

A Professional Learning Community:

What It Is	What It Isn't
A different way of “doing business” in schools	A new name for “business as usual” – the latest educational fad
People meeting together to focus on professional learning	People meeting together to focus on an agenda (busyness, business, announcements, etc.); accomplish tasks; learn something new from outside expert
A variety of people meeting together	The usual groups: whole faculty, grade-level teams, subject-area disciplines, department meetings (although these CAN become PLCs)
Focus on new ways of meeting	Use of agendas (same old, same old)
Egalitarian (peer-to-peer)	Hierarchical (principal, department chair, in charge, etc.)
Supportive, collegial, collaborative	Objective, task oriented
Work driven by data about students/staff	Work driven by agenda
Variety of tools (protocols, lesson study, SIP)	Agenda or one-shot workshops; presentations
Outside work important: visiting other classrooms, schools; creating lessons and units and studying them	Ends when agenda is accomplished or when workshop is over
Action oriented in terms of implementing new strategies; experimenting; conducting action research	Action oriented in terms of accomplishing agenda or completing workshop
Study oriented – books, articles; book study; data analysis	Agenda oriented or presentation oriented
Helpful: coaching mentoring, follow-up	Isolated, isolating; abandonment in terms of workshop follow-up
Principal as co-learner	Principal as manager, leader
Dialogue	Decision-making; debate; discussion
Collective inquiry	Pre-set agenda, workshop topic
Continuous	One shot deals (meetings or workshops)
Student focus	Focus on management items or focus on outside expertise in workshops
Systemic change (one event at a time)	Incremental change