CULTURE OF PROFESSIONAL LEARNING COMMUNITIES

by:

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Have you heard about Professional Learning Communities? It is clearly explained that this innovation or practice could uplift the teaching practices and create a learning environment where all learners can reach their full potentials. Moreover, learner’s success was the focus of PLC collaboration. In addition, it was clearly discussed that PLCs could give educators the opportunities to directly improve teaching and learning; build stronger relationships between team members; help teachers stay on top of new research and emerging technology tools for the classroom, and lastly, help teachers reflect on ideas.

In the present education system, we have what we called School Learning Action Cell (SLAC). Just like PLC, this Learning Action Cell also aims to improve teachers professionally, in order to be effective and efficient in providing quality education among learners. But then, it is more ideal to adopt the concept of establishing Professional Learning Communities in every school if possible, to help uplift the teaching and learning process. This will be a collaborative effort within the teams. As was once quoted, “The more minds that come together from different backgrounds, the more likely we are to add value and purpose to the field of education. This only proves that working collaboratively will bring more ideas to the teachers specially in addressing common issues and challenges encountered in the classrooms. Learning from others enable you to reflect on ways to uplift your teaching and to adjust your practice for the better. But this collaborative effort requires smart planning and whole-hearted implementation and a just evaluation in order to realize its main purpose.
Educational managers may also adopt this practice considering some modifications to fit the needs of the school. This must be properly studied and planned before the actual implementation. Perhaps, this innovation is new to our ears, but we are not aware that in some aspects it has something in common with the practices that we have before. To realize the concept of the so-called PLC, intensive orientation must be conducted to equip every teacher about the processes and concepts this innovation. Organization of the team will be the next thing to do, in order to select those who are willing, capable and committed to be the catalysts of change in the school. Afterwards, planning and crafting action plan will also be considered. Action plan, programs, schedule of activities must be properly planned and organized. If I were to suggest, addressing the least mastered skills in different subject areas must be the focus of this innovation. If possible, one subject per quarter. Every last Friday of the month will be the regular meeting for coaching and mentoring purposes. This will be the time of sharing of practices and interventions applied in every classroom that could help address and improve the least mastered skills in a particular subject. Likewise, the very essence of a PLC is focus on and a commitment to student learning. Meeting weekly or quarterly creates a bond and builds a team leader within the school.

It is clear that PLC can improve teaching performance. This will be through collaborative efforts among teachers in the group. The main concept is to work together to solve problems and try new things. Through this concept, teachers are encouraged to share best practices and brainstorm innovative ways to improve learning and drive the student’s achievement.

Moreover, as teachers improved their performances, the positive effect will be improved students’ achievements. As discussed, PLCs used data to improve student learning. Teachers are encouraged to gather assessment data and create goals based on that data. Likewise, it is relevant for the teachers to work together to analyze student’s strengths and weaknesses in order to improve student achievement.
This is just like searching for the appropriate interventions or innovations in addressing problems or challenges encountered by the teachers and the learners in a more collaborative way. The purpose of PLC will be achieved if planned, executed, and evaluated whole-heartedly. As we adopt this practice, we must also expect the drawbacks of this when not implemented properly. Instructional leaders must extend his/her full support to the group of teachers who are responsible on this to keep them inspired and motivated to work for the betterment of the learners and for themselves as well. This can be a make or break decision. There will be challenges but hopes that the benefits will outweigh the negatives.

“PLCs are the lifeblood of innovation and risk taking in school. When structured well, they can be teams that constantly learn together and work to discover what is best for students.”

References: