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## The effectiveness of Professional Learning Communities in the Saudi EFL context: Teachers' Perspective(\*)

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## The effectiveness of Professional Learning Communities in the Saudi EFL context: Teachers' Perspective

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### Abstract

This investigation focuses on the adoption and efficacy of Professional Learning Communities (PLCs) within the English Language Unit (ELU) at Taibah University. It showcases a rising trend in the engagement and perceived significance of PLCs among ELU instructors, accentuating their vital contribution to fostering professional growth and collaborative education. Nonetheless, the study uncovers varying degrees of satisfaction among teachers across different campuses, highlighting the need for a more individualized approach to implementing PLCs that suit the distinct requirements of each campus and its teaching staff. The research, conducted in 2023, encompassed gathering data from PLC sessions across Taibah University's campuses and issuing a survey to ELU teachers. A descriptive statistical approach was employed to verify the validity of the study. The findings particularly point out lower satisfaction levels among female faculty members at specific campuses, signaling urgent areas for improvement. The outcomes demonstrate the effectiveness of PLCs in nurturing environments conducive to mutual support and joint learning. Instructors have suggested various improvements to augment the impact of PLCs, like incentivizing teacher involvement, alleviating time constraints, diversifying presentation methods, and focusing more on tangible classroom-related issues. Additionally, the research reveals a pronounced preference among teachers for PLCs to concentrate more on practical, real-world classroom topics rather than theoretical ones, stressing the importance of tailoring PLC activities to the day-to-day challenges faced by educators.

**Keywords:** Professional Learning Communities; ELU; teacher training; continuing learning.



## Introduction:

Professional Learning Communities are teachers who continually assess their practices and explore, create, and discuss new meanings that improve such practices (Skerrett, 2010). The purpose is to continuously improve teaching practices by involving staff in in-depth, systematic, collaborative professional development activities (Hord, 1997). Extensive research shows that teachers in a teacher-learning community are more effective in the classroom and achieve better student learning outcomes (Lewis and Andrews, 2004). Despite this compelling evidence indicating that working collaboratively represents better practices, teachers in many institutions work in isolation. The goal is for teachers at all stages of their careers to learn from one another. New teachers can benefit from the knowledge and experience of their more seasoned colleagues, and novices, in turn, bring recent training in pedagogy and technology that can inform and reinvigorate long-time teachers (Nelson et al., 2008).

Effective learning communities are not about everyone agreeing with one another; instead, they encourage disagreement as a natural part of working in a group. These groups value what a diversity of perspectives contributes to ongoing conversations about instruction and student learning (Levine, 2010). Teacher-learning communities must be teacher-driven, tackling questions that emerge from authentic classroom concerns and motivated by a spirit of inquiry rather than simple compliance. Merely requiring teachers to spend time together will not create an influential learning community (Cochran-Smith et al., 1999).

In this research paper, the following research questions should be investigated:

- 1- What are the benefits of professional learning communities?
- 2- What are the barriers to professional learning communities?
- 3- What are the characteristics of Effective PLCs?
- 4- How to make PLCs more productive?

## What are Professional Learning Communities?

Although a universal definition for professional learning communities has not been established, a few practical definitions are worth mentioning. From these definitions, 'professional learning communities' refers to people



sharing and critically interrogating their practices in an ongoing, reflective, collaborative, inclusive, learning-oriented, growth-promoting way (Mitchell & Sackney, 2000; Toole & Louis, 2002). PLCs are also defined as a collective enterprise (King & Newmann, 2001). A more comprehensive definition is that they are groups in which the teachers in a school and its administrators continuously seek and share learning and act on their learning. Their actions aim to enhance their effectiveness as professionals for the 'students' benefit; thus, this arrangement may also be called communities of continuous inquiry and improvement (Hord, 1997).

## **-Benefits of Professional Learning Communities**

### **1- Linking Research and Practice**

The presentation of research findings is rarely calibrated to the problems teachers encounter. Accordingly, teachers often feel that research is not relevant to their practice. Participants in teacher learning communities actively seek and carry out research that addresses group concerns and reflect deeply on research, and, not surprisingly, the research accessed or generated through this process is much more likely to have a direct effect on teacher practices (Vanderlinde et al., 2010).

