



PROFESSIONAL LEARNING COMMUNITIES

Forging Teacher Collaborations

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**PROFESSIONAL
LEARNING
COMMUNITIES**
Forging Teacher Collaborations

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(Deemed to be University)

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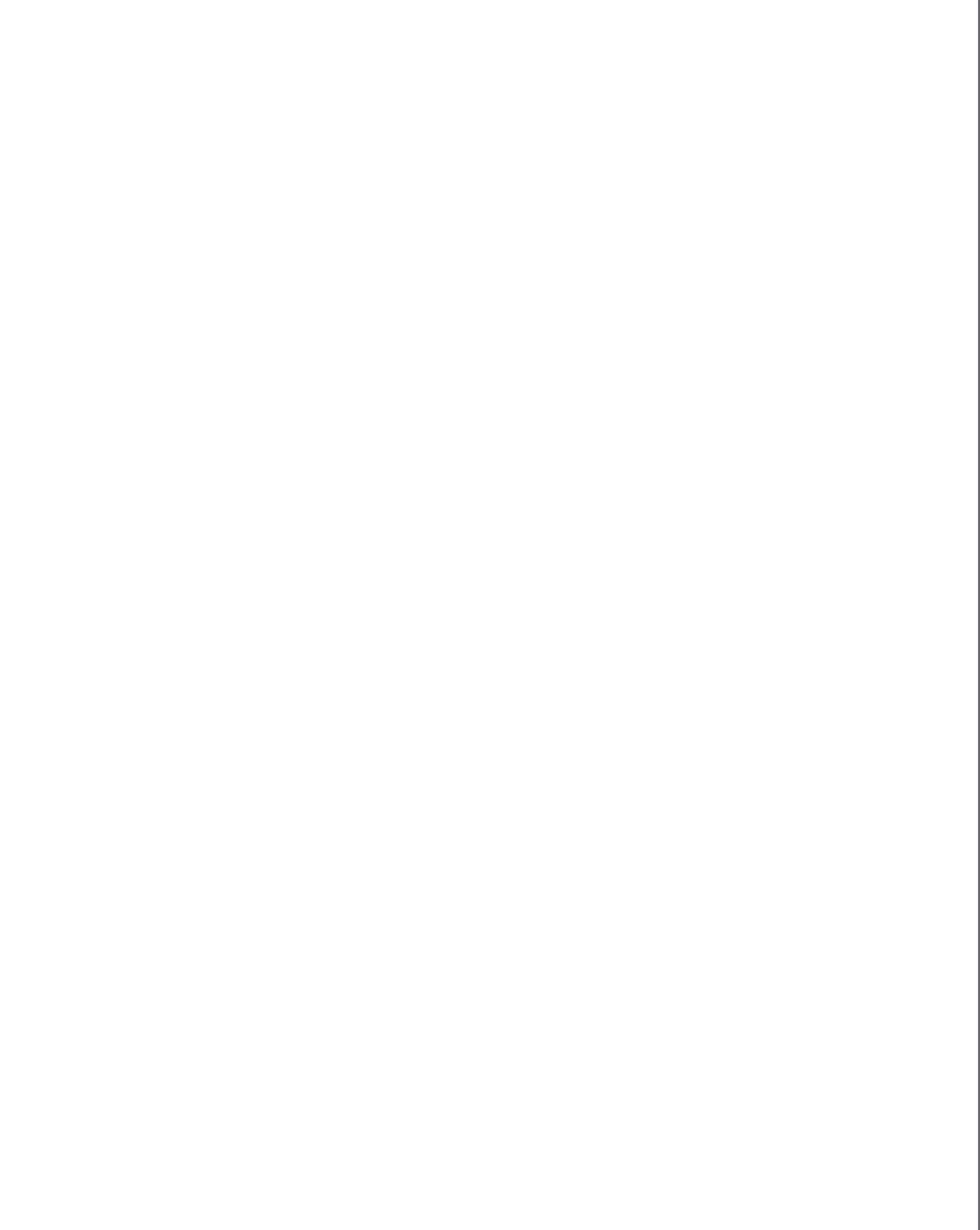
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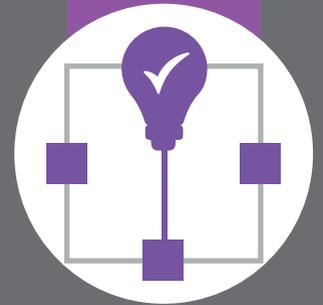
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SECTION I

Theoretical Underpinnings



3.0 A Word to the School Leaders...

Good learning requires active engagement in the “whole game”. As teachers; this is one of the things that we grew up learning. Research clearly shows that people do not learn well as “spectators”, as passive recipients of pre-packaged knowledge delivered to them, rather learn when they are made active participants in the planning and execution of their growth and development. We understand this when it comes to students’ learning and advocate for constructivist pedagogy and inquiry-based learning. However, when it comes to teacher development the same principles of learning are either not understood or not practiced.

The teacher development initiatives rather than coming from or by teachers take the form of something that is done to teachers or with teachers (Fullan, 1991). There is a growing recognition that when teachers come together around a shared vision and collective commitment to change the results are more meaningful and long lasting. It is about leveraging the power of the group to change the group. We notice this when we see a sports team sitting around a match recording and discussing the flaws in their or any other player’s game or observing the game of their opponent team to identify the gaps and work out strategies. The same is noticed quite often in the discussions in operation theatres before or after surgeries wherein a patients’ case is discussed by team of doctors to diagnose the problem and remediate. What happens in the process is that the individual human capital through focused interactions is generating social capital which further places them in an advantageous position to take professional decisions advancing their decisional and thus in the words of Hargreaves and Fullan (2012) their professional capital.

This module therefore is a call for school leaders to a new philosophy and approach to professional growth and development that visualizes teachers as reflective practitioners capable of engaging in reflective exercises both individually and collectively and school leaders as coach and mentors supporting and facilitating the collective learning of the school team. The module enables school leaders to invest in purposeful group learning and development and nurture teacher leadership by promoting and participating in teacher development and change and provide the resources – including time, space, constructive feedback and training in new processes and practices and above all a culture of trust that facilitates free inquiry and learning for all. Forging teacher collaborations emboldens social constructivism through the formation of professional learning communities. It is a call for teachers to hold the reigns of their professional development.

3.1 Objectives

The designed module will enable the leaders ...

1. To understand the key concepts, characteristics and significance of learning in communities
2. To apprehend the factors that help or hinder the development of effective PLCs.
3. To skill school staff in establishing and conducting effective PLCs.
4. To understand the role of school leadership in facilitating effective PLCs
5. To develop an action plan for sustaining PLCs within and amongst schools.

3.2 Concept Box

Reflective Dialogue: A reflective dialogue is a conversation wherein two or more colleagues deeply engage in reflections based on experience, data and/or literature to improve practice.

Collaborative Inquiry: Involves teachers collaboratively engaging in an inquiry for identifying common challenges, systematically examining educational practices, exploring students' response to instruction, testing new instructional approaches thus leading to changes in classroom teaching.

Social Constructivism: It refers to a theory of learning that believes that all learning takes place primarily in social and cultural settings rather than in isolation and is heavily dependent on interpersonal interactions and discussion. According to social constructivism every conversation presents an opportunity for new knowledge to be obtained, or present knowledge to be expanded.

Human Capital: It refers to the personnel dimension of the quality of teachers in the school – their basic competencies in teaching. Cultivating the skills of individual teachers is about developing the human capital in school.

Social Capital: It refers to the quality and quantity of interactions and relationships in school. Social capital in school affects teachers' access to knowledge and information; their sense of expectations, commitments and trust; and their obligation to work together for a common cause.

Professional Capital: Professional Capital is the function of the interactive and multiplicative combinations of the three kinds of capital; the human capital, the social capital and the decisional capital.

Professional Learning Community (PLC): It is a group of people sharing and critically interrogating their practice in an ongoing and reflective manner, contributing towards the success of the other and working towards the common vision and goals which they have set for themselves. The whole philosophy of the PLC is to develop the collective capacity of the staff to work together to achieve the fundamental purpose of school – learning for all.

3.3 Introduction

Teacher Professional Development literature presents multiple conceptualizations regarding the scope, focus, nature and quality of TPD. James (2014) in her project on 'Learning how to learn' studied the practices and values of 1200 teachers in 40 schools in England and notes that the quality of teaching and student learning have more to do with 'what teachers think – their knowledge and beliefs than what teachers do – their practices'. Since what teachers do depend upon what and how teachers' think. The meta-analysis of 800 researches on effective learning by Hattie (2009) also accords; the most important thing is how teachers think- how they plan their daily chores, make decisions and judgments about student learning. It is not necessarily who they are and what they do; it is what they think that makes the biggest difference and hence the key to teacher professional development is enhancing the way teachers' think. Thus, engaging teachers in continuous reflection and inquiry about their teaching improves learning.

Further high quality TPD provides teachers with active learning opportunities for engaging in exploration, reflection and discussion; emerges from the immediate reality of the teacher; his/her school context; is non-prescriptive rather constructive and is accompanied with sustained follow-up (Bautista et al., 2015; Desimone, 2009; Sherin & Han, 2004). In addition to this for TPD to improve instructional practice it will have to be intensive and sustained instead of short and sporadic so as to provide greater opportunities for comprehensive analysis of subject matter, pedagogies and student thinking (Garet et al., 2001). Thus, it is obligatory to explore for school based TPD programs; that are grounded in the structured learning of teachers, explores their collaborative potential and brings positive changes to their practice as well as the learning of their students.

Collaboration focused on the improvement of teaching and learning is one of the highest yielding strategies to boost student, school and system performance. Furthermore, effective collaboration nurtures the kind of professional culture needed to create and sustain over time the social and professional capital of teachers and school leaders across the system

(Elmore et al., 2004; Little, 1982; Wilson, 1994). Systematic reviews report that active learning in collaboration, are, over a longer period of time, essential features of effective professional development and that strong professional communities can foster teacher learning (Brown & Poortman 2018; Darling-Hammond, Hyler, and Gardner 2017). This module having placed PLC in the perspective of teacher development and internal quality assurance mechanism illustrates the ‘what’, ‘why’ and ‘how’ of effective PLCs and the role of school leaders at different levels in the hierarchy in initiating, implementing and institutionalizing PLCs for professional growth and motivation of teachers.

3.4 Why Learn in Communities?

Before we actually begin to understand why learn in communities, let us listen to some of the school teachers about their experience of learning in communities and its impact on overall learning.

Concept In Action: Learning From The PLC At Katrain, Kullu, H.P.

Researcher - Your cluster conducts in-house trainings for teachers and all of you work as a PLC to improve the teaching-learning and academic achievement of all the schools in your cluster. What difference do you see in these trainings and the one's imparted to you at the district or the state levels by experts.

Teacher 1 – The difference comes from how involved you are at all stages in the process. As teachers we get nominated unmindful of the individual interest, expertise or needs. There hardly is any follow-up at the stage of translating the knowledge into practice. Even the subject or pedagogical trainings are not grounded in the daily instructional practice and the everyday challenge of the teachers.

As against this, our cluster level trainings are conceptualized after a thorough analysis and discussion on the subject-wise performance of the pupils, identification of key learning gaps and training needs. As community of learners, we work together at every stage; be it designing program, writing modules, setting targets, conduct of trainings, facilitation and achieving the shared goals. There is a responsibility for learning; a positive pressure and everyone understands - if targets are missed it will put us into this cycle again. So, we feel responsible. The discussions at every stage are critical and there is great level of trust, collegiality and ownership in the process.

Teacher 2 – Working in a PLC has brought a lot of ownership; earlier perfecting one’s practice was the focus, from there I moved to ensuring 100% results for my subject and now it is no more about my subject, your subject or my school, your schools. We work together to ensure learning for all, across all subjects and all schools and everyone takes up what they can do best to achieve the goals. Ensuring student learning is like a moral commitment, an internal push that drives you towards perfection for all.

Teacher 3 – As a new entrant to this cluster, I was initially scared of the list of expectations coming my way and wanted to shift to some other cluster but gradually I found so much support in discovering my grey areas and improving my practice as a teacher that I just thanked myself for being posted at this cluster.

-Teachers in a PLC at Katrain cluster in Kullu, H.P

Research shows that teacher learning communities enhance teacher quality, and teacher quality is the key to enhancing student learning. Learning in communities is about giving teacher that space and time for coming together as a community of professionals for critical reflection and self-growth impacting the classroom instructions and overall school improvement. The anecdote from the interactions with some of the teachers from the PLC of cluster Katrain in district Kullu, Himachal Pradesh explains to us the significance of engaging teachers at all levels of the design and execution of teacher development initiatives. Learning in communities is thus a radical departure from the conventional top-down models of teacher development that embody a passive view of the teacher as lacking in skills and needing to be filled up with new techniques and strategies.

Learning in communities is also about deprivatization of practice, breaking the isolation within and amongst schools, driven by the needs and interests of the participants themselves, enabling adult learners to expand on knowledge and practice by engaging in a collaborative inquiry

PLCs: Experience from Schools Abroad

PLCs ...

1. Enhance staff effectiveness
2. Increase work efficacy (Lewis, 2004)
3. Create an environment that supports learning through experimentation and innovation (Bryk et.al. 1999)
4. Fosters instructional change (Little, 2001)
5. Improves students’ learning outcome (Louis, 2004)
6. Improve professional relationships
7. Encourage higher order thinking, develops reflective mindset, deepens professional insight (Louis and Marks, 1998)

for mutual support, assistance and solutions to the classroom problems (Elmore 2002). It is also a new road to accountability which is not external but internal; not individual rather collective and comes with a moral imperative to improve student learning and strengthen the teaching profession. At the heart of PLC is the notion of ‘community’ - learning of and within a community context – a notion of job embedded continuous and collective learning. Thus, restructuring teachers’ professional development and student learning.

3.5 Conceptualizing Professional Learning Communities

Social Learning or learning in a community is a perspective that emboldens social interactions and believes that individuals construct knowledge through continuous sharing and is influenced by the cognitive, behavioural and environmental factors. It means that “learning is collaborative with meaning negotiated from multiple perspectives” (Smith and Ragan, 2005). Successful and innovative organizations around the globe are increasingly creating collaborative spaces and channelizing individualistic efforts in favour of collaborative efforts to build trust and reassure collective accountability. Hughes (2017) calls these spaces ‘makerspaces’ – spaces where people come together as a community to learn through exploration, collaboration, problem solving, reflection and being creative and innovative. Converting institutional spaces into ‘makerspaces’ reduces the tension that the outdated system of “grafting-on and hope it works” approach to change brings wherein teachers are oriented to best practices in one system to be replicated in another system setting. Instead, in case of Professional Learning Communities (PLCs) change is supplanted with a totally new approach built from the ground up by the professionals (teachers and leaders in this case) with complete ownership and understanding of their social context and needs. Professional Learning Community thus works on a maker pedagogy and promotes principles of inquiry, reflection, critical thinking, problem solving, collaboration and personalized learning.

Professional Learning Community (PLC) encourages teachers/leaders to work collaboratively in recurring cycles of collective inquiry and action research to achieve better results for the students they serve. While there is no universal definition of a professional learning community, there appears to be broad international consensus that it is a group of people sharing and critically interrogating their practice in an ongoing, reflective, collaborative, inclusive, learning-oriented, growth-promoting way (Mitchell & Sackney, 2000; Toole & Louis, 2002); operating as a collective enterprise (King & Newmann, 2001). It is about bringing teachers out of individual classrooms for collective reflection and dialogue around issues of concern to teaching-learning.

A PLC is a process of changing the school's culture into a learning culture. For example, in a school functioning as a PLC, on any given day one would see teachers discussing curriculum goals, activities for classroom engagement, problematizing practice, critically reflecting on the instructional gaps without any hesitation. Regular practice of such inquiry sessions would lead to habit formation; inquiry and critical reflections would eventually become the school culture.

A PLC is ...

1. A collaborative venture.
2. Always focused on student learning.
3. Distributes leadership.
4. Narrows curriculum to its essence.
5. Shares practices for improvement.
6. Uses “assessment for learning”

A PLC is NOT...

1. A program to be implemented
2. A package of reforms to be adopted
3. A step-by-step recipe for change
4. A best practice borrowed from another school
5. One more addition to an already overloaded school agenda

The whole philosophy of a PLC is people working together to enhance their effectiveness as professionals for the students' benefit through continuous inquiry and improvement cycles. The notion, therefore, draws attention to the potential that a range of people based inside and outside a school can mutually enhance each other's and pupils' learning as well as school development (Astuto, Clark, Read, McGree & Fernandez, 1993).

Research confirms that it is about “cracking the walls of privatism” to improve instructional practice. It could also for example be about collaborative lesson planning, team teaching, learning through joint ideation exercises or discussing effective strategies for engaging the slow learner or observing and being observed for the purpose of giving and receiving feedback or evidence-based analysis of the instructional practice for effective decision making and change. Seashore, Anderson and Riedel (2003) elaborate that PLC is not just about discrete acts of teacher sharing, but the establishment of a school-wide culture of collaboration which is inclusive, genuine and ongoing focused on critically examining practice to improve student outcomes.

In India the idea of having PLC was first mooted in the Indian Education Commission (1964-66) and later reiterated in the National Policy on Education (1986) through

establishment of school complexes. CBSE in 1987 brought the concept of “Freedom to learn and freedom to grow through Sahodaya School Complexes (SSCs)” characterised as voluntary association of schools in a given area, who through mutual volition come together for a systematic system-wide renewal of education process. “Sahodaya” signified rising together, it identified six areas, to begin with, for collaboration amongst schools of its complex:

1. Educative Management
2. Evaluation
3. Human Resource Mobilization
4. Professional Growth of Teachers
5. Value-Oriented School Climate
6. Vocationalization of Education.

Through positive promotional efforts, the Board helped schools come together and form an interactive and sharing relationship. At present, there are 260 such complexes which are active throughout the country. However, what we see in the Sahodaya School Complexes is a more loosely structured PLC with each complex having autonomy to decide how they would want their learning journeys to be. A much recent development in this area is the formation of Hub Schools which is a comparatively small unit with well-defined roles and responsibilities for the mutual growth of all schools in the complex. The Rashtriya Avishkar Abhiyan (RAA), MoE also has recommended formation of ‘Teacher Circles’ for improving teaching of science and mathematics.

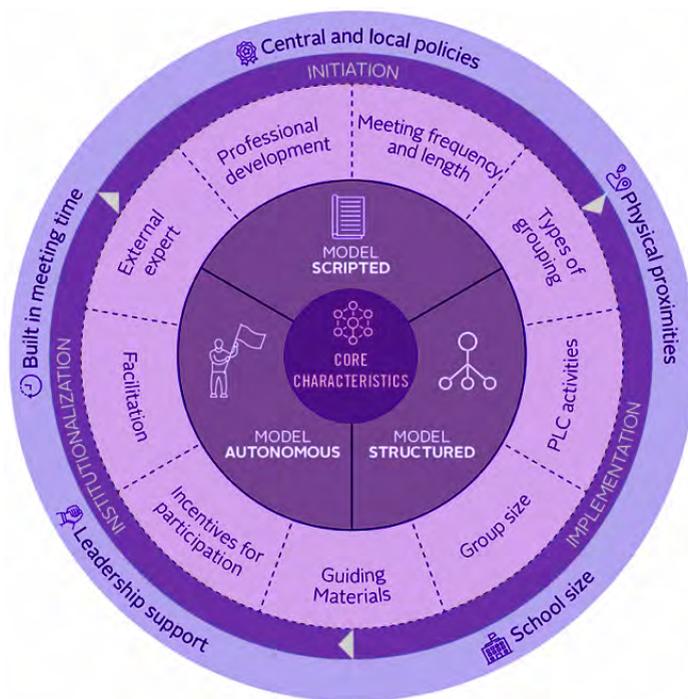
3.6 Typology and Framework of Professional Learning Communities

After combing through the literature on PLCs certain core characteristics were found to be common across all PLCs; while in certain others PLCs varied significantly. For example, there were PLCs within a single school and across multiple schools as well. In some cases PLCs were mandated; more so in low- and middle-income countries, while in certain others they had emerged from the ground, out of the felt needs for improving students’ learning and as part of the teacher professional development. There were variations in terms of their size, frequency of meetings, incentives to teachers and peer led or led by an external expert or in terms of the level of prescriptiveness that decided their structure, scripting and autonomy. Based on this Soares et.al (2020) drew three conceptual categories of PLCs that differ by the type of materials, incentives and professional development

provided to teachers which influences how open-ended or scripted the PLCs tend to be. These are; the autonomous model, the structured model and the scripted model. The framework(see daigram) also consists of five interconnected dimensions, grounding the multidimensional nature of PLCs in something more concrete.

The core characteristics of success for PLCs are shown at the centre of the framework and remain same irrespective of the model or design it uses. These refer to the five essential attributes that were found to be common across literature on PLCs (Soares et al., 2020). These include shared values and vision, focus on student learning, reflective dialogue, deprivatization of practice and collaboration or collective learning.

Typology and Framework of PLCs



Source: A typology and framework for professional learning communities (PLCs) in LMICs | R&E Search for Evidence (fhi360.org)

There are three PLC models – autonomous, structured and scripted – based on the level of PLC autonomy and structure. In the autonomous model, teachers are highly involved in identifying their learning needs and determine the priorities for the PLC. The structured model allows some level of autonomy however comes with structured guidance to shape the community dialogue. The scripted model is totally prescriptive and comes with highly-

scripted materials and pre-defined community content.

The structural varying characteristics like group size, guiding materials and facilitation method are usually associated with the design of the PLC. These structural features can vary greatly within any PLC model.

The **phases of development** refer to the different stages any PLC may go through from the moment of its creation, in recognition that PLCs are constantly changing: initiation, implementation and institutionalization.

And the supportive conditions refer to factors outside of the PLC that may allow or hinder its creation, ongoing management and sustainability (Bolam et al., 2005).

From an implementation perspective, the framework guides debate on which PLC model and what specific features are best for different local contexts. The integrated conceptual framework for PLCs can be a pathway to get there.

