

Erasmus+ Project LeaFaP

LeaFaP

REPORT



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LeaFaP

Leading and Facilitating Professional Learning Communities in Schools towards an Inquiry-based and Reflective Practice
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Erasmus+ Project LeaFaP: Learning Outcomes

Leading and Facilitating Professional Learning Communities in Schools towards an Inquiry-based and Reflective Practice

Learning Outcomes *EDITION 2*

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0 Introduction

The following learning outcomes (LOs) are designed to provide facilitators with essential knowledge, skills, and attitudes needed to effectively promote and support Professional Learning Communities (PLCs) with a focus on reflection and inquiry. They are informed by an international literature review on PLC leadership and facilitation, including research from Austria, Cyprus, Germany, Greece, Norway, and Spain. They also draw on empirical research based on interviews with communities of practice, PLC facilitators, and leaders in these countries, as well as the conceptual framework developed within the LeaFaP project <<https://www.leafap.eu/>>. These outcomes will inform the design of activities and a modular training aimed at fostering PLC facilitation for inquiry and reflection.

Overall, there are seven main dimensions, each structured into two to three subdimensions (except for the dimension concerning reflection and inquiry, which has seven). These subdimensions are further organised into three categories: knowledge, skills and attitudes. The dimensions are as follows: relational, communication, collaborative, learning- and knowledge-building, reflection and inquiry, organisational, and digital. It should be noted that these subdimensions are not strictly defined categories, and some elements may fit into more than one.

1 Relational dimension

1.1 Promote empathy, respect, and trust-building among PLC members

- **Knowledge:**
 - Trust- and empathy-building strategies and their importance in group settings.
- **Skills:**
 - Demonstrate interpersonal skills, including empathy and respect, through verbal and non-verbal cues.
 - Respond to emotional cues communicated by group members appropriately.
 - Conduct activities that foster respect and openness among the PLC members.
 - Create and maintain a safe space within the community.
- **Attitudes:**
 - Commitment to fostering positive and trusting relationships.

1.2 Foster supportive relationships and group dynamics for a collaborative and safe environment

- **Knowledge:**
 - Principles of group dynamics
- **Skills:**
 - Conduct activities that enhance group cohesion and a sense of belonging.
 - Create and maintain a supportive and inclusive environment where all PLC members feel safe to express themselves, challenge ideas, assumptions, etc. and be challenged by other members.
- **Attitudes:**
 - Commitment to ensuring everyone's voice is heard and respected.
 - Patience and persistence in nurturing group cohesion.

1.3 Resolve conflicts and mediate disputes effectively

- **Knowledge:**
 - Conflict resolution theories and strategies that promote understanding and respect, including mediation techniques.
- **Skills:**
 - Ability to mediate conflicts within the PLC, fostering a constructive and respectful resolution.
- **Attitudes:**
 - Commitment to maintaining a positive, collaborative environment even during conflicts.

2 Communication dimension

2.1 Optimise communication effectiveness within the PLC.

- **Knowledge:**
 - Effective communication principles, including active listening and clear, respectful expression of ideas.
- **Skills:**
 - Promote active listening.
 - Facilitating discussions to ensure all members can contribute and feel heard.

Demonstrate and promote respectful communication, with a particular focus on handling challenging conversations.

- **Attitudes:**
 - Being receptive to different perspectives and ideas during discussions.

2.2 Moderate and guide communication, summarise discussions effectively, and engage the group in meta-conversations about communication within the group

- **Knowledge:**
 - Moderation and facilitation techniques.
- **Skills:**
 - Use clarifying questions to facilitate understanding.
 - Moderate respectful discussions to keep them focused and productive.
 - Paraphrase and summarise key points and decisions from discussions concisely and clearly.
 - **Use visual aids to communicate key information effectively.**
 - Engage the group in meta-conversations to reflect on and improve communication processes.
 - Develop norms for interaction and communication.
- **Attitudes:**
 - Openness to feedback and continuous improvement of communication practices.

