

THE PLC LEARNING GAME

By Lois Brown Easton

This game illustrates Simon Sinek's (2009) Golden Circle way of making change (see p. 1). Many of the actions that are described in the game board spaces and chance cards have a *why* and *how* focus. They don't address the *what* part of the circle, of course, because the *what* is contextual and based on a school's *why* and *how*.

Play the game with colleagues and, as you play, read aloud the actions and the situations you encounter before moving your marker. Afterwards, you may want to discuss the particulars (see p. 2 for discussion prompts).

DIRECTIONS

Before the game

- Make enough game boards for groups of 3-5 players.
- Get one die for each group.
- Get one place holder for each player (buttons do nicely).
- Make a set of the CHANCE! cards for each group.

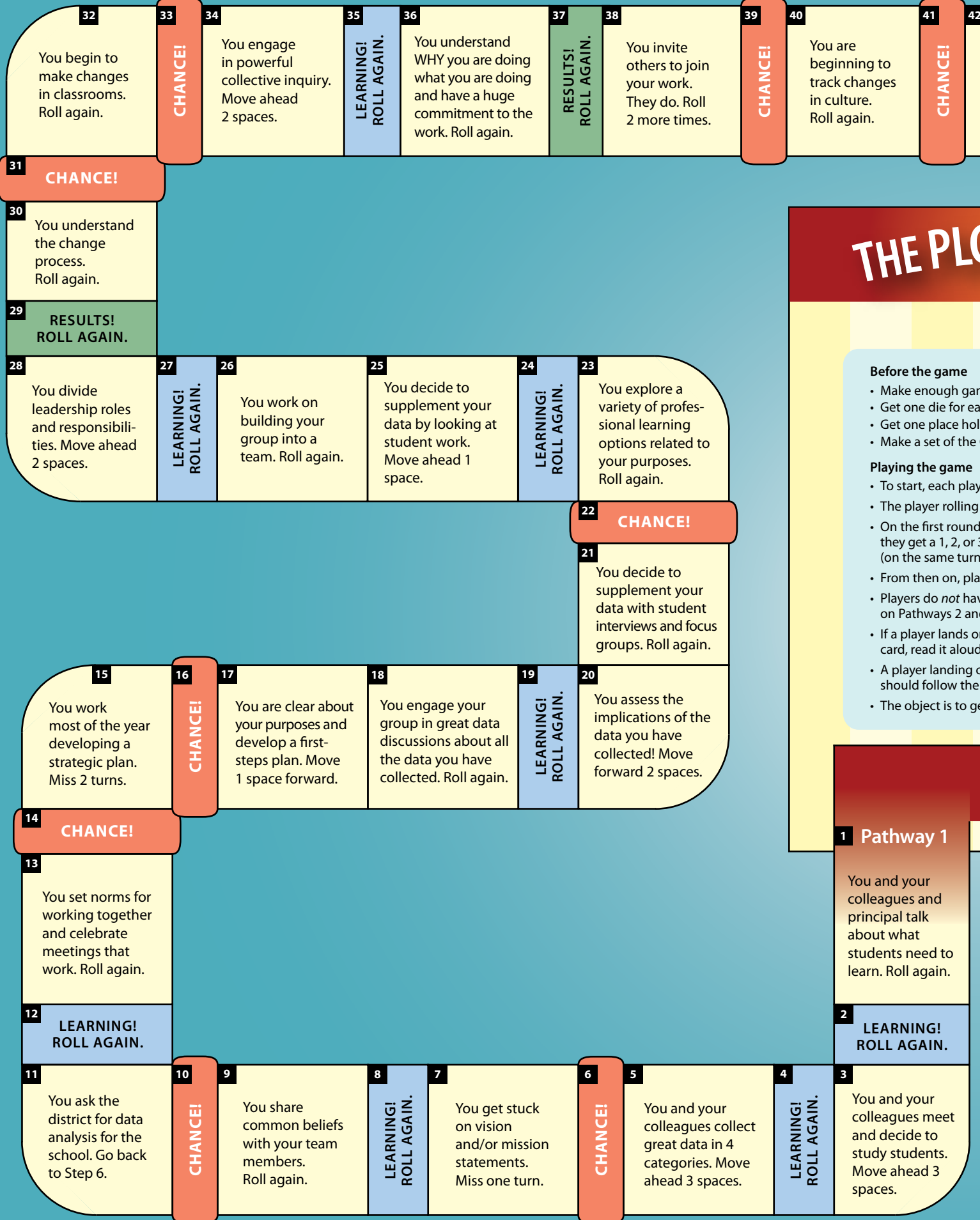
Playing the game

- To start, each player should roll one die.
- The player rolling the highest number on the die should go first.
- On the first round, players select a pathway by rolling the die until they get a 1, 2, or 3. Once a pathway is determined, players roll again (on the same turn) and move the corresponding number of spaces.
- From then on, players should roll and move the number on the die.
- Players do not have to roll the exact amount to get to the last space on Pathways 2 and 3 or to reach EFFECTIVENESS.
- If a player lands on a CHANCE! square, the player should draw a card, read it aloud, and follow the directions.
- A player landing on the LEARNING! and the RESULTS! squares should follow the directions.
- The object is to get to EFFECTIVENESS first!



