

Organize for the journey

Good facilitation begins with good organization. Set up a method to collect and organize information before the team start-up. Keep on hand this list of types of information and artifacts a facilitator might maintain throughout the professional learning team process, and review it periodically to be sure you are covering the team's needs.

INFORMATION:

1.	Teams: Record team members' names, information about each (subject taught, special skills and training, etc.), and contact information.
2.	Logistical information: Keep a record of when teams will meet, where they will meet, and how long meetings are scheduled to last.
3.	Team goals: Keep each team's goal in a place where you can easily access it while reading logs, briefly visiting a meeting, and so on.
4.	Team logs and communications: Set up a separate folder, a notebook section, or electronic folder for each team. Keep a record of each team's communications there. Include copies of all team logs as well as feedback sent to teams in response to their logs. Add other communications concerning the team's work.
5.	Reports and memos: Include copies of any reports you make on a team's progress or of the professional learning team project in general. These records might include informal memos to the team members, principal, etc.
6.	Resources: Keep a record of materials (research articles, books, web sites, DVDs, outside experts, etc.) that team members use in their study and work.
7.	Monitoring and evaluation: Include team self-assessments, pre-assessments, mid-year evaluations, and end-of-the-year evaluations, plus other input and observations. Include anecdotal data, such as agendas from faculty meetings, showing changes in school faculty meetings as professional learning teams gain higher priority, for example. Include information on changes in classroom instruction, changes in teachers' behaviors, and any signs that teacher collaboration across the school is increasing.
8.	Tools and tips: Keep track of tools, tips, and ideas that further the team's progress. These can inform future professional learning team work.
9.	Personal journal: Keep a journal of your own activities and reflections. Soon you'll have an understandable history of the project and a source of invaluable information for later use. Journaling may seem like a nuisance at first, but it's a great way to document the project's evolution. Your daily reflections will spur valuable personal insights and help steer your future course.

Source: Jolly, A. (2008). *Team to teach: A facilitator's guide*. Oxford, OH: NSDC.