

UNIVERSITY OF TWENTE.

LEADERSHIP FOR PROFESSIONAL LEARNING NETWORKS

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What, why and how of PLNs



Why PLNs?



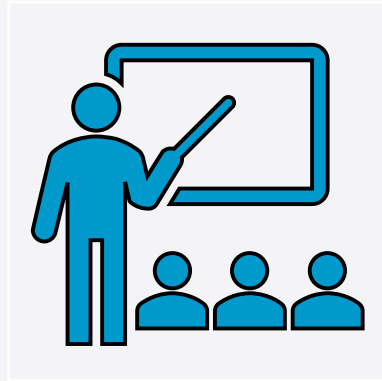
Definition, process and influencing factors



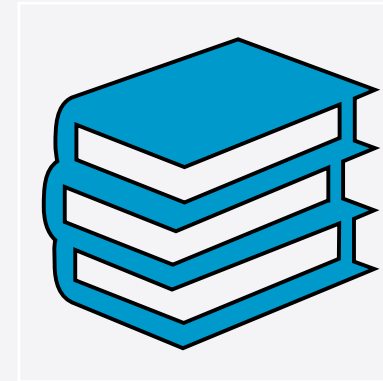
Distributed leadership for PLNs

- For yourself: consider what you think is a professional learning network and write this down in 1 sentence
- Then: Please go to www.menti.com and use the code **9161 8750**
- and answer the question: **What 1 word do you link to Professional Learning Network most? [answers at end]**

Why?

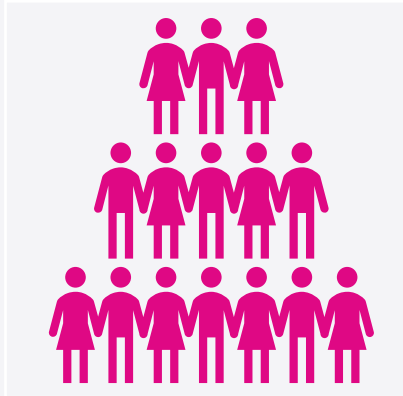


Teachers often report they like participating in networks and learn from this participation

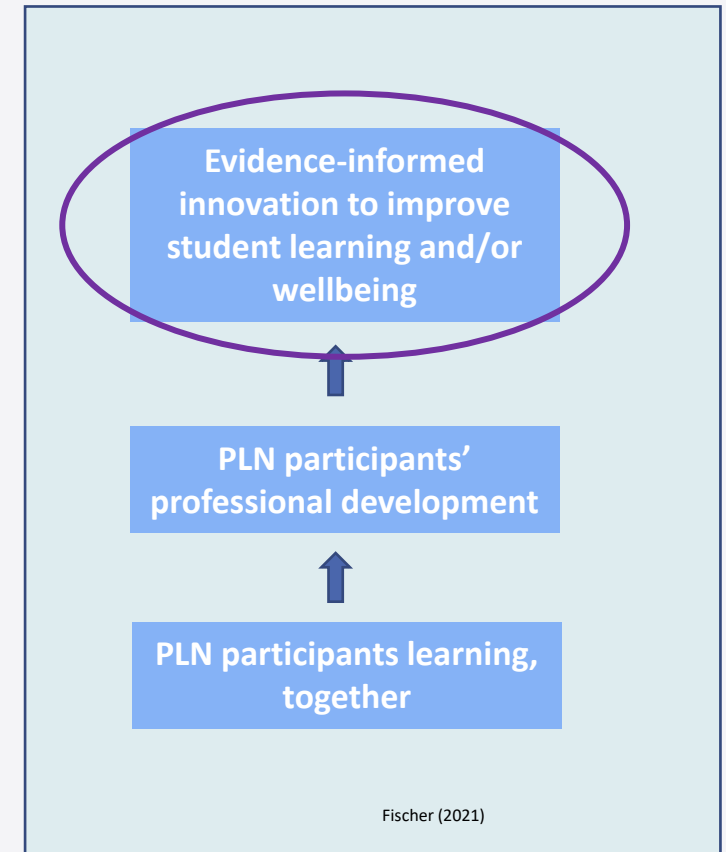


Research shows that teacher collaboration in learning networks can lead to improved teaching practice and increased student learning

What are PLNs?



