PROFESSIONAL LEARNING COMMUNITIES AND TEACHER SELF-EFFICACY

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ABSTRACT

PROFESSIONAL LEARNING COMMUNITIES AND TEACHER SELF EFFICACY

The purpose of this research is to see if there is a correlation between the implementation of professional learning communities and teacher self-efficacy. This quantitative study involved 86 certified staff members from a low SES school district in the Willamette Valley of Oregon. Survey data was analyzed from two different surveys, the Professional Learning Communities Survey Revised (PLCA-R) and the Teacher Sense of Efficacy Scales (TSES). Participants were asked an open-ended question: Has the implementation of professional learning communities changed the teachers' beliefs about teaching and learning?

The findings from this study revealed a significant relationship between six of the eighteen components of professional learning communities and teacher self-efficacy. The six components from greatest correlation to least were shared personal practice to efficacy in student engagement, supportive conditions–relationships to efficacy in student engagement, shared and supportive leadership to efficacy in student engagement, shared personal practice to efficacy in instructional strategies, shared and supportive leadership to efficacy in classroom management, and shared personal practice to efficacy in classroom management.
DEDICATION

This work is dedicated to my beloved wife and best friend, Traci, and to my three children Christian, India and Tucker. I cannot imagine trying to complete an endeavor of this magnitude without the love and support of my family. I am truly blessed to have each of you in my life. I love you so much.
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Chapter One

Introduction

We have entered a time in education in the United States in which our educators and the students in our educational system have had unprecedented expectations placed on them. As Dufour and Marzano state,

Contemporary American educators confront the most daunting challenge in the history of public schooling in the United States: they are called upon to raise academic standards to the highest level in history with common core standards that are so rigorous and include such challenging cognitive demands that they align with the highest international benchmarks (DuFour & Marzano, Leaders of Learning, 2011, p. 5).

Having standards that align with the highest international benchmarks is an admirable goal; however, all students are being asked to achieve these benchmarks. This is no small change since historically our most gifted students have been the ones asked to achieve these highest of standards. In fact, the prevalent assumption that has driven public education throughout the history of the United States is that few students are capable of high levels of learning (DuFour, DuFour, Eaker, & Karhanek, 2010, p. 13). In addition, this call for increased rigor in our public schools comes at a time when public education is in the midst of one of the most austere times in our history. For example, according to a report by the Confederation of Oregon School Administrators (COSA) K–12 education share of Oregon's state budget has gone from 44.8% in the 2003–2005 biennium to 38.8% in the 2009–2011 biennium (Confederation of Oregon School Administrators, 2012). It also comes at a time of unprecedented accountability in public education with the continuation of No Child Left Behind and Race to the Top.
One of the ways in which we can reach these demands is through continuous professional development of our educators. Ernest Boyer once stated that, "When you talk about school improvement, you are talking about people improvement. That is the only way to improve schools." (Sparks, 1984, p. 9). There is a great deal of evidence that the classroom teacher is the most important factor when it comes to student learning (McCaffrey, Lockwood, Koretz, & Hamilton, 2003; Rivkin, Hanushek, & Kain, 2005; Rowan, Correnti, & Miller, 2002; Wright, Horn, & Sanders, 1997). According to Wright, Horn and Sanders (1997, p. 63),

The results of this study well document that the most important factor affecting student learning is the teacher. In addition, the results show wide variation in effectiveness among teachers. The immediate and clear implication of this finding is that seemingly more can be done to improve education by improving the effectiveness of teachers than by any other single factor.

Unfortunately, there has been a long history of unsuccessful professional development in education in the United States. For too long we have relied on the stand-alone professional development model that most public schools in the United States still use. For example, in the district in which I work we have brought in multiple presenters for a single day but there has been very little follow-up to those one-day trainings. This issue has been addressed in an Education Week article, "Historically, administrators have favored the workshop approach, in which a district or school brings in an outside consultant or curriculum expert on a staff-development day to give teachers a one-time training seminar on a garden-variety pedagogic or subject-area topic." (Education Week, 2011, p. 1). This use of stand-alone professional development needs to change if we are to get more out of the limited time we have for
professional development in education. In fact, according to Joyce and Showers (2002), stand-alone training has a less than 5% chance of improving instructional practices in the classroom.

In this arena of demands placed on educators and the realities of the economics and the state of stand-alone professional development a better solution for increasing student learning and increasing the effectiveness of teachers should be implemented. As asserted by Darling-Hammond, "The time and opportunities essential to intense, sustained professional development with regular follow-up and reinforcement are simply not in place in most contexts, as evidenced by the short duration of most professional development activities (Darling-Hammond, Wei, Andree, Richardson, & Orphanos, 2009, p. 27).

Professional Learning Communities are the integration of several concepts, that when taken together, hold great promise for improving teacher quality and therefore student achievement. In a report from the Annenberg Institute it states, "We support and encourage the use of professional learning communities (PLCs) as a central element for effective professional development and a comprehensive reform initiative (Annenburg Institute for School Reform, 2012, p. 3). Louis and Marks (1998) found that when a school is organized into a professional learning community, the following occurs: 1. Teachers set higher expectations for student achievement. 2. Students can count on the help of their teachers and peers in achieving ambitious learning goals. 3. The quality of classroom pedagogy is considerably higher. 4. Achievement levels are significantly higher.

A professional learning community is built around three "big ideas" with several areas of concentration within those three ideas. The first big idea is that there is one fundamental purpose of a school and that is to make sure that all students learn. Encompassed within this idea are four
critical questions that educators need to ask. 1. What exactly do we want students to learn at each level? 2. How will we know when each student has learned what we intended them to learn? 3. What will we do when the student has not learned what we intended them to learn? 4. How will we enrich and extend the learning of those students that have already learned what we intended them to learn?

The second big idea is that in order for all students to learn the teachers will have to work in collaboration. The idea is that no single teacher can ensure learning for all students. Therefore, teachers need to collaborate in order to ensure that all students learn. This is a big culture change from how schools have typically operated in the past.

The third big idea is that effective schools must operate with a results orientation. Results will be used to decide how students are doing with their learning, what interventions need to be used and whether or not they are successful, how individual teachers are doing at teaching the content, and what needs to be done for those students that need enrichment (DuFour, DuFour, Eaker, & Karhanek, 2010).

**Definition of the Problem**

The problem that will be addressed by this research is whether the implementation and use of professional learning communities increase the efficacy of teachers. Professional learning communities are an established process in which teachers work more collaboratively on their professional practice, which in turn should lead to increased student learning. Darling-Hammond has asserted “Enabling educational systems to achieve on a wide scale the kind of teaching that has a substantial impact on student learning requires much more intensive and effective professional learning than has traditionally been available” (Darling-Hammond, Wei,
Andree, Richardson, & Orphanos, 2009, p. 2). Given the amount of time and resources that go into professional development and the lack of results from this professional development it would seem that the use of professional learning communities would lead to an increase in the effectiveness of professional development and in turn an increase in teacher effectiveness. In a status report from the National Staff Development Council, the preface contains a warning about the lack of highly effective professional learning and the consequences that follow.

For many years, Title I of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act has required low-performing schools to set aside ten percent of their allocations for schoolwide professional development. Title II funding has resulted in the allocation of more than three billion dollars to professional development. More than 40 states have adopted standards calling for effective professional development for all educators accountable for results in student learning. In addition, several national studies on what distinguishes high-performing, high-poverty schools from their lower performing counterparts consistently identify effective schoolwide collaborative professional learning as critical to the school’s success. Yet as a nation, we have failed to leverage this support and these examples to ensure that every educator and every student benefits from highly effective professional learning (Darling-Hammond, Wei, Andree, Richardson, & Orphanos, 2009, p. 3).

Research Questions

The purpose of this study was to examine how participating in a professional learning community affects the efficacy of teachers in the classroom, which in turn should affect the level of student achievement.
Teachers’ sense of efficacy has been shown to be a powerful construct related to student outcomes such as achievement, motivation, and sense of efficacy. Teachers with a strong sense of efficacy are open to new ideas and more willing to experiment with new methods to better meet the needs of their students; they also exhibit greater levels of planning and organization (Tschannen-Moran, Woolfolk Hoy, & Hoy, 1998, p. 222).

The research questions I attempted to answer in this study include:

1. What is teachers’ perception of how well professional learning communities have been implemented?
2. What is the relationship between participation in PLCs and a teachers’ sense of efficacy?
3. Has the implementation of professional learning communities changed the teachers’ beliefs about teaching and learning?

For research question #1 I use the PLCA-R instrument developed by Dianne Olivier and Kristine Hipp that was included in the book *Assessing and Analyzing Schools as Professional Learning Communities* (Olivier & Hipp, 2008). For question #2, I used the Teachers’ Sense of Efficacy Scale developed by Ohio State University. For question #3, I used a self-developed questionnaire that simply asks an open-ended question about how being a part of a professional learning community has changed the teachers’ beliefs or classroom practices if at all.

**Key Terms**

1. **Professional Learning Community (PLC):** Educators committed to working collaboratively in ongoing processes of collective inquiry and action research to achieve better results for the students they serve. Professional learning communities operate
under the assumption that they key to improved learning for students is continuous job-embedded learning for educators. (DuFour, DuFour, Eaker, & Many, 2006)

2. **Professional Development**: A comprehensive, sustained, and intensive approach to improving teachers’ and principals’ effectiveness in raising student achievement.
   (National Staff Development Council, 2007)

3. **Teacher Efficacy**: Teachers’ belief or conviction that they can influence how well students learn. (Guskey, 1998)

4. **Collective Inquiry**: The process of building shared knowledge by clarifying the questions that a group will explore together. In PLCs, collaborative teams engage in collective inquiry into both best practices regarding teaching and learning as well as the reality of the current practices and conditions in their schools or districts. (DuFour, DuFour, Eaker, & Many, 2006)

5. **Formative Assessment**: An assessment for learning used to advance and not merely monitor each student’s learning. Formative assessments are used to ensure any student who experiences difficulty reaching or exceeding proficiency is given additional time and support as well as additional opportunities to demonstrate his or her learning. Formative assessments are also used to help students monitor their own progress toward an intended standard of proficiency. (DuFour, DuFour, Eaker, & Many)

6. **Collegiality**: Relationship among people within a profession, field, organization, or office, characterized by trust, openness, concern, and cooperation. (Definition: Education.com)
7. **Collaboration**: A systematic process in which people work together, interdependently, to analyze and impact professional practice in order to improve individual and collective results. (DuFour, DuFour, Eaker, & Many, 2006)

**Limitations and Delimitations**

The limitations of this research center on the fact that surveys were used for all of the data obtained. Using a survey as an instrument for gathering data has the disadvantage of not being completely accurate. It is difficult to know how people view levels of agreement or disagreement on a survey. Another limitation is that response rates, which are typically low, might skew the data. This issue was minimized to a great extent because the people who answered the surveys were colleagues. This study assumed that all participating schools used a similar approach to the implementation of professional learning communities. Finally, this research did not control for instructional differences.

The delimitations for this research were that I surveyed only certified personnel for this research. Some professional learning communities involve classified staff in their meetings so there was no input from that group. In addition, the surveys were only sent out to certified staff in one district. While the participants included all grade levels from K–12 it was rather limited in scope since only one district was involved. This study dealt with certified teachers and their understanding of PLCs and relied on their perceptions of their own efficacy in the classroom. This study was conducted in one moment in time and did not measure any aspects of growth from continued use of PLCs over time.
Chapter Two

Review of the Literature

In looking at the literature on this research topic, as to whether or not implementing professional learning communities increases teacher efficacy, it was apparent that there were a few areas that need to be reviewed. The history and current thoughts around professional learning communities and their relationship to effective professional development were also reviewed. Finally, a review of the literature regarding teacher efficacy and student achievement was included.