### **2- Creating Space for Addressing Problems of Practice**

Teacher learning communities are most successful when focused on 'participants' inquiry into questions about instruction and 'students' learning. When built on a foundation of trust and appreciation of difference, these communities can give participants a place to bring issues and concerns from their classroom experience. These issues and concerns allow participants to explore and think deeply about the inevitable challenges of teaching. This kind of exploration and thinking deepens the 'teachers' understanding of student learning and draws on the 'group's collective capacity to generate responses to instructional dilemmas (Horn et al., 2010).

### **3- Increasing Teacher Retention**

Research shows that teachers often leave the profession because they feel professionally isolated, and the working conditions of most teachers are indeed lonely. In contrast, teachers who work collaboratively with colleagues are likelier to remain in the profession. Participation in learning communities allows teachers to work sustainably with their colleagues,



develop a shared mission, and feel more connected and committed to the institution. These communities are especially good at helping novice teachers build collegial relationships, navigate institutional norms, and reinvigorate and energise more experienced teachers (Webb et al., 2009).

#### **4- Uniting Pedagogical and Disciplinary Knowledge**

Most forms of professional development foreground either pedagogy or disciplinary knowledge, but teacher-learning communities promote the melding of the two. This is because considering classroom practice issues raises questions about the 'teacher's content knowledge and approach to teaching. In order to think productively about ways to enhance student learning, English language teachers need to consider both the material they are teaching and how they are presenting it. Professional learning communities offer a place where teachers can consider both.

#### **5- Fostering Transformative Teaching**

Because professional learning communities include participants with varying backgrounds, expertise, and experience, they offer multiple perspectives on classroom practice. They also provide an alternative to the traditional mentor/apprentice relationship, which positions novice teachers as having little to contribute. Teacher learning communities position all participants as contributors, fostering "collaborative resonance" that enables teachers to work together toward transformative, against-the-grain teaching (Barab et al., 2002).

#### **6- Enhancing Student Learning**

Teacher-learning communities establish a school culture that promotes student learning by establishing values, norms, and shared expectations among teachers (Bryk et al., 2010). The self - consciousness about learning that comes with teacher-learning communities also creates connections between assessment and instruction. Specifically, these groups support using formative assessment, thereby creating a classroom culture of assessment- as opposed to a testing culture - that shapes student learning (Birenbaum et al., 2009). The powerful collaboration that characterizes teacher learning communities involves teachers working in teams, engaging in an ongoing cycle of questions that promote deep team learning. This process, in turn, leads to higher levels of student achievement.



## - Agenda Structure of Meetings

The meetings should have a clear purpose focused on developing teacher practices and ultimately on developing teacher practices and enhancing student learning. The following is a sample agenda structure for teacher-learning community meetings (Leahy and Wiliam, 2011).

### **Introduction (5 minutes)**

Agendas for the meeting are circulated, and learning intentions are presented.

### **Starter activity (5 minutes)**

Participants engage in an activity to focus on their learning.

### **Feedback (25 minutes)**

Each teacher gives a brief report on what they are committed to trying out during the 'personal action 'planning' section at the previous meeting, while the rest of the group listens appreciatively and then supports the individual in taking their plan forward.

### **New learning about an agreed-upon topic (20 minutes)**

Each meeting includes an activity introducing new topics, e.g. formative assessment. This might be a task, a video to watch and discuss, or a 'book study'.

### **Personal action planning (15 minutes)**

This session involves participants planning what they hope to accomplish before the next meeting. This may include trying out new ideas or consolidating techniques. This is also a good time for participants to plan any peer observations or workshops they hope to deliver.

### **Summary of learning (5 minutes)**

In the last five minutes of the meeting, the group discusses whether they have achieved the learning intentions they set themselves.

Teacher learning communities must set aside time at the end of meetings to reflect on recent decisions and practices they implemented or challenges they are experiencing. This allows them to develop ideas and beliefs they can carry into their next shared task.



