

THE NEXT STEP IN PLCs

COLLABORATIVE TEAMS THAT
Transform
SCHOOLS

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Research and Theory

Of the many initiatives to pass through education, one of the most widely recognised is the concept of professional learning communities. Generally speaking, this term refers to a schoolwide system of teacher teams that collaborate on issues of instruction, assessment and other school topics with the goal of improving student learning.

The most popular conception of PLCs is likely the one articulated by Richard DuFour and his colleagues (for example, DuFour & Eaker, 1998; DuFour, DuFour & Eaker, 2008; DuFour, DuFour, Eaker & Many, 2010). This model has a number of strong theoretical and research-based tenets, and its core component is a set of four critical questions that effective PLCs should address. As articulated by Richard DuFour and Robert Eaker, they are:

1. What is it we want our students to know?
2. How will we know if our students are learning?
3. How will we respond when students do not learn?
4. How will we enrich and extend the learning for students who are proficient?

DuFour and his colleagues have offered many diverse answers to these questions (for example, DuFour, DuFour, Eaker & Many, 2010; DuFour, DuFour, Eaker & Karhanek, 2010; DuFour & Fullan, 2013). In this book, we will approach the questions from a unique perspective. Specifically, we believe that these questions must be addressed simultaneously. The manner in which the first question is answered dramatically affects the way in which the second question is effectively answered, and so on.

In addition to providing a unique and internally cohesive answer to the four original questions, we add a fifth and a sixth.

5. How will we increase our instructional competence?
6. How will we coordinate our efforts as a school?

Table 1.1 (page 4) lists all six questions and the education area emphasised by each.

Table 1.1: The Six Questions and Their Emphases

Question	Area of Emphasis
What is it we want our students to know?	Curriculum
How will we know if our students are learning?	Assessment
How will we respond when students do not learn?	Instruction
How will we enrich and extend the learning for students who are proficient?	Instruction
How will we increase our instructional competence?	Teacher development
How will we coordinate our efforts as a school?	Leadership

As indicated in table 1.1, the first question (What is it we want our students to know?) is fundamentally a curriculum issue. The second question (How will we know if our students are learning?) is an assessment issue. The third question (How will we respond when students do not learn?) and fourth question (How will we enrich and extend the learning for students who are proficient?) are both instructional issues. The fifth question (How will we increase our instructional competence?) deals with teacher development. The sixth question (How will we coordinate our efforts as a school?) deals with leadership. These six questions not only offer a new perspective on the PLC process but can also serve as transformational forces when answered in specific ways. Before we consider these questions and their respective emphases, we first consider the historical and theoretical development of the PLC process.

The Nature of Organisations

Organisations, by definition, are made up of people and their interactions. Within an organisation, no one truly acts independently; one's actions and behaviours affect – and are affected by – the actions and behaviours of other members of the organisation. As Jeffrey Pfeffer and Robert I. Sutton (2000) put it, “Behavior and performance are influenced by the actions, attitudes and behaviors of many others in the immediate environment” (p. 158). Organisational theorist Donald A. Schön (1983) described organisations as “repositories of cumulatively built-up knowledge: principles and maxims of practice, images of mission and identity, facts about the task environment, techniques of operation, stories of past experience which serve as exemplars for future action” (p. 242). In other words, organisations have the ability to store information.

However, a great deal of the organisational knowledge that develops over time cannot be stored formally – written procedures and other documents do not suffice to record practical or tacit knowledge (Pfeffer & Sutton, 2000). Instead, this information exists within the dynamics of the organisation itself, “by the stories people tell to each other, by the trials and errors that occur as people develop knowledge and skill, by inexperienced people watching those more experienced, and by experienced people providing close and constant coaching to newcomers” (Pfeffer & Sutton, 2000, p. 19). In light of these ideas about the ways knowledge is shared within organisations, it seems rather intuitive that increased collaboration would lead to an increase in both organisational and individual knowledge.

Development Through Collaboration

The importance of collaboration as a method for professional improvement became evident in both the business and education sectors over the course of the 1970s and 1980s (Aram, Morgan & Esbeck, 1971; de Geus, 1988; Levitt & March, 1988; Shrivastava, 1983). In a 1986 article in *Educational Leadership*, Shirley M. Hord summarised various theories regarding collaboration and identified 10 essential features of effective collaboration; table 1.2 displays these 10 features.

