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Fostering Networked Learning for School Improvement

A Tobago Agenda



Content

- 1) Connecting PLNs/PLCs to School and System Improvement-
- 2) What are PLNs?
- 3) What are PLCs?
- 4) Implementing PLNs & PLCs
- 5) Reflecting on the Constraints in Tobago
- 6) Videos and Handouts
- 7) Planning for PLCS in schools and across clusters

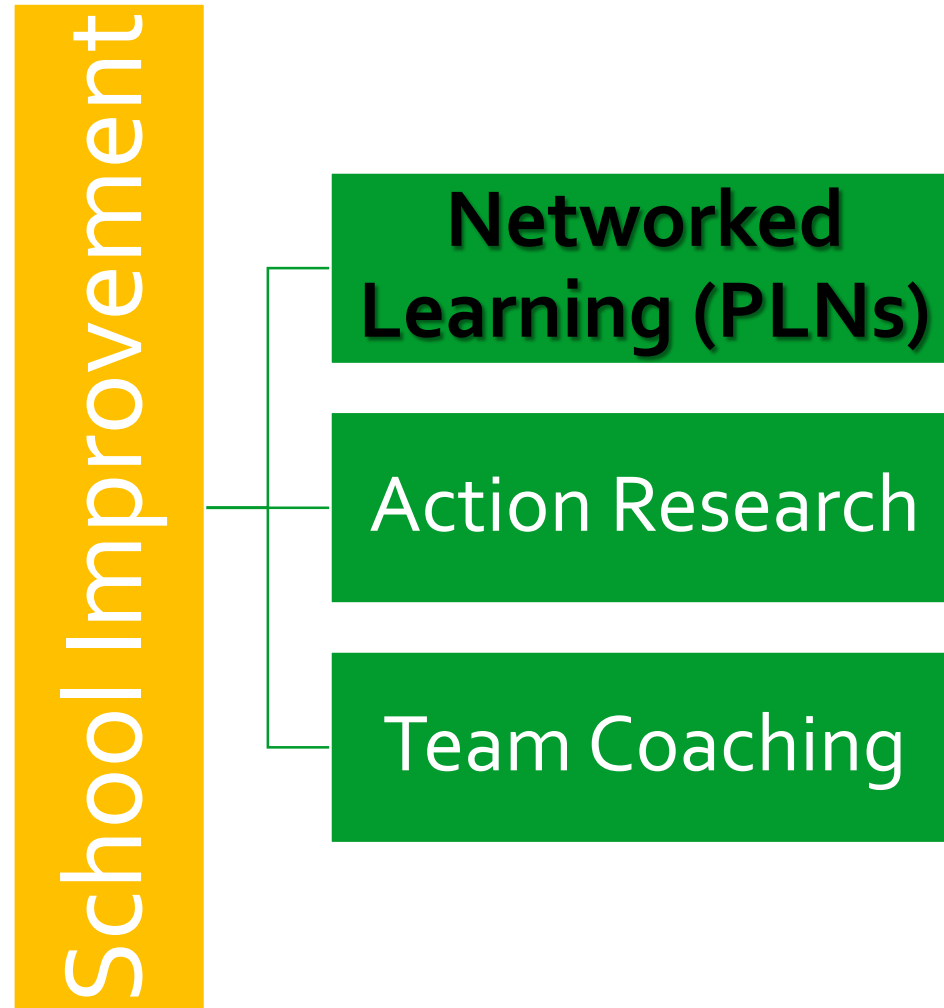


Activities

- 1) Form School Clusters
- 2) Identify shared issues
- 3) Organize PLNs in the schools
- 4) Create a PLN of principals
- 5) Discuss & practice the protocols of Action Research & Coaching
- 6) Discuss future implementation in the clusters



The Tobago Intervention



A Theory of Action for the proposed School Improvement Model

Components	Action Mechanisms	Intermediate Outcomes	Final Outcomes	Enhanced Student Learning
PLNs	Networked learning facilitates innovation and agency as teams work across clusters of schools	Agency Collaboration Well-Being	Collaborative engagement	
Action Research	Action Learning provides a procedure for testing and improving policy ideas and innovations	Innovation Organizational Learning	Improved learning and policy intervention fit	
Team Coaching	Coaching ensures collaborative and professional learning in which individual and team engagement and improvement	Personal growth and improvement Professional Development	Continuous Professional Learning	

Connecting PLNs/PLCs to School and System Improvement

Clarifying the Context



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Connecting PLNs/PLCs to School & System Improvement- School effectiveness



» What do we mean by school improvement? School improvement theory is a set of ideas that builds upon our historical understanding of school effectiveness.

» It includes ideas that focus on making schools successful and includes all those practices we now know as educational improvement.

Connecting PLN/PLCs to School & System Improvement- School effectiveness



- » The ideas about school effectiveness were first generated in the US in 1983 from the work of Ron Edmonds and by Michael Rutter in 1979 in the UK. The ideas directly confronted the question of “do schools matter?”
- » School effectiveness research is formally described as the scientific approach to determine the causal influence of malleable conditions of schooling (Jap Schreens).

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Connecting PLN/PLCs to School & System Improvement- School effectiveness



- » Edmonds wrote a number of key articles based upon his work on New York schools, including, “ **Effective schools for the urban poor**”.
- » Michael Rutter’s work is entitled, “**Fifteen Thousand Hours: Secondary Schools and Their Effects on Children**”.
- Written by Michael Rutter, Barbara Maughan, Peter Mortimore, and Janet Ouston, with Alan Smith. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1979, 285 pp.

Connecting PLN/PLCs to School & System Improvement-

The trigger for the school effectiveness studies of the 70s & 80s

- » The trigger for both these works and subsequent ideas was the 1969 US report by James Coleman on “Equality of Opportunity”

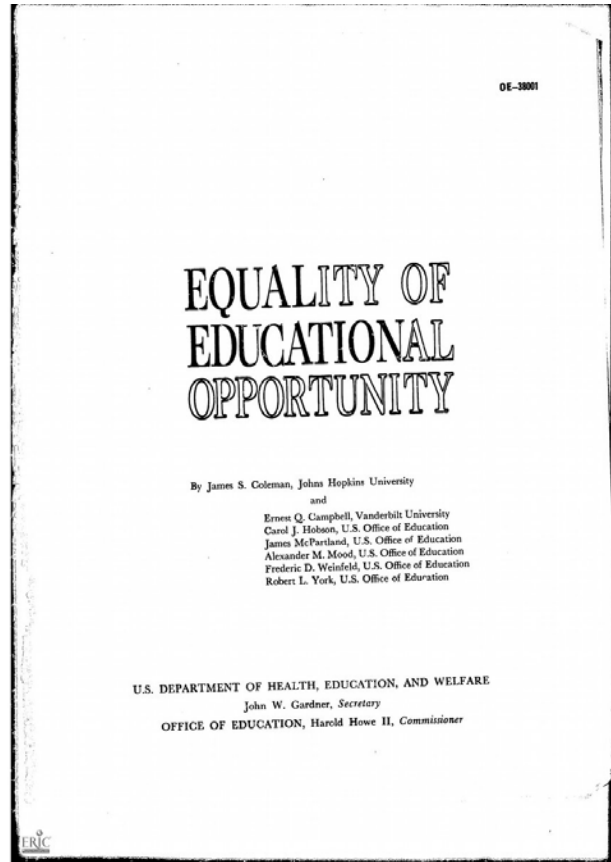
Reconsidering the
COLEMAN REPORT
on its 50TH ANNIVERSARY

FEBRUARY 25, 2016 • WASHINGTON, D.C.

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Connecting PLN/PLCs to School & System Improvement-

The Coleman Report



- » This report concluded that there were differences among students at different levels of schooling.
- » However, the report argued that the most important factor was the socioeconomic makeup of the school and the home background, which made the greatest impact upon achievement levels.
- » This raised the question of whether or not schools made a difference.

Connecting PLCs to School and System Improvement-

School Effectiveness vs School Improvement



Professor David Reynolds
CBE BA FRSA

- » School effectiveness is more directed to finding out “what works” in education and “why”
- » School improvement in contrast is **practice and policy oriented** and is intended to change education in the desired direction.
- » School improvement is therefore educational improvement within schools.

Connecting PLN/PLCs to School & System Improvement- School Improvement Defined



- » **School improvement** is formally defined as a distinct approach to educational change that aims to enhance student outcomes as well as strengthening the school's capacity for managing change (Hopkins).
- » It describes a set of processes, managed from within the school, targeted both at pupil achievement and the school's ability to manage change—a simultaneous focus on process and outcomes.