### Theoretical Background:

Professional Learning Communities are founded on a blend of theories spanning organizational learning, learning organizations, and cooperative professional growth. Their core theoretical underpinnings encompass Organizational Learning, Collaboration and Shared Expertise, differentiating between Organization and Community, and Interrelated Characteristics with Supportive Conditions. Originating from organisational learning theories, notable contributions from scholars such as Argyris and Schön (1978) and Bolam et al. (2008) highlight the overall learning and adaptation processes within organizations. Furthermore, the PLC concept is shaped by the principles of learning organizations (Senge, 2006) and learning systems (Garratt, 1991), which stress the importance of ongoing learning and flexibility in organizations. Rosenholtz (1989) established a connection between workplace factors such as autonomy and learning opportunities and teachers' dedication, proposing that a collaborative setting enhances professional learning and effectiveness. This aligns with the PLC ethos, which centres on joint inquiry and the pooling of educational expertise. DuFour and Eaker (1998) made a clear distinction between the efficiency and structure of an "organization" and the shared interests of a "community," seeing PLCs as venues that nurture mutual support and individual development, crucial for effective educational environments. Characterized by interconnected elements, including frameworks for professional learning and supportive, collaborative conditions (Kruse et al., 2017; Hord, 2008), these features are vital for the successful operation of PLCs (Antinluoma et al., 2021). In essence, PLCs embody a comprehensive strategy for professional development within educational contexts anchored in organizational learning theories, collaborative practices, and a commitment to ongoing adaptation and enhancement.

### Related Work:

Numerous studies have addressed the subject matter of this research. Olsson (2019) conducted a literature review to examine studies on professional learning communities to shed light on promoting practice-based research through various collaborative inquiry forms. The efforts aim to enhance teaching and learning, focusing on Swedish schools. Drawing on



a diverse array of global research published in English-language, peer-reviewed journals and books, the review extends its applicability beyond the Swedish educational landscape. The review highlights empirical evidence underscoring the advantages of PLCs in educational settings. It researches the essential attributes that characterize effective PLCs, providing a clear picture of their foundational elements. Furthermore, the review engages in a scholarly discussion informed by research about the growth and persistence of PLCs.

The report emerged as a crucial resource for academics and policymakers focused on advancing primary and secondary education by presenting these findings and discussions. Its perceptions are critical for understanding the current landscape of PLCs and instrumental in plotting future courses for educational development and research.

A study by Wines (2019) investigated the role and influence of professional learning communities on teaching methods. A PLC is characterized as a collective of educators collaborating to foster a culture of teamwork, with a focus on exchanging insights related to their professional activities. This research centred on a singular case study, examining the deployment of a PLC in an elementary school, guided by core principles like shared vision, collective inquiry, team collaboration, action research, continual progress, and a results-driven approach. The findings revealed that the PLC process enhanced teaching practices that positively impacted student learning at the school. The research suggested potential applications of these findings, including adopting the PLC process in middle and high schools to refine teaching practices and emphasizing the importance of securing teachers' engagement and support throughout the PLC implementation phase.

Over the past two decades, PLCs have gained prominence as a method for professional development in education. However, research indicates that establishing teacher communities does not necessarily lead to enhanced teaching methods that bolster student learning. Spencer-Johnson's (2018) qualitative research aimed to investigate the perceptions of humanities teachers regarding their participation in PLCs, mainly focusing on their experiences concerning subject and pedagogical knowledge and how their



involvement in PLCs influences changes in teaching practices. Employing an embedded unit case study approach, with each PLC as a separate unit, the study collected data from 19 teachers in English, social studies, and world languages. In-depth interviews were conducted with each teacher, principal, and assistant principal.

Additionally, the researcher observed the five PLCs thrice during full meetings, each lasting 81 minutes. The analysis of interview transcripts, observational notes, and field notes led to themes across the cases, with data triangulation playing a pivotal role in theme development. The study found that teachers had positive views on peer collaboration within PLCs but felt constrained due to a lack of training in various areas. This sentiment emerged from the interviews and was corroborated by observations highlighting several deficiencies. The study recommends that the school district formulate a unified vision for PLC activities, increase involvement from school leaders in PLC-related matters, and provide targeted teacher training on data utilization and group discussion dynamics.