Table 1.2: Hord's 10 Features of Organisational Collaboration

Feature	Description
Needs and interests	"When gain is mutual and interest is sufficiently heightened, collaboration is possible."
Time	"The necessary time must be devoted to joint endeavors."
Energy	"Collaboration requires effort."
Communication	"The collaborating mode is a sharing one, and sharing is grounded in continuing communication."
Resources	"Collaborating organizations share funds, staff, and other resources."
Organisational factors	"While the organizations are the framework, the people within them do the actual work. Collaborating individuals within an organization promote similar activities between organizations."
Control	"When participants are willing to relinquish personal control and assume more risk, they create a more flexible environment and can move closer to collaboration."
Perceptions	"Taking the pulse or checking the perceptions of others involved contributes to the collaborating climate."
Leadership	"Strong leaders who express an enthusiastic, positive example of collaborating on many levels encourage overall collaboration in the organizations."
Personal traits	"'If there is any personality characteristic needed to function in the [collaborating] approach, it is probably simple patience' (Murray & Smith, 1974)."

Source: Adapted from Hord, 1986, p. 26.

The characteristics of organisational collaboration listed in table 1.2 clearly show that both structural and humanistic changes are required for organisations to operate collaboratively. Features such as time and resources must be redistributed to allow for collaboration. The individuals who make up the organisation must buy into a common vision and be willing to devote energy to the cause, communicate with others, relinquish some personal control and set positive examples for others. The identification of these key organisational traits sets the stage for the development of practical collaborative strategies.

The Many Faces of PLCs

The collective ideas about effective professional collaboration (see also Rosenholtz, 1991), along with those about reflective practice (Schön, 1983, 1987; Stenhouse, 1975), formed the foundation for the concept of professional learning communities. The term *professional learning community* became popular in education

research and theory in the 1990s (Cuban, 1992; Hord, 1997; Louis, Kruse & Associates, 1995; Louis, Marks & Kruse, 1996; McLaughlin, 1993). Since then, the concept has evolved and grown through the work of its many notable proponents, including Milbrey W. McLaughlin, Joan E. Talbert, Judith Warren Little, Karen Seashore Louis, Jane B. Huffman, Kristine K. Hipp, Thomas Many, Robert Eaker, Rebecca DuFour and Richard DuFour. Despite the many volumes that have been written on this topic, it can still be difficult to define.


Hord (1997) purported that a PLC engages teachers in a cycle of looking at what is happening in their school; determining if they can make it a better place by changing curriculum, instruction or relationships between community members; and assessing the results – all with the goal of enhancing their effectiveness as professionals. Similarly, Louise Stoll, Ray Bolam, Agnes McMahon, Mike Wallace and Sally Thomas (2006) stated that the term “suggests a group of people sharing and critically interrogating their practice in an ongoing, reflective, collaborative, inclusive, learning-oriented, growth-promoting way” (p. 223). Kathleen Fulton and Ted Britton (2011) identified the goal of a PLC as “focusing teachers on improving their practice and learning *together* about how to increase student learning” (p. 7). As mentioned previously, one of the best-known articulations of PLCs comes from DuFour et al. (2008): “We define a professional learning community as *educators committed to working collaboratively in ongoing processes of collective inquiry and action research to achieve better results for the students they serve*” (p. 14).

These definitions all indicate that a PLC is an ongoing process. Teachers and leaders within a PLC are expected to become learners themselves, using research from the field and from within their own schools and classrooms to inform and adjust curriculum, instruction and assessment. They also work together, sharing resources and knowledge to help one another improve their teaching practices. All of this is done with the primary goal of increasing student learning – success is not measured by what or how teachers teach, but by how much students learn.

Building on these general definitions, researchers and theorists have identified specific characteristics of effective PLCs. A summary of some of these characteristics is displayed in table 1.3. Taken together, the myriad definitions and descriptions emphasise collaboration, critical inquiry and improving student learning. Few educators would deny that these notions seem like good ideas – which begs the question, why haven't PLCs been more widely and effectively implemented as tools for school reform?

