

Teacher leadership
as impacted by
collaboration in
professional learning
communit...



Leadership development requires self-efficacy (Gilbert, Voelkel, Jr., & Johnson, 2018). Effective collaboration yields work place satisfaction and indicates sense of belonging and usefulness (Lowery-Moore, Latimer, & Villate, 2016). “ Mature” PLCs evoke “ challenge and communal responsibility” while fostering teacher leadership development (Owen, 2016, p. 404). Collective efficacy serves more often as a focus when evaluating PLCs effectiveness (Battersby & Verdi, 2015; Gray, Kruse, & Tarter, 2017). The Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) requires local education agencies (LEAs) to develop and implement professional learning plans. Recent research findings indicate a more thorough assessment of PLCs is necessary (Gilbert et al.). Effective PLCs are described using common qualifications, yet limited studies apply effective PLC collaboration as a contributing factor of teacher leadership (Owen, 2016; Watson, 2014; & Wilson, 2016). Additionally, ambiguous understanding and fragmented structuring have downgraded the importance of PLCs (Gray et al.; Watson, 2014). PLC collaboration and its impact on teachers’ self-efficacy and leadership opportunities can be viewed positively or negatively and is influenced by a number of factors.

The wellbeing of teachers is a component of effective collaboration not often considered. Owen (2016) measured teachers’ social emotional development as impacted by commonlyheld tenets of PLCs including shared vision, collective responsibility, inquiry method, and distributed leadership. Her research yielded a positive relationship between teacher empowerment and student achievement. Teachers reported this accomplishment increased leadership opportunities and enhanced self-efficacy.

Cornerstones of PLC collaboration are inquiry and reflection (DeMatthews, 2014; Owen, 2016; & Wilson, 2016). Since these are difficult to measure, most research centers on collective approaches. Gray et al. (2017) evaluated PLCs using the variables enabling school structures, collegial trust, academic emphasis, and collective efficacy. The researchers defined enabling school structures (ESS) as those empowering teachers intentionally through systematic and ongoing professional learning opportunities. Findings revealed a combination of the four variables significantly correlated to PLC operations. The variable ESS had a significant effect on the development of PLCs. The others did not. The researchers concluded “enabling school structures act as an antecedent to professional learning communities by establishing and supporting the foundation upon which learning, teaching, collaboration, and trust can be developed” (Gray et al., p. 6).

Inadequate collaboration, poor communication, and misguided purposes weaken potentially effective collaboration in PLC settings (Wilson, 2016). Thornton and Cherrington (2014) discovered trust facilitated teacher leadership and collective efficacy. Teachers deemed collaboration ineffective in the absence of trust in the leader. Teachers identified communication as an integral component. Resentment occurred when teachers believed only semblance of distributed leadership existed (Wilson, 2016). Sustainable, effective collaboration required consistent nurturing (Thornton & Cherrington, 2014; Grey et al., 2017). Teachers willingly contributed to prescribed causes when the leader displayed genuine concern (Thornton & Cherrington, 2014).

Gray et al. (2017) discovered the foundation of an embedded structure supporting and facilitating the PLC process more important than trust. This research represents a current, pervasive theme of fragmentation and lays the groundwork for future studies evaluating PLC implementation (Watson, 2014). The findings also illuminate the disconnect between those in leadership positions who organize PLCs and the expectations of participants. Lowery-Moore et al. (2016) learned multiple reform efforts and leaders' reluctance to distribute leadership inhibiting factors to teacher leadership opportunities. This necessitates including teacher perspectives in future research exploring self-efficacy and leadership (Battersby & Verdi, 2015).

Critical analysis of PLCs leadership should demonstrate teacher leader development (DeMatthews, 2014; Gilbert et al., 2018; Quinn, Deris, Bischoff, & Johnson, 2015; & Thornton & Cherrington, 2014). Teacher leaders' success correlates positively with leaders' attitudes towards school governance (Quin et al.; Thornton & Cherrington, 2014; & Wilson, 2016). Those deemed transformational principals embraced PLCs as a means of effective collaboration enhancing collective efficacy (Quin et al.). Conversely, conventional leaders retained ultimate authority and limited opportunities for individual growth (DeMatthews, 2014). Recent studies highlight adopted norms and consistent practices as important and emphasize the principal's role in providing teacher leadership opportunities (DeMatthews, 2014; Gilbert et al.; Gray et al., 2017; & Owen, 2016).