Jimenez's (2020) research explored whether these teachers' perceptions align with the documented traits of highly effective PLCs found in extensive research. The study was guided by six critical characteristics identified as markers of successful PLCs. Adopting a mixed-method sequential explanatory design, the research sought a comprehensive understanding of teacher perceptions on multiple levels. Initially, anonymous Likert-style surveys were distributed to all English Language Arts teachers in the district, aiming to capture a broad perspective. Subsequent interviews were conducted by carefully selecting participants, both confirming and challenging the initial survey data, to validate the findings. The study uncovered a notable alignment between the teachers' perceptions and the characteristics of high-functioning PLCs identified in academic literature. It also highlighted an area for improvement, emphasizing the need for shared and supportive leadership in guiding schools. The findings of this study offer valuable insights for schools and districts, aiding them in formulating effective strategies to foster and enhance their PLCs.

**Rationale and Method:**

Instead of the 'one-size-fits-'all' training that used to be conducted in the ELU and that did not cater for the individualized needs of each teacher, the PLC model has been introduced to achieve more tailored, customized, and differentiated Continuous Professional Development (CPD) sessions. According to this model, teachers are divided into some groups that a PLC coordinator monitors. Each group includes native and non-native speakers, teachers with varying levels of experience and age groups.

The duty is to facilitate discussions, workshops, etc., based on his group's or subgroup members' individualized needs. Each group member is also encouraged to participate in presenting CPD sessions and workshops for both his PLC group and other groups. This program runs in Madinah's leading male and female and other satellite campuses, like Yanbu, Al Mahd, and Bader.

**Purposes:**

- Provide specific, needs-based, individualized and focused professional development.
- Improve student learning outcomes.

**Strategies:**

- Collaborative learning with and from peers
- Focused on classroom practice within a specific context.

**Assumptions:**

- Teachers learn better with and from each other.
- Teachers are capable of and interested in identifying and working towards addressing their needs.

**Policies and Procedures of the PLCs**

All teachers are divided into a set number of groups. As mentioned earlier, specific considerations were observed in grouping teachers, e.g. each group should have native and non-native speakers, novice teachers and experienced teachers, etc.

All teachers are expected to attend the PLCs to which they belong. The attendance log is kept online and is used for teacher evaluation purposes.



Community members are to visit each other and be visited by their PLC coordinator to collaborate and share good practices. No written reports will be kept about any community member based on her/his performance during the PLCs or when s/he is visited by any other community member or the PLC coordinator himself/herself. The whole program is mainly developmental.

Teachers are encouraged to present workshops or sessions to their and other PLC groups. In this case, all community members will attend the workshops/sessions. As an incentive, presenters will be given a certificate of contribution signed and stamped by the ELU administration to acknowledge their efforts.

### **Instrument**

An online survey in the form of a questionnaire was created and conducted to assess the effectiveness of Professional Learning Communities (PLCs) in English language teaching. As discussed above, this was achieved through an analytical method used to evaluate the outcomes of meetings, teaching sessions, and discussions. The questionnaire aligned with the study's objectives was developed using Google Forms and shared with teachers and students through WhatsApp groups. The questionnaire underwent a validation and reliability check to ensure its appropriateness for the study.

### **Study results:**

#### **Achievements**

As shown in Table 1, PLC sessions were successfully conducted on all campuses since we have noticed a significant increase in the number of meetings. Similarly, the number of workshops and teacher participation in PLC meetings has increased. This reveals the ascending interest of ELU learning communities in PLC sessions and the relevance of such professional development to 'teachers' careers. However, one can notice that the number of meetings varies from campus to campus. Indeed, as revealed in Table (2), the Madinah female campus (10) recorded the most significant number of PLCs, while Yanbu Females (4) and Badr Males (4) held fewer meetings than other campuses.

**Table (1) Achievements of (2023)**

No	Achievement	Details
1	400% Increase in the number of PLCs on campuses.	PLCs were implemented across all campuses.
2	Significant increase in the number of PLC meetings.	PLC meetings were held fortnightly across all campuses.
3	Significant and exceptional increase in workshops conducted.	All campuses were involved now in having to implement workshops.
4	Initiation of Post-workshop surveys.	Workshop surveys were initiated towards the middle of the 2 <sup>nd</sup> semester.
5	Significant increase in teacher participation in PLC meetings through the sharing and exchanging ideas.	The PLCs were initially set up to create a space where teachers could share ideas and learn from one another.