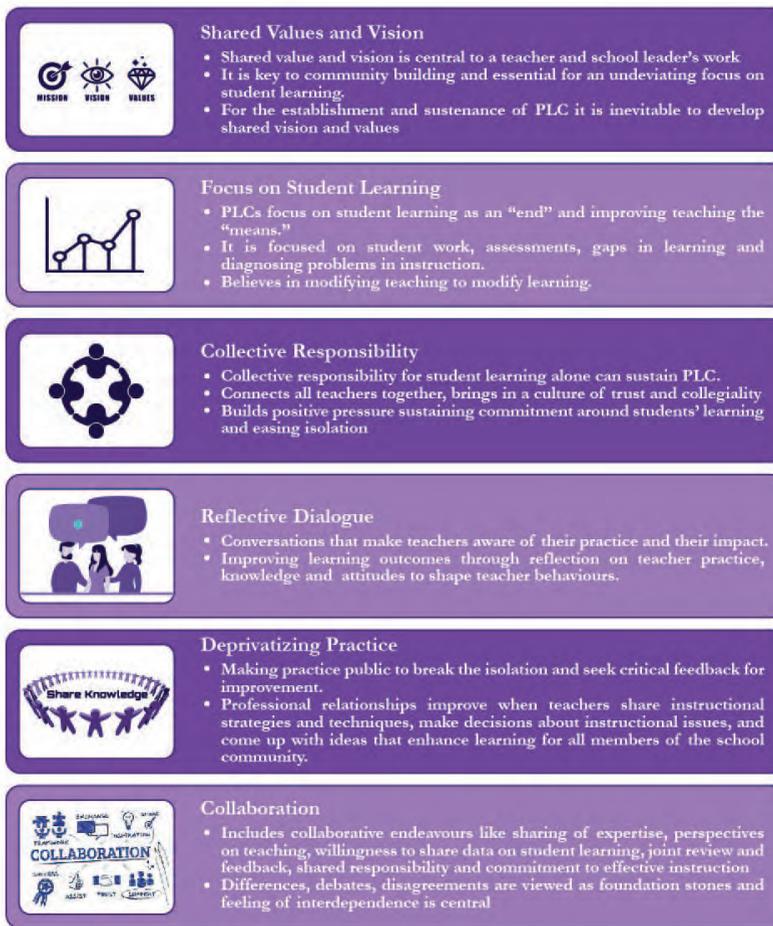
3.6.1 Characteristics of Professional Learning Communities

Soares et.al (2020) in the typology and framework for PLCs allude to the core characteristics of PLCs giving insights into creating PLCs within and amongst schools for encouraging teacher professional development and improving practice. These are as follows:

Pause and Ponder

- .. Which PLC model is more beneficial and at which phase?
- .. Is it beneficial to have scripted approaches when initiating a PLC versus an autonomous model for more mature PLCs?

Build evidence around answering these questions and see what works for your schools.



In addition to the above, few other characteristics common across PLCs and essential for its sustenance are inclusive membership, networks, partnerships, openness, mutual trust, respect and support. In a nut shell, when you walk into a school that values learning in community you see a sense of trust and harmony amongst people, places, events; emanating from the collective commitment to advance the school towards shared goals. Teachers are also empowered to do what is best for their students.

3.7 PLC: A Constructivist Pathway to Professional Development

The key principles for professional development presented by King and Newmann (2001) argue that teacher learning is most likely to occur when instructions and outcomes are analysed in the specific contexts in which the teacher teaches; there are sustained

opportunities for teachers to innovate, experiment with and receive feedback and have a platform that allows for peer collaboration both inside and outside the institution and with researchers and program developers.

PLCs are based on this premise of social constructivism that believes that learning is an active process and knowledge is constructed by learners as they attempt to make sense of their day-to-day experiences. It is not uncommon to see teachers sharing their subject, pedagogical or student related issues in the staffroom or with trusted peers. Teachers actively construct knowledge through interactions, discussions and collective reflections on practice when they collaborate as a community. PLCs emphasize the active involvement of the teacher in the analysis of their experiences. It actually puts to use the individual teachers' knowledge, skills and dispositions for the development of the collective enterprise thus translating the individual mastery learning for the collective growth and institutional effectiveness (King and Newmann, 2001).

A systematic review of literature on collaborative CPD and its effect on teaching and learning concluded that collaborative CPD impacts teacher behaviour; instils greater confidence; improves self-belief and empowers teachers to make a difference to pupils' learning. Despite the initial anxiety about classroom observation; PLCs bring together greater commitment to changing practice and willingness to trying new things. It develops enthusiasm for collaborative working. Processes in PLCs involve the active deconstruction of knowledge through reflection and analysis, and its reconstruction through action in a particular context (Mitchell and Sackney, 2000). It also include co-construction through collaborative learning with peers. It is thus a constructivist pathway to professional learning and development which fosters participation in a climate of mutual trust and respect. Lave and Wenger (1991) and Wenger (1998) propose that when learning in communities of practice, participants gradually absorb and are absorbed in a 'culture of practice', giving them exemplars, leading to shared meanings, a sense of belonging and increased understanding making PLC an empowering and sustainable approach to professional learning.

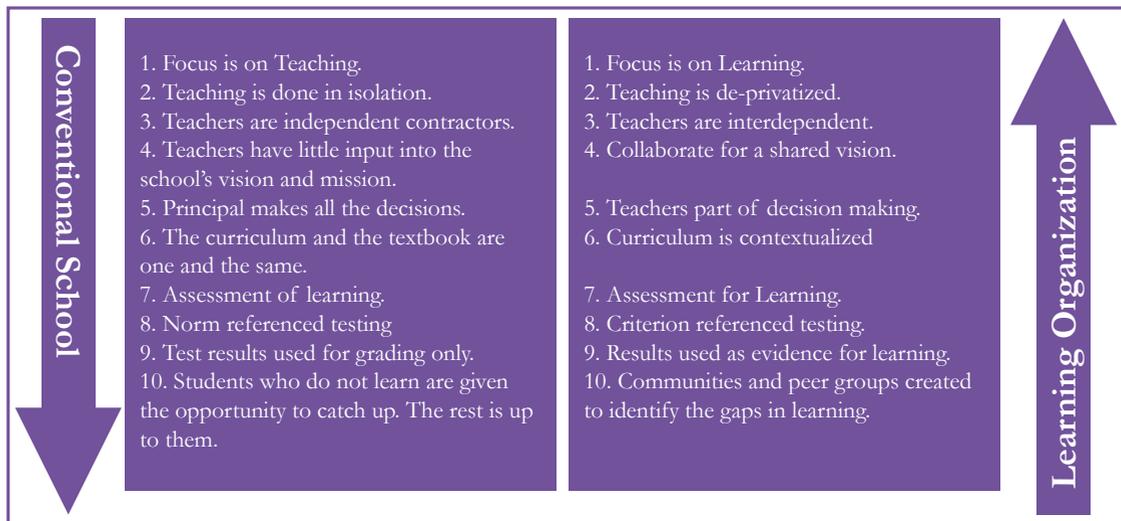
3.8 PLC: A New Pathway to Accountability

If we go back to the case study from Katrain cluster, we realize that teachers talk about "monitoring" or about being "accountable" very differently. Working in a PLC alters the notions of accountability; earlier understood as answerability to the system. Accountability in a PLC is rather primarily described as responsibility towards student learning; And student learning as we observed in the narrative was less about test results and more about

accepting ownership of the moral imperative of having every student learn. As teachers engage in greater sharing as a community of learners and continue to de-privatize practice, they begin to expect others to visit their classrooms, see them engaging in agreed upon practices, reflect on their teaching, their classroom walls, and student work and begin to talk about being accountable as a community towards students' learning. Hargreaves & Fullan, (2012) call this the new accountability framework that relies on the collective capacity of the profession and its responsibility for continuous improvement and change. It is a shift from the tradition of external monitoring that rely on costly instrumentation, individual evaluation and transient intervention towards providing incentives for schools to develop collaborative cultures that assist one another – 'leveraging the power of the group to change the group'. The research on the power of collaborative cultures to get results, points to the agency and impact of strong and effective groups—to improve student learning (DuFour & Eaker, 1998; Elmore, 2007; Hord, 1997; Huberman, 1995; Leana & Pil, 2006; Lieberman & Mace, 2010; Little, 1982, 2002; Stoll, Bolam, McMahon, Wallace, & Thomas, 2006; Wilson, 1994). It consists of simultaneously building individual and collective efficacy through reflective dialogue and evidence-based discussions thus creating links for lateral accountability that pushes team members to get better at their practice. Furthermore, effective collaboration nurtures the kind of professional culture needed to create and sustain the professional capital of teachers and school leaders across the system (Elmore et al., 2004; Little, 1982; Wilson, 1994).

3.9 Leading PLCs: Factors that Promote Effective Growth

The idea of PLC undoubtedly overlaps with the earlier concept of schools as learning organization (Module 1) and with the work on school improvement. Before we begin to talk on how to initiate a PLC in one's school, let's think of what a conventional school is like and what behaviours or actions do we wish to change through the development of PLCs.



Let us now pick each attribute of the PLC and see how we create opportunities or avenues for it. For example, if focus on learning is agreed upon as a goal by all within the school and at the system level outside the school, school will have to make provisions for the learning of teachers, staff, parents and the community alike. The system (decision making bodies – government in case of state or centre managed schools and private management in case of private schools) will have to support the collaborative efforts not only through the provisioning of resources, expertise and time but also through positive reinforcement and alterations in the structure, core functions and assessment systems so that collaborations do not come as an additional task rather is part of the routine exercises. Likewise for each change that one visualizes in a school, a shift in the mindset, attitudes, culture, values and ethos is required subsequently impacting the individual behaviour and sustaining the individual and collective motivation. The following are some of the factors that promote effective growth of PLCs:

1. School Vision and Values

Unless the organization as a whole agrees to move beyond the conventional understanding of 'learning as absolute' to commit to continuous learning, leading and sustaining effective learning communities is not possible. Hence all members need to put it in a concise way a statement that explains specifically what you desire to do, how you do it, why you do it, and who you actually serve through it.

This could be done through a small exercise with different stakeholder groups:

- What's your dream for this school?
- What should be the school's purpose and why?
- What are the school's problems and challenges?

- What are the school's assets and strengths?
- What would a learning school look like?
- What you wish to achieve through establishment of PLC?
- What kind of culture do we wish to create through PLC?

Encourage participants to dream big and be as idealistic and optimistic as they can. With the answers to these questions, analyse the information for any emerging trends or common elements that can inform the development or modification of the mission statement.

All these individual statements of purpose could then be grouped together to arrive at a commonly agreed vision and goal and each stakeholder group then be motivated towards realizing it.

2. Recruitments and Induction focussed on Learning Attitude

While basic qualifications and a professional preparation is crucial for teaching nevertheless something that is equally indispensable is the teacher attitude, passion and commitment for student learning. Either recruit teachers that have values in sync with the institutional ethos or induct teachers into values of collaboration, reflection, and openness to accepting feedback and learning so that they gel with and contribute towards the achievement of the institutional goals. In the Indian scenario; especially for government schools where principals hardly have a say in the recruitment of the staff could at least design an Institutional Induction Program (IIP) that introduces all the freshers be it teaching, non-teaching or even students to the school, its vision and mission, culture, norms of behaviour, expectations of attitude and skillset from each stakeholder group and respective standards of achievement. Once this is established right in the beginning forging collaborations at any level with any stakeholder group would not be a challenge since all would be clear of the institutional expectations.

3. Creating Time and Resources

Provide time for teachers to work together and reduce isolation. Schedule teacher learning time or teacher collaboration time in the regular school time-table. Initiate, encourage and collaborate with staff on lesson planning. Conduct meetings around class-wise and subject-wise performance or on any school/students-related problem. Organize for collective reflection and problem solving.

Identify a room or open space that could be used by teachers and/or students or other members of the staff as collaborative discussion space or a 'makerspace' wherein people ideate, create, reflect, dialogue, debate, collaborate and arrive at creative solutions to educational issues.

4. Structural and Functional Reforms that promote Teacher Autonomy, Learning and Collaboration

Rajkiya Pratibha Vikas Vidhyalaya, Harinagar, New Delhi introduced school reforms to achieve the school vision of transforming it into a learning organization. The school designed strategies for the development of all which included not only the students but also the teachers and community. For example: Making time for Self-awareness and Self Development. Setting aside time for 'Teacher Student Interaction Program (TSIP)' - discussions outside the daily subject matter interactions and cuts across life skills and issues; last two periods every Saturday are set aside for teacher development workshops and last working day every month is a monthly colloquium/seminar. The school has two annual conferences which promotes a research culture and teachers not

only get a chance to interact with experts in the field but also share their research ideas. A small committee of teachers is formed to take up activities for professional development. The school time-table is altered to accommodate all these developmental activities. The district and zonal offices, as also the parents, are communicated of the change so that when children are given free periods or free Saturdays everyone understands the cause and the true purpose.

The school also challenges the traditional accountability forms and procedures and invites the inspectorate to join the school staff and students for a reflective dialogue; observe the Learning Journals of the teachers and students, be part of the inter and intra-faculty interactions, open house and some of the pedagogic meetings of subject teachers. Further, teachers are encouraged to look beyond the traditional roles of teaching to complete the syllabus than to create interest for learning and contribute productively. So keeping learner records and sharing data in monthly meetings, conducting professional dialogues and working collaboratively to reach the desired learning standards. Thus, not only time and resources but also academic guidance and motivation is must for creating and sustaining PLCs.

Concept In Action: PLC in RRVP, Harinagar, New Delhi

Watch the documentary on RPVV, Harinagar

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xGn9S9pPouY>

Record the provisions made at school level for encouraging collaborations.

Make a note of the organizational support system created for sustaining school initiatives

Reflect on the teacher development and collaboration initiatives at your school

5. Individual to Collective Learning

Social Constructivism emboldens teachers to examine information and create new meaning. This enables teachers to solve instructional issues in the classroom and the school through the unique experiences that all bring to the table which supports the achievement of learning goals (East, 2015). This needs to be recognized at all institutions promoting and supporting teachers in collective learning. While external trainings may address the individual learning needs, the in-house trainings may address the institutional needs for collective learning and growth. It also builds connection between the student, the teacher, and pedagogy in the classrooms impacting the learning levels at school.

6. Distributed Leadership

It has been increasingly realized that leadership cannot be the domain of one individual or a small ‘senior’ group. First of course is because of the increasing complexity of the nature of work and secondly if change has to percolate to the grassroots and goals have to be accomplished at all levels responsibility, ownership and leadership also will have to be devolved for people to feel the commitment to change (Gronn, 2003). In fact, Gibb (1958) describes this joint action, a characteristic of PLC as distributed leadership. In schools that have sustained PLCs; it has been observed that head teachers/principals work with teachers in joint enquiries and provide opportunities wherein teachers take up a range of leadership roles related to bringing change in teaching and learning. In her discussion of teacher leadership, Harris (2003, p.322) concluded:

“If we are serious about building professional learning communities within and between schools then we need forms of leadership that support and nourish meaningful collaboration among teachers. This will not be achieved by clinging to models of leadership that, by default rather than design delimits the possibilities for teachers to lead development work in schools.”

7. Mutual Trust and Respect for all

Trust is an overarching factor with regard to PLC's. People will not engage with each other in a genuine cycle of learning until they feel safe to do so. Hipp and Hufmann (2010) state that “without a strong culture of trust and respect, and related structures that promote continual learning, it is impossible to build a PLC (p.27).” Hence non-judgmental feedback and non-violent communication will have to be the norms for participation which will eventually develop mutual trust. For change to occur whether at the individual level or at the institutional level it is important that we trust the intent of every individual and respect them as they are.

3.10 Leading PLCs: Factors that Inhibit Effective Growth

While initiating and leading PLCs at school, it would be a common site to see the force of tradition and the lure of innovation simultaneously and complexly at play in teachers' everyday talk. The habitual ways of thinking or acting are bound to coincide closely with some of the enthusing ("Ahaa") moments; the impulse to question practice will be resisted by the 'simply get on with it – we have been doing this for years' attitude. Thus, the factors that inhibit effective growth of PLCs are actually the age-old habitual ways of functioning and emerge as a result of the interplay of the conventional and creative (Little, 2003). Some of the inhibiting factors are as follows:

1. Problem of Culture

Unless the school has established norms for learning and collaborations PLCs will not take off. A genuine interest for learning of all has to be a part of the school vision and mission operationalized through its culture. A closed culture that follows the language of circulars and orders will neither be welcoming nor motivating enough to either initiate or sustain PLCs.

2. Problem of Time

Learning for all cannot be by default; it happens only through design. It is not unusual for teachers to resist any new assignment and one of the major barriers is time. They are already overloaded with lots of responsibilities both academic and administrative so simple mandates for PLC without making any changes in the school schedule would not work.

As school leaders one would need to genuinely think about what demands could be removed from teachers to create a professional learning time for them.

3. Fear of Change

Another struggle associated with PLCs is the anxiety about change. Teachers with years of experience in teaching and ensuring high learning outcomes may feel all they do is perfect and that they are used to doing it in a certain way. They are unprepared to question their ways of doing. PLCs by nature are oriented towards substantive changes in teaching practice. Teachers fear the change and are not prepared to go that extra mile to see the difference that it can make to the current practice.

School leaders could motivate teachers by emphasizing on their strengths and how they could use them to improve their practice, provide time for reflection which could lead to some intrinsic motivation and create time and space for sharing of experiences that might inspire.

4. Hierarchical Structure

While teachers may not have issues with working in groups they may still resist PLCs owing to the top-down approach in which the principal or central authority mandates. Hence authentic professional development goals could be collaboratively decided and questions that need to be reflected upon agreed to and the entire school team irrespective of the position could engage in a dialogue.

5. Problem of Singleton or Small Schools

Small schools that may have just one subject teacher or at times no subject teacher may find it difficult to form subject teams for discussions. Similarly Single teacher or two teacher schools may also feel challenged since they have no one to share their professional challenges. Forming vertical teams across subject and grades based on the common learning goals or the common challenges within or across schools could help them connect and learn together. This could be effectively ensured through the formation of school clusters or complexes and working together as one unit.

6. Problem of a Learning Attitude

Especially in the case of schools where teachers largely are made accountable to the system than to the students or parent community. The teachers' ownership for student learning and subsequently self-learning is comparatively less. Moreover, the systemic accountability is also largely fixed for administrative or financial matters than for academic matters hence the teachers attitude also at times becomes a barrier to effective growth of PLCs.

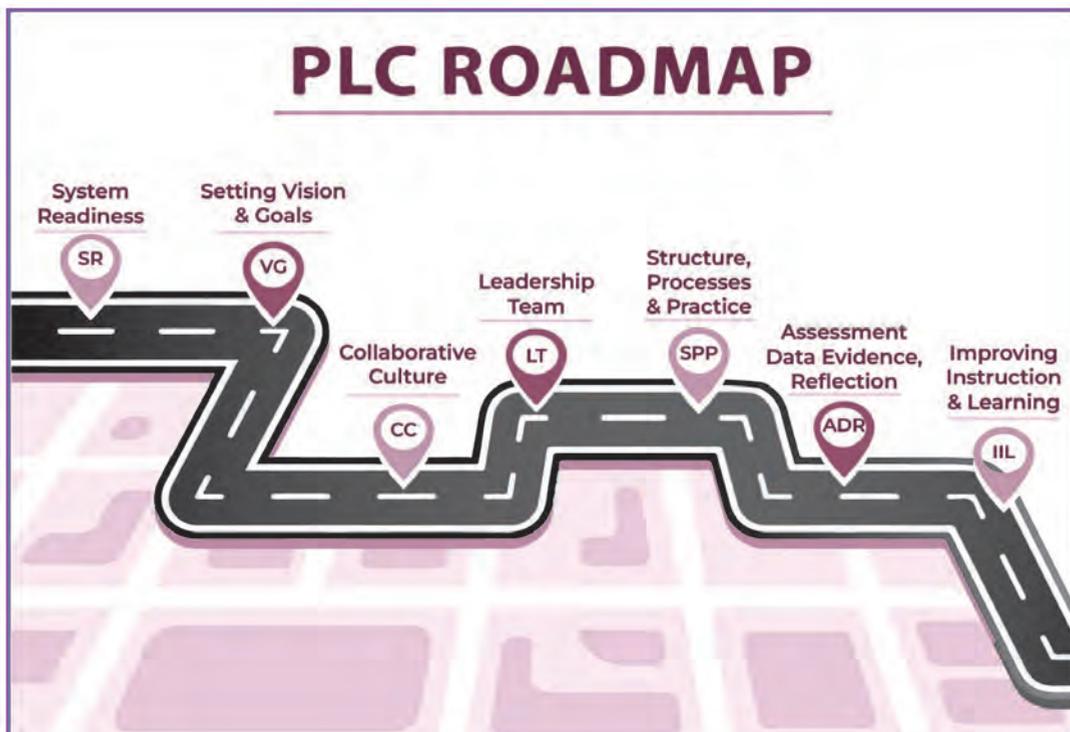
7. Systemic Unpreparedness for Change

For PLCs to be effective individuals and institutions as a whole should be prepared for undergoing change (Cameron and Quinn, 2006) which means staff must feel dissatisfied with the status quo and recognize the need for change; individuals and institution should feel that they have the capacity to successfully undertake the change and should believe that change will have positive outcomes for their job roles and above all individuals should

have positive affective emotional responses to a specific change event; in this case PLC. Unless school leaders and management ensures the preparedness for change; it may seem top-down and forced upon and may soon become dysfunctional.

3.11 PLC in Action: Roadmap for Developing Effective Learning Communities

It is said that ‘an idea is as good as its implementation’. Research literature on PLCs and some of my primary experiences of interacting with teachers and leaders in PLCs show that when they are well practiced they contribute to improved teacher and learner learning and morale. However, despite examples of excellence in the Indian context, in many schools they do not exist; in others, they exist but not in a form that supports learning. The PLC Roadmap thus is an attempt to lay down clear steps for its implementation which will have great impact on schools and district when they collaboratively create shared vision and mission. This will also be an implementation guide for the teachers and leaders in initiating and sustaining PLCs. Each of the steps enunciated below stem from the core characteristics of PLC:



1. Prepare the System for Change

Past experiences have told us that change is difficult because it involves painful unlearning and relearning (Schein, 1995) as individuals and organizations attempt to restructure their thoughts, feelings and behaviours with regards to the change at hand. The reason many schools have failed to be learning communities is most often their inability to provide for an effective unfreezing process which includes creating readiness for change. Since PLC needs all members to work together in collaboration, it is important to understand staff's attitudes, beliefs and reservations about working together. School leadership therefore, must assess the willingness to take up additional assignments, willingness to exercise lead roles, to work in collaboration and initiate strategies to not only gear the school towards the change rather welcome change initiatives.

2. Develop Shared Vision, Mission and Goals for PLC

The unlearning and relearning become easier if the vision and goals are clear. Therefore, establishing clear vision, mission and goals for PLC should be the next step to the implementation of PLCs.

3. Establish a Collaborative School Culture Focused on Learning

In top-down cultures the administrators and leaders identify the problems; problems are largely seen as somebody else's fault and solutions are somebody else's responsibility. Energies are concentrated around defending oneself than on collaborative decision making, strengthening everyone's ability to achieve high standards. Collaborative cultures build the confidence teachers need to lead. The third step in the implementation of PLC therefore is the transformation of school culture from top-down to collaborative and focused around learning for all.

From Top – down Cultures...	To Collaborative Cultures...
Teachers resist any change to the status quo.	Teachers discuss challenges to status quo and support one another's efforts to improve it for better.
Teachers depend on principals to solve problems, blame others for their problems, and complain about the consequences of decisions.	Teachers take responsibility for solving problems and accept the consequences of their decisions.
Ideas and projects belong to individual teachers; as a result, development is limited.	Teachers share ideas. As one person builds on another's ideas, a new synergy develops.
Ideas are limited to the "tried and tested"—what has been done in the past.	Educators evaluate new ideas in light of shared goals that focus on student learning.