Professional Development for Teachers

Professional development in education today tends to consist of one-shot workshops that while useful do not lead to increased student learning unless they are followed up with multiple hours of continued professional development in the same area. "Today as in previous decades, most professional development for teachers comes in the form of occasional workshops, typically lasting less than a day." (Darling-Hammond, Wei, Andree, Richardson, & Orphanos, 2009, p. 9). Rick DuFour in his analysis of empirical studies found that, "The research is quite clear that little growth occurs as a result of a single training session." (DuFour R., 1991, p. 60). Teacher professional-development research (Loucks-Horsley, Hewson, Love, & Stiles, 1998) indicates that a "one-shot" teacher professional-development experience is not effective in almost any significant attempt to improve teaching practice. If these workshops were followed up with intensive professional development research shows that student achievement could be boosted by approximately 21 percentile points for only 49 hours of professional development (Yoon, Duncan, Lee, Scarloss, & Shapley, 2007). The main focus for professional development
should be that it is high quality. In addition, professional development should be guided by research and provide teachers both the time and space to collaborate to improve all aspects of their professional knowledge.

High quality staff development: Focuses on deepening teachers’ content knowledge and pedagogical skills; includes opportunities for practice, research, and reflection; is embedded in educators’ work and takes place during the school day; is sustained over time; and is founded on a sense of collegiality and collaboration among teachers and between teachers and principals in solving important problems related to teaching and learning (Sparks, 2002, p. 5).

Teachers cannot be expected to improve the craft of teaching unless they are given the type of professional development described above. Given the limited resources that education currently has in the United States this type of professional development will only occur if it is job-embedded and occurs for an extended period of time.

Included in the above description is the need for collegiality and collaboration among teachers. This is a huge concern given that the typical teacher has very little history collaborating with other teachers or administrators. This may have more to do with how schools have been structured than with the desire of the teachers to work alone. More needs to be done to help teachers increase their opportunities for collaboration. Research by Newman and Wehlage showed that in schools that formed professional learning communities academic achievement increased significantly in math, science, history and reading. In addition, there was a narrowing of achievement gaps in math and science among low and middle-income students (Newmann & Wehlage, 1997). In a research study by Dunne, Nave & Lewis it was found that
teachers that observed other teachers and then provided constructive feedback became more student centered and focused on ensuring that their students mastered the material as opposed to simply covering the material. It was also found that these teachers had a greater desire to continuously improve than did teachers that did not participate (Dunne, Nave, & Lewis, 2000). This needed increase in collaboration can certainly be achieved with the use of professional learning communities since one of the tenants of a professional learning community is developing high performing collaborative teams. Hattie concluded that the best way to improve schools is to organize teachers into collaborative teams that clarify what each student must learn (Hattie, 2008).

Another aspect of high quality professional development is that it should be focused on solving important problems related to teaching and learning. This is again an important part of any professional learning community. Research has shown that professional development tends to be more effective when it is an integral part of a larger school reform effort, rather than when activities are isolated (Darling-Hammond, Wei, Andree, Richardson, & Orphanos, 2009, p. 10). Teachers also view professional development that helps them build their academic content knowledge and how to reach students with this new knowledge as being the most valuable (Garet, Porter, Desimone, Birman, & Yoon, 2001). As can be seen from the literature review on professional development, the one-shot workshops need to be transformed into intensive ongoing professional development that is relevant to the teachers and helps them increase student achievement.
Professional Learning Communities

In the late eighties and early nineties work from Peter Senge and Susan Rosenholtz converged to identify a workplace where students and learning were the undeviating focus and the staff worked collegially to achieve the desired results (Hord, Meehan, Orletsky, & Sattes, 1999, p. 1). Rosenholtz described effective schools as being places in which the teachers were encouraged to collaborate, share ideas and solutions to problems and learn about educational practice. She also found that as the teachers’ practice improved, the students also benefited from this (Rosenholtz, 1989). Senge wrote the Fifth Discipline in 1990 and it promoted the ideas of developing shared visions, working in teams and collaborating to produce a better product. While this was intended for the corporate world, it also caught on in education circles. In 1992, Milbrey McLaughlin identified seven areas by which strong professional communities were characterized. They were; a) shared norms and beliefs, b) collegial relations, c) collaborative cultures, d) reflective practice, e) ongoing technical inquiry regarding effective practice, f) professional growth, and g) mutual support and mutual obligation (McLaughlin, 1992). In 1995, Newmann and Wehlage found that,

The most successful schools are those that use restructuring to help them function as professional communities. These schools find ways to channel staff and student efforts toward a clear, commonly shared purpose for student learning. They create opportunities for teachers to collaborate and help one another. Teachers in these schools take collective responsibility for student learning and for constantly improving their teaching practices (Newmann & Wehlage, 1997, p. 10).
In 1997, Shirley Hord wrote a publication entitled *Professional Learning Communities: Communities of Continuous Inquiry and Improvement* in which she espoused five different attributes of professional learning communities: a) Supportive and Shared Leadership, b) Collective Inquiry, c) Shared Values and Vision, d) Supportive Conditions, and e) Shared Personal Practice (Hord, 1997). Finally in 1998 DuFour and Eaker wrote a book entitled: *Professional Learning Communities at Work: Best Practices for enhancing Student Achievement* in which they identified six characteristics of professional learning communities: a) Collectively pursue shared mission, vision, values and goals, b) Work interdependently in collaborative teams focused on learning, c) Engage in ongoing collective inquiry into best practice and the current reality of student achievement and the prevailing practices of the school, d) Demonstrate an action orientation and experimentation, e) Participate in systematic processes to promote continuous improvement, and f) Maintain an unrelenting focus on results (DuFour & Eaker, 1998).

Following these works, the majority of research around PLC’s has come from Rick DuFour, Rebecca DuFour, and Robert Eaker. They have written numerous books detailing how to implement and sustain professional learning communities and tour the United States giving presentations on professional learning communities.

The guiding principles of professional learning communities center on what are referred to as the “big ideas” and the six essential characteristics of a PLC. There are three big ideas: Big Idea #1 is ensuring that students learn, Big Idea #2 is a culture of collaboration and Big Idea #3 is a focus on results (DuFour, 2004). Each of these “big ideas” is broken down into parts and these parts when put together encompass what a professional learning community should be. In

Ensuring that students learn is the first “big idea” for PLCs. It is broken down into four questions that when followed and answered help to insure that all students are learning at a high level. The questions are: 1. What do we want students to learn? What should each student know and be able to do as a result of each unit, grade level, and/or course? 2. How will we know if they have learned? Are we monitoring each student’s learning on a timely basis? 3. What will we do if they do not learn? What systematic process is in place to provide additional time and support for students who are experiencing difficulty? 4. What will we do if they already know it? Question #1 looks at what we want students to know and be able to do. Robert Marzano stated, “The first school level factor is a guaranteed and viable curriculum. I rank this as the first factor, having the most impact on student achievement” (Marzano, 2003, p. 22). Marzano identified five action steps that can be taken to make sure that a guaranteed and viable curriculum is implemented: 1. Identify and communicate the content considered essential for all students versus that considered supplemental or necessary only for those seeking postsecondary education. 2. Ensure that the essential content can be addressed in the amount of time available for instruction. 3. Sequence and organize the essential content in such a way that students have ample opportunity to learn it. 4. Ensure that teachers address the essential content. 5. Protect the instructional time that is available (Marzano, 2003). Taking these five steps will certainly ensure that we have identified what students should know and be able to do.
How will we know if they have learned? Are we monitoring each student’s learning on a
timely basis? These two questions really point to the use of formative assessments in
conjunction with summative assessments. We can know what a student has learned by using a
summative assessment but then that student has no chance to learn concepts that they may not
have understood the first time. If you use formative assessments, the student will know at a
much earlier stage of their learning whether or not they understand a concept and the teacher and
student can then do something about the learning. Paul Black and Dylan Wiliam (1998, p. 61)
analyzed over 250 studies on formative assessment and concluded, “The research reported here
shows conclusively that formative assessment does improve learning. The gains in achievement
appear to be quite considerable, and as noted earlier, amongst the largest ever reported for
educational interventions.” Douglas Reeves states, “Formative assessment is accompanied by
data analysis, use of the assessment to improve teaching practices, and careful application of
those improved teaching practices to student learning will, in combination, have a strong
probability of improving student results” (Reeves D. B., 2011, p. 27).

What will we do if they do not learn? What systematic process is in place to provide
additional time and support for students who are experiencing difficulty? This seems like a
pretty common sense approach to helping students learn. If they are not understanding the
objectives set forth before them then they will need some additional time and support in order to
get the objectives learned. If they are asked to go ahead and move forward, they run the risk of
falling further and further behind. Historically in education, if a student is struggling they are at
the mercy of individual teachers to step in and give some needed guidance and help. This calls
for a systematic approach that will involve all teachers in helping students be successful. When
a school creates a systematic pyramid of interventions, it is able to guarantee students that they 
will be given additional time and support if they struggle...\cite{DuFour, DuFour, Eaker, & 
Karhanek, 2010, p. 224}. In a report on the world’s best performing school systems Michael 
Barber and Mona Mourshed concluded that: \textit{The best systems take these processes inside 
schools, constantly evaluating student performance and constructing interventions to assist 
individual students in order to prevent them from falling behind}\cite{Barber & Mourshed, 2007, p. 
59). The best schools are constantly identifying students that are struggling and doing whatever it 
takes to make sure that they are successful.

What will we do if they already know it? Educators still need to be concerned with those 
students that already understand the concepts so that they do not get bored or conclude that 
learning is no fun. According to DuFour and Marzano \cite{2011} there are several options for 
enrichment for those students that have already learned the material: 1. Provide students with the 
specific criteria they must achieve in order to demonstrate advanced proficiency. 2. Build 
enrichment activities into each unit of instruction. 3. Provide students with access to more 
rigorous curriculum. 4. Allow participation in cocurricular programs. 5. Provide the option of 
independent study related to the topic. 6. Use students as tutors. 7. Provide internships and 
mentorships.

\textbf{Teacher Efficacy and Student Achievement}

Klassen et al. have stated that, \textit{Teacher efficacy\textemdash the confidence teachers hold about 
their individual and collective capability to influence student learning\textemdash is considered one of the 
key motivation beliefs influencing teachers\textemdash professional behaviors and student learning}\cite{Klassen, Tze, Betts, & Gordon, 2011, p. 1). According to Bandura\cite{1986; 1997} model of
self-efficacy there are four sources of efficacy: Mastery experiences, vicarious experiences, social persuasion, and reduced stress and negative emotions. Teachers can increase their sense of efficacy if they have experiences that are successful for them and lead them to believe they are capable of doing the job. They can observe other teachers or coaches and through this vicarious experience determine that they are capable of doing the same thing. They can be a part of a group of teachers where the majority believes a certain way that has been successful for them and the teacher can increase their efficacy due to social persuasion. This happens to be one of the major ways in which professional learning communities can improve teacher efficacy. Through these four sources, teachers begin to develop an understanding of their competence and their beliefs in themselves are shaped. Although all four sources of information play roles in the creation of efficacy beliefs, it is the interpretation of this information that is critical (Tschannen-Moran, Woolfolk Hoy, & Hoy, 1998, p. 230).

Teachers with a high sense of efficacy feel a personal accomplishment, have high expectations for students, feel responsibility for student learning, have strategies for achieving objectives, a positive attitude about teaching, and believe they can influence student learning (Ashton, 1984). In a meta-analysis of 39 studies, Multon and Brown (1991) found that self-efficacy beliefs had a positive relationship to student performance. Researchers have found few consistent relationships between characteristics of teachers and the behavior of learning of students. Teachers’ self-efficacy is an exception to this general rule (Woolfolk & Hoy, 1990, p. 81). Given that self-efficacy can have such an important effect on the quality of teaching and that it can influence student achievement as it can we would be wise to make every effort to increase teacher efficacy through the use of professional learning communities. Professional
learning communities can add to a teacher’s perception of self-efficacy through the collaborative structure that is a part of any PLC. In addition, their sense of self-efficacy can be increased using the model of continuous improvement that is also a part of PLCs.
Chapter Three

Methodology

The purpose of this study is to examine how participating in a professional learning community affects the efficacy of teachers in the classroom. Specifically I used three survey instruments in order to answer three questions:

1. What is teachers’ perception of how well professional learning communities have been implemented?
2. What is the relationship between participation in PLCs and a teachers’ sense of efficacy?
3. Has the implementation of professional learning communities changed the teachers’ beliefs about teaching and learning?

