

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.

Dear Authors,

I would like to commend you for this interesting and well-written paper. I found the topic intriguing. It brings a much-needed focus to ELT and offers valuable insights for both ELT teachers and teacher trainers.

In Iran, we face the exact same problem as our in-service teachers, especially novice teachers, do not have the ongoing support they need and they do not engage in self-evaluation and peer-evaluation. As such, when they start their practice, they cannot properly translate what they have learned in teacher education programs and smoothly change theory into practice and they are, thus, overwhelmed. Additionally, the existing top-down PD programs cannot help them much in this regard. Ultimately, as a teacher and a teacher trainer, I do agree that the traditional PD frameworks can, in practical terms, be "ineffective and irrelevant" and we can, instead, opt for bottom-up PLCs for EFL teachers' PD as an appropriate alternative to promote collaboration and peer support and self- and co-reflection.

There are, however, some areas where the paper can use some amendments and improvement. What follows are some general comments. Hope you find them useful.

1. You should proofread your paper for some minor typos and errors.
2. You need to be consistent regarding the format of in-text citations.
3. Also, the excerpts and extracts should be indented.
4. The section "The development of PLCs in Israel" needs more elaboration. It tells us about PLCs in America and then suddenly moves to the next section without giving a clear account of its history in Israel.
5. You have defined PLC properly but the study does not have a clear conceptual or theoretical framework. From the statements in your study regarding teacher PD, it could be inferred that you followed a sociocultural perspective on learning and teaching. This is an area that can use some more work.
6. The design of your study should be better explained. As this is a phenomenology, you should better expound on the in-depth interviewing process; not just on the questions but also on how questions were formulated and how the interviews were conducted as well as the researchers' positionality and also how their position as informants in the contexts impacted the interpretation of the results.
7. You should provide the reader with more details about both groups of participants and the criteria and procedure for

their selection. For instance, their years of experience as teachers (novice vs. experienced) and the length of exposure to the PLC program.

8. You should also mention if the coding was done manually or via a software program or both.
9. It is not unconventional to mix the discussion section with the presentation of the findings in the qualitative studies, but it should be done carefully with proper justification and detailed explanation. For instance, you need to provide more details on the way themes and sub-themes were constructed and organized and also the way quotes to accompany the themes were selected and their clear and detailed interpretation. Merely presentation of the quote is insufficient. For some of the quotes, you need to mention exactly what question was asked following which the comment was made by the participant or the context where the comment was made, to give the reader a better idea. One good example where you have done this, is the section on “problematic participants”. Details are given about the atmosphere and the context. This can be done for the previous sections as well.
10. Finally, as the trustworthiness of results is important in qualitative research, you should mention how you ensured the credibility of the findings and interpretations. Did you have some form of participant or respondent validation to check for accuracy and resonance of the interpretations with their experiences? If so, then you should mention it before the “Discussion section”.

Best of Luck