4. Select and Develop PLC Leads/Leadership Implementation Team (LIT)

The research literature on 'School leadership' now supports what practitioners have experienced for decades: powerful school leadership has a positive effect on the student

achievement through the development of teachers and staff. The need to select and develop PLC leads is to identify that small team of innovators and early adapters that are not only keen and enthusiastic about the change but also eager to take up leadership roles to alter the traditional practices at school. It has been observed that there is continuous preference of many teachers to be left alone and that they would prefer to work by themselves; establishing a Leadership Implementation Team (LIT) would support a shift in the school culture through modelling, coaching and guiding the key processes in PLC. The LIT could include the following key roles:

Chairperson that guides the team through the agenda, starts conversation and moves the dialogue in a constructive direction;

Time keeper or rounder that ensures that time is managed well and that the discussion doesn't become erratic;

A voice of reason's role is 'stop' every time the goals become too ambitious and the project stretches beyond boundaries of everyone's ability to accomplish.

Note Keeper is a person who is good at keeping track of everything the team decides. Note keeper is one of the most important roles because not everyone is capable of staying organized—or of keeping track of the goals and efforts.

Optimist's role is to remind the team early and often that they are teachers on mission to ensure learning for all. Staying positive may at times become real difficult and professional learning in collaboration very gruelling. Optimist can bring the team back to consider the benefits of working in teams and of the contributions that it would make to overall learning.

Skeptic's role is to ask questions that no one is willing to ask. Skeptic role is to force team to consider things that they haven't thought yet and think differently.

Cleanser is someone who is willing to listen to complex conversations carefully, identify the stumbling blocks that can be easily removed, and ensure that team decisions are pure and clear. No meeting will begin without hearing the Cleanser's summary of where we have been; and no meeting will end without hearing Cleanser's summary of where we are going.

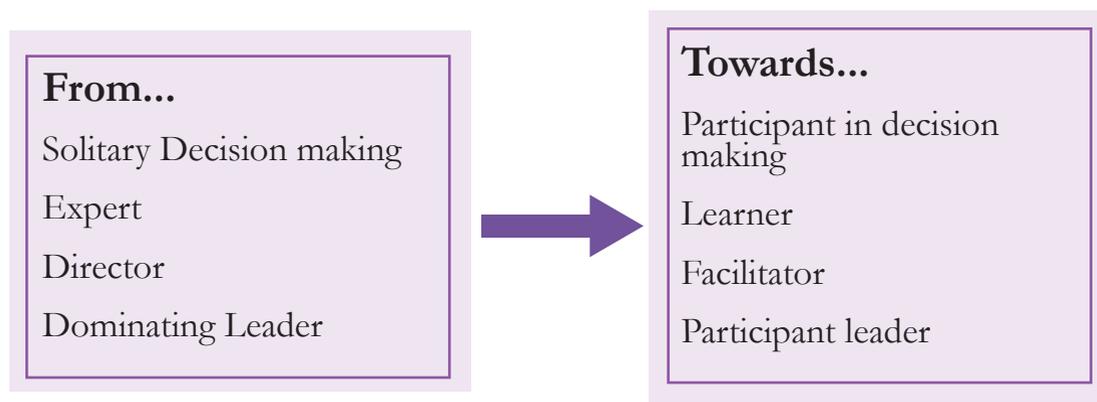
Depending upon the need, further lead roles could be assigned in the Leadership Implementation Team (LIT).

5. Establish a structure for PLCs

No change can happen without a change in the structure. If learning in collaborations has to be made a reality, school will have to schedule time for collaborations in the school time table itself. Teacher learning and teacher collaboration time would have to be figured in the annual school calendar. The existing top-down or hierarchical structures would have to be changed and space for teacher autonomy and teacher voice will have to be accounted for. Establishing norms and protocols, mechanisms for consensus building and conflict resolution, communication structures and channels, assessment and evaluation structures, reflection and feedback structures will have to be created. A working space for ideation and collaboration and set aside time, resources and expertise that empower the structures would need to be established.

6. Establish Clear Processes and Practices

Structures in itself would be meaningless if they are not supported with effective processes and practices. Some of the processes and practices for initiating PLCs would be processes for visioning, for collaborations, for enhancing professional relations, for develop collective culture and identity, for transforming to learning organization, for assessment and evaluation, for reflection and feedback, for monitoring fidelity of PLCs, for benchmarking student achievement as also instructional practices, for collecting and collating data, for utilizing data and evidence for improvement of instructions and for implementation of variety of innovative practices to improve student learning. These are just a few; there could be many more practices and processes in the functioning of PLCs



7. Assess and Monitor the Progress of Learning

The framework of a PLC is inextricably linked to the effective integration of equity and quality in education... the leaders of PLCs balance the desire for professional autonomy with the fundamental principles and values that drive collaboration and mutual accountability (Reeves, 2005). It is important to regularly monitor the learning in PLCs through the action-reflection cycles, observation and feedback and learning conversations.

3.12 Leading Effective PLCs: Role of School Leadership

Transforming a school into a learning organization can only occur with the sanction and support of the principal (Mulford and Silins, 2003). In order to bring this shift towards learning in the mindset of all the members of the school community the principal and/or system officers must abandon the traditional position of authority and recognize that their role must also include that of “learner,” working with teachers and other school staff to investigate and seek solutions that will improve student learning. This would entail a shift in their leadership styles and actions from being the ‘know it all’ person to ‘happy to learn’, from being the ‘sage on the stage to being a guide by the side’.

School leaders would therefore need to embrace the following processes and subsequently change in their current roles:

1. Promoting and Modelling Enquiry

It is significant as a means to promote reflective enquiry. Three inter-connected modes of enquiry-minded leadership for school improvement have been distinguished (Stoll et al, 2002):

- Encourage research and evaluation across the school, as collective as also by individual classroom teachers;
- Systematic collection, analysis and use of data and evidence in the course of ongoing work; for example, students’ achievement data, demographic data of the school and/or school inspection reports;
- Reviewing literature and using relevant and practical research findings generated and produced by external researchers for improving classroom practice.

Concept in Action: Leading by Example

Sister Annie from Jesus and Mary's convent wanted her teachers to be open and transparent about their practice and learn from and with each other. However, wasn't sure of how to convince her senior staff for the same. She then thought about the saying by M.K Gandhi – 'Be the Change you want to See'.

She opened her classrooms for all her teachers. Rather encouraged them to visit her classes. Initially there was silence and no post observation dialogue. Nobody wanted to dare to inquire or share reflections on any of the practices after all it was the vice-principal's teaching. With passing time, staff noticed the genuineness in seeking feedback, understood the real intent and joined the trend.

Today this has become a norm in the school. There is separate chair kept in the corner of every class room for observers and regular post classroom reflections are conducted in pairs, in trios, in group and monthly discussion meetings on the trends of teaching practice at school and the improvement required.

2. Ensuring Learning at all Levels and for all Stakeholders

Central to all leadership roles is an urge to foster and sustain effective learning in both students and adults (Law and Glover, 2000). This can best be done by embedding professional development in the regular day-to-day activities of the practitioner, what Leithwood and colleagues (1999) call "situated cognition". Real experiences allow individual to actively collect information and this information when processed by way of critical thinking and reflection lead to alternate possibilities. Thus, investing in resources and people and setting aside time for reflection and dialogue that empowers the teacher in the skills of inquiry, reflection and collaboration is fundamental to the professional change process. However, if PLCs are limited to the learning of teachers' alone changes will be limited to the classroom processes and may also loose rigour. Hence PLC at all levels from students to cluster, block and district levels is required. When it comes to schools with central governance like the KVS and NVS; there need, to be PLCs at the regional and zonal levels. School visits rather than focusing on fault finding and punitive measures should be focusing on the root cause of the educational and pedagogical problems and set aside mechanisms for support. This will entail structural and functional changes and lead to overall systemic reforms.

3. **Creating a Culture that is Conducive to Learning**

Each member of the school has a different reality of school life and the way things should be or shouldn't be done. This in turn influences the readiness for change. Schein (1985) suggests that a culture which balances the interests of all stakeholders, focuses on people rather than systems, makes people believe they can change their environment, make time for learning, takes holistic approach to problems actually encourages and is conducive for learning. Shulman (1997) argues that the potential of teacher learning depends upon the processes of school viz., teacher learning activities, reflection, socio-emotional relationships and collaboration. It is the role of the school leaders to support, legitimize, nurture and value such experiences throughout paying attention to the human side of change. Further it is the role of the school leader to create an environment that inspires learning by overcoming the resistance. In the words of Beckhard-Harris establish dissatisfaction with the current state through gathering evidences, develop a clear and shared vision and acceptable first steps to achieve the vision. This will help overcome the resistance and gradually develop a culture for learning.

4. **Managing and Coordinating Professional Learning**

Coordination of professional activities is a pre-condition of school improvement (Hopkins et al, 1994) and requires sensitive handling such that teachers feel they have the discretionary autonomy they need to make instant decisions, taking account of their pupils' individuality and the unique nature of each encounter (Hopkins, 2001). Throughout the 1980s and early 1990s, professional development was broadly consistent with the human resource management approach. Of late there has been a significant shift from individual teacher development to the creation of learning communities in which all students, teachers, principals and support staff are both learners and teachers (Sparks and Hirsh, 1997) and the role of the school leader is to maintain a record of the professional progression of individual members while simultaneously planning for the learning of the community as a whole, using development as part of school change. School leaders at different levels need to encourage such professional interactions and create avenues for the same. In fact, the external accountability norms that largely emphasize the products or the administrative or financial aspects could simultaneously lay emphasis on the processes that support and inspire learning.

5. **Leadership that Nurtures Collaboration**

Alma Harris (2003) in her work on teacher leadership concluded that for building PLCs within and between schools we need forms of leadership that support and nourish

meaningful collaboration among teachers. Clinging to models of leadership that by default rather than by design delimit the possibilities for teachers to lead developmental works in schools cannot help us work as a learning community. Hence as school leaders; it is imperative to recognize that leadership cannot be the domain of an ‘individual’ or a small ‘senior’ closed group of members rather it has to be a joint action so as to accomplish the complexity of school change and improvement and nurture belongingness and ownership. The more a school leader involves the staff in collaborative decision making, the more the staff would get to own the school and contribute towards the achievement of its vision.

The Role of Teachers

1. Strengthen teacher professionalism and improving learning outcomes by actively engaging in PLCs.
2. Open to contributing as well as to learning.
3. Regard PLCs as an integral part of teaching practice and actively participate in it.
4. Take up leadership roles in PLCs, such as facilitation, setting the agenda, keeping records, reviewing tasks and defining outcomes for all.

The Role of Subject/Pedagogy Groups

Some of the large schools may have subject departments or groups or small schools could come together to form subject groups and the pedagogy experts in these groups could...

1. Bring in expertise and collaborate and network with other partners
2. Develop diagnostic self-assessment tools that will help to identify areas of improvement for individual teachers.
3. Identify areas of improvement that can be worked on within the PLCs.
4. To develop, select and share materials and resources that can be used in PLCs either online or in print.
5. Develop online forums to facilitate follow-up discussions within PLCs and to create links between PLCs.

The Role of the School Management Committees

1. To create the conditions wherein PLCs can thrive
2. To motivate teachers to engage in PLCs. However, the role of the principal/ SMC chairperson is not to chair every PLC meeting.

3. To guide the process to establish PLCs. For example, identifying people willing to take up leadership roles, informing teachers about PLCs, coordinating the setting of agenda, formulation of expected outcomes and assessment process.
4. To support PLCs by resource allocation, logistics and timetabling.

The Role of the Block/Districts/Zonal Offices

1. Support PLCs with resources and expertise on facilitation skills, video analysis, development of teaching resources, the use of ICT etc.
2. Highlight issues for discussion at state and national level.
3. To function as a hub for exchanging PLC practices within the district and zones.
4. To create opportunities for follow up and sharing via PLCs within and amongst districts through workshops.
5. Conduct annual progress of the PLCs, identify the gaps, the strengths and seek feedback from teachers and leaders.
6. To develop synergies between PLCs and system level officers at cluster, block, district or zonal levels.
7. To provide teachers with resources that help them to integrate their own professional knowledge with the latest research-based knowledge about content and practice.

Conceptual Linkages...

Each one of you are having dual roles; teachers as well as learners; ask the following questions to yourself:

While we plan for PLCs think of all these aspects as well.

- .. 1. What would learning focused school ethos be like?
- .. 2. How would belongingness affect the learning journey of adults?
- .. 3. How would a learning focused, collaborative and mutually trusting school culture impact the mental health and well-being of its members?

3.13 PLCs for Singletons and Small Schools

Teachers working in small schools with single or two teachers or those offering unique subject areas like special educators, art or music teachers or foreign language teachers hardly find partners to talk to or work with and are challenged when it comes to engaging

in meaningful collaborative learning. In small schools even the physics or biology or mathematics teacher becomes rarity and therefore thinking of PLCs in the conventional manner would be seemingly impossible. This would demand school leaders come up with structural changes which include building vertical teams across grades or interdisciplinary teams across subjects or connecting virtually with teachers in different parts of the country or world. Conventionally we have subject-based PLCs (Example: Maths or Science teachers' PLC; Language or Social Science Teachers' PLC) or role-based PLCs (Principals/Head Teachers' PLC or Cluster leaders' PLC); it is however important to assess the strengths and weaknesses of working in homogenous groups as against working in diverse groups following which teachers may be asked to explore what they have in common rather than looking at what is different. The following process can be taken up for initiating PLCs in small or singleton schools:

Concept In Action: Small Schools Grouping Together in Clusters for Learning

Researcher: Tell me, Mr. Kapur when you initiated the learning community how easy or difficult was it to sustain collaborations with continued focus on learning.

Mr. Kapur: When we initiated, we had commonly agreed to begin discussion with foundations in education and those documents which are of prime concern to all of us as teachers. For example: The NCF, 2005; Continuous and Comprehensive Evaluation; Constructivist Pedagogy. Beginning from there was safe road to take up; since at the initial stages not many would be prepared to open up or share their practices. Everyone joined the discussions and it went smoothly for some time. However, soon we realized that the burden of pre-meeting tasks, during meetings and post meetings - all was left to the leader or the small leadership team and that this would not sustain for long since the burden of work would gradually make people withdraw themselves.

With some brainstorming we agreed that for collaborations to sustain, leadership also needs to be collaborative and we agreed to make leadership rotational and responsibilities shared. Every month one school in the cluster took initiative of leading the PLC which included finalizing the agenda, circulating amongst members, sharing report of tasks done and hosting the PLC for all 17 schools in the cluster. Apart from the agenda for the discussion; this rotation also brought an opportunity wherein school principals and heads of 16 schools visited one school, interacted with their staff, students and community, made observations about the school, gave feedback thus contributing to the improvement of the school. This also made the community, the SMC, local Panchayat, Parents and Students equally vigilant since in a small village school everyone gets to know about the visitors to their school making them alert about their role in school development and continuous learning.

-Interaction with Mr. Ghanshyam Kapur from Katrain School Cluster, March, 2019

1. Organize teams based on what learning goals teachers have in common.
2. Focus on those issues which are common rather than those that are not. (For example; students are common; their learning style, pace, attention span, issues etc could be common across subjects and how to deal with it while ensuring learning could certainly be part of PLC dialogue).

3. Identify the most important common outcome.
4. Develop a method of assessment, a rubric that anchors.
5. Calibrate scoring and evaluate results.
6. Come back to the table with common strategies designed to improve performance.
7. Although the unit assessments are not exactly “common” from one grade level to the next, the skills often are. In groups, determine what “common” skills could be focused. So, imagine if you are a social science or language teacher; what could some common outcomes for your learning be?

3.14 Sustaining Effective PLCs: Steps towards a Learning Culture

Creating and developing professional learning communities depends on working on a number of processes inside and outside schools. Like ‘learning organisation’ the idea of PLCs is also a work in the school improvement tradition and therefore depends upon shared vision, shared ethos, shared language and culture and shared practice and reflection. Apart from working on partnerships and networks with outside agencies and experts; openness, mutual trust, respect and support within the school and a continuous focus on learning rather a moral imperative for learning, assessment, reflection and continuous improvement has to be built in the system for sustaining PLCs.

At this stage, we have sufficiently discussed the theoretical underpinnings to PLC in this module; I would like to again bring you back to the case study that we began with and look into the journey of evolution of Katrain Cluster; their initial steps in building team, setting norms, identifying common issues and agree upon goals, working as a PLC for improving student learning and the journey of sustaining collaborative learning and reflection for the improvement of all.

The idea in sharing this narrative is to bring home the following messages:

1. PLC cannot be built solely through single leadership or even a small senior team of leaders. It has to be led by all, owned by all.
2. Further, leaderships may change over time and members may superannuate; so if PLCs need to sustain the intellectual rigour and learning, should have a set of norms that keep it learning focused, values and ethos of mutual trust and respect for all that guide the newly inducted members into norms of behaviour.

3. PLC cannot be about professional development opportunities alone – variety of learning experiences gathered through teacher observations, collective enquiry into school improvement, coaching or mentoring, provision of excellent teaching materials and support for classrooms and much more that answers teachers’ daily challenges with regards to teaching-learning sustains PLCs.
4. For PLCs to be sustainable, leadership and management would need to invest in expert knowledge and skills and a strong emphasis on the professionalization of teachers’ work through increasing expert knowledge.
5. Last but not the least, every PLC passes through stages of development; it does not begin straight with reflections and sharing of data or collective enquiry. Rather the first six months to one year is a stabilization phase wherein the motivation to continue to work in group needs to be stabilized and this would only demand filling the group time meaningfully. In this stage you would need someone to lead from the front and ensure that all meetings are conducted as per the time, there is no overshooting time, focused and meaningful discussions are conducted. In the second stage i.e., a time wherein the group has started feeling comfortable working together and see meaning in collaborating that they could share personal practices. This stage is still about sharing best practices and looking for replicability. There is enquiry but limited to appreciation. In the third stage sufficient trust is established and there is a comfort in discussing common issues, planning common goals, strategies, sharing student related data, conducting common assessments and reflecting on it. Thus, by now the team has moved from just discussing generic concepts or sharing best practices to analysing student learning, conducting differentiated instructions and follow-up and reflecting on practice. Once a PLC team has reached a stage where they feel comfortable in collective enquiry and reflections; perhaps that is when they would not need any external incentive for sustaining it; learning then is not a means but an end in itself.

3.15 Summary

PLC is about encouraging professionals within and across schools to engage in genuine and ongoing critical examination of practice through collaboration. It is not only about some discrete acts of teacher sharing rather about developing shared values and vision and setting high expectations for students and guiding teaching and learning to achieve those. It is a shift away from the conventional approaches of teacher development that emphasize on “Knowledge for practice” to an approach grounded on the idea of “Knowledge of practice” (Cochran-Smith and Lytle, 1999). The module further explains the typology, the characteristics, factors inhibiting and factors promoting PLCs and at the end mentions about the role of school leadership in leading and sustaining PLCs.

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SECTION II

Facilitator's

Toolkit



A. Blueprint

B. Session Manual and Resources

A. Blueprint

S.	Session Focus	Focal Points	Group Size	Session/Activity Title	Resources Required	Time
No						
S1	Assessing Teaching-Learning	Creating dissatisfaction for the current practice and developing readiness for learning	Individual activity	D1.S1.A1. Assessment of teaching-learning processes	Worksheet, Marker pens,	20 min.
	Learning in Context	Understanding the significance of learning in context	Group Activity	D1.S1.A2. The Question Answer conundrum	None	20 min.
	Approaches to Teacher Professional Development	Social Learning as an approach to teacher professional growth	Group Activity	D1.S1. A3. Diamond-6 Activity	Research Quotes on Teacher Professional Growth	30 min.
	Why learn in Communities	Benefits of learning in communities	Group Activity	D1.S1. A4. Why Learn in Communities: Research Excerpts on the Benefit of Collaborative Learning	Research Excerpts	60 min.

SECTION II

S. No	Session Focus	Focal Points	Group Size	Session/Activity Title	Resources Required	Time
S2	Conceptualizing PLC	To conceptualize PLC	Lecture & collaborative creation of worksheet	Conceptualizing PLC	Power point presentation, A4 Paper, Marker pens	50 min.
	PLC in Practice	Understanding PLC in Practice	Case Study Reading and Discussion	D1. S2. A1. Understanding PLC in Practice: Case Study of Katrain Cluster	Handouts, A4 papers, Markers, Pens	40 min.
S3	PLC in Practice	Identifying Practices and Processes in effective PLCs	Watching Video followed by Group discussion	Case Study on RPVV, Harinagar Di. S3. A1. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xGn9S9pPouY	A4 Sheets, Chart paper, Marker pens	30 min.
	What shapes our attitudes?	How beliefs and values shape actions and behaviours	In Pairs, In small Groups	D1. S3. A2. Identifying Beliefs, Values and Vision of Conventional Vs Progressive Teachers	PLC Belief Identification Sheet, A4 Paper, Pens and Markers	30 min.
	Assessing Beliefs, and Fears around working in Collaboration	Identifying beliefs and fears underlying actions	Individually	D1. S3. A3. Assessing Beliefs and Fears around working in Collaboration	Handout, A4 Sheets, Marker, Pens	30 min.
	Assessing school factors	Assessing factors that promote PLCs	Individually	D1. S3. A4. Assessing factors that promote PLCs	Handout, Pencils	30 min

S. No	Session Focus	Focal Points	Group Size	Session/Activity Title	Resources Required	Time
S4	PLC: A Constructivist Pathway to Professional Development	How to plan in-house professional development using PLCs	In pairs followed by small group discussion	D1. S4. A1. Planning in-house CPD	CPD: Self-Evaluation Proforma, CPD Planning Sheets, Pens, A4 sheets	40 min.
	PLC: A Constructivist Pathway to Professional Development	Arriving at a personal mastery for all staff members through creating PDP	In pairs followed by small group discussion	D1. S4. A2 Creating Professional Development Plan	PDP proforma, A4	30 min.
	PLC Scope: Brainstorming	Visualize the scope of PLCs for their schools	small group and in pair activity	D1. S4. A3. Mapping the Scope of PLCs for transforming Schools to Learning Organizations	Brainstorming, idea cards/sticky notes, Markers, Pens and Chart paper	30 min.

SECTION II

S. No	Session Focus	Focal Points	Group Size	Session/Activity Title	Resources Required	Time
S5	Developing Norms for Collaboration	Co-creating norms for working together	Large Group Discussion	D2. D5.A1. Creating Norms for Collaboration	A4 Sheets, Chart Paper, Sketch pen and Marker pens	45 min.
	Shared Vision for PLC	Shared vision and goals for effective and sustaining PLCs	Individual to small and large group discussion	D2. S5. A2. Developing Shared Vision and Goals for Effective PLCs	Sticky notes, Chart papers, Marker pens, Sketch pens	45 min.
	What effective PLCs do?	Effective PLCs: Lessons from international research	Small group activity	D2. S5. A3 Effective PLCs: Lessons from international research	Sticky notes, Chart papers, Marker pens, Sketch pens	30 min
S6	Using Data for conducting effective PLCs	Mapping and Using Data sources for conducting Effective PLCs	Large and small group discussion	Mapping school- based data for collective inquiry in PLC	PPT, chart papers, marker pens, sketch pens, A4 sheets	45 min.
		Using data for reflective dialogue in PLC	small group discussion	D2. S6.A2 Reflective Dialogue in PLC	PPT, chart papers, marker pens, sketch pens, A4 sheets	45 min.

