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Designing a PLC to Improve Teaching Effectiveness at St. Gabriel's College: Case Study of the Teachers in the English Program

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Abstract

St. Gabriel's College in Bangkok is a well-established Catholic educational institution recognized for its strong academic standards and commitment to holistic student development. Despite this reputation, the English Program for Grades 1–6 faces several challenges related to inconsistent instructional practices, limited teacher collaboration, and insufficient opportunities for reflective professional dialogue. While Professional Learning Communities (PLCs) have been widely recognized as an effective framework for enhancing teacher collaboration and instructional improvement, empirical research examining PLC implementation in private primary English programs in Thailand remains limited. This study aimed to examine current teaching practices and design a contextually appropriate PLC model to improve teaching effectiveness among English teachers at St. Gabriel's College. A qualitative case study approach was employed to explore teachers' experiences and perceptions of collaborative professional learning. Data were collected through semi-structured interviews with eight English teachers, classroom observations, teacher self-reflection forms, and focus group discussions. The data were analyzed using thematic analysis to identify patterns related to instructional strategies, collaborative practices, and challenges in PLC implementation. The findings indicate that teachers demonstrate strong instructional competence and frequently employ interactive and experiential teaching strategies to enhance student engagement. However, PLC practices within the school remain largely informal and inconsistent due to heavy workloads, limited shared planning time, and the absence of structured collaboration routines. To address these challenges, the study introduces a practical PLC design incorporating Micro-PLC sessions, short reflective practices, peer collaboration, and a shared digital resource platform. The study suggests that small, flexible PLC structures can effectively support teacher collaboration and professional learning in schools where teachers face significant time constraints. The findings contribute to the growing literature on teacher professional development and provide practical guidance for implementing PLC models in private primary education contexts.

Keywords : Professional Learning Communities (PLC); Teaching Effectiveness; Micro-PLC; Teacher Collaboration; Reflective Practice; Teacher Professional Development; Primary Education

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1. Introduction

Improving the quality of teaching remains a central priority in education systems worldwide. Educational reforms across many countries emphasize strengthening teacher competencies, promoting student-centered learning, and supporting continuous professional development to enhance student learning outcomes (Darling-Hammond et al., 2017; UNESCO, 2021). In addition, effective school leadership and collaborative professional cultures have been widely recognized as essential factors in improving teaching effectiveness and sustaining educational quality.

Among the various strategies for improving teaching practices, the Professional Learning Community (PLC) model has emerged as one of the most widely adopted approaches for teacher professional development. PLCs promote collaborative learning among teachers through shared instructional practices, reflective dialogue, and collective analysis of teaching experiences (DuFour & Eaker, 1998; Hord, 2009). Through structured collaboration, teachers can examine instructional strategies, reflect on classroom practices, and continuously improve their pedagogical approaches.

In addition to PLCs, other professional development strategies—such as mentoring systems, peer observation, curriculum alignment, and sustained professional training—have also been widely used to strengthen teacher effectiveness (Guskey, 2002). These approaches aim to support teachers in developing pedagogical knowledge, enhancing instructional innovation, and responding to diverse student learning needs.

In Thailand, improving educational quality has been a long-term national priority. Recent educational reforms have emphasized active learning approaches, English language proficiency, and the integration of modern pedagogical practices in order to prepare students for participation in a globalized society (Office of the Education Council Thailand, 2020). Within this policy context, schools are encouraged to strengthen teacher collaboration and professional development as key mechanisms for improving instructional quality.

Private educational institutions often possess greater flexibility in implementing innovative teaching practices due to their access to additional resources, adaptive curriculum structures, and institutional support for professional development initiatives. Consequently, many private schools have begun to adopt collaborative professional development models, including Professional Learning Communities, to support continuous teacher learning and instructional improvement (Chantarasombat, 2019).

Despite the growing recognition of PLC practices, empirical research examining how PLC models can be effectively designed and implemented within private primary education contexts in Thailand remains limited, particularly in English language programs. Understanding how PLC structures can be adapted to fit the working conditions of teachers in private schools is therefore an important area of inquiry.

1.1 School Context

St. Gabriel's College, located in Dusit District, Bangkok, operates under the Saint Gabriel Foundation of Thailand and is part of a network of educational institutions administered by the Brothers of Saint Gabriel. The school has long been recognized for its strong academic reputation and its commitment to holistic education that emphasizes both intellectual development and moral character formation (Saint Gabriel Foundation, 2020).

The educational philosophy of the institution is inspired by the vision of Saint Louis-Marie de Montfort, which promotes the development of students who demonstrate academic competence, ethical responsibility, and social awareness (Montfort Missionaries, 2018). This philosophy is reflected in the school's guiding ideal of the "Gentleman of Saint Gabriel," representing students who embody integrity, responsibility, and respect for others (St. Gabriel's College, 2019).

Like many contemporary educational institutions, however, the school operates within a rapidly changing educational environment. Teachers are increasingly required to adopt innovative teaching approaches, respond to evolving curriculum expectations, and support the development of 21st-century learning skills. These expectations often expand teachers' responsibilities and increase their instructional and administrative workload (Office of the Education Council, 2021).