Issues with Implementation

One of the major problems hindering successful PLC implementation is a lack of clarity about the concept. Though broad definitions abound, the term is not standardised and often lacks practical, specific guidelines for development. As DuFour (2004) described:

 The idea of improving schools by developing *professional learning communities* is currently in vogue. People use this term to describe every imaginable combination of individuals with an interest in education ... In fact, the term has been used so ubiquitously that it is in danger of losing all meaning. (p. 6)

In the late 1990s and early 2000s, the PLC concept became widely known over a short period of time, and “rapid diffusion led also to ambiguity” (Louis, 2006, p. 479). While the ideals and aims of the PLC concept gained popularity, there were few specific instructions for *how* to establish a productive PLC. This made it inherently difficult for teachers, leaders and other school staff to manifest the desirable vision of a PLC. Furthermore, most educators had not previously experienced a PLC and therefore could not draw upon prior

Table 1.3: Characteristics of Effective PLCs

Characteristic	Supporting Studies
Mutual support and trust among teachers	Bolam, McMahon, Stoll, Thomas & Wallace, 2005 Fulton & Britton, 2011 Hord, 2009
Shared vision and values	Bolam et al., 2005 Fulton & Britton, 2011 Hord, 2009 Timperley, Wilson, Barrar & Fung, 2007
Focus on improving student learning	Bolam et al., 2005 Fulton & Britton, 2011 Hord, 2009 Timperley et al., 2007
Focus on teacher growth and professional development	Annenberg Institute for School Reform (AISR), 2004 Bolam et al., 2005 Hord, 2009 Louis et al., 1995
Intentional and systematic support of the collaborative model	Bolam et al., 2005 Fulton & Britton, 2011 Hord, 2009 Louis et al., 1995 Morrissey, 2000 National Center for Literacy Education (NCLE), 2013
Inquiry-based approach and use of evidence	AISR, 2004 Fulton & Britton, 2011 NCLE, 2013 Timperley et al., 2007

knowledge. Even as the PLC concept has become more established, precise directions are often still lacking. Schools, departments or teams of teachers attempting PLC work “may have vague plans that entail meeting together and working toward agreed-upon goals” (Mindich & Lieberman, 2012, p. 5), but without further specificity, good intentions often fail to produce results.

Inadequate guidance can also lead to the perception that the PLC concept is an easy fix that improves teacher and student learning, increasing the amount of time allotted for collaboration. Time for collaboration is, of course, one requirement of a successful PLC; however, “simply giving teachers time to talk [is] not enough to promote either their own learning or that of their students” (Timperley et al., 2007, p. 205). If a PLC is to effect change, collaborative efforts must be structured and purposeful. For example, one specific structure for PLCs is a set of conversational norms that encourage participants to “challenge problematic beliefs” and “test the efficacy of competing ideas” (Timperley et al., 2007, p. 203). Absent this and other conditions, collaborative time might simply reinforce the status quo (Timperley et al., 2007). Just as writing a set of academic standards does not ensure that all students will learn that material (DuFour, 2004), setting aside time for teachers and leaders to meet does not guarantee meaningful collaboration.

Another hindrance to wide PLC implementation is skepticism and resistance to change among staff:

Despite compelling evidence indicating that working collaboratively represents best practice, teachers in many schools continue to work in isolation. Even in schools that endorse the idea of collaboration, the staff's willingness to collaborate often stops at the classroom door. (DuFour, 2004, p. 9)

The level of collaboration required in a PLC is a substantial change from the way most teachers have done their jobs in the past. Some teachers prefer working alone, viewing collaboration as a waste of time or an impediment to getting work done; others doubt that collaboration positively impacts student achievement (Elbousty & Bratt, 2010). Research disputes these opinions, however, showing that teamwork can have a significant positive impact.

Benefits of the PLC Process

Research on the topic of collaboration from fields such as cognition and expertise supports the most general and fundamental assumption of PLCs – that working together produces better results than working alone. Some theories of cognition posit that thinking and reasoning are most effective when distributed across a system or group rather than confined to an individual (Putnam & Borko, 2000). Consider the example of a navy ship (Hutchins, 1990, 1991): numerous crewmembers perform specific tasks, ultimately working together to complete work too complex for one person to do alone.