S.	Session Focus	Focal Points	Group Size	Session/Activity Title	Resources Required	Time
No						
S7.	Establishing and Sustaining PLCs	Pre-requisite to Sustaining PLCs	Small group discussion	D2.S7.A2.-R1, Solution Record Sheet	chart papers, marker pens, sketch pens, A4 sheets	45 min.
		Challenges to Sustaining PLCs	Small group discussion	D2.S7.A2-R2 Commonly identified barriers and Potential Issues in establishing and sustaining PLCs	Activity Sheet, chart papers, marker pens, sketch pens, A4 sheets	45 min.
S8	Initiating and Sustaining PLCs	Preparing Schools for Change: Planning PLCs	Small group discussion	D2.S8.A1-R1 Attributes of PLCs: Research Excerpts D2.S8.A1.-R2 Reflection Cards on Attributes of PLC	Activity Sheet, Sticky notes, chart papers, marker pens, sketch pens, A4 sheets	60 min.
		Sustaining PLCs: Exploring Pathways, methods and phases	Small group discussion	D2.S8.A2-R1 PLC: Exploring Pathways D2.S8.A2.-R2 - Slide on Beckhard Harris Model of Change D2.S8.A2-R3 – Slide on Rogers Innovation Curve	Activity Sheet, Sticky notes, chart papers, marker pens, sketch pens, A4 sheets	60 min.

B. Session Manual and Resources

Day and Session	Session Title	Session Resources	
		Type	Title
D1. S1. A1	Assessment of Teaching Learning Process	Worksheet	NCFTE, 2009 Recommendations on Teaching-Learning Process
D1. S1. A2	The Question Answer conundrum	None	None
D1. S1. A3	Diamond-6 Activity	Reading	Research Quotes on Collaborative Learning and Professional Development
D1. S1. A4	Why Learn in Communities?	Readings	Research Excerpts on benefits of Learning in Communities
D1. S2. A1	Conceptualizing PLCs in Schools	Supplementary Reading and Worksheet	D1.S2.A1 Conceptualizing PLCs: Nature, Typology and Characteristics
D1. S2. A2	PLC in Practice	Case study	D1.S2. A2 PLC in Practice: Case study of Katrain School Cluster, H.P
D1. S3. A1	PLC in Practice	Case Study – Video Resource and Worksheet	D1. S3.A1 PLC in Practice: Case study of RPVV, Harinagar, New Delhi
D1. S3. A2	What Shapes our Attitudes? Beliefs, Values and/or Vision	Reflecting Sheet	D1. S3.A2. Identifying Beliefs, Values and Vision: Progressive Vs Conventional Teachers
D1. S3. A3	Assessing Self Beliefs, and fears with regards to working in Collaboration	Reflecting Sheet	D1. S3. A3 Assessing Beliefs and Fears around working in collaboration

D1. S3. A4	Assessing school factors that support PLCs	Worksheet	D1. S3. A4 School factor assessment Worksheet
D1. S4. A1	PLC and Teacher Professional Development	CPD Worksheet	D1. S4. A1 Creating CPD Self-Assessment Worksheet
D1. S4. A2	Professional Learning through PLC	Professional Development Plan Sheet	D1. S4. A2 Professional Development Plan
D1. S4. A3	Mapping the scope of PLC: Transforming schools to Learning Organisations	Reading	D1. S4.A3 Mapping the Scope of PLC: International Research on
D2. S5. A1	Creating norms for collaboration	None	None
D2. S5. A2	Developing Shared vision and norms for PLC	None	None
D2. S5. A3	What effective PLCs do?	Readings	D2. S5. A3 Effective PLCs: lessons from research
D2. S6. A1	Mapping and using Data Sources for conducting Effective PLCs	Real time School Data	Participants' Real time School Data
D2. S6. A2	Using Data sets for Reflective Inquiry and Dialogue	Using real time School Data	None

D2. S7. A1	Create time for professional learning	None	None
D2. S7. A2	Challenges in Sustaining PLCs	Worksheets	D2. S7.A2. -R1 Solution Record Sheet D2. S7.A2. -R2 Commonly identified barriers and potential issues
D2. S8. A1	Preparing Schools for Change: Planning PLCs	Reading and Reflection Cards	D2. S8.A1 – R1 Attributes of PLC: Excerpts from International Research D2. S8.A1 – R2 Reflection Cards on Attributes of PLC
D2. S8. A2	Establishing and Sustaining PLCs: Exploring Pathways, methods and phases in Evolution of PLC	Reading	D2. S8.A2 – R1 Exploring Pathways, methods and phases in the evolution of PLC D2. S8.A2 – R2 Slide on Beckhard Harris model for change D2. S8.A2. -R3 Slide on Rogers Innovation Curve

**Activity: Assessment of Teaching-Learning Processes****Time Required:** 20 minutes**Objectives:** Participants will be able to...

- Assess the current practice in teaching-learning in classrooms.
- Realize the need for collaborative enquiry into classroom practices.

Group Size: Individual Activity**Material Required:** Activity Sheet and Pen**Steps for Facilitation:**

1. Chapter 3 of the NCFTE (2009) identifies current practice in teacher education and raises questions around improving practice making it process-based. In this activity based on the recommendations in NCFTE a tabulation sheet is prepared for assessing one's classroom practice.
2. Distribute the tabulated sheet to every participant, which could be used as benchmark for assessing one's own classroom practice.
3. The tabulated sheet shows two boxes one depicts learning as absolute and the other box depicts learning to be an onward journey. Both the boxes are connected through a scale from 1 to 10. Where 1 depicts closeness to absolute learning while 10 depicts closeness to process based learning.
4. For every statement each one of you is expected to rate your school on a continuum of 1 to 10.
5. If you were to draw an average of all the statements, where do you see your school lying? Will it be mostly to the left or to the right? Remember your focus is teachers as learners not students.
6. Paste your sheets on the chart or wall and take a walk to see each other's performance.
7. How many of you see your school lying on the left?
8. Discuss the displays with the participants.

Points for Debriefing:

- Where do you think your school should be working towards? Left, or right?
- How far your school works towards the practices highlighted and advocated in NCFTE (2009)?
- Pedagogical knowledge and skills have to constantly undergo change to meet the diverse needs of diverse contexts through critical reflection on teaching practice. Discuss and reflect.

Key Takeaways:

- Learning is the Key purpose of Schooling
- Learning is for all – students, staff, school leaders, administrators alike
- Learning is never absolute; it is continuous and ever changing
- Unless learning for all is ensured – students do not learn and organizations do not grow



Assessment of Teaching-Learning Practice – NCFTE, 2009 Worksheet

The following boxes depict the nature of teaching-learning

Theory as ‘given’ to be applied in the classroom		Conceptual knowledge-experience, observations and theoretical engagement
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Knowledge treated as external to the learner and something to be acquired 		<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Knowledge generated through critical enquiry in the shared context of teaching, learning, personal and social experiences
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 2. Learners work individually on assignments, in-house tests, field work and practise teaching 		<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 2. Learners encouraged to work in teams, record observations, engage in interactions and projects across diverse courses; group presentations encouraged
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 3. No ‘space’ to address learners’ assumptions about social realities, the learner and the process of learning 		<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 3. Learning ‘spaces’ provided to examine learners’ own position in society and their assumptions as part of classroom discourse
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 4. No ‘space’ to examine learners’ conceptions of subject knowledge. 		<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 4. Structured ‘space’ provided to revisit, examine and challenge (mis)conceptions of knowledge
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 5. Engagement with generalized theories of learning and child development. 		<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 5. Engagement with learners in real life situation along with theoretical enquiry

Ideally marks for all should end up on the right-hand side where learning is active and interactive. The reality may be that your marks are on the left or in the middle. This gives a direction in which to travel. The facilitator may pick up few examples and discuss the way forward. TESS- India (2014). Activity 1 NCFTE (2009) from Transforming Teaching Learning Process: Developing Teacher as a Professional. www.TESS-India.edu.in

Reflective Questions

What should be the nature of professional development so as to enable teachers to encourage critical enquiry in classrooms?

How do we make classrooms constructive spaces where knowledge is not transacted rather generated through active engagement and experimentation with it?

**Activity: The Question Answer conundrum**

Time Required: 20 minutes

Objectives: Participants will be able to...

- Understand the significance of learning in context.

Group Size - Group activity

Material Required- none

Steps for Facilitation:

1. Divide the participants into two groups called; group A and group B.
2. Distribute one sticky notes to all participants and ask them to write as per the instructions on their respective notes.
3. Ask each member in 'Group A' to think of any of the educational questions/issues/problems and write on the note given to them. The questions should necessarily begin from 'WHY'. For example: Why do children fail?
4. Ask each member in 'Group B' to think of solution to any of the educational issues/problems/questions and write on the note given to them. Answers should necessarily begin from 'Because'. For Example: Because we teach through Activity based Learning.
5. Now ask one member from 'Group A' to read their question followed by one member from 'Group B' to read their answers.
6. Continue this till all members have read their questions and answers.
7. At the end of the activity, the participants from group A are asked to stick thier question on a common chart paper.
8. The facilitator must take note of these question and attempt to address them at suitable point during the workshop.

Points for Debriefing:

- While both; the questions and answers were relevant why did they not make sense together? What made some of the answers out of place and funny?

- Do you see this metaphorical game at play in your professional life?
- Do you think TPD is in some way a representation of this game?

Key Takeaways:

Learning is a situated activity that has social, cultural and physical contexts shaping and impacting it also known as ‘situated cognition’.

TPD as a top-down one time activity outside the school context may not be as impactful as TPD that is ingrained in the DNA of the school.

PLC provides one such platform to educators to collaboratively analyze evidence of student learning and adjust instructional practices.

D1.S1.A3



Activity: Diamond-6 Activity

Time Required: 20 minutes

Objectives: Participants will be able to...

- Understand the significance of learning in context.
- Understand that there are multiple pathways to learning.
- Understand the need for learning as a community of practitioners.

Group Size - Individual activity followed by group discussion

Material Required- Hand out on the Diamond-6 Activity

Steps for Facilitation:

1. Divide the participants into small groups of five each.
2. Distribute the Handout on Diamond-6 Activity – D1.S1.A3 to each participant in every group.
3. Ask the participants to read through the quotes and choose the six that they are able to relate with in terms of teacher professional growth.
4. Look at the questions given below and try to look for your own answers to it.
5. Once you are individually prepared with your set of reasons, discuss them within your small group.
6. On a A4 sheet or Chart bring out the major discussion points that emerged around teacher professional growth.
7. Pin it on the wall or on display board for everyone to see.

Points for Debriefing:

- Debrief on what the participants feel about the current approach to teacher professional development?
- How would they want to shape teacher professional growth in their own schools so as give time and space for collective inquiry and reflection?

Key Takeaways:

Teacher autonomy, teacher context is key to teacher growth and development and that alone can bring change in the classroom practice.

TPD as a top-down one time activity outside the school context may not be as impactful as TPD that is ingrained in the DNA of the school.



Diamond-6 Activity: Research Quotes on Teacher Professional Development

Recent research on teaching and learning has established that teaching and learning is not a simple cause and effect relationship, but rather a complex process in which learning is co-constructed by teachers and students in a specific classroom context with instruction at any point in time reflecting the teacher’s analysis of the various elements in play at that moment... The complexity of teaching and learning is incompatible with the narrow, short-term, episodic, special-project focus of much of traditional staff development (Reitzug, 2002, p. 2).

1. Within a learning community, the learning of the teachers is as important as the learning of the children.... We assume, therefore, that a learning community consists of a group of people who take an active, reflective, collaborative, learning-oriented and growth-promoting approach toward both the mysteries and the problems of teaching and learning (Mitchell and Sackney, 2000, p. 2).
2. Situational theorists say “that the physical and social contexts in which an activity takes place are an integral part of the activity, and that the activity is an integral part of the learning that takes place within it. How a person learns a particular set of knowledge and skills, and the situation in which a person learns, becomes a fundamental part of what is learned.” The perspective focuses on how “various settings for teachers’ learning give rise to different kinds of knowing.
3. The 4th International Policy Forum on EFA (2012) quotes “It is not lack of good intentions, efforts, investment or teacher training programmes; it is about teachers taking positive steps towards improving their professional practice through analysis of educational outcomes, meaningful feedback, self-assessment and desire to be a community of lifelong learners”. This calls for participatory professional development programs in which the boundary of the trainer-trainee blurs and the professional autonomy of the learner is enhanced.
4. Michael Fullan and Andy Hargreaves (1992) argue that professional development needs to focus on the development of ‘total teachers’, by addressing four different dimensions: the teacher’s purpose, the teacher as a person, the real-world context

- in which teachers work, and the culture of teaching, that is, teachers' professional relationships with others within the system. This can be done through four important focus areas: personal vision-building, reflective inquiry, mastery of skills, and collaborative work cultures (Fullan 1993).
5. Quote from the book, *Leading Learning Communities: Standards for What Principals Should Know and Be Able to Do* (2001) in which it states: "If adults don't learn then students won't learn either. . . . The school that operates as a learning community uses its own experience and knowledge, and that of others, to improve the performance of students and teachers alike. . . . There must be a place where learning isn't isolated, where adults demonstrate they care about kids but also about each other. In such places, learning takes place in groups. A culture of shared responsibility is established, and everybody learns from one another." (p. 5)
 6. "Capacity Building...is not just workshops and professional development for all. It is the daily habit of working together, and you can't learn this from a workshop or course. You need to learn it by doing and having mechanisms for getting better at it on purpose" (Michael Fullan, 2005). In other words, "It's not another program, it's a change in a way of thinking."
 7. "You won't close the implementation gap with another set of improvement reform or announcements about the latest initiative . . . the most promising strategy for substantive school improvement is developing the capacity for each school personnel to function as a professional learning community (PLC)." Robert Eaker, Richard DuFour, and Rebecca DuFour (2007)
 8. Clarke and Hollingsworth (1994) identified a number of alternative perspectives on teacher change that could be associated to the different approaches on teacher professional growth. These are; change as training or as something that is done to teachers; that is, teachers are "changed". The second being; change as adaptation wherein teachers "change" in response to something; they adapt their practices to the changed conditions. This change is internal as compared to the first and is organic in that sense. The third being; change as personal development; wherein teachers "seek to change" in an attempt to improve their performance or develop additional skills or strategies. The fourth; change as a local reform—teachers "change something" for reasons of contextual needs. The fifth is change as systemic restructuring; wherein teachers enact the "change policies" of the system to fit into the system. The last being; change as growth or learning—teachers "change inevitably through continuous professional activity"; teachers are themselves learners who work in a learning community.

Discuss

1. What does the above research findings tell you about teacher learning and growth?
2. If we all agree to teaching being a complex process, what should be the nature of in-service teacher development so as to improve the classroom practice.
3. How would you use your classroom experience and knowledge for improving learning for teachers and students' alike. Discuss.
4. Discuss in your group, why teachers continue to work in isolation when the researches clearly demonstrate the benefits of working in a collaborative culture. Write the one key reason which is most plausible and commonly agreed in your group. How do you address it?



Activity: Why Learn in Communities: Research Excerpts on the Benefit of Collaborative Learning

Time Required: 60 minutes

Objectives: Participants will be able to...

- Understand the significance of learning in communities
- Understand different strategies for improving teaching practice, teaching culture and students' learning through PLCs.

Group Size - Group activity

Material Required- Print Handouts, chart papers, sketch pens

Steps for Facilitation:

1. Divide the participants into five groups and distribute one handout each.
2. Ask every member in the group to read out the research excerpt given to their respective groups and cull out implications for their school.
3. Discuss the findings of the research in your group and share the implications drawn.
4. Make a list of all the implications on a chart paper and share it with the larger group under five broad headings
 - Impact of PLC on Student Learning
 - Impact of PLC on Culture of learning
 - Impact of PLC on Teaching Practice
 - PLC for development of Teacher Agency
 - PLC for improving school processes and collaboration
5. In the large group discuss the benefits of learning in communities/collaboration and the challenges that you foresee.

Points for Debriefing:

While each individual has differential learning needs and individual learning has its own significance; there is merit in learning together. Debrief on the significance of breaking the isolation in teaching profession and need for encouraging collaborations and sharing forming a community of practitioners.

Key Takeaways:

Learning is a social process. Encouraging sharing of practice, enquiry and reflection into the teaching practice not only improves the practice but also the culture and overall performance of the school..



Why Learn in Communities: Research Excerpts on the Benefit of Collaborative Learning

Darling-Hammond and McLaughlin (1995) write that nation's reform agenda requires most teachers to rethink their own practice, to construct new classroom roles and expectations about student outcomes, and to teach in ways they have never taught before. This necessitates professional development that involves teachers in the dual capacities of both teaching and learning. The following are excerpts drawn from research papers that bring out the impact of PLCs on teaching practice, culture of teaching, student achievement and bringing shift to the conventional models of teacher professional growth.

1. Professional Learning Communities and Impact on Teaching Practice

In what ways does teaching practice change as a result of participation in a PLC? And, what aspects of the PLC support these changes?

- In Dunne et.al. (2000) study it was found that with the participation in 'critical friends' group; the teaching practices became more student centred over time. Teachers increased the use of techniques such as added flexibility of classroom arrangements and changes in the pace of instruction to accommodate for varying levels of student content mastery.
- Englert and Tarrant (1995) studied changes in practice for three teachers within a learning community and found that substantive changes in their practice.
- In the study by Hollins et al. (2004) on 12 participating teachers that struggled to teach low achieving African-American students. It was noted that by the tenth meeting, the teachers had shifted to a more strategic focus as they designed a new "approach to language arts instruction that involved letter writing, a poetry project and class books, and employed the writing process" (p. 258). As a part of this process teachers used strategies that included, "visualization techniques" to help children understand their reading, manipulation of site words using flash cards, and different strategies for having the children change words to make new ones (p. 259).
- Using a combined quantitative/qualitative design Louis and Marks (1998) conducted a multi-site study of the impact of PLCs. The study focused on eight

elementary schools, eight middle schools and eight high schools (24 total) and studied both pedagogy and the social structure of the classrooms in examining teaching practice. In particular, through classroom observations and interviews with teachers they documented the presence of the structural support for authentic pedagogy which is an increased use of higher order thinking, the construction of meaning through conversation, and the development of in-depth knowledge that has value beyond the classroom. In fact, they note 36% of the variance in the quality of classroom pedagogy as an impact of PLC on classroom practice.

- A final example comes from one of Strahan's (2003) case studies of an elementary school where all of the teachers participated in efforts to improve student achievement in reading. As a part of the change process teachers worked collaboratively to develop a shared school mission around four guiding values that included integrity, respect, discipline, and excellence (p. 133). The researcher concluded that this led to the development of stronger instructional norms and made the teachers receptive to working with a curriculum facilitator in the areas of changing practices for guided reading, writing, and self-selected reading.
- Andrews and Lewis (2002) indicated that teachers who participated in a learning community known as Innovative Design for Enhancing Achievement in Schools (IDEAS) provided several direct quotes of teachers that reported improvement in teaching practice; "I find that my teaching has improved, I find that I understand more about what I'm doing, why I'm doing things, and I find that's been an improvement" (p. 246). What the researches typically demonstrated was more specific information on how the teaching culture changed as a result of teachers' participation in a PLC.
- Little (2001) reports that professional community is an important contributor to instructional improvement and school reform. Lewis et al (1995) found that in schools with a genuine sense of community there was an increased sense of work efficacy, in turn leading to increased classroom motivation and work satisfaction, and greater collective responsibility for student learning. In Australia, Andrews and Louis (2004) also found that where teachers developed a professional learning community, it not only enhanced the knowledge base of the group, but also had a significant impact on their work in their classrooms.

Points for Discussion

- Enlist aspects of PLC that led to improvement in teaching practice
- Discuss within your group about how you could initiate some of the strategies reviewed through literature

2. Professional Learning Communities and Impact on School Culture

In the studies on impact of PLC, change in the professional culture of a school came up as a significant finding since it demonstrated a fundamental shift in the habits of mind that teachers brought to their daily work in the classroom. The studies reported that the characteristics inherent in learning communities worked to promote changes in teaching cultures. These are: collaboration, a focus on student learning, teacher authority, and continuous teacher learning.

- For example; Collaboration a key characteristic of PLC promoted strategies that “open” practice in ways that encourage sharing, reflecting, and taking the risks necessary to change thus promote changes in teaching cultures. Louis and Marks (1998) created a “professional community index” that demonstrated that effective PLCs included both collaborative activity and the deprivatization of practice.
- Berry et al. (2005) reported that a learning community structure helped teachers in a rural elementary school examine their practice through sharing lessons, using protocols for decision making, and relying on systematic note taking to inform colleagues about their work.
- In another example, Phillips (2003) reported that PLC allowed teachers to observe each other in the classroom, videotape and review lessons, investigate teaching problems and collectively generate new ideas for practice, engaging in literature study circles, and participating in critical friends’ groups.
- In the most comprehensive study of PLCs, Bolam et al. (2005) examined survey data from 393 schools that included early childhood, elementary and secondary schools and interview-based case study data from 16 school sites. Both survey and case study data suggest a positive impact on teaching practice and morale as a result of participation in collaborative activities. Across the reviews, teachers reported an increase in collaboration as they worked in learning communities. This type of change in teacher culture, which has traditionally been described as isolationist, seems likely to lead to fundamental shifts in the way that teachers approach their work.
- Another key characteristic of PLC is the focus on student learning. Bolam et al. (2005) found that in effective PLCs the “pupil learning was the foremost concern” (p. 146) and that PLCs at higher levels of development had stronger linkages between student achievement and teachers’ professional learning. These findings reinforce the importance of persistently pursuing an instructional focus as teachers engage in their work in learning communities.

- Another element of a PLC that helps to foster changes in teaching cultures is the ability of teachers to make decisions regarding both the processes of their learning communities and aspects of school governance. In a case study reported by Englert and Tarrant (1995) between three special education teachers and seven university researchers to provide “meaningful and beneficial” (p. 325) literacy instruction for students with mild disabilities, the researchers encouraged the teachers to take control of the curriculum. “Teachers were given leadership in their choices about curriculum development, so that the power over the topics and change agenda might be shaped by the teachers’ concerns, interests, and questions” (p. 327). In the end, at least one teacher noted the significance of being given this authority when she spoke of how it transformed her sense of ownership over the curriculum. At the beginning, I didn’t like that [parity] at all. I wanted Carol Sue to say, “Try this,” and “Do this.” And there was none of that. Now I can see why that was a really good way of doing that because I feel that I’ve [speaker’s emphasis] done it, as opposed to taking somebody else’s [ideas]. Even though I’ve used hundreds of other people’s ideas and so forth, it’s still mine, you know (p. 335).
- In a second example, Supovitz (2002) reported survey data comparing team-based and non-team based teachers’ perceptions of school culture on 33 items that were grouped into five key indicators of school culture. He found “strong and persistent evidence” that team-based teachers “felt more involved in a variety of school-related decisions” (p. 1604). He concluded that giving teachers the power to be decision makers in their own learning process was essential to improving students’ learning.
- The final element of PLCs that supports overall changes in teaching cultures is that of continuous teacher learning. Participation in learning communities facilitates professional development that is driven by the needs of teachers as they are naturally engaged in efforts to accomplish their goals. The importance of continuous teacher learning was supported throughout the literature (Berry et al., 2005; Bolam et al., 2005; Englert and Tarrant, 1995; Hollins et al., 2004; Phillips, 2003; Supovitz, 2002).