Although teachers at St. Gabriel's College demonstrate strong commitment to student learning, opportunities for structured professional collaboration and reflective dialogue among teachers remain limited. This situation may restrict the systematic exchange of instructional strategies and reduce opportunities for collective professional learning.

To address these challenges, the school has begun to introduce Professional Learning Community (PLC) practices as part of its teacher development initiatives. Through collaborative dialogue, reflective practice, and shared problem-solving, PLCs aim to strengthen teachers' pedagogical competencies and support continuous improvement in classroom instruction (Hord, 2004).

1.2 Problem Statement

Improving teaching effectiveness remains a critical concern in contemporary education systems, particularly at the primary school level, where foundational learning skills are developed. Teachers are expected not only to deliver subject knowledge but also to cultivate students' critical thinking, communication, collaboration, and creativity. Achieving these goals requires sustained professional development and supportive collaborative structures that enable teachers to refine their instructional practices (Darling-Hammond et al., 2017; UNESCO, 2021).

However, in many schools teachers continue to work in relatively isolated professional environments with limited opportunities for collaborative learning and reflective dialogue. Traditional professional development approaches—such as short-term workshops or seminars—often fail to produce long-term changes in classroom practice because they do not provide continuous support for teacher learning (Guskey, 2002).

Within the context of private primary schools in Thailand, improving teaching quality remains an important educational priority. Teachers are increasingly required to adopt student-centered pedagogies, enhance English language proficiency among students, and integrate innovative teaching strategies to meet international education standards (Office of the Education Council, 2020). These demands create additional pressures on teachers and highlight the need for effective collaborative professional development structures.

At St. Gabriel's College, particularly within the English Program for Grades 1–6, teachers demonstrate strong dedication to student learning but often face constraints related to heavy teaching workloads, administrative responsibilities, and limited opportunities for structured professional collaboration. As a result, professional exchanges among teachers frequently occur informally rather than through systematic professional learning structures.

Although Professional Learning Communities (PLCs) have been widely recognized as effective mechanisms for promoting collaborative teacher learning and instructional improvement (DuFour et al., 2016; Hord & Tobia, 2011), limited empirical research has examined how PLC models can be effectively implemented within private primary English programs in Thailand.

Therefore, this study seeks to examine current teaching practices and develop a contextually appropriate PLC model to support teaching effectiveness among English teachers in the primary-level English Program (Grades 1–6) at St. Gabriel's College.

1.3 Organizational Structure of the School

St. Gabriel's College operates under a structured administrative framework governed by the Saint Gabriel Foundation of Thailand. The school's management system includes multiple levels of leadership responsible for academic administration, curriculum development, student services, and institutional management.

This organizational structure provides a foundation for effective communication and coordination among school administrators, department leaders, teachers, and other stakeholders. Clear role allocation enables the school to support professional development initiatives and instructional improvement programs.

Within this framework, school leadership plays an important role in facilitating teacher collaboration and professional

learning activities. Structured coordination among academic departments and teaching teams creates opportunities for implementing initiatives such as Professional Learning Communities (PLCs), which require cooperation among teachers, department leaders, and school administrators.

By providing organizational support for teacher collaboration and professional development, the school's administrative structure contributes to strengthening instructional quality and enhancing student learning outcomes.

1.4 Challenges in Implementing Professional Learning Communities

Despite the supportive institutional framework, several challenges influence the effective implementation of PLC practices within the school.

First, increasing expectations from parents create pressure on teachers to maintain high academic standards and strong English language proficiency among students. These expectations often increase teachers' workload and reduce the time available for collaborative professional learning activities.

Second, private schools in Bangkok face growing competition in providing high-quality education and innovative learning environments. Teachers are therefore expected to continuously adopt new teaching strategies and instructional technologies, which may further increase professional demands.

Third, schools must comply with national educational standards and quality assurance regulations established by the Ministry of Education. These requirements often involve additional documentation and administrative responsibilities that may limit teachers' opportunities for collaborative professional development.

Finally, although PLC has been introduced as a professional development approach within the school, its implementation remains limited. Some teachers report insufficient time for PLC participation, while others indicate uncertainty regarding how PLC activities can directly support teaching improvement.

These structural and organizational challenges highlight the importance of designing PLC practices that are practical, flexible, and compatible with teachers' working conditions.

1.5 Research Objectives

Based on the challenges identified in the teaching and professional development practices at St. Gabriel's College, this study aims to explore how Professional Learning Communities (PLCs) can enhance teaching effectiveness among English teachers in the primary-level English Program (Grades 1–6).

The specific objectives of this research are:

- (1) To examine the teaching strategies used by English teachers to enhance student engagement and learning.
- (2) To investigate how participation in a Professional Learning Community (PLC) influences the teaching effectiveness of English teachers.
- (3) To identify the challenges that English teachers encounter in applying effective teaching practices and participating in PLC activities.

1.6 Research Questions

To achieve these research objectives, the study addresses the following research questions:

- (1) How do English teachers implement effective teaching strategies to enhance student engagement and learning?
- (2) How does participation in a Professional Learning Community (PLC) influence the teaching effectiveness of English teachers?
- (3) What challenges do English teachers face in applying effective teaching practices and participating in PLC activities?