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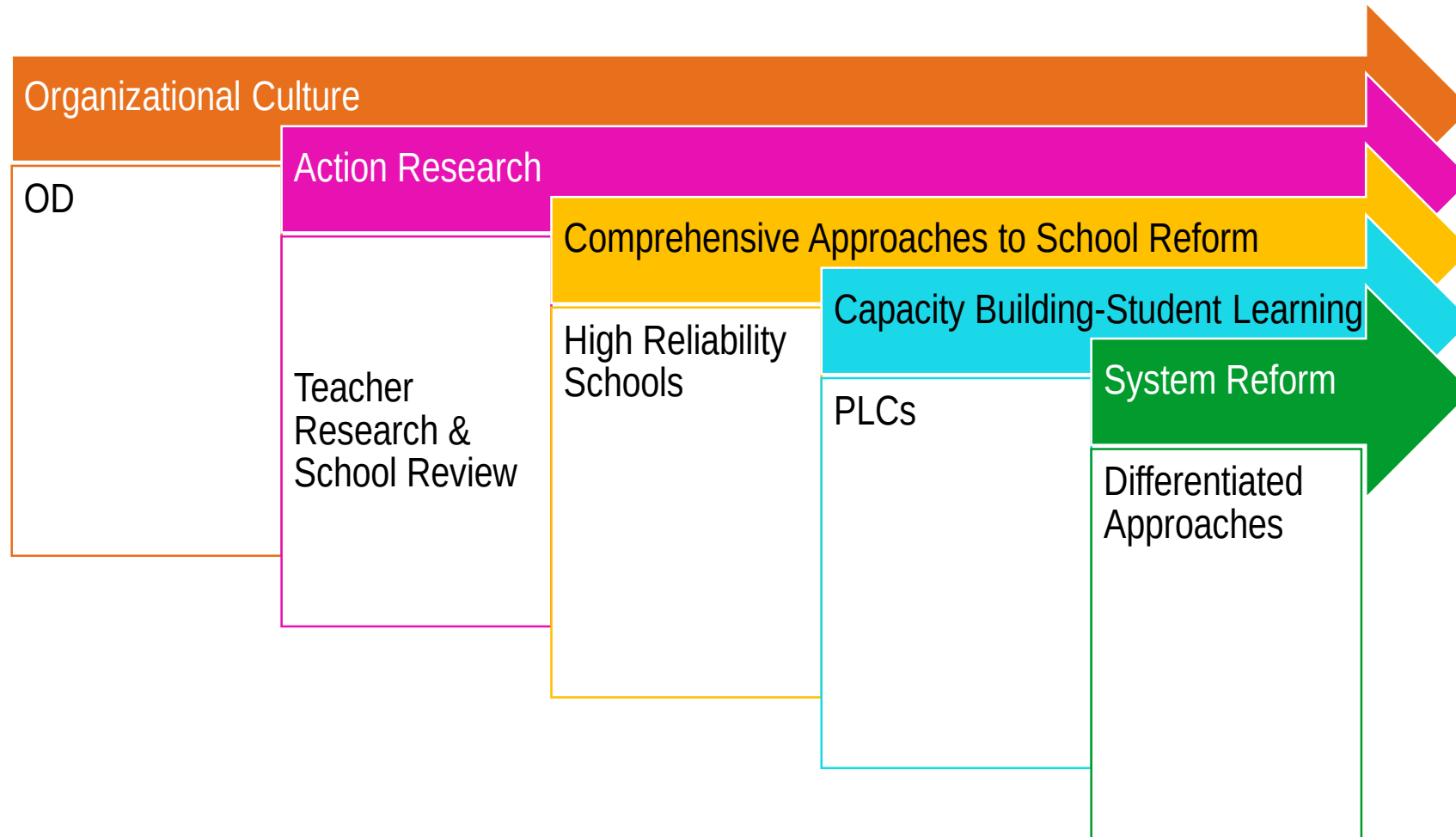
Connecting PLN/PLCs to School & System Improvement-

The Phases of School Improvement

Table 1. Five phases of research on school and system improvement.

Phase of School and System Improvement	Key Features of Each Phase
Phase 1 – Understanding the organisational culture of the school	• The legacy of the organisational development research • The cultures of the schools and the challenges inherent in change
Phase 2 – Action research and research initiatives at the school level	• Teacher research and school review • Research programmes such as the Rand Study, Dissemination Efforts Supporting School Improvement (DESSI), Special Strategies and the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) International School Improvement project
Phase 3 – Managing change and comprehensive approaches to school reform	• Managing centralised policy change • “Comprehensive” approaches to school reform, such as: Success for All, New American Schools, High Reliability Schools and Improving the Quality of Education for All (IQEA).
Phase 4 – Building capacity for student learning at the local level and the continuing emphasis on leadership	• Professional learning communities and networks • Recognising the continuing importance and impact of leadership
Phase 5 – Towards systemic improvement	• The influence of the knowledge base and the impact of national and international benchmarking studies • Differentiated approaches to school and system reform

How School Improvement has evolved



Connecting PLN/PLCs to School & System Improvement-

The last decade

SPRINGER INTERNATIONAL HANDBOOKS OF EDUCATION 23

Andy Hargreaves
Ann Lieberman
Michael Fullan
David Hopkins
Editors

Second International Handbook of Educational Change

- » The decade of large-scale reform has also been a decade in which evidence has replaced experience; hard data have pushed aside soft intuition and judgment.
- » Data-driven instruction and improvement have become de rigeur elements of Anglo-American approaches to educational reform.

Connecting PLN/PLCs to School & System Improvement-

The last decade of school change

- » Data-driven improvement has become an integral part of the movement to develop schools into being professional learning communities (PLCs), where teachers use data and other evidence to inquire into their practice and its effects on students and make needed improvements together to address the shortcomings that they find.
- » In the best or most advanced PLCs, a wide range of quantitative and qualitative data are used as a regular and effortless part of collective practice to inquire continuously into practice in the classroom, department, or entire school so as to keep improving in order to raise standards of achievement (Datnow, Park, & Wohlstetter, 2007).

Connecting PLNs/PLCs to School and System Improvement- System Improvement

- » System improvement means changing many schools at the same time using the core principles of school improvement. Such large scale systematic reform has a long history in the Western world but rarely implemented with precision in countries of the global South.

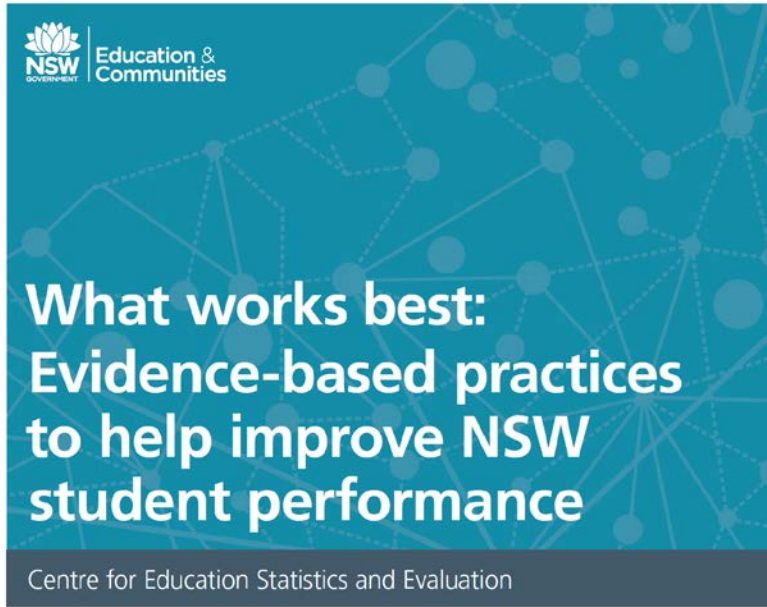
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“Leaders have to provide direction, create the conditions for effective peer interaction, and intervene along the way when things are not working as well as they could.”



Connecting PLN/PLCs to School and System Improvement- School Improvement in a 'What Works' world



- » School improvement does not mean that every practice and strategy is to be tried. Modern educational science emphasizes "what works" and cultural relevance asks "what works where?"
- » The what works movement suggests that some policies, practices and programmes are more effective than others. The US Government maintains a what works clearinghouse.

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Connecting PLN/PLCs to School and System Improvement- School Improvement in a 'What Works' world

IES : WWC What Works Clearinghouse ≡ MENU Go

Select topics to **Find What Works** based on the evidence

 Literacy

 Mathematics

 Science

 Behavior

 Children and Youth with Disabilities

 English Learners

 Teacher Excellence

 Charter Schools

 Early Childhood (Pre-K)

 K-12 Kindergarten to 12th Grade

 Path to Graduation

 Postsecondary

WELCOME TO THE WHAT WORKS CLEARINGHOUSE

The What Works Clearinghouse (WWC) reviews the existing research on different *programs, products, practices, and policies* in education. Our goal is to provide educators with the information they need to make evidence-based decisions. We focus on the results from *high-quality research* to answer the question "What works in education?" Find more

HIGHLIGHTS



New WWC Webinar: WWC Standards for Reviewing Fuzzy Regression Discontinuity Designs

Join us on October 29 for a free webinar on WWC standards for reviewing evidence from fuzzy regression discontinuity designs.

