SAS Professional Learning Communities: Guidelines for Moderators

SAS Professional Learning Communities (PLCs) are collaborative learning environments for educators in which they can reflect on practice with colleagues, share expertise and resources, and build a common understanding of instructional approaches, standards, and curriculum. Moderators play a central role as caretaker of the community.

Moderator Role:
- Create a place where members feel safe and comfortable sharing ideas by actively monitoring comments.
- Introduce discussion topics and resources relevant to the goals of the community.
- Maintain an enthusiastic role in the community by participating in conversations and promoting the exchange of ideas.

Contributing as a moderator requires a strong commitment to furthering the aims of standards-based education in the Commonwealth. The community needs to have confidence that leaders are listening in a consistent, predictable way; this requires visiting the community on a regular basis.

A good host wants the community to be worth a return visit and dedicated participation. Here are some guiding principles:

> **Be welcoming**: Be aware of interactions by members that are new to a discussion. Recognize their participation with a simple greeting; it can mean the difference between them feeling a part of the community or not making a return visit.

Be professional: Express thoughts in ways that encourage ongoing discussion. Shift between active participation and allowing members to carry the conversation. Empower natural leaders that emerge from discussion; acknowledge helpful or positive contributions by others and reference them when appropriate.

Be prepared: Keep a list of discussion topic ideas and resources in case the community experiences a downturn in activity. A community has to provide some sort of value or it will disappear. Communities that do not maintain a consistent level of activity will be removed from SAS once the moderator has been notified.

Be vigilant: Remove inappropriate postings quickly; specifically those that are deemed harmful, objectionable, or inaccurate. Contact the member responsible and explain that the posting does not comply with user guidelines.

Be in compliance: Do not post commercially licensed materials or anything that violates any patent, copyright, or trademark without express permission from the third party. Refrain from promoting or advertising any products or services. Please see the SAS Portal [Terms of Use](#) for further guidance.

Be informed: Review the *Guidelines for Members* and be aware of the terms of membership in a community.