

البحث السابع :

” برنامج تدريبي مقترح في مجموعات التعلم المهني وأثره على البنية
المعرفية لمعلمات اللغة بمعهد اللغة الانجليزية بجامعة الملك عبدالعزيز ”

إعداد :

د/ دلال عبد الله

استاذ مساعد المناهج وطرق تدريس اللغة الإنجليزية
كلية التربية جامعة الملك عبد العزيز بجدة

Research:7

***A suggested training program in Professional Learning
Communities and its effect on the Knowledge of English
Language Teachers at the English Language Institute of
King Abdul-Aziz University***

***Dr. Dalal Abdullah Alqiawi
Assistant Professor
English Language Curriculum and Instruction
Faculty of Education.***

A suggested training program in Professional Learning Communities and its effect on the Knowledge of English Language Teachers at the English Language Institute of King Abdul-Aziz University

Dr. Dalal Abdullah Alqawi

Assistant Professor

English Language Curriculum and Instruction

Faculty of Education

• **مستخلص البحث باللغة العربية :**

برنامج تدريبي مقترح في مجموعات التعلم المهني وأثره على البنية المعرفية لمعلمات اللغة بمعهد اللغة الانجليزية بجامعة الملك عبدالعزيز

أصبح مصطلح مجموعات التعلم المهني مصطلحا شائعا لوصف المدارس الفاعلة في الوقت الحاضر. بل لقد بات في طليعة العمليات القابلة للتطبيق والتي يمكن وضعها في الاعتبار عند التخطيط لتطوير العملية التعليمية. وتقدم الدراسة الحالية هيكلًا مقترحًا لمفهوم مجموعات التعلم المهني وكيفية بناء نظام تعليمي يقوم على هذا المفهوم خطوة بخطوة. حيث تهدف الدراسة إلى بناء برنامج تدريبي يبين خصائص مجموعات التعلم المهني، ويوضح الفلسفة والمفاهيم المندرجة تحت هذه العملية. و لقياس أثر البرنامج التدريبي على البنية المعرفية لمعلمات اللغة فقد قامت الباحثة ببناء استبيان خاص يتكون من ثلاث محاور رئيسية هي (تركيب المدرسة، عمليات التدريس، ومخرجات التعلم). أما العينة المستهدفة في هذه الدراسة فهم معلمات اللغة بمعهد اللغة الانجليزية بجامعة الملك عبد العزيز. وقد استغرق تطبيق البرنامج خمسة عشر ساعة موزعة على ثلاثة أيام. ولايات صحة الفرضية المقترحة فقد تم استخدام الحزمة الاحصائية للعلوم الاجتماعية حيث استخدمت الباحثة اختبار (ت) للعينة الواحدة والذي يقيس تحصيل معلمات اللغة في الاستبيان وفقا لدرجة محك يتم تحديدها بمقارنة متوسط أداء المعلمات الفعلي بمتوسط نظري . وقد أثبتت نتائج الدراسة أن أداء أفراد العينة كان ضمن مدى المتوسط المحك مما يدل على نجاح البرنامج في تزويد معلمات اللغة بمفهوم ووسائل تطبيق أو بناء مجموعات التعلم المهني داخل المؤسسة التعليمية.

Abstract:

The concept of Professional Learning Communities has become a common term of current effective schooling. It has moved toward the forefront as a viable process for consideration in addressing school improvement needs. The present study offers a conceptual framework of a PLC and the step by step procedures to construct it. It aims at constructing a training program that describes the characteristics of a PLC, and states the philosophy and different concepts underlying this process. In order to assess the effectiveness of the program on improving the knowledge of English language teachers at King Abdul-Aziz University a questionnaire prepared by the researcher is adopted. The targeted participants of the study are English language teachers, teaching at the English Language Institute of King Abdul-Aziz University. The program lasted for (15) hours divided on three days. In order to test the hypothesis of the study, the one sample T-Test was used. The results showed that most of the trainees' responses are around the test value which is (85) at a confidence interval of 95%.

Introduction

The world is experiencing an accelerated expansion of knowledge and speed changes in each and every aspect of life in the last few years. Therefore, change in the field of education is becoming a common sense. This suggests that teachers are supposed to develop, learn continuously, and exchange new teaching strategies they may come across. The ultimate goal of teachers should be continuous inquiry and improvement. In order for these changes to be effective and adopted successfully administrators, teachers and all staff members should accept new ideas and be willing to improve. The concept of Professional Learning Communities has become a common term of current effective schooling. In fact, for some, the infusion of teacher collaborative practices is considered to have had an immense and unprecedented impact in the field of education. Professional learning communities (PLCs) have moved toward the forefront as a viable process for consideration in addressing school improvement needs (Comier & Olivier, 2009).

Professional Learning Community is a new phenomenon that is becoming a common vocabulary of educators throughout the world (Bailey & Jakicic, 2012). It arises as a response to the increasing concern about student learning outcomes and that no student should be left behind. PLC is a restructuring process that can be tried with schools in order to develop communities of continuous inquiry and learning. Schmoker (2006: 106) stated, *“Professional learning communities have emerged as arguably the best, most agreed-upon means by which to continuously improve instruction and student performance”*.