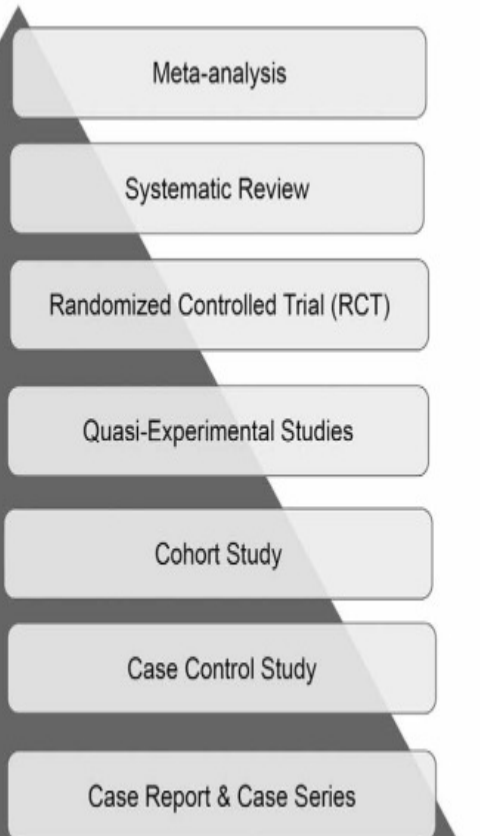
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Connecting PLN/PLCs to School and System Improvement-

Evidence for what works

Hierarchy of Evidence



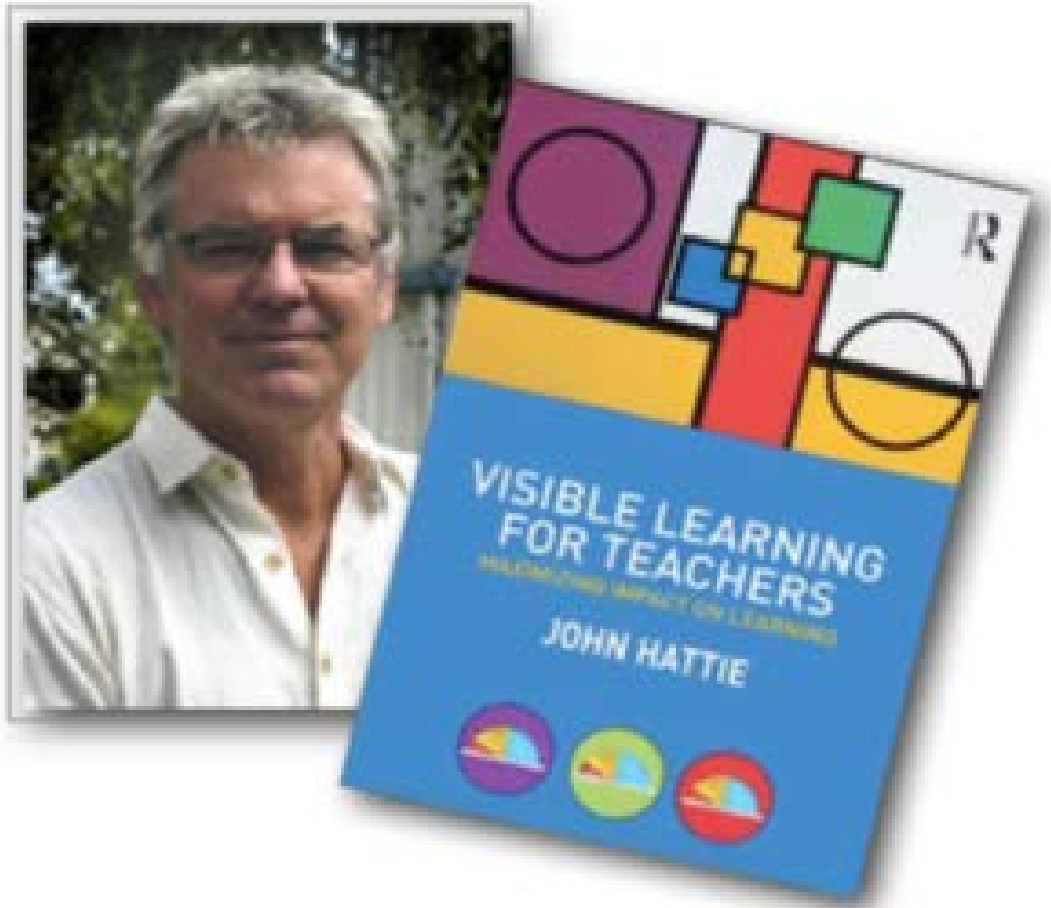
- » In Western countries, evidence for what works is gathered mainly from Randomized Control Trials (RCTs) and Cohort Studies. A synthesis of results from high quality studies are often summarized in Systematic Reviews and Meta-analytic Studies.
- » There is less research and much higher quality evidence in countries of the global South, making transfer and adaptation necessary.

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Connecting PLNs/PLCs to School and System Improvement-

The work of John Hattie

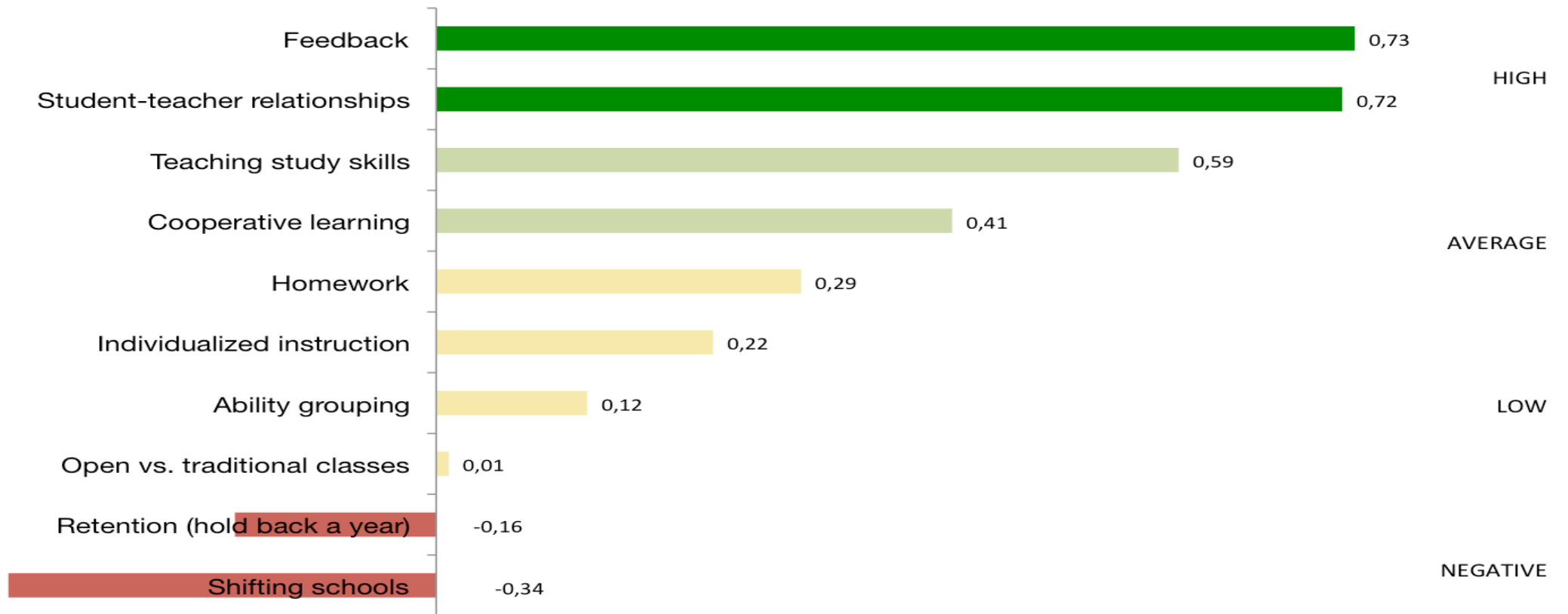


» John Hattie, an Australian Professor, has mapped the magnitude of the impact of several educational interventions using effect sized and concludes that collective teacher efficacy, feedback, and professional development are powerful tools.

Connecting PLNs/PLCs to School and System Improvement-

The work of John Hattie

10 Selected Effect sizes: What works best for learning in schools?
Source Visible Learning (2009)



www.visible-learning.org

PLC Commitment to Learning:

Common Work



Collective Teacher Efficacy



**John Hattie's latest
Visible Learning
Research**

based on
1,400 meta-analyses
of over
80,000 studies
involving over
300 million students

Research on PLNs/PLCs

Evidence that PLCs work



Professional communities and student achievement – a meta-analysis

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(Received 14 January 2010; final version received 1 November 2010)

In the past 3 decades, the concept of professional community has gained considerable momentum in the theoretical and empirical studies in this field. At the same time, the concept has faced conceptual and methodological difficulties in that as yet no universal definition has been formulated and that its operationalization differs in the various empirical studies conducted on the subject. This study presents a comprehensive synthesis of the theories currently available and their implications for the conceptualization and operationalization of the professional community concept including a meta-analysis of the studies that investigated the effect of professional community on student achievement. Our meta-analysis reported a small but significant summary effect ($d = .25$, $p < .05$), indicating that within a school environment professional community could enhance student achievement. Furthermore, the need for the conceptual and empirical validation of the concept's key dimension was discussed.

