

Notes to the Facilitator

The purpose of this workshop is to help educators explore the concept of leadership in professional learning communities (PLCs). It is based on the work of Richard DuFour, Rebecca DuFour, Robert Eaker, and Thomas Many. In this workshop, participants learn from their counterparts at other schools across North America. The workshop features a video program, approximately 30 minutes in length, which shows leaders from real PLC schools engaging in the strategies highlighted in the workshop.

This workshop is divided into six components:

- 1. Introduction**—This segment introduces participants to the critical strategies that will help them create a viable conceptual framework for addressing their task as school leaders.
- 2. Be clear about your primary purpose**—In PLC schools, principals focus on three big ideas to bring clarity and coherence to the purpose of their schools and their responsibilities as principals.
- 3. Disperse leadership throughout the school**—PLC schools develop a strong leadership team that assumes collective responsibility for creating conditions that enhance student and adult learning.
- 4. Employ a system of reciprocal accountability**—The best way principals can help others to lead is to put them in a position where they are called upon to lead and then provide them with feedback and support as they move forward.
- 5. Create a school culture that is simultaneously loose and tight**—PLC schools employ strategies that are simultaneously loose and tight. They are tight about the school's vision, values, and learning mission. They are loose about how they go about achieving that mission.
- 6. Learning by doing**—The goal of leadership development ultimately involves action, not just knowledge. Leaders help people to learn from their work rather than taking them away from their work to learn.

Conducting the Workshop

This workshop is designed to last about three hours. All the professional development materials you need to conduct this workshop—facilitator's guide with detailed teaching suggestions, transparency and participant handout masters, as well as the video resources—are provided in this packet.

To conduct a successful learning event, please consider the following issues:

- **Preparation**—Please view the entire video program, read all materials, and complete all activities yourself *before* leading the workshop.

overhead or computer projector to show handouts.

- **Handouts**—Reproducible masters for all participant handouts are included with this guide (starting on page 11, and on the CD). The handouts should be duplicated before workshop begins and distributed to participants according to the workshop instructions. Masters for overhead transparencies are also included with this guide (starting on page 11, and on the CD). They should be duplicated before the workshop begins, or you may project the page from your computer onto a screen.
- **Additional equipment**—You will also need flip charts, chalkboards, or whiteboards and appropriate writing materials to conduct the workshop.
- **Refreshments**—The agenda for the three-hour workshop should include one or more breaks at which beverages are offered. Snacks are optional, but water should be available throughout the workshop.

Video Program

This workshop incorporates a video program that is approximately 28 minutes in length. The video features documentary footage from a diverse group of eight elementary, middle, and high schools, observations from principals and teachers in those schools, as well as commentary from some of the nation's leading authorities on professional learning communities. The PLC process is embedded in the culture of these schools. The footage captures the sights and sounds of effective teacher teams and leaders in action. *There are no scripted scenes in this program!* Participants will gain insight from the real-life experience of successful PLC practitioners.

The PLC Resource Continuum

This resource is designed to introduce educators to PLC concepts and build shared knowledge regarding the key terms and practice of leadership in PLC schools. The video is designed to provide a precise explanation of PLC leadership practices and to give educators suggestions for moving forward on the PLC continuum. Furthermore, while other resources typically stress the resource base that supports PLCs, this video makes the case for professional learning communities through the stories of the people who have actually created them.

Print

Getting Started: Reculturing Schools to Become Professional Learning Communities

A Leader's Companion: Inspiration for Professional Learning Communities at Work

Learning by Doing: A Handbook for Professional Learning Communities at Work

On Common Ground: The Power of Professional Learning Communities

Raising the Bar and Closing the Gap: Whatever It Takes

Revisiting Professional Learning Communities at Work: New Insights for Improving Schools

Workshop Overview at a Glance

Time (in minutes)	Section	Handouts and Transparenc
10–20	Introduction	
35–45	Be Clear About Your Primary Purpose	Three Big Ideas Asking the Right Questions
35–45	Disperse Leadership Throughout the School	Shared Leadership
45–60	Employ a System of Reciprocal Accountability	Feedback and Support Critical Issues for Team Considerat How Leaders Demonstrate Recipro Accountability
35–45	Create a School Culture That Is Simultaneously Loose and Tight	Loose/Tight Compromises
20–30	Learning by Doing	

Workshop Teaching Suggestions

The purpose of this workshop is to help educators explore the concept of leadership in professional learning communities. Special attention is given to four critical leadership strategies: (1) be clear about your primary purpose; (2) disperse leadership throughout the school; (3) employ a system of reciprocal accountability; and (4) create a school culture that is simultaneously loose and tight.

Learning Objectives

After viewing the video and participating in the activities for the workshop, participants will be able to:

- Identify the three big ideas of a PLC school.
- Identify ways to operationalize the three big ideas in PLC schools.
- Generate important questions to guide the implementation of the three big ideas.
- Explain the term *shared leadership*.
- Distinguish between the pros and cons of shared leadership.
- Identify different ways in which shared leadership can manifest itself in a PLC school.
- Define the term *reciprocal accountability*.
- Identify ways in which reciprocal accountability could be employed within the context of the three big ideas.
- Generate questions that a principal and team leaders could use to clarify reciprocal accountability surrounding a particular issue.
- Explain what it means to be simultaneously loose and tight and how that relates to the three big ideas.
- Describe the benefits of being tight on certain principles and loose about how they are implemented.
- Develop a plan for implementing a professional learning community in their schools.

- ▶ What does “widely shared leadership” mean to you?
- ▶ What would be some examples of shared leadership?
- ▶ What would you need to give up in order to share leadership in your school?
- ▶ What would you gain from sharing leadership in your school?

Indicate that this segment of the workshop deals with shared leadership.

2. Next, play the first portion of the video segment on dispersed leadership featuring Principals Anthony Muhammad and Janet Gonzalez. It begins when the title *Disperse Leadership Throughout the School* appears on the screen. Stop the video after Principal Gonzalez concludes her remarks. Ask participants to identify, as they watch, the argument for shared leadership offered in the video.
3. After they view the two principals, ask participants, “What did Principals Muhammad and Gonzalez say that added to your understanding of dispersed leadership?” Have them share their responses as a group.
4. Then have participants view the rest of the segment. It begins with the comments by Principal Clara Sale-Davis. It ends when the title *Employ a System of Reciprocal Accountability* appears on the screen. Ask participants to identify, as they watch, different ways in which dispersed leadership was used in the schools.
5. After they view the rest of the video segment, ask participants to identify the various ways in which dispersed leadership manifested itself in the segment. Record their answers on a chart or board. Have the participants work individually to consider each example of dispersed leadership listed on the chart or board. Have them answer the following questions for each example on the list: “Would this type of dispersed leadership work in my school? Why or why not? When they have finished their work, ask for volunteers to share their thoughts with the group.”
6. Ask participants to work in pairs. Have each group brainstorm some specific ways in which leadership could be dispersed in their schools. Ask them to speculate about the barriers they might encounter in implementing each of these strategies in their schools, and how they might overcome these barriers. Ask for pairs to volunteer to share their thinking with the group.

Employ a System of Reciprocal Accountability

1. Project the Feedback and Support master (page 9) on a screen or wall, *revealing only the first paragraph*. Review the paragraph as a group. When participants have absorbed the first paragraph, reveal the second paragraph. Ask participants to define “reciprocal accountability” in their own words. Ask for volunteers to share their definitions with the group. Write their definitions on a chart or board. Ask participants why they think reciprocal accountability is necessary for the operation of a PLC school. Indicate that the next segment of the workshop deals with reciprocal accountability.