In PLC teachers learn not only to learn from each other but to learn with each other. If one of the staff members is having a certain strategy or a new teaching practice and he/she is not sure how to apply it or not sure what the results will be, in PLC collaborative teams she will learn with colleagues, try to find resources and work to make that happen. Working in a team will be an inspiration, place of reassurance, and support. In PLC schools there will be no more isolation in teaching. *“PLCs can reinvigorate education in any building serving any grade level with any group of students as long as practitioners decide to take action.”* (Graham & Ferriter, 2010: xxi). PLCs are *“Schools*

that value change and seek changes that will improve their schools". PLC is a school "...having students, teachers, and administrators reciprocally engaged in learning." (Hord, 1997:6). In conclusion, PLC is an ongoing process in which educators work collaboratively in recurring cycles of collective inquiry and action research to achieve better results for the students they serve. (Dufour, Dufour, Eaker & Many, 2010; Brookhart, 2009) Huffman and Jacobson (2003) define professional learning communities as a school organization in which all stakeholders are involved in joint planning, action, and assessment for student growth and school improvement where difficult things can be talked about, where hard questions about teaching and learning get asked, and where adults can learn from each other. Another definition of PLCs providing a more detailed description comes from Bolster and Henley (2005): PLCs are groups of teachers (3-5) working together on a regular basis for learning, joint planning, and problem solving. PLCs can be organized by grade levels, departments, or interdisciplinary groups. The members of each group interact with each other and depend upon each other for the accomplishment of specific goals. The group stays together long enough to form habits and conventions. An effective learning community cultivates an attitude of inquiry and focuses attention on student thinking and understanding.

- PLCs are successful because they build capacity for leadership, learning and growth. They both need and provide support within the physical and human environments of the learning organization.
- PLCs emphasize the learning process of teaching and recognize and respect the professional knowledge embedded in their practice.
- PLCs are themselves an impetus for change that is focused on the improvement of teacher quality and student learning, growth and achievement.

Philosophy

Dufour and Marzano (2011) mentioned three big ideas that drive the PLC process; (1) the fundamental purpose of school is to ensure that all students learn at high levels, (2) if teachers are to

help all students learn, they need to work collaboratively in a collective effort to meet the needs of each student, (3) in order to know if students are learning and to respond appropriately to their needs, educators must create a result orientation data. The philosophy underlying PLC is a continuum of learning (Hord, 2004). Morrissey (2000: 23) estimated that *“Throughout our research on professional learning communities, four key themes emerged that will be echoed here: (1) A professional learning community is not a thing; rather, it is a way of operating. (2) Change requires learning, and learning motivates change. (3) When staff work and learn within professional learning communities, continuous improvement becomes an embedded value. (4) Professional learning communities exist when each of the five dimensions are in place and working interdependently together”*

The objective of a PLC school is to increase teachers’ effectiveness, and administrators as professionals for the sake of students’ learning. *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: 2)

A PLC is made up of team members who regularly collaborate toward continued improvement in meeting learner needs through a shared curricular-focused vision (Reichstetter, 2006). *“As an organizational arrangement, the professional learning community is seen as a powerful staff development approach and a potent strategy for school change and improvement”* (SEDL,)

The most important factor in developing a PLC is strong relationship which forms the cornerstone of every transaction within a building and without such a positive relationship schools fail. (Graham & Ferriter, 2010:58). DuFour and Eaker (1998) list six characteristics of professional learning communities.

- The development of shared understandings and common values ,

- Collective inquiry,
- Collaborative teams that share a common purpose ,
- Commitment to action and experimentation,
- Commitment to continuous improvement ,
- Willingness to be assessed on the basis of results,

DuFour and Eaker's focus on changing teachers and this is not strange; in a practical sense changing teacher behavior is one of the few ways that school administrators and politicians can influence the educational system. (Tarnoczi, 2006). Recent research shows that the kinds of professional development that improve instructional capacity display four critical characteristics (Senge 1990; Knapp, 2003); they are:

- ongoing
- embedded within context-specific needs of a particular setting
- aligned with reform initiatives
- grounded in a collaborative, inquiry-based approach to learning

A focus on PLCs has resulted in a changing view of the role of teachers. Schools that function as PLCs encourage teachers to move away from the traditional view of teachers as isolated practitioners toward a collaborative, learning-centered model. (PLC 13) (Corcoran 1995; Darling-Hammond and McLaughlin 1995; Little 1988; Elmore 2002)

A change occurred also on school purpose that it shifted to make its goal making sure that all students learn rather than all students are taught and this led to four critical questions:

1. *What is it we want all students to learn?*
2. *How will we know when each student has learned?*
3. *How will we respond when students experience initial difficulty in their learning?*
4. *How will we enrich and extend the learning for students who are already proficient?* (Dufour, Dufour, Eaker & Karhanek, 2010: 8)

Buffum, Mattos, and Weber (2012) insisted on teachers describing in details what do they want from their students; they

should set very carefully and specifically what they want their students to learn otherwise they will not be able to proceed to answer the other questions.

