Chapter 4 Worksheets

**Chapter 4 Worksheet Instructions:   
Institutional and Ecosystemic Support**

High-impact professional learning requires strategic support. The Institutional dimension of the *NLC Framework* focuses on campus policies and practices that institutions can take to support professional learning and advance instructional quality. The Ecosystemic dimension considers the broader systemic actors that shape the higher education environment, including the environment for professional learning. The Institutional and Ecosystemic Core Principles together outline a strategic approach to scaling and sustaining professional learning and educational development.

Worksheets 4.1–4.8 are designed to help your team consider the Good Practice Principles of the Institutional and Ecosystemic dimensions as you prepare your plans. For each Good Practice Principle, we suggest you begin by individually assessing current campus professional learning practice, using the rating scale and question prompts. (You might decide beforehand whether to focus on professional learning campus-wide or in a smaller, more specific area.) Then, individually brainstorm ways to strengthen your professional learning design and implementation.

You might want to consider doing this as a simple “jigsaw” process, splitting up different Principles (or sets of two to four Principles) to be addressed by subgroups of your team. There are of course many ways to do this. Here’s one way that this could work:

**Step 1: Individual Work.** After splitting up your team to address different Principles, team members work individually, using the Worksheets for their assigned principle to assess current professional learning practice and plan for change.

**Step 2: Small Group Discussion.** Those who worked on the same Principles meet to share and discuss, using the Reflective Questions below. Each team prepares a report.

• What did you learn from this process? Of the Good Practice Principles you focused on, which one(s) did you find most interesting or important?

• What steps for strengthening the integration and support for professional learning emerged as you examined these Principles?

• What steps will be simple? What will be more complex? What changes can we make in the short run? What will take a long-term effort?

After everyone has had a chance to share, work as a group to prepare a report to the larger team. You may want to create notes on poster paper to facilitate your report.

• List two to four Good Practice Principles that your group wants to highlight as strategically important. Be prepared to explain your choices to the team and to identify possible steps that your team could take.

**Step 3: Whole Team Discussion.** Subgroups come together to share reports and consider strategies for future action, using the prompts below. Save notes for future use.

• Review the Principles identified by the small groups. Create a list of perhaps four to five that we want to spotlight for future action and discussion.

• How could we begin to bolster support for our professional learning practice with these Principles in mind? Who would we need to involve in the conversation? How would we make our case?

• What do we need to know more about? What aspects of high-impact professional learning practice do we need to understand better? What resources might we explore?

Worksheet 4.9 invites you to specify strategic connections aligned with your teaching and learning initiative(s). How can you attract the support needed for high-impact professional learning needed to advance change?

However your team decides to organize your discussion of specific Principles, it is important that at some point the whole team comes together to share and discuss insights, strategies for improvement, and ways to apply these Good Practice Principles to support teaching and learning improvement. We encourage you to create a record of the key points that emerge from this discussion.

In Chapter 5, we explicitly encourage teams to go back and review Worksheets from earlier chapters. With this in mind, we encourage you to retain these Worksheets and other records of your discussion, including summaries of the answers to the Reflective Prompts.

As in earlier chapters, the Worksheets for Chapter 4 conclude with a Making the Case Worksheet designed to help your team harvest insights from the research and evidence offered in this chapter and prepare to use that evidence to build support for the work led by your team.

Worksheet 4.1

Good Practice Principle #9 (Institutional Dimension) **Integrate Changes in Pedagogy, Curriculum,   
and Assessment**

Changes in individual practice are most powerful in concert with changes in structural dimensions of education. Deep and enduring improvement emerges from reciprocal transformations of pedagogy, curriculum, and assessment, integrated through professional development processes.

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| **1. Inquiry Starters**  For each question, please rate our campus professional learning practice, using a scale of 1 to 5 in which 1 is Strongly Agree, 3 is Neutral, and 5 is Strongly Disagree  A. In our area(s) of focus, curriculum is well aligned with the evidence-based pedagogy and practices we seek to advance. Rate: 1 – 2 – 3 – 4 – 5  B. The changes we seek to make in pedagogy and practice will help faculty and students address campus-wide student learning outcomes. Rate: 1 – 2 – 3 – 4 – 5  C. We have identified ways to use data from the assessment of student learning to guide improvement efforts. Rate: 1 – 2 – 3 – 4 – 5  D. Our professional learning programs effectively help educators consider the interplay of pedagogy, curriculum and assessment in the change process. Rate: 1 – 2 – 3 – 4 – 5 | **2. Identifying Challenges & Strengths**  Thinking about this Good Practice Principle, your experience, and your answers to the Inquiry Starters, please briefly highlight two to three challenges and/or strengths of our practice. |
| **3. Planning Forward**  Consider one set of questions in terms of your plans. How might you address these issues in designing your work?  A. What broader changes in curriculum and assessment are needed to advance the enduring effectiveness of pedagogical innovations? Who needs to be engaged in that process?  B. How might our professional learning processes be adjusted to address the intersection of curriculum, assessment, and pedagogical change? | |

Worksheet 4.2

Good Practice Principle #10 (Institutional Dimension) **Connect Professional Development with Strategic Priorities**

Move beyond a cafeteria model of professional development toward strategic models aligned with institutional goals and supported with resource allocations.

