

PLC at Work™ Institute

Portable Event Package

Course Overview

The Portable Event Package course is structured for your optimal learning experience. Keynote sessions drive home the main ideas and themes, while breakout sessions support the keynotes.

Solution Tree recommends viewing the keynotes in the order presented. Please select breakout sessions to match your viewing needs.

PEP participants have access to sessions for 90 days from the date they click “I agree” on the acknowledgement within the virtual platform. Sessions may feature downloadable handouts or PowerPoint slides. Handouts and slides will be available on the virtual platform on the “Additional Resources” tab.

Block 1

Keynote —Mike Mattos <i>The Urgency of the Moment</i>	See page 5.
Breakout Sessions	See pages 2 & 5–9.
Panel Discussion — <i>In this recorded session, presenters field questions during a PLC at Work Institute.</i>	

Block 2

Keynote —Anthony Muhammad <i>The Way Forward: PLC at Work and the Bright Future of Education</i>	See page 10.
Breakout Sessions	See pages 3 & 10–12.

Block 3

Breakout Sessions	See pages 4 & 13.
Keynote —Regina Stephens Owens <i>Transformed People Transform People</i>	See page 14.

Breakout Sessions at a Glance

Block 1

Tim Brown <i>Building a Commitment to Learning in Students</i>
William M. Ferriter <i>Making Differentiation Doable</i>
Heather Friziellie <i>Raising the Bar and Closing the Gap: Whatever It Takes in Elementary Schools</i>
Timothy D. Kanold <i>Heart & Soul: Living a Fully Engaged, High-Energy, Well-Balanced Professional Life!</i>
Maria Nielsen <i>The 15-Day Challenge: Win Quick, Win Often!</i>
Maria Nielsen <i>Common Assessments: The Key to Uncommon Results for Student and Teacher Learning</i>
Mike Mattos <i>Are We a Group or a Team?</i>
Mike Mattos <i>Raising the Bar and Closing the Gap: Whatever It Takes in Secondary Schools</i>
Mike Mattos <i>Taking Action: How the PLC at Work Framework Drives an Effective Multitiered System of Supports</i>
Anthony Muhammad <i>Collaboration Is a Lifestyle, Not a Meeting!</i>
Anthony Muhammad <i>Transforming School Culture: New Insights</i>
Regina Stephens Owens <i>Small Schools and Singletons: Wired for Rigor and Relevance</i>

Breakout Sessions at a Glance

Block 2

Tim Brown

Activating the Keys of Formative Assessment to Create a Culture of Learning

Tim Brown

Grading: The Good, the Bad, and the Ugly

Luis F. Cruz

Taping Before Painting: Taking the Critical Steps to Respond Collectively When Students Don't Learn

Timothy D. Kanold

Your PreK–12 PLC Mathematics Focus: Great Instruction and Tasks!

Maria Nielsen

Elementary ELA Strategies to Keep Your Students on Track

Jeanne Spiller

Yes We Can: Collaboration by All, for All!

Breakout Sessions at a Glance

Block 3

Luis F. Cruz

I Am Sold on PLCs: Practical Tools and Directions to Be Successful

Mike Mattos

Guiding Principles for Principals: Tips and Tools for Leading the PLC at Work Process

Anthony Muhammad

Beyond Test Scores! The PLC at Work Process and Serving the Whole Child

Session Descriptions

Block 1

KEYNOTE

Mike Mattos

The Urgency of the Moment

One of the essential characteristics of a professional learning community is continuous improvement. To achieve this goal, educators within a PLC commit to collective inquiry and action research to increase both adult and student learning. As we celebrate the 25th anniversary of Dr. Richard DuFour and Dr. Robert Eaker's original work—Professional Learning Communities at Work—Mike Mattos reviews the essential elements of the PLC at Work framework and shares insights we have learned through the process.

BREAKOUT SESSIONS

Tim Brown

Building a Commitment to Learning in Students

The educators in a learning-centered school deliberately identify strategies for building and communicating high expectations with their students. The importance of this is reinforced by Anthony Muhammad's research for his book, *Transforming School Culture: How to Overcome Staff Division* (2017). Muhammad discovered that students will learn more and be more successful in an environment where all educators believe they can learn at high levels, and those educators work together to convince the students they can achieve lofty academic goals teachers set for them.