Keywords: professional community; meta-analysis; secondary education; student achievement

A review of research on the impact of professional learning communities on teaching practice and student learning[☆]

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Received 7 October 2006; received in revised form 9 January 2007; accepted 10 January 2007

Abstract

After an overview of the characteristics of professional learning communities (PLCs), this manuscript presents a review of 10 American studies and one English study on the impact of PLCs on teaching practices and student learning. Although, few studies move beyond self-reports of positive impact, a small number of empirical studies explore the impact on teaching practice and student learning. The collective results of these studies suggest that well-developed PLCs have positive impact on both teaching practice and student achievement. Implications of this research and suggestions for next steps in the efforts to document the impact of PLCs on teaching and learning are included.

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What are PLNs/PLCs

Clarifying the innovation



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Connecting PLCs to School and System Improvement-

What are PLCs?



» PLCs mean **Professional Learning Communities**, It is a group of educators (teachers and administrators) that meets regularly, shares expertise, and works collaboratively to improve teaching skills and the academic performance of students.

Definition by Louise Stoll

A group of people sharing and critically interrogating their practice in an ongoing, reflective, collaborative, inclusive, learning-oriented, growth-promoting way.

Connecting PLCs to PLNs

A PLC is a network-‘groups or systems of interconnected people and organizations (including schools) whose aims and purposes include the improvement of learning and aspects of well-being known to affect learning. Professional Learning Networks (PLNs) include inter-school collaboration.

Connecting PLCs to PLNs

Networked Learning Communities (NLC 2003) was an innovation launched in 2002 by the DfES in partnership with the National College for School Leadership (NCSL) and with the Innovations Unit (a public services intermediary).

To qualify for funding, groups of schools across England were encouraged to form networks of any size (but a minimum number of eight schools), with a commitment to promoting learning at pupil level and at adult level within and beyond the network.

Activity-Experience a Principal PLN

- » Form a PLN of 6 to 8 principals
- » Nominate a group leader for the month, a co-leader, and a secretary/recorder.
- » Form a WhatsApp group.
- » Set up the rules for engagement (the group can build their own norms)
- » Brainstorm-Decide on a specific learning issue you wish to explore among your schools- getting boys to write; improving literacy, improving mathematics for everybody, installing project-based learning.
- » Decide how you will engage evidence and selection actions to solve the stated issue.

Think of an effective team-
what rules did they have for
the following areas?

Norms Development Template

Elements To Consider	Group Proposed Norms
<u>Time</u> ❖ When will we meet? ❖ Where will we meet? ❖ Will we be on time?	
<u>Listening</u> ❖ How will we listen to our peers? ❖ Are there any bad ideas? ❖ How will we discourage verbal interruptions when others are speaking?	
<u>Confidentiality</u> ❖ What content is to be held in confidence? ❖ What can be shared after the meeting?	
<u>Decision Making:</u> ❖ How will we arrive at a decision? ❖ What if everyone doesn't agree with the group's decision?	
<u>Participation</u> ❖ Is participation optional? ❖ Will we have an attendance policy? ❖ What will we do if a member regularly misses meetings?	
<u>Expectations</u> ❖ What do we expect from team members? ❖ Do we need a method for ensuring each member comes to the meeting prepared with appropriate data or other items?	

What are PLCs- Key Characteristics?



- 1) Shared mission, vision, values, goals
- 2) Collaborative teams focused on learning
- 3) Collective inquiry (Action Research)
- 4) Action orientation and experimentation
- 5) Commitment to Continuous improvement
- 6) Results orientation

How inclusive should be the community? (Louise Stoll)

Huffman (2001) suggested that more mature PLCs involve all their stakeholders in building vision, but those primarily involved are those in school. Much of the literature considers only teachers (including school leaders) to be members of professional learning communities.

For many schools, however, especially those in certain contexts and those with younger children or large numbers of pupils with special needs, the role of other staff employed by the school can be equally critical (Louis & Gordon, 2006).

What are PLCs?- PLC Lite?



- » Richard De Four describes **PLC Lite** as a PLC process where activities **fail to embrace the central tenants of the PLC process** and will not lead to higher levels of learning for students or adults.
- » The genuine PLC process calls for working together in collaborative teams; establishing a guaranteed and viable curriculum; using formative assessments stemming from the curriculum; and using the result of the assessments to inform interventions and teaching.

What are PLCs?-

Four Guiding Questions



- » **What do we expect students to learn?**
 - Clear standards and goals
- » **How will we know when they have learnt it?**
 - Common formative assessments
 - National Learning Assessments
 - Data informed instruction
- » **How do we respond when they don't know it?**
 - Evidence-based interventions
- » **How will we respond when they already know it?**
 - Enrichment Activities

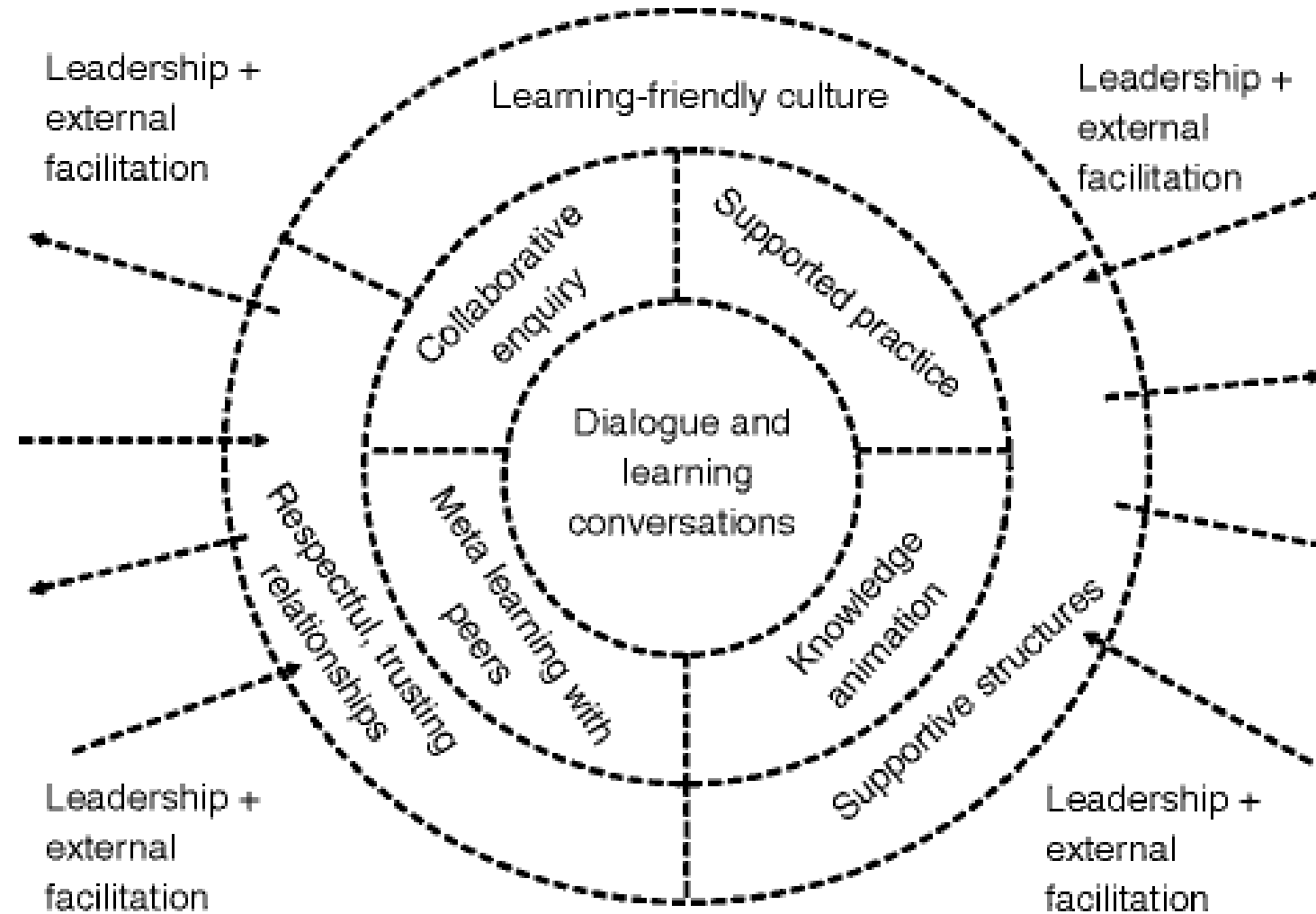
Connecting the dots



What are PLCs for?

