

PLC Roles Within a Team

In order to be productive, it is imperative that the members of the PLC assume responsibility for making the group's time effective. This is accomplished by assigning roles to the group members. A PLC may have as many or as few roles as they would like. Be sure to share the responsibility of the work. It is up to everyone to assure the group meets its goal (commitment).

Within the PLC, decide how often the group members would like to change roles. Some groups like to change often. This spreads the various responsibilities throughout the group. Others change roles when the SMART goal changes. This allows member to know their role well.

As a PLC you may decide to have as many assigned roles as you would like. What is important is that it is clear who is doing what in the PLC. A lack of clarity is detrimental to the PLC process. Everyone needs to see how they will contribute to the work of the group (Commitment) and how they will impact the group's learning (Accountability). Be sure that the group understand the connection of their role to the group's purpose and student achievement.

Here are a few role descriptions and responsibilities. Your group may develop other roles. Start with what makes sense to the members of your PLC.

1. **Facilitator** - The Facilitator is the Traffic Cop. This role helps the group move forward. The facilitator makes sure that everyone is participating and understands where the group is in the process. They also assure that everyone understands what the group is working to accomplish at each point of the meeting. Sometime administrators ask the PLC to have a **Team Leader**. The facilitator may or may not be the team leader. Usually the team leader is responsible for communicating the group's work and progress to others.
2. **Recorder/Note Taker** - This role documents the group's work. It is essential that the group's thoughts and conversations are visible. If the group's work is recorded, it can hold the group accountable to completing real work. The note taker should be documenting the groups big ideas, stopping to ask the group to further clarify ideas so that they are in a form that may be expressed in writing. If the recorder struggles to capture an idea, "then there is still more clarification and work to be done to create a mutual understanding " that may be expressed in writing (Sparks, 2008, p. 38)¹. It is often helpful to do this on a computer. By typing the notes in a Google doc, all participants will have access to the group's work. Notes may be typed directly into the agenda. This also helps to keep the

¹ "Solution Tree | The Collaborative Teacher." 2011. 5 Aug. 2012
<<http://www.solution-tree.com/the-collaborative-teacher.html>>

group on track.

3. **Agenda Keeper or Timekeeper** - This is a great role for the control freak in the group. At the beginning of the meeting, this person will review the agenda and may ask the group to set approximate times it wants to spend on each agenda item. Remember these times are goals, not rules. If a part of the meeting takes longer than the time initially agreed on, the timekeeper will alert the group to this and see if they want to continue or move ahead to the next item. Always remind the group of the goal/outcome they set and keep the group moving at a pace that will allow the group to reach that outcome. PLCs work when they are productive. This role can be an essential accountability piece that helps the group reach its commitments. This person makes sure the meeting starts and stops on time and that it moves ahead. Each meeting ends by creating the agenda for the next meeting. Remember to plan the agenda backwards - start with the end in mind.
4. **Norms Manager/Process Checker** - Everyone in the group is responsible for maintaining the norms (accountability). The Norms Manager reminds the group of the norms at the beginning, asks if there is a focus norm, reminds the group during the work of the norms (if needed), and helps the group to reflect at the end on their adherence to the norms. They also help the group to reflect on the process they have selected to do the work and its effectiveness.
5. **Charts and Visuals (The Visualizer)** - This is a fun role for someone with an artistic flair or the person that needs to be up and active during a meeting. Tracking the groups work (thoughts and ideas) on chart paper may be a great accountability piece. Charting the participants ideas help them to feel valued and heard; they are able to “see” their participation. It also helps to maintain the group’s focus. Finally, ideas from quieter participants can be charted. This help dominant group member to “hear” the person and adds importance to what the quieter member shared. “Effective visuals help your team own the work and refocus when the conversation begins to stray” (Sparks, 2008)². [Here is a link](#) to helpful tips for this role. Note - **Use brown, black, or blue markers as they are the easiest for people to read. Use red only when the group wants to mark an idea as important.*
6. **Materials Organizer** - This is a great job to share. This person makes sure the group has markers and chart paper, copies of anything they need (such as agendas), and other items necessary to the meeting.
7. **Encourager** - The **Encourager** role come from Collaborative Strategic Reading (CSR). This person encourages the group with positive statements and names and notices positive behaviors that benefited the group. “That was a great idea.” “Wonderful job of adding onto Juan’s idea.” “Super connection.” “Great work today team!” “I notice you were really focused in today’s meeting. You were

² "Solution Tree | The Collaborative Teacher." 2011. 5 Aug. 2012

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nodding and added several ideas to the action plan” “Great meeting everyone! High-five each person before you leave.” This is a fun role. Everyone loves a compliment and it can bring a lot of energy to the group.

8. **Effective Group Member** - It is important that each member is conscious of their actions. An Effective Group Member arrives on time prepared, contributes ideas, keeps the meeting focused on the purpose, and holds group members accountable to the norms.
9. **Nutritional Coordinator or Gastro Engineer** - Aren't all meetings better with a healthy snack? This is an example of a role that your PLC might want to create.

During your debrief after each meeting, look for patterns that the group wants to change. The PLC may create a role to address a specific need of the group. For example, your group may determine that they need a **Negativity Eliminator**. This person will listen for negative statements and reframe them into positive one.

Create any role that will help your PLC function well. Be sure to be clear on what is the purpose and responsibilities for each role. Clarity is essential to a high functioning PLC!