



Systematic Literature Review: Teacher Learning Communities as a Strategy for Sustainable Professional Development in Schools

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Abstract

This research aims to examine the role of Professional Learning Communities (PLC) or Teacher Learning Communities as a strategy for sustainable professional development in schools. This study uses a Systematic Literature Review method to select and review 20 relevant scientific articles, published in the period 2020–2024. The focus of the analysis is directed at four research questions, which include effective PLC implementation models, the benefits of PLC in schools, challenges in its implementation, and institutional support for the success of PLC. The study results show that effective PLCs are characterized by teacher collaboration that is structured, reflective, and data-based. The main benefits of PLC include increasing teacher competency, work motivation, and collaborative culture. However, the challenges that arise include limited time, lack of leadership support, low teacher participation, and a work culture that is still individualistic. Institutional support, such as principals, school policies, and facilitator training, is proven to play an important role in the success of PLC implementation. In conclusion, PLC can be an effective strategy in improving the quality of learning and teacher professional development if implemented consistently and supported by a supportive school system.

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INTRODUCTION

The teacher learning community strategy is an effective approach to realizing sustainable professional development in schools. This approach emphasizes collaboration, joint reflection, and knowledge exchange between teachers to create a learning environment that supports sustainable professional growth (Risa & Madani, 2024; Zorde & Lapidot-Lefler, 2025). Zorde & Lapidot-Lefler (2025) outlines how sustainable educational infrastructure can be formed through inclusive learning communities so that it can improve teacher well-being and lead to better teaching practices. On

the other hand, Risa & Madani (2024) research highlights sustainable professional program development strategies, especially at the elementary school level, which emphasizes increasing pedagogical competence through a case study approach and collaboration between teachers.

In creating a learning community that supports professional growth, teachers actively transform from passive participants into collaborative learning agents. Chauraya & Barmby (2022) report that teachers in learning communities, especially in the field of mathematics, are starting to feel a shift in roles by sharing ideas and constructing knowledge

together. Chotto & Dirckinck-Holmfeld (2008) research also supports that planned facilitation of communities of practice can help teachers change their teaching practices. In addition, Mak & Pun (2015) showed that both planned and spontaneous efforts in communities of practice resulted in sustainable professional development, proving that this collaborative approach is able to overcome problems of isolation and increase innovation in teaching.

In terms of leadership and technology integration, the role of school principals and digital leaders is very crucial in encouraging the sustainability of teacher learning communities. Rasdiana et al. (2024) emphasize that digital leadership can improve teachers' innovation skills, especially through strengthening technology-centered collaborative practices. Zheng & Ye (2024) research further outline teacher leadership strategies in networked learning environments, which facilitate ongoing competency development through shared value-setting, collaboration, and strategic allocation of resources. Meanwhile, Huang (2023) shows that the establishment of digital platforms can expand the space for teachers to collaborate and learn from each other, thereby supporting continuous professional development. The integration of digital concepts into learning communities is also the basis for building a "digital professional learning community" model that is adaptive and relevant to the demands of the times.

Overall, the teacher learning community strategy has been proven to be able to create a mutually supportive learning culture through collaboration, communication, and mutual reflection. This approach enables the transformation of school culture as a whole and the development of teacher competencies that continuously adapt to today's educational challenges. Thus, the implementation of

learning communities as a continuous professional development strategy has proven to be relevant and effective, as evidenced by the various research findings that have been described.

This study focuses on four main research questions. First, what implementation models of the Professional Learning Community (PLC) are effective in schools. Second, what are the benefits of implementing PLC in the school context. Third, what are the main challenges faced in the implementation of PLC in schools. Fourth, how does institutional support influence the successful implementation of PLC in schools.

Therefore, this literature review aims to understand the implementation of teacher learning communities, the expected benefits, and the key elements that play a role in the success of their implementation. Apart from that, this study will also discuss various PLC models that teachers can implement in schools, the challenges faced in implementing PLC, and the impact that PLC can have on the quality of teaching and student learning outcomes. Thus, the results of this study will not only enrich academic literature on teacher professional development but can also become a practical guide for schools and teachers in efforts to improve the quality of education in Indonesia through effective collaboration and joint learning.