Collaboration also plays an important role in reflective practice. Reflective practice is an important pathway to expertise in education and other disciplines. It is also difficult to engage in reflective practice alone. Indeed, Schön (1983) stated, “The teacher’s isolation in her classroom works against reflection-in-action. She needs to communicate her private puzzles and insights, to test them against the views of her peers” (p. 333). Collaborative problem-solving is, in general, superior to problem-solving in isolation simply because a group provides more perspectives on an issue. Interaction with others “expand[s] and test[s] the new concepts as part of the learning experience” (Morrissey, 2000, p. 4). A similar dynamic applies to growth and learning about oneself. Even extremely self-aware and critical people have blind spots, but input and feedback from others can help identify and improve them (Brookfield, 1995).

These more general benefits of collaboration are further supported by research on PLCs and collaboration in schools. In the following sections, we explore how the PLC process benefits teachers, students and school leaders.

Benefits for Teachers

One of the most frequently proposed benefits of the PLC process is that it offers a more effective means of providing professional learning opportunities to teachers. As explained by V. Darleen Opfer and David Pedder (2011), “Most research has concluded that activities that effectively support teachers’ professional learning need to be sustained and intensive rather than brief and sporadic” (p. 384). As a structure that is designed to engage teachers in collaborative professional work over an extended period of time, PLCs are more likely to be effective sources of professional growth for teachers than more traditional one-time presentations (Guskey, 2000; Hawker & Valli, 1999; Opfer & Pedder, 2011).

In general, collaboration appears to engender significant professional growth if teachers are willing to explore and analyse important aspects of their practice (Servage, 2008, 2009). One 2009 survey of American

educators found that the majority believe that collaboration would have a positive effect on their own success and that of their students (MetLife, 2009):

- Sixty-seven per cent of teachers and 78 per cent of principals surveyed believe that increased collaboration would significantly impact student achievement.
- Ninety per cent of teachers surveyed agreed that “other teachers contribute to their success in the classroom” (MetLife, 2009, p. 12).

As a by-product of enhancing teachers’ instructional prowess, PLCs can also help establish a culture in which teachers feel more empowered in their work. In a 2009 study by Patricia Hoffman, Anne Dahlman and Ginger Zierdt, the researchers surveyed 56 teachers who had participated in a PLC program and found extremely high rates of agreement with items regarding the experience’s positive impacts on their teaching practice as well as their feelings of efficacy. Their findings are summarised in table 1.4.

Table 1.4: PLC Survey Items with High Rates of Agreement

Survey Question	Percentage of Teachers Who Responded “Agree/Strongly Agree”
Participating in a PLC assisted me to develop new knowledge and skills.	95.5
Participating in a PLC helped me establish or strengthen professional networks.	95.5
I felt a sense of belonging in my PLC.	90.0
I believe the PLC was a place where my voice was heard, respected and valued.	100.0
I believe my participation in the PLC will have a long-term impact.	94.4
My participation in the PLC translated into tangible, concrete actions.	90.0
I believe a PLC is a place to develop a plan of action.	95.5

Source: Adapted from Hoffman et al., 2009, p. 36.

A 2013 survey of educators found similar correlations between collaboration and “valued professional learning outcomes” (National Center for Literacy Education, 2013, p. 20). Respondents who indicated agreement with the survey item “Collaboration is a routine part of how we do our jobs here” were likely to also agree with statements regarding high levels of trust, exchange of information about best practices, allowance to try new ideas and use of student data (National Center for Literacy Education, 2013, p. 20).