3 Collaborative dimension

3.1 Promote a collaborative culture within the PLC beyond surface-level exchanges

- **Knowledge:**
 - Collaborative learning theories and practices.
- **Skills:**
 - Use tools and techniques to enhance deeper engagement among members.
 - Develop a shared vision and common values within the PLC.
- **Attitudes:**
 - Value deep, meaningful interactions over superficial exchanges.

3.2 Encourage active and equitable participation among PLC members

- **Knowledge:**
 - Techniques to encourage equitable participation.
- **Skills:**
 - Monitor and adjust participation dynamics to maintain equity.
- **Attitudes:**
 - Commitment to inclusivity and fairness.

3.3 Promote collective responsibility for both the professional development of PLC members and leadership within the PLC

- **Knowledge:**
 - Shared leadership, collective efficacy, and the benefits of collective responsibility in educational settings and professional development in a PLC.
- **Skills:**
 - Facilitate goal-setting and action-planning sessions.
 - Track and assess progress towards collective goals.
 - Develop leadership skills and capabilities among the PLC members
- **Attitudes:**
 - Commitment to a culture of continuous learning, mutual support and shared responsibility.

4 Learning- and knowledge-building dimension

4.1 Select and share relevant resources to support members in expanding their knowledge base and implementing effective professional methods

- **Knowledge:**
 - Current research and best practices in education.
 - Educational resources, including journals, books, and online platforms.
- **Skills:**

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- Select and disseminate high-quality educational resources.
 - Facilitate access to professional development opportunities.
 - **Attitudes:**
 - Commitment to continuous professional growth and learning.
 - Encouragement of a culture of resource-sharing and collaboration among PLC members.

4.2 Recognise diverse needs and offer personalised support and guidance to address specific challenges

- **Knowledge:**
 - Concept of diversity in group contexts.
 - Specific needs and contexts of the members being supported.
- **Skills:**
 - Assess the specific needs and challenges of individual members.
 - Assess the need for input (in terms of. e.g., research, theory, practical applications) within the PLC.
 - Provide tailored support and resources to address those needs.
- **Attitudes:**
 - Sensitivity to the unique contexts and challenges of each member.

4.3 Manage change in educational settings

- **Knowledge:**
 - Theories and models of change management and their application in educational settings.
- **Skills:**
 - Ability to plan and support change initiatives within a PLC to improve teaching and learning practices.
- **Attitudes:**
 - Openness to change and a proactive approach to leading educational innovations.

5 Reflection and Inquiry dimension

5.1 Understand how inquiry and reflection facilitate professional learning in a PLC

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- **Knowledge:**
 - Theoretical frameworks and models of inquiry-based learning.
 - Concept of reflective thinking and practice.
 - **Skills:**
 - Introduce inquiry as a necessary process for professional learning.
 - Give examples to understand how inquiry can inform practice.
 - **Attitudes:**
 - Commitment to evidence-based practices.

5.2 Acknowledge, explore and analyze members' knowledge, beliefs, practices, and school contexts for support needs

- **Knowledge:**
 - Techniques for collecting, analyzing and interpreting qualitative and quantitative data.
 - Types of valid data (classroom data, student work, observations from one's own teaching, standardised test results, etc.).
- **Skills:**
 - Collect, analyse and interpret data to identify support needs.
 - Reflect on findings to develop targeted support strategies.
- **Attitudes:**
 - Respect for diverse professional knowledge, experiences, beliefs, and practices.

5.3 Encourage individual and group reflection and critical analysis of professional practices to identify learning goals

- **Knowledge:**
 - Techniques for fostering reflective practice.
- **Skills:**
 - Ask probing questions to stimulate critical thinking.
 - Make use of the group's previous knowledge and experiences to foster reflection and critical thinking.
- **Attitudes:**
 - Commitment to fostering a reflective culture.
 - Valuing critical analysis as a tool for improvement.