This chapter looks at several different aspects of this research: the setting of the investigation, the participants, human subjects safeguarding, research design, instrumentation/materials, data collection and analysis procedures, role of the researcher, and potential contributions of the research.

Setting

The District is a medium-sized rural school district in Western Oregon. The District has approximately 2150 students ranging from kindergarten to 12th grade. Students attend six different schools within the district. There are four elementary schools, one junior high, and 1 high school. There are approximately 97 teachers in the district and the district average teacher experience is 11.86 years, which is slightly below the state average of 12.78 years. The District has been in the process of implementing and using professional learning communities for the past three years with varying degrees of implementation depending on the school. The high
school was the first school to begin using professional learning communities and is currently entering the third year of implementation. The other five schools in the district are entering their second year of implementation.

Participants

Each school site was invited to participate in this study and all certified teachers along with principals will be asked to complete the suite of surveys. Each survey had an identifying number with participants receiving the same number for all three surveys. In this way the researcher can compare the answers from each survey without identifying which participant received which survey. The identities of all participants were protected through anonymous surveys. Anonymity was essential in order to get accurate statements from the participants since the researcher works in the district. A consent form was provided for all invited participants and no demographic data will be requested from the teachers or administrators.

Participants were asked to complete three surveys. The first survey was the Professional Learning Communities Assessment – Revised (PLCA-R) that assesses the perceptions of teachers about their principal, staff, and stakeholders based on the dimensions of a professional learning community. The second survey was the Teachers’ Sense of Efficacy Scale (TSES), which asks teachers to rate their efficacy in three areas: classroom management, instructional practices, and student engagement. The final survey was an open-ended survey that asked how being a part of a professional learning community had changed their beliefs or classroom practices, if at all.
Human Subjects Safeguarding

All George Fox University Safeguarding of Human Subjects guidelines were followed during this research project.

Research Design

This study used a survey design. A survey design provides a quantitative or number description of trends, attitudes, or opinions of a population by studying a sample of that population. From sample results, the researcher generalizes or makes claims about the population (Creswell, 2008, p. 234). The survey's are the correct design for this research because we are looking for opinions of teachers as to how well they believe professional learning communities have been implemented and whether or not that has had any impact on their self-efficacy or classroom practices or beliefs. The survey design also allows for very rapid collection of needed data without being overly intrusive into the educators already busy lives.

The first survey helped identify how well teachers believe that professional learning communities were implemented in their district. The second survey measures the teachers' sense of self-efficacy. This allowed a correlation study to see if the implementation of professional learning communities had any significant correlation to a teacher's sense of efficacy. Finally, the additional open-ended question allowed teachers to describe if and how their beliefs and practices had changed due to the implementation of professional learning communities.

Instrumentation/Materials

All participants were asked to complete the Professional Learning Community Assessment Revised, which measured staff perceptions of school practices, related to six dimensions of professional learning communities. The six dimensions are:
1. Shared and Supportive Leadership
2. Shared Values and Vision
3. Collective Learning and Application
4. Shared Personal Practice
5. Supportive Conditions – Relationships
6. Supportive Conditions – Structures (Southwest Educational Development Laboratory)

The Southwest Educational Development Laboratory reviewed the dimensions for internal consistency resulting in the following Cronbach Alpha reliability coefficients:

- Shared and Supportive Leadership (.94)
- Shared Values and Visions (.92)
- Collective Learning and Application (.91)
- Shared Personal Practice (.87)
- Supportive Conditions – Relationships (.82)
- Supportive Conditions – Structures (.88)

In addition, the tool has gone through construct validity and yielded satisfactory internal consistency for reliability. (SEDL)

All staff members were asked to complete the Teachers' Sense of Efficacy Scale. This instrument measures a teacher's sense of self-efficacy using 24 questions and was developed at Ohio State University. In Tschannen-Moran, M., & Woolfolk, Hoy, A. (2001) Teacher efficacy: Capturing an elusive construct. Teaching and Teacher Education, 17, 783-805, the following were found:
Long Form

Alpha

TSES .94

Engagement .87

Instruction .91

Management .90

All staff members were asked to complete a one-question survey that asked: "Please explain how being part of a professional learning community has changed your beliefs about teaching or classroom practices if at all." This is my own question that I will use to compare with how they answered the other surveys.

The three different surveys were bundled together and given a unique six-digit code so that each participant had only one code for all of their surveys. This helped ensure that the surveys were attached to only one participant and helped ensure anonymity for each of the participants.

Data Analysis and Coding

A correlation analysis was conducted between the PLCA-R and the TSES components using a Pearson correlation statistic. In addition, for both the PLCA-R and TSES a descriptive analysis was conducted using the mean and standard deviation for both sets of results. Finally, an analysis of the open-ended question was done in relation to the percentage of respondents that indicated that the implementation of PLC had changed their beliefs or practices.
Role of the Researcher

The role of the author was that of a researcher to analyze the data and draw conclusions from the data in a logical and objective manner. I work in the district in which this research took place and was interested to see how the process of implementing PLCs had changed teacher behavior and to what degree.

Potential Contributions of the Research

This research will add another piece to the existing research on professional learning communities and teacher efficacy, which may then stimulate further exploration of the topic by other researchers. This research included teachers at all grade levels, in order to find out how the results vary from elementary teachers to secondary teachers if at all.
Chapter Four

Findings

The findings presented in this chapter include a quantitative analysis of the survey results from the PLCA-R instrument developed by Dianne Olivier and Kristine Hipp and the TSES developed by Ohio State University. For the PLCA-R survey results, I used an analysis of the mean and standard deviation for the six subscale scores to determine the teachers’ perception of PLC implementation. I used the SPSS Statistics version 21 to do a Pearson’s correlation analysis between the PLCA-R and the TSES results. Finally, I analyzed the results from the open-ended question to see if teachers have changed their beliefs in regards to teaching and learning due to the implementation of PLCs.

Research Questions

The research questions I attempted to answer in this study were:

1. What is teachers’ perception of how well professional learning communities have been implemented?
2. What is the relationship between participation in PLCs and a teachers’ sense of efficacy?
3. Has the implementation of professional learning communities changed the teachers’ beliefs about teaching and learning?

Descriptive Statistics

All certified staff in the District in the 2012-2013 school year were asked to complete the PLCA-R, TSES survey instrument and the question, “Has the implementation of professional learning communities changed your beliefs or practices in regards to reaching and learning?” Of the 97 certified staff that were invited to participate in these surveys 88.7% (n=86) responded to
both instruments. Of the 86 that responded to both instruments 95.3% (n=82) responded to the open-ended question which is 84.5% (n=82) of those invited to participate in this study.

Results for research question 1. The first research question asked: “What is teachers’ perception of how well professional learning communities have been implemented?”

The PLCA-R survey measures six components of a professional learning community through a series of 52 questions. The six components examined were:

1. Shared and supportive leadership,
2. Shared values and vision,
3. Collective learning and application
4. Shared personal practice,
5. Supportive conditions – relationships, and
6. Supportive conditions – structures.

Table 1 contains the overall mean and standard deviation from the 86 participants who responded to the survey. This survey had a scale of 1 – 4 with 1 being strongly disagree, 2 being disagree, 3 being agree and 4 being strongly agree.
Table 1

Professional Learning Communities Assessment Revised Subscale Mean and Standard Deviation Scores (N=86)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Subscales</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Standard Deviation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Shared and Supportive Leadership</td>
<td>3.097</td>
<td>.6881</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shared Values and Vision</td>
<td>2.934</td>
<td>.6669</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Collective Learning and Application</td>
<td>3.048</td>
<td>.6165</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shared Personal Practice</td>
<td>2.513</td>
<td>.7488</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Supportive Conditions – Relationships</td>
<td>3.016</td>
<td>.6978</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Supportive Conditions – Structures</td>
<td>2.793</td>
<td>.7640</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Overall</td>
<td>2.914</td>
<td>.7214</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Given the data above it would appear that five of the six components of the professional learning community survey were seen as being implemented with fidelity. The one component that would be questionable is Shared Personal Practice with a mean of 2.513. Given that a 2 in this survey represented a disagree and a 3 represented an agree this component is fairly evenly split between those two choices. Looking into the data a little further shows that 4 of the 7 statements within this component had a mean below 2.5, which would indicate a general level of disagreement. Those four statements were:

1. Opportunities exist for staff members to observe peers and offer encouragement at 2.198.
2. Staff members provide feedback to peers related to instructional practices at 2.174.
3. Opportunities exist for coaching and mentoring at 2.282.

4. Staff members regularly share student work to guide overall school improvement 2.377.

One statement in this component had a mean of 3.209 and that was:

1. Staff members informally share ideas and suggestions for improving student learning.

Overall, it appears that the participants believed that professional learning communities were implemented with fidelity although there would be some area for improvement in the area of Shared Personal Practice.

**Results for research question 2.** The second question asked was "What is the relationship between participation in PLCs and a teachers' sense of efficacy?"

As with the PLCA-R results, the mean and standard deviation for the TSES subscales were calculated. The Teachers' Sense of Efficacy Scale measures three components:

1. Efficacy in Student Engagement
2. Efficacy in Instructional Strategies
3. Efficacy in Classroom Management

Table 2 contains the overall mean and standard deviation from the 86 participants who responded to the survey.
Table 2

Teacher Sense of Efficacy Scale Mean and Standard Deviation Subscale Scores ($N=86$)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Subscales</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Standard Deviation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Efficacy in Student Engagement</td>
<td>6.707</td>
<td>1.438</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Efficacy in Instructional Strategies</td>
<td>7.495</td>
<td>1.181</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Efficacy in Classroom Management</td>
<td>7.528</td>
<td>1.265</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Given that this survey has a scale of 1 – 9 in regards to how much a teacher believes they can do given 24 questions grouped into the three components above it appears the teachers believe they have quite a bit of influence with these different components. A 5 on this scale indicates that they have "Some Influence" while a 7 indicates they have "Quite a Bit" of influence. The means would indicate that the teachers' sense of efficacy is quite strong in regards to student engagement, instructional strategies, and classroom management. The lowest individual question pertained to "How much can you assist families in helping their children do well in school" with a mean of 6.058 which still indicates that they feel they have decent influence. The highest individual question pertained to "To what extent can you make your expectations clear about student behavior" with a mean of 8.116, which indicates that they feel a great deal of influence.

To determine the relationship of professional learning communities and teachers' sense of self-efficacy, a Pearson correlation of the subscale scores for the PLCA-R and TSES was used. A Pearson $r$ is the measure of the linear correlation between two variables. An $R$-value of 1 would indicate a perfect correlation while an $R$-value of 0 would indicate no correlation between the two variables. The Pearson correlation in this data determined the linear
relationship among the subscales of both the PLCA-R and TSES subscales. The subscales for the PLCA-R were: a) shared and supportive leadership, b) shared vision and values, c) collective learning and application, d) shared personal practice, e) supportive conditions relationships, and f) supportive conditions structures. The subscales for the TSES were: Efficacy in student engagement, Efficacy in instructional strategies, and Efficacy in classroom management. Table 3 contains the results of the analysis at p<.05.

