How the PLC Process Changes at Different Levels of School Reform

Robert J. Marzano
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Robert J. Marzano

Rick DuFour (and Bob Eaker and Becky DuFour) created a “crack in the cosmic education egg.”

The PLC Process: 3 Big Ideas

1. The fundamental purpose of our schools is to ensure that all students learn at high levels.
2. If we are to help all students learn, it will require us to work collaboratively in a collective effort to meet the needs of students.
3. Educators must create a results orientation in order to know if students are learning and to respond appropriately to their needs.

The PLC Process: 4 Questions

1. What is it we want our students to know?
2. How will we know if our students are learning?
3. How will we respond when students do not learn?
4. How will we enrich and extend the learning for students who are proficient?
Reform means being accountable for assuring that what we are doing actually works.

Levels of Accountability

- **Stage 1**: You aren’t really engaging in activities and innovations that would help improve the school.
- **Stage 2**: You are trying to implement activities and innovations that would help improve the school but are in the beginning and incomplete stages.
- **Stage 3**: You are implementing activities and innovations that would help improve the school.

- **Stage 4**: You have collected data that indicate your activities and innovations are working (“lagging indicators”).
- **Stage 5**: You continually collect “quick data” on your activities and innovations to ensure continuous improvement.

When you hold yourself up to this level of scrutiny, you are operating as a high reliability organization.
Levels of Reform

| Level 5 | Competency-Based Education |
| Level 4 | Standards-Referenced Reporting |
| Level 3 | Guaranteed and Viable Curriculum |
| Level 2 | Effective Teaching in Every Classroom |
| Level 1 | Safe and Collaborative Culture |

Levels 1, 2, and 3

- Foundational for all schools
- Represent a hierarchy of priority
- Must be worked on simultaneously because they are interdependent.

Levels 1, 2, and 3

- Foundational for all schools
- Represent a hierarchy of priority
- Must be worked on simultaneously because they are interdependent.

Critical Aspect

Standards-Referenced Reporting

Report status and growth on the report card using proficiency scales.
Levels of School Reform

5. Competency-Based Education
4. Standards-Referenced Reporting of Student Progress
3. A Guaranteed and Viable Curriculum
2. Effective Teaching in Every Classroom
1. Safe and Collaborative Culture

Level 5 “The Rare Air”
A school replaces a system that matriculates students based on time with one that matriculates students based on demonstrated competence in specific content areas.

Moving Through the Levels from the PLC Perspective

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Level</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
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</tr>
</tbody>
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The PLC Process: Three Big Ideas
1. The fundamental purpose of our schools is to ensure that all students learn at high levels.
2. If we are to help all students learn, it will require us to work collaboratively in a collective effort to meet the needs of students.
3. Educators must create a results orientation in order to know if students are learning and to respond appropriately to their needs.
Leading Indicators for Level 1
Safe, Supportive, and Collaborative Culture

1.1 The faculty and staff perceive the school environment as safe and orderly.
1.2 Students, parents, and the community perceive the school environment as safe and orderly.
1.3 Teachers have formal roles in the decision-making process regarding school initiatives.
1.4 Teacher teams and collaborative groups regularly interact to address common issues regarding curriculum, assessment, instruction, and the achievement of all students.
1.5 Teachers and staff have formal ways to provide input regarding the optimal functioning of the school.
1.6 Students, parents, and the community have formal ways to provide input regarding the optimal functioning of the school.
1.7 The success of the whole school, as well as individuals within the school, is appropriately acknowledged.
1.8 The fiscal, operational, and technological resources of the school are managed in a way that directly supports teachers.