Points for Discussion

- Enlist aspects of PLC that led to improvement in teaching culture
- Discuss within your group about how you could initiate some of the strategies reviewed through literature

3. Professional Learning Communities and Impact on Student Achievement

In an educational climate that is increasingly directed by the demands of accountability, the viability of PLCs will be determined by their success in enhancing student achievement. This makes it incumbent upon educators to demonstrate how their work in learning communities improves student learning. Eight studies (Berry et al., 2005; Bolam et al., 2005; Hollins et al., 2004; Louis & Marks, 1998; Phillips, 2003; Strahan, 2003; Supovitz, 2002; Supovitz & Christman, 2003) that examined the relationship between teachers' participation in PLCs and student achievement found that student learning improved.

Berry et al. (2005) documented the progress of a rural elementary school over a 4-year period and found that more than 80% students met the grade level standards as compared to the previous 50%. In Strahan's (2003) account of three struggling elementary schools over a 3-year period, in each of these schools' student test scores rose from 50% proficiency to more than 75%. The researchers concluded that, "the greater the extent of reported staff involvement in professional and pupil learning, the higher was the level of pupil performing and progress in both primary and secondary schools" (p. 132).

Finally, the studies conducted by Bolam et al. (2005), Louis and Marks (1998), Supovitz (2002), and Supovitz and Christman (2003) are particularly important in helping to discern the value of PLCs. In these studies, results of student achievement gains varied with the strength of the PLC in the school (Bolam et al., 2005; Louis & Marks, 1998) or with the specific focus of the efforts of teams or small communities of teachers (Supovitz, 2002; Supovitz & Christman, 2003). After adjusting for grade level and student background Louis and Marks (1998), found that student achievement was significantly higher in schools with the strongest PLCs. This effect was so strong that the strength of the PLC accounted for 85% of the variance in achievement in this study. In both sites studied by Supovitz (2002) and Supovitz and Christman (2003) "there was evidence to suggest that those communities that did engage in structured, sustained, and supported instructional discussions and that investigated the relationships between instructional practices and student work produce significant gains in student learning" (p. 5).

It is important to note, however, that in the communities where teachers worked together but did not engage in structured work that was highly focused around student learning, similar gains were not evident. A focus on student learning is the key to increased achievement inquiry about how learning communities produced the improvement in student learning. All studies documented that the collaborative efforts of teachers were focused on meeting the learning needs of their students.

1. Berry et al. (2005) reported; for consistent improvement for students, the teachers worked in professional learning teams to develop instructional strategies that were based on student data and reinforced by professional literature, to lead to meaningful student achievement.
2. Hollins et al. (2004) stressed the importance of a facilitator who helped teachers maintain a focus on the goal of improving literacy for African-American students during all group meetings. Additionally, the facilitator worked to ensure that the efforts of their collaborations were always rooted in improving test scores and other measures of student achievement.
3. Similarly, Strahan (2003) noted that the reform efforts of the three elementary schools he studied were driven by data-directed dialogue. He explained that this meant teachers' collaborative efforts were always focused on data about student learning and directed toward increasing that learning.
4. Louis and Marks (1998) examined the nature of impact of PLC on pedagogy and achievement to conclude that the focus on the intellectual quality of student learning within PLCs boosts achievement because it pushes teachers toward the use of authentic pedagogy.
5. Phillips (2003), in his case study supported that teachers in this middle school continually analysed data from each child to identify ways to affect his/her success both cognitively and affectively. Phillips concluded that the teachers "knew their students' population well, and they deliberately created culturally relevant programs to make learning more meaningful" (p. 258). Thus key element of successful PLCs is their pervasive attention to meeting the learning needs of their students.
6. Lee and Smith (1996) in a longitudinal follow-up study of 820 US high schools and almost 9,904 teachers, found that achievement gains for eighth and tenth grade students (in maths, reading, science and social studies) were significantly higher in schools where teachers took collective responsibility for students' academic success or failure (one of the key characteristics of professional community).

Points for Discussion

- Enlist aspects of PLC that led to improvement in students' learning
- Discuss within your group about how you could initiate some of the strategies reviewed through literature
- What does it mean to take collective responsibility of student learning?

4. Professional Learning Community for Development of Teacher Agency

Literature on “teacher change” (see, for example, Doyle, 1990; Guskey, 1985; Johnson, 1996a, Clarke and Hollingsworth, 1994) identifies a number of alternative perspectives to teacher change and each perspective could be associated with a particular approach to teacher professional development. Clarke and Hollingsworth (1994) described six perspectives on teacher change:

1. **Change as training**—change is something that is done to teachers; that is, teachers are “changed”.
2. **Change as adaptation**—teachers “change” in response to something; they adapt their practices to changed conditions.
3. **Change as personal development**—teachers “seek to change” in an attempt to improve their performance or develop additional skills or strategies.
4. **Change as local reform**—teachers “change something” for reasons of personal growth to meet the context specific reform measures.
5. **Change as systemic restructuring**—teachers enact the “change policies” of the system to fit into the system.
6. **Change as growth or learning**—teachers “change inevitably through continuous professional activity”; teachers are themselves learners who work in a learning community.

Historically, teacher change has been directly linked with planned professional development activities (Clarke & Hollingsworth, 1994) based on a training paradigm that implied a deficit in teacher skills and knowledge. Most professional development consisted of “one-shot” workshops aimed at teacher mastery of prescribed skills and knowledge rather than an emphasis on continuous learning aimed at change in the classroom practice. A significant shift in focus from earlier conceptions of change as something that is done to teachers (that is, change as an event with teachers as relatively passive participants), to change as a complex process that is done with teachers (Fullan & Stiegelbauer, 1991; Guskey, 1986; Hall & Loucks, 1977; Johnson, 1989, 1993, 1996a, b; Teacher Professional Growth Consortium, 1994) is noticed today. The key shift is one of agency: from programs that change teachers to teachers actively participating in shaping their professional growth through reflective practice. This approach to teacher professional development is about teachers wanting to know more about their practice not to repair a personal inadequacy as a teacher, but to seek greater fulfilment as a practitioner of the art (Jackson, 1974). PLCs

provide this opportunity to develop the collective agency of teachers to contribute to the practice. Bolam et al. (2005) found that teachers saw a clear connection between their own professional learning opportunities within the PLC and changes in their practices and student learning. Bryk and colleagues (1999) suggest that professional community fosters instructional change by creating an environment that supports learning through innovation and experimentation.

Points for Discussion

- As a teacher and leader, where do you see yourself on the continuum of change. Is change done to you or do you initiate change through continuous inquiry and reflection?
- What changes do you anticipate to transform your school into a site for continuous inquiry and learning for all?
- Are you able to exercise your agency as a teacher/leader in your school?

5. PLC for improving school processes, practices and collaboration

Awasthi, K. (2018) describes the application of PLC evident at Government Senior Secondary School, Katrain to improve all the schools in the cluster and transform pedagogical practices to meet the recommendations of NCF, 2005. In 2013, some of the elementary schools in the cluster were ranked in the lowest quartile in the district. By 2016... all schools had moved to the top quartile of the districts' 6 blocks and 118 clusters. The staff from all schools joined together as a professional community of learners, engaging in reflection, assessment, study and learning about how to make [learning for all] work in their classrooms. The teachers felt the change in practice required their collaboration and coming together to learn as a unit... Respective principals encouraged collective learning, making it clear that expectations were high. Such learning was enabled through arranging time schedules and structures to accommodate it. Making effective use of Saturdays and post school hours for teacher learning and discussion. Again, the principals were active—managing and effectively utilizing resources, monitoring and encouraging efforts. The efforts got maximized with the cluster head engaging parents and students as part of the efforts by the learning community. The students took active interest in their learning, by setting targets for achievement and actively engaging in the process of assessment for learning. The parents became sensitive to the efforts of the teachers and schools and joined hands in encouraging students' learning at home. Further, teachers were given the freedom and the responsibility for making decisions; a climate was created where this could happen. The cluster head facilitated and encouraged internal open house for the faculty of the cluster where teachers shared successes. Trust is one element upon which this way of working is built: the principal's trust in the teachers and their reciprocal trust in the principal. In other work relating to the development of PLCs, benefits are identified that link to the processes and structures that can be used to build collaborative teams and initiate inquiry-based learning. The following are some of the PLC activities that have direct benefits on the school processes, practices and culture.

Sr. No.	Processes / Activities in a Professional Learning Community	Direct Benefits
1	Use shared planning to develop units, lessons and activities	Divides the labour, saves time because no one has to do it all, increases quantity and quality of ideas
2	Learn from one another by watching each other teach	Provides concrete examples of effective practices, expands the observer's repertoire of skills, stimulates analytical thinking about teaching

3	Collectively study student work to identify weaknesses and plan new ways to teach to those weaknesses	Increases quantity and quality of insights into student performance, focuses efforts on the bottom line—student learning, increases professionalism and self-esteem of learning community members
4	Share articles and other professional resources for ideas and insights, conduct studies of books on teaching and learning	Expands pool of ideas and resources available to members of the learning community
5	Talk with one another about what and how you teach and the results your teaching produces	Decreases feelings of isolation, increases experimentation and analysis of teaching practices, increases confidence of teachers, provides teachers with greater access to a range of teaching styles, models and philosophies
6	Provide moral support, comradeship and encouragement	Enables teachers to stick with new practices through the rough early stages, decreases burnout and stress, increases team members' willingness to try new methods and share ideas and concerns with other members of the learning community
7	Jointly explore a problem, including data collection and analysis, conduct action research	Improves quality of insights and solutions, increases professionalism
8	Attend training together and help each other implement the content of the training	Helps learning community members get more out of training, enables them to go to one another with questions or for clarification about what was presented during training
9	Participate in continual quality improvement activities	Creates more efficient use of time, takes advantage of particular talents or interests of learning community members
10	Use collective decision making to reach decisions that produce collective action	Improves quality of instruction, student performance and school operations

11	Provide support for help-seeking as well as help-giving	Makes a strong statement of shared responsibility and commitment to one another's learning
12	Share the responsibility for making and/or collecting materials	Helps learning community members feel secure in asking for help and advice, enables the giving of assistance and advice without establishing one-up/one-down relationships

Source: Adapted from Collins, 2000

Points for Discussion

- Do you see merit in the PLC activities? Can these be included as part of your school schedule?
- How do you plan to include the PLC activities as a regular part of your school time-table?



Activity: Conceptualizing PLCs in Schools

Time Required: 50 minutes

Objectives: Participants will be able to ...

- Understand the meaning and concept of PLCs
- Typology and framework of PLCs

Group Size – Power-point presentation followed by discussion and worksheet completion

Material Required- A4 papers, pens, sketch pens

Steps for Facilitation:

1. The session begins with the facilitator making groups of 4 to 6 such that at the end there are even group numbers.
2. Each group is paired with another group such that these two groups are ‘competing’ groups.
3. Each group is then given blank sheets to work on.
4. The task is to listen to the power point presentation carefully and come up with a worksheet based on the session presentation.
5. This worksheet is to be prepared as each concept is discussed.
6. The group has freedom to design their worksheet -
7. The facilitator may give discussion and writing time after completion of each concept.
8. The facilitator may ask the participants to refer to the additional resource, if need be, for preparing the worksheets
9. At the end of the lecture which should take around 30 minutes, the worksheets are exchanged between the groups.
10. The competing groups have to fill the worksheets and return to their creators.

11. Each group then checks the worksheet created by them and filled up by their competitors.
12. Any confusion or mis-conceptualization arising from either the questions or answers of these worksheets are clarified.
13. All worksheets are displayed on bulletin /pin up boards for all to see.

Points for Debriefing:

Based on the understanding about PLC, discuss what would be the pre-requisites for developing PLC in your schools.

Key Takeaways:

PLC is a collaboration of professionals (in this case teachers and leaders) sharing and critically interrogating their practice in an ongoing, reflective, collaborative, inclusive, learning-oriented, growth promoting way.

PLCs could be autonomous, structured or scripted depending upon the phase at which they operate, the culture and ethos of the school and the beliefs and attitudes shared by the staff.

The core characteristics of PLCs is shared value and vision, collective responsibility, focus on learning, reflective dialogue, deprivatizing practice and collaboration.



Excerpt – Meaning and Concept of Professional Learning Community

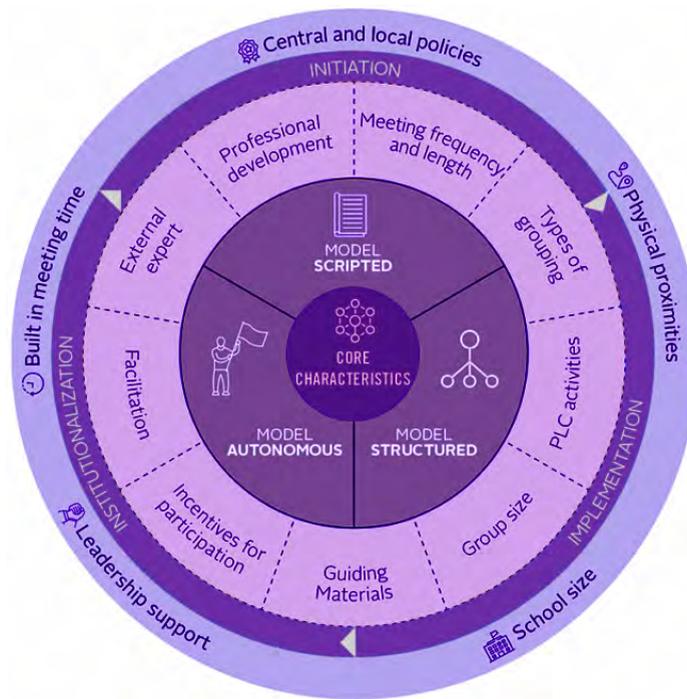
There is no universal definition of Professional Learning Communities. PLC is a group of people sharing and critically interrogating their practice in an ongoing, reflective, collaborative, inclusive, learning-oriented, growth-promoting way (Mitchell & Sackney, 2000; Toole & Loius, 2002); operating as a collective enterprise (King & Newmann, 2001). Hords (1997) blends process and anticipated outcomes and defines PLC as one: in which the teachers in a school and its administrators continuously seek and share learning and act on their learning. The goal of their actions is to enhance their effectiveness as professionals for the students' benefit; thus, this arrangement may also be termed communities of continuous inquiry and improvement. The notion therefore draws attention to the potential that a range of people based inside and outside a school can mutually enhance each other's and pupils' learning as well as school development.

Seashore, Anderson and Riedel (2003) elaborate that by using the term PLC we signify our interest not only in discrete acts of teacher sharing, but in the establishment of a school-wide culture that makes collaboration expected, inclusive, genuine, ongoing and focused on critically examining practice to improve student outcomes...The hypotheses is what teachers do outside the classroom can be as important as what they do inside in affecting school restructuring, teachers' professional development and student learning.

Typology and Framework of Professional Learning Communities

After combing through the literature on PLCs certain core characteristics were found to be common across all PLCs while in certain others they varied significantly. For example; there were PLCs within a single school and across multiple schools as well, in some cases PLCs were mandated; more so in low- and middle-income countries while in certain others they had emerged from the ground, out of the felt needs for improving students' learning and as part of the teacher professional development. There were variations in terms of their size, frequency of meetings, incentives to teachers and peer led or led by an external expert or in terms of the level of prescriptiveness that decided their structure, scripting and autonomy. Based on this Soares et.al (2020) drew three conceptual categories of PLCs that differ by the type of materials, incentives and professional development provided to teachers which influences how open-ended or scripted the PLCs tend to be. These are; the autonomous model, the structured model and the scripted model.

The core characteristics (the purple centre) of success for PLCs are shown at the centre of the framework and remain same irrespective of the model or design it uses. These refer to the five essential attributes that were found to be common across literature on PLCs (Soares et al., 2020). These include shared values and vision, focus on student learning, reflective dialogue, deprivatization of practice and collaboration or collective learning.



Typology and Framework of PLCs

Source: A typology and framework for professional learning communities (PLCs) in LMICs | R&E Search for Evidence (fhi360.org)

There are three PLC models – autonomous, structured and scripted – based on the level of PLC autonomy and structure. In the autonomous model, teachers are highly involved in identifying their learning needs and determine the priorities for the PLC. The structured model allows some level of autonomy however comes with structured guidance to shape the community dialogue. The scripted model is totally prescriptive and comes with highly-scripted materials and pre-defined community content.

The structural varying characteristics like group size, guiding materials and facilitation method are usually associated with the design of the PLC. These structural features can vary greatly within any PLC model.

The phases of development refer to the different stages any PLC may go through from the moment of its creation, in recognition that PLCs are constantly changing: initiation, implementation and institutionalization.

And the supportive conditions (the green circle of the framework) refer to factors outside of the PLC that may allow or hinder its creation, ongoing management and sustainability (Bolam et al., 2005).

Characteristics of Professional Learning Communities

Soares et.al (2020) in the typology and framework for PLCs alludes the core characteristics of PLCs These are as follows:

- Shared Values and Vision**
 - Shared value and vision is central to a teacher and school leader's work
 - It is key to community building and essential for an undeviating focus on student learning.
 - For the establishment and sustenance of PLC it is inevitable to develop shared vision and values
- Focus on Student Learning**
 - PLCs focus on student learning as an “end” and improving teaching the “means.”
 - It is focused on student work, assessments, gaps in learning and diagnosing problems in instruction.
 - Believes in modifying teaching to modify learning.
- Collective Responsibility**
 - Collective responsibility for student learning alone can sustain PLC.
 - Connects all teachers together, brings in a culture of trust and collegiality
 - Builds positive pressure sustaining commitment around students' learning and easing isolation
- Reflective Dialogue**
 - Conversations that make teachers aware of their practice and their impact.
 - Improving learning outcomes through reflection on teacher practice, knowledge and attitudes to shape teacher behaviours.
- Deprivatizing Practice**
 - Making practice public to break the isolation and seek critical feedback for improvement.
 - Professional relationships improve when teachers share instructional strategies and techniques, make decisions about instructional issues, and come up with ideas that enhance learning for all members of the school community.
- Collaboration**
 - Includes collaborative endeavours like sharing of expertise, perspectives on teaching, willingness to share data on student learning, joint review and feedback, shared responsibility and commitment to effective instruction
 - Differences, debates, disagreements are viewed as foundation stones and feeling of interdependence is central

In addition to the above, few other characteristics common across PLCs were inclusive membership, networks, partnerships, openness, mutual trust, respect and support. In a nut shell, when you walk into a school that values learning in community, you see a sense of trust and harmony amongst people, places and events. You see all working together to advance the school towards the shared goals. Teachers are also empowered to do what is best for their students.



Activity: PLC in Practice

Time Required: 40 minutes

Objectives: Participants will be able to ...

- Visualize PLC in practice through the case study
- Relate the concept with their school's functioning.
- Identify the processes that lead to sustained collaborations

Group Size: Individual Reading followed by Large Group discussion

Material Required- Case Study Handout, Chart paper, markers, Pens,

Steps for Facilitation:

1. Divide the larger group into small groups of five to seven.
2. Distribute the handout on case study to all the participants in the groups and instruct them to read.
3. Ask participants to individually try and answer the questions at the end of the case study.
4. Identify the practices and processes initiated by the schools for collaborative learning.
5. Discuss the answers in the small groups and collate them on an A4 sheet.
6. Do some reflection on the practices back in your school. What is the nature of collaboration in your school?

Points for Debriefing:

- Debrief on what brought the schools together? How could healthy collaborations be developed and sustained?
- What practices and processes were initiated by the schools to grow together?

- How teacher and school collaborations were impacting student learning and performance in schools?
- What does the case study tell you about Professional Learning Communities?

Key Takeaways:

To function as a PLC it is important to identify a common purpose that drives all.

To create processes and practices that engage all at all stages and lead to the growth and development of all.

Sustaining a PLC does not require a mandate from outside rather a compelling committing force from inside – you can't have it, you create it.



Case Study- PLC at Katrain Cluster, Kullu, H.P

Katrain is cluster in district Kullu of Himachal Pradesh with 17 schools. In 2013, school principal of one of the senior secondary schools; also the cluster head got an opportunity to undergo a training on school leadership development at Moray House School of Education, Scotland which became a motivation for him to take leadership seriously. Later in 2015, another training from NCSL, NIEPA on school leadership development further triggered not just one but many like-minded school heads with an urge to transform the face of government school system. Individually they felt diffident and lost hope owing to the increasing administrative and academic workload and the expectations for change but as a collective it was always motivating and empowering through the mutual sharing. Kullu was also fortunate to have a good leadership at the block and district level that supported teachers and school heads in reflecting on the existing practices.

Challenges in Teaching Learning

Reflections led to an awareness that while results were 100%, learning wasn't and there was mechanized teaching. Participation of every child into the learning process was also much below 100%. Neither the school administration nor the teachers were much concerned about it since at the end only results mattered. This bothered Mr. Kapur; the principal of Senior Secondary School, Katrain who in his words was tired of listening to the same set of answers for lack of learning levels – “what can we do, children are coming from the neighbouring elementary or primary schools without having their fundamentals clear. So, if they do not perform it is not our fault”. Mr. Kapur, then was a principal of a senior secondary school with grades 6th to 12th in Katrain. One day he realized that perhaps his question was wrong; rather than asking “Why children did not perform?” I should be asking, “What can we do so that all children in learn and perform to their fullest?” and this he says made all the difference. This question led us to think together on solutions on what we could do to improve learning and changed the perspective for all. I realized how with slight change in the question the attitude of defending oneself or blaming on others shifted to owning up the problem and look for solutions. We reached to an agreement that if problem lies in neighbouring schools why not work with these schools, their teachers, their students who tomorrow would be our students and thus improve their foundations. This was the genesis of a PLC amongst schools in the Katrain cluster.

The Initiation of Teacher Collaborations – Laying Foundations for PLC

The first few meetings were more about filling time - reading educational documents like NCF, 2005; Continuous Comprehensive Evaluation, government circulars or orders, constitutional documents like RTE, 2009, some of the educational classics and other relevant documents. Gradually these meetings started losing luster and there was this burden of calling meetings, setting agenda, recording minutes, initiating discussion, hosting principals and heads, ensuring that everybody attends and much more. Teachers in the host school (GSSS, Katrain) also felt this was an additional activity and wanted to escape the responsibility. The challenge once again found its solution in the collective discussions and we resolved by deciding to share leadership responsibilities across schools rather than a senior secondary school taking it up by default. This turned out to be a boon; something which was just thought of as an alternative to find solution to our problem, became a reason for the sustenance of the PLC. The monthly meetings became rotational. There was ownership amongst all the heads; the teachers from different schools that hosted meetings also got a chance to participate. Monthly meetings became monthly visits to each school in the cluster thus giving everyone a glimpse of every other school in the cluster. The staff, students, SMC and community of the village became alert since in a small village school when 17-20 teachers visit; itself becomes an occasion and there was a very positive message to the community which felt that all teachers are sincerely wanting the schools for their kids to improve and hence they also reciprocated with great optimism. Thus, the growth of schools which otherwise was lopsided towards secondary and senior secondary schools performing better now had its focus and efforts distributed to all schools and every school in the cluster received the required support.