5.4 Provide constructive feedback, promote dialogue and critical thinking, and encourage exploration of assumptions

- **Knowledge:**

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- Principles of effective feedback.
 - Techniques for facilitating productive dialogue.
 - **Skills:**
 - Deliver feedback that is specific, actionable, and supportive.
 - Use questioning techniques to promote deeper thinking.
 - Encourage members to reflect on and challenge their assumptions and biases.
 - Structure the outcomes of inquiry results and reflective discussion.
 - **Attitudes:**
 - Encouragement of exploration of assumptions and of critical thinking.

5.5 Promote research and assist in creating research tools and in analysing data

- **Knowledge:**
 - Research methodologies and tools.
 - Data analysis techniques relevant to educational research.
- **Skills:**
 - Guide members in formulating research questions.
 - Assist in the development of surveys, interviews, and other research tools.
 - Support members in data collection and analysis.
- **Attitudes:**
 - Encouragement of professional autonomy and initiative in research.

5.6 Guide members in reflecting on practices and leveraging data for evaluation of practices, informed decision-making and planning

- **Knowledge:**
 - Frameworks that connect inquiry and reflection to evaluation of practice, informed decision-making and planning (e.g., action research, action learning, lesson study)
 - Methods for evaluating professional practices.
- **Skills:**
 - Guide members in reflective inquiry related to their practices.
 - Guide members in using data to inform instructional decisions and strategies, and planning.
 - Use evaluation outcomes to inform ongoing professional development.
- **Attitudes:**
 - Valuing evidence-based practices and informed decision-making.
 - Commitment to using evaluation as a developmental tool.

5.7 Self-analyse and reflect upon the role of the facilitator to improve the facilitation process and outcomes, and create a Personal Learning Environment to overcome possible deficiencies

- **Knowledge:**
 - Self-reflection techniques and tools for professional development.
 - Personal Learning Environments (PLEs) and their components.
- **Skills:**
 - Conduct self-assessments and reflections to evaluate facilitation and leadership effectiveness.
 - Set personal development goals and create action plans.
 - Engage in professional dialogue with peer facilitators across different PLCs.
 - Build and maintain a PLE that includes a variety of learning resources and tools.
- **Attitudes:**
 - Openness to self-evaluation and self-critique.
 - Commitment to self-directed learning and continuous improvement.

6 Organisational dimension

6.1 Effectively manage logistical aspects of PLC functioning to ensure regular meetings and maintain focus on tasks

- **Knowledge:**
 - Tools and technologies that can aid in scheduling and task management.
- **Skills:**
 - Create and distribute agendas to keep meetings focused and productive.
 - Manage time effectively during meetings to cover all planned topics.
- **Attitudes:**
 - Valuing structured and goal-oriented meetings.

6.2 Monitor activities and progress of the PLC and handle documentation efficiently

- **Knowledge:**
 - Understanding of progress monitoring and evaluation techniques.
 - Tools for tracking activities and maintaining records.

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- **Skills:**
 - Track progress and documenting outcomes of PLC activities.
 - **Attitudes:**
 - Commitment to transparency and accountability in monitoring progress.

7 Digital dimension

7.1 Use digital tools to conduct online or hybrid sessions

- **Knowledge:**
 - Digital platforms for online and hybrid meetings.
 - Best practices for engaging members in virtual environments.
- **Skills:**
 - Set up and manage online or hybrid sessions using digital platforms.
 - Use appropriate digital tools and features strategically, such as screen sharing, breakout rooms, and polls, to enhance engagement.
- **Attitudes:**
 - Commitment to creating an inclusive and interactive virtual environment.

7.2 Use digital tools to create documents and graphic organisers

- **Knowledge:**
 - Design principles and tools for creating digital documents and graphic organisers.
 - Collaborative tools for real-time document creation and editing.
- **Skills:**
 - Collaborate with others in real-time to create and edit documents.
- **Attitudes:**
 - Valuing clarity and visual appeal in educational materials.

7.3 Use digital tools to promote reflection and the participation of all members in online sessions

- **Knowledge:**
 - Digital tools and strategies for promoting reflection, interaction, and engagement.
- **Skills:**
 - Facilitate reflective activities and discussions using digital tools.
 - Create and use platforms for sharing best practices and success stories.
- **Attitudes:**
 - Openness to using various digital tools to enhance engagement.