Indicator 1.5: Teachers and staff have formal ways to provide input regarding the optimal functioning of the school

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sustaining</th>
<th>Applying</th>
<th>Developing</th>
<th>Beginning</th>
<th>Not Attempting</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
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<td>The school leader continually cultivates information through quick data sources to monitor formal structures for teachers and staff to provide input regarding the optimal functioning of the school, and takes proper actions to intervene when quick data indicate a potential problem.</td>
<td>The school leader has implemented formal processes for teachers and staff to provide input regarding the optimal functioning of the school, and uses these indicators to show the desired effects of these actions.</td>
<td>The school leader has implemented formal processes for teachers and staff to provide input regarding the optimal functioning of the school.</td>
<td>The school leader is in the beginning, yet incomplete, stages of implementing formal processes for teachers and staff to provide input regarding the optimal functioning of the school.</td>
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Leaders of Learning
(DuFour & Marzano, 2011)
Reciprocal Accountability

1. Organize staff into meaningful teams.
2. Provide teams with time to collaborate.
3. Provide supportive structures that help groups become teams.
4. Clarify the work teams must accomplish.
5. Monitor the work of teams and provide direction and support as needed.
6. Avoid shortcuts in the collaborative team process.
7. Celebrate short-term wins, and confront those who do not contribute to their teams.

Hierarchy of Goals
(a.k.a. “The Self System”)

Level 6: Connection to something greater than self
Level 5: Self actualization
Level 4: Esteem within a community
Level 3: Belonging
Level 2: Safety
Level 1: Physiology
Questions Related to the Hierarchy of Needs

Level 1: Is this situation comfortable from a physiological perspective?
Level 2: Is this situation safe?
Level 3: Am I welcome in this situation?
Level 4: Do I have a sense of status in this situation?
Level 5: Does this situation allow me to move toward a personal goal?
Level 6: Does this situation inspire me?

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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Level 2</td>
<td>Safe and Collaborative Culture</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The PLC Process: 4 (+2) Questions

1. What is it we want our students to know?
2. How will we know if our students are learning?
3. How will we respond when students do not learn?
4. How will we enrich and extend the learning for students who are proficient?
5. How will we increase our instructional competence?
6. How will we coordinate our efforts as a school?

Leading Indicators for Level 2

2.1. The school leader communicates a clear vision as to how instruction should be addressed in the school.
2.2. Support is provided to teachers to continually enhance their pedagogical skills through reflection and professional growth plans.
2.3. Predominant instructional practices throughout the school are known and monitored.
2.4. Teachers are provided with clear, ongoing evaluations of their pedagogical strengths and weaknesses that are based on multiple sources of data and are consistent with student achievement data.
2.5. Teachers are provided with job-embedded professional development that is directly related to their instructional growth goals.
2.6. Teachers have opportunities to observe and discuss effective teaching.
Indicator 2.1: The school leader communicates a clear vision of how instruction should be addressed.

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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The school leader continually cultivates information through quick data sources to monitor the extent to which the schoolwide language or model of instruction is consistently used, and takes proper actions to intervene when quick data indicate a potential problem.</td>
<td>The school leader has implemented a schoolwide language or model of instruction, and can produce lagging indicators to show the desired effects of these actions.</td>
<td>The school leader is in the beginning, yet incomplete, stages of implementing a schoolwide language or model of instruction.</td>
<td>The school leader has not attempted to implement a schoolwide language or model of instruction.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
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</table>
Feedback

1. Students understand the progression of knowledge they are expected to master and where they are along that progression.

2. Students understand how test scores and grades relate to their status on the progression of knowledge they are expected to master.

Assessment

Content

3. When new content is being presented, students understand which parts are important and how the parts fit together.

4. After content has been presented, students deepen their understanding and develop fluency in skills and processes.

5. After content has been presented, students generate and defend claims through knowledge application tasks.

6. Students continually integrate new knowledge with old knowledge and revise their understanding accordingly.

Context

7. Students are paying attention, energized, intrigued, and inspired.

8. Students understand and follow rules and procedures.

9. Students feel welcomed, accepted, and valued.

10. Typically reluctant students feel valued and do not hesitate to interact with the teacher or their peers.

Engagement

Rules and Procedures

Relationships

High Expectations

Opportunities to Observe and Discuss Effective Teaching

- Instructional rounds
- Expert coaches
- Expert videos
- Teacher-led PD
- Virtual communities