Image 1: Teachers and Leaders analyzing the students' achievement data at a cluster meeting in Katrain

Sharing, Conducting Enquiry and Learning: Evolving as a Single Unit

With the monthly meetings being rotational observations about the host school naturally became a focus of discussion. From minute focus on overall school maintenance, aesthetics, cleanliness, to classroom teaching-learning, interaction with teachers, students and community and an increased emphasis on students' learning. All teachers and school leaders got involved into the process of enquiry, reflection and discussion since each one of them felt it was talking about their day-to-day problems and giving them the much-required feedback and insight about what and how things could be improved. This also gradually evolved them as team from simply filling in time to sharing best practice and then to a stage where there was mutual trust and respect and sharing the rough edges of one's own practice and school was also considered ok. Students also got familiarized with the teachers and leaders of other schools in their cluster. This improved the transition from primary to elementary and secondary grades. The PLC also got extended to students. Peer groups within and amongst schools were formed where peer leaders took up the onus to lead different curricular areas like literature, sports, arts, STEM subjects and other cluster level activities. Inter-school competitions were hosted by students, classroom settings were rearranged to support peer learning and children expressed their joy in learning in teams as against the didactic classrooms.



Image 2: A Discussion Meeting at Cluster Katrain

Articulating his emotion Mr. Kapur said, “previously I was only concerned about my school, my teachers our school performance but with the regular cluster meetings and engagement in PLC, I no longer see myself or my school in isolation and I feel all children

in the cluster are our responsibility and we ought to promise them quality education. This is how PLC brought in us collective commitment for student learning. Another school head who had recently been posted to this cluster said, *“it is only three months since I have joined this school, but before posting I had heard about this cluster and was very sceptic. I also wanted to get myself posted to some other cluster so that I could avoid the cluster meetings and escape the additional work. But after having attended a few PLCs I realized it is really helpful and lot of pedagogical concepts which otherwise I would not have learnt I got to learn in this group. I realized there is so much opportunity to share, reflect, learn and improve.”*

Another teacher from a small primary school added; “not only this, as a small primary school I would have hardly got an opportunity to share or discuss any of the content areas with anybody. Not only this now we have common exams at the cluster level; which means subject-wise and grade-wise question bank is prepared at the cluster level and from it questions are pooled. There is a common date for exams in all schools of the cluster and questions are printed at one school and sealed and supplied to other schools like we do for 10th and 12th graders. Thus, small schools like us not only get to improve quality of the questions but also are saved of the burden of expenditure which in absence of a printer or xerox machine we would have to undergo in getting few sets prepared for our students.” This is just one example but there are many such acts of sharing and learning that has enhanced our knowledge and skills.

PLC: A Constructivist way to Teacher Development and Internal Accountability

So, did anyone mandate a PLC in Katrain? Was its structure enforced upon or did it emerge as a result of the collective need and voluntary effort?

When schools in Katrain cluster got engaged in cluster-based training programs; one of the teachers remarked that when we were nominated for trainings, the burden of its success lied with the facilitators and the best of trainings at times did not find implications in the classroom. Not because trainings were not good or that we made any less effort. It was simply that we did not see our context and daily classroom problems getting addressed through it. In cluster-based teacher professional development our prime concerns were improvement of subject knowledge and pedagogical skills; right from the stage of identifying the challenges and issues to developing training modules, designing the program, facilitation, assessing the impact; all of it was done through participation of all. There was 100% involvement and ownership and thus learning no longer was an end rather a continuous on-going process. We had no idea of what a PLC is; we evolved gradually into one owing to our common interests and a focus on learning for all. Students also felt enthused seeing teachers engage in learning during and after the school time.

The positivity that we saw around motivated us to continue; the system that we initially cared for was no more relevant. The children started holding a centre place. Now it wasn't accountability that drove us rather the urge to refine ourselves every day and be better at what we do. Remedial classes which otherwise remained ritualistic were now based on analysis of students' answer scripts, reflection on teaching-learning process, diagnostic tests and identifications of common errors followed by meticulously designed easy to learn material for students. Community that normally were reluctant in sending children to school during harvesting or sowing seasons; now took turns to escort children back home after the remedial class late in the evening. The motivation for learning percolated down to every stakeholder. PLC now was no longer a small gathering of teachers for improving practice rather a reason that connected the whole of school community.

Points for discussion

- What does the case study tell you about a PLC?
- List out the characteristics of PLC as discussed in the case study.
- Identify the different aspects of school development that PLCs contribute to.
- What processes the school community underwent to develop and sustain as a PLC?
- What solutions does the case study offer to some of the common school challenges?

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Activity: PLC in Practice

Time Required: 40 minutes

Objectives: Participants will be able to ...

- Visualize PLC in practice through the Video link
- Relate the concept with their school's functioning.
- Identify the processes that lead to sustained collaborations

Group Size: Viewing the Video followed by Large Group discussion and completion sheet

Material Required- Internet, Projector and screen for viewing the Youtube video, Completion sheet, Chart paper, markers, Pens,

Steps for Facilitation:

1. Display the video of RPVV, Harinagar - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xGn9S9pPouY> to all the participants in the group.
2. Participants will be asked to keep taking notes while viewing and identify key innovative steps taken by the Head of School for functioning as a PLC.
3. Participants would then be requested to discuss their key take aways in small groups of five
4. On a separate A4 sheet participants may collate the key learning under the following themes:
 - Engaging the Students and Community in the process of learning
 - Creating a Culture of Learning
 - Planning for Teacher Professional Development
 - Developing School as a Learning Organization
5. The facilitator may then paste four chart papers on four different corners of the room with the above four themes written on it.

6. One member from each group could write their key points on the different chart papers
7. All members may take a gallery walk to read what other group members have put up.

Points for Debriefing:

- What does the case study tell you about Professional Learning Communities?
- What learning do you take back when you reflect on your school's functioning?

Key Takeaways:

PLCs entail shared leadership.

PLCs require institutional support in terms of space, time and resources both infrastructural and academic expertise.

PLCs require patience, perseverance and healthy partnerships.

Sustaining a PLC does not require a mandate from outside rather a compelling committing force from inside – you can't have it, you create it.



PLC in Practice: Completion Activity

Based on the Understanding developed about PLC through the Case Study and the Youtube Video, Complete the following.

<ul style="list-style-type: none">■ I understand PLCs to be...
<ul style="list-style-type: none">■ I know of a PLC... / Our school has a PLC...
<ul style="list-style-type: none">■ To function as a PLC, our school would need to commit to...
<ul style="list-style-type: none">■ I see a great promise in PLCs in terms of...



Activity: Identifying Beliefs, Values and Vision: Conventional Vs Progressive Teachers/Leaders

Time Required: 30 minutes

Objectives: Participants will be able to ...

- Identify the underlying beliefs, values and vision of conventional leaders.
- Identify the underlying beliefs, values and vision of progressive leaders that encourage collaboration.

Group Size: Small group activity followed by Large Group Discussion

Material Required- Handout on identifying beliefs values and vision, conventional and progressive teacher caps conventional teacher caps for role play, marker, pens chart paper

Steps for Facilitation:

1. Distribute the handout on identifying beliefs, values and vision to all participants.
2. Ask participants to read through the actions of conventional and progressive teachers and leaders.
3. Make pairs with your neighbour and one of you could pick up the role of a conventional teacher/leader while the other may pick up the role of a progressive teacher/leader.
4. Think through each statement to identify the beliefs, values and vision underlying the actions.
5. Immerse yourself in the role that you have taken up and discuss with your partner what motivates your actions

Points for Debriefing:

Debrief on how our beliefs, values and vision shape our actions and behaviours and could either help or hamper our progress.

How belief values & vision may also block our thinking?

Are you able to relate the role of belief and values in shaping our mental models?

Key Takeaways:

Our experiences at times shape our beliefs and at others we go seeking experiences that match our beliefs. Thus beliefs, assumptions gradually become deeply ingrained shaping our mental models and directing our actions.



Identifying Beliefs, Values and Vision of Conventional Vs Progressive Teachers/Leaders

Conventional Teachers...	Identify the Belief, Values and Vision in the case of Conventional Teachers that shapes their actions			Progressive Teachers...
	Belief	Values	Vision	
Work in isolation in individual classrooms and do not collaborate on strategies to improve student learning.	What is belief behind working in isolation?	What is the value that one sees in working in isolation?	What do you think is the personal vision?	Work collaboratively on problems that focus on student learning.
Feel responsible for teaching while learning is responsibility of the child and/or parents. Teachers can at the most support.	What is the teacher's philosophy?	??	What is the vision when one takes collective responsibility of learning?	Feel a collective responsibility for the growth and learning of all teachers and students in the school.
Believe they have all answers and thus, feel vulnerable in seeking new knowledge or collaborate professionally.	What is the underlying belief of a "know-it-all" person?	Where does the vulnerability come from? – what is the value?? What is value and belief when one says' knowledge is everywhere?		Understand that no individual has all the answers, but that each has important knowledge to contribute.
Teach to a set of externally fixed curricular standards that remain static over time	What does a team setting its own standards tell us about their beliefs, values and vision?			Focus on jointly creating new knowledge and see their own and their students' learning as an ongoing process

Work individually with large groups of students in restrictive time periods				Work in cohorts of colleagues and with groups of students whom they get to know well over time
Are given little or no time to work collaboratively with their colleagues			What vision do you think guides the teacher in doing so?	Have structured time to observe and reflect on each-others' work and serve as critical friends in support of each other
Perform in isolation according to externally determined professional standards	Why does a teacher follow the externally mandated standards? What is the belief behind setting personal teaching norms?			Identify their personal teaching norms as individuals; these norms may or may not be the same as those of their colleagues
Commit to shared norms, with shared responsibility for growth in learning of all teachers and students in the school				Build understanding of each-others' styles and techniques so they can learn from one another and complement each-others' work
Often fail to build professional relationships, communication and trust with their colleagues, students, parents and community members, due to a lack of shared goals, norms and understandings.	What do you think is the belief in making communications open and regular?			Value open and regular communications that are the foundation of trust, shared goals and professional norms among teachers, administrators, students, parents and community members.



Activity: Assessing Beliefs and Fears around working in Collaboration

Time Required: 30 minutes

Objectives: Participants will be able to ...

- Assess their values, beliefs and fears around working in collaboration.
- Reconsider their fears and beliefs around working in collaboration.

Group Size: Individual activity followed by Large Group Discussion

Material Required- Handout on Assessing beliefs around working in collaboration in a PLC and Reconsidering beliefs, marker and pens

Steps for Facilitation:

1. Distribute the handout on beliefs and fears around working in collaboration in a PLC.
2. Ask participants to read through each belief and fear statement.
3. Participants are free to add any other belief or fears that they have and is not mentioned in the list.
4. Select top five beliefs and fears around working in collaboration.
5. In the table below put these beliefs and fears.
6. Visualize how would it look like, sound like and feel like in action.
7. Encourage participants to share the root cause and/or experiences if any that led to their current beliefs and fears around working in collaboration.
8. Further visualize what alteration they would need to bring to individual and institutional behaviour and culture so as to alter their beliefs and fears.

Points for Debriefing:

Debrief on how our beliefs and fears shape our actions and behaviours and could either help or hamper progress.

Key Takeaways:

Our experiences at times shape our beliefs and at others we go seeking experiences that match our beliefs. Thus beliefs, assumptions gradually become deeply ingrained shaping our mental models and directing our actions.



Belief and Fears/Worries around working in Collaboration

Circle five statements that resonate with you and align with your beliefs around PLCs. Put these beliefs in the table below and visualize what it would look like, sound like and feel like in action.

1. PLCs should be directed by teachers.
2. The essence of a PLC is a focus on and a commitment to the learning of each student.
3. Trust and relationships are vital for successful PLCs.
4. Teams need to work collaboratively and learn together about best practices in teaching and learning.
5. PLCs should become “just the way we do things”, rather than a once-a-week meeting.
6. The steady flow of student assessment information is the most important component of PLCs.
7. All goals should be set based on what the assessments and other forms of data are showing.
8. PLCs should be a safe space and require all members to be vulnerable.
9. PLCs should help facilitate systemic changes in a school’s processes and culture.
10. PLCs have the power to avoid top-down decisions.

Circle five statements that are your fears or worries around working in collaboration. Put these fears/worries in the table below and visualize what it would look like, sound like and feel like in action.

1. Sharing practice could make me vulnerable.
2. PLC would be too much expectation on time.
3. Documentation, recording meetings, preparing for discussions would leave no preparation time for teaching.
4. Balancing personal and professional life would increasingly become difficult with additional demands on teacher time.
5. Collaborating with others is too much adjustment especially if it is across seniority.
6. Making teachers responsible for student learning is unfair.
7. PLC if institutionalized will become a tool for internal accountability.
8. PLC could be waste of time given the differential attitudes, mindsets and styles of working.
9. PLC is a school leader's responsibility.
10. PLCs need equitable distribution of responsibility for it to be sustained and make age-appropriate learning outcome a reality for every child.

Beliefs and Fears around working in Collaboration

Our Top 5 beliefs around working in collaboration	Looks like in action 	Sounds like in action 	Feels like in action 	Revisiting Beliefs
For example PLC directed by teachers	I have decision making power	empowered	I am important	

Our Top 5 fears/worries around working in collaboration	Looks like in action 	Sounds like in action 	Feels like in action 	Revisiting Fears/Worries
For example sharing practice makes me vulnerable	Hesitant in sharing	Weak	vulnerable	

D1.S3. A4



Activity: Assessing School Factors that Facilitate PLCs

Time Required: 45 minutes

Objectives: Participants will be able to...

- Conduct a self-assessment of the factors that reinforce learning communities for their respective schools.
- Draw lessons for bridging the gaps for their schools.

Group Size: Individual activity followed by group discussion

Material Required: Assessment sheets, Pencils

Step for Facilitation

1. Distribute one assessment sheet to each participant
2. Ask them to go through the instructions and accordingly respond to the statements.
3. For every domain participant would have to imagine of the position in their school and accordingly fill the form.
4. There is no right or wrong nor good or bad, it is simply informing the status quo which is dynamic and can and would change so each participant may respond honestly.
5. The Self-assessment tool would give an assessment about the following aspects of your schools; each of which contributing towards developing effective PLCs.
 - Shared and Supportive Leadership
 - Shared Values and Vision
 - Collective Learning and Application
 - Shared Personal Practice
 - Supportive Conditions – Relationships
 - Supportive Conditions – Structures

6. From each area pick up key statements which you feel your school needs to work upon urgently.
7. Share the tool with your colleagues back in school and learn about the perceptions of all staff members which would give an honest assessment of the school.

Points for debrief

Debrief on the role of school leader in establishing supporting conditions both in terms of in-house trust and collegiality and administrative structures

Key Takeaways:

Shared purpose, vision, supportive structures and conditions and collective learning and inquiry are all non-negotiables for an effective PLC



Activity: Assessing School Factors that Facilitate PLCs

Source: Olivier, D. F., & Hipp, K. K. (2010). Assessing and analyzing schools as professional learning communities. In K. K. Hipp & J. B. Huffman (Eds.), *Demystifying professional learning communities: School leadership at its best*. Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield.

Directions:

This questionnaire assesses your perceptions about your principal, staff, and stakeholders based on the dimensions of a professional learning community (PLC) and related attributes. This questionnaire contains a number of statements about practices which occur in schools. Read each statement and then use the scale below to select the scale point that best reflects your school. Tick the appropriate option provided to the right of each statement. Be certain to select only one response for each statement. Comments after each dimension section are optional.

Key Terms:

- Principal = Principal, not Associate or Assistant Principal
- Staff/Staff Members = All adult staff directly associated with curriculum, instruction, and assessment of students
- Stakeholders = Parents and community members

Scale:

1=Strongly Disagree (SD)

2=Disagree (D)

3 = Agree (A)

4 = Strongly Agree (SA)

STATEMENTS		SCALE			
I	Shared and Supportive Leadership	SD	D	A	SA
1.	Staff members are consistently involved in discussing and making decisions about most school issues.				
2.	The principal incorporates advice from staff members to make decisions.				
3.	Staff members have accessibility to key information.				
4.	The principal is proactive and addresses areas where support is needed.				
5.	Opportunities are provided for staff members to initiate change.				
6.	The principal shares responsibility and rewards for innovative actions.				
7.	The principal participates democratically with staff sharing power and authority.				
8.	Leadership is promoted and nurtured among staff members.				
9.	Decision-making takes place through committees and communication across grade and subject areas.				
10.	Stakeholders assume shared responsibility and accountability for student learning without evidence of imposed power and authority.				
11.	Staff members use multiple sources of data to make decisions about teaching and learning.				

COMMENTS:					
II	Shared Values and Vision	SD	D	A	SA
12.	A collaborative process exists for developing a shared sense of values among staff.				
13.	Shared values support norms of behavior that guide decisions about teaching and learning.				
14.	Staff members share visions for school improvement that have an undeviating focus on student learning.				
15.	Decisions are made in alignment with the school's values and vision.				
16.	A collaborative process exists for developing a shared vision among staff.				
17.	School goals focus on student learning beyond test scores and grades.				
18.	Policies and programs are aligned to the school's vision.				
19.	Stakeholders are actively involved in creating high expectations that serve to increase student achievement.				
20.	Data are used to prioritize actions to reach a shared vision.				
COMMENTS:					

III	Collective Learning and Application	SD	D	A	SA
21.	Staff members work together to seek knowledge, skills and strategies and apply this new learning to their work.				
22.	Collegial relationships exist among staff members that reflect commitment to school improvement efforts.				
23.	Staff members plan and work together to search for solutions to address diverse student needs.				
24.	A variety of opportunities and structures exist for collective learning through open dialogue.				
25.	Staff members engage in dialogue that reflects a respect for diverse ideas that lead to continued inquiry.				
26.	Professional development focuses on teaching and learning.				
27.	School staff members and stakeholders learn together and apply new knowledge to solve problems.				
28.	School staff members are committed to programs that enhance learning.				
29.	Staff members collaboratively analyze multiple sources of data to assess the effectiveness of instructional practices.				
30.	Staff members collaboratively analyze student work to improve teaching and learning.				

COMMENTS:					
IV	Shared Personal Practice	SD	D	A	SA
31.	Opportunities exist for staff members to observe peers and offer encouragement.				
32.	Staff members provide feedback to peers related to instructional practices.				
33.	Staff members informally share ideas and suggestions for improving student learning.				
34.	Staff members collaboratively review student work to share and improve instructional practices.				
35.	Opportunities exist for coaching and mentoring.				
36.	Individuals and teams have the opportunity to apply learning and share the results of their practices.				
37.	Staff members regularly share student work to guide overall school improvement.				
COMMENTS:					
V	Supportive Conditions - Relationships	SD	D	A	SA
38.	Caring relationships exist among staff and students that are built on trust and respect.				
39.	A culture of trust and respect exists for taking risks.				

40.	Outstanding achievement is recognized and celebrated regularly in our school.				
41.	School staff and stakeholders exhibit a sustained and unified effort to embed change into the culture of the school.				
42.	Relationships among staff members support honest and respectful examination of data to enhance teaching and learning.				
COMMENTS					
VI	Supportive Conditions - Structures	SD	D	A	SA
43.	Time is provided to facilitate collaborative work.				
44.	The school schedule promotes collective learning and shared practice.				
45.	Fiscal resources are available for professional development.				
46.	Appropriate technology and instructional materials are available to staff.				
47.	Resource people provide expertise and support for continuous learning.				
48.	The school facility is clean, attractive and inviting.				
49.	The proximity of grade level and department personnel allows for ease in collaborating with colleagues.				

50.	Communication systems promote a flow of information among staff members.				
51.	Communication systems promote a flow of information across the entire school community including: central office personnel, parents, and community members.				
52.	Data are organized and made available to provide easy access to staff members.				
COMMENTS:					

Source: Olivier, D. F., & Hipp, K. K. (2010). Assessing and analyzing schools as professional learning communities. In K. K. Hipp & J. B. Huffman (Eds.), *Demystifying professional learning communities: School leadership at its best*. Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield.

D1. S4. A1.



Activity: Creating CPD Self- Evaluation Sheet

Time Required: 40 minutes

Objectives: Participants will be able to ...

- Visualize the role of Self Evaluation in planning for growth and development.
- Visualize the role of a peer educator team in contributing towards mutual learning and development.

Group Size: Pair Activity followed by Large Group Discussion

Material Required- Handout CPD Self-Evaluation Sheet

Steps for Facilitation:

1. Distribute the handout on CPD-Self Evaluation.
2. Ask participants to form pairs and pick up roles of reviewer and reviewee to work with each other.
3. Each member is asked to fill their own Self-Evaluation sheet.
4. Exchange the completed sheets with your pair and act as reviewer for your pair and discuss the CPD sheet.
5. List out the key strengths of your reviewee and write them in an A4 sheet.
6. Circulate the sheet to two more pairs, making it a response sheet for 6 members.
7. Similarly list out the key improvement areas of your reviewee and write them in an A4 sheet.
8. Circulate the sheet to two more pairs, making it a response sheet for 6 members.
9. One member of the 6-member team may now read out the strengths and improvement areas for their group.
10. As a small group of six, discuss what could be the improvement plan for the members in your group and how do you support each other's growth if you were part of same school.

11. In the resources is an CPD Interaction Proforma -II, which is a prototype and could be used in your schools for conducting repeat interactions with your reviewees and planning their learning journeys.

Points for Debriefing:

- Does your school have any CPD Self Evaluation sheet for the staff?
- How are successive capacity building programs planned for the members of the staff?
- How do you see the relationship between classroom observation, gap area identification and CPD?

Key Takeaways:

CPD cannot be an activity in isolation, rather is a part of a learning continuum based on the identification of gaps, learning needs, the contextual demands and the teachers' growth areas.



Self-Evaluation Proforma for CPD Interaction – II

(A prototype for repeating dialogue with your reviewee for planning the life-long journey)

Reviewee

Reviewer

Date

1. Indicate the progress made on the 2-3 areas to be developed, agreed for the past review period and what has been the impact.

2. Further agreed areas for development (medium term – 1 year and any adjustments to long term – 3 years)

3. Indicate 2-3 initiatives taken up by you to improve your classroom instructions since the past review period and how has it impacted your teaching-learning.

Reviewee notes and comments

Reviewer notes and comments

D1. S4. A2.



Activity: Creating a Professional Development Plan

Time Required: 30 minutes

Objectives: Participants will be able to ...

- Understand the essence of creating a Professional Development Plan (PDP).
- Visualize the impact of a PDP in the learning journey of a teacher/leader.

Group Size: Pair Activity followed by Large Group Discussion

Material Required- Handout PDP Sheet

Steps for Facilitation:

1. Distribute the PDP proforma to each participant to fill in the details based on their CPD self-evaluation sheets.
2. Ask participants to work with the same pairs that they had formed earlier and share their developmental objectives, CPD needs and Expected Outcomes for midterm and long term.
3. Exchange sheets with your pair and act as reviewer for your pair and discuss the PDP sheet.
4. Circulate the sheet to two more pairs, making it a response sheet for 6 members.
5. As a small group of six, list out the developmental objectives, the CPD needs and expected outcomes as set out by each member of the team.
6. Pick up the CPD Self Evaluation Sheet and the PDP sheet of any one member of the team who acts as a reviewee; all other members of the team may act as supportive peers.
7. Discuss on the improvement areas identified, the CPD needs, the previous in-service trainings received, the data on classroom instruction, the gaps in learning and much more... acting as a PLC for the mutual improvement.

