GK	Hi Christina, and welcome listeners! This is Session 4 in Module 7 of the TALE Academy, Empowering Teachers to Develop Portable Practices.
	Let's start by exploring the definition of portable. As an adjective, it is defined as able to be easily carried or moved, especially because of being of a lighter and smaller version than usual.
	As a noun, it is defined as a version of something, such as a small lightweight television or computer, that can be easily carried.
CLH	In Module 1, we introduced teachers to the idea of "portable practices" – practices that they can use across learning environments. Portable practices are developed through a resilient design for learning (RDL) approach, which, if you recall from Session 2 of this module, is "the ability to facilitate learning experiences that are designed to be adaptable to fluctuating conditions and disruptions."
GK	Quick recap: The three elements of RDL are extensibility, flexibility, and redundancy. Extensibility is about making the practice as lightweight as possible by identifying the essential questions/elements; flexibility focuses on the end goal of the practice, such as learning outcomes, and moves backward from there to identify multiple pathways that lead to the same goal; and redundancy applies universal design for learning to the practice so that the practice can work for everyone, as well as everywhere.
CLH	In Session 2, we proposed that school leaders adopt a resilient design for leading approach that follows similar principles but focuses on addressing the contexts within which schools exist. We suggested that in a VUCA world that is volatile, uncertain, complex, and ambiguous, leaders respond to volatility with vision, uncertainty with understanding, complexity with community, and ambiguity with agility. In this session, we explore how leaders can integrate resilient design for learning with resilient design for leading to help teachers make their practices portable AND aligned with the school's vision, mission, and goals.
GK	We will focus on the shift from complexity to community by considering how professional learning communities, or PLCs – a tried-and-true approach for teacher collaboration – can help with this important work.
CLH	The first six modules of the TALE Academy are focused on the work of teaching. We provide teachers with strategies that they can use in their own classrooms. So when we speak of "portable practices" in Modules 1-6, we focused on adapting what is within the domain of the teacher.
GK	For each portable practice that we walked through in the teaching modules,, there are four steps:

	Step 1: Identify a Learning Barrier. You can begin by identifying a learning barrier that pops up when shifting across learning environments.
	Step 2: Identify Correlating Learning Goals
	In this step, you establish a goal or series of goals directly related to overcoming the learning barrier.
	Step 3: Identify an Existing Practice in Your Teacher Toolkit
	You can explore your existing teacher toolkit to see what practices you already have in place that can be adapted to address the barrier and achieve the goal.
	Step 4: Make the Practice Portable
CLH	We asked teachers to apply the three design elements of resilient design for learning, which are extensibility, flexibility, and redundancy, using proven instructional design practices, such as essential questions, backward design, and universal design for learning. The result should be a portable practice that can be used across learning environments.
GK	So here we are. We've described a myriad of practices that teachers already have in their toolkits and can be adapted to be portable across learning environments. And maybe your teachers were inspired or affirmed during the TALE Academy. But your role is to support and enable. That's where we're going to put our focus on today. Specifically, to work effectively, teachers need the support of their peers in the form of PLCs.
CLH	Did you know that when asked the top resource teachers accessed during the pandemic to support them in emergency remote teaching, they didn't cite technology, online training, or resource banks. They cited their fellow teachers.
GK	Yup, in a December 2021 survey of 630 teachers from across the country, more than half stated that their peer teachers were more supportive now than they were pre-pandemic, citing camaraderie and collaboration as the silver linings of the storm that was teaching during COVID-19. As teachers worried about child safety, nutrition, and mental health, grappled with how to best serve students with disabilities, and provided emergency remote teaching, for most, for the first time in their lives, teachers planned with each other, offered each other emotional support, and shared resources and instructional strategies.

In the face of complexity, teachers turned to collaboration. |
| CLH | Now, as we transition from ERT to teaching across learning environments, or TALE, we can harness the power of teacher collaboration with purpose, intent, and administrative support. For decades, teachers across the world have been using PLCs to work together to improve their teaching practices. And it is to PLCs that we |

	suggest we turn once again to help support our shift to TALE. But first, we need to agree on what we mean when we use the term "PLC."
GK	The website All Things PLC – linked in the transcript – points to the challenge of talking about PLCs: "The term has become so commonplace and has been used so ambiguously to describe virtually any loose coupling of individuals who share a common interest in education that it is in danger of losing all meaning." PLCs have been proposed as the solution to everything from classroom practices to systemic reforms. They are variously described as events, organizations, programs, communication systems, or as a fancy way to describe meetings.
CLH	In the TALE Academy, we use the definition of a PLC established by All Things PLC: "an ongoing process in which educators work collaboratively in recurring cycles of collective inquiry and action research to achieve better results for the students they serve."
GK	Yeah, unfortunately, during the early 2000s, PLCs became synonymous with data-driven instruction where "data" included formative and summative assessments, teacher-developed assessments, observations of student learning, and more. There arose an emphasis on using hard data, such as test scores, growth rates, and value adds, to drive continuous improvement. But, as we know from studying learner variability, demonstration of learning doesn't always look the same, and measuring student learning cannot be standardized. We're in the midst of another sea change in which our shared understanding of terms such as "proficiency," "mastery," and "competency" are in flux. At the same time, so are the contexts and environments within which we teach.
CLH	Same with the context for collaboration amongst teachers. Let's break that definition down so that we can consider how to establish PLCs through resilient design for leading. Quick refresher on our definition of PLC?
GK	"...an ongoing process in which educators work collaboratively in recurring cycles of collective inquiry and action research to achieve better results for the students they serve."