A group of educators
coming together with others outside of their everyday
community of practice
with the intention to engage in collaborative learning
to improve outcomes for students (also equity, wellbeing)



Factors important for PLNs

Collaboration



Reflective professional inquiry



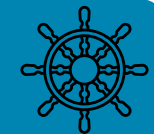
Shared sense of purpose focused on outcomes for students



Boundary crossing



PLN leadership (within network and from schools)



Factors important for PLNs

Collaboration



Factors important for PLNs

Reflective professional inquiry



Factors important for PLNs

Shared sense of purpose focused on
outcomes for students



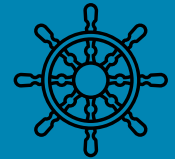
Factors important for PLNs

Boundary crossing

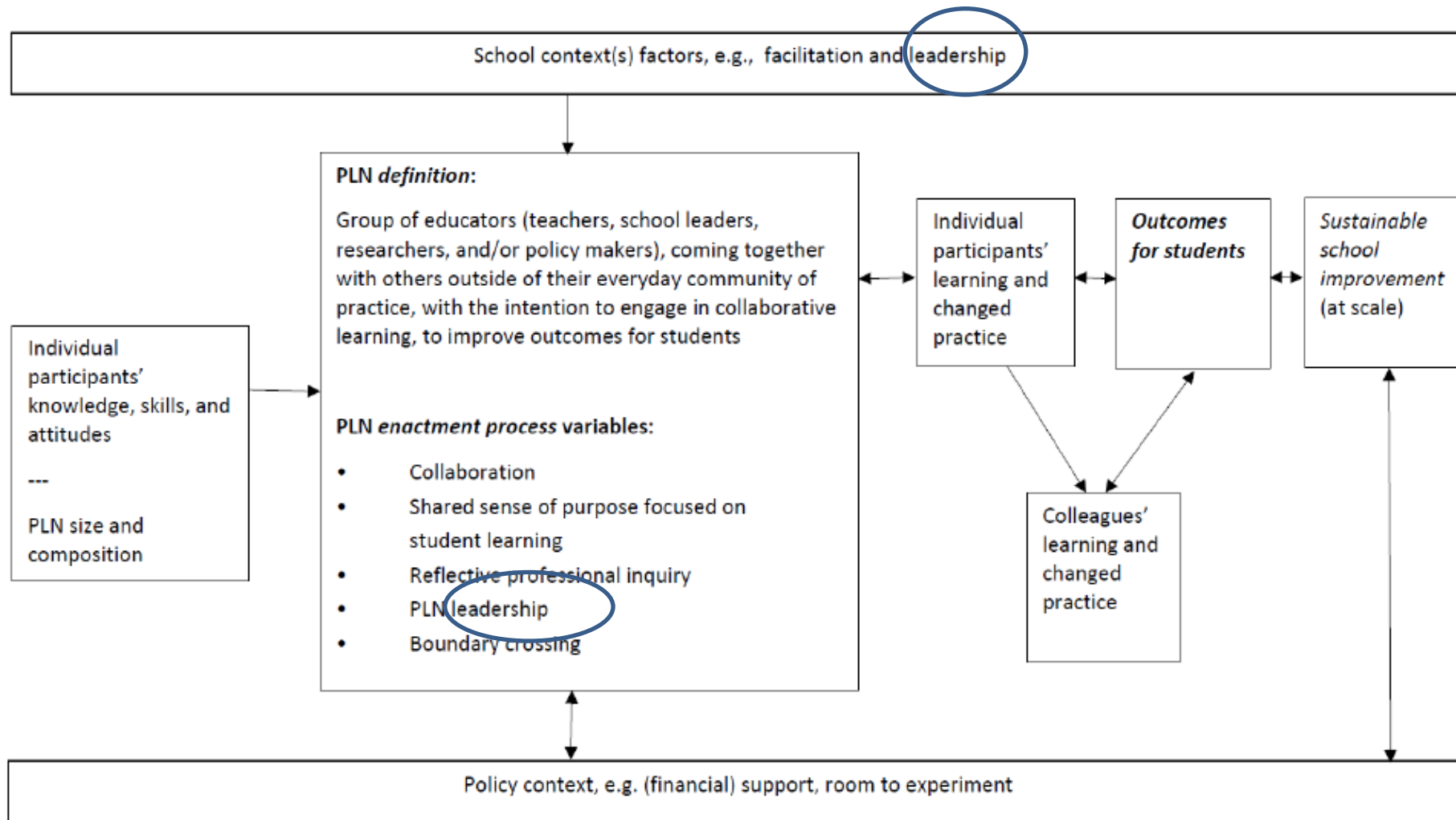


Factors important for PLNs

PLN leadership (within network and from schools)



PLNs: Definition, conceptual and methodological challenges



*Open-access paper: Poortman, C. L., Brown, C., & Schildkamp, K. (2021). Professional learning networks: a conceptual model and research opportunities. *Educational Research*, 1-18.