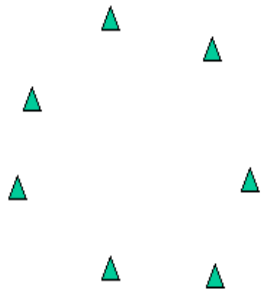


Theorizing on PLN processes

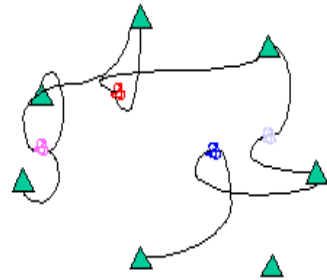


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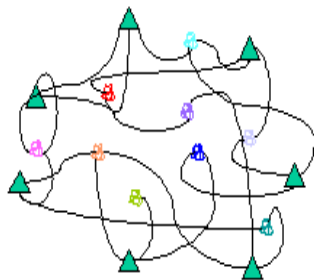
PLN Theory



1. The network partner schools



2. The growth of threads and knots

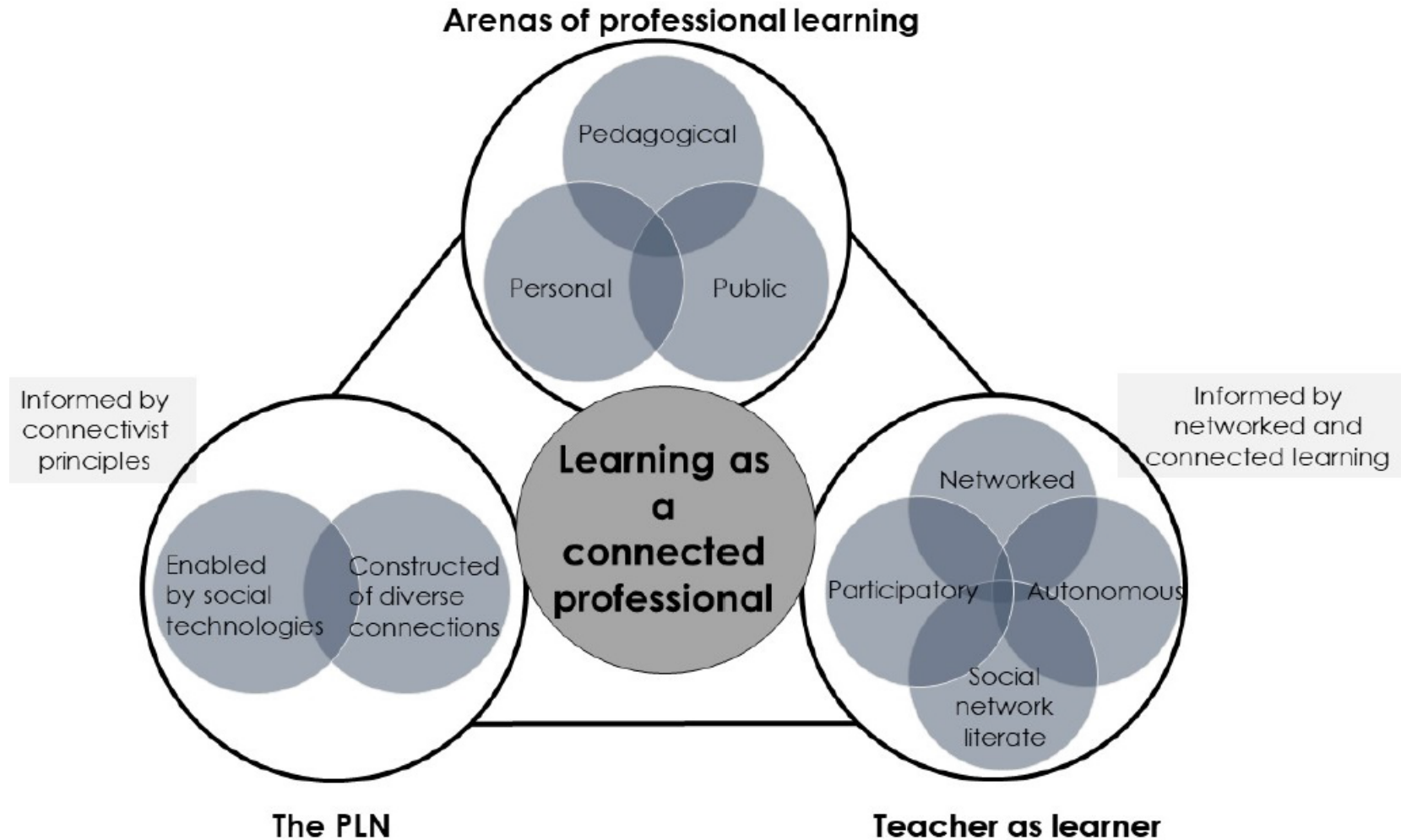


3. The net - working!

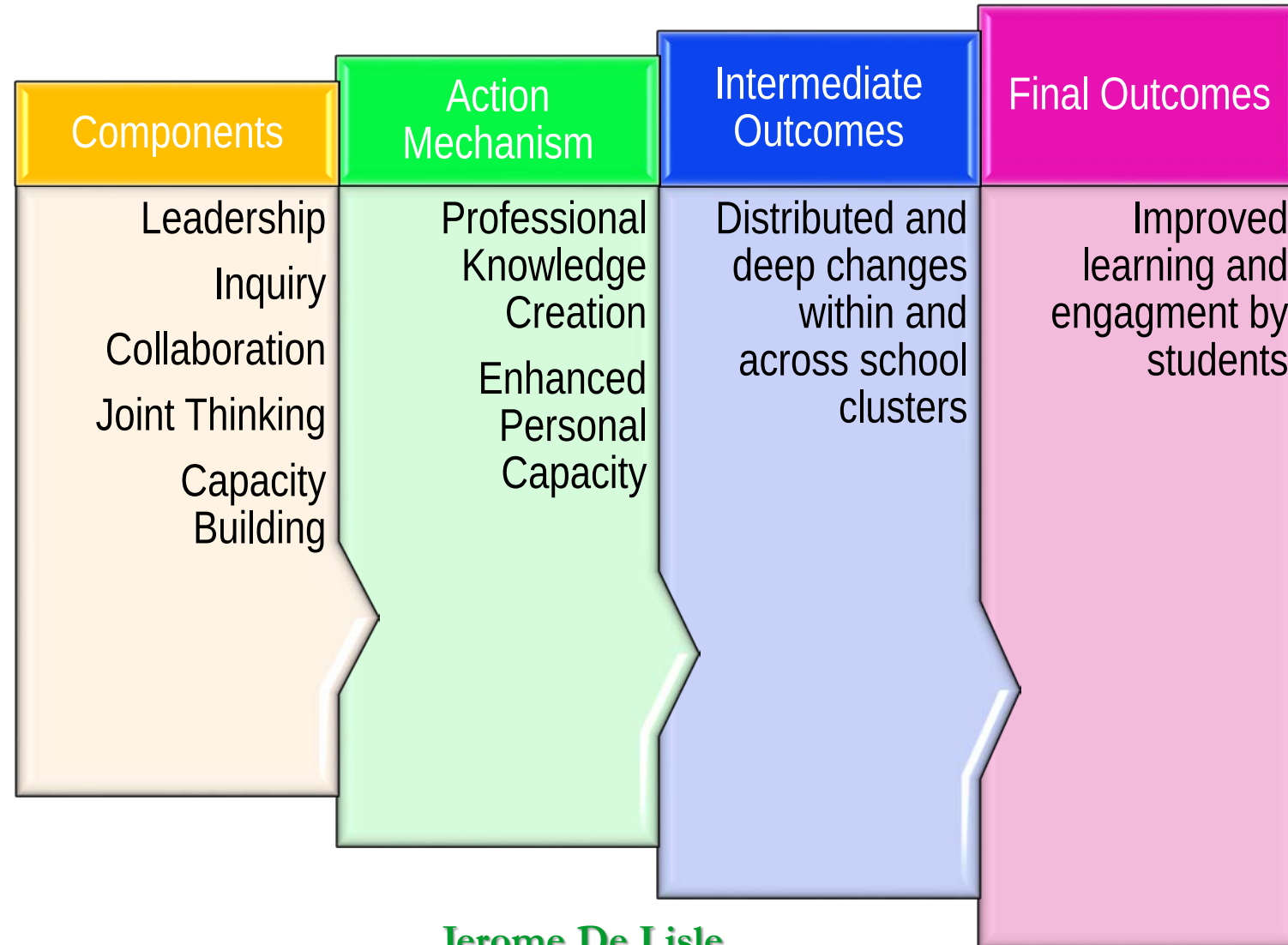
» The theory developed in England focuses upon **threads, knots, and nets**. Five types of learning knots are envisaged. Knots are the key points of dynamic learning with the potential for wider resonance.

