

# Review of: "Professional Learning Communities (PLCs) for English Teachers as an Effective Alternative Framework for Professional Development"

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Potential competing interests: No potential competing interests to declare.

This paper is presented as original research. I have been reviewing and researching PLCs since 2004 in the United States with over two dozen peer reviewed articles and citations on the topic of PLCs and school culture. Your research is important in the evolution of the literature on the practices of PLCs, especially given your title. If in fact PLCs are a modern PD model, it is important to create a conceptual frameworks for it as a PD model relative to concurrent PD research.

You will find a not-exhaustive review of your prospectus. I might add that in the United States this paper would not had been published as there are major stylistic issues, disarticulated flows of logic, no research questions or purpose statement, no conceptual or theoretical framework. Moreover, the themes that emerge from your data are not novel aspects of PLCs or progressive/modern PD models, and they do not reconnect the reader back to your title.

Please find my review below. Hang in there and if you want more strategic feedback on how to make these changes and make this paper more presentable I am happy to consult further.

In the introduction

- opening paragraph there is a stylistic error between sentence 2 and 3, separated by a comma but should be separated with a period
- the second paragraph flow of logic is non-linear with no opening sentence to frame branching logic. There is little doubt from this research and the literature, that there are multiple reasons why traditional PD models do not work well. The flow of logic in the paragraph justifies the various reasons why traditional PD models do not work, that within reasonable justification should be your opening statement, that "there are multiple reasons why traditional PD models are ineffective at teachers support and change".
- the fact that teacher pd programs offered today do not provide enough "ongoing support" is an important point, but not the leading thesis to the paragraph. Furthermore, this statement is an important point and should be part of the branching logic of the paragraph included with a citation to strengthen the statement.
- Third paragraph opening sentence that "over the past thirty years there has been a paradigm shift regarding the professional development of teachers..." needs a citation to strengthen your argument.
- It is customary to include a purpose statement somewhere in your introduction. I would add that right after your third paragraph.

## In the literature review

- Opening paragraph, stylistic punctuation second sentence EFL Journal Quarterly citation numbers need parenthesis.
- Third sentence stylistic punctuation period placed before the citation (DuFour 2004).
- Fourth sentence on defining a PLC, the citation is dated and needs a newer citation, as the model has evolved significantly from 2002. Even my research in 2018 provides a unique, well researched and synthesis of the literature to create a “new definition” on the PLC model as a functional element of school culture for teacher learning. Not that you have to use that citation, but there are multiple authors that have synthesized more modern functional definitions of the PLC as a model relative to teacher professional development. Moreover, the citation you use from Wenger, McDermott & Snyder is a very good works, but stylistically you must include proper punctuation using the page number as per APA formatting rules.
- The flow of your argument in the first paragraph is non-linear and not well constructed... as an example you go from teacher isolation in sentence one, to teacher groups. Then you go to historical foundation of PLCs, then on experienced teachers as subject specialists, cognitive elevation and teacher “out of the box thinking... all of these are great points and well cited but the logic of the paragraph is non-linear and non-branching, disjointed and needs restructured with the remainder of your lit review... must like the introduction, your flow of logic is disjointed and needs structured in a way that promotes your arguments relative to the flow of logic (the journey of knowledge from the literature relative to your argument.
- The second paragraph is well constructed. Well done!
- Your fourth & sixth (?) paragraph, sentence use of i.dem should include the reference. Not sure if the use of i.dem fits here as this is not bibliographical. Might be best to recite rather than use that, unless you include the reference right after i.dem.
- The use of Cochran-Smith & Lytle 1999 citation is dated and needs more recent citation. There are from 2010-2020 that would better fit here.
- In the development of PLCs in Israel, it would be best to include a sentence at the conclusion of that section that introduces the reader to the timeline inception of the development of PLCs in Israel as suggested by the level 3 header. There is nothing in that paragraph that leads the reader to the development of PLCs in Iseal as the section header suggests. A sentence should also lead to the next level 3 header on “PLCs for English teachers”.
- At the conclusion of your lit review, you should have your research questions. This is a research article and there are no research questions and no purpose statement as yet. This is a major weakness of this prospectus.

## In your materials and methods

- You state that the research is qualitative, but do not describe that it is a phenomenology until paragraph two. Be very explicit in your opening statement that give the research questions, to best collect data and given the phenomenon of PLCs a qualitative phenomenological research methodology was used. Then in the second sentence you can state that the types of data that best answer your research questions within a phenomenological study will leverage observations, in-depth interviews and the analysis of documents and artifacts.

- If you are to do an “analysis”, what are you analyzing? I am assuming that since you are using a qualitative phenomenology that you will be collecting and analyzing relevant documents and artifacts (see Creswell, Stakes, Groenewald, Bliss, Qutoshi, etc.)
- When using an inductive stance, you must frame the stance on the conceptual frameworks from your lit review, which has yet to be defined. There is no conceptual frameworks presented in this paper prior to getting to the methodology and thus there is no foundation for inductive analysis. Moreover, your conceptual frameworks should be framed around your research questions, which have yet to be presented in this paper.
- The second paragraph “The phenomenological methodology was used...” needs a citation relative to the relationship between the researcher and participants. Robert Stake’s literature frames this well.
- The coding of transcripts needs teased out more. The coding needs to use a frameworks relative to research questions. This removes researcher bias, as stipulated by Creswell in his definition of researcher bias in analysis. As an example, to reduce bias, the researcher can use inductive coding relative to the conceptual framework that thus connects codes back to the research questions, binding the literature to the strength of your thesis.
- You discuss observations and the emphasis placed on it, but there is no observation protocol presented. There seems to be inconsistency between how frequent observations were done but no justification, which thus decreases trustworthiness of data collection and analysis (Defined by Lincoln and Guba).
- How did you select participants? Was it purposeful or a random sample. Random sampling is not effective in phenomenology and so I am guessing it is purposeful. If purposeful, what criteria did you use to determine your purposeful sampling of teachers?
- Your interview questions are logical, but then should be triangulated to your observation protocol and document/artifact analysis. Triangulation is critical to the validity and reliability (trustworthiness and dependability) of your data in collection, analysis and thus use in discussion. Without a clear connection between your types of data there is no way to suggest your data is free from bias and therefore is no reliable.
- You absolutely need to define data trustworthiness, dependability, confirmability, and transferability relative to data collection, analysis and use in discussion to support you research questions (thesis).

There is no data presented for data organization. This is a major weakness of this research prospectus. The discussion section presents data and should be changed to data. The discussion should then use the data provided to tie together all information gained from this research and how that data might find a solution relative to the purpose of the research and answer the research question(s) of the prospectus.

- The discussion of themes up front is customary and based on best practice. The issue is that this is data emerged from a data section that is not included here. Moreover, the themes seem deductive when the analysis was suggested as inductive, none of which points back to the title of the paper as an alternative PD model. Finally, the themes that emerge are all cited in research studies done on PLCs by this and MANY other researchers over the last twenty years of research all over the world. There is nothing novel here and thus the discussion might only relate to Israeli English PLCs, but that isn’t stated here. Thus the lack of the novel nature of the themes makes this discussion irrelevant as a research study.

The conclusion section is essentially a discussion section. When hitting key points, this should be framed around research questions. Moreover, the synthesis should be supported with citations from the literature that help draw logic to the outcomes relative to supporting your thesis. While the flow of logic is well constructed, you need to strengthen your statements with citations that support the logic.