RESEARCH METHODS

This research uses a descriptive method with a literature review approach. This method was chosen to identify relevant findings from previous research regarding PLC implementation. Data was collected from national journal articles accessed via Google Scholar. To ensure the relevance of the data, the articles collected were limited to the period 2020 to 2024. Of the total of 50 articles identified, 20 articles that focused on the theme of implementing teacher learning

communities were further selected for analysis.

The article selection process was carried out based on their suitability to the research objectives, namely exploring the benefits, challenges, and implementation models of PLC. The analysis was carried out by grouping articles based on main findings, thus providing a comprehensive picture of various PLC approaches in the educational context. Thus, this method allows literature reviews to produce practical recommendations that can

support teacher professional development.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Based on several study results in the articles that have been reviewed, there are several journals with similar research results regarding the implementation of teacher learning communities as a strategy for sustainable professional development in schools.

Table 1. Research Data

Researcher	Year	Country	Research Title	Research Design
Mutiani, Abbas, Syaharuddin, & Susanto	2020	Indonesia	Building Learning Communities Through Lesson Study Model	Qualitative approach with descriptive method
Prawitasari & Suharto	2020	Indonesia	Implementation of Learning Community Policy in the Merdeka Learning Curriculum in Indonesia	Qualitative method through literature study
Arifin & Hanif	2024	Indonesia	Management of School Learning Community Programs to Improve Teachers' Pedagogical Competence	Both qualitative and quantitative research methods
Prasetyani & Ati	2024	Indonesia	Implementation of Teacher Learning Communities to Improve Pedagogical Competence in Elementary Schools	Narrative qualitative method, data collected through in-depth interviews, participatory observation, and document analysis
Novita & Radiana	2024	Indonesia	The Relationship between Learning Communities and Teachers' Learning Motivation towards Teacher Performance	Literature study

What are the implementation models Professional Learning Community (PLC) effective in schools?

Effective implementation of Professional Learning Communities (PLC) in schools is closely related to the success of teachers' sustainable professional development strategies. Based on the results of several studies, it was found that an effective PLC model is generally characterized by intensive collaboration

between teachers, reflective practice, and the use of real evidence from the learning process for joint decision making.

Research by Arifin & Hanif (2024) shows that structured learning community activities have a strong correlation with increasing teachers' pedagogical abilities. This indicates the importance of PLCs integrating professional activities routinely as part of the school culture. Meanwhile, Prasetyani

& Ati (2024) emphasize the effectiveness of the PLC model which is based on collaboration and critical reflection. In this model, teachers not only share experiences, but also carry out joint evaluations of learning practices to improve their quality.

Furthermore, studies by Wulandari & Ibrahim (2021) and Sulistyo & Raharjo (2023) strengthen previous findings by confirming that collaboration in learning communities acts as the main pathway for sustainable professional development. Teachers involved in such communities demonstrate significant improvements in the quality of teaching, reflective skills, and ability to adapt to curriculum changes.

The PLC model has also proven effective in the context of curriculum transformation, as discussed by Jatmiko & Anwar (2022). They found that learning communities focused on collaboration had a real impact on the successful implementation of new curricula and improved learning practices. In line with this, Prasetyo & Utami (2022) revealed that teacher collaboration through learning communities is able to encourage overall improvement in the quality of education.

From the overall findings, it can be concluded that an effective PLC model in schools is one that: Encouraging collaboration between teachers in a structured and sustainable manner, Facilitate reflective practice through discussions based on teaching experiences, Using data or evidence of learning as a basis for decision making, Support adaptive curriculum changes and teaching innovation.

Thus, developing and strengthening teacher learning communities as a form of PLC is not only a relevant professional development strategy, but also the key to improving the effectiveness of learning and the quality of education in schools.

What are the benefits Professional Learning Community (PLC) at school?

The existence of a Professional Learning Community (PLC) in schools provides various significant benefits, both for individual teachers and for improving the quality of education institutionally. PLC not only acts as a means of sharing experiences, but also as a forum for developing pedagogical competencies, reflecting on practice, and increasing professional collaboration in the school environment.