Points for Debriefing:

- How do you see the role of Peer Support Group in School in creating the PDP and planning the personal mastery of all members in the school?
- In the absence of self- appraisals, individual PDP and in-house CPD programs, do you think the externally mandated programs contribute towards transforming the quality of education? Yes/No and Give reasons for your answers.

Key Takeaways:

Self-appraisals, individual PDPs and in-house CPD programs are at the heart of school transformation; for they capture the contextual challenges and learning needs of the teachers and leaders and find direct implications in the classrooms. They are continuous and comprehensive rather than one shot trainings.



Professional Development Plan for Lifelong Learning

What are the developmental objectives arising from your consecutive three CPD Self-Evaluations?

Please suggest how the above objectives might be addressed for the forthcoming year in terms of:

Outcomes for the year (medium term)	CPD – What I need to do?
Outcomes for the next three years (Long term)	CPD – What do I need to do?

*Schools can have a staff development coordinator who could keep record of all the self-evaluation forms for review and planning of CPD for the entire staff.

Agenda for the Review Meeting with the School Support Team/Peer Educators (Example of a PLC for Staff Development)

1. Review areas of professional practice identified by reviewee as being good and worthy of sharing with others
2. Review progress made in meeting outcomes agreed at the previous year's review meeting, evaluate the impact and make adjustment to long term objectives
3. Identify and agree development objectives based on strengths and needs identified through self-evaluation (medium and adjusted long term)
4. Identify CPD activities in the CPD plan which will be undertaken for the following year.
5. Reflect on the comments or notes from the Reviewee/as also from the Reviewer.
6. Using the above peer dialogue, develop annual CPD Planning Sheet.

CPD Planning Sheet

Competency areas to be addressed	Independent Study	Academic coursework	Conference presentation	Publication	Mentorship	Other	Date Training Completed

D1. S4. A3.



Activity: Mapping the Scope of PLCs for Transforming Schools to Learning Organizations

Time Required: 30 minutes

Objectives: Participants will be able to ...

- Visualize the scope of PLCs in improving student learning, classroom instruction, teacher development, teacher accountability, networking with community, peer group learning etc.
- Map the scope of PLCs for their own school context.

Group Size: small group activity followed by discussion and gallery walk

Material Required- Idea cards/Sticky notes, Marker pens, A4 sheets, pens

Steps for Facilitation:

1. The participants are divided into small groups of five.
2. Based on their understanding of and exposure to the idea of PLC, each group is asked to brainstorm on the 'scope of PLC'.
3. Instruct the participants the protocols to be followed for brainstorming activity:
 - Either restrict time, or restrict number of ideas per group for example until 20 ideas are noted
 - Remind the group that the goal in brainstorming is quantity, not quality. Encourage all ideas, even if silly or wild.
 - Remind group of brainstorming guidelines—hot ideas only, no questions or disagreements, tag-ons are fine.
 - Opportunity for clarification and advocacy will follow.
 - Check for understanding of the topic which is the focus of the brainstorming and the process itself. Allow 1-2 minutes for each participant to silently reflect
4. Start the brainstorming activity with a stop watch.

5. Each idea is to be written on different idea card/sticky note.
6. The group that finishes 20 ideas first may raise their hands; after which the activity stops for all.
7. The groups can now have a look at the key ideas that have emerged in their group and classify them.
8. Discuss in the large group the major categories that emerge. If any overlap; groups can reconsider the categories.
9. Write each category on a separate chart paper and paste it in different walls of the training hall.
10. Ask all the participants to accordingly go and paste their idea card/sticky note on that chart.
11. Once all ideas are pasted, the entire group goes for a gallery walk, one member from each group stands near the chart to explain.
12. The participants are now requested to get back to their seats and think of what is the scope of PLCs for their respective schools.
13. In pairs the participants may discuss the nature PLC and outcomes they would wish to achieve through formation of PLC.
14. Share the research findings sheet with the participants and ask them to check if they have missed on any of the scopes that international researches have proved.
15. Request any member from the large group to volunteer to explain any of the scopes mentioned in the researches.

Points for Debriefing:

- How do you see the role of PLC in transforming schools to Learning Organizations?
- In the absence of school staff, students and community coming together for improving the learning at school; do you think a learning culture or learning organization is possible? Discuss.

Key Takeaways:

Creating scope for collaboration, setting protocols for working together, collective appraisals, trust, learning culture, learning rounds are all the pre-requisites for a learning organization.



Activity: Scope of PLCs: Findings of International Researches

International researches have proved that PLCs lead to the following:

1. Increased Efficacy
2. Collective Responsibility for Student Learning
3. Reduction in teacher Isolation
4. Substantial learning about pedagogic practices and increased content knowledge
5. Higher Morale
6. Greater Job Satisfaction
7. Greater retention rates and enthusiasm

Points for Discussion

- While as a group you have all mapped the scope of PLCs. Using this sheet map if you have missed out on any of the research findings.
- Invite any member in the large group to volunteer and explain how PLCs could increase efficacy or bring in collective responsibility for student learning or any of the above.



Activity: Creating Norms for Collaboration (Developed by Marylyn Wentworth*)

Time required: 30 minutes

Objectives: Participants will be able to...

- Understand the significance of gaining agreement around ground rules or norms for working together on difficult issues over time.
- Visualize the role of ground rules in building trust, clarifying group expectations and establishing points of ‘reflection’ to check the group’s performance regarding any process.

Group Size: Large Group Discussion

Material required: A4 Sheets, Chart Paper, Sketch pen and Marker pens

Steps for Facilitation

1. Instruct participants to write down what each person needs in order to work productively in a group, giving an example of one thing the facilitator needs, i.e. “to have all voices heard,” or “to start and end our meetings when we say we will.” (This is to help people focus on process rather than product.)
2. Each participant names one thing from their written list, going around in a circle, with no repeats, and as many circuits as necessary to have all the ground rules listed.
3. Ask for any clarifications needed. One person may not understand what another person has listed, or may interpret the language differently.
4. If the list is VERY long — more than 10 Ground Rules / Norms— ask the group if some of them can be combined to make the list more manageable.
5. Ask if everyone can abide by the listed Ground Rules. If anyone dislikes or doesn’t want to comply with one of them, that Ground Rule should be discussed and a decision should be made to keep it, to remove it, or to try it for a specified amount of time and check it again.
6. Ask if any one of the Ground Rules might be hard for the group to follow. If there is one or more, those Ground Rules should be highlighted and given attention.

With time it will become clear if it should be dropped, or needs significant work. Frequently, a system of checking in with everyone, without requiring everyone to speak, becomes a more effective Ground Rule.

7. While work is in progress, refer to the Ground Rules whenever they would help group process. If one person is dominating, for example, it is easier to refer to a Ground Rule that says, “take care with how often and how long you speak,” than to ask someone directly to stop dominating the group.
8. Check in on the Ground Rules when reflection is done on the group work. Note any that were not followed particularly well for attention in the next work session. Being sure they are followed, refining them, and adding or subtracting Ground Rules is important, as it makes for smoother work and more trust within the group.

Revising Proposed Norms

9. When the proposed norms are posted and “rest” with the group for a week or ten days, it provides time and space for group members to disassociate from particular norms offered by particular people.
10. Share with the participants a norm review process, which they could use at a later stage during the workshop as also for future purposes.

A Norms Review Process

Set time before the next day’s session to review the group norms. Questions that encourage “tending to” group norms include:

- In what ways are our norms helping us “grow” our thinking?
- Should we change our norms in some way in order to help us better meet our goals?
- What norm(s) are we using well?
- What norm(s) seems difficult for us?
- What norm will I/we work on today?

* School Reform Initiative website at www.schoolreforminitiative.org

Points for Debriefing

- Discuss on the role of ground rules or norms for effective collaborations
- Discuss on the role of norms in minimizing conflicts, maximizing time

Key Takeaways:

Protocols are most powerful and effective means to conduct meaningful collaborations and sustain learning within PLCs.

Norm setting is not only about aggregating on and following “accepted group behaviours” rather about being aware of one’s needs and goals and working in collaboration to achieve the commonly agreed to needs and goals through group thought showering techniques.



Activity: Developing Shared Vision and Goals for PLC

Time Required: 30 minutes

Objectives: Participants will be able to...

- Arrive at a consensus on what they wish to achieve through formation of a learning community.
- Develop a vision for the learning community

Material Required: Sticky notes, Chart papers, Marker pens, Sketch pens

Step for Facilitation

1. Instruct participants to reflect and consider aspects of learning that are important when choosing to work and learn in community. This is 'Journaling to know yourself'. This is a very important step in establishing PLCs, wherein the participants are clear of what they want to achieve through a PLC. Participants may take 10 minutes to either write, draw or list.
2. Based on the insights generated from journaling, negotiate your ideas down to 3 things you would want to achieve for self through a PLC. For instance: I would want the group to support ...
3. Ask participants to write down each of their vision and goals on a separate sticky note.
4. Distribute one chart paper amongst six members and ask all six members to paste their sticky notes on that chart paper.
5. Participants now transfer the personal vision and goals to group goals through grouping of similar goals, classifying, prioritizing and negotiating goals and arrive at three non-negotiable goals that they would want to achieve as a PLC. This process is called negotiating goals or 'arriving at group vision and goals'. It may be helpful to offer a prompt such as: In order to do our best learning together as a community, our vision and goal should be:
 - (sticky note #1)
 - (sticky note #2)
 - (sticky note #3)

6. All groups now have just three sticky notes to them. All these sticky notes are now put up on another chart paper.
7. In a large group discussion, each member presents their group goals and negotiates. The purpose is not to delete or defend any thought, idea or vision rather it is to be exactly be sure of 'what' you want 'why' and 'how'.

Points for Debriefing

Role of shared visioning exercise on development of positive mindset towards PLCs. Debrief on your school's processes to arrive at a shared vision.

Is visioning in your school about telling, 'selling', 'consulting' or 'cocreating'.

Key Takeaways:

Accounting for the personal needs, goals and vision to arrive at the institutional needs, goals and vision contributes towards aligning individual vision with institutional vision.

D2. S5. A3



Activity: What Effective PLCs do?

Time Required: 30 minutes

Objectives: Participants will be able to...

- Understand through the research review the nature of engagements in effective PLCs.
- Draw lessons from international experience on effective PLCs for their school context.
- Use their learning in drawing a plan for making their PLCs effective

Group Size: Small Group Discussion

Material Required: Chart papers, Marker pens, Sketch pens,

Step for Facilitation

1. Divide participants in groups of five and distribute the hand-out on Effective PLCs: Lessons from Research
2. Instruct each group to read through the research excerpts and debrief on the questions given below in their small groups.
3. Distribute chart papers and sketch pens and markers, one each in every group.
4. Collate the key lessons emerging from each research excerpt on a chart paper.
5. Instruct the group to discuss on each of the key lessons and how they plan to implement it in their schools to develop an effective and sustainable learning community.
6. One member from each group may read out the discussions made in their group.
7. Other group members may raise questions or share experiences if any with regards to functioning as a PLC.

Points for Debrief

Encourage participants to do a SWOT on working in collaboration and look at the realistic strengths and opportunities, as also the limitations and threats if any.

Key Takeaways:

While working in collaboration comes with a bag of possibilities it also has its own challenges unless proper protocols for participation are established, norms are set, accountability structures are built and learning is reinforced.



Handout – Effective PLCs: Lessons from Research

Considerable research has been published on the subject of professional development through professional learning communities. The findings of the research review by Annenberg Institute of School Reform (AISR), Brown University point out a number of useful lessons about what makes some PLCs successful in leveraging school improvement, while others have little or no effect.

PLCs provide advantages to schools and districts. Creating strong professional learning communities holds several potential advantages for schools and districts. Among the positive outcomes reported in the research are: increased efficacy, both collectively and individually (Louis 1992); collective responsibility for student learning (Little 1990; Lee, Smith and Croninger 1995); reduction in teacher isolation (Lieberman 1995); substantial learning about good teaching and increased content knowledge (McLaughlin and Talbert 1993); higher morale, greater job satisfaction, greater retention rates, and enthusiasm (Lee, Smith and Croninger 1995; Hall and Hord 2001).

Debrief

Discuss in your small groups how do PLCs increase efficacy or bring in collective responsibility for student learning or any of the above.

PLCs promote positive cultural change. Many teachers and administrators find the opportunity to meet with colleagues and openly reflect on practice to be a welcome change from the isolation and focus on individual effort that characterize the traditional professional context of education. These cultural changes, to which PLCs contribute, result in positive indicators for academic improvement, including decreases in dropout rates and absenteeism, increased learning with a focus on equity (specifically in smaller high schools), academic gains in major subjects, and smaller achievement gaps (Lee, Smith and Croninger 1995; Smith, Lee and Newmann 2001; Newmann and Associates 1996). A sense of relational trust – linking the notions of respect, competence, personal regard, and integrity with academic achievement – also strengthens the community and makes shared decision-making possible (Gordon 2002).

Debrief

How could we develop a sense of relational trust through PLCs and/or how do we as a community of teachers link the notions of respect, competence, personal regard with academic achievement.

Leadership enhances and is enhanced by PLCs. Leaders play a key role in fostering the success of PLCs. Newmann and his associates (1996) found that in schools with strong PLCs, leaders paid attention to key facets of both school culture and structure – such as supportive and shared leadership and a strong focus on improvement – and ensured that cultural conditions supported professional community. They set the tone for improvement by modelling active learning, investing time in the process, showing respect for the ideas of others, and empowering teachers as leaders (Zepeda 1999; Lambert 1998). And they can actively support a culture of inquiry and the use of ideas, particularly in bringing ideas in from outside the school (Louis, Kruse et al. 1995). It is critical that leadership be supportive and shared, with leaders maintaining the organization’s vision, keeping a focus on improvement, and inviting input into decision making (adapted from Eaker et al. 2002 and from Hord 1997). PLCs can help to build collective, scale-level leadership capacity. According to Lambert (1998), increased leadership capacity means that the principal is one leader but that “he or she does not fill all or even most of the leadership roles...” (pp. 91–92).

Debrief

1. To develop effective PLCs discuss the role that you would have to play as school leaders.
2. To develop effective PLCs discuss the type of school culture that you would have to develop as school leaders.

Adult learning theory strengthens PLCs. Understanding what motivates adults to grow and learn enhances professional development and helps the school or district become a community of learners (Zepeda 1999). The PLCs approach is grounded in adult learning theory and evidences several characteristics important to adult learners. For example, as autonomous and self-directed adults, professional educators need to be involved in the planning and evaluation of their instruction, and they often reject prescriptions by others for their learning. In addition, adults have accumulated a foundation of experiences, knowledge, skills, interests, and competence; they are most interested in learning subjects that have immediate relevance to their jobs or personal lives. Like learners of all ages, adults need to see the results of their efforts and to get feedback about progress toward their goals (Lieb 1991; Dalellew and Martinez 1988; Zemke and Zemke 1995).

Debrief

1. As school leaders, how often do you engage and encourage teachers in your school to reflect on their instructions.
2. What are the avenues for participation and sharing where teachers could reflect and discuss their classroom challenges and look for collaborative solutions?

Interconnectedness enhances PLCs. Current research (as well as our own experience in schools and districts) suggests that the effects of PLCs are optimized when they exist not in isolation but as part of overlapping, interconnected communities of practice (Resnick and Hall 2001; Mitchell et al. 2001). Members of such “overlapping” communities are both formally and informally bound together by what they do, by what they have learned through their mutual engagement in the work, and through the work they have produced (Wenger 1998). Recent research also suggests that “depth” plays an important role in schools’ and districts’ capacity to sustain change. Overlapping PLCs can help schools and districts develop the capacity necessary for them to assume authority and knowledge for improved teaching and learning (Coburn 2003). Overlapping PLCs are unified by common goals but focus their work on affecting change from a variety of vantage points within the system. For example; While school level professional communities engage teachers in implementing the goals of Functional Literacy and Numeracy (FLN), a group of principals of those schools meet to discuss effective strategies for observing practice and giving feedback to teachers on their use of the framework. At the same time, area administrators meet regularly to reflect on the innovation in schools for improving practice and the change in roles and responsibilities in providing support to schools, and another cross-role team including parents and community members ensure coordination and alignment of central office resources to provide support to teachers and schools. These diverse areas of focus are united by the common goal of building individual and collective capacity with a focus on improving teaching and learning.

In this way, knowledge is created, shared, organized, revised, and passed on within and among these communities. As a result, districts are better positioned to construct organizational expertise and to develop strategies that ensure that their individual work is connected to the larger goals and purposes of the organization (Wenger 1998).

Debrief

How do you as a group of professionals build horizontal and vertical networks such that the entire school ecosystem works towards a common goal – improving students’ learning?



Activity: Mapping and Using Data Sources for Conducting Effective PLCs

Time Required: 45 minutes

Objectives: Participants will be able to...

- Understand the significance of data for conducting objective inquiries
- Generate reflective dialogue through the use of data for school improvement

Group Size: Large Group discussion followed by small group exercise

Material Required: Power point presentation, Chart papers, Marker pens, Sketch pens

Step for Facilitation

1. Facilitator may make a power point presentation on the use of data for effective dialogue, the role of evidence in engaging in objective learning conversations and data-based school improvement and learning.
2. The participants are expected to take notes on the learning while simultaneously thinking about the dataset they have at school and how they have been using it for school improvement.
3. Participants are requested to click on the following link and read the guide on using data for school improvement.

<https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED518630.pdf>

4. The facilitator may now divide the large group into small groups of five.
5. Each group would now consider them to be members of a small school who are working together for transforming their school through use of data.
6. Each group may use the following steps for initiating dialogue and arriving at steps for using data for school improvement in their own school.

Step I: Prepare for data exploration. The process begins with promoting a data culture and forming a team that will examine the data.

- Each group is expected to discuss how they would like to form a data team and promote a data culture in their schools?

- This could be done by the team beginning to examine the use of data in their schools and see how better they could use data for school improvement.
- Do they, as a school team look for answers to their actions based on analysis of data and ask questions?
- Is the decision making in their school based on evidence or perceptions?

Step II: Collect and organize the data. The team identifies the relevant data, gathers it together, and organizes it for analysis.

- Each group may make a list of the input data, the process data and output data that the schools have.
- This may be followed by a discussion on the information each data set provides and the gaps that could be identified through the use of these data set.

Step III: Analyze the data. The team reviews the data and looks for important patterns. It identifies specific programs or student groups most in need of improvement.

- The group if is able to have access to some of their data available online through school portals could use it.
- Data of schools of any one of the team members could be used for analysis and conduct of collaborative inquiry.

Step IV: Explain the results. The team uses data to generate hypotheses and explain the underlying causes of the areas needing improvement.

Upon completion of these four steps, educators are prepared to use their data to inform school improvement efforts.

Points for Debriefing

Debrief on steps each of the schools would want to take to initiate data collation, data analysis and interpretation and conduct of a PLC for inquiry and reflective dialogue around the results and it's use for school improvement plan.

Debrief on how to translate data into improved practices in the classroom?

Key Takeaways:

Evidence makes the dialogue non-judgmental and objective.

Data based evidence is non-perceptive and neutral and engages all as a team for improving the weak areas and leading to school improvement.

**Activity: Using Data Sets for Reflective Inquiry and Dialogue****Time Required:** 45 minutes**Objectives:** Participants will be able to...

- Understand the significance of data for conducting objective inquiries
- Generate reflective dialogue through the use of data for school improvement

Group Size: Small group exercise**Material Required:** Power point presentation, Chart papers, Marker pens, Sketch pens, role play exercise**Step for Facilitation**

1. Participants may be divided into small groups of five each and asked to reflect on the following questions. The questions are adapted from Sargent, 2003, help to raise awareness of the need for data-driven decision making:

Pause and Ponder

- How do you currently establish improvement goals each year (for the district, a school, or a program)? Describe the process.
- Generally, describe the achievement levels of the students in your subject or school.
- What academic areas are in greatest need of improvement?
- With what content areas within each subject are students having the most difficulty?
- On what basis do you answer these questions?
- In your opinion, what are the primary factors within the school's control that cause low achievement in the areas of greatest need?
- What data have you examined to support your opinions?
- What do you hope that the school or district will accomplish by data-driven decision making?

- Participants may be introduced to the Korthagen and Vaslos (2005) ALACT Model of conducting a reflective inquiry using data.

Action

Looking back on action

Awareness of essential aspects of action

Creating alternative methods of action and

Trial of new method

- The participants within their group may discuss how PLCs can operate in an iterative and cyclic manner by following the ALACT model
- Participants may make use of three data sources; experience as data/ numeric data/ research literature data and initiate a reflective dialogue within their school.
- As a guide for the dialogue, participants may take a look at the question itinerary that could be formed for the use of data for reflective inquiry.
- To make the entire process of learning more meaningful, it would be nicer if participants could use real time data from their schools. For example: addressing learning difficulty of slow learners.

Triangulate Data	Experience	Collating teachers everyday experience from classrooms interactions and students participation
	Numeric Data	Students attendance, Students achievement- Formative and summative, students overall performance in curricular activities
	Personal Data	Socio-emotional wellness of child, anecdotal, evidence if any, relationships-family, peer and with teachers
	Research Data	Research literature on effective pedagogies to deal with slow learners

- Participants may take any such case from their school and do a practice exercise on conducting reflective dialogue using probing questions as follows:

What was the context?

What did you want to achieve?

What did you do?

What were you thinking?

How did you feel?

What kind of effect did it have on the students?

What did the students intend to learn and achieve?

What did the students do?

What were the students thinking?

How did the students feel?

What is the ideal situation – the situation that as a teacher you want to bring about?

What are the limiting factors that prevent you from achieving the ideal situation?

Points for debriefing

Participants may debrief on challenges in the use of three sources of information; experience, data and literature for the conduct of reflective inquiry.

Key Takeaways:

School Leaders play a key role in the making of PLCs meaningful. Reflective dialogue, collaborative inquiry, teacher professional development, situated learning, using data for school improvement are some of the techniques that can make PLCs effective and sustainable.



Activity: Make Time for Professional Learning

Time Required: 30 minutes

Objectives: Participants will be able to...

- Assess the current school time that is used for professional learning.
- Reschedule their daily time-table to create space for regular reflections and dialogues.
- Schedule learning time in the Annual Academic Calendar of School

Group Size: Individual activity

Material Required: Sticky notes, Chart papers, Marker pens, Sketch pens

Step for Facilitation

1. Instruct participants to individually reflect on the average learning time available for them as teachers and leaders in school. The following questions may be used as prompts for reflections:
 - a. On average, how much time do you (teachers, subject heads, principals and others) have for individual planning and reflection time on a weekly basis?
 - b. On average, how much time do you (teachers, subject heads, principal and others) have for team learning on a fortnight basis?
 - c. On average, how much time do you (teachers, subject heads, principal and others) spend on schoolwide learning on a monthly basis?
 - d. Do teachers, subject heads, principal and others have adequate time for professional learning on annual basis?
 - e. Do you feel you need to create time for individual, team and school reflections within the school calendar?
 - f. What are priorities for using additional time if it were identified?
 - g. What are the considerations for creating new time or reallocating current time?