2. Literature Review

2.1 Organizational Context of the Case Study

St. Gabriel’s College is a private educational institution operating under the supervision of the Saint Gabriel Foundation of Thailand, which oversees a network of schools administered by the Brothers of Saint Gabriel across the country. The school operates within a structured administrative system designed to ensure effective governance, academic quality, and institutional accountability.

Organizational structures play an important role in shaping professional learning environments in schools. According to Fullan (2016), effective school structures facilitate communication, shared leadership, and collaboration among educators, which are essential conditions for continuous school improvement. Similarly, Hord and Tobia (2011) emphasize that supportive administrative structures provide teachers with the time, resources, and leadership support necessary for implementing Professional Learning Communities (PLCs).

Within this context, the organizational structure of St. Gabriel’s College provides a foundation for implementing collaborative professional development initiatives. Clear roles and responsibilities among administrators, department leaders, and teachers help coordinate instructional planning and professional learning activities. Such institutional support is particularly important for PLC implementation because successful PLCs require sustained collaboration, shared reflection, and collective responsibility for student learning.

Figure 1 presents the organizational structure of St. Gabriel’s College for the academic year 2025.

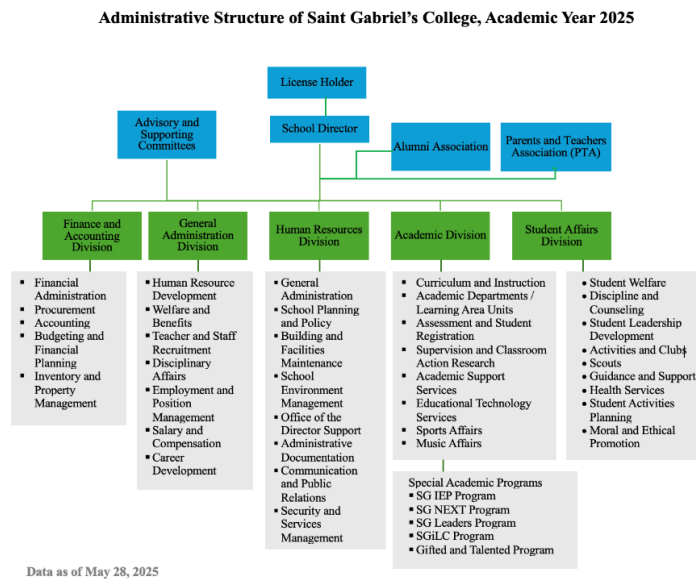


Figure 1. Organizational Structure (Academic Year 2025)
 Note. Adapted from Saint Gabriel’s College Administrative Chart (2025).

2.2 Stakeholders in Professional Learning Communities

The successful development of Professional Learning Communities requires the active participation of multiple stakeholders who influence school governance, teacher development, and classroom practices. Research suggests that PLC effectiveness depends on collaborative engagement among school leaders, teachers, and the wider school community (DuFour

et al., 2016; Stoll et al., 2006).

2.2.1 Saint Gabriel Foundation of Thailand

The Saint Gabriel Foundation serves as the governing body responsible for establishing educational policies and institutional guidelines for schools within the Saint Gabriel network. The foundation promotes teacher professional development and ensures that educational practices align with the Montfortian philosophy of holistic education.

2.2.2 School Administration

School administrators, including the school director, deputy directors, and department leaders, are responsible for implementing policies and managing daily school operations. Leadership support plays a crucial role in facilitating PLC activities by allocating time for collaboration, providing professional learning resources, and fostering a culture of shared professional responsibility (Hord, 2004).

2.2.3 Academic Affairs and Subject Coordinators

Academic coordinators and department leaders support curriculum development and instructional planning. They often facilitate PLC activities by organizing meetings, monitoring instructional practices, and encouraging reflective dialogue among teachers.

2.2.4 Teachers

Teachers represent the central participants in PLC activities. Through collaborative lesson planning, peer observation, and reflective discussions, teachers collectively examine classroom practices and develop strategies to improve student learning outcomes (DuFour & Eaker, 1998).

2.2.5 Students

Students are the ultimate beneficiaries of effective PLC implementation. Research indicates that strong teacher collaboration contributes to improved instructional practices and enhanced student learning outcomes (Vescio et al., 2008).

2.2.6 Parents and School Community

Parents and community members support school development by encouraging student learning and maintaining communication with teachers. Parental engagement has been shown to positively influence students' academic achievement and school improvement initiatives (Epstein, 2018).

2.2.7 Alumni Association

Alumni networks often contribute to institutional development through mentorship programs, educational initiatives, and financial support that strengthen school identity and learning opportunities for students.

2.3 Organizational Context and SWOT Analysis

Several external factors influence the implementation of PLC practices in schools. National education policies in Thailand emphasize active learning, the development of 21st-century skills, and continuous teacher professional development (Office of the Education Council, 2021). These policy directions align closely with the collaborative and reflective principles underlying PLC models.

Additionally, private schools face increasing competition to provide high-quality education and strong English language programs. Parents often expect high academic standards and international competitiveness, which increases pressure on schools to continuously improve instructional practices.

