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Introduction

The Principal as Professional Learning Community Leader is designed to provide principals with hands-on, practical support as they build professional learning communities (PLCs) in their schools. Creating a collaborative culture for action that focuses on improving student achievement is a complex undertaking. Principals need to understand why PLCs provide an effective infrastructure for continuous school improvement. This book provides a convincing rationale for developing the attributes of a PLC that principals can share with their teachers to begin the work of transforming instructional and leadership practice in their schools. And this book supports principals in their role as instructional leaders. A variety of strategies are presented to principals that can be used when introducing the concept of PLCs to staff. These strategies are outlined step-by-step in several Professional Development Modules at the back of the book, which school leaders can use with teachers to do the following:

- Lay the foundations of mission, vision, values, and goals
- Build the pillars of collaborative teamwork, teacher capacity, leadership capacity, and professional development that support teacher learning teams
- Raise the roof of continuous learning and improvement
- Celebrate PLC accomplishments

This handbook offers principals valuable tools, templates, and techniques on how to start building a PLC in a school that can be easily adapted to any particular school context.

The Principal's Toolkit

Professional Development Modules

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT MODULE 1

LAYING THE FOUNDATIONS OF MISSION, VISION, VALUES, AND GOALS

In this Professional Development (PD) module, school leaders should adapt strategies and activities to suit individual school contexts. The suggested time to deliver this module is two hours; however, it can easily be broken into shorter segments. Each activity has a suggested time as a guideline. Make any adjustments to content and time that are suitable. The suggested scripts for each activity are easily adapted to school context as well.

1. Think, Pair, Share: Place Mat Activity

(Suggested time: 15 minutes)

Start the PD module with an activity that asks teachers about an experience that illustrates the value of teamwork. Use the graphic organizer in Figure PD1.1 as a tool for accessing prior knowledge. (A full-page template can be found on page 113.)

Use the Place Mat Activity to facilitate a think, pair, share experience. This activity is designed to access prior knowledge and stimulate discussion. Because it is completed in groups of four, it reinforces the value of cooperative learning.