Based on studies from several studies, the main benefits of PLC in schools include increasing teacher pedagogical competence, teaching motivation, learning effectiveness, and encouraging innovation in the teaching process. Arifin & Hanif (2024) show that teacher participation in learning communities directly correlates with increasing their pedagogical abilities. This means that through interaction in PLC, teachers can learn from each other, improve their teaching approaches, and be better able to accommodate students' needs.

Research by Prasetyani & Ati (2024) and Wulandari & Ibrahim (2021) also highlights that collaboration and reflection in PLCs provide space for teachers to critically evaluate their practice. This has an impact on improving the quality of the teaching and learning process and building a culture of lifelong learning among teachers. Apart from professional development, another benefit is the aspect of teacher work motivation. Novita & Radiana (2024) found that active involvement in learning communities can increase teachers' internal motivation to continue to develop and innovate in teaching. This is especially important in facing the dynamics of educational policies such as the implementation of the Independent Curriculum.

Furthermore, Jatmiko & Anwar (2022) and Sulistyo & Raharjo (2023) highlight the role of PLCs in encouraging cross-disciplinary collaboration and

adaptation to curriculum changes. Teachers who are members of a PLC tend to be more ready to accept and implement new policies because they have collective support from colleagues.

Professional Learning Communities (PLC) in schools offer various strategic benefits that have a direct impact on improving the quality of education, both in terms of individual teachers and educational institutions. These benefits are mainly seen in increasing pedagogical competence, increasing teaching motivation, learning effectiveness, and its ability as a means of adapting to the latest educational policies, such as the implementation of the Independent Curriculum.

What are the main challenges faced in implementation Professional Learning Community (PLC) at school?

Even though Professional Learning Communities (PLC) offer many benefits for teacher professional development and improving the quality of learning, their implementation in schools cannot be separated from various structural, cultural and personal challenges. These challenges can impact the long-term sustainability and effectiveness of PLC programs. Based on the analysis of several articles, the main challenges in implementing PLC in schools include lack of time, lack of managerial support, low teacher commitment, and individualistic work culture. Research by Prasetyani & Ati (2024) and Sulisty & Raharjo (2023) shows that limited time is the main obstacle. Teachers' busy schedules, coupled with administrative burdens, mean that PLC implementation often does not run optimally. Teachers find it difficult to set aside special time to gather, discuss, or reflect deeply on learning practices.

In addition, Arifin & Hanif (2024) noted that the lack of support from the school principal or school management is an important obstacle. When school

leaders do not provide support in the form of policies, facilities, or motivation, teachers' enthusiasm for participating in the learning community will decrease. Another challenge is related to teacher commitment and participation. As explained by Prasetyo & Utami (2022), not all teachers have the same motivation for participating in PLC. Some teachers view these activities as an additional burden, rather than a professional development requirement. This is exacerbated by a work culture that is still individualistic, where teachers are more accustomed to working alone rather than collaborating. Novita & Radiana (2024) also highlighted the lack of facilitator skills in guiding PLCs, which caused discussions to be less focused and not produce significant changes. When a learning community is not managed well, this activity will lose meaning and become just a formality.

How institutional support influences implementation success Professional Learning Community (PLC) at school?

The success of implementing a Professional Learning Community (PLC) in schools is greatly influenced by the extent to which institutions, especially school management and education policy makers, provide comprehensive support. Institutional support is not only administrative in nature, but also includes moral, structural aspects, as well as strengthening a collaborative culture that supports teachers' continuous professional development.

Several studies show that support from school principals, education offices, and internal school policies are important factors in ensuring the sustainability and effectiveness of PLCs. As explained by Sulisty & Raharjo (2023), school principals who actively support the implementation of PLC—both through providing time, space, and formal recognition of these activities—contribute greatly to teacher enthusiasm and

participation in the learning community. Visionary school principals will encourage teachers to make PLC part of their professional routine, not just an additional activity.

