Idaho State University | Albion Center for Professional Development

# Professional Learning Communities
## Course Syllabus

## Course Description

This self-paced graduate professional development course offers educators an in-depth exploration of Professional Learning Communities (PLCs) as a powerful model for fostering collaboration, improving teaching practices, and enhancing student achievement. Through eight comprehensive modules, participants will acquire the knowledge and skills to create, implement, and sustain effective PLCs within their educational settings. The course begins with a foundational introduction to PLCs, followed by strategies for building a collaborative culture and establishing clear, data-driven goals. Participants will learn how to structure effective teams, set SMART goals, and utilize action research to improve instruction. A key focus of the course is the continuous professional growth of educators, where participants will explore methods for reflective practice and maintaining engagement in PLCs overtime. Practical tools, such as data analysis techniques and action research planning, are embedded throughout the course to ensure that educators can immediately apply the concepts in their own settings. By the end of the course, participants will be equipped to drive sustainable change through PLCs, creating environments that foster both educator and student success. This course supports educators in developing the skills to become effective collaborators and leaders within their schools, committed to lifelong learning and improvement.

## Course Objectives

At the end of this course you should be able to:

1. Examine the purpose, key characteristics, and benefits of Professional Learning Communities, explain their role in improving student learning and educator collaboration, and analyze various Professional Learning Community models to evaluate their effectiveness within a school setting.
2. Analyze strategies for fostering trust, shared leadership, and a culture of collaboration within a Professional Learning Community, and evaluate their impact on team effectiveness and student learning.
3. Analyze the components of effective team structures, define key roles within a Professional Learning Community, and apply strategies to establish norms that foster collaboration and enhance team dynamics.
4. Evaluate the benefits of analyzing student data to identify trends and assess instructional effectiveness, applying data-driven insights to make informed decisions that support student growth.
5. Develop meaningful and measurable goals aligned with student achievement by analyzing student data to ensure their relevance and impact.
6. Analyze current instructional strategies within Professional Learning Communities, apply action research methods to test and refine these strategies, and evaluate their effectiveness using data from case studies.

7. Analyze strategies for sustaining Professional Learning Communities, apply adaptive approaches to overcome challenges, and evaluate methods to ensure their long-term sustainability.
8. Analyze reflective practices, synthesize strategies that promote professional growth within Professional Learning Communities, and evaluate their effectiveness in fostering continuous improvement.

## Modules

- Module 1: Introduction to Professional Learning Communities, Quiz 1
- Module 2: Building a Collaborative Culture, Quiz 2
- Module 3: Effective Team Structures and Roles, Quiz 3
- Module 4: Data-Driven Decision Making, Quiz 4
- Module 5: Developing Shared Goals and SMART Goals, Quiz 5
- Module 6: Implementing Action Research in PLCs, Quiz 6
- Module 7: Sustaining PLCs overtime, Quiz 7
- Module 8: Reflective Practice and Continuous Learning, Quiz 8

## Grading:

Each quiz must be passed at an 80% or higher (three attempts allowed).

## Format

This is a self-paced, asynchronous (no required live meetings) course. Throughout the PD course, you will find it helpful to take notes along the way to assist with the quizzes. Within each module, you will find reflection assessments that are not graded but will help in your journey through the course.