2. Participants are requested to form a group of six and share results with six other members and collate them on the table given below:

Average time on any kind of learning activities	Individual planning and Reflection	Team learning	School-wide learning	Professional Learning
During Lunch				
Scheduled Time during school day				
Specific professional learning days				
District/Block meetings				
Late Start Days				
Early Release Days				
After School				
Summer Holidays				
Diwali and/or Winter holidays				

* Participants are requested to write about the actual time spent and not on what they wish or desire to do

3. Debrief in your small group and determine if any change needs to be brought in the school calendar to accommodate individual teacher reflection time, team learning time, school learning time and professional learning time.
4. Identify the next three actions that the group feels need to be taken immediately to work out learning time at school. Write it on a small sticky note (one each)
 (sticky note #1)
 (sticky note #2)
 (sticky note #3)

5. Collate all responses on a chart paper and ask one member in the group to read it aloud.
6. The group can also prepare a Time Review Sheet to assess the scheduling and usage of teacher learning time.

Time Review Sheet - Prototype

	Used for professional learning? Yes/No	Participants (who will join learning?)	Goals/focus for learning	Evidence of impact collected
Free periods		Teachers/ Students/ Subject heads		
Zero periods				
Staff meetings				
Cluster/ Block meetings				

Points for Debriefing

Debrief on the challenges in scheduling time for and pursuing professional learning at school

Should teacher learning time be figured in the school's academic schedule, calendar and time-table?

Key Takeaways:

Making time for professional learning is about creating space for self-growth, one can neither teach nor lead without being open to learning. Engaging in continuous learning is like being on the path towards personal mastery leading to transforming into a learning organization.

D2. S7. A2



Activity: Challenges in Sustaining PLCs

Time Required: 45 minutes

Objectives: Participants will be able to...

- Anticipate the challenges to the establishment and sustenance of PLCs
- Overcome the barriers in teacher collaborations.
- Identify solutions to the challenges to effective PLCs in their respective schools.

Group Size: Small Group Activity

Material Required: Activity Sheet, A4 sheets and Pen

Steps for Facilitation:

1. Divide the larger group in small groups of five each.
2. Instruct participants that each member in the group would have different roles for example;

Sharer – poses a real situation that they are experiencing at their school and would like support with and solutions for.

Timer – times each section of the discussion

Mediator – makes sure the group is sticking to the protocol / norms of the group and is on task. Tries to include everyone.

Pause and Ponder

The sharer describes their situation, uninterrupted (2 minutes)

The group asks the sharer questions for clarification (1 minute)

The group discusses the situation and some possible solutions while the sharer listens and takes notes on the provided sheet (4 minutes)

The sharer summarizes some ideas they heard and can open the floor to the whole group discussion (3-5 minutes)

3. Repeat this process for each individual in the group (all participants should have chance to share their school problems).
4. The entire discussion is divided into two blocks of 30 minutes each. In the first block the participants may discuss the barriers arising as a result of mindset issues in their schools (Commonly occurring challenges in schools are listed in resource D2.S7.A2 for reference)
5. the core features of PLC with regards to their respective schools.
6. Participants may discuss the challenges focussing on the different stages in the cycle of implementation of PLC; its specific requirement, challenge and the way out. For example; the challenges at the
 - a. Initiation stage: Beginning stage representing basic knowledge
 - b. Developing stage: Developing capacity to function as an effective learning community
 - c. Integrating stage: Group members apply criteria and focus on student achievement
 - d. Sustaining stage: Skilled use of learning community criteria and evidence of improving student achievement of all students.
7. In your small groups look for solutions to the key issues around establishment and sustenance of PLCs.
8. For the next block of 30 minutes the participants discuss about the solutions to the potential PLC issues (Solution Record Sheet is attached in resource D2.S7.A2)
9. Each round participants will rotate roles
10. There will be approx. 10 minutes per person + discussion
11. Participants may also be shared the Supplementary Reading for detailed understanding on how core features could be materialized in their schools.

<https://www.frontiersin.org/articles/10.3389/feduc.2021.617613/full>

Points for Debriefing

- Debrief on the idea of listening to learn, listening deeply, listening to understand
- Being open to change - open to contribution – be vulnerable – build trust
- Creating space for sharing and collaborative working -culture of learning

Key Takeaways:

Learning is process of continuous enquiry and happens in a social context. Due to individual difference, there are bound to be conflicts, how do you focus all energies towards the common goal and direct arguments towards the achievement of common goal is the art of leading a learning community. Like teaching would not happen without a teaching time similarly learning would not happen unless time is slotted for teacher learning and development.



Solutions to My Challenge

School Name:

My PLC Challenge:

What I heard my colleagues talking about:

Possible Solutions/Next Steps:

Additional Notes



Commonly Identified Barriers and Potential issues

The Barriers: How Our Minds Get in the Way

We focus more on confirming our hypotheses, not challenging them.

We are paying too much attention to things that appear more vivid.

We consider ourselves to be exceptions.

We don't want others to see our vulnerabilities.

We come together in a culture of kindness.

We hesitate to take action in a new direction.

Potential PLC Issues

We are passive. They show up but do not participate actively.

We resist change. We don't see value in PLC time.

PLC work is not data driven and/or student focused.

We don't see the difference in Professional Development & Professional Learning

We don't want to work collaboratively

School leader is disconnected from PLC work or has a different agenda.

D2. S8. A1



Activity: Preparing School for Change: Planning PLCs

Time Required: 60 minutes

Objectives: Participants will be able to...

- Map the required school readiness for undergoing change
- Arrive at strategic plans for initiating change.
- Chalk out plan for engaging staff in a PLC regularly.

Group Size: Small Group Activity

Material Required: Activity Sheet, A4 sheets and Pen

Steps for Facilitation:

1. Divide the large group into small groups of six each.
2. In each group distribute the handout on Attributes of PLC-What the contemporary research has to say? (D2.S8.A1-R1)
3. Following the reading exercise each group is given a Reflection Card (D2.S8.A1 – R2) for each attribute and asked to discuss in their small groups on how the group plans to achieve the vision of a PLC as reflected in its attribute. The Reflection Card (RC) acts as a prompt for initiating the discussion in the group.
4. There are six members in each group and there are six attributes. Each member in the group should take the onus for any one attribute and make a small note on an A4 sheet on how he/she plans to achieve it.
5. While the participants are noting the key points in their respective sheets, the facilitators may paste six chart papers with the six attributes written on them on the walls at a distance from each other.
6. The facilitator may now instruct the participants that one member from each group may move to the chart on which the attribute they have worked for is written.
7. Facilitator may place large sticky notes and sketch pens near each chart paper.

8. One point per sticky note, in this manner participants may note their strategies for the achievement of the attributes.
9. This exercise of writing may take 20 minutes, following which the participants may take a gallery walk across the room.
10. All participants may click pictures or take copious notes of the different ideas and strategies that have emerged as a result of the collective dialogue
11. Participants may be given time to record and prioritize the strategies for arriving at a plan for their school.

Points for Debriefing

1. Debrief on personal experiences of how easy or difficult it is to work in collaboration
2. What are the three key factors for minimizing conflicts and maximizing productivity in groups and teams?

Key Takeaways:

Collaboration requires shared vision, common goals, group norms, accountability framework which is common for all, a shared leadership and a democratic work environment which gives opportunity and autonomy to all.



Attributes of PLC

Research Literatures	Attributes of PLC					
	Supportive and shared leadership capacity	Shared mission, focus, goals	Collective learning and application of learning	Continuous inquiry and practice	Focus on improvement	Supportive conditions and environment
Hord (1997)	Shared leadership structures in which administrators and teachers question, investigate and seek solutions for school improvement.	Values are embedded in day-to-day actions. Learning community engages and develops commitment and talents.	Collectively seeking new knowledge and applying it to work, resulting in collaborative relationships.	Share personal practice through inquiry-oriented practice and collegial coaching.	Continuous improvement	Create supportive structures, including a collaborative environment – structural conditions and collegial relationships.
DuFour and Eaker (1998)		A solid foundation consisting of collaboratively developed and widely shared mission, vision, values and goals	Collaborative teams that work independently to achieve common goals.		A focus on results as evidenced by a commitment to continuous improvement.	

SECTION II

Senge (2000)	Personal mastery: articulate a coherent image of personal vision, expanding personal capacity	Shared vision: focus on mutual purpose to nourish a sense of commitment.	Team learning: group interaction to transform collective thinking and learning and mobilize energies and actions to achieve common goals.	Mental Models: reflection and inquiry skills focused around developing awareness of attitudes and perceptions.	Systems thinking: interdependency and change to deal more effectively with the forces that shape the consequences of their actions. Find the leverage needed to get constructive change.
Kruse, Seashore Louis, and Bryk(1994)	Teacher empowerment and school autonomy; supportive leadership.	Collective focus, shared norms and values, trust and respect.	Collaboration, deprivatization of practice, socialization.	Reflective learning.	Openness to improvement Structural conditions: time to meet and talk, physical proximity, interdependent teaching roles, communication structures.

Berlinger-Gustafson (2004)	The collegial and facilitative participation of the principal, who shares leadership, has the ability to facilitate the work of staff and the ability to participate without dominating.	A shared vision developed from staff's unswerving commitment to students' learning that is consistently articulated and referenced for the staff's work.	Collective learning among staff and application of that learning to solutions that focus on students' learning. Move beyond procedure to strategies for improvement based on high standards and best practices that are shared, public and applied.	Supportive conditions: the conditions determine when, where and how the staff regularly come together as a unit to do the learning, decision making, problem solving and creative work	Physical conditions and human capacities that support such an operation: time to meet and talk, small size of the school, physical proximity of staff, teaching roles that are interdependent, school autonomy, teacher empowerment.
Patterson and Rolheiser (2004)	Build capacity for shared leadership.	Commit to change and reculturing, choose a meaningful focus.	Establish a safe and caring environment. Be open to possibilities and take risks. Establish trust. Model collaborative work.	Learn about change; specifically studying the change process helps increase the chance of sustaining change initiatives. Encourage professional discussion.	Have high expectations and take responsibility for colleague's learning.

SECTION II

<p>Annenberg Institute (2003)</p>	<p>Building internal capacity for leadership necessitates that groups share responsibility for leadership. This means building the capacity of school, district and community leaders to learn together and construct meaning and knowledge needed to support collaboration around improved instructional practices. This requires honing skills in communication, group-process facilitation, inquiry, conflict mediation and dialogue.</p>	<p>Creating overlapping communities of practice; sharing a mission, vision and values focused on improved practice and student outcomes.</p>	<p>Ensure content-based, outcomes focused experiences; ongoing opportunities for learners to increase subject-matter knowledge. Acquire strategies for instruction and assessment. Examine current research and/or district policies to support instruction. Observe, analyze and coach peers and provide ideas and feedback to each other.</p>	<p>Document evidence of improved practice. Develop a process to identify, collect and analyze specific examples of what changes in practice people made and the resulting impact on culture, norms and outcomes.</p>	
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Source: Professional learning communities: An Exploration.

In Praxis Group Inc. developed this report for the School Improvement Branch, Basic Learning, Alberta Education. ISBN 0-7785-4705-7



Preparing Schools for Change: Reflection Cards for Ideating and Planning PLCs

Participants may use the Reflection Cards as prompts to initiate dialogue on the ‘Attributes of PLC’ and how to achieve them in respective school contexts.

Reflection card 1: Supportive and Shared Leadership Capacity

1. How would you want to develop a shared leadership structure in which administrators and teachers’ question, investigate and seek solutions from and with each other for school improvement?
2. As a leader how would you like to articulate a coherent image of personal vision and expand your personal capacity? Have you done it before? If Yes. How are you working towards it? If No. How do you plan to achieve your personal vision?
3. How would you want the school to engage in building the capacity of the students, teachers, parent, community in terms of knowledge, skills and attitudes needed to support collaboration and improve learning?
4. How does your school work towards refining skills in communication, group-process facilitation, inquiry, conflict resolution, negotiations and dialogue?



Reflection card 2: Shared Mission, Focus Goals

1. Does your school have a solid foundation of collaboratively developed and widely shared vision, mission, values and goals? If Yes. Do everyone in the school own it? Is it continuously referred to in all public functions and considered while planning all activities? If No. How do you plan to take that up?
2. Do your staff meetings focus on mutual purpose, shared norms and values, trust and respect and nourish a sense of commitment? What are staff meetings in your schools like?
3. How do you develop staff's unswerving commitment to students' learning that is consistently articulated in every staff's work?



Reflection card 3: Collective Learning and Application of Learning

1. Does your school have a culture of collectively seeking new knowledge, ideating, experimenting and working to achieve common goals?
2. What are the on-going opportunities for teachers to increase subject-matter knowledge, improve strategies for instruction and assessment and examine current research provisions for outcome focused experiences?
3. How do you establish safe and caring environment, ensure a climate of trust, model collaboration, be open to possibilities and encourage peer observation, analysis and coaching?
4. How do you encourage collective learning among staff and application of that learning to solutions that focus on students' learning. Move beyond procedure to strategies for improvement based on high standards and best practices that are shared, public and applied.



Reflection card 4: Continuous Inquiry and Practice

1. Does your school have an 'Inquiry into the Practice' time set aside in the school time table?
2. How would you promote sharing of personal practice and collegial coaching at school?
3. How do you challenge the existing mental models, encourage reflection and inquiry skills and increase mindfulness in all actions?
4. How do you plan to develop supportive conditions for staff to collaborate for collective inquiry into practice by determining when, where and how the staff regularly come together as a unit for learning, decision making, problem solving and creative work?
5. Keeping record of the practices and learning about change helps us in increasing the chances of sustaining change initiatives. How would you want to encourage this in your school so as to sustain change?



Reflection card 5: Focus on Improvement

1. Is there an 'openness to improvement' culture at your school? Does the leadership also reflect the same?
2. Does the school have learning focussed staff meetings to discuss and reflect on the learning levels for all children?
3. Is there a process for documenting evidence of improved practice? Develop a process to identify, collect and analyse specific examples of what changes in practice people made and the resulting impact on culture, norms and outcomes. This would encourage change



Reflection card 6: Supportive Conditions and Environment

1. How do you create supportive structures, including a collaborative environment – structural conditions and collegial relationships for establishing and sustaining PLCs?
2. How do you understand relationships and interdependency amongst multiple factors from a systems' thinking approach to deal more effectively with the forces that shape the consequences of different actions and find the leverage needed to get constructive?
3. Structural and physical conditions and human capacity: time to meet and talk, physical proximity of the staff, interdependent teaching roles, communication structures, small size of the school, school autonomy, teacher empowerment, high expectations and taking responsibility for colleague's learning.

Note: Collaborative working does not mean organizing school activities as a team; it is specifically with reference to learning, improving practice, improving instructions and being a better teacher.



Activity: Establishing and Sustaining PLCs: Exploring Pathways, Methods and Phases in the Journey

Time Required: 60 minutes

Objectives: Participants will be able to...

- Understand the pathways to establishing PLCs
- Explore the different methods, models and activities for initiating, developing and sustaining PLCs.
- Prioritize a plan for the development of PLC for their school context.

Group Size: Small Group Activity

Material Required: A4 sheets, chart papers, marker pens and sketch pens, PPT slide

Steps for Facilitation:

1. Participants are divided into three slightly large groups
2. Each group is distributed a handout on 'Exploring Pathways to PLCs' – D2.S8.A2-R1
3. There are three pathways and each group represents one pathway to establishing a PLC.
4. The handout elaborates on each of the three pathways, evolutionary journey of schools through the different stages in the establishment of PLCs and the descriptors or levels for each stage.
5. Each group is expected to carefully read through the pathway assigned to their group. Also make minute observations on the differences between the descriptors in each stage.
6. Participants may across stages record attributes, behaviours and attitudes of teachers and leaders as depicted in the descriptors.
7. At this stage the facilitator may break the group work and share with the participants a slide on overcoming resistance to change through the Beckhard-Harris Model for Change (D2.S8.A2-R2).

8. Participants may once again resume to group work and discuss on how to create dissatisfaction amongst their staff for their existing actions, instructions, nature of collaborations and engagement in collective inquiry?
9. Further team may make a list of activities that demonstrate a better vision for all stakeholders – students, teachers and community and ensure learning for all.
10. At this stage the participants may again be shared with a slide on Rogers’ Innovation Curve (D2.S8.A2.-R3)
11. This slide will help the participants understand where should they initiate the change from? Should it be the innovators, the early adopters or the laggards? Who would contribute towards change and sustenance?
12. The participating group may now prepare a plan of activities as part of the PLC which could be initiated in their respective schools.

Points for Debriefing

Debrief on the resistance the participants anticipate in their respective schools, the innovators, early adopters and laggards and how do they plan to work with them so as to establish and sustain PLCs?

Key Takeaways:

Sustaining PLCs is about sustaining the interests of all members in learning through learning. It is about holding on to the common goals, about shared leadership and autonomy. It is about using the agency of the teachers for teacher development and change.



Handout: Three Pathways: A Case of PLC Journey in Alberta Schools

The need to view PLCs as a collaborative process is emphasized by Couture’s (2003) adaptation of Grossman, Wineburg and Woolworth’s (2001) three pathways that map teacher experiences and recognize the tensions and challenges inherent in establishing and sustaining meaningful PLCs.

The first pathway: Develop a shared identity by taking responsibility for each other.

The second pathway: Improve teaching by learning from our differences as practitioners.

The third pathway: Define and name student success

Following table provides a model that blends current research on PLCs with experiences across Alberta schools

SECTION II

Before the journey begins	Early steps in navigating the way	Nearing the destination and preparing for the next plateau
<p>1. Developing a shared identity by taking responsibility for each other</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ focuses on personal growth and accomplishments in isolation from the school community's goals and purposes ■ defines professionalism in the context of individual teachers working in isolation with students ■ sees wellness and the psychic life of teachers as entirely personal issues ■ romanticizes teacher isolation and sees independence as an indicator of professional autonomy; e.g., new teachers are told to sink or swim 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ recognizes people's unique contributions to the school community ■ defines professionalism as teams of adults cooperating on special projects and short term initiatives; e.g., AISI project teams ■ attempts to deal with teacher stress, isolation and overwork through wellness initiatives; e.g., workshops, leaves ■ sees the structures of the school and the ecology of work culture as unchangeable 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ sees differences among staff as a source of strength that should be learned from ■ advocates shared responsibility for the well-being of students and teachers ■ defines professionalism as shared values and an ethical commitment to supporting learning; e.g., school-wide project teams that affect the entire school ■ sees stress and burnout as systemic organizational issues that must be addressed ■ looks to restructuring the school as a workplace for students and teachers so as to enhance teaching/learning; e.g., school week determined by proven research on work ecology rather than administrative convenience, such as bus schedules

2. Improving teaching by learning from our differences as practitioners		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> denies differences through institutional silence about what happens in classrooms; e.g., the egg crate organization of students and teachers by subject specialization as seen in typical high schools ignores disagreements “by understanding new things in the same old ways” (Sergiovanni, 2000, p. 146) resorts to defensive posturing when conflicts occur; sees debates as either/or rather than as chances to cooperate 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> recognizes to a certain extent people’s unique contributions to the school community manages disagreements or superficially accepts them avoids differences of opinion regarding teaching and learning shares problem solving and concerns about classroom practice through peer review and short-term involvement in study groups 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> looks at differences in teaching practices as a way to reflect on what the research says about effective teaching promotes ongoing reflection on teaching practice; e.g., action research and professional inquiry projects commits to mentoring, study groups and other collegial support provides adult learning that focuses on the mysteries of teaching as opposed to technical problem solving (Gherardhi 1999)

3. Defining and naming together what student success looks like		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ assumes all teachers know what students ought to be learning, which is typically determined by so-called objective measures such as standardized tests ■ accepts drive-by measures of student learning; e.g., externally imposed high stakes tests, rather than testing for student learning ■ sees professional growth as a series of things done to teachers ■ allows district and school goals to develop in isolation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ focuses peer review of professional growth plans on student learning ■ shares concerns about classroom practice through formal peer review and study groups ■ allows some discussion of school goals and teaching strategies ■ adds school goals to district goals with some integration 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ shares responsibility for achieving the collective goal of helping all students learn ■ recognizes that the richest professional growth occurs through shared values and a school culture that promotes shared learning and risk taking ■ ensures that the school continually develops different ways to acknowledge and celebrate student learning ■ infuses district goals into school goals in the critically reflective practice of teachers

Source: Professional learning communities: An Exploration.

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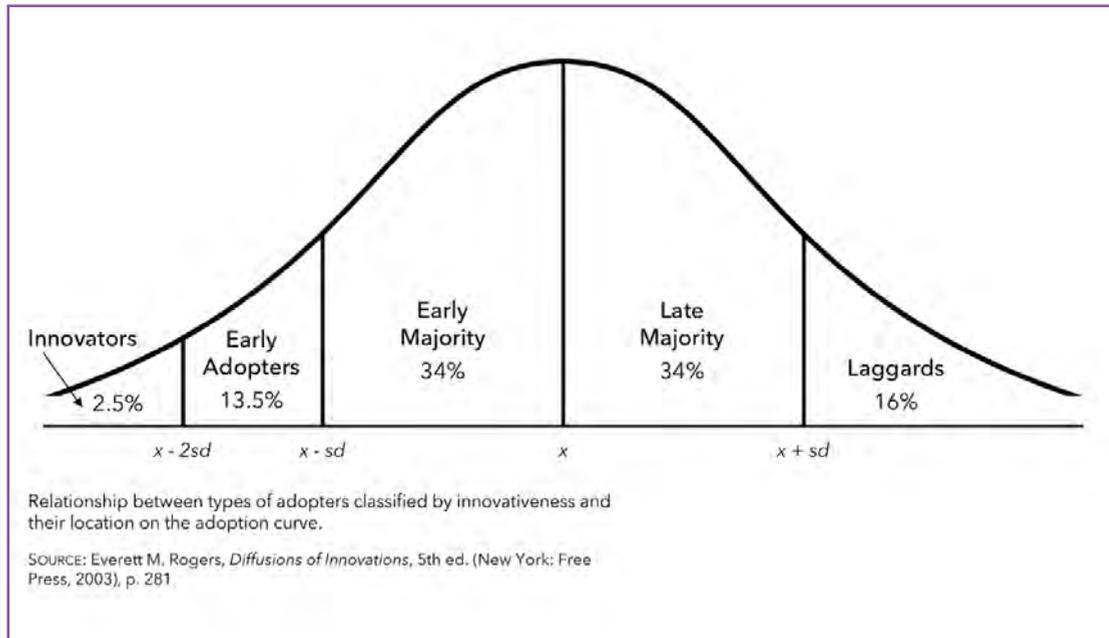


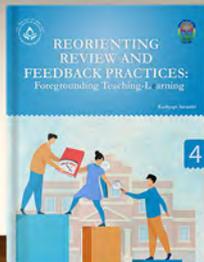
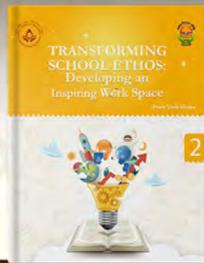
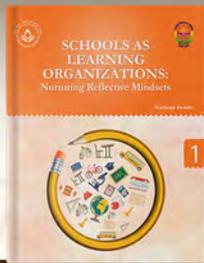
Beckhard-Harris Model for Change





Roger's Adoption Curve – Who should leaders begin from?





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