Table 3

Pearson Correlation of PLCA-R and TSES Subscales Scores (N=86)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Subscale</th>
<th>Pearson Correlation</th>
<th>Sig. (2-tailed)</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Efficacy in Student Engagement</th>
<th>Efficacy in Instructional Strategies</th>
<th>Efficacy in Classroom Management</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Shared and Supportive Leadership</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Pearson Correlation</td>
<td>.247*</td>
<td>.022</td>
<td>.161</td>
<td>.234*</td>
<td>.030</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Sig. (2-tailed)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>N</td>
<td>86</td>
<td>86</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>86</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shared Vision and Values</td>
<td>Pearson Correlation</td>
<td>.151</td>
<td>.165</td>
<td>.172</td>
<td>.132</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Sig. (2-tailed)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>N</td>
<td>86</td>
<td>86</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>86</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Collective Learning and Application of Learning</td>
<td>Pearson Correlation</td>
<td>.189</td>
<td>.081</td>
<td>.187</td>
<td>.184</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Sig. (2-tailed)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>N</td>
<td>86</td>
<td>86</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>86</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shared Personal Practice</td>
<td>Pearson Correlation</td>
<td>.275*</td>
<td>.010</td>
<td>.242*</td>
<td>.226*</td>
<td>.037</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Sig. (2-tailed)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>N</td>
<td>86</td>
<td>86</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>86</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Supportive Conditions Relationships</td>
<td>Pearson Correlation</td>
<td>.272*</td>
<td>.011</td>
<td>.118</td>
<td>.158</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Sig. (2-tailed)</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>N</td>
<td>86</td>
<td>86</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>86</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Supportive Conditions Structures</td>
<td>Pearson Correlation</td>
<td>.149</td>
<td>.172</td>
<td>.039</td>
<td>.089</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Sig. (2-tailed)</td>
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<td>N</td>
<td>86</td>
<td>86</td>
<td></td>
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<td>86</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).
Six of the eighteen relationships among factors indicated a positive significant relationship. The six relationships include shared personal practice to efficacy in student engagement, supportive conditions to efficacy in student engagement, shared and supportive leadership to efficacy in student engagement, shared personal practice to efficacy in instructional strategies, shared and supportive leadership to efficacy in classroom management, and shared personal practice to efficacy in classroom management.

**Results for research question 3.** The third question asked was Has the implementation of professional learning communities changed the teachers' beliefs about teaching and learning?

Of the 82 participants that answered this open-ended question 80.5% (N=66) indicated that the implementation of professional learning communities had changed their beliefs about teaching and learning. As an example of how PLC's changed some teachers' perceptions I have included a few quotes from teachers and a complete list can be found in appendix F.

Mainly, PLC's have helped me to be more intentional and purposeful in my teaching. The structure and accountability of the team keeps me more focused on formative assessment and adjusting instruction/interventions as we go through the units rather than just at the end. So far, our PLC's have been mostly focused on data as we continue to learn the system. As we become better at that part, we are able to spend more time discussing instructional strategies. That part has become the most valuable to me. PLC's provide a regular scheduled time to collaborate.

I think the PLC's have made me take a closer look at being more aware of each child's ability level, their level of understanding and the additional support each child needs. It's definitely been nice to collaborate goals with others to hold each other and myself
accountable for following through. Mostly I feel that it's given a bigger focus on finding alternative ways to teach and help students gain a better comprehension for each of their academic areas.

Professional learning communities have served to provide the training, leadership, time and respect that allow teachers to collaborate for the improved learning of all students. SHSD has highly educated and trained teachers that have been supported (through the implementation of PLC's) to finally be able to combine their talents and strengths. This allows all staff to continue to learn and become better teachers.

My beliefs have changed in that I think data should drive decision making about what I should do in the classroom to help students learn. Data can also help decide the most effective interventions when a student is not being successful. Collaborative teams are more powerful to make change than one person going it alone. What we do in education should be based on research not on what we have always done or on anecdotal stories that may not apply to the majority. Lastly, it takes time to do things right.

This is just a sampling of the quotes listed in appendix F. Some of the themes from the quotes are that the implementation of PLC's has been helpful especially in regards to collaboration and looking at data. It would appear from many of the quotes that it has made teachers more aware of looking at the data related to their students' academic success and allowed them to concentrate on how to improve the learning outcomes. There are some concerns raised in regards to how difficult it is to implement PLC's with fidelity when the total number of
staff in a building is so small and there are only one or two teachers who are teaching in the same content area or the same courses.

Summary

An analysis of all the data indicates that the teachers in our district have a strong sense of efficacy and that professional learning communities have been implemented with fidelity. In addition, an overwhelming majority of the teachers have seen a positive change in their practices in regards to teaching and learning due to the implementation of professional learning communities. In regards to the correlation study, six of the eighteen possible relationships had positive significant correlations. Shared personal practice had positive significant correlations in all three areas of teacher efficacy and shared and supportive leadership had positive significant correlations in two areas of teacher efficacy. The four areas that scored lowest in shared personal practice were in opportunities for staff members to observe peers and offer encouragement, in staff members providing feedback to peers related to instructional practices, in opportunities for coaching and mentoring, and in staff members sharing student work to guide overall school improvement.
Chapter Five

Analysis and Implications

This chapter includes a summary of the study; an analysis of the findings; limitations of the study; implications and recommendations; possible areas of future research and a final summary.

This study was developed out of a concern for the fidelity of implementation of professional learning communities and the effect of professional learning communities on teacher efficacy. A recent study on the research into teaching teams and collaboration concluded, "Overall, the studies show us that when teachers are given the time and tools to collaborate they become life-long learners, their instructional practice improves, and they are ultimately able to increase student achievement far beyond what any of them could accomplish alone." (Carroll, 2010, p. 10). Teacher efficacy is also paramount to increasing student learning as Rick DuFour stated, "This sense of efficacy is also critical to schoolwide improvement efforts. If those within the school believe that the causes of student learning lie outside their spheres of influence school improvement efforts will be viewed as futile." (DuFour R. &., 1995, p. 5).

While the research is clear in regards to the efficacy of professional learning communities and teacher self-efficacy, it has been the experience of this researcher that there is a lack of research as to the relationship between these two. This study examined the relationship between professional learning communities and teacher self-efficacy in six schools that have recently implemented professional learning communities as a structure for professional development. This study used the PLCA-R survey instrument to gauge the level of teacher belief into how well professional learning communities were implemented. There are six components of the PLCA-
R; Shared and Supportive Leadership; Shared Values and Vision; Collective Learning and Application of Learning; Shared Personal Practice; Supportive Conditions – Relationships; and Supportive Conditions – Structures that have been shown to be valid indicators of professional learning communities (The Center for Comprehensive School Reform and Improvement, 2009) (DuFour, DuFour, Eaker, & Many, 2006) (DuFour & Eaker, 1998). The Teacher Sense of Efficacy Scales survey was used to gauge the level of efficacy with which teachers self-identified their level of efficacy in three component areas; efficacy in student engagement; efficacy in instructional strategies; and efficacy in classroom management. Finally, this study used a one-question survey to gauge if professional learning communities had influenced the teachers beliefs in regards to teaching and learning.

This information was gathered from participants using the PLCA-R survey, the TSES survey, and an open-ended question in regards to changes in their beliefs or practices due to the implementation of professional learning communities.

Analysis of the Findings

The following section analyzes the study’s findings from Chapter Four. This analysis is centered on the three major research questions from this study.

**Research question 1: What is teachers’ perception of how well professional learning communities have been implemented?**

The schools in this district were in various stages of implementation of professional learning communities with one school in their third year of implementation and the remaining schools being in their second year of implementation. The Professional Learning Communities Assessment – Revised (PLCA-R) was used to determine if PLCs were implemented with
fidelity. All certified staff was asked to participate in this survey. The PLCA-R uses a Likert scale from 1 to 4 to determine fidelity of implementation. The Likert Scale is 1 = Strongly Disagree, 2 = Disagree, 3 = Agree, and 4 = Strongly Agree. This is a 52-item survey that measures six components of PLC’s: shared and supportive leadership, shared vision and values, collective learning and application, shared personal practice, supportive conditions – relationships, and supportive conditions – structures. Of the 97 certified staff that were invited to participate 88.7% (n=86) responded to the survey.

Analysis of the data from the PLCA-R indicates that professional learning communities were implemented with fidelity in this district with one possible exception. Of the six components identified with the PLCA-R five had mean scores around 3. The mean scores for all six are: Shared and Supportive Leadership ì 3.097, Shared Values and Vision ì 2.934, Collective Learning and Application ì 3.048, Shared Personal Practice ì 2.513, Supportive Conditions ì Relationships ì 3.016, and Supportive Conditions ì Structures ì 2.793. As can be seen from these numbers shared personal practice had the lowest mean and would be the one possible exception of being implemented with fidelity. However, given the overall numbers it is safe to conclude that professional learning communities were implemented with fidelity in this district.

The one area that educators in this district could spend some additional time implementing would be around the area of shared personal practice. This area of the survey had seven questions associated with it and four of those questions had means below 2.5 while only one question had a mean above 3.0. Specifically, educators need more time to observe their peers, provide feedback related to instructional practices, receive coaching and mentoring and share student work to guide improvement.
Research conducted by Reeves (2011) has indicated that when PLCs are implemented with fidelity there is an increase in teacher knowledge, an increase in teacher efficacy, improvements in student achievement and improved instructional practices. This is especially important given the fact that shared personal practice has the potential to lead to definite increases in instructional practices. Blasé and Blasé (2006, p. 22) found that consultation with peers enhanced teachers’ self-efficacy (teachers’ belief in their own abilities and capacity to successfully solve teaching and learning problems) as they reflected on practice and grew together, and it also encouraged a bias for action (improvement through collaboration) on the part of teachers.

Combining this with research that has identified teacher effectiveness as having a substantial impact on student achievement (Marzano, 2003) (Reeves D., 2011) it would benefit educators to put a stronger emphasis on shared personal practice.

Research question 2: What is the relationship between participation in PLC’s and a teachers’ sense of efficacy?

The survey instrument used to gauge the level of teacher efficacy was the Teacher Sense of Efficacy Scale. This instrument uses a scale from 1 ÷ 9 to measure teacher efficacy and contains 24 questions broken into three components. For each question the teacher is asked to identify how much they can do in regards to a series of questions with a 1 indicating nothing, a 3 indicating very little, a 5 indicating some influence, a 7 indicating quite a bit, and a 9 indicating a great deal. Therefore anything above a 5 indicates that the teacher believes they have at least some influence and would indicate a stronger sense of efficacy. The means for the three areas...
were: 6.707 for Efficacy in Student Engagement, 7.495 for Efficacy in Instructional Strategies, and 7.527 for Efficacy in Classroom Management. Given these numbers, it appears that teachers in this district have a strong sense of efficacy.

To determine if there is a correlation between PLC’s and teachers’ sense of efficacy, a Pearson’s correlation analysis was conducted. The six subscales from the PLCA-R survey were compared to the three subscales from the TSES survey. This analysis indicated that there was a positive significant relationship with six of the eighteen factors. The six factors having a positive significant relationship were Shared Personal Practice with Efficacy in Student Engagement; Shared Personal Practice with Efficacy in Instructional Strategies; Shared Personal Practice with Efficacy in Classroom Management; Shared and Supportive Leadership with Efficacy in Student Engagement; Shared and Supportive Leadership with Efficacy in Classroom Management; and Supportive Conditions — Relationships with Efficacy in Student Engagement.

Shared Personal Practice had a significant relationship with all three areas of Teacher Self-Efficacy. I would posit that these relationships are significant due to the fact that when teachers share their personal practice, their practices are either reinforced through positive feedback or do not get reinforced through silence or a suggestion as to how to improve. In this way teachers can begin to refine their practices and gain from the practices of other teachers that also share. The statements around Shared Personal Practice deal with observing peers and offering encouragement, receiving feedback around instructional practices, sharing ideas for improving student learning, coaching and mentoring, opportunities to apply learning and share the results, and sharing student work to guide school improvement. All of these areas are
concentrated on helping individual teachers become part of a larger picture with the help of their peers which I would posit leads to an increase in teacher self-efficacy.

