

Professional Learning Communities: Source Materials for School Leaders and Other Leaders of Professional Learning

**Louise Stoll, Ray Bolam, Agnes McMahon,
Sally Thomas, Mike Wallace,
Angela Greenwood and Kate Hawkey (2006)**

**Based on the Creating Effective Professional
Learning Communities Project (Bolam et al, 2005)**



Definition of a professional learning community

An effective professional learning community has the capacity to promote and sustain the learning of all professionals in the school community with the collective purpose of enhancing pupil learning.

Bolam et al (2005)



A professional learning community is:

. . . an inclusive group of people, motivated by a shared learning vision, who support and work with each other, finding ways, inside and outside their immediate community, to enquire on their practice and together learn new and better approaches that will enhance all pupils' learning.

Stoll et al (2006)

Main Characteristics of Professional Learning Communities

- # Shared values and vision
- # Collective responsibility for pupil learning
- # Collaboration focused on learning
- # Professional learning: individual and collective
- # Reflective professional enquiry
- # Openness, networks and partnerships
- # Inclusive membership
- # Mutual trust, respect and support



Processes to create, develop and sustain professional learning communities

- **Optimising resources and structures**
- **Promoting professional learning: individual and collective**
- **Evaluating and sustaining the PLC**
- **Leading and managing**



Three ways to determine the effectiveness of a PLC

- # Its ultimate impact on pupil learning and social development
- # Its impact on staff morale and practice, and potential for developing leadership capacity
- # The characteristics are in place and processes are operating smoothly – part of ‘the way we do things’

Creating and Sustaining Effective Professional Learning Communities

- # Project funded by DfES, NCSL, GTCe from January 2002 – October 2004
- # Project website: www.eplc.info
- # Project report available: www.dfes.gov.uk/research
Bolam et al (2005)