This session is designed to engage the audience in a thoughtful examination and exploration of four practical and proven strategies that engage students in building a commitment to learning.

Participants can expect to:

- Understand the importance of regularly communicating high expectations to students to develop a culture of learning throughout the school.
- Gain effective learning strategies to communicate and establish a learning-centered classroom culture.
- Recognize the important role celebrations play in reinforcing and sustaining a focus on learning for all.
- Explore various strategies for engaging students in goal setting to take greater ownership of their learning.

William M. Ferriter

Making Differentiation Doable

If schools are truly working to move every student forward, learning experiences must be differentiated to meet the needs of individual students. The challenge, however, rests in making differentiation doable. While few teachers doubt the importance of differentiating, many struggle to make customized learning spaces a reality.

In this presentation, Solution Tree author and career classroom teacher Bill Ferriter introduces participants to a range of strategies that can be used to:

- Carefully plan and deliver initial attempts at remediation and enrichment in a differentiated classroom.
- Create meaningful “turn to” tasks for students to tackle after demonstrating mastery of grade-level essentials.
- Reduce the time, energy, and effort required to effectively differentiate instruction.

Heather Frizziellie

Raising the Bar and Closing the Gap: Whatever It Takes in Elementary Schools

Schools that function as PLCs must ultimately do two things: 1) build a collaborative culture to promote continuous adult learning, and 2) create structures and systems that guarantee students additional time and support for learning when they need it. After examining the key components of systematic intervention and enrichment, participants examine protocols and criteria to assess their own schools’ responses and an action-planning template for next steps in raising the bar and closing the gap in the local context.

Participants examine strategies and structures to collaboratively:

- Examine the essential core beliefs that relate to all means *all*.
- Review and reflect on the essential elements of Tiers 1, 2, and 3 intervention.
- Consider high-leverage usage of resources (human, material, structural) to meet the needs of all learners.
- Examine the most common RTI mistakes.
- Reflect on critical reminders regarding process and criteria.
- Apply a current reality assessment tool while learning.

Timothy D. Kanold

Heart & Soul: Living a Fully Engaged, High-Energy, Well-Balanced Professional Life!

Education is a profession of “emotional labor,” and it is easy to experience fatigue from the daily noise and intense, often quick-changing expectations of the educators’ work life. Giving “heart and soul” to the professional life is fulfilling. Yet, it can also take its toll at work and at home.

Timothy D. Kanold notes, “Off and on, I have lost contact with the joy of my work life. So, it is for you. Sooner or later, the world of your professional life stretches you beyond your limits. But there are ways to sustain and regain your happiness at work.” The secret lies in understanding how to live a well-balanced daily life.

Participants examine the difference between being busy and being hurried, and they consider how to maintain high positive daily energy and joy, as they ruthlessly eliminate the hurry from their lives based on the energy quadrants from Dr. Kanold’s award-winning book, *HEART! Fully Forming Your Professional Life as a Teacher and Leader* (Solution Tree, 2017). Participants walk away feeling the power of their professional journey.

Participants can expect to:

- Understand and embrace happiness as a high positive energy state.
- Ruthlessly eliminate hurry from their life.
- Avoid emotional exhaustion through the demonstration of self-compassion.
- Avoid the natural drift to a high negative energy state of being.
- Choose a daily, well-balanced life.

Mike Mattos

Are We a Group or a Team?

Collaborative teacher teams are the engine that drives a professional learning community. When these teams are highly engaged in the right work, student learning accelerates ... and when they are not, learning sputters and stalls. Because teachers have traditionally been required to attend grade-level or departmental team meetings, schools often mistakenly assume that merely renaming these gatherings “PLC time” represents teacher collaboration. The act of meeting together does not make a team, but instead, merely a group.

Participants in this session:

- Assess if they are currently part of a group or a team.
- Review the essential work of teacher teams in a PLC.
- Learn how to successfully navigate team disagreements.
- Leave with specific action steps to improve your teacher team.

