

Demystifying Professional Learning Communities



PLC
ASSOCIATES

Demystifying Professional Learning Communities

Module V: Global Professional Learning Community Research



Module V

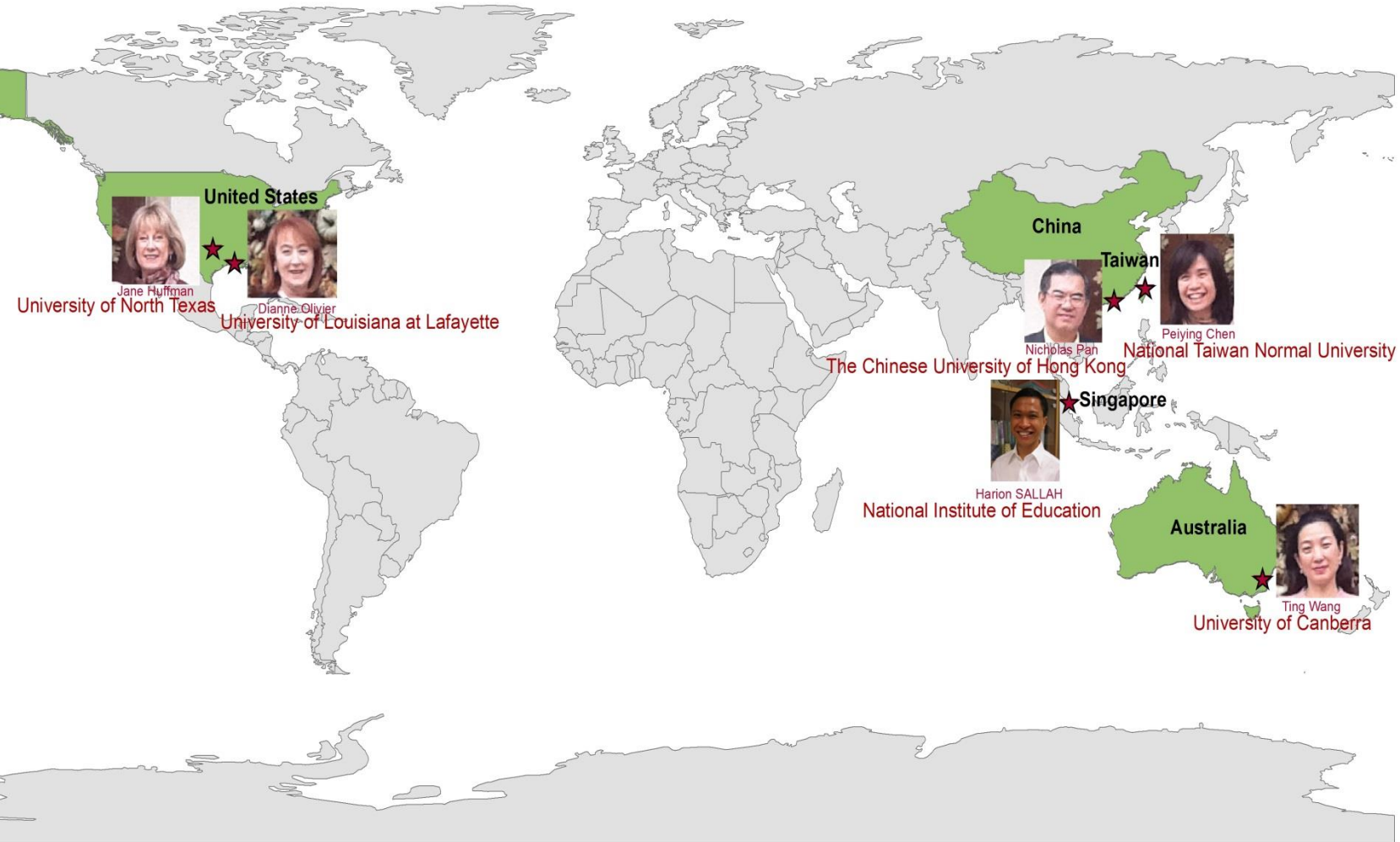
provides information on...

- A global PLC conceptual framework
- Research findings of leadership practices in schools in China, Taiwan, and United States
- Implications of global issues of educational leadership

Global PLC Network

- ▶ Six researchers began in 2009 to conduct an international comparative study of PLCs and school leadership across mainland China, Taiwan, Hong Kong, Singapore, and the United States

Global Professional Learning Community Network (GloPLCNet)



Global Professional Learning Community Network Members

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Global PLC Network

- ▶ Purpose – study PLC model and practices in a global context to understand teaching, learning, and leadership through an inter-cultural perspective
- ▶ Examines the PLC status and leadership in secondary schools in mainland China, Taiwan, and U.S. using a global conceptual framework



Global Professional Learning Community Conceptual Model

Studying the PLC process from a Global Perspective

- Most existing research ~ Anglo–American settings
- Growing body of experience and research in other cultures
- Explore contexts in which PLC process exists in other non–Anglo countries
- Broaden and deepen our international understanding of complex issues facing educational leaders

Global PLC Definition

*Communities of learning
in which educators
collaboratively engage
to foster a culture that
enhances teaching and learning
for all.*

Qualitative Methodology

- 8 high schools recognized as high performing PLCs
 - Harbin, China; Taipei, Taiwan; Louisiana, Texas
- Interviews and focus groups (80)
- Interview protocol for leadership structures and processes

Overarching Questions

- ▶ How can we understand **leadership** within the global PLC model?
- ▶ What commonalities and unique educational leadership practices exist in the United States, China, and Taiwan?