- Joint work groups e.g. project teams, curriculum development groups
- Collective planning e.g. steering groups, professional development groups
- Mutual problem-solving teams e.g. focus groups
- Collaborative enquiry groups e.g. enquiry teams
- Shared professional development activities e.g. learning forums and joint staff days

Learning in a PLN



How PLN work-A theory of action



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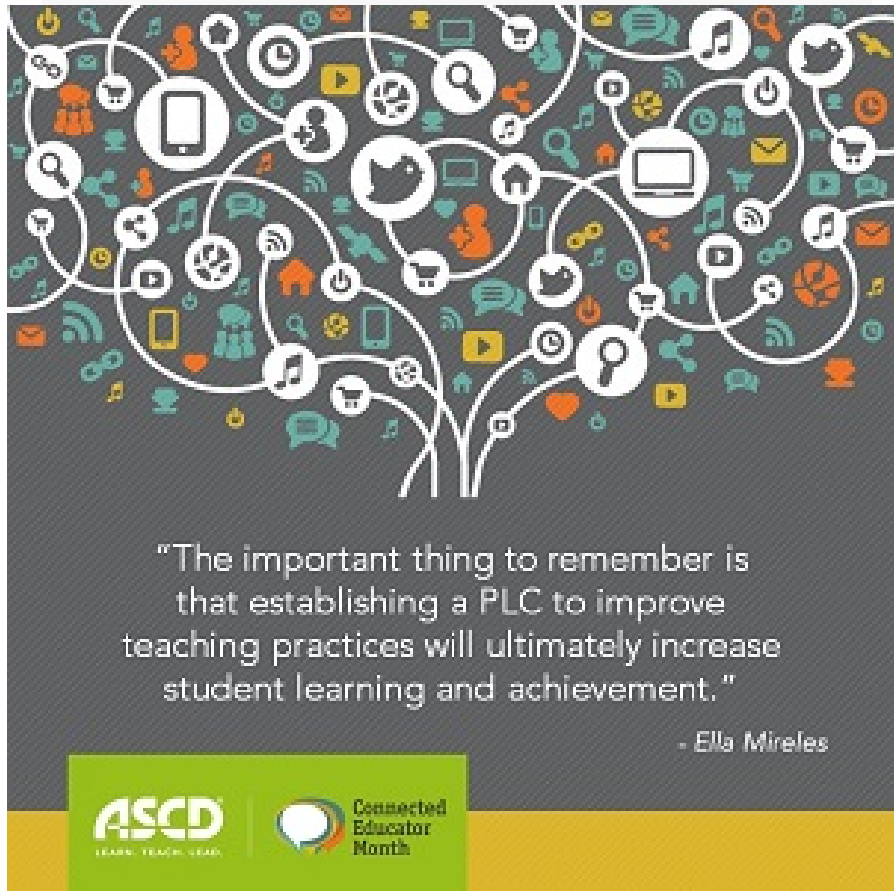


Implementing PLNs/ PLCs in Local Schools

Theory & Reflection

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The process of Implementation PLCs



- » Traditional Caribbean schools do not actively promote collaboration. Indeed, teaching is not regarded as a collaborative, team-based exercise.
- » Implementing PLCS required creating a culture that encourages collaboration both inside and outside the school. It will also require reaching out to key stakeholders.

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The process of Implementation PLCs



» Additional barriers in the Caribbean include

- 1) Lack of problem-solving experience
- 2) Traditional hierarchical relationships
- 3) Paternalistic leadership
- 4) Lack of an inquiry habit for data
- 5) Low confidentiality
- 6) Limited school-family-community partnerships

The process of Implementation PLCs Needed



- » PLCs are needed for collaborative planning, which is critical to STEM and other interdisciplinary initiatives.
- » PLCs are also used for data teams as in Data Driven Decision-Making.
- » Unfortunately, such activities are rare in local schools and are likely to hinder effective implementation of these innovations.

The process of Implementation Promoting beyond school collaboration

» Interorganizational networking and collaboration means schools reaching out and linking up to work together on short term fixes and longer-term development. This is an important innovation, especially for small rural schools.



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The process of Implementation

Promoting within & beyond school collaboration

- » Local schools must go beyond professional staff. School/stakeholder collaboration means the school reaching out to families and communities to work together.
- » Internal collaboration means teachers and administrators working together in PLCs



The process of Implementation

Forms of School to School Collaboration

- 1) Networks where highly effective schools support weaker schools for school improvement purposes
- 2) Networks where small schools collaborate to share resources, broaden curriculum, and ensure survival
- 3) Networks in which schools collaborate across phases (e.g., primary and secondary schools) to ensure smoother transitions across these phases
- 4) Networks of schools with a similar ideology or worldview
- 5) Networks in which mainstream schools collaborate with special schools to improve inclusion and provision for students with SEND
- 6) “Academy chains” where specialized schools are run by a single sponsor

The process of Implementation for Leaders- Setting up PLCs

- 1) Provide a clear structure and purpose for PLC meetings
- 2) Address the most pressing instructional challenges
- 3) Provide support from all levels of the school system.
- 4) Foster an atmosphere of trust.
- 5) Monitor the work of PLCs and provide constructive feedback.
- 6) Support teachers' sense of efficacy and level of professionalism.



The process of Implementation Practical Advice for teacher leaders

- 1) Although PLCs require time to implement, there are easy ways to get the collaboration going.
- 2) The first step is to open up communication with colleagues so everyone feels safe sharing ideas, fears, and concerns.
- 3) Norms—or rules—should be determined collaboratively at the first meeting and agreed upon by the team- turn cell phones off, speak positively, offer solutions, stay on topic, be prepared, and participate.

The process of Implementation

Practical advice for principals and teacher leaders

- 1) After the norms are read, the team can begin the meeting by sharing general information and then delving into specific topics such as teaching strategies, obstacles in the classroom, concerns, and data.
- 2) In addition, team members can share student work samples and offer relevant ideas and resources. After each meeting, the team should have an opportunity to discuss important and pertinent questions.

The process of Implementation

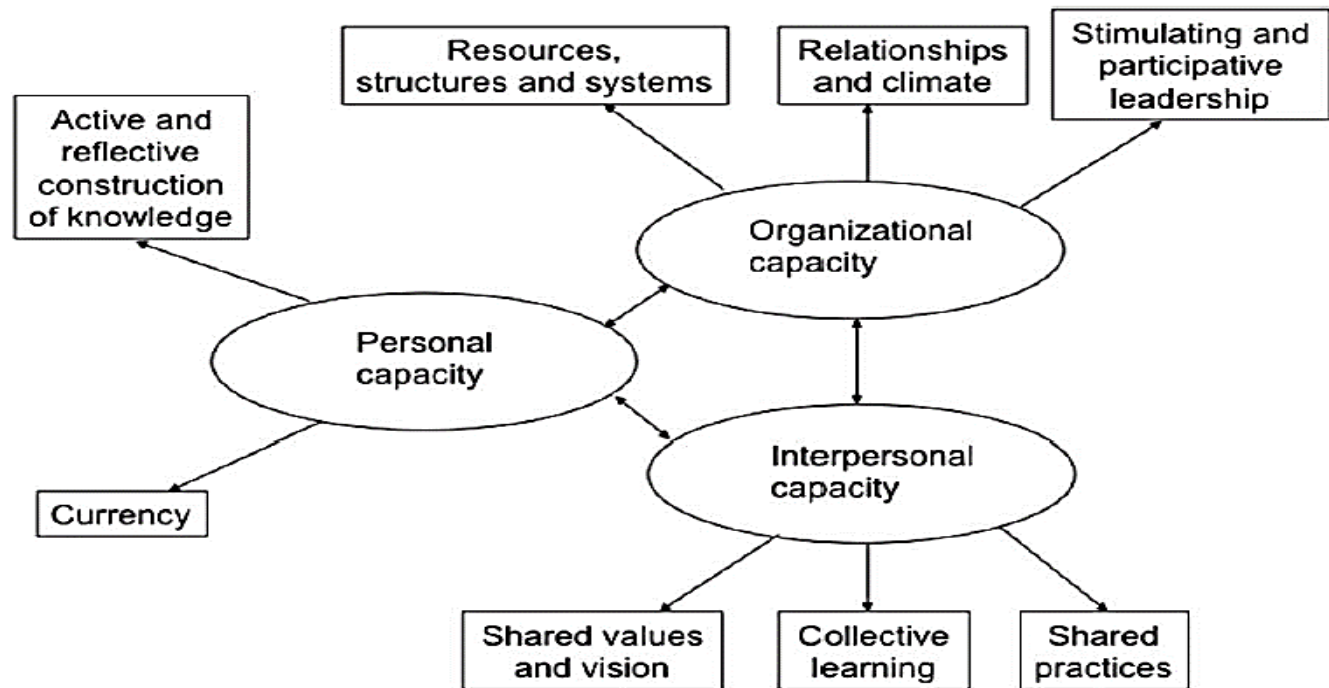
Practical advice
for principals
and teacher
leaders

- 1) Foster team collaboration-the group may discuss new ways to teach by sharing instructional experiences that have had a positive impact on learning.
- 2) Team members can also take part in professional development activities and then share the ideas and resources they learned with one another.