Raising the Bar and Closing the Gap: Whatever It Takes in Secondary Schools

If the fundamental purpose of being a professional learning community is to ensure all students learn at high levels, then there must be time embedded during the school day to provide students extra time and support to succeed. In this session, Mike Mattos provides real examples showing how to create time for supplemental and intensive interventions.

Participants learn specific steps to implement a flexible secondary intervention period, including how to:

- Learn specific steps to implement a flexible intervention period.
- Determine what interventions to offer each week.
- Require students to attend specific interventions.
- Monitor student attendance.
- Allocate staff.
- Extend student learning.

Taking Action: How to Create a Highly Effective, Multitiered System of Supports

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, educators face an unprecedented challenge: how to close the learning gaps created by months of school closures and uneven access to learning opportunities. In this breakout, Mike Mattos discusses specific steps that schools can take to create a highly effective, multitiered system of supports to target learning gaps and show how the PLC at Work process creates the larger, schoolwide framework required to successfully intervene.

Participants in this session:

- Gain an understanding of the guiding principles behind a multitiered system of interventions.
- Learn the essential actions that collaborative teams must complete at Tier 1 to effectively respond when students don't learn.
- Explore how to target preventions, interventions, extension, and remediation.
- Prioritize resources to best meet student needs.

Anthony Muhammad

Collaboration Is a Lifestyle, Not a Meeting!

This session addresses the collaborative characteristics of a high-performing PLC. Learn how teachers, support staff, school administrators, and central office all work together to improve school performance. Anthony Muhammad addresses the issue of staff resistance to change and the leader's role in building consensus. Two key areas are explored: creating a culture of collaboration and creating an environment in which people embrace collective responsibility.

Participants in this session learn:

- How to construct and protect productive collaborative relationships
- How to create organizational coherence and ensure collaboration at every level of the school community
- The balance between support and accountability

Transforming School Culture: New Insights

In this session, Anthony Muhammad addresses the issue of conflicting agendas within schools. A high-performing school has a very clear purpose—high levels of learning for all students. Participants examine the barriers to aligning individual agendas with the organization's agenda and what *all* parties must do to develop the synergy necessary to guarantee learning. The theoretical framework developed by Anthony in the book *Transforming School Culture: How to Overcome Staff Division, 2nd Edition* (Solution Tree, 2018) is examined as the basis for developing a collaborative culture.

Participants can expect to learn:

- How staff division develops and how to prevent it
- Strategies that heal old social and professional wounds
- To create an environment where every professional can thrive

Maria Nielsen

The 15-Day Challenge: Win Quick, Win Often!

This interactive session establishes, reboots, or re-energizes the work of collaborative teams. Schools nationwide are using this simple learning-assessing process to connect the dots of a PLC. Maria Nielsen helps teams see the big picture of a PLC and put it all together in a recurring cycle of collective inquiry. The 15-day challenge is a practical way to bring the PLC process to life.

Participants in this session:

- Clarify the work of collaborative teams.
- Establish steps for a guaranteed and viable curriculum.
- Explore the learning-assessing cycle in a unit of study.

Common Assessments: The Key to Uncommon Results for Student and Teacher Learning

The secret is out: Common formative assessments are the key to improving student learning! Formative assessments are powerful when teams of teachers create assessments in common, then share and discuss the results. This collaborative process leads to a dramatic increase in student learning and improved teaching practices. Maria Nielsen provides proven tools to use common assessments across grade levels and departments and illustrates practical strategies for implementing and using assessments to substantially improve student and adult learning.

Participants in this session:

- Examine the benefits of using common assessment as a grade level or department.
- Understand the balance between formative and summative assessments.
- Gain formative assessment tools to increase student and adult learning.
- Discover quick and easy ways to look at data and drill down to individual students.

Regina Stephens Owens

Small Schools and Singletons: Wired for Rigor and Relevance

Singleton teachers are accustomed to seeking solutions and understanding opportunities as they arise. Operating efficiently and effectively within a PLC can be challenging. Team members must collaborate on common denominators, work with peers to improve professional practices and student learning, leverage technology, and authentically engage in the PLC at Work process.