It is interesting to note that while shared personal practice was the area of PLC implementation with the lowest fidelity it was the only area that had a significant positive relationship with all three subscales of the TSES survey. This would indicate again that some attention would need to be paid to making sure that teachers in this district are given the opportunity to share personal practice.

The second area with two out of three subscales of efficacy having a significant positive relationship was shared and supportive leadership. This component had a significant relationship with efficacy in student engagement and efficacy in classroom management. One question within this area that had the most positive correlations in regards to the area of teacher efficacy was around stakeholders assuming shared responsibility for student learning without evidence of imposed power and authority. I would suggest that this has such a strong positive correlation because teachers feel like they are part of the process without the process dictated to them. This in turn gives them a greater sense of self-efficacy.

Out of the three subscales on the TSES the one that had the three highest positive significant relationships with implementation of professional learning communities was Efficacy in Student Engagement.

The question naturally arises as to why these six areas had a strong positive correlation and the other twelve did not. In regards to the three components that showed no positive correlations which when taken together account for nine of the twelve areas; Shared Values and Vision, Collective Learning and Application, and Supportive Conditions — Structures, I would
I posit that all of these areas while being implemented have taken a back seat to the other areas in importance within this district. While shared values and vision are discussed, they are not at the forefront of our discussions as shared personal practice has been. The same can be said for collective learning and application. Finally, while the structures for supportive conditions are in place, I would posit that they are simply a prerequisite to increasing teacher self-efficacy but does not necessarily lead to increased teacher self-efficacy itself.

**Research question 3: Has the implementation of professional learning communities changed the teachers’ beliefs about teaching and learning?**

This question was answered by 84.5% (N = 82) of the respondents and of those 82, 80.5% (N = 66) indicated that the implementation of professional learning communities had changed their beliefs about teaching and learning. This number would indicate that the implementation of professional learning communities has been successful in changing in a positive manner how teachers perceive their own teaching.

Some of the comments from the teachers would also indicate why there seemed to be a strong positive correlation with student engagement. While there were several quotes presented in chapter 4, I have included some additional quotes at this point. These quotes again highlight some of the increased beliefs and practices the teachers have acquired through the implementation and use of PLCs.

Sharing different teaching strategies to help struggling students has been very helpful.

The PLC environment has made it possible for me to focus more on the low achievers, choose a way to help and make a difference for every child to achieve a goal. When we
can focus on the most needy and use tools, games, one on one help - that is the most effective.

Implementing PLC's has helped me learn how to use specific data to drive my instruction. I tend to assess more regularly since taking part in PLC's. I also appreciate the time to work with my grade level team to further our student's growth. It has been difficult to form cohesive teams because there are many blended classrooms. These blends are a result of loss of staff over the years and are a necessity, but they do make collaborating more difficult.

I think the PLC's have made me take a closer look at being more aware of each child's ability level, their level of understanding and the additional support each child needs. It's definitely been nice to collaborate goals with others to hold each other and myself accountable for following through. Mostly I feel that it's given a bigger focus on finding alternative ways to teach and help students gain a better comprehension for each of their academic areas.

The PLC's, especially this year, have increased communication between all grade levels. We are able to review data to help guide our teaching. We are more aware of how students are doing in different settings. I think standards are raised because data is more available. Teachers are more able to share strategies and ideas. It gives us the feeling that we are all in this together for the benefit or our students.

These comments are just a few that indicate that the teachers have spent more time focusing their instruction, which in turn should improve student engagement. An analysis of the
comments from the teachers indicates that there has been a focus on helping struggling students. This has arisen due to the emphasis in the PLC’s of looking at data on the students. As the teachers look at the data, questions naturally arise as to how to address the areas of struggle the individual students are having. This leads to teachers sharing their best ideas as to how to address struggling students. This collaboration around student learning and teaching strategies has strengthened individual teachers’ beliefs in their own abilities and has given them a stronger sense of community.

**Implications and Recommendations for Future Research**

This study explored the relationship between implementation of professional learning communities and teacher efficacy. While there were some areas in which there was a strong positive relationship between the two there were more areas that did not show a strong positive relationship. Further research into the area of shared personal practice would yield insights into why that was the area with the strongest positive relationships and at the same time was weakest when it came to PLC implementation. Given the size of the district, this could be controlled for on a school-by-school basis to see if there would be any relationships between student achievement and a stronger implementation in this area. Further research could be conducted on a question-by-question basis to see which relationships were strong or weak within the subscales. This would help pinpoint those specific areas rather than relying on the subscale scores. Finally, in regards to shared personal practice, educators need more time to observe their peers, provide feedback related to instructional practices, receive coaching and mentoring and share student work to guide improvement.
The second strongest relationship existed with shared and supportive leadership with student engagement and classroom management. Reeves (2011) supports these findings.

Although teachers have an undeniably large influence on student results, they are able to maximize that influence only when they are supported by school and system leaders who give them the time, the professional learning opportunities, and the respect that are essential for effective teaching (p. 70).

This would indicate that shared and supportive leadership are vitally important for teacher efficacy and further for increased student achievement. Further study could be done to explore why there was not a strong positive relationship between leadership and instructional strategies. This area would seem to go hand-in-hand with professional learning communities given many of the teacher quotes in appendix F. It would appear from teacher statements that they see a correlation between the implementation of PLCs and instructional strategies but that was not seen in the data.

Given the data from this particular district it might benefit teachers to establish professional learning communities in order to increase student engagement and classroom management. Since there was only one positive relationship with instructional strategies it might be wise to find other avenues for that area. For example, having an in-service on Marzano’s instructional strategies might benefit teachers’ instructional strategies more than discussing them in their PLCs. However, as stated earlier, there were many indicators from teacher statements that would lead one to believe that this area may also be beneficial even though the data did not show a strong positive relationship in regards to PLCs and instructional strategies.

Finally, here are some areas for further research based on the findings from chapters four:
1. Further research into the categories of professional learning communities might offer more insight into which areas within the categories actually have the largest impact on teacher efficacy. This was a 52-question survey that had six components. Each of those six components could be explored further.

2. Given the limited size and scope of this study, a larger sample size could yield different results that would give further insight into the relationship between professional learning communities and teacher efficacy.

3. Given that this was a one-moment-in-time study it would be beneficial to have a longitudinal study completed to see if the effects persist over time.

4. The demographics in this particular district limit the scope to which this study can be generalized. Therefore, a study, or studies, that contained many demographics would be useful.

**Conclusions**

This research will add another piece to the existing research on professional learning communities and teacher efficacy. This current research also involved teachers at all grade levels. Based upon the findings from this study there is a strong positive relationship between the PLC subscale of Shared Personal Practice and all three subscales of teacher self-efficacy. In addition, there was a strong positive relationship between the PLC subscale of Shared and Supportive Leadership and the subscales of teacher self-efficacy of Student Engagement and Classroom Management. Finally, there was a strong positive relationship between the PLC subscale of Supportive Conditions Relationships and the teacher self-efficacy subscale of Student Engagement.
There were no strong positive relationships between three of the PLC subscales and any of the teacher self-efficacy subscales. Those were Shared Vision and Values, Collective Learning and Application, and Supportive Conditions Structures. These findings indicate that while the professional learning community structure can definitely impact teacher efficacy in the area of shared personal practice and shared and supportive leadership there may need to be other structures in place to address other areas of teacher efficacy.

Through this research study I have come to see how valuable our PLC time is in our district. The data from the first survey helped me see that the implementation of our PLCs was somewhat fragmented and could have been implemented in a more systematic manner. However, given the data the implementation was successful overall. As is the case with anything there is room for improvement. The data from the second survey on efficacy showed me that our teachers have strong beliefs in their ability to influence the learning that occurs in their classrooms. While this belief didn’t necessarily correlate strongly with all areas of PLC implementation it would appear from the comments to the final survey question that our teachers do see a strong correlation between the implementation of PLCs and positive changes to their teaching. Many of the comments centered on how PLCs had changed their emphasis to individual students and how best to identify their areas of struggle and then implement strategies to address those struggles. Since this is the essence of PLCs I would say that the implementation of PLCs in this district did lead to an increase in teacher efficacy.
References

*Definition: Education.com.* (2012). Retrieved from Education.com:

http://www.education.com/definition/collegiality/


http://www.mckinsey.com/locations/UK_Ireland/~/media/Reports/UKI/Education_report.ashx


Retrieved from Southwest Educational Development Laboratory:


Appendices
Appendix A: Exempt Consent Form

Professional Learning Communities and Teacher Efficacy

You are invited to participate in a research study about the effect professional learning communities (PLCs) has on teacher efficacy. If you agree to be a part of the research study, you will be asked to complete the attached surveys on professional learning communities and teacher efficacy. The first survey measures the extent that PLCs are implemented with fidelity. The second instrument measures teacher self-efficacy. The third instrument measures how your classroom practices and beliefs have changed with the implementation of PLCs.

Surveys will not require identifiable information from participants of the study and all participants will have a choice of whether to participate or not. Identities of participants will be protected and no identifiable information will be collected. There are no foreseeable risks from participating. Interested participants and the superintendent of the school district will have access to the results at the conclusion of the research project.

Participating in this study is voluntary. Even if you decide to participate now, you may change your mind and stop at any time. You may choose not to answer any survey question for any reason.

If you have any questions about this research study, you may contact Tim Porter at tim.porter@sweethome.k12.or.us or Dr. Gary Tiffin, faculty advisor for the project, at gtiffin@georgefox.edu.
Appendix B: Permission to Use PLCA-R

July 19, 2012
Tim Porter
George Fox University
4909 Mimosa Circle
Sweet Home, Oregon

Dear Mr. Porter:

This correspondence is to grant permission to utilize the Professional Learning Community Assessment-Revised (PLCA-R) as your instrument for data collection for your doctoral study through the George Fox University. I believe your research exploring the relationship of implementation and fidelity of professional learning community practices and teacher efficacy will contribute to the PLC literature and provide valuable information as schools and districts work toward high effective collaboration. I am pleased that you are interested in using the PLCA-R measure in your research.

This permission letter allows use of the PLCA-R through a paper/pencil administration. In order to receive permission for the PLCA-R online version, it is necessary to secure the services through our online host, SEDL in Austin, TX. Additional information for online administration can be found at www.sedl.org.

Upon completion of your study, I would be interested in learning about your entire study and would welcome the opportunity to receive an electronic version of your completed dissertation research.

Thank you for your interest in our research and measure for assessing professional learning community attributes within schools. Should you require any additional information, please feel free to contact me.