Table (2) also shows that Madinah Males (8) and Yanbu Males (8) arranged quite an essential number of meetings, which reflects the success of PLCs in almost all campuses.

**Table (1) Number of PLC meetings held per campus**

Campus	Number of meetings
Madinah Males 1.	8
Madinah Males 2.	10
Madinah Females.	6
Yanbu Males.	8
Yanbu Females.	4
Badr Males.	4
Badr Females.	5

As for the topics discussed in these PLC sessions, various topics were tackled, ranging from group discussions to workshops. They covered different learning areas, like classroom management, 'students' motivation, SMART objectives, teaching aids, use of apps and new technology in teaching language classes, etc.

**Analysis of the survey results and 'teachers' feedback****Table (3) Top 10 survey questions based on average mean**

Order	Investigated areas of the survey	Mean
1	30. The PLC Coordinator was approachable.	4.04
2	26. I could express my views openly.	4.03
3	27. I did not feel out of place.	3.92
4	29. The PLC Coordinator was professional.	3.89
5	12. I could share my ideas.	3.88
6	25. It was a positive atmosphere.	3.88
7	31. I felt I could trust the PLC Coordinator.	3.86
8	21. Classroom visits are preferable to formal observations	3.82
9	24. Colleagues were supportive.	3.80
10	28. I did not feel under pressure.	3.80

Overall, it seems that the purpose of the PLCs, which is to offer teachers a space within which they express their ideas, is well received, and as a result, the means in Table (3) reflect this positive impact. Interestingly, the only question that appears within the top (10) means that do not relate specifically to PLCs is to informal teacher observations. These are termed classroom visits, carried by the PLC heads, and are meant to be developmental. Teachers feel more comfortable being observed this way, which is considered non-threatening. If this is the case, then perhaps this should be how teaching development is encouraged. The overall average for all questions was above (3) (neutral), a positive indicator.

Table (4) is a summary of the average mean per campus:

**Table (4) Average score per campus**

Which campus do you belong to?	Average mean per campus	n (population)	Percentage of the total population
Badr Males.	4.66	3	4%
Yanbu Females.	3.98	12	16%
Madinah Males.	3.67	23	30%
Yanbu Males	3.54	10	13%
Madinah Females	3.03	16	21%
Mahd Females	2.94	1	1%



The average mean per campus as displayed in Table 4 above, shows that Badr males were the most satisfied. However, the number of respondents for these campuses was relatively low compared to other campuses. The lowest average score was for Mahd females. However, only one individual responded, so ignoring this figure for analysis is appropriate. Considering this, the lowest average score is attributed to Madinah Females. This is significant and needs to be addressed in the following year. This indicates that there are serious issues on this campus. It could be argued that the higher the average mean goes above 3 (neutral), the better the satisfaction with PLC groups.

After examining Table (5) (See Appendix 1), one can note whether the PLCs are a positive development. Badr recorded the highest means, 4.80 respectively. Likewise, these two campuses had the highest means relating to questions, like whether the workshops were relevant or not, whether they benefited from these workshops and whether they contributed to their professional development. However, the lowest means were noticed in Al Mahd Females, which may reflect the negative atmosphere on this campus. Generally, the 'teacher's feedback on PLCs is primarily positive, highlighting their professional development, ameliorating their presentation skills, and improving teamwork and self-confidence.

### Teacher comments on the PLCs

When ELU teachers are asked to mention at least two aspects they liked about the PLCs, the most pertinent answers relate to discussing up-to-date problems, boosting creativity, providing support when needed, communicating with colleagues and exchanging ideas and experiences, researching a lot to present a new topic, supporting us to improve our skills, sharing ideas with colleagues, presenting workshops strengthens confidence, working in a friendly atmosphere, teamwork and professionalism, and learning how to cope with problems from other teachers.

The most recurrent answers are the new ideas teachers acquired in PLC sessions and the positive atmosphere with colleagues. Some answers are somewhat amusing as some teachers like the food and refreshments provided by colleagues. This shows the strong rapport between colleagues as well as the friendly atmosphere. Another recurrent answer is their ability to express themselves openly and work collaboratively, hence teamwork.



