Sample Professional Learning Activities

a) Think-Pair-Share
Think-Pair-Share is a cooperative learning strategy that can promote and support higher-level thinking. The leader asks participants to think about a specific topic, then pair up with another participant in order to discuss their thinking and after that, to share their thinking with the larger group.

b. Brainstorming, Post-It Pile Up or Sticky Note Sort
This cooperative learning activity provides an alternative to traditional group brainstorming. Each individual is given a number of sticky notes (post-its) upon which they record desired information (e.g., knowledge, attitudes or skills). The sticky notes are then read out to a small group. Any sticky notes that contain similar information are piled one on top of the other.

c. Say Something
“Say Something” (Beers, 2003) offers opportunities for participants to engage in accountable talk and deepen their understanding through predicting, questioning, inferring, responding and making connections.
   a. Direct participants to find a partner and number themselves One and Two.
   b. Read or provide an interesting, thought-provoking text that has been chunked into manageable sections of text.
   c. Model reading the first chunk of text and responding to the text by saying something about what was read. This “something” could be a key idea, a connection, a question or simply a brief statement about the ideas presented in the text.
   d. Encourage participants to read each chunk of text and to “say something” to their partners.
   e. Continue reading and “saying something” until the entire selection of text has been read and discussed by the partners.
   f. Provide time for each member of the larger group to collectively share their insights or to answer a synthesizing question about the text.

d. 3-2-1
This strategy helps participants summarize key information in six brief segments such as: 3 things I learned … 2 connections that I made …. 1 question I have. Cheers, Mirrors and Fears is a modification of this activity such that participants record the aspects they like…. the aspects they find similar….the aspects that trouble them…

e. Round Robin in Triads
Working in groups of three, participants each take a turn sharing their ideas in their group, one at a time, going in one direction, in a circle. Participants have a right to pass (to not share).