Although one of the goals of a PLC is to improve teachers’ instructional practice, it is important to note that individual improvement alone is not enough. Research suggests that professional learning communities provide a unique, schoolwide perspective on pedagogy (Louis & Marks, 1996; Newmann & Wehlage, 1995). Fred M. Newmann and Gary G. Wehlage (1995) explained that schoolwide “authentic pedagogy ... calls for channeling individual human commitment and competence into collective organizational productivity. Schools need to have a clear, shared purpose ... collaborative activity ... and collective responsibility” (p. 51). Similarly, DuFour and Marzano (2011) suggested that “the focus must shift from helping individuals become more effective in their isolated classrooms and schools, to creating a new collaborative culture based on interdependence, shared responsibility, and mutual accountability” (p. 67). Distributed knowledge, collective capacity and shared responsibility are much more powerful than the abilities of even the best teachers working

in isolation. In fact, “a school’s social capital – the connections between educators and the extent to which they exchange and build on each other’s knowledge – is just as powerful a predictor of student achievement as raw human capital – the skills of individual teachers” (National Center for Literacy Education, 2013, p. 14). Additionally, collaborative structures make the professional learning process more efficient and more sustainable. Teachers can learn from each other’s ideas and experiments; when an expert teacher leaves a school, much of their knowledge will remain (National Center for Literacy Education, 2013). As mentioned previously, organisational connectedness allows for the storage of tacit knowledge.

A second benefit for teachers in the PLC process is the potential for increased satisfaction with their careers. To better understand this benefit, consider the following model of job satisfaction. Studies summarised by Frederick Herzberg (1987) suggested that satisfaction and dissatisfaction are two separate spectrums, each affected by a distinct set of factors. In this model, not being *dissatisfied* with one’s job does not necessarily mean that one is *satisfied*. In the same way, low satisfaction does not mean high dissatisfaction. Job dissatisfaction is affected by “hygiene” factors – basic elements such as company policy, relationships at work, salary and job security. When these elements are positive, dissatisfaction is low; when these elements are lacking or negative, dissatisfaction increases. Job satisfaction, on the other hand, is affected by “motivators” such as growth, responsibility, recognition and achievement. As these elements increase, satisfaction increases. Considering these two independent elements (dissatisfaction and satisfaction), it is clear that raising an employee’s salary or improving other hygiene factors is not enough to create true job satisfaction – only to decrease dissatisfaction. The factors that contribute to satisfaction require creating opportunities for growth, increased responsibility and recognition. Table 1.5 displays components that influence satisfaction and dissatisfaction respectively.

Table 1.5: Influences on Job Satisfaction and Dissatisfaction

Satisfaction	Dissatisfaction
Growth	Company policies
Responsibility	Relationships with co-workers
Recognition	Salary
Achievement	Job security

Along these lines, Edward L. Deci and his colleagues (2001) presented a model of job satisfaction and fulfilment that centres on three factors: (1) competence, (2) autonomy, and (3) relatedness. *Competence* means engaging in appropriately challenging tasks (not too difficult or too easy) and achieving success. *Autonomy* means having options and making decisions for oneself. *Relatedness* means interacting with other people and experiencing mutual respect and care. When these factors are met, employees are more likely to be engaged and motivated in their work and experience better overall mental health. PLCs have the potential to increase these motivational factors for teachers. For example, as a result of the collaborative structure inherent in PLCs, teachers have opportunities to make decisions on a regular basis. This empowers teachers and provides autonomy; they do not just receive and carry out directives from school leaders. Stated differently, “Decentralization of decision making encourages people to learn because they know they will have the opportunity and, indeed, the responsibility to use their knowledge in their daily activities” (Pfeffer & Sutton, 2000, p. 103). Overall, teachers in schools with higher levels of collaboration are more likely to be very satisfied with teaching as a career (68 per cent versus 54 per cent in schools with lower levels of collaboration; MetLife, 2009).

As might be inferred from the preceding discussion, PLCs require reconceptualising one's definition of the job of a teacher. Lee Shulman (2004) described teaching as "perhaps the most complex, most challenging, and most demanding, subtle, nuanced, and frightening activity that our species has ever invented" (p. 504) and, in comparing the challenges of teaching to those of other professions, posited that "the only time medicine even approaches the complexity of an average day of classroom teaching is in an emergency room during a natural disaster" (p. 504). In the face of questions about instructional practice, difficult students and so on, the best resource for a teacher may be their colleagues (Rosenholtz, 1991). If one also considers that "teachers' regard for their work – their sense of optimism, hope and commitment – tends to reside in workplace conditions that enable them to feel professionally empowered and self-fulfilled" (Rosenholtz, 1991, p. 165), it becomes clear that meaningful collaboration can help teachers develop a sense of efficacy and, as a result, help increase student achievement.

