

Activity 1: Defining Professional Learning

Purpose:	Through reading, discussion and planning, this session will familiarize participants with the principles of Professional Learning and guide them through planning for Professional Learning in their school communities.
Length of Time:	70-90 minutes
Materials:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chart paper • Markers • <i>Handbook for Professional Learning</i>, pages 3-4 and 11-30 • (optional if time allows) Article: <i>What Works in Professional Development?</i> (Guskey and Suk Yoon)
Essential Questions:	How would you define professional development versus professional learning? How are they similar? How are they different?

Activity Steps:

1 Turn and Talk (15 minutes): Today we will explore the differences and similarities between the concepts of professional development and professional learning. We will begin by thinking about these questions: How would you define professional development vs. professional learning? How are they different?

- Participants complete T-chart in groups of 4-6:

Professional Development	Professional Learning

- Small groups share 1-2 elements from their T-chart with the entire group.

Note: If teams have been identified, participants may sit in the professional learning teams that they will meet with regularly.

- 2 Reflect on Professional Learning Experiences (20 minutes):** The elements of professional learning that we discussed and charted are the foundation for our notion of professional learning. Let’s take a minute to read a section from the *Handbook on Professional Learning* to see where our ideas align.
- Participants independently read the Introduction of the *Handbook on Professional Learning* (pages 3-4).
 - Participants reflect on their own professional learning experiences by jotting down the following:
 - Think about a time in your professional career when you learned something new that changed your practice and/or the way you worked. For example, did an introduction to the writing process cause you to approach writing instruction in a completely new way? Did a colleague share a way to teach number systems that made you completely rethink your math instruction?
 - Participants discuss their professional learning experiences in their small groups:
 - What were the conditions of that professional learning? What made it stick for you in order for it to become a part of your regular practice? How were you supported?
- 3 Planning for Professional Learning (20 minutes):** Now that we’ve done some reading and reflected upon our own professional learning experiences, let’s consider the elements that will help us plan meaningful professional learning experiences in our school by reading the first section of the *Handbook, Planning for Professional Learning*.
- Groups divide in half; half of the participants will read pages 11-18 and the other half will read pages 19-30.
 - Participants should be prepared to share the highlights of their pages and to discuss the following questions:
 - What elements of professional learning does your section highlight? What are the implications of your section for planning professional learning?
 - Small groups share 1-2 key ideas from their discussion with the whole group.
- 4 Considerations for Professional Learning in Your School (15 minutes):** As we wrap up our session (unless you intend to include the extension activity below), let’s think about some additional considerations for professional learning.
- Participants read the *Considerations for Professional Learning* on page 80 of the *Handbook* and prepare to discuss the following:
 - How can we use this information to ensure that our professional learning experiences are successful (defining success both by having teacher “buy-in” and by having an impact on student learning)?
- 5 (optional if time allows) Article Study: What Works in Professional Development? (20 minutes):** In addition to reading the *Handbook for Professional Learning*, let’s see what the research says about what works in professional development so that professional learning in our school can have the greatest impact.
- Participants read Guskey’s article and respond to the following questions in small groups:
 - How has our school defined the success of professional development in the past?
 - How can we evaluate professional learning moving forward and how will that information systematically inform our ongoing planning?
 - What additional professional learning opportunities would lead to changes in our school, and how can we support one another through the learning process?