PLC Five Attributes

Literature pointed five main attributes characterizing PLC schools. These are summarized as follows; Supportive and Shared Leadership, Shared Values and Vision, Collective Learning, Supportive Conditions, and Shared Personal Practices.

Supportive and shared leadership refers to teacher's role in the school decision making. It suggests that teachers are not any more followers to the principle authority; they are helping and advising about what is better for the school and students' learning. A good starting point for describing what these learning communities look like is to look at how the principal "*accepts a collegial relationship with teachers*" (D. Rainey, personal communication, March 13, 1997) to share leadership, power, and decision making.

Administrators are committed to share decision making with teachers and providing opportunities for them to serve as leaders (Hargreaves & Fink, 2006; McREL, 2003). Leadership is shared and distributed among formal and informal leaders (Phillips, 2003; Reichstetter, 2006). Kleine-Kracht (1993: 393) suggested that administrators, along with teachers, must be learners: "*questioning, investigating, and seeking solutions*" for school improvement. Administrators display a willingness to participate in collective dialogue without dominating, and they share the responsibilities of decision making with the staff. This type of relationship between principle and staff suggests that frustration will develop and conflict will emerge. The question, here, is how will the team deal with this conflict. Graham and Ferriter, 2010; Hord, 1997) suggest that staff members along with administrators should not avoid conflict, but address it constructively; work to understand the perspectives of others, administrators should tread cautiously around team dynamics. The concept of school leadership within the context of a PLC's vision and values requires a transferal from leader-centered to leadership capacity, which translates into changing the view of the principal as the sole instructional leader to leader facilitator (Praxis Group, Inc., 2006).

Shared Values and Visions Buffum, Mattos, and Weber (2009) emphasized the importance of assessing honestly the current reality of the school before starting to set its vision. Sparks (1999) recommends that within the PLC, teachers must collaborate to fulfill their individual professional vision, while supporting a value system that includes collective responsibility. The principle can create a data base for the school vision and mission by asking questions to identify and focus attention on the challenges and goals of the school. Vision describes how good a school can become and it should be clear and coherent (Kanold, 2011)

The principle should meet the staff regularly and ask them what they would do to make their school a better school, what are the challenges they are facing, what suggestions they can provide to improve the school outcomes. Bailey and Jakicic (2012) add that it is important to engage the entire staff because if they do not participate in information gathering and mission and vision statement, they will become passive recipients of someone else's conclusions. Waterhouse (2003) an advocate for professional learning communities, describes the act of committing to a shared mission statement as a mechanism for shaping individual teacher behavior. Townsend and Adams (2005) contend that the most advanced professional learning communities are ones where members are "*actively living out the spirit of the mission and vision*" (*Exploring* 49). Huffman and Hipp (2003) recommend that the PLC membership collectively view the vision as a living experience.

Collective Learning suggests that a PLC school should have collaborative core teams. The main practice of these teams is encouraging and supporting the work of staff members. Stiggins (2005: 28) argues that in PLC teams teachers usually tend to; "*(1) analyze, understand, and deconstruct standards, (2) transform them into high-quality classroom assessments, and (3) share and interpret results together, they benefit from the union of their wisdom about how to help students continue to grow as learners.*"

In order to foster collaboration, it is very important for principles to create schedules that provide time for teachers to cooperate with their teammates. DuFour and Eaker (:152)

highlight this when they write that *"The link between collaborative processes to resolve key instructional questions and a commitment to results cannot be overstated"*. According to Leonard and Leonard (:384), advocates of professional learning communities, collaborative work is an *"important key"* to developing learning communities. DuFour (2004) equates this collaboration directly with teacher learning when he writes, educators *"must work together to achieve their collective purpose of learning for all"*. Leonard and Leonard (2001) offer insight as to how the idea of collaborative participation can be used to exert influence by noting that, thinking of the workplace as a community helps create a culture where employees are morally bound to collective goals. Couture (2005) establishes the important roles that open dialogue plays in professional learning communities when he writes, *"real promise for school improvement lies in open dialogue between colleagues"*. Schmoker (2006) add that this collective effort would eventually transform into a cultural characteristic of the school. According to Cowan (2003:79), the catalyst for school improvement occurs when *"collaboration to achieve shared goals becomes focused, intentional, and urgent"*. Schechter (2008) identified that the more effective routines for collective learning is featured as follows; (a) the analysis of student achievement data, (b) the interpretation of the data to guide instructional planning, and (c) an analysis of the effectiveness of the instructional intervention. A quantitative study by Wheelan and Tilin (1999) found a high correlation between collective learning and collective efficacy.