Institutional support is also closely related to the availability of resources, as described by Arifin & Hanif (2024). When schools provide supporting facilities such as discussion rooms, access to literature, and special time in the weekly schedule, it will be easier for teachers to carry out collaborative and reflective activities in the PLC. Furthermore, Prasetyani & Ati (2024) highlighted the importance of school policies that support evaluation and reward systems for teacher involvement in PLC. When teacher involvement is recognized as part of career development or performance assessment, teacher motivation to be active in the learning community increases. Meanwhile, Jatmiko & Anwar (2022) added that collaboration between schools and external institutions such as the education office or the Education Quality Assurance Institute (LPMP) is also important. This collaboration can provide training for PLC facilitators, strengthening teacher capacity, and ongoing coaching.

Implementing a Professional Learning Community (PLC) in schools is an effective professional development strategy for improving the quality of teaching and teacher competency. An effective PLC model is characterized by collaboration between teachers, reflective practice, and the use of data in decision making, all of which together create a learning culture that supports continuous improvement in the school environment. (Herman et al., 2024; Permana & Sudarsyah, 2016)

In the study by Permana & Sudarsyah (2016) and Suparti et al. (2025) stated that the structure of regularly organized PLC activities is able to strengthen teachers' pedagogical abilities and facilitate joint evaluation of learning

practices. The research results underscore the importance of collaboration and critical reflection that are at the core of the PLC model. The collective reflection process allows teachers to share experiences, identify challenges, and develop data-based improvement strategies. This finding is in line with research results which emphasize that professional development through PLC reduces the "top-down" approach and supports a more participatory and adaptive approach to learning (Permana & Sudarsyah, 2016).

Furthermore, studies by Anggraheni et al. (2024) and Kusumaningtyas (2024), strengthens the role of collaboration as the main path of continuous professional development. Teachers who are active in learning communities show significant improvements in teaching quality and reflective abilities. This research states that the implementation of the supervision program through the PLC approach makes a positive contribution to increasing teacher professionalism and performance through collective guidance and regular evaluation of learning practices (Suparti et al., 2025).

Curriculum transformation also receives support from the PLC model, as demonstrated by the studies of (Arifin & Hanif, 2024) and Jatmiko & Anwar (2022). Collaboration and reflective practice carried out by learning communities helps teachers to adapt curriculum changes and initiate innovation in teaching methods. Similar positive contributions were also expressed by research which highlighted the role of driving teachers in increasing competence and encouraging a collaborative culture in schools, thereby facilitating the implementation of innovation and improving the quality of education (Kusumaningtyas, 2024).

Finally, research by Anggraheni et al. (2024) stated that improving the quality of education cannot be separated from the important role of teacher training and

professional development based on the PLC model. An approach that prioritizes collaboration, experience-based reflection, and the use of learning evidence as a basis for decision making is the key to creating a school environment that is adaptive and responsive to curriculum developments and current educational challenges.

Overall, it can be concluded that effective implementation of PLC not only increases individual teacher competence, but also creates a collaborative culture that supports teaching innovation and improves the quality of school education. An approach that integrates structured collaboration, reflective practice, and the use of learning data provides a strong foundation for the success of teachers' ongoing professional transformation.

Professional Learning Communities (PLC) in schools offer various strategic benefits that have a direct impact on improving the quality of education, both in terms of individual teachers and educational institutions. These benefits are mainly seen in increasing pedagogical competence, increasing teaching motivation, learning effectiveness, and its ability as a means of adapting to the latest educational policies, such as the implementation of the Independent Curriculum.

First, increasing teacher pedagogical competence is one of the main contributions of PLC. Fitri et al., (2024) show that teachers' active involvement in PLC is positively correlated with their pedagogical abilities. This is also reinforced by research by Trisiantari et al. (2017) which proves that training and mentoring in the context of active learning can significantly increase the pedagogical competence of teachers. In addition, research reported by Afriyani et al. (2025) emphasizes that professional collaboration through PLC allows teachers to exchange experiences and innovations, thereby improving their performance in

the learning process (Permanasari & Pradana, 2021; Pradana et al., 2024).