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Leading Indicators for Level 3
Guaranteed and Viable Curriculum

3.1 The school curriculum and accompanying assessments adhere to state and district standards.
3.2 The school curriculum is focused enough that it can be adequately addressed in the time available to teachers.
3.3 All students have the opportunity to learn the critical content of the curriculum.
3.4 Clear and measurable goals are established and focused on critical needs regarding improving overall student achievement at the school level.
3.5 Data are analyzed, interpreted, and used to regularly monitor progress toward school achievement goals.
3.6 Appropriate school- and classroom-level programs and practices are in place to help students meet individual achievement goals when data indicate interventions are needed.

Indicator 3.2: The school curriculum is focused enough that it can be adequately addressed in the time available to teachers.

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<th>Not Attempting</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The school leader continually cultivates information through quick data sources to monitor whether the curriculum for all content areas is focused enough that it can be adequately addressed in the time available to teachers, and takes proper actions to intervene when quick data indicate a potential problem.</td>
<td>The school leader has protocols and practices in place to ensure that the curriculum for all content areas is focused enough that it can be adequately addressed in the time available to teachers.</td>
<td>The school leader has protocols and practices in place to ensure that the curriculum for all content areas is focused enough that it can be adequately addressed in the time available to teachers.</td>
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Isabelle Beck’s Distinctions

- Tier 1 words
- Tier 2 words
- Tier 3 words
Cognitive Skills

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Cognitive Skill</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Generating conclusions</td>
<td>Involves combining pieces of known information to form new ideas.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Identifying common logical errors</td>
<td>Involves analyzing information to determine how true it is.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Presenting and supporting claims</td>
<td>Involves expressing a new idea and presenting information to support it.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Navigating digital sources</td>
<td>Involves using electronic resources to find credible and relevant information.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Problem solving</td>
<td>Involves accomplishing a goal in spite of obstacles or limiting conditions.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Decision making</td>
<td>Involves using criteria to select among alternatives that initially appear to be equal.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Experimenting</td>
<td>Involves generating and testing explanations of observed phenomena.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Investigating</td>
<td>Involves identifying confusions or contradictions about ideas or events and suggesting ways to resolve those confusions or contradictions.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Identifying basic relationships between ideas</td>
<td>Involves consciously analyzing relationships between ideas to better understand complex texts.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Generating and manipulating mental images</td>
<td>Involves creating images in one’s mind to facilitate deep processing and memory of information.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Metacognitive Skills

1. Setting goals and monitoring progress
2. Staying focused when answers and solutions are not immediately apparent
3. Resisting impulsivity
4. Pushing the limits of your knowledge and skills
5. Generating and trusting your own standards of excellence
6. Seeking accuracy
7. Seeking clarity
8. Seeking cohesion and coherence
9. Recognizing incremental steps
Moving Through the Levels from the PLC Perspective

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The PLC Process: 4 (+2) Questions

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5. How will we increase our instructional competence?
6. How will we coordinate our efforts as a school?

Leading Indicators for Level 4 Standards-Referenced Reporting

4.1 Clear and measureable goals are established and focused on critical needs regarding improving achievement of individual students within the school.

4.2 Data are analyzed, interpreted, and used to regularly monitor progress toward achievement goals for individual students.

Indicator 4.2: Data are analyzed, interpreted, and used to regularly monitor progress toward achievement goals for individual students.