The rapid integration of digital technologies and online learning platforms further requires teachers to adapt their pedagogical strategies and engage in ongoing professional learning (Fullan, 2016).

2.3.1 External Context

Several external factors influence the implementation of PLC practices at St. Gabriel’s College. National educational policies in Thailand emphasize active learning, 21st-century skills, and continuous teacher development, which align with PLC principles (Office of the Education Council, 2021). Additionally, private schools face increasing competition to provide high-quality education and meet the expectations of parents who demand strong academic outcomes and English language proficiency.

The rapid integration of digital technologies, artificial intelligence, and online learning platforms also requires teachers to continuously update their instructional strategies and pedagogical skills (Fullan, 2016).

2.3.2 Internal Context

Internally, St. Gabriel’s College demonstrates several strengths that support PLC implementation. The school maintains a strong academic culture and employs experienced teachers who possess substantial pedagogical expertise. School leadership also supports teacher development through supervision and professional training programs.

However, several internal challenges remain. Teachers often face heavy workloads due to teaching responsibilities, administrative duties, and extracurricular activities. Although collaborative practices exist within the school, PLC activities currently lack consistent structures, scheduled meeting time, and shared resources necessary for sustained professional learning.

To better understand these contextual conditions, a SWOT analysis was conducted based on interviews with supervisors and English program coordinators.

Table 1.
 SWOT Analysis of PLC Implementation

<p>Strengths Strong institutional reputation Supportive school leadership Experienced teaching staff</p>	<p>Weaknesses Limited teacher understanding of PLC practices Heavy teaching workload Limited time for collaborative meetings</p>
<p>Opportunities Support from external experts Alignment with national education reforms Digital tools enabling collaboration</p>	<p>Threats Lack of continuous monitoring Changes in policy or administration Risk of PLC losing momentum</p>

Source. Constructed by Authors.

2.4 Operational Definitions of Terms

To clarify the key concepts used in this study, the following operational definitions are provided.

2.4.1 Professional Learning Community (PLC)

A collaborative professional development model in which teachers work collectively to improve instructional practices and enhance student learning outcomes through shared reflection, data analysis, and continuous improvement (DuFour et al., 2016).

2.4.2 Teachers

English teachers at St. Gabriel's College who participate in collaborative professional learning activities such as peer observation, reflective discussions, and instructional knowledge sharing.

2.4.3 Teaching Motivation

The internal and external factors that influence teachers' commitment, enthusiasm, and engagement in their teaching practices (Herzberg, 1968).

2.4.4 Peer Coaching

A collaborative professional development strategy in which teachers observe each other's classroom practices, provide constructive feedback, and support professional growth through reflective dialogue (Knight, 2018).

3. Theoretical Framework

3.1 Professional Learning Community (PLC)

Professional Learning Community theory provides the primary theoretical foundation for this study. PLCs refer to structured collaborative processes in which teachers work collectively to analyze teaching practices, examine student learning outcomes, and continuously improve instructional strategies (DuFour et al., 2016).

Hord (2004) and Hord and Tobia (2011) identify several core characteristics of effective PLCs:

- (1) Shared vision and values
- (2) Collaborative work among teachers
- (3) Reflective dialogue about instructional practices
- (4) Use of evidence related to student learning
- (5) Continuous improvement and collective responsibility

Research indicates that participation in PLCs contributes to teacher professional development, improved instructional quality, and enhanced student learning outcomes (Vescio et al., 2008).



Figure 2. Key Characteristics of a Professional Learning Community
Note. Adapted from Hord and Tobia (2011).

3.2 Appreciative Inquiry (AI)

Appreciative Inquiry is an organizational development approach that focuses on identifying strengths and successful practices within an organization rather than concentrating solely on problems (Cooperrider et al., 2020). AI encourages participants to reflect on positive experiences and build on existing strengths to facilitate organizational change.

The Appreciative Inquiry process is commonly described using the 5D cycle, which includes:

- (1) Define – identifying the focus of inquiry
- (2) Discover – identifying existing strengths and successful practices
- (3) Dream – envisioning future possibilities
- (4) Design – planning strategies for improvement
- (5) Destiny – implementing and sustaining change

In educational contexts, the AI approach can support teacher collaboration and reflective dialogue by encouraging positive engagement and shared problem-solving among educators.

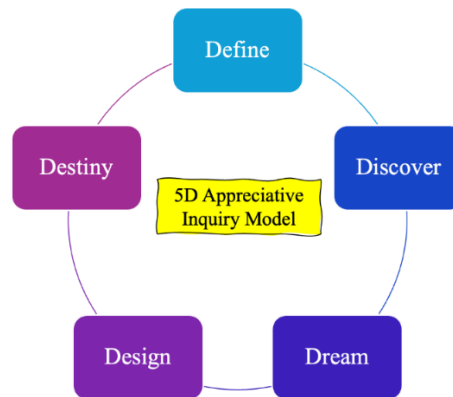


Figure 3. The 5D Appreciative Inquiry Model

Note. This information is sourced from the book "Appreciative Inquiry: A Positive Revolution in Change" by Cooperrider, Whitney, and Stavros, published in 2020. Copyright 2018 by Berrett-Koehler Publishers.