Regina Stephens Owens shows how to use best practices in collaboration, and participants learn how to design action plans supporting the work of schools and singleton teachers in a PLC.

Participants can expect to:

- Gain clarity on connecting in a PLC.
- Seek solutions for successful partnering.
- Learn to function effectively in a PLC.

Session Descriptions

Block 2

KEYNOTE

Anthony Muhammad

The Way Forward: PLC at Work and the Bright Future of Education

The impact of COVID-19 will have long-lasting effects on every facet of our society. Very few institutions were more disrupted than schools. The pandemic affected staffing, funding, morale, and the continuity of student learning. Anthony Muhammad explores the history of the field of education and examines why the tenets of the PLC at Work process were important before the global pandemic and why they will be even more important after the pandemic. This is not the time to back away from PLCs; this is the time to reinforce the foundation of the PLC at Work process.

Participants in this session learn that:

- Developing the profession of education has always been evolving. Utopia never existed.
- The principles of PLC at Work are timeless.
- The PLC at Work process is essential in order to repair and advance the field of education.

BREAKOUT SESSIONS

Tim Brown

Activating the Keys of Formative Assessment to Create a Culture of Learning

Formative assessment can have an amazing impact on learning and is especially beneficial for students who struggle. If you have students who struggle in your school, being great at formative assessment is crucial. Participants in this session examine their current assessment practices in comparison to the five keys and nine principles of assessment for learning. Practical examples and strategies are shared throughout the session.

Participants can expect to:

- Explore the relationship between formative assessment and student achievement.
- Evaluate important considerations in the assessment process.
- Examine tools, scenarios, and processes from the field that demonstrate that the five keys and nine principles are doable in every classroom, at every level.

Grading: The Good, the Bad, and the Ugly

When schools make the shift from a focus on teaching to a focus on learning, they must be willing to examine beliefs, assumptions, policies, guidelines, and practices to ensure everything we do that affects learning is aligned to the mission of the school. Because of the effect grading has on student learning, a discussion about grading practices must be part of the reflective and learning effort by staff. In this session, Tim Brown shares strategies and resources to help staff engage in a collaborative process that examines some of the more prevalent fixes that need to happen with grading if staff is going to be true to a mission that promotes high levels of learning for all students.

Participants can expect to:

- Answer the question, Where should we begin in our discussion about grading?
- Discuss the importance of crafting a statement about what a grade represents.
- Examine four notable fixes in our grading practices in light of a standards- or evidence-based approach to learning: homework, 100% scales, formative assessment, and averaging scores.
- Reflect on grading practices and guidelines that have been successfully implemented in schools at every level.

Luis F. Cruz

Taping Before Painting: Blending the PLC and RTI Processes to Collectively Respond When Students Don't Learn

Luis F. Cruz shows how to embrace the power of the word *and* versus the tyranny of the word *or*. It's not PLC or RTI, but instead, embracing both the PLC and RTI processes to become a professional learning community. Dr. Cruz showcases how educators use effective collaborative processes (taping the room) to ensure a collective response when students do not learn (painting the room). Hence, participants learn how the PLC and RTI processes complement each other in increasing academic achievement for all students.

Participants in this session learn:

- How effective teacher teams collaborate and respond when students do not learn
- How to incorporate the five non-negotiable vessels of the PLC Process
- How to gauge collaborative practices via seven stages
- How teacher teams implement structures and processes that will allow for a collective response when students do not learn

Timothy D. Kanold

Your PreK–12 PLC Mathematics Focus: Great Instruction and Tasks!

Timothy D. Kanold explores how collaborative teams can improve student achievement in mathematics through the balanced use of lower- and higher-level-cognitive-demand tasks and classroom discourse combined with meaningful formative feedback during instruction.

Dr. Kanold shares research-affirmed lesson design criteria essential to student perseverance, development of self-efficacy, and sustained effort in mathematics class every day. He shares sample mathematics tasks and online resources for teacher support.

