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PLCs at Work® and the IB Primary Years Programme: Optimizing Personalized, Transdisciplinary Learning for All Students

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Study Guide

This study guide is a companion to the anthology *PLCs and the IB Primary Years Programme: Optimizing Personalized, Transdisciplinary Learning for All Students*, edited by Timothy S. Stewart and David (Cal) Callaway. *PLCs and the IB Primary Years Programme* explores the practices of schools within the International Baccalaureate's Primary Years Programme and how these align with the tenets of Professional Learning Communities at Work to ensure the highest levels of learning and engagement for all students

This guide is arranged by chapter, enabling readers to either work their way through the entire book or focus on the specific topics addressed in a particular chapter. It can be used by individuals, small groups, or an entire team to identify key points, raise questions for consideration, assess conditions in a particular school or district, and suggest steps that might be taken to promote a healthy school culture.

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We thank you for your interest in this book, and we hope this guide is a useful tool in your efforts to create a healthy culture in your school or district.

Chapter 1

PLC at Work in High-Performing Schools

1. The author, Timothy S. Stewart, asserts that PLCs are the single most powerful way to maximize student learning. List and define the three big ideas of the PLC process.
2. What's the key element of a learning-progressive school?
3. What does *agency* mean in the context of student learning, and how does it contribute to a highly effective learning environment? What are some ways you can encourage student agency?
4. List the four critical questions of a PLC. What is the goal of a PLC?
5. How would you define *transdisciplinary learning*? Why might a transdisciplinary approach be ideal for primary years?

Chapter 2

PYP and PLC at Work: A Perfect Pair

1. List and discuss the six themes of a transdisciplinary unit of inquiry.
2. What are some factors that should be considered when deciding which assessment tool is appropriate for your students and team?
3. How can the IB PYP framework and PLC process complement each other?
4. What are some assessment tools have you used in the past? What are some tools that you would like to learn more about or potentially use in the future?
5. What are some examples of non-quantitative data that can be used to assess where students are in their learning?

Chapter 3

Mathematics and Literacy in the PYP

1. Julie Stern (2018) asserts that progress is more important than mastery in a student's learning. What are some ways that progress can be assessed that align with the PYP philosophy that assessment must be authentic and collaborative?
2. What are the four dimensions of assessment as outlined by the IB PYP?
3. What are some ways that you already involve students in the assessment process? How could you further improve this practice in the future?
4. Describe the SOLO Taxonomy. How can it be used to assess learning in literacy? In mathematics?
5. Describe the concept of *flex time*. What are the benefits of flex time? What PLC critical question or questions does flex time attempt to address?

Chapter 4

Response to Intervention in the PYP

1. Describe the three instructional tiers of RTI. How does RTI support equity in the classroom?
2. When implementing RTI, schools are likely to take a protocol approach, a problem-solving approach, or a blended approach. Which approach do you think might be best suited to your institution? Why?
3. In RTI, what is the meaning of the terms *enrichment* and *extension*?
4. What are the six steps of systematic intervention?
5. How is your physical teaching space (or spaces) organized? How could you, or how would you like to, modify it to optimize a collaborative, effective, and progressive learning environment?

Chapter 5

Early Years Education and a Pedagogy of *With*

1. What does the author, Laura Jo Evans, mean by a “pedagogy of *with*”?
2. What are the main areas of curricular focus in a highly effective early years program?
3. Describe Vygtsky’s zone of proximal development. How it can be applied in early years education?
4. List the four central features, or practices, of IB PYP early years learning discussed in the chapter. Which do you think is the most significant feature, and why?
5. See the list of early years practices to “move away from” and “move toward” in table 5.2
Which in the “move away from” column resonate with you as practices you currently engage in? Which in the “move toward” do you already do, and which would you like to incorporate in your classroom?

Chapter 6

The Educational Assistant in the PYP and PLC

1. In what ways can an educational assistant play a role in creating the classroom learning environment?
2. Describe *micro-teaching*. How might you use micro-teaching to aid an educational assistant in their professional development?
3. How can educational assistants help collaborative PLC teams implement RTI?
4. How does your institution utilize educational assistants in the classroom? How might your institution change this relationship to better support students and PLC collaborative teams?
5. Consider the PYP guided inquiry learning cycle, as shown in figure 6.1. How might an educational assistant help facilitate this cycle for students?

Chapter 7

Leading Change in the PYP Through PLCs

1. How can the critical questions of a PLC be modified for leadership team use?
2. Which of the ten learner profile attributes resonates with you and your current leadership style the most? Which attribute would you like to work on more to improve your leadership skills?
3. What is the significance of the job title change from “teacher’s assistant” to “educational assistant,” and why is such a distinction supportive of PLCs in a PYP?
4. What is the “collective hub observation approach” the author discusses? How can this approach support teacher success measurement? What are the benefits of this approach compared to traditional individual teacher observations?
5. How might culture be a unique challenge in an IB PYP PLC? How might a leader address that challenge?