Supportive Conditions refer to structures that support the vision of a school and learning community. These conditions are vital to the effectiveness and innovation of teaching at the classroom level. There are two types of supporting conditions; physical and human. In order for learning communities to function productively, the physical or structural conditions and the human qualities and capacities of the people involved must be optimal (Boyd, 1992; Louis & Kruse, 1995; Gilrane, Roberts, & Russell, 2008; Hord, 1997). According to the findings, teacher reflection and changed behavior were significantly influenced by; (a) the development of collegial dialogue in determining professional development needs, (b) physical structures available including

materials, location, and time for collaborative planning, (c) support of peer mentors and support personnel, and (d) availability of resource materials regarding the reading initiative being addressed. Hord (1997, 2004) ; Cowan (2003) and Huffman and Hipp (2003) described human capacity as the ability for PLC members to engage in collective learning, shared leadership, and shared professional practices in a collegial atmosphere. They added that the collegial relationship in the supportive conditions dimension requires the traits of decision-making, the personalization of the school improvement plan, and contributing to a positive student-teacher-principal relationship in the context of the professional learning community.

The structural conditions described by Hord (1997: 57) included a variety of conditions such as *“size of the school, proximity of staff to one another, communication systems, and the time and space for staff to meet and examine current practices”*. Several structural conditions are necessary to build a frame that allows PLCs to operate effectively. These include regular and substantial time to meet and talk, close physical proximity among members, and a regular space to hold group meetings (Louis, Kruse et al. 1995).

Shared personal practice is not an evaluative practice but a part of the *“peers helping peers”* process. Such review is conducted regularly by teachers, who visit each other's classrooms to observe, script notes, and discuss their observations with the visited peer. In this part the teams in a PLC engage in collective inquiry into both best practices in teaching and best practices in learning including their present practices and the levels of achievement of their students. Through sharing knowledge teams develop new skills and capabilities that in turn lead to new experiences and awareness. Wignall (1992) described a high school in which teacher share their practice and enjoy a high level of collaboration in their daily work life. Mutual respect and understanding are the fundamental requirements for this kind of workplace culture. Teachers find help, support, and trust as a result of the development of warm relationships with each other. *“Teachers tolerate (even encourage) debate, discussion and disagreement”*. Through such interaction, teachers continue to build a culture of mutual respect and trustworthiness for both

individual and school improvement, and they also exhibit increased commitment to their work. Shared personal practice is limited, even in highly functioning learning communities, and tends to be the last of the dimensions to develop. Copland (2003) echoed that sentiment by offering the premise that shared practices is a key component to changing what occurs in the individual classrooms, which serves as the driving force for holistic school improvement. The process of peer helping peer is more about de-privatizing practices and little about evaluation. Shared practice involves teachers acting as change agents through collegial support, peer coaching, and building trust (Comier & Olivier, 2009).

Mastering these five dimensions of a PLC along with an administrator believing on the theme of the process and a well organized team that is ready to cooperate along with a clear vision and a specified mission and smart goal are expected to help in adopting PLC in any educational workplace.

PLC Construction

The cornerstone of an effective PLC is the continuous focus on improving student learning and teachers' commitment to work collectively toward achieving this outcome. DuFour (2003) outlined the main actions of a successful PLC;

1. Commit and contribute to collaborative teams;
2. Clarify purpose and priorities of learning;
3. Gather continual data on student achievement;
4. Identify areas of concern and generate interventions;
5. Create common, formative assessments;
6. Assess the impact of the identified interventions; and
7. Support each other through this process.

Eaker et al., (2002: 34) state that PLCs are composed of four main priorities:

1. Focus on learning,
2. Focus on collaborative culture,
3. Focus on results, and
4. Provide timely, relevant information.

PLC work requires school staff to focus on learning rather than teaching. Teachers' collective commitments will help all students raise their levels of achievement (Roberts, 2010). This shift entails an expanded notion of "community," one that includes all adults who work directly or indirectly with students, including teachers, school and district administrators, central office staff, superintendents, business and community partners, parents, university faculty, and school board members (PLC12).

Marzano (2007) provides a research-based link between collaborative cultures and organizational climate, and school effectiveness and increased student achievement. He says *"studies that have found a statistically significant relationship between school climate and student achievement have focused on collegiality and professionalism."* He defines collegiality and professionalism as "the manner in which staff members in the school interact and the extent to which they approach their work as professionals." *Rather than becoming a reform initiative itself, a professional learning community becomes the supporting structure for schools to continuously transform themselves through their own internal capacity"* Morrissey (2000: 10)

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.

Many researchers and practitioners agree that school culture is the most important factor in the effectiveness and sustainability of PLCs.

"Achieving cultural change is more elusive. It's about developing an atmosphere of respect and trust for professional educators to make decisions about teaching"

and learning. It's about developing a learning community for teachers that encourages and supports collaborative dialogue and reflective practice. It's about breaking down the barriers that promote isolation and developing a true spirit of teamwork...Without both structural and cultural change, it is unlikely that a professional learning community will be established.

Skytt (2003: 8)

Kruse, Louis and Byrk (1994) outline five structural conditions of a professional community: time to meet and talk, physical proximity, interdependent teaching roles, communication structures and teacher empowerment and school autonomy.