Sincerely,

Dianne F. Olivier

Dianne F. Olivier, Ph. D.
Assistant Professor
Joan D. and Alexander S. Haig/BORSF Professor
Department of Educational Foundations and Leadership
College of Education
University of Louisiana at Lafayette
P.O. Box 43091
Lafayette, LA 70504-3091
(337) 482-6408 (Office) dolivier@louisiana.edu
Reference Citation for Professional Learning Community Assessment-Revised measure:

Appendix C: Professional Learning Communities Assessment-Revised

Professional Learning Communities Assessment - Revised

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

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

Scale: 1 = Strongly Disagree (SD)
2 = Disagree (D)
3 = Agree (A)
4 = Strongly Agree (SA)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>STATEMENTS</th>
<th>SCALE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Shared and Supportive Leadership</strong></td>
<td>SD</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. Staff members are consistently involved in discussing and making</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>decisions about most school issues.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. The principal incorporates advice from staff members to make decisions.</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Staff members have accessibility to key information.</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. The principal is proactive and addresses areas where support is</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>needed.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Opportunities are provided for staff members to initiate change.</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. The principal shares responsibility and rewards for innovative actions.</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. The principal participates democratically with staff sharing power and</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>authority.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Leadership is promoted and nurtured among staff members.</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. Decision-making takes place through committees and communication across</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>grade and subject areas.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. Stakeholders assume shared responsibility and accountability for</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>student learning without evidence of imposed power and authority.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11. Staff members use multiple sources of data to make decisions about</td>
<td>0</td>
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<tr>
<td>teaching and learning.</td>
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</table>
## COMMENTS:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>STATEMENTS</th>
<th>SD</th>
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<th>SA</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>12. A collaborative process exists for developing a shared sense of values among staff.</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13. Shared values support norms of behavior that guide decisions about teaching and learning.</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14. Staff members share visions for school improvement that have undeviating focus on student learning.</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15. Decisions are made in alignment with the school=s values and vision.</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16. A collaborative process exists for developing a shared vision among staff.</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17. School goals focus on student learning beyond test scores and grades.</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18. Policies and programs are aligned to the school=s vision.</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19. Stakeholders are actively involved in creating high expectations that serve to increase student achievement.</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20. Data are used to prioritize actions to reach a shared vision.</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
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</table>

## COMMENTS:

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<tr>
<th>STATEMENTS</th>
<th>SD</th>
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<th>A</th>
<th>SA</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>21. Staff members work together to seek knowledge, skills and strategies and apply this new learning to their work.</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22. Collegial relationships exist among staff members that reflect commitment to school improvement efforts.</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23. Staff members plan and work together to search for solutions to address diverse student needs.</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24. A variety of opportunities and structures exist for collective learning through open dialogue.</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25. Staff members engage in dialogue that reflects a respect for diverse ideas that lead to continued inquiry.</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26. Professional development focuses on teaching and learning.</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>27. School staff members and stakeholders learn together and apply new knowledge to solve problems.</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Statement</td>
<td>Scale</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>28.</td>
<td>School staff members are committed to programs that enhance learning.</td>
<td>0 0 0 0</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>29.</td>
<td>Staff members collaboratively analyze multiple sources of data to assess the effectiveness of instructional practices.</td>
<td>0 0 0 0</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30.</td>
<td>Staff members collaboratively analyze student work to improve teaching and learning.</td>
<td>0 0 0 0</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>COMMENTS:</strong></td>
<td></td>
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**STATEMENTS**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Statement</th>
<th>Scale</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>31.</td>
<td>Opportunities exist for staff members to observe peers and offer encouragement.</td>
<td>0 0 0 0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>32.</td>
<td>Staff members provide feedback to peers related to instructional practices.</td>
<td>0 0 0 0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>33.</td>
<td>Staff members informally share ideas and suggestions for improving student learning.</td>
<td>0 0 0 0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>34.</td>
<td>Staff members collaboratively review student work to share and improve instructional practices.</td>
<td>0 0 0 0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>35.</td>
<td>Opportunities exist for coaching and mentoring.</td>
<td>0 0 0 0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>36.</td>
<td>Individuals and teams have the opportunity to apply learning and share the results of their practices.</td>
<td>0 0 0 0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>37.</td>
<td>Staff members regularly share student work to guide overall school improvement.</td>
<td>0 0 0 0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>COMMENTS:</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Supportive Conditions – Relationships**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Statement</th>
<th>Scale</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>38.</td>
<td>Caring relationships exist among staff and students that are built on trust and respect.</td>
<td>0 0 0 0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>39.</td>
<td>A culture of trust and respect exists for taking risks.</td>
<td>0 0 0 0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>40.</td>
<td>Outstanding achievement is recognized and celebrated regularly in our school.</td>
<td>0 0 0 0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>41.</td>
<td>School staff and stakeholders exhibit a sustained and unified effort to embed change into the culture of the school.</td>
<td>0 0 0 0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>42.</td>
<td>Relationships among staff members support honest and respectful examination of data to enhance teaching and learning.</td>
<td>0 0 0 0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>COMMENTS:</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Supportive Conditions – Structures</td>
<td>SD</td>
<td>D</td>
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<tr>
<td>-----------------------------------</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>43. Time is provided to facilitate collaborative work.</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>44. The school schedule promotes collective learning and shared practice</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>45. Fiscal resources are available for professional development.</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>46. Appropriate technology and instructional materials are available to staff.</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**STATEMENTS**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>STATEMENTS</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>SD</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>47. Resource people provide expertise and support for continuous learning.</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>48. The school facility is clean, attractive and inviting.</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>49. The proximity of grade level and department personnel allows for ease in collaborating with colleagues.</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>50. Communication systems promote a flow of information among staff members.</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>51. Communication systems promote a flow of information across the entire school community including: central office personnel, parents, and community members.</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>52. Data are organized and made available to provide easy access to staff members.</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**COMMENTS:**

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Appendix D: Permission to use Teachers’ Sense of Efficacy Scale

Anita Woolfolk Hoy, Ph.D. Professor

Dear Tim,

You have my permission to use the Teachers’ Sense of Efficacy Scale in your research. A copy of both the long and short forms of the instrument as well as scoring instructions can be found at:

http://www.coe.ohio-state.edu/ahoy/researchinstruments.htm

Best wishes in your work,

Anita Woolfolk Hoy, Ph.D.
Professor
Appendix E: Teachers Sense of Efficacy Scale

Teachers’ Sense of Efficacy Scale\(^1\) (long form)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Teacher Beliefs</th>
<th>Nothing</th>
<th>Very Little</th>
<th>Some Evidence</th>
<th>Quite A Bit</th>
<th>Great Deal</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. How much can you do to get through to the most difficult students?</td>
<td>(1)</td>
<td>(2)</td>
<td>(3)</td>
<td>(4)</td>
<td>(5)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. How much can you do to help your students think critically?</td>
<td>(1)</td>
<td>(2)</td>
<td>(3)</td>
<td>(4)</td>
<td>(5)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. How much can you do to control disruptive behavior in the classroom?</td>
<td>(1)</td>
<td>(2)</td>
<td>(3)</td>
<td>(4)</td>
<td>(5)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. How much can you do to motivate students who show low interest in school work?</td>
<td>(1)</td>
<td>(2)</td>
<td>(3)</td>
<td>(4)</td>
<td>(5)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. To what extent can you make your expectations clear about student behavior?</td>
<td>(1)</td>
<td>(2)</td>
<td>(3)</td>
<td>(4)</td>
<td>(5)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. How much can you do to get students to believe they can do well in school work?</td>
<td>(1)</td>
<td>(2)</td>
<td>(3)</td>
<td>(4)</td>
<td>(5)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. How well can you respond to difficult questions from your students?</td>
<td>(1)</td>
<td>(2)</td>
<td>(3)</td>
<td>(4)</td>
<td>(5)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. How well can you establish routines to keep activities running smoothly?</td>
<td>(1)</td>
<td>(2)</td>
<td>(3)</td>
<td>(4)</td>
<td>(5)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. How much can you do to help your students value learning?</td>
<td>(1)</td>
<td>(2)</td>
<td>(3)</td>
<td>(4)</td>
<td>(5)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. How much can you gauge student comprehension of what you have taught?</td>
<td>(1)</td>
<td>(2)</td>
<td>(3)</td>
<td>(4)</td>
<td>(5)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11. To what extent can you craft good questions for your students?</td>
<td>(1)</td>
<td>(2)</td>
<td>(3)</td>
<td>(4)</td>
<td>(5)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12. How much can you do to foster student creativity?</td>
<td>(1)</td>
<td>(2)</td>
<td>(3)</td>
<td>(4)</td>
<td>(5)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13. How much can you do to get children to follow classroom rules?</td>
<td>(1)</td>
<td>(2)</td>
<td>(3)</td>
<td>(4)</td>
<td>(5)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14. How much can you do to improve the understanding of a student who is failing?</td>
<td>(1)</td>
<td>(2)</td>
<td>(3)</td>
<td>(4)</td>
<td>(5)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15. How much can you do to calm a student who is disruptive or noisy?</td>
<td>(1)</td>
<td>(2)</td>
<td>(3)</td>
<td>(4)</td>
<td>(5)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16. How well can you establish a classroom management system with each group of students?</td>
<td>(1)</td>
<td>(2)</td>
<td>(3)</td>
<td>(4)</td>
<td>(5)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17. How much can you do to adjust your lessons to the proper level for individual students?</td>
<td>(1)</td>
<td>(2)</td>
<td>(3)</td>
<td>(4)</td>
<td>(5)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18. How much can you use a variety of assessment strategies?</td>
<td>(1)</td>
<td>(2)</td>
<td>(3)</td>
<td>(4)</td>
<td>(5)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19. How well can you keep a few problem students from ruining an entire lesson?</td>
<td>(1)</td>
<td>(2)</td>
<td>(3)</td>
<td>(4)</td>
<td>(5)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20. To what extent can you provide an alternative explanation or example when students are confused?</td>
<td>(1)</td>
<td>(2)</td>
<td>(3)</td>
<td>(4)</td>
<td>(5)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21. How well can you respond to defiant students?</td>
<td>(1)</td>
<td>(2)</td>
<td>(3)</td>
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<td>(5)</td>
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<tr>
<td>22. How much can you assist families in helping their children do well in school?</td>
<td>(1)</td>
<td>(2)</td>
<td>(3)</td>
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<td>(5)</td>
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<tr>
<td>23. How well can you implement alternative strategies in your classroom?</td>
<td>(1)</td>
<td>(2)</td>
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<tr>
<td>24. How well can you provide appropriate challenges for very capable students?</td>
<td>(1)</td>
<td>(2)</td>
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Directions for Scoring the Teachers’ Sense of Efficacy Scale

Developers: Megan Tschannen-Moran, College of William and Mary
Anita Woolfolk Hoy, the Ohio State University.

Construct Validity

For information the construct validity of the Teachers’ Sense of Teacher efficacy Scale, see:


Factor Analysis

It is important to conduct a factor analysis to determine how your participants respond to the questions. We have consistently found three moderately correlated factors: Efficacy in Student Engagement, Efficacy in Instructional Practices, and Efficacy in Classroom Management, but at times the make up of the scales varies slightly. With preservice teachers we recommend that the full 24-item scale (or 12-item short form) be used, because the factor structure often is less distinct for these respondents.

Subscale Scores

To determine the Efficacy in Student Engagement, Efficacy in Instructional Practices, and Efficacy in Classroom Management subscale scores, we compute unweighted means of the items that load on each factor. Generally these groupings are:

**Long Form**
- **Efficacy in Student Engagement:** Items 1, 2, 4, 6, 9, 12, 14, 22
- **Efficacy in Instructional Strategies:** Items 7, 10, 11, 17, 18, 20, 23, 24
- **Efficacy in Classroom Management:** Items 3, 5, 8, 13, 15, 16, 19, 21

**Short Form**
- **Efficacy in Student Engagement:** Items 2, 3, 4, 11
- **Efficacy in Instructional Strategies:** Items 5, 9, 10, 12
- **Efficacy in Classroom Management:** Items 1, 6, 7, 8
Reliabilities

In Tschannen-Moran, M., & Woolfolk Hoy, A. (2001). Teacher efficacy: Capturing and elusive construct. *Teaching and Teacher Education, 17*, 783-805, the following were found:

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<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Long Form</th>
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<td>Mean</td>
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<td>OSTES</td>
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<tr>
<td>Engagement</td>
<td>7.3</td>
<td>1.1</td>
<td>.87</td>
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<tr>
<td>Instruction</td>
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<td>1.1</td>
<td>.91</td>
<td>7.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Management</td>
<td>6.7</td>
<td>1.1</td>
<td>.90</td>
<td>6.7</td>
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1 Because this instrument was developed at the Ohio State University, it is sometimes referred to as the *Ohio State Teacher Efficacy Scale*. We prefer the name, *Teachers’ Sense of Efficacy Scale).*
Appendix F: Teacher Responses to Open-Ended Question

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Survey #</th>
<th>Response</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1000</td>
<td>Sharing different teaching strategies to help struggling students has been very helpful.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1001</td>
<td>PLC's keep me on track especially in assessment and keeping records. The documentation clearly defines areas of learning we are targeting and show growth. It helps to keep our grade level working together toward student growth. It creates a situation where we as teachers discuss strategies that will help improve student learning in our targeted area.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1002</td>
<td>Belief hasn't changed on teaching but focus is helpful. PLC's help keep the focus on best practices in teaching and create an atmosphere where collaboration is encouraged and expected. The process is helpful to see where the current teaching may be leading and thinking of ways to improve teaching and student learning.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1003</td>
<td>The PLC environment has made it possible for me to focus more on the low achievers, choose a way to help and make a difference for every child to achieve a goal. When we can focus on the most needy and use tools, games, one on one help - that is the most effective.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1004</td>
<td>Mainly, PLC's have helped me to be more intentional and purposeful in my teaching. The structure and accountability of the team keeps me more focused on formative assessment and adjusting instruction/interventions as we go through the units rather than just at the end. So far, our PLC's have been mostly focused on data as we continue to learn the system. As we become better at that part, we are able to spend more time discussing instructional strategies. That part has become the most valuable to me. PLC's provide a regular scheduled time to collaborate.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1005</td>
<td>Implementing PLC's has helped me learn how to use specific data to drive my instruction. I tend to assess more regularly since taking part in PLC's. I also appreciate the time to work with my grade level team to further our students growth. It has been difficult to form cohesive teams because there are many blended classrooms. These blends are a result of loss of staff over the years and are a necessity, but they do make collaborating more difficult.</td>
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I've always valued collaboration and PLC's have provided a structured opportunity to do that. I feel like my instruction is more data driven than it was before. This years PLC's have been more difficult because of our large blended classes. I have 3 different teams that I meet with, and each team is made of myself and one other teacher. Scheduling time to meet has been tricky and with just two of us it doesn't feel like a true community. It would be nice to have a larger team to collaborate with.