The process of Implementation

Practical advice for principals and teacher leaders

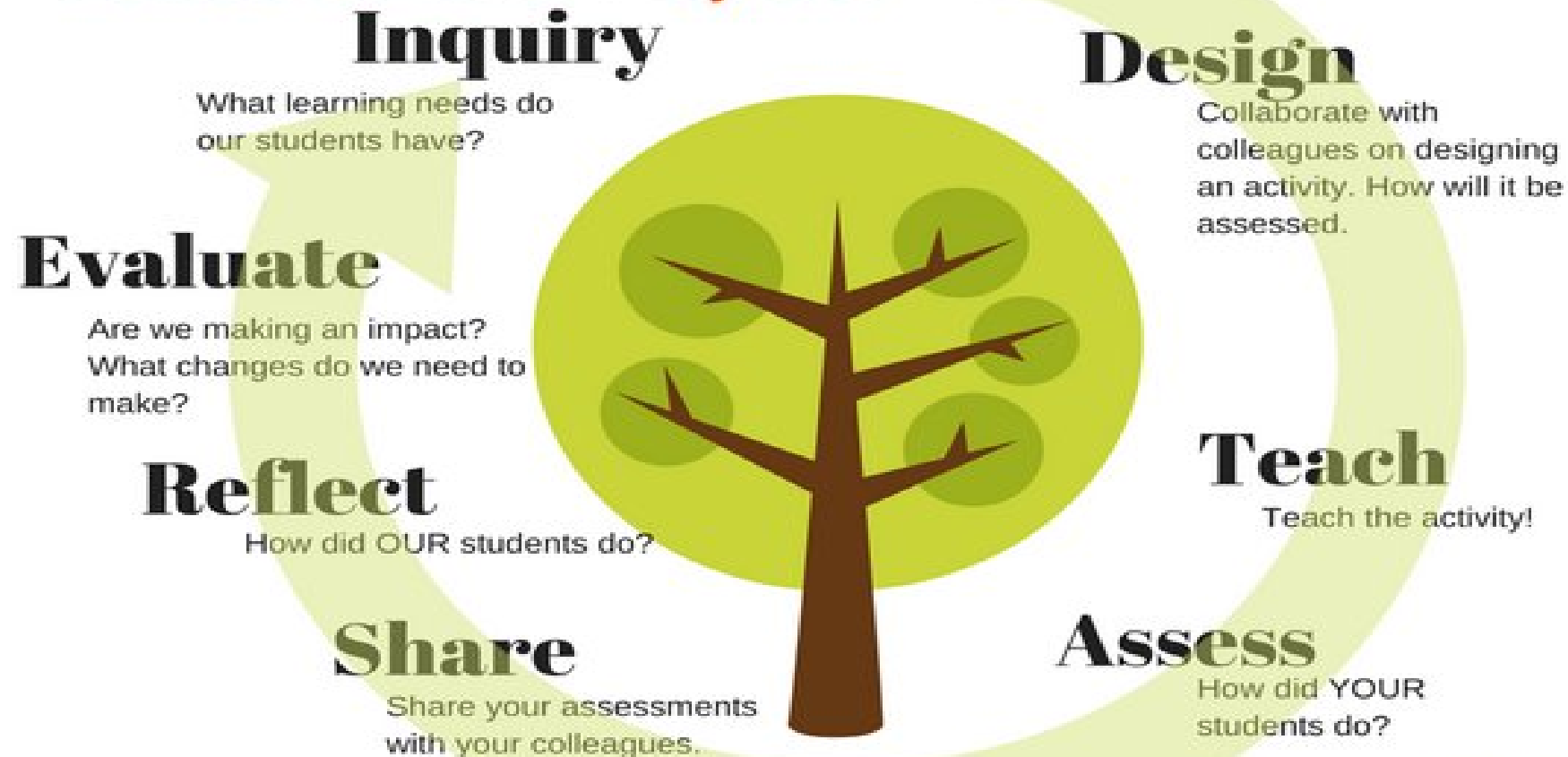
- 1) PLCs allows teachers to continue to grow professionally by learning from their colleagues and finding ways to take what they learned and make it work in their own classrooms to meet their students' needs.



The Continuous Improvement Cycle

Professional Learning Community

Collaboration Cycle



@CraigMah

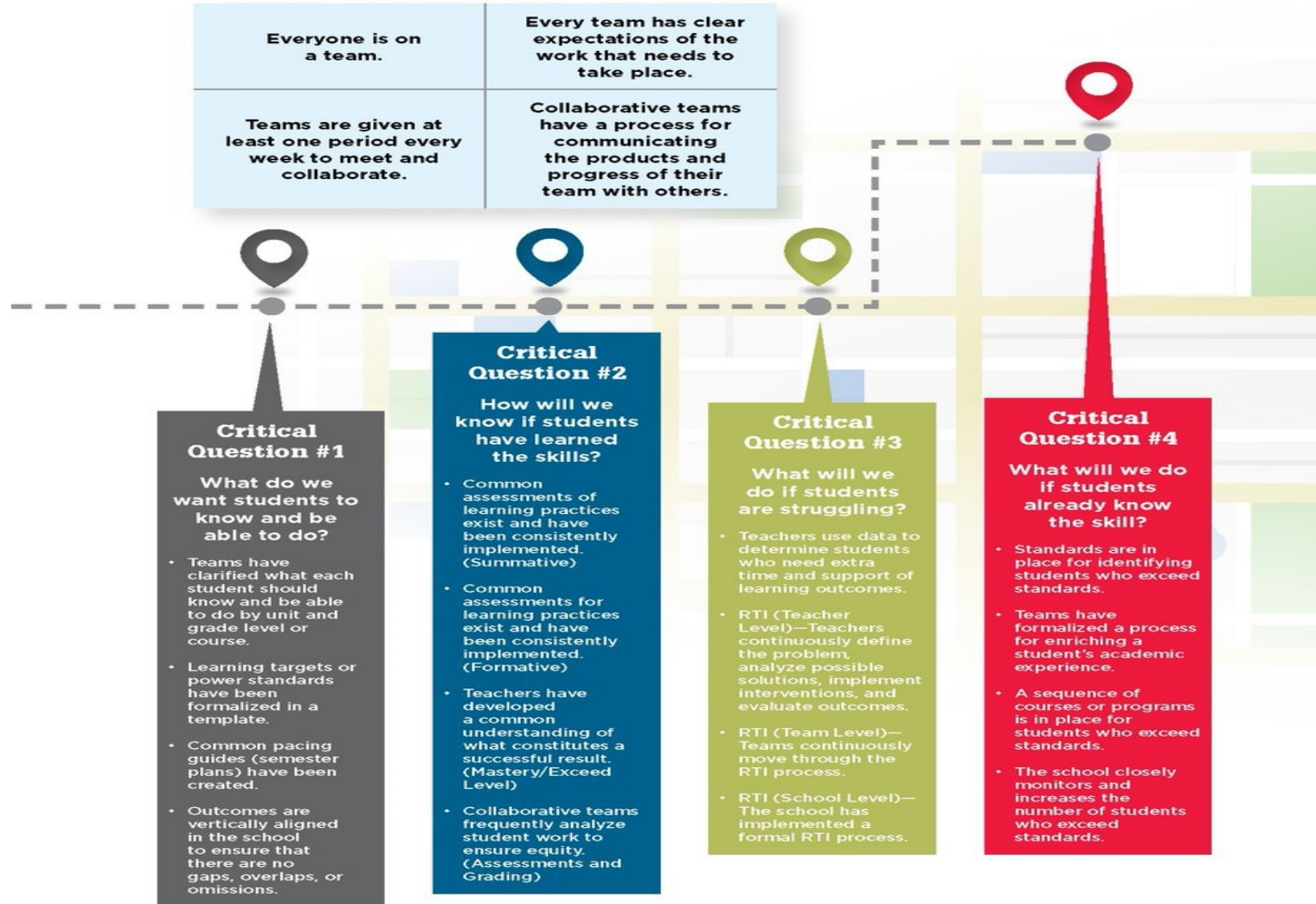
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PLC ROADMAP