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<td>The school leader continually culminates information through quick data sources to monitor that data are analyzed and used to regularly monitor progress toward achievement goals for individual students.</td>
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### Use Proficiency Scales to Move to a Blended Approach

<table>
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<th>Level</th>
<th>Learning Goal</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Advanced</td>
<td>Describe and defend what might occur to climatic patterns in a specific location given a dramatic change in one specific process of the water cycle.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| 3     | Target        | An understanding of:  
- How the water cycle processes (condensation, precipitation, surface runoff, percolation, evaporation) impact climate changes.  
- The effects of temperature and pressure in different layers of Earth’s atmosphere. |
| 2     | Simpler       | • Recognize and recall basic terms such as: climatic patterns, atmospheric layers, stratosphere, troposphere.  
• Recognize or recall isolated details such as:  
  - Precipitation is one of the processes of the water cycle.  
  - The troposphere is one of the lowest portions of the Earth’s atmosphere. |
| 1     | Partial credit with help | • Recognize and recall basic terms such as: climatic patterns, atmospheric layers, stratosphere, troposphere.  
• Recognize or recall isolated details such as:  
  - Precipitation is one of the processes of the water cycle.  
  - The troposphere is one of the lowest portions of the Earth’s atmosphere. |
| 0     | Even with help no success | • Hardcopy directions for specific requirements regarding what must be addressed  
• Examples from previous students  
• Khan Academy video  
• Teacher-created screencasts  
• Pages in a book  
• Practice sheets  
• Short formative assessments  
• Practice sheets  
• Short formative assessments |

### Topic: Atmospheric Processes and Water Cycle

- An understanding of:  
  - How the water cycle processes (condensation, precipitation, surface runoff, percolation, evaporation) impact climate changes.  
  - The effects of temperature and pressure in different layers of Earth’s atmosphere.

- Recognize and recall basic terms such as: climatic patterns, atmospheric layers, stratosphere, troposphere.
- Recognize or recall isolated details such as:  
  - Precipitation is one of the processes of the water cycle.  
  - The troposphere is one of the lowest portions of the Earth’s atmosphere.
Students track their progress the entire year.

Critical Aspect
Standards-Referenced Reporting

Report status and growth on the report card using proficiency scales.

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The PLC Process: 
4 (+2) Questions

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5. How will we increase our instructional competence?
6. How will we coordinate our efforts as a school?

Leading Indicators for Level 5
Competency-Based Education

5.1 Students move on to the next level of the curriculum for any subject area only after they have demonstrated competence at the previous level.
5.2 The school schedule is designed to accommodate students moving at a pace appropriate to their background and needs.
5.3 Students who have demonstrated competency levels greater than those articulated in the system are afforded immediate opportunities to begin work on advanced content and/or career paths of interest.

Indicator 5.2: The school schedule is designed to accommodate students moving at a pace appropriate to their background and needs.

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<tr>
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<td>The school leader has protocols and practices in place to ensure that the school schedule is designed to accommodate students moving at a pace appropriate to their background and needs in all content areas, and can adjust data lagging indicators to show the desired effects of these actions.</td>
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Adjusting Reporting Systems Accordingly

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<th>Critical Aspect</th>
<th>Competency-Based Education</th>
<th>Adjusting Reporting Systems Accordingly</th>
<th>Level 1</th>
<th>Level 2</th>
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<td>Science</td>
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<td>1 hr</td>
<td>3 hr</td>
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**Reporting System:**

**Grade-Level Approach**

- **Mathematics**: 1 hr, 9 hr, 3 hr, 9 hr, 1 hr, 3 hr, 3 hr, 3 hr, 3 hr, 1 hr
- **Science**: 1 hr, 9 hr, 3 hr, 9 hr, 1 hr, 3 hr, 3 hr, 3 hr, 3 hr, 1 hr

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**High School Approach**

<table>
<thead>
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<th>Subject Area</th>
<th>Course</th>
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<tr>
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<td>English</td>
<td>Advanced Language Arts</td>
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<td>Physics</td>
<td>D</td>
<td>Performing Arts</td>
<td>Orchestra</td>
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<tr>
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<td>Chemistry</td>
<td>E</td>
<td>Dancing</td>
<td>Street Dance</td>
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<tr>
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<td>Economics</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>Digital Graphics</td>
<td>Digital Graphics</td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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Thank You

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