

Focus on the development of distinctive PLCs

Presenters: Fred Huijboom and Pierre van Meeuwen (Open Universiteit, Netherlands)

Rationale

PLCs can play an important role in school development, teacher development and better learning of pupils. Little is known about the development of PLCs and factors that influence this development. Using this knowledge stakeholders can improve the effectiveness and sustainability of a PLC.

Theoretical framework

Based on literature a multidimensional framework is developed to research the development of PLCs in a broad and in-depth way. The framework is composed of 11 characteristics and three influencing factors.

Research design

A longitudinal mixed method study is conducted on the development of seven PLCs. Based on the framework one quantitative measuring instrument is developed: a questionnaire and two quantitative instruments to analyse semi-structured interviews resp. observations of meetings. De PLCs were monitored for two academic years. A model was developed that allowed the level of characteristics to be determined.

Results

The results show that the development of the distinctive PLCs depends on the degree of presence of the influencing factors. Some PLCs showed development on all the characteristics; for other PLCs the development of most of the characteristics stayed behind.

Conclusions

The aim of the study is to supplement and deepen the current knowledge of PLC development and their influencing factors. Based on a comprehensive framework, designed to detect differentiation in PLC development, we established significant distinction in PLC development within the seven cases under study. Different levels of development were distinguished for each characteristic, allowing a more in-depth description of the development of the separate PLCs. It turns out that as an influencing factor the role of the schoolleader is crucial for the PLC development.

The conclusions of this research have been converted in useful practical tips, that can help teachers and managers to make their PLC a success.