Learn to play and
play to learn...

TOOL



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Before the game

- Make enough game cards for each player.
- Get one die for each player.
- Get one place holder for each player.
- Make a set of the game cards.

Playing the game

- To start, each player rolls the die.
- The player rolling the die moves their token to the starting space.
- On the first round, each player rolls the die and moves their token to the space corresponding to the number rolled (on the same turn).
- From then on, players take turns rolling the die and moving their token.
- Players do *not* have to move their token on Pathways 2 and 3.
- If a player lands on a space with a card, read it aloud.
- A player landing on a space with a card should follow the instructions on the card.
- The object is to get to the end of the path.

1 Pathway 1

You and your colleagues and principal talk about what students need to learn. Roll again.

2 LEARNING! ROLL AGAIN.

You and your colleagues meet and decide to study students. Move ahead 3 spaces.

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DIRECTIONS

Use boards for groups of 3-5 players. Order for each player (buttons do nicely). CHANCE! cards for each group. Player should roll one die. The highest number on the die should go first. Players select a pathway by rolling the die until 3. Once a pathway is determined, players roll again and move the corresponding number of spaces. Players should roll and move the number on the die. Do not roll the exact amount to get to the last space or to reach EFFECTIVENESS. In a CHANCE! square, the player should draw a card, and follow the directions. On the LEARNING! and the RESULTS! squares, move to EFFECTIVENESS first!

START

2A Pathway 2

You are given a project to implement by the district or school. Lose 1 turn.

3A Pathway 3

You are mandated to start PLCs. Skip 1 turn.

2B CHANCE!

2C

You meet to manage your project. Lose 1 turn.

2D

LEARNING! ROLL AGAIN.

2E

CHANCE!

2F

LEARNING! ROLL AGAIN.

2G

RESULTS! ROLL AGAIN.

2H

You finish your project and decide to continue to work together but with a focus on student needs. Go to the first space on Pathway 1.

3B

CHANCE!

3C

You are told what to do in PLCs. Skip 1 turn.

3D

CHANCE!

3E

You work with your colleagues to decide what to do in PLCs. Go to the first space on Pathway 1.

3F

LEARNING! ROLL AGAIN.

3G

You, your principal, and your colleagues like the idea of PLCs, so you continue them yourselves. Go to the first space on Pathway 1.

49 CHANCE!

50
You are beginning to see schoolwide changes. Move ahead 5 spaces.

51 LEARNING! ROLL AGAIN.

52
You use a variety of protocols to enhance learning in your group. Roll again.

53 LEARNING! ROLL AGAIN.

54 CHANCE!

55
You regularly celebrate progress and results. Move ahead 2 spaces.

56 CHANCE!

57
You collect and analyze student work to check progress on your goals. Move ahead 1 space.

63 CHANCE!

62 RESULTS! ROLL AGAIN.

61
News of what you are doing spreads throughout your school and into other schools. Congratulations! Move ahead 1 space.

60 CHANCE!

59
You are beginning to see changes in student achievement. Move ahead 2 spaces.

58 LEARNING! ROLL AGAIN.

47 RESULTS! ROLL AGAIN.

48
You practice dialogue and discussion. Move ahead 3 spaces.

46
You monitor changes regularly and report results. Move ahead 2 spaces.

45 LEARNING! ROLL AGAIN.

44
You communicate what you are doing in a variety of ways. Roll again.

43 RESULTS! ROLL AGAIN.

You are beginning to see changes in what teachers do in classrooms. Roll again.

64
65 RESULTS! ROLL AGAIN.
66 LEARNING! ROLL AGAIN.
67 RESULTS! ROLL AGAIN.

You initiate peer coaching because you know it aids implementation. Roll again.



Below are the CHANCE! cards to use with The PLC Learning Game featured in Learning Forward's *Tools for Learning Schools* (2012, Spring).
 Make a copy of this page to cut out the cards.