Benefits for Students

A growing research base supports the claim that PLCs lead to improved student outcomes. Valerie E. Lee, Julia B. Smith and Robert G. Croninger (1995, 1997) studied high school students' achievement gains on maths and science questions and reported that the PLC process "is strongly and positively associated with both effectiveness and equity in learning in both mathematics and science" (1997, p. 139). In both maths and science, students from high schools where teachers had higher levels of collective responsibility achieved greater gains than students from less collaborative schools (1995). These results suggest that when collaborative structures are in place, "more learning occurs" (1997, p. 142). Newmann and Wehlage (1995) found similar results: the higher the level of professional collaboration at a school, the higher students' achievement.

Karen Seashore Louis and Helen Marks (1996) analysed data from 24 schools to examine the relationship between the quality of professional community and student achievement. They found moderate correlations between the quality of professional collaboration and both the quality of classroom pedagogy (.36, $P \leq .01$) and student achievement (.26, $P \leq .001$, adjusted for year level and student background). In other words, "The achievement level is significantly higher to the extent that schools are strong professional communities" (p. 19). The researchers concluded, "Our findings strongly support ... that the organization of teachers' work in ways that promote professional community will have significant effects on the organization of classrooms for learning and the academic performance of students" (p. 26).

Another study of collaborative schools and students' test results found that the majority of PLC schools reported increases in students' scores over a three-year period. For mathematics, 90.6 per cent of PLC schools had increases; for reading and English, 98.4 per cent of PLC schools saw their students' scores go up (Hughes & Kritsonis, 2007).

In 2008, Vicki Vescio, Dorene Ross and Alyson Adams provided the following summary of the effects of learning communities on teachers and students:

Participation in learning communities impacts teaching practice as teachers become more student centered. In addition, teaching culture is improved because the learning communities increase collaboration, a focus on student learning, teacher authority or empowerment, and continuous learning; [finally,] when teachers participate in a learning community, students benefit as well, as indicated by improved achievement scores over time. (p. 88)

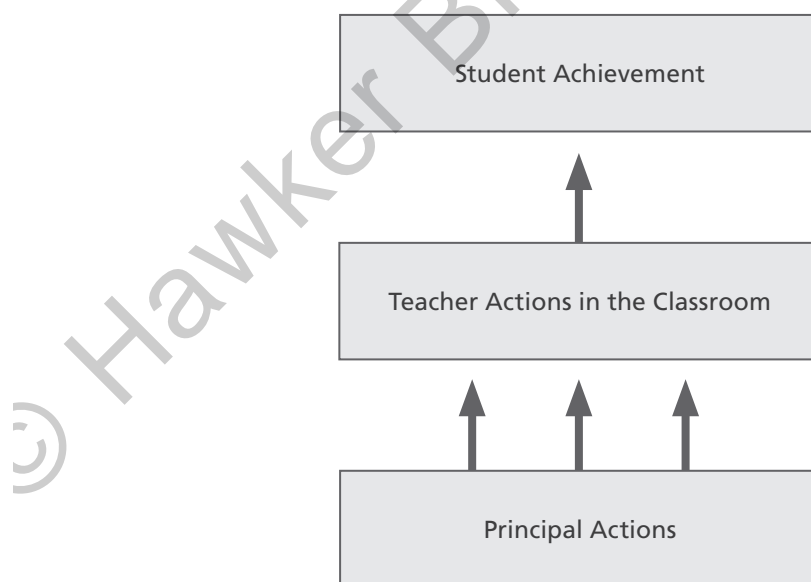
Further research has continued to support these findings. For example, Fulton and Britton (2011) analysed six previous studies on collaborative structures and student learning in mathematics; all six studies found

positive effects. In addition to increased achievement across content areas, studies have shown that PLCs lead to decreased student absences and a lower dropout rate (National Center for Literacy Education, 2013; Newmann & Wehlage, 1995). In a 2005 study, researchers found that “pupil learning was the foremost concern of people working in PLCs and the more developed a PLC appeared to be, the more positive was the association with two key measures of effectiveness – pupil achievement and professional learning” (Bolam et al., 2005, p. 146). In short, a wide range of research over several decades has shown that the existence of effective PLCs is associated with enhanced student achievement.