Numerous studies found that PLCs are an important factor in improving student achievement, particularly in those schools with low-achieving students. The Annenberg Institute (2003) found four key benefits result from PLCs which are:

- Building productive relationships that are required to collaborate, partner, reflect and act to carry out a school-improvement program
- Engaging educators at all levels in collective, consistent and context-specific learning
- Addressing inequities in teaching and learning opportunities by supporting teachers who work with students requiring the most assistance
- Promoting efforts to improve results in terms of school and system culture, teacher practice and student learning.

“Research demonstrates that the development of a strong professional community among educators is a key ingredient in improving schools” (Fullan 1999; Langer 2000; Little and McLaughlin 1993; Louis, Kruse and Marks 1996; Newmann and Associates 1996)

Professional learning communities (PLCs) are increasingly recognized as an important aspect of the relationships and culture within school environments. In Alberta and across North America there is consensus that PLCs can improve professional practice and efficacy as well as student

learning and growth and that processes centered on teacher inquiry and decision making impact the effectiveness of PLCs. There are also increasing calls for structures and supports that facilitate the development of school cultures that encourage effective and sustainable PLCs. These supports are typically focused on the provision of time and flexible logistical structures within a school's organizational structures, the ability to form collaborative working relationships and the allocation of resources to develop leadership capacity and provide professional development support. Researchers agree that, within the context of a facilitative school culture, PLCs have the potential to significantly impact teacher practice, views of learning and student achievement.

Statement of the Problem

The term "Professional Learning Community" is becoming a commonplace in the educational environment. It is becoming as one of the most promising strategies for meeting the challenge of helping all students learn at high levels (Dufour, Dufour, Eaker & Many, 2010). "*...the characteristics of a PLC are essential to the sustained improvement of any organization*" (Eaker, Dufour, and Dufour, 2002). However, there is a lot of ambiguity and confusion about the real meaning and successful construction steps of the process. The present study is a training program describing in detail the definition, Attributes, philosophy and structuring steps of a PLC.

Purpose of the Study

The present study aims at

- Constructing a training program on PLC that describes the characteristics of an established PLC, state the philosophy and different concepts underlying this process. It also intends to offer a conceptual framework featuring the core characteristics of a PLC and the step by step procedures to construct a PLC.
- Assessing the effectiveness of the training program on English language teachers at King Abdul-Aziz University via a questionnaire.

Significance of the Study

1. The study is considered to be the first at King Abdul-Aziz University dealing with PLC and defining its concept.

2. English language teachers of the English Language Institute at King Abdul-Aziz University are supposed to benefit from the program in teaching their students and learn from colleagues.
3. The study detailed description of the PLC concepts may help language teachers to understand and even adopt PLC in their workplace.
4. The application of PLC may help in driving teachers' attention toward student learning outcomes as its one of the main pillars of PLC.
5. Aligning the vision, mission, and goals with student learning outcomes is becoming the main target of today's education and the PLC process provides administrators and staff members of a school with the necessary skills to master such activities.

Questions of the Study

1. What is the philosophy of a PLC? ,
2. What are the main attributes of a PLC?
3. What are the construction steps of a PLC?
4. What is the extent of the English language teachers' knowledge about PLC after the training program?

Study Hypothesis:

English Language Teachers of the ELI at King Abdul-Aziz University will be able to determine the characteristics of PLC with a mean of (85) at (90%) of confidence.

Definition of Terms

Professional Learning Communities:

PLC is an ongoing process through which teachers and administrators work collaboratively to seek and share learning and to act on their learning, and their goals to enhance their effectiveness as professionals for students' benefit (Hord, 1997).

English Language Teachers Knowledge:

This term refers to teacher's familiarity with PLC which can include facts, information, descriptions, or skills acquired through experience or education. It can refer to the theoretical or

practical understanding of PLC. This knowledge will be assessed through a questionnaire.

English Language Teachers:

English language teachers are the teachers specialized in Teaching English as a Foreign Language TEFL at the English Language Institute of KAU. They are qualified teachers, who are either native or non-native speakers, Saudi or non-Saudi.

The English Language Institute:

The ELI is one of King Abdul-Aziz University Centers which provides general English language courses to over 12,000 male and female full-time KAU foundation Year students annually, and employs around 600 qualified faculty across the Men's and Women's Campuses.

Limitations of the Study

The present study will be eliminated to the following;

1. The first semester of the Academic Year 2013.
2. English Language Teachers at the English Language Institute of King Abdul-Aziz University.
3. Professional Learning Communities; definition, philosophy , concepts, and construction steps.

Sample of the Study

The sample of the study will include English language teachers, teaching at the English Language Institute of King Abdul-Aziz University (Assalama Campus) in the first semester of the academic year 2013.

Study Materials and Instruments

In order to achieve objectives of the study and answer the questions, the following materials and instruments are used;

1. A training program prepared by the researcher including three sessions and in each session there is a number of lessons.
 - a. The first session is PLC Conceptualization and it includes; PLC Phenomenon, PLC Philosophy, and PLC Concepts.

