Professional Learning Community

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Practicum II A

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November 10, 2017

As teachers we have the ability to help our students reach their maximum potential, while we ourselves grown and develop professionally. This can be achieved by collaborating as professionals to achieve shared goals. One way in which we may collaborate is through forming a professional learning community or most popular known as PLC. According to \_\_\_ a PLC is a group of educators that meets regularly, shares expertise, and works collaboratively to improve teaching skills and the academic performance of students. This is not just collaboration to help teachers plan their lessons more authentic this aim to serve two broad purposes such as improving the skills and knowledge of educators through collaborative study, expertise exchange, and professional dialogue, and improving the educational aspirations, achievement, and attainment of students through stronger leadership and teaching. doesn’t this sound like an ideal method of collaboration? PLC function as a way to continually question, reevaluate, refine, and improve teaching strategies and knowledge. This is the reason I believe that creating a PLC will improve students learning and help teachers become more effective.

In professional learning communities, teams are often built around shared roles or responsibilities. This mean that teachers that form a PLC usually teach the same grade and or subject. this commonality allows teachers to focus on specific issues and strategies of how to a student/class better or how to even select the most appropriate strategy to deliver a lesson. The glossary of education reform (2014), mentioned that a professional learning community most often if not always take place in a meeting. These include the discussion of teacher work where educators collectively review lesson plans or assessments that have been used in a class, and then offer critical feedback and recommendations for improvement; another is the discussion of students work; educators look at examples of students’ work turned in for a class, and then offer recommendations on how lessons or teaching approaches may be modified to improve the quality of student work; educators also discuss students data by analyze student-performance data from a class to identify trends—such as which students are consistently failing or underperforming—and collaboratively develop proactive teaching and supports strategies to help students who may be struggling academically; and finally the discussion of professional literature where educators select a text to read, such as a research study or an article about a specialized instructional technique, and then engage in a structured conversation about the text and how it can help inform or improve their teaching. Sharing roles and responsibilities and meeting on a regular basis are essential features of a PLC that aims at improving students learning.

According to DuFour (2006), the very essence of a learning community is a commitment to the learning of each student. Educators within the organization that foster PLC, embrace high levels of learning for all students as both the reason the organization exists and the fundamental responsibility of those who work within it. In order to achieve this purpose, the members of a PLC create and are guided by a clear and compelling vision of what the organization must become in order to help all students learn. They make collective commitments clarifying what each member will do to create such an organization, and they use results-oriented goals to mark their progress. Members work together to clarify exactly what each student must learn, monitor each student’s learning on a timely basis, provide systematic interventions that ensure students receive additional time and support for learning when they struggle, and extend and enrich learning when students have already mastered the intended outcomes.

This model improves students learning simple because it puts students learning first. Everything that the participates of the PLC do is done in a means of improving themselves to execute effective lessons to students. They continuously revise and reevaluate strategies and lesson just so that no child is left behind. The model uses students’ data to monitor students progress and if students are failing, they meet to form a plan to reach these failing students. According to Rentfro (2007), if a student is failing frequent common assessments, grade-level expectations, and progress monitoring, teachers and administrators identify at-risk students and write goals and devise action steps to achieve those goals. Progress is monitored for each student, and the results of all assessments determine the type and intensity of interventions to meet student goals. Systematic interventions contribute significantly to student learning. Intervention time must be provided during the school day to be effective for all students. During interventions, all staff members in the building are involved and work as a team to meet the needs of all children. This is why this model improve student learning.

Ensuring that all students do well, supersede just the sharing of lessons and worksheets. PLC involves much more than a staff meeting or group of teachers getting together to discuss a book they’ve read. Instead, a PLC represents the focus of a continuous improvement in teacher performance as well as student learning. PLC bring about involvement in a process of reflection upon instructional strategies and desired student benchmarks, as well as monitoring of outcomes to ensure success. PLC enable teachers to continually learn from one another through shared visioning and planning, as well as in-depth critical examination of what *does* and *doesn’t* work to enhance student achievement. The focus of PLC is ongoing not a one-time professional development session facilitated by outsiders, who have little accountability regarding whether staff learning is successfully applied. PLCs therefore benefit teachers just as much as they do students.

Being a part of a PLC is a means of becoming a more effective teacher. Educators are able to commit to a greater cause. Too often teachers have not time to interact with colleagues because they are either teaching a class or preparing to go to a class. A school that fosters PLC is able to set aside time for meeting and planning. Teachers in a PLC have a lot of responsibility, not just for their students but also for their colleagues. The work done is a PLC group gives teachers the opportunity to be significant decision-makers in the school. This will make teachers feel relevant and build their commitment to the profession. When teachers get the support from a PLC, they see their own practice grow and evolve. When they realize that their new-found efficacy makes an impact on student learning, they are more likely to stay in the classroom. Teachers work together to improve their skills and those of their colleagues which allows them to be more effective teachers and satisfied with their job.

I have been a part of a PLC before without even knowing what a PLC was. I was on two weeks internship and my colleagues were the ones that kept me moving forward. We were all from different schools and departments, but we worked together to succeed. I had resources that other colleagues did not have and I was more than willing to assist with materials, unit plan and lesson plans. Some of my colleagues did not know how to do unit plans and the 5E lesson plan and I had no problem providing guidance and examples. I wanted them to do well and execute their lessons effectively. When collaborating one must be able to compromise and if sharing assessments is one way I am ready and willing. If I know that I can make students productively engaged in an assessment activity by using a form of assessment my colleague used and succeed with, why not? The whole purpose of a PLC so that we as teachers can work together for the benefit of ourselves and our students. In order to do so we must share what works and what does not. This form of collaboration I believe is the most benefiting, it not only makes teachers more effective but, students are able to benefit fulltime.

Reference

Rentfro, E. R. (2007). Professional Learning Communities Impact Student Success. National Association of School Principals.

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