

UCL Centre for Educational Leadership



The professional learning community in digitised schools

Professor Louise Stoll
louisestoll.com

Skolen i digital utvikling

29 October 2021

Teacher professionalism

- knowledgeable and skilled
- autonomous within social settings
- networking with peers
- curious, lifelong learner
- adaptable
- innovative and creative
- catalyst for change



Future-ready schools also require:

- Leaders at all levels who model and create conditions for such professionalism

What's in a name?

Professional Learning Communities (PLCs)

Schools as Learning Organisations (SLO)

Professional Learning Networks

Networked Learning Communities



OECD (2016)

Opportunities of digitisation for PLCs

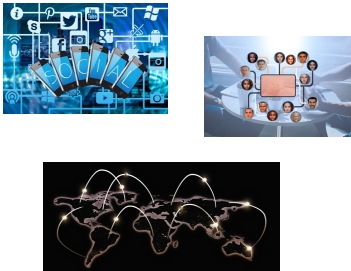
COVID-19

Easy access to social media, platforms, resources, tools

Synchronous and asynchronous collaboration and learning

Participating online may feel 'safer'

Easier to extend PLCs – locally, nationally and globally



Challenges for PLCs

Confidence and competence

Overwhelming choice – and making wise decisions

Pressure/exhaustion

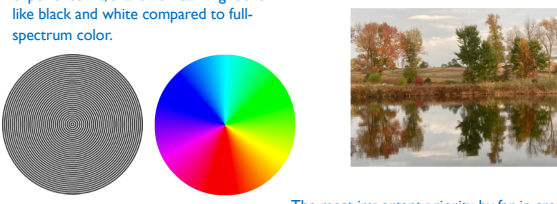
Maintaining connection/collective responsibility/isolation

Ensuring depth



... deeper learning is captivating. Hard to achieve, yes, but once you've experienced it, shallower learning looks like black and white compared to full-spectrum color.

Creating system-wide symmetry




The most important priority, by far, in creating a system that would support deeper learning is to develop teachers and leaders who themselves have experienced some version of deep learning.

Mehta and Fine (2015)

Supporting PLCs in digitised schools

- o Ensure digitisation meets the needs of great professional learning - symmetry
- o Stimulate learning conversations
- o Develop facilitation competencies
- o Create conditions to embed cultures of collaborative practice
- o Encourage creativity



Starts with end in mind **Great professional learning** **Challenges thinking**

Connects work-based learning with external support

Ensures varied, rich and sustainable opportunities

Is content rich

Meets individual and school needs

Is enhanced by creating PLCs within and between schools and by joint practice development

But We've ALWAYS Done It This Way

Requires leadership to create conditions

Involves inquiry

Kaser and Halbert (2017)


Stoll et al (2012)



EEF (2020) Remote Professional Development (PD)

Five key findings

1. Remote PD can be effective
2. Remote coaching, mentoring and expert support can be effective
3. Video use can enhance remote PD
4. Interactive content and collaboration can enhance remote PD
5. Remote PD requires supportive school conditions



Stimulating learning conversations

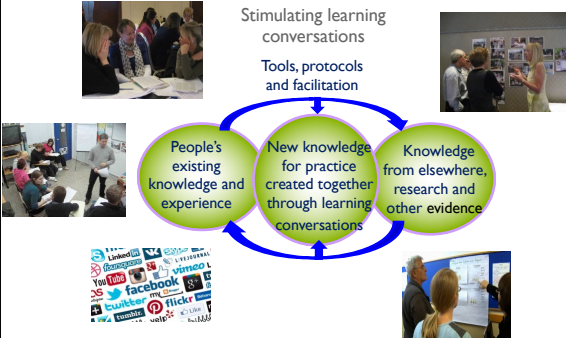
Tools, protocols and facilitation

People's existing knowledge and experience

New knowledge for practice created together through learning conversations

Knowledge from elsewhere, research and other evidence

Stoll (2015) based on NCSL (2005)



Research-informed tools and protocols

CATALYST

Professional Learning Communities: A Guide for Schools and Other Leaders of Learning

Catalyst (Stoll et al, 2021) available from: <https://www.crownhouse.co.uk/catalyst>

Resources to download at: <http://www.louisstoll.com/writing/resources/>

Evidence-enriched practice labs 1-4, Louise Stoll www.learnlab.net



Deep features of protocol pedagogy

Pressing for participation

Forcing different kinds of participation


Making and reading texts

Fostering trust


It often seems that in looking at students' work samples, teachers are really looking – as in double exposure – at their own work.

McDonald et al (2012)

Allen (1998)


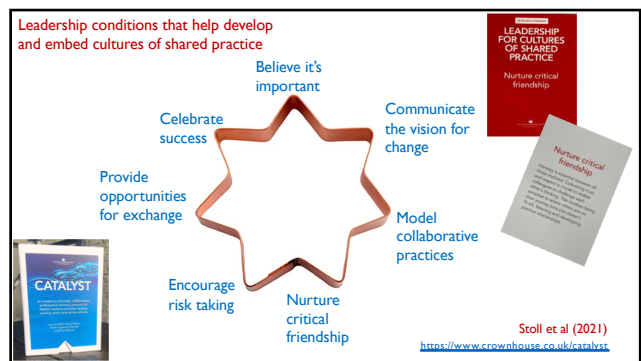
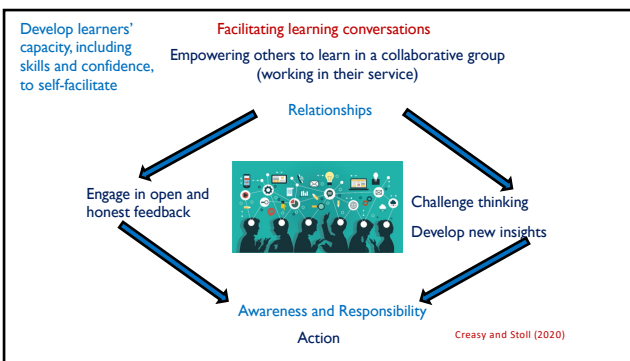


How do the stimuli (materials and resources) and protocols you use in PLC conversations stimulate reflection and 'double exposure'?

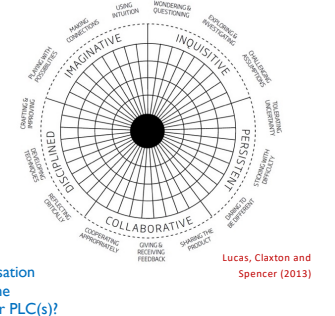


Example of ground rules from a leadership PLC

- Be present, stay focused
- Be curious, open to learning
- Listen to what others are saying – make meaning
- Share and actively contribute, don't interrupt
- Show respect in dialogue – think about words
- What you say in the room stays here/ confidentiality, trust
- Be vulnerable, dare to open up about challenges
- Be supportive, help each other in your real work
- Challenge each other, ask the hard questions

Progression to Student Creativity in School



Teaching Creative Thinking

Lucas, Claxton and Spencer (2013)

How does digitisation help stimulate the creativity of your PLC(s)?

Pick an image. How does this help you think more deeply about professional learning communities in an age of digitisation?