3.3 Human Process Interventions and Coaching

Human process interventions emphasize improving interpersonal communication, collaborative problem-solving, and supportive organizational climates (French & Bell, 2010). In educational settings, these interventions are often applied through coaching and collaborative reflection practices.

Instructional coaching models highlight the importance of reflective questioning, active listening, and non-judgmental feedback in supporting teacher professional growth (Knight, 2011; Costa & Garmston, 2016). These approaches help teachers critically examine their instructional practices and explore alternative teaching strategies.

3.4 Conceptual Framework of the Study

The conceptual framework of this study integrates PLC principles with teacher professional development outcomes. The framework proposes that collaborative professional learning processes can influence teaching effectiveness by strengthening instructional competence, reflective practice, and student-centered teaching approaches.

Independent Variables (PLC Components)

- Shared vision and values
- Collaborative culture
- Reflective practice
- Supportive leadership
- Shared instructional practices

Dependent Variables (Teaching Effectiveness Outcomes)

- Teaching effectiveness
- Instructional competence
- Reflective pedagogy
- Student-centered learning outcomes

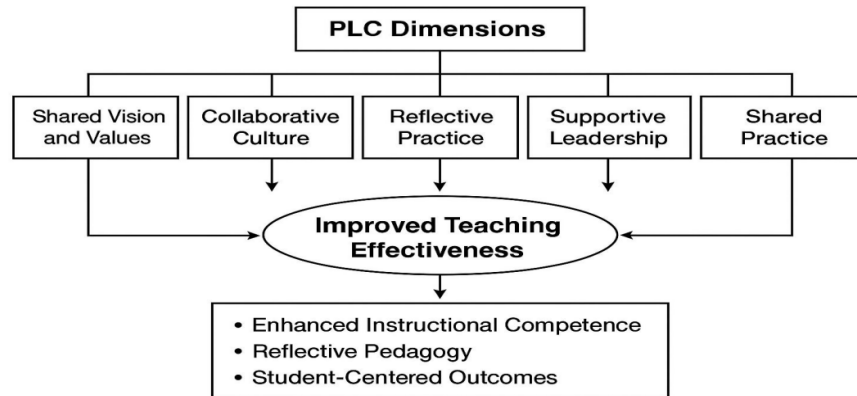


Figure 4. Conceptual Framework of the Study
Source. Constructed by Authors.

4. Research Methodology

4.1 Research Design

This study employed a qualitative case study design to explore how Professional Learning Communities (PLCs) influence teaching effectiveness among English teachers in the primary-level English Program (Grades 1–6) at St. Gabriel’s College. A qualitative approach was selected because it allows the researcher to examine teachers’ experiences, perceptions, and collaborative practices within their real educational context (Creswell & Creswell, 2018).

Case study research is particularly appropriate for investigating complex educational phenomena within a specific institutional setting (Yin, 2018). In this study, the case focused on the implementation of PLC practices among English teachers and on how collaborative professional learning processes contribute to instructional improvement within the school context.

This design was considered suitable because the study sought to understand not only teachers’ perceptions of PLC practices but also the organizational conditions that support or constrain collaborative professional learning.

4.2 Population and Participants

The participants consisted of eight English teachers from the primary-level English Program at St. Gabriel's College. Purposive sampling was used to select participants who were directly involved in classroom teaching and had experience with collaborative professional learning activities within the school (Patton, 2015).

The participants had teaching experience ranging from 5 to 21 years, allowing the study to include perspectives from both mid-career and highly experienced teachers. Among the participants, seven were female and one was male. All participants were actively engaged in teaching English at the primary level and were considered appropriate informants for examining PLC practices and teaching effectiveness.

4.3 Data Collection Methods

Data were collected using multiple qualitative sources in order to strengthen credibility through triangulation. The study drew on semi-structured interviews, classroom observation and reflective notes, and document review.

4.3.1 Semi-Structured Interviews

Semi-structured interviews were conducted with the eight English teachers to explore their experiences with PLC practices, collaborative learning, and instructional improvement (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2015). The use of semi-structured interviews allowed the researcher to guide the discussion around key topics while also giving participants flexibility to elaborate on their experiences.

The interview questions focused on the following areas:

- (1) teachers' understanding of PLC
- (2) collaborative teaching experiences
- (3) strategies used to improve student learning and engagement
- (4) perceptions of challenges affecting PLC participation
- (5) expectations for future PLC practices within the school

These areas were designed to align with the research objectives and research questions of the study.

4.3.2 Classroom Observation and Reflective Notes

Observational reflections were conducted to examine how teachers discussed instructional practices, classroom challenges, and collaborative problem-solving during professional interactions. Observation provided supporting contextual evidence regarding how PLC-related practices were understood and enacted in the school setting.

Reflective notes were recorded to document recurring patterns in teacher interaction, instructional discussion, and collaborative behavior that could support the interpretation of interview data.

4.3.3 Document Review

Additional data were collected through the review of teacher self-reflection forms and PLC-related documents. These documents provided supplementary evidence concerning teachers' reflective practices, instructional concerns, and school-level efforts to support collaboration. Document review was used primarily to support triangulation and to enhance understanding of the institutional context.