- b. The second session defines PLC five attributes and each is discussed in a separate lesson. These attributes are; Supportive and Shared Leadership, Shared Values and Visions, Collective Learning, Supportive Conditions, and Shared Personal Practices.
 - c. The third session is PLC Construction and it includes; PLC Schools versus Traditional Schools, PLC Staff Meetings, and Creating a PLC.
2. Each session
 3. A questionnaire developed by the researcher and derived from studies and references describing and discussing PLC to assess the extent of English language teachers' knowledge of PLC after the training program.

Study Methods and Procedures

➤ Method

The study followed the experimental method in order to assess the extent of development in English Language teachers' knowledge about PLC definition, philosophy, and construction the training program.

➤ Procedures

In order to answer the research questions and hypothesis, the researcher collected data on PLC through comprehensive and analytical readings in the literature of PLC, which resulted in the following;

1. Deducing the definition of PLC and other terms related to the process.
2. Tracing the history of PLC as it is becoming a distinguished phenomenon in the USA education.
3. Extracting the philosophy of PLC and its main pillars.
4. Summarizing the main attributes of PLC and their definitions.
5. Comparing traditional schools with PLC schools.
6. Deriving the distinguishing characteristics of PLC meetings.

7. Outlining the steps followed to construct a PLC.
8. Using the above mentioned data to develop the training program.
9. Designing the questionnaire according to the three main cores related to PLC teaching practices which are; School Structure, Teaching Practices, and Learning Outcomes.
10. Giving the training program and the questionnaire to jury members who were asked to judge the external validity of the training program and the questionnaire. See Appendix (A)
11. Counting the internal validity of the questionnaire through the use of factor analysis in the SPSS program which shows that the questionnaire items are valid as the saturation value of each item was more than (00.3) which is an accepted and statistically significant value.
12. Assessing the reliability of the questionnaire by using the (Alpha- Cronbach in the SPSS program and the results suggested that the questionnaire is reliable and the value of Alph-Cronbach was (00.83) which is a highly significant value.
13. After establishing the validity and reliability of the study tools, they were applied on the sample.
14. The application of the whole program lasts for three days; each day one session of the program was discussed for five hours. See Appendix (B)
15. In the first day, the first session of the program was discussed and it lasts for five hours. Each lesson lasts for (80) minutes followed by a practice exercise for (20) minutes.
16. In the second day, the second session of the program was explained and it lasts for five hours. This session included five lessons; each lesson lasts for (50) minutes followed by a practice exercise for (10) minutes.
17. In the third day the third session of the training program was discussed and it also lasts for five hours. This session

included three lessons; each lesson lasts for (80) minutes followed by a practice exercise for (10) minutes.

18. By the end of the third day, the questionnaire was distributed among trainees, and they were asked to decide if the statement belongs to or does not belong to PLC by choosing one of the three letters in front of each statement (A=Agree, N= Not Sure, or D=Disagree) to assess the extent of the trainees' knowledge about PLC. The questionnaire consists of three main cores which are; school construction, teaching practices, and learning outcomes. Each of the three cores includes ten items describing in details that core. The application of the questionnaire lasts (30) minutes. See Appendix (C)
19. Data deduced from the questionnaire was analyzed and processed by the use of the SPSS program.
20. In order to test the hypothesis of the study, the one sample T-Test was used. The results showed that the trainees' responses are around the test value which is (85) at a confidence interval of 95%.
21. Results showed that the program succeeded to improve English Language teachers' Knowledge of PLC and that they become aware of the detailed characteristics of PLC.

➤ **Recommendations**

1. PLC is a valid practical process that should be adopted and encouraged among teachers of different levels.
2. Each educational organization should set clearly its vision and mission before starting its educational plan.
3. Values and goals should be stated clearly and derived carefully from the organization vision in order to help in achieving the mission.
4. Teaching should be an open shared profession and teachers should no more keep teaching practices as a secret.
5. Administrators should be no more the dominant authority in the organization; teachers are becoming co-leaders that can be joined in the decision-making process.

6. The main concern of the organization should be the attained curriculum not the intended curriculum.
7. Learning of each student that is making sure there is no student left behind should be the ultimate goal of education.
8. Continuous learning and inquiry should be the culture of teacher and other staff members in the organization.
9. Collaboration and interaction is the solution that can be followed to confront classroom isolation.
10. A specific time should be set in the weekly or monthly schedule for teachers meetings to discuss and share teaching practices.

References

- ..., "Professional Learning Communities :Professional Development Strategies That Improve Instruction"
- Conzemius, A., & O'Neill, J. (2001). *Building shared responsibility for student learning*. Alexandria, VA: Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development.
- Cormier, Ron & Olivier, Dianne F. "Professional Learning Committees: Characteristics, Principals, and Teachers" Paper Presented at the Annual Meeting of the Louisiana Education Research Association, Lafayette, Louisiana, March 5-6, 2009 University of Louisiana at Lafayette Iberia Parish Public School System
- Couture, J. C. "Three Paths in a Journey." *ATA Magazine* 83.4 (2003). On-Line. Internet. January 18,2005. Available <http://www.teachers.ab.ca/archive/magazine/teachers.ab.ca/index.cfm171.htm>
- Darling-Hammond, L.(1998).Teachers and teaching: Testing policy hypotheses from a national commission report. *Educational Researcher*, 27(1), 5-15.
- DuFour, R., & Eaker, R. (1998). *Professional learning communities at work: Best practices for enhancing student achievement*. Bloomington, IN: National Education Service.
- DuFour, R., DuFour, R., Eaker, R., & Karhanek, G. (2004). *Whatever it takes: How Professional Learning Communities respond when kids don't learn*. Bloomington, IN: National Education Service.