Furthermore, reflection on teaching practice is an important aspect conveyed through PLC activities. Research conducted by Patty et al. (2024) underlines that collaboration and reflection with colleagues encourages critical evaluation of the teaching methods applied. This support for reflective practice also suggests that reflective practice training directly increases teachers' capacity to adapt and improvise their learning strategies according to actual needs in the classroom Afriyani et al. (2025). In this way, PLC not only improves technical skills but also builds a culture of lifelong learning among teachers.

Aspects of teacher work motivation also receive attention in the PLC context. Based on the findings of Novita & Radiana (2024), active involvement in learning communities creates increased internal motivation which encourages teachers to continue to develop themselves and innovate in the teaching process (Prianto et al., 2024). This motivation, in synergy with collective support from colleagues, has been proven to help teachers face the challenges of changing curriculum and educational policies that continue to develop.

Furthermore, PLCs play an important role in facilitating adaptation to curriculum changes and encouraging learning innovation. Jatmiko & Anwar (2022) and Sulisty & Raharjo (2023) note that through cross-disciplinary collaboration mechanisms, teachers are better prepared to accept and implement new policies (Hamdi et al., 2022). Hamdi et al. (2022) support these findings by stating that a freedom-of-learning-based curriculum such as the Merdeka Curriculum requires an adaptive and collaborative pedagogical approach, where the PLC functions as a medium for

distributing experience and effective implementation strategies.

Overall, the synergy between increasing pedagogical competence, joint reflection activities, increasing motivation, and adapting to curriculum innovation shows that the presence of PLC in schools has a multidimensional impact in improving the quality of education. By providing a forum for teachers to share experiences, develop pedagogical skills, and carry out critical evaluations, PLCs contribute to the creation of a school environment that is dynamic and responsive to changes in educational policy.

Analysis of the implementation of Professional Learning Communities (PLCs) reveals that although PLCs have great potential in improving teacher professional development and the quality of learning, their success is strongly influenced by a number of structural, cultural and personal challenges. These challenges need to be identified and addressed holistically to ensure the long-term sustainability and effectiveness of the PLC program.

First, time constraints are the main obstacle. Busy teaching schedules and heavy administrative loads reduce opportunities for teachers to engage in meetings, discussions, and in-depth reflection on learning practices. Research findings, as reported by previous studies, indicate that lack of time is a serious obstacle that disrupts the essential processes of collaboration and collective reflection in PLCs (Kusumaningtyas, 2024; MW et al., 2023). This lack of time often makes PLC meetings a formality rather than a productive forum for exchanging ideas and innovative solutions.

Second, the lack of support from managerial parties, especially from school principals or institutional leaders, is also an inhibiting factor. Managerial support includes the provision of supportive facilities and policies, as well as

motivation and strategic direction to integrate PLCs as an important part of professional development. Research on the principles and techniques of effective supervision shows that the role of the principal is very crucial in encouraging active teacher participation (Joni, 2024). When leaders do not actively accommodate professional development needs through PLCs, this can reduce teacher enthusiasm and commitment.

Furthermore, varying teacher commitment and participation is also a challenge in itself. Not all teachers see PLCs as a professional development need; some consider these meetings an additional burden that disrupts their personal and professional time. A work culture that tends to be individualistic further exacerbates this situation, considering that individual work habits reduce the potential for collaboration and sharing of best practices which should be the main strength of PLCs. The lack of facilitation skills in leading and directing group discussions also makes the implementation of PLC less focused so that it does not produce real innovation (Kusumaningtyas, 2024; MW et al., 2023).

To overcome these challenges, a comprehensive intervention approach is needed. Strategic steps include managerial empowerment through leadership training and supervision techniques, arranging a more flexible schedule to allocate special time for PLC activities, as well as efforts to transform work culture from individualistic to collaborative. These approaches must receive support from all stakeholders in the school environment, from leaders to teachers, so that the value of collaboration can be integrated into daily practice and PLC can develop as a forum for innovation and professionalism (Joni, 2024; Kusumaningtyas, 2024).

