RESOURCE 8.1
What a PLC Is and Is Not

PLCs Are	PLCs Are Not
About professional learning, focused on educator learning applied to student learning	Meetings as usual, mostly to make decisions
People meeting together to learn	People meeting together to focus on an agenda (busyness, business, announcements, etc.); accomplish tasks
Groups of various compositions	The usual groups: whole faculty, grade-level teams, subject-area disciplines, department meetings (although these CAN become PLCs)
Agendas that are derived from data and include professional learning strategies; agendas come from "inside" the school, based on what people in the school want to learn	Use of agendas (same old, same old) related to decisions and tasks; agendas may come from "outside" the school
Egalitarian (peer-to-peer from different roles: everyone is a learner)	Hierarchical (principal, department chair, etc.) in charge of meeting
Supportive, collegial, collaborative	Objective, task oriented
Work driven by data about students/staff	Work driven by agenda
Variety of tools (protocols, lesson study, Standards in Practice or looking at assignments)	Meetings with agendas or one-shot workshops or presentations
Continuous: never really ends as people discover new questions and pursue new learning	Ends when agenda is accomplished or when workshop is over
Inside out; participants may pursue visiting other classrooms, schools; shadow; observations; creating lessons and units and studying them	Outside in; agenda from outside (administrator, district, state, etc.)
Action-oriented in terms of implementing new strategies; experimenting; conducting action research; follow-up	Focus on accomplishing agenda or completing workshop
Study oriented—books, articles; book study; data collection and analysis; student voices	Task oriented
Helpful: coaching mentoring, follow-up; collegiality	Isolated and isolating; may be one-shot, with no expectation of follow-up
Principal as colearner	Principal as manager, leader
Dialogue	Decision making; debate; discussion

(Continued)

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Collective inquiry; outcomes discovered	Preset agenda, workshop topic, outcomes set in advance
Follow-up expected	No follow-up expected, other than completion of tasks, committee work
Student focus; learning from students (and related data); making changes that help students	Focus on management items or focus on outside expertise in workshops
Systemic change—seeing the whole picture	Incremental change—making task decisions, one at a time