4.4 Data Analysis

The data were analyzed using thematic analysis, following the framework proposed by Braun and Clarke (2006). Thematic analysis was selected because it provides a systematic procedure for identifying, organizing, and interpreting patterns of meaning within qualitative data.

The analysis involved the following steps:

- (1) Transcribing interview responses and organizing observation notes and documents
- (2) Reading the data repeatedly to gain familiarity with participants' experiences and perspectives
- (3) Generating initial codes from meaningful statements related to PLC practices, teaching strategies, and collaborative challenges
- (4) Grouping related codes into broader categories and potential themes
- (5) Reviewing and refining themes to ensure consistency with the coded data and the research questions
- (6) Interpreting the themes in relation to the study objectives and theoretical framework

This process enabled the researcher to identify patterns related to instructional strategies, PLC participation, and the challenges affecting collaborative professional learning.

4.5 Trustworthiness and Ethical Considerations

To enhance the trustworthiness of the study, several strategies were employed. First, data triangulation was achieved through the use of multiple data sources, including interviews, observation notes, and document review. This helped strengthen the credibility of the findings by allowing the researcher to compare evidence across sources.

Second, the researcher used systematic thematic analysis to ensure that the interpretation of the data remained grounded in participants' responses and observed practices. Third, attention was given to maintaining consistency between the research objectives, data collection methods, and thematic interpretation.

Regarding ethical considerations, participants were informed of the purpose of the study before data collection. Their participation was voluntary, and informed consent was obtained prior to the interviews. Confidentiality and anonymity were maintained throughout the research process, and participant information was reported in a way that protected individual identities.

5. Findings

This section presents the findings derived from the qualitative analysis of interview data, observational reflections, teacher self-reflection records, and collaborative discussions among English teachers at Saint Gabriel's College. The analysis was conducted using thematic analysis to identify patterns related to teachers' experiences with Professional Learning Community (PLC) practices and their influence on teaching effectiveness.

The findings are organized according to the research objectives and research questions of the study, focusing on:

- (1) teaching strategies used by English teachers,
- (2) the influence of PLC participation on teaching effectiveness,
- (3) challenges affecting PLC implementation,
- (4) teacher self-reflection and professional growth, and
- (5) stakeholder perspectives on PLC implementation.

Across the data sources, five major themes emerged from the interview and observation data:

- (1) openness and psychological safety,
- (2) collaborative learning culture,

- (3) commitment to professional improvement,
- (4) real-life and experiential learning, and
- (5) readiness for co-creation.

Overall, the results suggest that teachers at Saint Gabriel's College demonstrate strong instructional competence and professional commitment. However, the current implementation of PLC practices remains inconsistent due to structural and time-related constraints.

5.1 Teaching Strategies Used by English Teachers

The findings indicate that English teachers employ a variety of student-centered teaching strategies designed to enhance student engagement and comprehension. Teachers frequently integrate interactive learning activities such as games, songs, storytelling, project-based learning, and cultural experiences to make lessons more meaningful for students.

Examples of classroom activities reported by teachers include:

- (1) storytelling exercises to develop language fluency
- (2) verb-based language games to reinforce grammar skills
- (3) hands-on cultural activities such as krathong making
- (4) multimedia-supported lessons using digital resources

Teachers emphasized that students respond more positively when lessons are connected to real-life experiences. These findings correspond with Theme 4: Real-Life and Experiential Learning, in which teachers highlighted the importance of experiential learning activities that link classroom content with everyday life.

Observation data also confirmed that teachers demonstrated strong instructional capacity, particularly in designing creative learning activities and adapting teaching materials to suit students' learning levels. These findings align with research suggesting that experiential learning approaches improve student engagement and participation (Kolb, 2015).

5.2 Influence of PLC Participation on Teaching Effectiveness

The findings indicate that PLC participation has the potential to support teacher professional development and instructional improvement. Teachers reported that collaborative discussions with colleagues enable them to exchange teaching strategies, reflect on classroom experiences, and explore alternative instructional approaches.

These findings correspond with Theme 2: Collaborative Learning Culture, where teachers demonstrated openness to learning from one another through shared classroom experiences and collaborative problem-solving.

Teachers noted that collaboration helps them:

- (1) discover new teaching strategies
- (2) reflect on instructional practices
- (3) learn through peer observation
- (4) improve lesson design

However, PLC activities within the school are currently informal rather than systematic. Many professional discussions occur after lessons or during informal conversations rather than through structured PLC meetings.

Despite this limitation, teachers acknowledged that collaboration with colleagues plays a significant role in improving their teaching practices. These findings support previous research indicating that PLC participation promotes reflective practice and collective professional learning among teachers (DuFour et al., 2016; Stoll et al., 2006).

5.3 Challenges Affecting PLC Implementation

Several challenges were identified that limit the effective implementation of PLC practices within the school.

5.3.1 Heavy Workload and Scheduling Constraints

The most frequently mentioned challenge was limited time for collaborative activities due to heavy teaching workloads and scheduling conflicts. Teachers explained that their teaching timetables often do not align, making it difficult to organize regular PLC meetings.

