

Enhancing Teacher Leadership for Supporting Professional Learning Communities in Cyprus

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Abstract

Since 2015 there has been a shift in teachers' professional learning policy in Cyprus (Eracleous et al, 2020). This was based on the implementation of an inquiry-based methodology focusing on participants' perspectives, collegial action, research, and reflection (Avgitidou, 2015; Eracleous et al, 2020). Creating professional learning communities (PLCs) in schools has been set as the ultimate goal of the national state institution, Cyprus Pedagogical Institute, responsible for teachers' professional learning. The interaction of the schools' PLC coordinators, the external facilitators/critical friends and the school head and teaching staff have a central role in designing, implementing, and reflecting on that effort. The paper presents the PLC coordinators' and facilitators' reflections and attitudes on the implementation of activities that were developed as a tool to support coordinators in acting as teacher leaders enabling PLCs. The activities focused on the coordinators' needs in working collaboratively with colleagues to co-create a meaningful professional learning framework in their working environment and raise students' learning (Antinluoma et al, 2018). Data were collected through questionnaires, interviews and the facilitators' diaries. Results revealed a high level of satisfaction, a close link of the activities to a PLC framework for active teachers and schools (Margalef & Robins, 2016) and the importance of the coordinators' leadership in generating knowledge about teaching (Nehring & Fitzsimons, 2011). At the same time, the need to revisit the activities in relation to the role of the school head teachers in enhancing teacher leadership in professional learning communities was also revealed.

Keywords: professional learning communities; tool activities, teacher leaders; collaboration