Other positive feedback relates to supportive and professional colleagues, recycling previous knowledge in the field, putting training into practice, improving skills and practice, sharing ideas, and expressing oneself openly. Other aspects that teachers appreciated are sharing experiences in teaching, facilitating cooperation and communication, and strengthening the rapport between staff members. Other teachers liked the flexibility of meeting times and the various topics discussed, which they thought were valuable and relevant.

As for the 'teachers' feedback on what they want to change to make the PLCs more effective, the most dominant idea is motivating teachers by providing them with certificates of participation, simple prizes for the best presentations, etc. Another recurrent idea is time constraints, as some teachers think they are already overwhelmed with workload. Some suggested holding meetings once per month, while others suggested making attendance or presenting optional because of time constraints. According to some, the timing should be more suitable, and there should be a fixed time for PD sessions. Similarly, many teachers suggested hiring trained experts to train them and allowing them to select the topics to be discussed in PLC meetings. While some participants think nothing should be changed, others believe the PLCs are fruitful and valuable; hence, they must be held more frequently.

Last but not least, teachers asked for skill-specific workshops, sharing all 'campuses' presentations, using the Q: Skills for Success series as a reference in presenting, discussing new topics like how to write research papers, preparing individual developmental plans based on peer observations and alternating PLC coordinators by rotating this role every month/semester. We should not neglect some 'teachers' requests to focus on higher quality presentations, more engagement and preparedness on the part of presenters, and equipping satellite campuses with more facilities to conduct PLC sessions. A few teachers criticized the PLC coordinators, their plans, and suggested topics. An important suggestion is that the ELU prepare a feedback form to let teachers reflect on their learning. Another proposal focuses on practical issues rather than theoretical issues in classrooms.



## How to make PLCs more productive?

Based on the teacher-learning communities, the following points should be taken into consideration:

### 1- Have teachers set the agendas?

The last thing attendees in a PLC meeting want is to discuss matters that have no significance to what they face in the classroom. This will cause them to zone out from the very beginning of the meeting. A solution for this is to have teachers develop the agenda for meetings. They should be encouraged to set up an agenda of current issues they face in the classroom. This will allow these issues to be addressed with their colleagues and the opportunity to suggest potential solutions. Thus, every PLC meeting should be teacher-led, not administrative-led.

### 2- Use various presentation methods in the meetings.

The goal in this context is to break up the monotony of meetings. A survey can be used to explore the specific needs of teachers. Meeting agendas can be adjusted according to the results of the survey. Another way to motivate teachers and increase interest in meetings is to ask teachers skilled in certain areas to present at PLCs.

### 3- Set a suitable time slot for meetings to be held.

Teachers are already overwhelmed with classroom needs and other work-related duties. Allow teachers to agree on a suitable time so that they can arrive on time and be present for the meetings. This allows teachers to have more flexible schedules.

### 4- Plan activities that are related to 'teachers' daily concerns.

The time devoted to a PLC meeting should focus on practical rather than theoretical issues. Take the time to engage teachers in activities that allow them to reflect on the work they do in the classroom. Teachers can be asked to bring in sample student work and lead discussions based on those samples. Discussions should focus on how to help low-level students who are behind academically and 'students' disciplinary issues.

## Discussion:

The results from the PLC sessions conducted across all campuses indicated a considerable increase in the frequency of meetings and workshops and teacher participation. This upward trend underscores the growing interest of ELU teachers in PLC sessions and their relevance to



professional development. However, there was a noticeable variation in meeting frequency across different campuses. Specifically, male faculties at Badr campuses reported the highest satisfaction, although the respondent numbers for these campuses were relatively low. The lowest satisfaction score came from Al Mahd's female faculty on campus, but this was based on a single response and thus was deemed less reliable. Excluding this, the lowest average score was noted among female faculty at the Madinah campus, highlighting significant issues that warrant attention in the upcoming year. Generally, teachers reported positive experiences with PLCs, noting enhancements in professional development, presentation skills, teamwork, and self-confidence, which is consistent with Wines' study (2019).