- DuFour, R., DuFour, R., Eaker, R., & Many, T. (2010). *Learning by doing: A handbook for professional learning communities that work*. Bloomington, IN: Solution Tree.
- Dufour, Richard & Rebecca Dufour, (2012) "The School Leader's Guide to Professional Learning Communities at Work", Solution Tree Press, United States of America.
- DuFour, Richard. "What is a 'Professional Learning Community'." *Educational Leadership* 61.8 (2004). 6 - 11
- Elmore, R. F. (2000). *Building a new structure for school leadership*. Washington, D.C.: Albert Shanker Institute.
- Feger, S., & Arruda, E. (2008). *Professional learning communities: Key themes from the literature*. Providence, RI: The Education Alliance, Brown University.
- Fullan, M. (2005). *Leadership and sustainability: System thinkers in action*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin Press & Toronto, ONT: Ontario Principals' Council.
- Haar, J. M. (2003). Providing professional development and team approaches to guidance. *Rural Educator*, 25(1), 30-35.
- Hall, G.E. & Hord, S.M. (1987). *Change in schools:Facilitating the process*. Albany, NY: State University of New York Press.
- Hargreaves, A., & Fink, D. (2006). Redistributed leadership for sustainable professional learning communities. *Journal of School Leadership*, 16, 550-565.
- Hopkins, D. (2001). *School improvement for real*. London, England: RoutledgeFalmer
- Hord, S. (1997). *Professional learning communities: What are they and why are they important?* Austin, TX: Southwest Educational Development Laboratory (SEDL).
- Huffman, J. (2003). The role of shared values and vision in creating professional learning communities. *NASSP Bulletin*, 87, 21-34.
- Hulley, W. (2004). *Planning for school and student success tool kit*. Burlington, ON: Canadian Effective Schools.
- Joseph Tarnoczi, *Electronic Journal of Sociology* (2006),ISSN:1198 3655
- Leonard, Pauline E., and Lawrence J. Leonard. "The Collaborative Prescription: Remedy or Reverie?" *The International Journal of Leadership in Education* 4 (2001) 383 - 399. 19 - 30.
- Leonard, Pauline E., and Lawrence J. Leonard. "The Collaborative Prescription: Remedy or Reverie?" *The International Journal of Leadership in Education* 4 (2001) 383 - 399. 19 - 30.
- Lezotte, L. W., & McKee, K. M. (2002). *Assembly required: A continuous school improvement system*. Okemos, MI: Effective Schools Products, Ltd.

- Little, J. W. (1989). Norms of collegiality and experimentation: Workplace conditions of school success. *American Educational Research Journal*, 19(3), 325-340.
- Little, J. W. (2003). Inside teacher community: Representations of classroom practice. *Teachers College Board*, 105(6), 913-945.
- Louis, K. S. (2006). Changing the culture of schools: Professional community, organizational learning, and trust. *Journal of School Leadership*, 16(5), 477-489
- Louis, K. S., Marks, H. M., & Kruse, S. (1994). *Teachers' professional community in restructuring schools*. Madison, WI: Wisconsin Center for Educational Research, University of Wisconsin-Madison. (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED31871). Retrieved August 14, 2008, from http://eric.ed.gov/ERICWebPortal/custom/portlets/recordDetails/detailmini.jsp?_nfpb=true&_ERICExtSearch_SearchValue_0=ED381871&_ERICExtSearch_SearchType_0=no&accno=ED381871
- Marzano, R. (2007). Designing a comprehensive approach to classroom assessment. In D. Reeves (Ed.), *Ahead of the curve: The power of assessment to transform teaching and learning*. Bloomington, IN: Solution Tree.
- Melanie S. Morrissey Southwest Educational Development Laboratory 211 East Seventh Street Austin, Texas 78701, 512/476-6861, 2000
- Mid-continent Research for Education and Learning (McREL). (2003). *Sustaining school improvement: Professional learning community*. Retrieved May 10, 2008, from http://www.mcrel.org/pdf/leadershiporganizationdevelopment/5031TG_prof_lrncommfolio.pdf
- Mindy L. Roberts, "Improving Student Achievement Through Professional Learning Communities" (2010). *Educational Administration :Theses, Dissertations, and Student Research*. Paper 42.
- Olivier, D. F., & Hipp. K. (2006). Leadership capacity and collective efficiency: Interacting to sustain student learning in a professional learning community. *Journal of School Leadership*, 16, 505-519
- Phillips, J. (2003). Powerful learning: Creating learning communities in urban school reform. *Journal of Curriculum and Supervision*, 18(3), 240-258.
- Reichstetter, R. (2006). Defining a professional learning community: A literature review. *E&R Research Alert*, #06.05. Retrieved August 8, 2008, from http://www.wcpss.net/evaluation-research/reports/2006/0605plc_lit_review.pdf