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| **1. Inquiry Starters**  For each question, please rate our campus professional learning practice, using a scale of 1 to 5 in which 1 is Strongly Agree, 3 is Neutral, and 5 is Strongly Disagree  A. The advances in evidence-based pedagogy and practice we seek to make align with strategic institutional improvement priorities.  Rate: 1 – 2 – 3 – 4 – 5  B. Our professional learning and pedagogical change effort has been (or will be) recognized in our institution-wide strategic planning process.  Rate: 1 – 2 – 3 – 4 – 5  C. Our professional learning and pedagogical change effort is embedded in the strategic planning process at the appropriate departmental and divisional levels. Rate: 1 – 2 – 3 – 4 – 5  D. Our professional learning and pedagogical change effort is considered as part of the resource allocation process. Rate: 1 – 2 – 3 – 4 – 5 | **2. Identifying Challenges & Strengths**  Thinking about this Good Practice Principle, your experience, and your answers to the Inquiry Starters, please briefly highlight two to three challenges and/or strengths of our practice. |
| **3. Planning Forward**  What steps could we take to strengthen the recognition of professional learning and instructional improvement in our strategic priorities and planning processes? Who would need to be engaged to support change in this area? | |

Worksheet 4.3

Good Practice Principle #11 (Institutional Dimension) **Leverage Reward Systems as a Resource**

Advance institutional policies, practices, and norms that celebrate and reward individual and departmental innovation and change. Design and sustain reward structures and resource allocation that value teaching and recognize effective engagement with professional learning processes. For full-time tenure-track faculty, “learning about teaching” should be valued appropriately in annual review, promotion, and tenure processes. Reward adjunct faculty and staff engagement with professional learning with opportunities for career advancement, equitable treatment, and access to resources.

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| **1. Inquiry Starters**  For each question, please rate our campus professional learning practice, using a scale of 1 to 5 in which 1 is Strongly Agree, 3 is Neutral, and 5 is Strongly Disagree  A. Faculty and staff participation in our efforts to build teaching and learning excellence are/will be appropriately recognized, encouraged, and supported. Rate: 1 – 2 – 3 – 4 – 5  B. Participation in professional learning is recognized in the evaluation and promotion (and tenure) processes for full-time faculty, part-time faculty, and staff.  Rate: 1 – 2 – 3 – 4 – 5  C. The importance of professional learning is clearly communicated in hiring processes for full-time faculty, part-time faculty, and staff. Rate: 1 – 2 – 3 – 4 – 5  D. Campus stakeholders (e.g., upper-level administrators, union, governance, etc.) understand the need for policies supporting professional learning and educational development. Rate: 1 – 2 – 3 – 4 – 5 | **2. Identifying Challenges & Strengths**  Thinking about this Good Practice Principle, your experience, and your answers to the Inquiry Starters, please briefly highlight two to three challenges and/or strengths of our practice. |
| **3. Planning Forward**  What steps can you plan to take to more effectively leverage reward systems to support professional learning and instructional improvement? Who would need to be engaged to make this happen? | |

Worksheet 4.4

Good Practice Principle #12 (Institutional Dimension) **Build a Learning Culture**

Professional learning builds capacity, strengthens the educator role within the institution, and contributes to the growth of an engaged, multi-vocal, multi-layered learning organization. Find ways to recognize the innovations and expertise emerging from educational development in the evolution of institutional culture, policy and practice. Respect and engage academic freedom and shared governance.