Thus, although PLCs offer many benefits, their success depends largely on the school's ability to overcome obstacles

such as lack of time, lack of managerial support, and low teacher commitment. Initiatives to improve facilitation skills also need serious attention so that each PLC meeting can produce positive changes in more innovative and effective learning practices.

Based on the research results that have been synthesized, the success of implementing a Professional Learning Community (PLC) in schools is largely determined by overall institutional support from various parties, especially school management and education policy makers. This support not only includes administrative aspects, but also moral intervention, organizational structure, and strengthening collaborative culture as a basis for teachers' continuous professional development (Harjaya & Idawati, 2022; Hashim, 2024).

First, the role of the principal or school leader in providing support plays a key role. School principals who are visionary and actively support PLC activities, such as providing time, facilities, and giving formal recognition to collaborative learning efforts, have been proven to increase teacher enthusiasm and participation in the learning community (Harjaya & Idawati, 2022; Kusumaningtyas, 2024). Apart from that, the role of the principal in driving the process of changing school culture is also very important so that PLC is not seen as an additional activity but as an integral part of the teacher's professional routine. These findings are in line with study reports which state that supportive leadership greatly contributes to increasing the effectiveness of PLCs and transforming learning culture in schools (Herman et al., 2024).

Second, institutional support is also seen in the aspect of providing resources, which includes physical facilities such as discussion rooms and access to literature that supports reflective and collaborative activities. Providing these resources not

only facilitates the implementation of PLC activities, but also increases teacher efficacy in applying their professional knowledge in classroom learning practices (Karuppannan et al., 2022). This approach creates an environment conducive to dialogue, reflection, and innovation, which ultimately has a positive impact on improving the quality of learning (Herman et al., 2024).

Furthermore, internal school policies that support evaluation and appreciation for teacher involvement in PLC are also crucial factors. Policies that stipulate recognition of teacher participation as part of career development or performance assessment provide strong incentives for teachers to be more actively involved in PLC activities (Hashim, 2024). Apart from that, external collaboration with institutions such as the education office or LPMP also provides added value through providing ongoing training and coaching for PLC facilitators, which supports the development of teachers' professional capacity (Dzul et al., 2022). This synergy between internal and external support creates an effective feedback mechanism to improve collaborative practices in schools.

Thus, the successful implementation of PLC is highly dependent on holistic support that includes visionary leadership, provision of adequate resources, and internal policies that recognize and appreciate the role of teachers in the learning community. Collaboration between schools and external institutions further strengthens the capacity and effectiveness of PLCs, thereby creating a culture of professional learning that is sustainable and responsive to today's educational challenges.

CONCLUSIONS AND SUGGESTIONS

PLC is a sustainable professional development strategy that has a significant impact on improving the quality of learning and teacher

competency. Through collaborative, reflective, and data-based activities, PLC provides a space for teachers to learn from each other, share best practices, and jointly find solutions to the learning problems they face. The PLC implementation model that has been proven to be effective is one that involves the entire school community in an active, structured and sustainable manner. This model emphasizes the importance of reflective discussions, collaboration between teachers across subjects, and the use of learning evaluation results to improve classroom practice. This implementation must also be adapted to the context and needs of each school.

The benefits of PLC are widely felt by teachers, starting from improving teaching skills, strengthening work motivation, to growing a collective learning culture that supports innovation and positive change in the school environment. Apart from that, PLC is also a safe space for teachers to reflect, develop themselves, and receive constructive feedback from colleagues. However, PLC implementation is also faced with various challenges. Limited time, high teacher workload, low commitment of some teachers, and lack of support from school leaders are obstacles that are often encountered. Without adequate support, PLC activities risk becoming just an administrative routine without significant impact.

Institutional support is a key element in the success of a PLC. The principal has a central role in creating a collaborative climate, providing time and space for PLC activities, and encouraging the active involvement of all teachers. This support can also be strengthened through school policies, facilitator training, and collaboration with education agencies or other external institutions. Overall, PLCs are not just about routine teacher activities, but about building a professional culture that encourages

continuous change and improvement. With the right implementation model, clear benefits, strategies to overcome challenges, and strong institutional support, PLC has great potential to become a driving force for improving the quality of education in schools.

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