In addition to teaching responsibilities, teachers are involved in extracurricular activities, administrative tasks, and school events, which further reduce opportunities for professional collaboration.

5.3.2 Lack of Structured PLC System

Although teachers are willing to collaborate, PLC activities currently lack a formal structure and consistent scheduling. Professional discussions often occur informally rather than through planned meetings with defined objectives.

Research suggests that structured PLC systems are necessary to sustain teacher collaboration and professional learning (Hord & Tobia, 2011).

5.3.3 Limited Shared Resources

Another challenge identified by participants was the absence of a shared digital platform for teaching materials. Teachers reported that they often create instructional resources independently even when similar materials already exist within the school.

Teachers suggested that a shared resource platform could support collaborative lesson planning and reduce duplicated preparation work.

5.3.4 Psychological Safety and Teacher Confidence

The study also revealed concerns related to psychological safety, corresponding to Theme 1: Openness and Psychological Safety. Some teachers reported feeling hesitant to share classroom difficulties due to concerns about being judged by colleagues.

However, when discussions occurred in smaller and more supportive settings, teachers felt more comfortable sharing teaching experiences and classroom challenges. Psychological safety has been identified as an essential condition for effective collaborative learning among teachers (Van Gasse & Vanhoof, 2020).

5.4 Teacher Self-Reflection and Professional Growth

The analysis revealed that teachers demonstrate a strong commitment to professional improvement, corresponding to Theme 3: Commitment to Professional Improvement.

Data from teacher self-reflection forms showed that teachers regularly reflect on several aspects of their instructional practices, including:

- (1) activity design and lesson structure
- (2) questioning techniques
- (3) classroom management strategies
- (4) strategies for engaging quieter students

Teachers reported that reflective practices allow them to evaluate the effectiveness of their lessons and make adjustments to better support student learning.

These findings are consistent with previous research indicating that reflective practice is a central component of teacher professional development and instructional improvement (Schön, 1983).

5.5 Stakeholder Perspectives on PLC Implementation

Different stakeholders within the school expressed varying perspectives on PLC implementation.

5.5.1 Teachers

Teachers emphasized that PLC activities should be practical, time-efficient, and focused on real classroom challenges. Many teachers expressed interest in collaborating with colleagues to develop teaching materials and lesson plans, corresponding with Theme 5: Readiness for Co-Creation.

5.5.2 Department Leaders

Department leaders highlighted the importance of establishing clear PLC structures, coordination mechanisms, and shared instructional resources to support sustained collaboration.

5.5.3 School Administrators

School administrators expressed strong support for PLC implementation but acknowledged that teachers' heavy workloads can limit participation in professional learning activities.

5.5.4 External Educational Experts

External educational experts were identified as potential contributors who could provide professional coaching and training to support teacher development and strengthen PLC implementation.

5.6 Overall Findings

Overall, the findings suggest that teachers at Saint Gabriel's College possess strong instructional expertise and demonstrate a high level of professional commitment. Teachers are willing to collaborate and engage in reflective practices; however, PLC implementation remains underdeveloped due to structural constraints such as time limitations, heavy workloads, and the absence of a formal collaboration system.

The analysis also revealed that teachers prefer simple and practical PLC structures that can be integrated into their existing teaching schedules.

During the study, several small-scale interventions were introduced to support PLC practices, including:

- (1) Micro-PLC sessions
- (2) mini-reflection activities
- (3) light peer observation
- (4) a shared media bank for teaching materials

These interventions produced several positive outcomes. Short reflective discussions helped teachers develop reflective teaching habits, while Micro-PLC sessions created opportunities for focused collaboration among teachers. The shared media bank encouraged resource sharing and reduced duplicated preparation work.

The findings indicate that small, flexible PLC structures are more suitable for schools where teachers face heavy workloads and limited time for professional collaboration. These approaches can strengthen teacher collaboration while remaining practical within existing organizational conditions.

6. Discussion

This study examined how Professional Learning Community (PLC) practices influence teaching effectiveness among English teachers at Saint Gabriel's College. The findings indicate that teachers demonstrate strong instructional competence and a willingness to collaborate with colleagues; however, PLC implementation within the school remains inconsistent due to structural and organizational constraints.

One important finding concerns the use of student-centered instructional strategies. Teachers reported integrating interactive activities such as games, storytelling, cultural projects, and multimedia resources to enhance student engagement. These instructional practices reflect experiential and active learning principles, which emphasize connecting classroom instruction with meaningful real-world experiences (Kolb, 2015). The results suggest that teachers possess strong pedagogical knowledge and are capable of designing creative learning environments that encourage student participation.

However, the study also found that PLC practices within the school have not yet been institutionalized as a structured professional development system. Collaborative exchanges among teachers frequently occur informally after lessons rather than through regular, organized PLC meetings. This finding is consistent with earlier research indicating that teacher collaboration often remains informal unless schools establish clear structures, leadership support, and scheduled time for PLC activities (Hord & Tobia, 2011; Stoll et al., 2006).