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| **1. Inquiry Starters**  For each question, please rate our campus professional learning practice, using a scale of 1 to 5 in which 1 is Strongly Agree, 3 is Neutral, and 5 is Strongly Disagree  A. Our campus consistently leverages the expertise developed in professional learning to advance ongoing institutional improvement. Rate: 1 – 2 – 3 – 4 – 5  B. Participants and leaders of professional learning processes have effective avenues to share insights with administrators and institutional governance bodies. Rate: 1 – 2 – 3 – 4 – 5  C. Meaningful participation in professional learning processes is understood and valued in leadership development. Rate: 1 – 2 – 3 – 4 – 5 | **2. Identifying Challenges & Strengths**  Thinking about this Good Practice Principle, your experience, and your answers to the Inquiry Starters, please briefly highlight two to three challenges and/or strengths of our practice. |
| **3. Planning Forward**  What steps can we take, as part of our work, to build an institutional culture of learning on our campus? What could help our campus move forward? | |

Worksheet 4.5

Good Practice Principle #13 (Ecosystemic Dimension) **Build Partnerships and Exchange**

Cross-institutional networks and communities of practice can generate new insights and enrich campus professional learning conversations. Collaborative exchange with peer campuses offers opportunities to examine new approaches to learning and teaching in real-life settings, supplementing insights from the research literature. Building respectful partnerships can attract broader campus attention and provide sustaining mutual support.

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| **1. Inquiry Starters**  For each question, please rate our campus professional learning practice, using a scale of 1 to 5 in which 1 is Strongly Agree, 3 is Neutral, and 5 is Strongly Disagree  A. Our faculty and staff have ample opportunities to engage in collaboration and communities of practice that connect our college with other institutions.  Rate: 1 – 2 – 3 – 4 – 5  B. Our educational development efforts take productive advantage of professional learning resources and learning opportunities offered by our system, our national network partners and disciplinary professional associations. Rate: 1 – 2 – 3 – 4 – 5  C. We seek out and create opportunities for mutual learning and exchange with peer institutions within and beyond our system. Rate: 1 – 2 – 3 – 4 – 5  D. Our campus professional learning efforts are informed by scholarship and best practice in the field of professional learning and educational development. Rate: 1 – 2 – 3 – 4 – 5 | **2. Identifying Challenges & Strengths**  Thinking about this Good Practice Principle, your experience, and your answers to the Inquiry Starters, please briefly highlight two to three challenges and/or strengths of our practice. |
| **3. Planning Forward**  As an initiative, how can we help our educators take full advantage of external partnerships and professional learning opportunities? What opportunities might be most helpful? What steps can we take to facilitate productive engagement? | |

Worksheet 4.6

Good Practice Principle #14 (Ecosystemic Dimension) **Capitalize on Strategic Messaging**

National education reform and student success groups, disciplinary associations, and regional accreditors play key roles in shaping the higher education conversation, informing the direction of educational change. Campus efforts can borrow, adapt, and build on the messages emerging from these and other sources to strengthen and nuance their own communications with educators, students, administrators, and other stakeholders.

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| **1. Inquiry Starters**  For each question, please rate our campus professional learning practice, using a scale of 1 to 5 in which 1 is Strongly Agree, 3 is Neutral, and 5 is Strongly Disagree  A. We take strategic advantage of the messaging done by educational reform groups and disciplinary associations to elevate the legitimacy and perceived value of our professional learning and educational development efforts. Rate: 1 – 2 – 3 – 4 – 5  B. We seek out opportunities to showcase our successful campus work at national conferences, and in higher education media and scholarly journals, as a way to advance broader change in policy and practice. Rate: 1 – 2 – 3 – 4 – 5 | **2. Identifying Challenges & Strengths**  Thinking about this Good Practice Principle, your experience, and your answers to the Inquiry Starters, please briefly highlight two to three challenges and/or strengths of our practice. |
| **3. Planning Forward**  How can we take full advantage of the national conversation around learning, teaching, and educational development? What steps can we take to leverage this conversation to advance our campus effort? | |

Worksheet 4.7

Good Practice Principle #15 (Ecosystemic Dimension) **Leverage External Funding**

Funders can be a vital element of the change process, shaping possibilities for institutions and systems. External funding can catalyze campus change and leverage internal resources and support. Seek out funders who support educational development and ensure that grant proposals for educational improvement include funds for professional learning. Think strategically about how to use short-term funds to build capacity and create long-term change.

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| **1. Inquiry Starters**  For each question, please rate our campus professional learning practice, using a scale of 1 to 5 in which 1 is Strongly Agree, 3 is Neutral, and 5 is Strongly Disagree  A. Our campus efforts to advance professional learning and educational development effectively seek out and attract external funding. Rate: 1 – 2 – 3 – 4 – 5  B. Our campus Grants (and/or Development) Office effectively identifies funders and funding opportunities for professional learning and educational development. Rate: 1 – 2 – 3 – 4 – 5  C. When our College seeks funding for student success, it consistently builds in budget items for professional learning for faculty and staff. Rate: 1 – 2 – 3 – 4 – 5  D. Grant funded professional learning programs on our campus are effectively institutionalized when grant funding ends. Rate: 1 – 2 – 3 – 4 – 5 | **2. Identifying Challenges & Strengths**  Thinking about this Good Practice Principle, your experience, and your answers to the Inquiry Starters, please briefly highlight two to three challenges and/or strengths of our practice. |
| **3. Planning Forward**  How can we more effectively identify, attract and leverage external funding to support professional learning and educational change? What steps can we take, as part of our work, to build capacity in this area? | |