CLH	Thanks! Let's do the who-what-when-where-why-how thing.
	
	Our "who" is educators.
	
	    The barrier we are encountering is their buy-in.
	
	    Our goal is for teachers to own and take responsibility for and pride in the PLC work.
	
	    The leadership practice we can use is to provide PLCs with autonomy and support self-governance.

GK	Our "what" is the ongoing process.
	A barrier we may encounter is process without product.
	Our goal is for teachers to use collaborative processes that result in specific products/ deliverables.
	One leadership practice we can leverage is to support the PLC members in establishing clear and specific outcome goals.
CLH	Our "when" is recurring cycles.
	A barrier we may encounter is process fatigue.
	Our goal is for teachers to be engaged and eager to participate.
	A leadership practice we can use is to cycle as needed, where need is determined by the members of the PLC.
GK	Our "where" is traditionally in-person.
	A barrier we may encounter is lack of time during the existing school schedule.
	Our goal is for teachers to experience PLC work as integrated into their existing work, not an "add on."
	One leadership practice we can use is to allow for synchronous and/or asynchronous meetings, either in-person or virtual. Modalities are determined by the members of the PLC.
CLH	Finally, the "how" of this work is collective inquiry and action research.
	One barrier we may encounter is vague directions and guidance.
	Our goal is for teachers to have a shared understanding of and agreement around how their PLC operates.
	A leadership practice we can use is protocols that include a clear and shared purpose, norms, roles, and steps to carry out collective inquiry and conduct action research.
GK	This approach requires school leaders to give up the reins in many regards. It is a teacher-driven approach from the bottom up to address schoolwide changes from the top down. In allowing PLCs to function effectively, school leaders need to give up some traditional forms of management and control. You will have an opportunity to explore strategies for establishing and supporting such PLCs in your school throughout this session.

CLH	For now, it is key to note a few items you may want to put in place to support the work of PLCs: The first is trained PLC facilitators. These can be lead teachers, instructional coaches, or other members of your instructional team. They should be thoroughly familiar with the practices of facilitative leadership, collective inquiry, and collaborative processes for change.
GK	The second is to incorporate time in the existing schedule. In traditional face-to-face PLCs, this means blocking out time for collaboration during the school day, week, and year, as well as during dedicated periods of professional development. If you adopt asynchronous collaborative strategies, the scheduling can be more flexible, BUT it should still be allocated. For example, instead of a 50-minute live meeting with 5-8 staff members, you might allocate 15-minute chunks of time during individual teacher's days for them to engage in online asynchronous work.
CLH	Another tip is to create autonomy with shared outcome goals. PLCs working in the way that we describe here should not be run by the school leadership team. Rather, teachers need to form trust among peers so that they can authentically explore and improve their practices. Some PLCs adopt the "Vegas rules" of "What happens in the PLC stays in the PLC" as a way to clearly articulate that the work of the PLC is for the group and is not part of a teacher evaluation process. This encourages experimentation and takes away the fear of failure.
GK	Finally, consider protocols rather than agendas. In an agenda-based meeting, there is usually one person leading who then takes the group through a series of sequential activities that may or may not have anything to do with one another or a shared outcome goal. Protocols, on the other hand, are designed to move teams through a series of sequential processes that lead to a shared outcome goal. [The School Reform Initiative](#), a nonprofit committed to fostering transformational learning communities, explains that protocols "offer structured processes to support focused and productive conversations, build collective understanding, and drive school improvement." We linked that for you, and there are whole lot more links for this session in the transcript.
CLH	As we wrap up this session, here are some recommended books for school leaders on PLCs. They are: ● [Demystifying Professional Learning Communities: School Leadership at Its Best](#) ● [The School Leader's Guide to Professional Learning Communities at Work](#) ● [Guiding Professional Learning Communities: Inspiration, Challenge, Surprise, and Meaning](#)

GK	We also recommend you check out these additional online resources for school leaders on PLCs. They are: ● [Implementing Effective Professional Learning Communities](#) ● [Professional Learning Communities: Guidance for High School Principals](#) ● [How to Provide Support in a Virtual Environment: Virtual PLCs and Remote Learning](#)
CLH	Now it's your turn! Next, you will explore one of the Portable Practices Protocols so that you can begin to see how you will shape your own leadership strategies to help teachers implement this and other TALE strategies in a collaborative way. The goal of the TALE Academy is to help teachers rethink education so that everyone–students, families, educators, school leaders, and communities–all have the opportunity to succeed. You've just added another tool to your toolbox when you empower teachers to build portable practices. Thanks for listening!