LEADERSHIP

Structures and processes related to actions of leaders and leadership teams as they design, implement, facilitate, manage, and monitor teachers, staff, and student learning in their schools.

Interview Question 1

Describe how system officials (or school leaders) support the PLC process and teacher professional learning in your schools.

Interview Question 1

Themes

- ▶ Strong distributed leadership
- ▶ Effective learning practices
- ▶ Learning for all through ongoing modeling and professional learning
- ▶ Shared vision
- ▶ Broad-based decision-making
- ▶ Moral purpose
- ▶ Responsibility for building leadership capacity

Interview Question 1 Responses

“We really try to set a standard of what our expectation is in the district...It’s not an option for us to hierarchically say you’ve got to do this. It has to be about setting parameters and letting teachers work within those parameters...we try to model that as a district.” (US)

Interview Question 1 Responses

“It is an honor for teachers to take up these roles which are also recognition of their expertise and teacher and research abilities...an acknowledgement of teaching excellence.”

China)

Interview Question 1 Responses

“Striving for excellence and maximizing potentials of each student” which became “a shared mission of the school community and guiding principle of teaching practices.” (Taiwan)

Interview Question 2

Describe how system officials (or school leaders) supervisor or monitor progress of the PLC process and teacher professional learning in your schools.

Interview Question 2

Themes

- ▶ Annual evaluation
- ▶ Assessing/monitoring system at school/system levels
- ▶ Evaluation and teacher designation – ranking systems
- ▶ Professional development requirements at national and provincial levels
- ▶ Active participation by district personnel in monitoring
- ▶ Monitoring through questioning – facilitative monitoring
- ▶ Responses from China and US, while no evidence of supervision or monitoring progress in Taiwan

Interview Question 2 Responses

“We have a system to assess and monitor the professional development procedures in the school. This monitoring system is in fact functioning within the organizational structure. Teachers’ professional development at different stages are monitored and supervised by the school structures and mechanism.”

(China)

Interview Question 2 Responses

“One of the biggest things....in terms of monitoring...is that there is active participation from central office staff.”

(US)

Revised Global PLC Network Conceptual Framework



Findings Connecting Leadership to Other Constructs

- ▶ Organizational Structures
 - Issues of time, funding, space
- ▶ Professionalism
 - Commitment and professional judgment

Findings Connecting Leadership to Other Constructs

▶ Learning Capacity

- Supportive feedback, change of practice, openness to learn collaboratively

▶ Sense of Community

- Supportive culture, high levels of trust and respect, collegial influence, group membership, recognition and celebration

Major Finding 1

Leadership construct is significant and meaningful due to many examples illustrated by descriptors

Major Finding 2

Interdependency or overlap among constructs is shown by examples of leaders' actions influencing other constructs and related descriptors

Major Finding 3

In each country, there is strong contextual influence related to the history and culture

Major Finding 4

Wide divergence in monitoring

- ❑ Taiwan – little to no support or emphasis
- ❑ China – system-wide mechanisms
- ❑ U.S. – Varied forms of national, state, and district monitoring

Major Finding 5

Role of principal is crucial to development of a clear and intentional plan of vision, guidance, support, as well as responsibility for professional staff learning

Major Finding 6

Role of teachers in leadership varies among countries – trending toward stronger teacher involvement and voice

China

- ▶ Findings illustrate school leaders “*strong instructional leadership and visionary stewardship for teacher professional learning.*”
- ▶ School leaders served “*a critical role in framing and communicating a shared vision, promoting and support professional learning, shaping a culture of trust, and monitoring collegial learning*” while “*teachers engaged in collective inquiry.*”

Taiwan

- ▶ Efforts include government directed reforms to initiate programs empowering schools and teachers to innovate and collaborate more which would relate directly to improved student learning.
- ▶ Leadership for strong professional development relating to building peer support and increased teacher leadership action, “...*shared leadership is broadly defined as teachers participate in schoolwide and instructional decision making.*”

United States

- ▶ Evidence of shared and supportive leadership at school level and supported by district staff personnel.
- ▶ School administrators routinely share power, authority, and decision making, and actively nurture leadership among teachers.
- ▶ *“The culture on our campus is that everyone leads. As administrators, we are active participants in the teachers’ support system. We continually work on building relationships.”*

Study Significance

- ▶ Contribute to the literature by enhancing understanding of leadership within the PLC process in different cultural contexts
- ▶ Provides a context for research on global issues influencing educational leadership and policy

Study Significance

- ▶ Provides an overview of a successful coalition focusing on leadership practices within a global framework
- ▶ Offers implications for addressing critical role of educational leadership as it relates to overall school improvement

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