Regarding teachers' favourite aspects of PLCs, common responses included discussions on current challenges, creativity enhancement, supportive peer interactions, idea exchange, research engagement for new topics, skill improvement, confidence-building through workshop presentations, working in a friendly and professional atmosphere, and problem-solving strategies. The most frequently mentioned benefits were acquiring new ideas and enjoying a positive atmosphere with colleagues. Some responses humorously mentioned appreciation for food and refreshments, highlighting a solid collegial rapport and a friendly environment. Additionally, teachers valued the opportunity for open expression, collaborative work, professional support, knowledge application, skills improvement, sharing experiences, and fostering stronger staff relationships, aligning with Jimenez (2020).

Teachers also suggested improvements for more effective PLCs, including incentivizing participation through certificates and prizes, addressing time constraints, adjusting meeting schedules, incorporating expert-led training, and allowing topic selection flexibility. There were suggestions for more frequent PLC meetings, skill-specific workshops, sharing presentations across campuses, discussing new topics like research paper writing, and creating individual development plans based on peer observations. Additionally, recommendations included rotating PLC coordinators, enhancing presentation quality, increasing engagement, and improving facilities at satellite campuses, and these ideas go with a study



conducted by Spencer-Johnson (2018). Some criticisms were directed at PLC coordinators and their planning. A significant suggestion was introducing a feedback form for reflective learning, focusing on practical rather than theoretical classroom issues.

Several strategies are proposed to enhance PLC productivity as follows:

- 1- Teacher-driven agendas, which allow teachers to set agendas based on current classroom issues, can make meetings more relevant and engaging.
- 2- Diverse presentation methods that utilize surveys to understand teachers' specific needs and invite skilled teachers to present can diversify and invigorate meetings.
- 3- Flexible meeting schedules that schedule meetings at convenient times for teachers can increase attendance and participation.
- 4- Focus on practical concerns, which emphasize practical issues in meetings and engaging teachers in activities that relate to their daily classroom experiences, can make PLCs more applicable and beneficial.

### **Conclusion:**

The research reveals an increasing interest and perceived importance of PLCs among ELU teachers. This emerging pattern underscores the role of PLCs as vital components in professional growth and cooperative learning within the ELU framework. Differences in teacher satisfaction with PLCs were noted across various campuses, indicating a need for customized implementation strategies that address the distinct requirements and situations of each campus and its faculty. The study particularly points out lower satisfaction rates among female faculty members at specific campuses, signalling areas that demand prompt intervention. These issues might be rooted in aspects such as the culture of the respective campuses, the availability of resources, or the specific methods employed in rolling out PLCs. Teachers have generally expressed favourable views regarding their involvement in PLCs, highlighting benefits like enhanced professional development, improved presentation and teamwork skills, and increased self-confidence. These positive experiences demonstrate the effectiveness of PLCs in creating an environment conducive to collaboration and support. To augment the efficacy of PLCs, educators have proposed various improvements, such as motivating participation through rewards, managing



time constraints more efficiently, introducing various presentation styles, and concentrating on practical classroom issues.

Further, by involving teachers in creating agendas and the leadership of meetings, PLC sessions can become more pertinent and engaging. A notable preference among teachers is for PLCs to concentrate on practical, classroom-centric issues over abstract theoretical discussions, emphasizing the need to align PLC activities more closely with teachers' real-world challenges. The study advocates ongoing PLC assessment and modification to maintain relevance and effectiveness. This process should include regular participant feedback collection, exploration of new themes and techniques, and the assurance of fair involvement and satisfaction among teachers across all campuses and faculties.