Sustainable educational innovation

Long-term AND in the entire school

- As a routine
- Fitting the school context AND maintaining the core aspects of the innovation
- Continuing improvement

Essential

- Coherence in vision and policy in schools is fundamental
- School organisation, context, individual characteristics and the innovation itself
- **Leadership** (distributed; Tappel et al.; Van den Boom-Muilenburg et al.)

Leadership for sustainable change

- When is the change sustainable (in your school)?
- Organizational routine, core components of the innovation embedded in the school (Tappel et al., Van den Boom-Muilenburg et al.)
 - Long-term change
 - Not just individual(s), but whole-school change
 - Impact on students
- **Distributed leadership:** not only formal school leader, but also (other) teachers fulfill this role
- Coherence in education vision and policy of school and network purpose (Tappel et. al.)

LEADERSHIP FOR SUSTAINABILITY



Organizing and (re-)designing the organization



Managing the teaching and learning program



Understanding and developing people



Organizational structures and
social-cultural interactions



TOOL FOR LEADERSHIP REFLECTION

- Available here: <https://pro-u.reflectiontool.utwente.nl/en> or:



- In 10-15 minutes, please select and answer individually for a specific innovation in your school (Data use? Specific professional learning network? Other?)
 - **Organizing and (re)designing the organization => vision and goals**
 - Please note the tool automatically continues to the next category
 - Then **Organizing and (re)designing the organization => Resourcing and facilitation**
 - Then **Understanding and developing people=> communication**
- After 15 minutes please go to www.menti.com and use the code **9161 8750 [answers at end]**
- To enter which category needs most work in your school according to you
- We will conclude together after about 20 minutes

SOME EXAMPLES

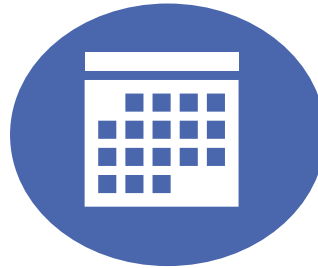
Vision and goals



Example: Formal vision document that school staff refer to when they further talk about it:

“We have discussed together *and* written down (in long-term plans) how the innovation helps us achieve our goals as a school”

Resourcing and facilitation



School leader: “all the time you need to do the [network work] was made available.”

This school shortened the lessons to free-up time for this, but also used time that was otherwise spent on meetings (that were not experienced as very effective)

Communication



- Appointing coordinators to support communication
- Asking colleagues to give input
- A lot of attention for communication and social atmosphere in general, e.g., Open doors, talking about work and personal life, being available

References

- Brown, C., & Poortman, C. L. (Eds.). (2018). *Networks for learning: Effective collaboration for teacher, school and system improvement*. Routledge.
- Hubers, M. D., & Poortman, C. L. (2018). *Establishing sustainable school improvement through Professional Learning Networks*. In *Networks for learning: Effective collaboration for teacher, school and system improvement*. Routledge Taylor & Francis Group, p. 194-204.
- [Tappel, A.](#), Prenger, R., [Poortman, C. L.](#), & [Schildkamp, K.](#) (under review). *How can educational Innovations become sustainable? A review of the empirical literature*.
- van den Boom-Muilenburg, S. N., de Vries, S., van Veen, K., Poortman, C. L., & Schildkamp, K. (2021). Understanding sustainable professional learning communities by considering school leaders' interpretations and educational beliefs. *International Journal of Leadership in Education*, 1-28., available here: <https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/13603124.2021.1937705>
- Van den Boom-Muilenburg, S.N. (2021). *The role of school leadership in schools that work sustainably on school improvement with professional learning communities*. Enschede: University of Twente, available here: https://ris.utwente.nl/ws/portalfiles/portal/268163985/dissertation_Elske_van_d_en_Boom_Muilenburg_2021_.pdf
- Van den Boom-Muilenburg, S.N., Poortman, C.L., De Vries, S., Schildkamp, K. & Van Veen, K. (2021). *Leiderschap voor duurzame onderwijsontwikkeling: van idee naar duurzame PLG*. Uitgeverij Phronese.
- <https://books.emeraldinsight.com/page/series-detail/emerald-professional-learning-networks-series/>

Thank you

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What word do you link with Professional Learning Networks most?



Which leadership category needs most work in your school?