- Roberts, S. M. & Pruitt, E. Z. (2003). *Schools as professional learning communities: Collaborative activities and strategies for professional development*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin Press.
- Rosenholtz, S. J. (1989). Workplace conditions that affect teacher quality and commitment: Implications for teacher induction programs. *The Elementary School Journal*, 89(4), 421-439.
- Sackney, L., & Mitchell, C. (2001). Building capacity for a learning community. *Canadian Journal of Educational Administration and Policy*, 19. Retrieved July, 9, 2005, from <http://www.umanitoba.ca/publications/cjeap/articles/mitchellandsackney.html>
- Schmoker, M. (2006). Learning communities at the crossroads: Toward the best schools we've ever had. *Phi Delta Kappan*, 86(1), 84-88.
- Sergiovanni, T. (1994). *Building community in schools*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey Bass
- Stoll, L., Bolam, R., McMahon, A., Thomas, S., Wallace, M., Greenwood, A., & Hawkey, K. (2005). *What is a professional learning community? A summary*. Retrieved February 16, 2008, from <http://www.decs.sa.gov.au/docs/documents/1/ProfessionalLearningComm-1.pdf>
- Sullivan, S. & Glanz, J. (2005). *Building effective learning communities: Strategies for leadership, learning, & collaboration*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin Press.
- Supovitz, J. A. & Christman, J. B. (2005). Small learning communities that actually learn: Lessons for school leaders. *Phi Delta Kappan*, 86(9), 649-651. The Center
- Townsend, David, and Pamela Adams. *Tracking the Journey to a Learning Community*. April 2004. On-Line. Internet. January 18, 2005. Available <http://www.chinooksedge.ab.ca>.
- Vescio, V., Ross, D., & Adams, A. (January, 2006). Review on professional learning communities: What do we know? Paper presented at the NSRF Research Forum. Retrieved August 28, 2008, from http://www.nsrffharmony.org/research.vescio_ross_adams.pdf
- Waterhouse, John R. "Professional Learning Communities: One School on its Way." *ATA Magazine* 83.4 (2003). On-Line. Internet. January 18, 2005. Available <http://www.teachers.ab.ca/archive/magazine/teachers.ab.ca/index.cfm170.htm>



((نموذج اشتراك في مجلة دراسات عربية في التربية وعلم النفس))

سعادة / الأستاذ الدكتور : رئيس تحرير مجلة دراسات عربية في التربية
وعلم النفس السلام عليكم ورحمة الله وبركاته وبعد ،،

أرغب الاشتراك في المجلة لمدة : (سنة واحدة □)

على أن تصلني نسخ أعداد المجلة على عنواني البريدي الموضح بهذا النموذج.

الاسم

الوظيفة

جهة العمل

الجنسية

عنوان المراسلة

البريد الإلكتروني

الهاتف/ الفاكس

اسم المشترك :

التوقيع :

- قيمة الاشتراك السنوي للأفراد بالدول العربية : (٥٠٠ ريالاً).
- قيمة الاشتراك للأفراد بباقي دول العالم : (٢٠٠ دولار).
- قيمة الاشتراك للمؤسسات بالدول العربية : (٧٥٠ ريالاً).
- قيمة الاشتراك للمؤسسات بباقي دول العالم : (٣٥٠ دولار).
- قيمة الاشتراكات هذه شاملة تكاليف البريد العادي ، ومن يرغب في البريد الممتاز يتحمل الفرق.
- تسدد قيمة الاشتراكات مباشرة أو بحوالة بنكية بالريال السعودي باسم رئيس تحرير المجلة (د . ا / ماهر إسماعيل صبري) على بنك الرياض فرع حي أحد بالمدينة المنورة ، رقم آي بان : SA162000001070160599940
- يمكن سداد قيمة الاشتراكات بالجنبيه المصري مباشرة لكتب المجلة بجمهورية مصر العربية ، أو بحوالة بنكية باسم رئيس التحرير (د . ا / ماهر إسماعيل صبري) على بنك فيصل الإسلامي المصري فرع بنها رقم الحساب ١٨٥٠٦
- ترسل صورة من قسيمة تحويل الاشتراكات على البريد الإلكتروني لرئيس التحرير mahersabry21@yahoo.com
- يرسل هذا النموذج بعد تعبئة بياناته عبر البريد الإلكتروني لرئيس تحرير المجلة ، أو عبر البريد العادي على عنوان رئيس التحرير الحالي : المدينة المنورة ، جامعة طيبة ، كلية التربية ، قسم المناهج وطرق التدريس . أو على عنوان مكتبنا بمصر : اش أحمد ماهر متضرع من ش الشعراوي ، أتريب ، بنها .