The major change in my teaching practices is in regard to record keeping. I have always collaborated with my grade level team, but now I feel that instead of just naming students I can pull out percentages which states how my students are doing with particular skills. I like that we have a set PLC time to meet, so when life gets busy we can't let things slip by. I find it frustrating that once we have reviewed data there is little opportunity to trade students with other teachers to best address individual needs. Our staff is so small that with two teachers it is hard to trade to intervene. You would end up with a class of 40+ students who are meeting the goal and 15-20 students who need intervention. With 40+ students you can't successfully enrich or manage the class with only 1 teacher.

I think the PLC's have made me take a closer look at being more aware of each child's ability level, their level of understanding and the additional support each child needs. It's definitely been nice to collaborate goals with others to hold each other and myself accountable for following through. Mostly I feel that it's given a bigger focus on finding alternative ways to teach and help students gain a better comprehension for each of their academic areas.

The implementation of PLC's has caused me to more consistently look at data. Sometimes I am not sure whether that is always a good thing. I like knowing where my students are at, but I feel like there is too much focus on scores. I like the collaboration but have found our grade configurations make it difficult to have true PLC's. I end up in 3 or 4 PLC groups because of 2 grade levels and 2 subjects...not sure how this could improve when we only PLC within our building.

Professional learning communities have served to provide the training, leadership, time and respect that allows teachers to collaborate for the improved learning of all students. SHSD has highly educated and trained teachers that have been supported (through the implementation of PLC's) to finally be able to combine their talents and strengths. This allows all staff to continue to learn and become better teachers.
<p>| 1011 | I feel very strongly about how positive PLC's can be for me as an educator as well as for student learning. Now that we are three years into the implementation of PLC's I don't know (or think) that we are far enough along in the process. I see and feel movement in the right direction, but feel we are no where near where we want to or need to be. There is enough resistance within the staff to have slowed the process down. I also feel that the number of staff members who won't buy into the process is large enough to keep us from being successful. Change is still needed for success. |
| 1014 | I am not sure that PLC's have changed my beliefs, but I think it has changed some of my practices. PLC time has been valuable for getting organized and &quot;on the same page&quot; with other teachers in my department. I think it has made me a better teacher, and it has helped me to be more organized and strategic in some of my planning. It has also provided some good feedback from my colleagues. |
| 1015 | The implementation of PLC's has given many opportunities to collaborate with my department about objectives for each class. We have come to value these learning objectives because it helps establish common standards within each class. I would like PLC's to become more collaborate and cooperative. It has instilled a belief in me that a few loud mouths can dominate the conversation. They are just now in a smaller group. PLC's have changed my practices not beliefs in teaching. It changed how I structure some classes and include certain materials and subjects. |
| 1016 | As a new teacher, my beliefs and practices are changing on a daily basis. PLC's help change my expectation of the students I teach. PLC's help form my curriculum to better align with the other teachers in the school. |
| 1017 | Yes, cooperation among groups leads to more resources and enables better techniques in the classroom. |
| 1018 | Yes, I enjoy discussing and implementing strategies with fellow staff members. We have developed department goals, objectives. Developed objectives and standards we all agree to teach. |
| 1019 | The PLC groups have helped greatly in that we are able to stay paced, teach the same thing and develop common work for the same classes with a different teacher. Example, Algebra 1 (from PLC) Make common worksheets, same quizzes, use of same examples, able to work at same pace always within a day of each other, share ideas on how to teach certain kids. |
| 1020 | I have not been involved long enough to provide a good answer to this question. |</p>
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<tr>
<td>1021</td>
<td>PLC's have been all I have known in the teaching profession so their implementation hasn't necessarily changed my beliefs and practices. I have never been involved in a school that does not do PLC's. They have made it so my department is now using standardized assessment which I think is a good thing. They provide an outlet as a newer teacher to seek guidance and support from more experienced teachers. In that way they have been very helpful.</td>
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<td>1022</td>
<td>The implementation of PLC's has not changed my beliefs but it has changed my practices with regard to how I work with others. With the addition of common formative assessments, I feel aligned with other teachers in my area, rather than a &quot;Lone Ranger.&quot; However, I think there will be some &quot;lag&quot; time before positive results will be seen. The first classes to benefit from a more consistent approach in our area will be those that are in their second year (at least) of the program or area.</td>
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<tr>
<td>1023</td>
<td>My beliefs have changed in that I think data should drive decision making about what I should do in the classroom to help students learn. Data can also help decide the most effective interventions when a student is not being successful. Collaborative teams are more powerful to make change than one person going it alone. What we do in education should be based on research not on what we have always done or on anecdotal stories that may not apply to the majority. Lastly, it takes time to do things right.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1024</td>
<td>I really knew nothing about using a common assessment to plan a lesson. I had always wanted to and liked team lesson planning, but I've realized the need to know better what they need to understand better before the teaching starts.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1025</td>
<td>No, not really. I was involved with a group that really drug their feet throughout the process. Most days we accomplished nothing. Other days another colleague and myself did much of the work. Many of those who were in my group could not work collaboratively or combine standards into usable content objectives. Had I been in a different group I think the time would have been more productive. The strategies behind professional learning communities are sound and do improve instructional practices when they are effectively implemented.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1026</td>
<td>It seems like the only thing we have done in PLC's is to articulate what we are teaching in our classes. We are in the process of outlining our objectives for all of the units that we teach. This has not had much effect on how I teach in the classroom.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1027</td>
<td>PLC's have not changed my beliefs about teaching, but have changed some of my practices as I have had the opportunity to learn from my peers. The biggest benefit I've experienced (and students more importantly) is in aligning practices to state reading and writing tests.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1028</td>
<td>This year has been the most helpful for improving teaching and learning in PLC's. The increased time and focus in moving forward has been a nice surprise. I'm hopeful that PLC's will be able to help new staff/first year teachers in the future. I'm also encouraged that many now see the purpose and the ultimate goal of improving our teaching and helping student learning.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1029</td>
<td>PLC time has not necessarily changed my beliefs about teaching and learning but rather made me feel more confident. I used to feel guilty if I &quot;stole someone's lesson&quot; or idea, so I like that that is encouraged and even expected behavior. I have changed my thinking toward students. I used to view kids that weren't in my class as someone else's problem, but I like that we're all on the page for all of our kids. It feels more like a community.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1030</td>
<td>The students who tend to be the 'quiet F's' ...the unnoticed poor attendance, polite but low quality/or little work...now are noticed. Before, those were the kids that were easy to forget about. Having time to discuss students and strategies that work for them has done a great deal to lighten the load. I can focus on the students who before would go unnoticed. Outside PLC's there is a much more collaborative environment in the school. There has been a shift from complaining about problem kids and what a pain they are to talking about what has worked for that student with another teacher. Instead of conversations about 'problem kids' being &quot;well, maybe they'll be expelled for drugs. that would solve my problem.&quot; Now conversations are focused on &quot;Have you talked to Mr. Thorpe? He has a great relationship with that kid.&quot;</td>
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<td>1031</td>
<td>In general, I would say that PLC's have not helped. I think many of us feel we still need guidance on what our goals should be. In regard to using data, we don't do this that often. I've gained more by informal conversations and sharing with other teachers in between lessons, or during lunch break.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1032</td>
<td>Because we have a very small group, PLC's have not been very useful in changing practices or beliefs. They have been useful in overall planning and content consistency for each level taught.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1033</td>
<td>I believe that the classroom alone can not be the source of improved student learning. The school must provide an alternative or a multi-level structure for students that do not succeed in the regular classroom. Just throwing them into a class because they need a place to go - is not the solution.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1034</td>
<td>I believe that PLC's are a great use of time when there are teachers who teach the same or similar topics. Teachers who are independent have little common areas find the PLC's frustrating and wish for others to actually collaborate with on topic specific areas.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1035</td>
<td>It has influenced it very little. I have obtained a few more ideas but not so many as to call it a success.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1037</td>
<td>I do enjoy PLC's as they are a great way to communicate with my department and other teachers. We are all in the same boat and have similar situations that need to be discussed. There were a couple times where I had several students not understanding a topic and I brought it up at PLC. A couple teachers had those students and gave me ideas. It worked and the students were now succeeding in my classroom.</td>
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<td>1038</td>
<td>It has reinforced my personal belief that I'm a &quot;good teacher&quot;. Talking to other teachers and discussing strategies and problems shows me that I am doing the right thing in my classroom. I have started implementing ideas from our PLC's into my class. When we discussed math vocab, I started teaching it in a much more systematic way. When we went over last year's OAKS data, I found the areas my students were struggling in and re-taught those lessons. In this way PLC's have made me much more reflective and responsive to the needs of my kids.</td>
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<tr>
<td>1039</td>
<td>The first year of implementation was rocky. We have a very small staff and although we only divided into 2 PLC groups - the groups were too small and diverse for effective collaboration. This year the PLC's are going much better. Our entire staff of 8 teachers/administrators are in 1 group and we are collaborating on 2 projects together to increase math outcomes. There is energy and enthusiasm for the projects and staff see the relevance of their work. I feel that it has changed math practice in our school.</td>
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<tr>
<td>1040</td>
<td>My practices have changed for the betterment of our students. PLC's have not changed my beliefs, but have changed my practices. Time is the greatest challenge, as always.</td>
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<tr>
<td>1043</td>
<td>I feel that the implementation of our PLC has made a huge difference for our primary team. We are working smarter and not harder. Collaborating together helps our students to succeed. I feel that we are all on the same page and our goals are set together. We have witnessed growth from our students due to our positive and successful professional learning communities. Knowing where the needs of our students were and addressing them has been beneficial. PLC's work and should be a part of every school.</td>
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<tr>
<td>1045</td>
<td>The PLC's have been very helpful at our school. The teachers meet once a week to collaborate and discuss primary students achievement. We test often and more students around to the intervention that best fits their needs for improvement. At this time we are working on language arts/reading curriculum. It has changed my belief that it is important to meet as a team of teachers.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1046</td>
<td>It has not yet, but I believe the more time I spend in PLC's the more my beliefs or practices may change and grow.</td>
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The idea of PLC's is excellent - I believe it follows much of Glasser's model of Schools without Failure. The piece that is missing is admin/counselor ability to be involved with students. I believe students need more exposure to admin in a positive way - the student body need to feel comfortable with admin in a positive way, thus having a respect not fear of authority. In addition, 4 day weeks and large class sizes in no way benefit students - many kids need the safety net of school and school staff: Positive support for staff all staff, positive support for lowest kids, at any given time teachers should know which admin/counselor is in the building, kids need to be priority over all else, coaches need to be teacher first and 7:45 - 4:15 dedicated to students, drugs/behavior issues and attendance top priority, climate of don't look - don't tell is very evident to students. I have seen great things done for kids when admin have time to get involved in support plans.