Worksheet 4.8

Good Practice Principle #16 (Ecosystemic Dimension) **Engage Internal and External Stakeholders**

The campus environment for professional learning and educational improvement is shaped by an array of systemic actors. Interactions with higher education organizations, leaders of regional and state systems, trustees, advisory boards, funders, professional associations, and accreditors offer valuable opportunities for identifying and building essential support for a sustainable culture of teaching and learning excellence.

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| **1. Inquiry Starters**  For each question, please rate our campus professional learning practice, using a scale of 1 to 5 in which 1 is Strongly Agree, 3 is Neutral, and 5 is Strongly Disagree  A. Our engagement with regional or national educational reform networks and movements (e.g., Achieving the Dream, Guided Pathways, etc.) supports our educational development efforts. Rate: 1 – 2 – 3 – 4 – 5  B. Our system office (e.g., regional or state university systems) is aware of the value of our professional learning and educational improvement efforts.  Rate: 1 – 2 – 3 – 4 – 5  C. Our educational development efforts take advantage of ways that professional associations and accreditors value professional learning and educational improvement. Rate: 1 – 2 – 3 – 4 – 5  D. Our campus actively seeks opportunities to connect diverse stakeholders and build a shared commitment to professional learning and educational development.  Rate: 1 – 2 – 3 – 4 – 5 | **2. Identifying Challenges & Strengths**  Thinking about this Good Practice Principle, your experience, and your answers to the Inquiry Starters, please briefly highlight two to three challenges and/or strengths of our practice. |
| **3. Planning Forward**  How can our campus better connect our educational development work with our external partnerships (e.g., our work with ATD and other education reform groups)? What steps can we take to encourage and support this? | |

Worksheet 4.9

**Strategic Connections**

How can your team strategically position your professional learning program? This worksheet invites you to begin developing a plan for attracting the support needed to strengthen your professional learning initiatives and foster a rich culture of teaching and learning excellence.

**Step 1: Designing for Excellence.** As a team, briefly review the evidence-based practices and preliminary designs for professional learning that we discussed in Worksheet 3.9. What professional learning features strike you as particularly exciting or crucial?

**Step 2: Strategic Integration.** With these designs in mind, consider ways that you can make strategic connections and build institutional support for professional learning. Draw on your jigsaw discussion of the Institutional and Ecosystemic Good Practice Principles to plan and pursue these connections.

• What institutional connections would strengthen your initiative? Are there ways you can connect changes in pedagogy with changes in curriculum and assessment? What partnerships linking Academic and Student Affairs could bolster your effort? How does your initiative support or advance your institution’s strategic goals?

• What kinds of institutional support can you argue for? Who might be your allies? What institutional resources can you leverage? What might be ways to engage the reward system as a way to support effective professional learning? What small steps could be taken in the next few months that could open the way for broader, more long-term change?

• What opportunities for ecosystemic connection might align with your initiative? How could you leverage your connection with ATD? What about system-based initiatives, accreditation processes, disciplinary associations, external funders, and other ecosystem actors? Can you identify possible partners, potential sources of guidance, messaging, and/or funding? How could you build any of the above into your plan?

**Step 3: Making and Pursuing a Plan.** Having reviewed the possibilities, begin developing a plan. Identify three to five particularly promising or strategically crucial possibilities. For each, identify at least one short-term step to take and one more mid-range strategy to pursue. Write up your notes and hold onto to them for future use.

Worksheet 4.10

**Making the Case**

Imagine you are having a conversation with other leaders at your college who are not part of your working team. You want to make a case for the importance of advancing high-impact professional learning as outlined in this chapter. Take a minute to think about it and make some notes, using the following reflective prompts as your guide.

1. What evidence or arguments presented in this chapter did you find particularly persuasive? Why? What are the implications of this evidence or argument? What ideas, references, or sources would you want to remember and be able to use in your work?

2. Sketch a two- to three-minute “elevator speech” arguing for the value of a college effort around this issue. What key points would you include?

3. What ideas or issues discussed in this chapter would you want to know more about? Are there references you’d like to explore in greater depth? How else might you deepen your knowledge base on the issue(s) you’ve identified?