Benefits for Leaders

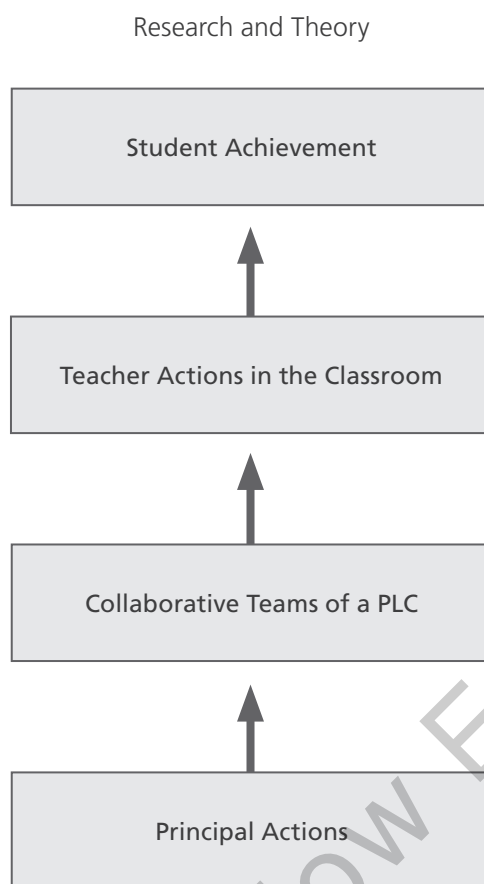
In addition to providing benefits for teachers and students, PLCs benefit school leaders by increasing their ability to support teacher development and student achievement. The classroom teacher has a direct effect on the achievement of their students, but it is also true that school leadership has an effect on student achievement, albeit indirectly (Day et al., 2009; Lee, Louis & Anderson, 2012; Marzano, Waters & McNulty, 2005; Witziers, Bosker & Kruger, 2003).

DuFour and Marzano (2011) provided a perspective on the manner in which PLCs can change interactions between school leaders and teachers. To illustrate, consider figure 1.1, which depicts the manner in which a principal in a school without PLCs affects student achievement. In schools without PLCs, school leaders must work with teachers individually to enhance their actions in the classroom, which, in turn, will have a positive effect on student achievement. In a large school with many teachers, this quickly becomes unmanageable for the principal. By contrast, in a school that has implemented the PLC process, the principal can more directly influence collaborative teams. The collaborative teams, in turn, have direct influence on teachers’ classroom practice, which then affects student achievement (shown in figure 1.2).



Source: DuFour & Marzano, 2011, p. 49. Used with permission.

Figure 1.1: Typical relationship between principal behaviour and student achievement.



Source: DuFour & Marzano, 2011, p. 52. Used with permission.

Figure 1.2: Relationship between principal behaviour and student achievement within PLCs.

In short, professional learning communities allow school leaders to have a powerful effect on student achievement.

Translating Research and Theory into Practice

In the ensuing chapters, we draw on the research and theory presented here to provide practical steps that schools wishing to engage in the PLC process can undertake. As explained previously, we present a new approach to answering DuFour and his colleagues' four critical questions and add two new questions. The complete set is as follows.

1. What is it we want our students to know?
2. How will we know if our students are learning?
3. How will we respond when students do not learn?
4. How will we enrich and extend the learning for students who are proficient?
5. How will we increase our instructional competence?
6. How will we coordinate our efforts as a school?

The emphases implicit in these questions are curriculum, assessment, instruction, teacher development and school leadership.

Each remaining chapter in this book discusses a topic that is essential work for a PLC or collaborative team. Chapter 2 establishes a base for the PLC process through schoolwide structures and processes for productive collaboration. Chapters 3 through 6 examine how collaborative teams can address the identified emphases and transform curriculum, assessment, instruction and teacher development, respectively. Finally, chapter 7 focuses on the importance of effective leadership in a PLC. Taken together, these elements represent a complete set of guidelines for the PLC process that goes above and beyond previous discussions of the topic.

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