Participants use the PLC mathematics lesson design model to:

- Examine research-affirmed teaching actions that maximize student learning during a mathematics lesson.
- Consider how to use prior knowledge activities effectively.
- Examine the balanced use of lower- and higher-level-cognitive-demand tasks during class.
- Embrace the balanced use of small-group student discourse as part of a formative feedback process that encourages student perseverance, engagement, effort, efficacy, and participation during the lesson.

Maria Nielsen

Elementary ELA Strategies to Keep Your Students on Track

Maria Nielsen takes educators on an interactive journey to gain new and exciting ELA and writing strategies as a team. In this fast-paced session, elementary teachers gain clarity about ELA standards and explore how reading and writing go hand in hand for increased student learning. Participants also learn how to focus on year-long essential standards while using a district-prescribed curriculum.

Participants in this session:

- Gather tools and graphic organizers to connect reading and writing.
- Understand learning progressions on literacy-focused instruction and assessment.
- Overlay essential standards with district-prescribed curricula.
- Examine research-based teaching strategies to improve classroom instruction.

Jeanne Spiller

Yes We Can: Collaboration by All, for All!

When teams commit to collaborating in the PLC process dedicated to high levels of learning for *all* students, a key critical step is to examine their personal and systemic beliefs about students, themselves, and learning. Then, ensure that all systems align, bringing this vision to life. Participants in this session are provided with strategies and protocols to examine mindsets and collaborative processes to drive action planning that ensure higher levels of learning for all students. This session is designed for both general and special educators.

Participants in this session:

- Examine best practices for ensuring all means *all*.
- Learn strategies to bring each of these best practices to life in your local context.
- Reflect on local current practices and policies that do and do not align with the belief that all students can learn at high levels and identify key next steps for moving forward.

Session Descriptions

Block 3

BREAKOUT SESSIONS

Luis F. Cruz

I Am Sold on PLCs: Practical Tools and Directions to Be Successful

As educators initiate the PLC process, they need practical tools to begin and enhance the journey. However, educators might discover that their staff needs convincing when it comes to embracing and implementing PLC at Work. Luis F. Cruz shares resources, movie clips, and a powerful activity to convince administrative and teacher leaders why implementation of the PLC process must become and continue to be a priority.

Participants in this session learn:

- Why resistance to the PLC process is to be expected
- Resources from *Learning by Doing* that act as powerful resources.
- Practical actions to accelerate PLC at Work
- The four schools activity

Mike Mattos

Guiding Principles for Principals: Tips and Tools for Leading the PLC at Work Process

Becoming a professional learning community will not happen by luck, chance, or hope; it requires focused and effective leadership. In this breakout, Mike Mattos provides guiding principles, practical examples, and targeted tools to help leaders—site or district administration and teacher leaders—successfully support teacher teams.

Participants learn how to:

- Create an effective site leadership team.
- Develop and enforce team norms.
- Monitor and support the work of collaborative teams.

Anthony Muhammad

Beyond Test Scores! The PLC at Work Process and Serving the Whole Child

The PLC at Work process is committed to a focus on *learning*. Learning does not have to be narrowly defined by academic standards and state test scores. Anything that we want students to learn—including social and emotional health, resilience, citizenship, entrepreneurship, and civility—can all be facilitated through the four PLC questions. If the COVID-19 pandemic taught anything, it is that human beings are complex and our holistic well-being is important.

Participants can expect to learn:

- How to strategically plan to define, assess, and address nonacademic student traits
- Strategies to engage counselors, social workers, and other nonacademic staff members in the PLC at Work process
- How to prioritize and promote student needs beyond test scores and student labels

KEYNOTE

Regina Stephens Owens

Transformed People Transform People

Becoming a PLC requires that we become learners and embrace collective responsibility as we commit to continuous improvement.

Transformational learning is a matter of belief. What we believe about people impacts every process and procedure we deploy. Educators deserve both a life and a career. Let's design environments and experiences that ensure they learn. Regina Stephens Owens discusses the essentials required to develop a community of learners and a culture of collective responsibility.

Learning outcomes include:

- Designing and develop a culture based on mission, vision, and values
- Creating learning environments to ensure adults experience transformational learning
- Learning to coach competency, not just compliance