ROAD MAP





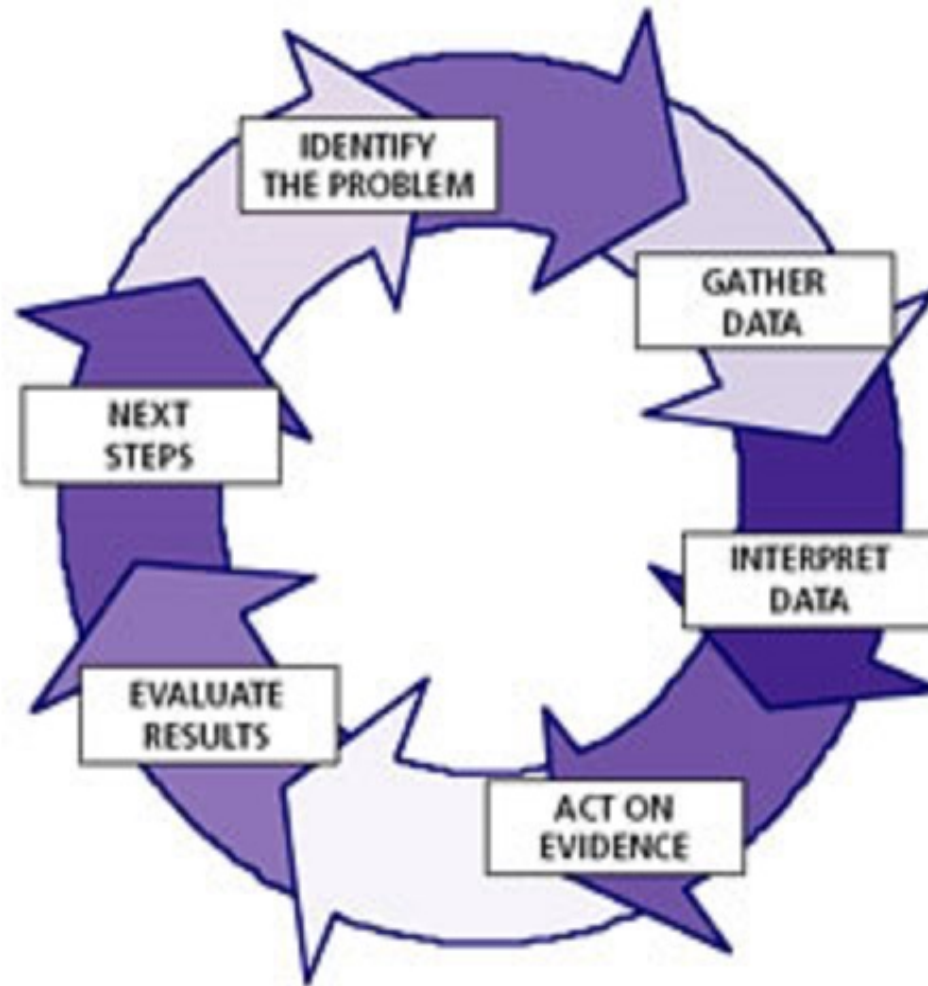
The Tobago PLN Project 2019

- » Form Principal PLNs
- » Schools arranged into clusters-
inter collaboration fostered
- » PLCs and PLNs organized
within each school.
- » Principals Monitor through
Meeting Notes and data
- » Principals report on progress in
PLNs

Nuts & Bolts 1-Action Research as a tool for the PLN

- » **Collaborative Action Research** is one type of action research. It is not individual but is coordinated and applied to system improvement
- » a process in which participants systematically examine educational practice, policy or innovations using the techniques of **research**, for the purpose of increasing learning of students, their teachers, and other interested parties.

Action Research as a Cyclical Process



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Step by Step

Identify issue using brainstorming or plan

Gather preliminary data on issue

Decide on best action using evidence and theory on what works

Develop plan and implement

Evaluate intervention

Step by Step

Identify issue –low boy's literacy



Gather preliminary data on issue-Survey/analysis of test results



Decide on best action using evidence and theory on what works-
use productive pedagogies in classroom (Australia)-Schoolwide



Develop plan and implement-Develop professional development
programme, mentoring and coaching



Evaluate intervention- Did boys do better in writing, reading, and
speaking?

Nuts & Bolts 1-Coaching as professional learning

- » Instructional coaching is the intentional and ongoing practice intended to support learning and develop new skills and capacities between two or more individuals. Coaching in a PLN is between a coach and a group of coachees (group coaching). Coaching has been proven to improve teacher performance and acts as a bridge between theory and practice.

Another definition

- » "... a dialogue in which the coach and the coachee collaborate to unlock the coachee's potential and maximise performance. It is a relationship that helps the coachee to learn and enhances their professional effectiveness and on-the-job performance, ensuing accountability and support for managing workplace issues, reaching goals and sustaining development."

The three elements of a coaching culture

Use a
systematic
model

Develop
skills of
coaching

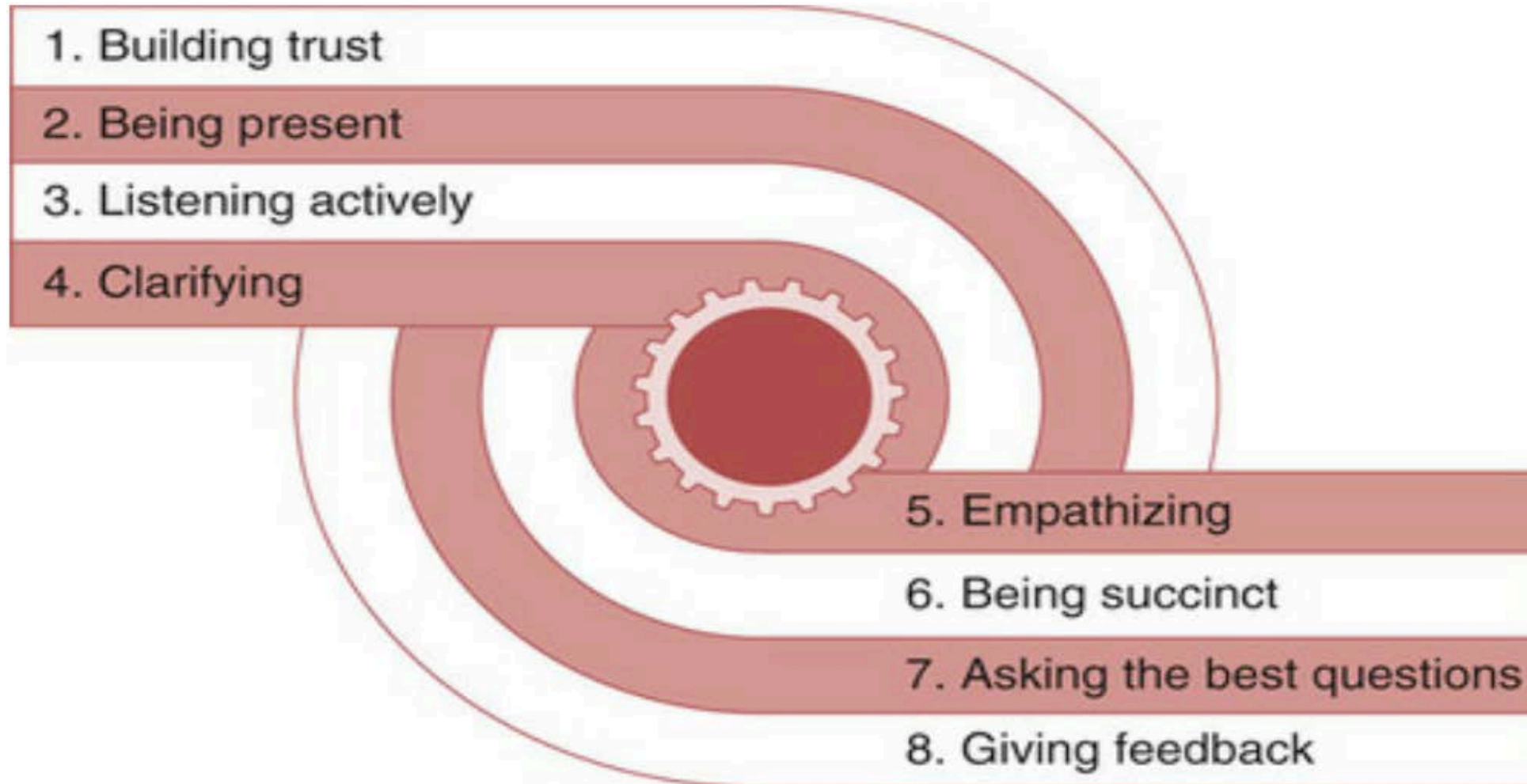
See coaching
as a way of
being

Coaching model

The GROW Coaching Model



Coaching Skills



Coaching as a way of being-part 1

» The most effective coaches are humble

- Without humility, it is difficult to enter into equal relationships. Humility allows a person to constantly be a learner. Status games have no place in coaching arena.

» The most effective coaches are confident in their ability as coaches

- Coaches need to be confident in their coaching abilities. Confidence in our coaching ability can be picked up by the coachee. Any self-doubt on our part can be contagious.

» The most effective coaches care about people

- Coaches should be driven by a desire to make things better for people..

Coaching as a way of being-part 2

- » **The most effective coaches believe that their coachees will achieve more of their potential**
 - The belief of the coach is an integral part of the self-belief of the coachee.
- » **The most effective coaches treat others with respect**
 - Feeling respected in one of the non-negotiables of trusting relationships.
- » **The most effective coaches have integrity**
 - Coachees must trust their coaches for them to be open and honest about their feelings, thoughts, aspirations and fears.



Improvement is a Journey

jerome.delisle.consulting
RESEARCH, EVALUATION, EDUCATIONAL IMPROVEMENT

Thank You

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