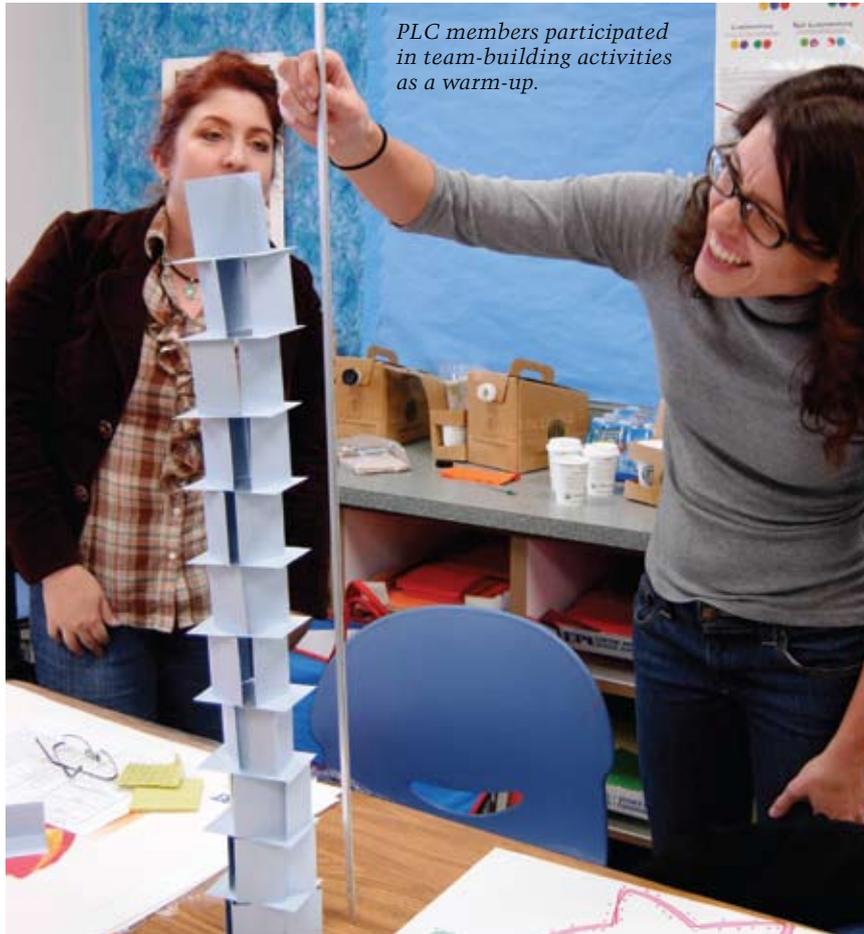


Art Education and the Professional Learning Community



PLC members participated in team-building activities as a warm-up.

Heather White

Professional learning communities are not a new concept in education for some, but they were

for me. This is the first year that my elementary school has fully implemented the program. As a veteran art teacher with twenty-six years of experience, I felt like I had a grasp of what education was all about. Teachers teach and students learn. This past year has brought about a whole new

perspective on how I see myself as an educator and what my expectations should be for my students.

Through this collaboration we can work smarter, not harder, and we solidify the importance of art as an integral part of the curriculum.

frequent assessment of learning objectives, evaluating areas of student strength and weakness, and targeting ways to meet the needs of students.

The focus of a professional learning community (PLC) is the idea that all students can achieve success through teachers collaborating on best practices,

Including Art in the PLC Team

How does an art teacher fit into the PLC process? I have become part of a team. Actually, I am part of two teams. I belong to the fourth-grade tutorial team in my school, and I am a member of a district-wide art team.

As a member of the fourth-grade tutorial team, my biggest concern is that I am an art teacher, not a classroom teacher. How can I help the fourth-grade students learn if I myself am learning the fourth-grade curriculum? The PLC's success relies on building a collaborative culture for sharing lessons and strategies among all staff members.

Once a week, I am provided with a substitute teacher for a forty-five minute block of time so I can meet and discuss plans with my fourth-grade team. In addition to teaching art, I tutor fourth-grade groups for thirty minutes every day. Being a part of a grade-level team has given me greater insight on specific criteria in instruction versus generalities given in the fourth-grade state objectives. I have always integrated the curriculum into my classroom, but now I am better at targeting my students' educational needs.

Plans for the Future

Some of the elementary art teachers in my district are beginning to meet to establish a mission, vision, values, and goals for our students. We have begun the process by collaborating to build a common language for math and science in art, common assessments in art, and cross-curriculum integrated lessons that are accessible to all teachers in the district.

If each art teacher selects a different grade-level team to work with next year, then we can form a year-long outline for lessons that is more effective for integrating math, language arts, and science. Through this collaboration we can work smarter, not harder, and we solidify the importance of art as an integral part of the curriculum. 🌀

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