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## Appendix 1

Table 5 Average mean per question per campus

Which campus do you belong to?	Badr Males	Madinah Females	Madinah Males	Mahd Females	Yanbu Females	Yanbu Males
Average mean per campus	4.66	3.03	3.67	2.94	3.98	3.54
n (population)	3	16	23	1	12	10
Percentage of total population	5%	22%	32%	2%	17%	14%
1- I feel the PLCs are a positive development.	5.00	3.25	3.48	3.00	4.42	4.00
2- I benefited from PLCs.	5.00	2.94	3.57	2.00	4.17	3.60
3- The frequency of the PLC meetings is just right.	4.00	2.94	3.30	1.00	3.58	2.90
4- I learnt new things and developed professionally because of the PLCs.	4.67	2.56	3.48	1.00	4.25	3.00
5- I used some of the ideas in class	4.33	2.81	3.65	3.00	4.33	2.80
6- Many of the ideas shared were relevant.	4.67	2.69	3.74	3.00	4.58	3.30
7- Overall, I benefited as a teacher.	4.67	2.63	3.70	2.00	4.33	3.20
8- PLCs are a suitable format for professional development.	4.67	3.19	3.87	1.00	4.33	3.80
9- I benefited from others' ideas.	4.67	2.88	3.78	3.00	4.33	3.40
10- There were many ideas that I learned and which I believe will help me in class.	4.33	2.50	3.65	3.00	4.08	3.30
11- The ideas were relevant to my context.	4.67	2.50	3.70	3.00	4.33	3.40
12- I could share my ideas.	4.67	3.00	4.09	3.00	4.42	3.70
13- The workshops were relevant.	4.67	2.63	3.65	3.00	4.25	3.10



Which campus do you belong to?	Badr Males	Madinah Females	Madinah Males	Mahd Females	Yanbu Females	Yanbu Males
14- I benefited from the workshops.	4.67	2.75	3.52	3.00	4.08	3.20
15- The workshops were of the right length.	4.67	2.75	3.39	3.00	4.00	3.30
16- Other groups could benefit from the workshops.	4.33	2.81	3.52	3.00	3.75	3.60
16a- I believe that presenting a workshop contributed to my professional development.	4.67	3.13	3.63	3.00	4.43	3.63
16b- I believe presenting a workshop improved my knowledge of the subject area.	4.67	3.13	3.63	3.00	4.43	3.38
16c- I believe that presenting a workshop increased my confidence.	4.67	2.88	3.69	3.00	4.43	3.75
16d- Presenting a workshop improved my presentation skills in the class.	4.67	2.75	3.56	3.00	4.00	3.88
16e- Presenting workshops with other teachers contributed to my professional development.	4.33	3.20	3.82	3.00	3.33	3.50
16f- I believe that presenting with other teachers improved my teamwork skills.	4.33	3.20	3.71	3.00	3.00	3.88
16g- I believe that presenting workshops with others improved my confidence	4.67	3.20	3.65	3.00	3.00	3.50
16h- I prefer presenting workshops on my own rather than in a	4.33	2.70	2.88	3.00	4.00	3.13



Which campus do you belong to?	Badr Males	Madinah Females	Madinah Males	Mahd Females	Yanbu Females	Yanbu Males
group						
17- I prefer internal PLC workshops to external workshops.	4.67	2.56	3.22	3.00	3.42	3.00
18- I benefited from classroom visits.	4.67	3.18	3.07		3.50	3.78
19- I was at ease during the classroom visits.	4.67	3.70	3.53		3.40	4.00
20- The feedback was helpful.	4.33	3.40	3.13		3.22	3.89
21- Classroom visits are preferable to formal observations.	4.67	4.00	3.43		3.70	4.11
22- I was satisfied with the group I was in.	5.00	3.06	3.96	4.00	3.50	3.50
23- We all worked well together.	5.00	3.00	3.87	4.00	3.67	3.60
24- Colleagues were supportive.	5.00	3.25	3.91	4.00	3.75	3.70
25- It was a positive atmosphere.	4.67	3.50	3.83	4.00	4.00	3.90
26- I could express my views openly.	4.67	3.56	4.04	4.00	4.25	4.10
27- I did not feel out of place.	5.00	3.31	3.96	4.00	4.08	4.10
28- I did not feel under pressure.	4.67	3.31	3.70	4.00	4.08	4.00
29- The PLC Coordinator was professional.	4.67	3.25	4.17	3.00	4.17	3.20
30- The PLC Coordinator was approachable.	5.00	3.38	4.30	3.00	4.50	3.40
31- I felt I could trust the PLC Coordinator.	5.00	3.00	4.22	3.00	4.00	3.30
32- I think we should continue with the PLCs in the future.	4.67	2.81	3.70	2.00	4.17	3.90