Research evaluating PLCs as collaborative entities focuses on student achievement and school culture. Current efforts address principals as instructional leaders in PLC settings. Scant research examines how PLC

<https://assignbuster.com/teacher-leadership-as-impacted-by-collaboration-in-professional-learning-communities/>

collaboration impacts teacher self-efficacy and leadership. Future research could provide a clear understanding of how teachers perceive collaboration as facilitator of leadership opportunities. Specific questions could impact understanding of self-efficacy and its relevance to leadership development. Analyses of teachers' perceptions could ascertain more comprehensive understanding and aid in improving the overall effectiveness of PLCs.

References

- Battersby, S. L., & Verdi, B. (2015). The culture of professional learning communities and connections to improve teacher efficacy and support student learning. *Arts Education Policy Review* , 116 (1), 22–29. <https://doi.org/10.1080/10632913.2015.970096>
- DeMatthews, D. (2014). Principal and teacher collaboration: An exploration of distributed leadership in professional learning communities. *International Journal of Educational Leadership and Management*, 2 (2), 176-206. doi: 10.4471/ijelm. 2014. 16
- Gilbert, K. A., Voelkel, R. H., Jr., & Johnson, C. W. (2018). Increasing self-efficacy through immersive simulations: Leading professional learning communities. *Journal of Leadership Education* , 17 (3), 154–174. Retrieved from <https://login.ezproxy.library.valdosta.edu/login?url=http://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=eric&AN=EJ1186955&site=eds-live&scope=site>
- Gray, J., Kruse, S., & Tarter, C. J. (2017). Developing professional learning communities through enabling school structures, collegial trust, academic emphasis, and collective efficacy. *Educational Research Applications* , 2017 (1), 1-8. Retrieved from <https://www.https://assignbuster.com/teacher-leadership-as-impacted-by-collaboration-in-professional-learning-communities/>

researchgate.

net/profile/Julie_Gray9/publication/319057521_Developing_Professional_Learning_Communities_through_Enabling_School_Structures_Collegial_Trust_Academic_Emphasis_and_Collective_Efficacy/links/598d2b990f7e9b07d2261d50/Developing-Professional-Learning-Communities-through-Enabling-School-Structures-Collegial-Trust-Academic-Emphasis-and-Collective-Efficacy.pdf

- Lowery-Moore, H, Latimer, R. M., & Villate, V. M. (2016). The essence of teacher leadership: A phenomenological inquiry of professional growth. *International Journal of Teacher Leadership* , 7 , 1-16. Retrieved from <https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/EJ1137503.pdf>
- Owen, S. (2016). Professional learning communities: Building skills, reinvigorating the passion, and nurturing teacher wellbeing and “flourishing” within significantly innovative schooling contexts. *Educational Review* , 68 (4), 403–419. <https://doi.org/10.1080/00131911.2015.1119101>
- Quin, J., Deris, A., Bischoff, G., & Johnson, J. T. (2015). Comparison of transformational leadership practices: Implications for school districts and principal preparation programs. *Journal of Leadership Education*, 14, 71-85. doi: 1012806/V14/I3/R5. Retrieved from http://www.journalofleadershiped.org/attachments/article/394/2014_0324_quin.pdf
- Thornton, K., & Cherrington, S. (2014). Leadership in professional learning communities. *Australasian Journal of Early Childhood* , 39 (3), 94–102. Retrieved from <https://login.ezproxy.library.valdosta>.

edu/login? url= http://search. ebscohost. com/login. aspx? direct=
true&db= a9h&AN= 103119011&site= eds-live&scope= site

- Watson, C. (2014). Effective professional learning communities? The possibilities for teachers as agents of change in schools. *British Educational Research Journal* , 40 (1), 18–29. Retrieved from<http://eds.a.ebscohost.com/eds/detail/detail? vid= 1&sid= be65c681-b67b-4eb9-a3d8-1ba55451b5c3%40sdc-v-sessmgr03&bdata= JnNpdGU9ZWRzLWxpdmUmc2NvcGU9c2l0ZQ%3d%3d>
- Wilson, A. (2016). From professional practice to practical leader: Teacher leadership in professional learning communities. *International Journal of Teacher Leadership* , 7 (2), 45-62. Retrieved from<http://web.b.ebscohost.com.ezproxy.library.valdosta.edu:2048/ehost/detail/detail? vid= 0&sid= 2ab45d18-c86b-46e8-b8ba-a598d21cc711%40pdc-v-sessmgr03&bdata= JnNpdGU9ZWZWhvc3QtbGl2ZQ%3d%3d#AN= EJ1137497&db= eric>