I believe in the value of PLC's, but I think we've done a poor job implementing them. We have so many issues to address and everything tends to get jumbled. I personally feel like I'm spread very thin, which hinders my ability to be as effective as a leader and team member. I feel we need more structure and specific goals - more modeling of effective techniques. We really need strong leadership (not dictatorial) modeled to us so we can in turn be more effective.

The best results from PLC's has been time to work with other teachers in designing effective lessons, examining data to see the results of those lessons, creating a common core curriculum, and creating strategies to assist failing students.

Yes, it certainly has. My department is now pouring over gathered data and then making informed decisions about future instruction. It is a healthy and collaborative environment.

I now have a greater appreciation of consistency among teachers within my department concerning classroom policies/lessons/assessments. Assessment data now has a greater influence on how we're teaching.

I have seen little impact so far on my own teaching practices with the PLC's. I find it more effective to visit classrooms and see different teaching strategies in the classroom, than setting in a PLC and discussing what they do.

Yes, within a group that is thinking collaboration and on board with the whole concept of PLC's, can be very effective, if the group is not on board, it is a waste of time.
To me the PLC process has helped to formalize what teacher's naturally do when they collaborate. By using a PLC, just like with kids, however, when you formalize the process of working in a group, you will get better results. Too many programs, methods, and 'practices' have been given to teachers that seem to be the "end all, be all" for education. I like how the PLC seems to approach the process in a 'we can only improve' stand point rather than saying "this is the magic bullet".

I think it has made me more open with fellow teachers and more open to change. It is very hard to implement a true PLC here because we are so small, but it has made me look at what I teach and how my students will use it in future years.

Having professional learning communities has changed my beliefs because I get to see more of the general ed. Position. As a Special Education teacher I have experienced a disconnect between gen. ed/SPED but having PLC time to collaborate and discuss has helped me in understanding what is going on in the classroom and we can problem solve together what to do. However, not all behavior problems can be solved through interventions with me involved because I am part time (which makes it a little more difficult). Overall PLC time is nice and I enjoy learning and trying new strategies.

PLC's have changed my practices in teaching and learning in two ways. First they have provided an opportunity to learn what other teachers are doing that works with students. Second PLC's have shown me the importance of consistent expectations academically throughout an entire school.

The implementation of professional learning communities has brought out the best of each one of our teachers in the primary team. We have been able to share ideas and strategies - as well as to plan intervention and enrichment groups in reading. It has been a slower process this year - but we did do more assessment and collaboration with teachers. A movement of classrooms has also been helpful as I've been closer to my partner - We've been able to help each other out.

My beliefs and practices have changed with regards to professional learning communities. I use the data to make decisions and collaborate with fellow teachers. The way I deliver instruction has also changed according to the data. I have a better understanding how to help struggling students since PLC's.

It has come to my understand that a PLC needs a leader that can take school goals and vision and not only communicate those ideas for the PLC, but continually bring the PLC back to those as a compass for the work. As with any system it can get off track without focus. My answer is that yes I feel that being part of a PLC has enhanced my learning and teaching. We took the data and made decisions about regrouping students into reading interventions based on data. We taught new intervention groups based on individual student needs. I am not yet satisfied with outcomes, but that is the nature of PLC.
Meeting with my PLC has made me be more aware of the strategies that I am using to provide instruction. When I have a goal or a certain percentage of students that need to meet a benchmark, I have to be aware of what my students need in order to learn the information necessary to meet that goal. I also appreciate the opportunity to discuss management concerns with my cohorts and get ideas to use in the classroom.

Yes, it has given me the chance to work with coworkers on specific problem areas that the students are having. Before we had PLC time, each teacher would be on their own to analyze and fix lessons that weren't working. I feel that this specific time that is set aside (with a specific SMART goal we are working towards) allows us a chance to share and therefore teach our students more than we were able to before.

The PLC's, especially this year, have increased communication between all grade levels. We are able to review data to help guide our teaching. We are more aware of how students are doing in different settings. I think standards are raised because data is more available. Teachers are more able to share strategies and ideas. It gives us the feeling that we are all in this together for the benefit or our students.

PLC's has put a lense on my teaching of self-reflection. I've become more aware of Tier 1 and 2 and 3 interventions and the importance of Core instruction for all students and separate intervention times. I've become more aware of the importance of systems being necessary for collaboration and instruction to be effective and systematic. Vertical alignment is absolutely necessary. I see assessment data as a major driver for instruction and intervention especially. Vision and systems are absolutely necessary and the whole district must be involved in the process of developing buy-in. Prep time must be included during the school day more than once a week for follow-up planning on PLC planning. My planning has become more data-driven. My conferences with parents are more focused on setting goals based on data. My schedule is driven by reading and math RTI recommendations by ORTI. Other subjects are integrated into literacy for the most part. I've been making connections between student responsibility data and summative assessments. I've begun to rely more on quality instruction lesson components in order to achieve my professional SMART goal of 2 years growth in reading by May as measured by Star for each kid. I've put more emphasis on my own professional development re: RTI tier interventions and implementing those in my class.

The implementation of PLC's have confirmed my beliefs and practices. Many times a new twist to an old idea reminds you of another way to loot at a problem. It is wonderful to work with other teachers to benefit kids with best practices. The best part of the PLC is what you learn about students and family dynamics. It answers many questions you may have and gives you an insight on how to better help the children.
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<td>1070</td>
<td>PLC's have not changed my beliefs about teaching and learning. I've always worked hard to create a rich learning environment for my students, as my colleagues have and continue to do. I feel PLC's are creating more work for staff - more &quot;busy&quot; work. This takes away valuable prep time that teachers could be using to plan and prepare for more engaging lessons.</td>
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<td>1071</td>
<td>I think the idea is great and the implementation somewhat more difficult with blends and no more than 1 person per grade level. It would seem to me that multiple teachers at the same grade level within each building would work best. It has made me more aware of less effective strategies and has made me focus on those more effective. It has seemed to heap more on our plates, especially during inservice days.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1072</td>
<td>Our professional learning community is a good time to talk to colleagues about students, their skills, and how to improve them. It is nice to have specific time set aside to talk to grade level teams. We may be too new to the process, but even though we look at our data - nothing much seems to happen with it after that. We don't necessarily change how we are teaching and I don't think the students' scores go up much. A lot of our PLC time seems to be just &quot;busy work&quot;. This takes away from valuable and necessary prep time. As a team, we often talk every day anyway about our shared students and how they are doing. I don't see a need to spend extra time in PLC's on a weekly basis.</td>
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<td>1073</td>
<td>I think it has a little bit of influence, but will probably have a lot more if we change to a school-wide Title I model. My beliefs and practices have been fairly student centered all along and I think it is what PLC's try to focus on so we don't have kids slipping through the cracks.</td>
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<tr>
<td>1074</td>
<td>In my opinion, the first year of PLC's was a waste of time. It had almost no impact on my teaching or student achievement. Under new leadership, the process has become more valuable. I am able to collaborate with grade level associates and develop a supportive arena for examining successes and failures. I have implemented new strategies with their support. We have challenged each other to set new, higher goals. We have built a community among our students with special activities combining all three classes. I feel supported in my successes and failures.</td>
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<tr>
<td>1075</td>
<td>PLC participation has focused our efforts as we work together on common goals using adopted materials. Uniformity is encouraged but then individual techniques/procedures are discussed as well. The emphasis on test scores, I feel, is a negative to the way our PLC's are run. I understand teaching to objectives are measured by scores. However, I would like more emphasis on best practices. When we have focused on that, I come away more energized to teach.</td>
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Having PLC’s has been a positive experience as I have experienced more collaboration between staff members. It provides more time to analyze data and then use that data to improve my teaching practices/change my instruction. What frustrates me is the emphasis on testing/test scores to drive instruction. It seems to have become the main emphasis instead of what is best for kids. Test scores should be a piece of the puzzle, not the entire emphasis.

For the most part my beliefs have not changed in regard to teaching and learning. I already practices PLC values at a previous district so it is not new to me personally here at this district. I believe we need to make students’ all of our students, not just students of their present teacher. This belief is just starting to change here in this district. I believe we all need to work together to support each other. I have seen this work in a former district, but it is just getting started here. My particular building is not very willing to change, so change is slow in coming. If we can all work together it truly makes a BIG difference in the student's success. I have seen it in the past - a poverty ESL community and students were highly successful.

I believe the learning communities provide a good means of sharing data and good communication. The ability to observe colleagues or teach classes of theirs is the most challenging. It seems we don't have enough resources to accomplish that. As teachers we are pretty busy and the amount of time and effort to incorporate to teach or observe another colleague is limited. A lot of teachers don't like the idea of that. I would say this is the difficult part of PLC's.

What it's done has shown me that having a positive culture in the school that is focused on learning and mutual respect is more important than anything else. The collaboration about student grades and success is not nearly as effective if that culture is not in place.

Professional learning communities have not changed my beliefs or practices at all, largely because I am the only person at our school who teaches my particular subject. I have one peer who I meet with, but our curriculum is very different and our teaching styles are very different, so we don't have a lot to collaborate about. I could see in a larger school/district utilizing a larger pool of peers, but in this particular scenario it hasn't altered my teaching.
| 1084 | I think that PLC's have a great deal of potential and could be a wonderful thing for students and teachers. However, I do not feel they have been that well implemented in my department. Out of the three teachers and four levels of classes only one is ever in common. We can give essential skills, but have no one to compare data with and there is no accountability for essential skills to be given or data to be used. I would like to see PLC's used to help form instruction and define learning outcomes. |
| 1085 | PLC's have given me an alternate perspective to teaching practices, some of which I've implemented into my own way of teaching. Though I understand it is the purpose of PLC's, I don't think it has increased collaboration to a significant degree in my department. |
| 1086 | New acronym. Some recycled ideas. Importing ideas without questioning the implementation to fit a particular district's needs is silly. |
| 1087 | I've always met in PLC's in some form, so my beliefs have not changed. It's just that the expectations for PLC's have changes so there's more data examination and paperwork having to be done. |
| 1088 | Yes and No. PLC's have re-affirmed my beliefs about education. Through work with my peers I have strengthened my practice and re-encouraged my beliefs about education. Overall, PLC's are a great place to learn and question new and old practices. |
| 1089 | I have found views of peer teacher I collaborate with, unfortunately, be untractable. Because I am one individual, the two individuals seem to adopt a perception of 'majority rules' even though the ideas/practices are archaic/ineffective and not the best at promoting student learning - this even though I have great ideas. |
| 1090 | PLC's seem to provide a space for teachers to "air their issues" and then to turn this alchemy into action. SHJH is a unique place where many of the goals of a PLC were already in order. |
| 1095 | Yes PLC's have changed my views on teaching and learning because I have learned my way is not always the best way. I want to provide the best education I can, and I can only do that if I know my strategies are working. For example a teacher I studied under was reluctant to change; we taught the same lessons but in a different way. My results were far better but because I was the student teacher, it didn't matter. |
I think PLC's enable us to provide more systematic and comprehensive supports for our students. They help teachers form a better sense of what is lacking and effective in our curriculum. It does seem, however, that for PLC's to be effective, they require tremendous amounts of collaborative time - and on a consistent, scheduled basis. I often wonder if we can afford this time at the expense of instructional time. I fear that educators are being asked to spend more and more time talking about effective teaching and less time teaching effectively.