ESTABLISHING NORMS WITHIN S-PLC GROUP WORK

Purpose

The aim of this activity is to establish rules and norms at the beginning of a S-PLC establishment.

Preparation

Material
computer, screen, beamer
online document for collaboration (e.g. google docs, padlet, miro)
copies of the two templates (see additional information)

Room
group tables for 3-6 people, chairs

Duration
about 45 minutes

Target group
student teachers, student teachers in internship, students

Setting
seminar at university, internship groups

Application
beginning of the S-PLC work

Description of the Activity

The aim of the activity is to establish the norms of the group as a necessary step in a S-PLC group.

Introduction phase
The lecturer uses, e.g., google docs, padlet, miro etc. to collect the answers of the students:

1. Question: Do you think a S-PLC should have norms? Why? Why not?

   The teacher may guide the discussion so that the following reasons are mentioned and registered in case they do not come up in the discussion:

   - To increase effectiveness
   - To help the group accomplish its tasks
   - To structure meetings
   - To ensure that all members have the opportunity to contribute, share and discuss ideas,
   - and be heard
   - To keep the dialogue open and respectful, even when members disagree

2. Question: What areas do you think these norms should cover in a S-PLC?

   Afterwards, all mentioned ideas are gathered and clustered by the lecturer (screen/board) including the following information:

   - TIME MANAGEMENT: Do we begin and end on time?
   - LISTENING: How do we encourage in active listening? How do we discourage interrupting?
   - CONFIDENTIALITY: Do we treat the mentioned information as confidential?
   - DECISION MAKING: How do we make decisions? How do we deal with conflicts? How do we deal with different opinions?
   - PARTICIPATION: How do we encourage everyone to participate?
   - EXPECTATIONS: What do we expect from each other?
     (Adapted from: https://www.baschools.org/vimages/shared/vnews/stories/54e631b7d1163/Guide%20to%20Establishing%20PLC%20Norms.pdf)

Working phase

1. The students gather in their S-PLC groups to think about behavior and attitudes, which are considered as important on an individual basis for the categories mentioned above (Template I). (The following impulse can be introduced: "Think of a past negative experience you have had serving on a team or committee and identify a specific behavior that prevented that group from being effective"; e.g., whining and complaining, being disengaged during the meetings etc.)

2. Afterwards, the results are discussed critically in the group. Behaviors and attitudes that are viable for all group members are marked. Consensus has to be reached.

3. The group translates the marked behaviors and attitudes in positive commitment statements (e.g., We will contribute equally to the workload of this team, we will start our meeting on time etc.) Note: A few key norms are sufficient (5 to 7 norms)

4. The group transfers the positive commitment statements into Template II. The group makes sure that every S-PLC participant agrees with the group norms by signing.

Notes for further work: Norms...
- Norms should be revised periodically and changed if needed.
- Meetings should begin with an overview of the norms until they are internalised.

Additional Information

Learn more
- http://toolbox1.s3-website-us-west-2.amazonaws.com/site_0681/PLCForms.pdf
- Wheelan, S. A. (2016). Creating effective teams: A guide for members and leaders (Fifth edition). Los Angeles: London: New Delhi: Singapore: Washington DCSAGE.
- Belbin, R. M. (1993). Team Roles at Work. Oxford: Buccerworth-Heineman
- Senior, B. (1997). Team roles and team performance: Is there 'really' a link?. Journal of Occupational and Organizational Psychology , 70, 241-258.

Template 1   *Use during working phase, step 1)*
Template 2   *Use during working phase, step 4)*

TEMPLATE 1

Area	Ideal Behaviours / Attitudes	Norms
Time Management		
Listening		
Confidentiality		
Decision making		
Participation		
Expectation		

TEMPLATE 2   Norms of our Professional Learning Community

In order to help each other to develop professionally as teachers and for our meetings to be productive, effective, focused and engaging, we make the following commitments to each other:

Area	Ideal Behaviours / Attitudes	Norms
Time Management		
Listening		
Confidentiality		
Decision making		
Participation		
Expectation		

PLC Members

    Name   Signature

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

4. _____

5. _____

6. _____