Another significant issue identified in the study relates to time constraints and teacher workload. Teachers reported that heavy teaching schedules, administrative duties, and extracurricular responsibilities limit opportunities for professional collaboration. These findings align with previous studies suggesting that teacher workload is one of the most common barriers to sustained PLC implementation (Stoll et al., 2006). Without institutional mechanisms that allocate time for collaborative reflection, PLC practices may struggle to develop into stable professional learning structures.

The findings also highlight the role of psychological safety in collaborative professional learning. Some teachers initially hesitated to share classroom challenges due to concerns about being evaluated by colleagues. Over time, however, teachers became more comfortable discussing both successful practices and instructional difficulties. Psychological safety has been identified as a crucial condition for effective PLC implementation because it encourages open dialogue, reflective practice, and collective problem-solving among educators (Van Gasse & Vanhoof, 2020).

The organizational development (OD) interventions introduced in this study—including Micro-PLC sessions, mini-reflection practices, peer observation, and a shared resource bank—demonstrated promising outcomes. These interventions were designed as small and practical strategies that could be integrated into teachers' daily routines without increasing their workload. The results suggest that short, structured PLC activities may be more feasible for teachers and can encourage consistent collaboration.

In particular, the concept of Micro-PLC, consisting of brief collaborative discussions lasting approximately 10–15 minutes, proved effective in facilitating professional exchange among teachers. This finding supports the argument that sustainable professional development models should be practical, context-sensitive, and aligned with teachers' working conditions (DuFour et al., 2016).

Furthermore, the establishment of a shared media bank encouraged teachers to exchange instructional materials and teaching resources. This reduced duplicated preparation work and supported collaborative lesson development. Digital resource platforms are increasingly recognized as valuable tools for promoting teacher collaboration and professional learning within schools (Fullan, 2016).

Overall, the findings suggest that PLC practices can enhance teaching effectiveness when they are designed to accommodate teachers' working conditions. In schools where teachers face heavy workloads and limited time for collaboration, small-scale and flexible PLC structures may be more effective than large, formal programs. Such approaches can support teacher reflection, strengthen professional collaboration, and contribute to continuous instructional improvement.

7. Conclusion

This study investigated the role of Professional Learning Communities (PLCs) in improving teaching effectiveness among English teachers at Saint Gabriel's College. The findings indicate that teachers possess strong instructional expertise and demonstrate a high level of commitment to improving their teaching practices. Teachers actively employ interactive and

experiential learning strategies that enhance student engagement and support effective classroom instruction.

However, the study also revealed that PLC practices within the school remain inconsistent and insufficiently structured. Although teachers are willing to collaborate and exchange teaching experiences, limited time, heavy workloads, and scheduling constraints restrict the frequency and effectiveness of PLC activities.

The introduction of small-scale organizational development interventions, including Micro-PLC meetings, mini-reflection practices, peer observation, and shared resource platforms, produced encouraging outcomes. These interventions enabled teachers to engage in reflective dialogue, collaborative problem-solving, and resource sharing while remaining practical within their existing work schedules.

The findings suggest that effective PLC implementation does not necessarily require large-scale structural reform. Instead, simple, structured, and manageable collaborative routines can create meaningful opportunities for teacher professional learning. By strengthening PLC practices, schools can develop supportive professional learning environments that enhance teaching effectiveness and contribute to improved student learning experiences.

8. Recommendations

Based on the findings of the study and the outcomes of the organizational development interventions, several recommendations are proposed to strengthen PLC implementation at Saint Gabriel's College. These recommendations are organized into three key areas: school leadership and policy support, teacher professional development, and institutional systems for collaboration.

8.1 School Leadership and Policy Support

School administrators play a critical role in establishing supportive conditions for PLC implementation.

Institutionalize Micro-PLC Practices - Schools should adopt Micro-PLC sessions as a regular professional learning routine. Short collaborative discussions of 10–15 minutes allow teachers to reflect on classroom practices and exchange ideas without significantly increasing workload.

Allocate Dedicated Time for PLC Activities - School leadership should allocate regular time within teachers' schedules for PLC discussions. Even brief but consistent meeting times can significantly strengthen teacher collaboration.

Align PLC with School Supervision Systems - PLC practices should be integrated into the school's instructional supervision and teacher development systems to ensure consistent implementation across academic terms.

8.2 Teacher Professional Development

Teacher capacity building is essential for sustaining effective PLC practices.

Encourage Post-Lesson Reflection - Teachers should incorporate short reflective discussions after lessons to evaluate instructional strategies and identify opportunities for improvement. Reflective practice is widely recognized as a key component of professional growth (Schön, 1983).

Strengthen Communication and Reflective Skills - Professional development programs should support teachers in developing reflective dialogue and collaborative communication skills. Workshops facilitated by instructional coaches or external experts may help teachers engage more effectively in PLC discussions.

8.3 Institutional Systems for Collaboration

Schools should establish systems that facilitate sustainable teacher collaboration.

Develop a Shared Resource Platform - The shared media bank should be expanded into a centralized digital platform where teachers can store and exchange teaching materials. This system can support collaborative lesson planning and reduce duplication of instructional resources.

Provide Expert Support and Coaching - Schools may invite external educational experts or instructional coaches to provide mentoring and professional training. Such support can strengthen teachers' understanding of PLC principles and enhance the effectiveness of collaborative learning practices.

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