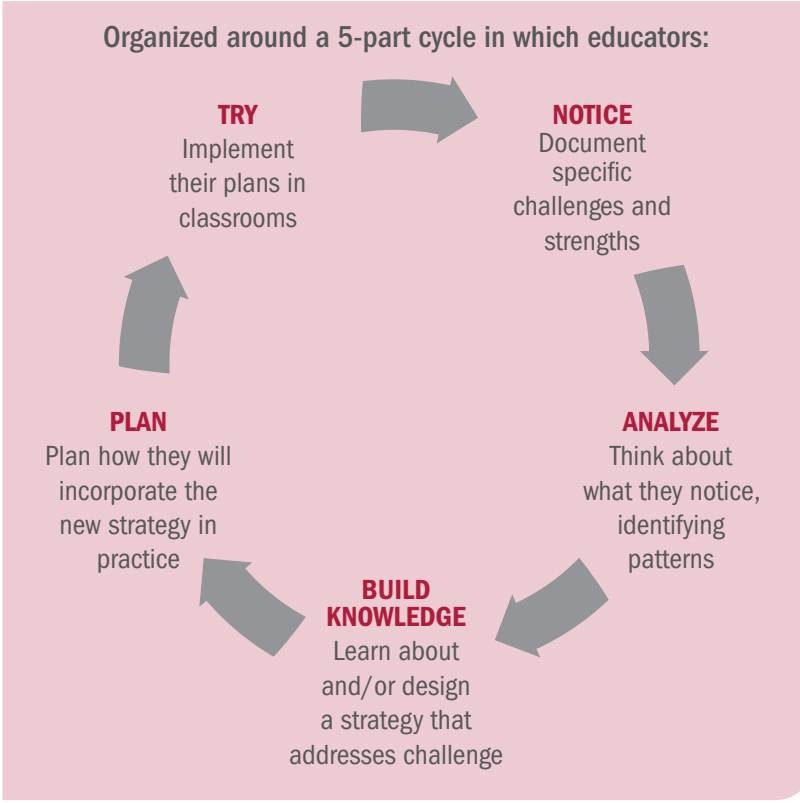


## Designing Effective Professional Development: Spotlight on Professional Learning Communities

**ISSUE:** Early educators are regularly provided with professional development (PD) intended to expand their knowledge and skills in order to enhance children’s outcomes. All too often, the design and delivery of these PD opportunities inhibits meaningful changes in practice. It is the job of leaders to offer PD that enables early educators to master the competencies essential for creating high-quality learning environments.

In this brief and the next, we focus on two core features of effective professional development. This brief describes professional learning communities (PLCs); brief 4 describes coaching.

### PROFESSIONAL LEARNING COMMUNITIES (PLCs)

	THE ELEMENTS	THE FRAMEWORK												
STRUCTURE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Small group</li> <li>• Skilled facilitator and teaching teams</li> <li>• Ongoing, frequent sessions</li> <li>• On-site</li> </ul>	<p>Organized around a 5-part cycle in which educators:</p> 												
APPROACH TO KNOWLEDGE-BUILDING	<p>Sessions are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• guided by learning objectives to foster cornerstone educator competencies (Brief 2)</li> <li>• interactive, using discussion and dialogue</li> <li>• incremental, building off previous sessions</li> <li>• part of a long-term plan</li> <li>• anchored in meaningful case examples</li> </ul>													
MECHANISM FOR TRANSFORMING PRACTICE	<p>Leaders and facilitators:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• provide decision-making and leadership opportunities</li> <li>• collaborate with educators to identify areas of strength and challenge</li> <li>• promote problem-solving and anticipation of roadblocks</li> <li>• encourage role-play, demonstration, and practice</li> <li>• implement Connected Coaching (Brief 4)</li> </ul>													
		<p><b>PLCs: WHAT THEY ARE NOT</b></p> <table border="0"> <tr> <td>Off-site</td> <td>Lectures</td> <td>Courses and trainings for credit or credential</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Short-term</td> <td>Large group meetings</td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td>One-time only</td> <td>Team planning time</td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td></td> <td>Staff meetings</td> <td></td> </tr> </table>	Off-site	Lectures	Courses and trainings for credit or credential	Short-term	Large group meetings		One-time only	Team planning time			Staff meetings	
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