<p>Some teachers resist working with you. Go ahead and do good work, hoping to entice them. Move ahead 1 space.</p>	<p>Some teachers resist working with you. Decide you can't move ahead until everyone is compelled to work with you. Lose 2 turns.</p>	<p>Your administrator wants to dictate the agenda and projects of the meeting. Lose 1 turn.</p>
<p>Make all the decisions for the school in your group. Announce these to the faculty at a faculty meeting. Go back to Start.</p>	<p>The group knows the power of talk about teaching and learning and has a repertoire of strategies, including visual dialogue, dialogue, gallery tours, protocols, and other ways to engage others in talk. Move ahead 1 space.</p>	<p>Understand that sometimes it is important to reinvent the wheel (or at least make a given wheel fit your car). Move ahead 2 spaces.</p>
<p>You do not attend to individual and group needs and the team starts to wither and die. Lose 1 turn.</p>	<p>You help everyone in your group understand individual meeting preferences and styles and, together, analyze the capacity of the group to work together. Roll again.</p>	<p>You maintain your PLC as an exclusive group. Lose 1 turn.</p>
<p>Members of your PLC are representative of certain grade levels, subjects, or departments and feel obligated to "protect" their constituencies. Lose 1 turn.</p>	<p>You build trust and attend to the stages of change. Roll again.</p>	<p>You know how to go from planning to implementation (crossing the "implementation gap"). Roll again.</p>
<p>You engage people in processing what they are doing on an individual and group level. Roll again.</p>	<p>Your group understands the importance of context but decides not to wait until the context is perfect before implementing important changes. Roll again.</p>	<p>You experience conflict in your group and don't know how to use and resolve it. Lose a turn.</p>
<p>You experience conflict in your group but decide to ignore it. It will probably go away. Lose 2 turns.</p>	<p>You get bogged down in crafting mission, vision, and a strategic plan for most of your first year. No one wants to be a part of the work in year two. Go back to Start.</p>	<p>Your group understands that the school must have powerful reasons for making change and that they can't start with <i>what</i> to change until they know <i>why</i> they must change. Roll again.</p>
<p>The group understands that sometimes it must "go slow to go fast" and proceeds accordingly. Move ahead 1 space.</p>	<p>The group understands how decisions are made and who makes them. Roll again.</p>	<p>The group uses a consensus process to reach decisions, respecting the opinion of those who initially dissent and working to help shape an idea until it gains consensus. Roll again.</p>

<p>The group understands the importance of what the school is presently doing that led to its current achievement data. Thus, it makes part of data collection an analysis of current context and activities for learning. Move ahead 2 spaces.</p>	<p>The group understands that professional learning is part of any process of making change to improve student learning. Roll again.</p>	<p>The group uses protocols to help guide dialogue and dig deeper into issues. Roll again.</p>
<p>The group fails to find a sponsor or champion at the district level. Lose 1 turn.</p>	<p>The principal understands the importance of the change process and professional development so well that he/she reallocates meeting time so the change group can work. Roll again.</p>	<p>People in the group are wary of individual differences and the dialogue stalls in pseudo-community, never addressing how individuals work together in teams. Lose 1 turn.</p>
<p>Everyone in the school considers professional learning and continuous school improvement as integral to their professional responsibility and responds accordingly. Shout "hurrah" and move ahead 2 spaces.</p>	<p>The group hits a roadblock, and people want to disband rather than work through it together. Stay where you are; that's natural!</p>	<p>The group's meetings are productive, interesting, filled with learning, and compelling. Other people want to join the group. Move ahead 1.</p>
<p>Implementation of something new starts somewhere (maybe not where people predicted it would start) but it is the right change at the right time for the right people. Cheer and roll again.</p>	<p>Even though the group doesn't implement something immediately, changes start happening in the school because the culture is influenced by the group's work. Move ahead 1 space.</p>	<p>The principal is being transferred to another school, and there is no plan in place to replace him/her. The group goes into a tailspin. Lose 2 turns.</p>
<p>The principal is being transferred to another school, but he/she has built a shared leadership governance structure, and the group goes on as it always has, looking forward to welcoming a new principal into their work. Roll again.</p>	<p>The adult and student culture is one of blame and shame. No one addresses the need to shift the culture. Lose 2 turns.</p>	<p>The students are involved in the change process from the start – through surveys, interviews, and focus groups; also, through regular reports to the students and involvement in key meetings. Move ahead 2 spaces.</p>
<p>The group has a regular process for taking stock and reporting to people how the work is going. Roll again.</p>	<p>The group makes communication a priority and consistently and effectively lets everyone know what's going on, all the time (emails can be deleted, after all). Roll again.</p>	<p>One person consistently objects to whatever is going on. The group has no way of dealing with this person, who dominates the process and restricts progress. Lose 1 turn.</p>
<p>The classroom is sacrosanct. Hands-off. The faculty believes that the school can mess around with everything "except what goes on in my classroom, between my students and me." Lose 1 turn.</p>	<p>The PLC effort begins to spread like an epidemic (a good one), and more people want to join and work together on behalf of student learning. Murmur a quiet "hip-hip-hooray" and take another turn.</p>	<p>The group knows that coaching is the most powerful structure to take a school from planning and learning to doing and changing students for the better. Take another turn.</p>