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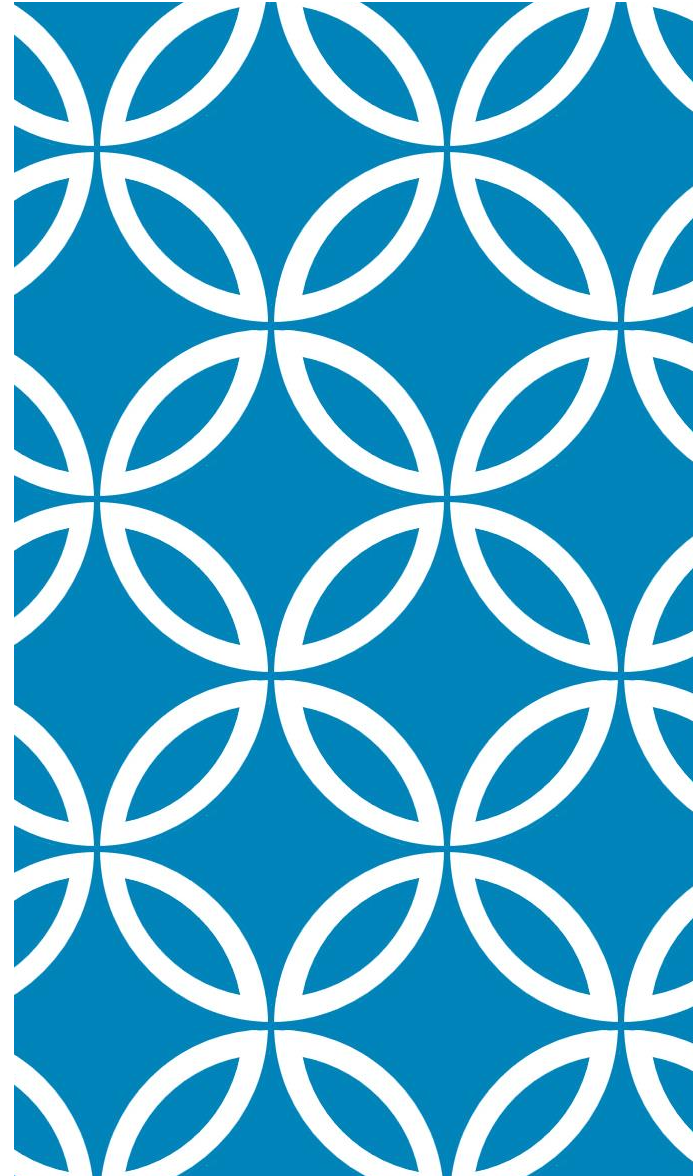
LEADING PROFESSIONAL  
COLLABORATIVE LEARNING  
PROFESSOR DR. ALMA HARRIS

# ENGAGEMENT

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## QUESTIONS AND ISSUES

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We bombard teachers with help, but most of it is not helpful—to teachers as professionals or to schools seeking better instruction

# PROFESSIONAL COLLABORATION

Is not a panacea  
but a process

Teachers  
engaging in  
*meaningful and  
impactful*  
professional  
collaboration





Professional  
learning **within,**  
**between and**  
**across** schools  
(Harris and  
Jones, 2010)



Whole school model approach

Within school model of PLCs or PLTs

Across school model – networked PLCs

**HOW IS COLLABORATION ENACTED?**



# IMPLICATIONS FOR SCHOOL LEADERS

But how is PLC activity  
best supported and led?



# SUPPORTING AND SUSTAINING EFFECTIVE PLCS

HOW?

3 Important conditions:

Distributed Leadership

Clear, shared model(s)  
of operation

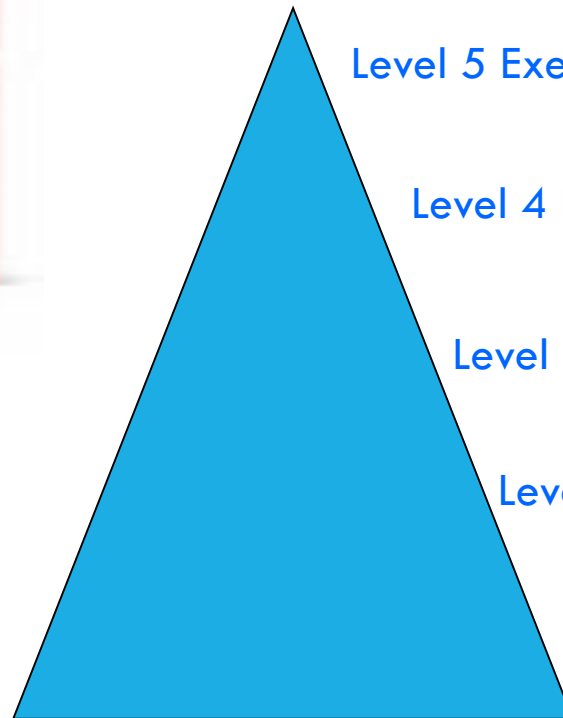
Feedback systems and  
measures of impact

LEADING  
PROFESSIONAL  
LEARNING  
COMMUNITIES

What type of leadership is needed to initiate, support and sustain effective professional collaboration?

# Leadership Matters





Level 5 Executive

Level 4 Effective Leader

Level 3 Competent manager

Level 2 Team manager

Level 1 Capable individual

## LEVEL 5 LEADERS

Channel ego needs away  
from themselves

Focus on larger goals

Are ambitious for their  
institution and not  
themselves

Widely distribute  
leadership

Facilitate the **collaboration  
of others**

## PAUSE AND REFLECT

- Have you ever worked for or with a level 5 leader?
- How far are you a level 5 leader?

WHAT FORM OF  
LEADERSHIP IS  
NEEDED FOR  
EFFECTIVE  
COLLABORATIVE  
WORK?

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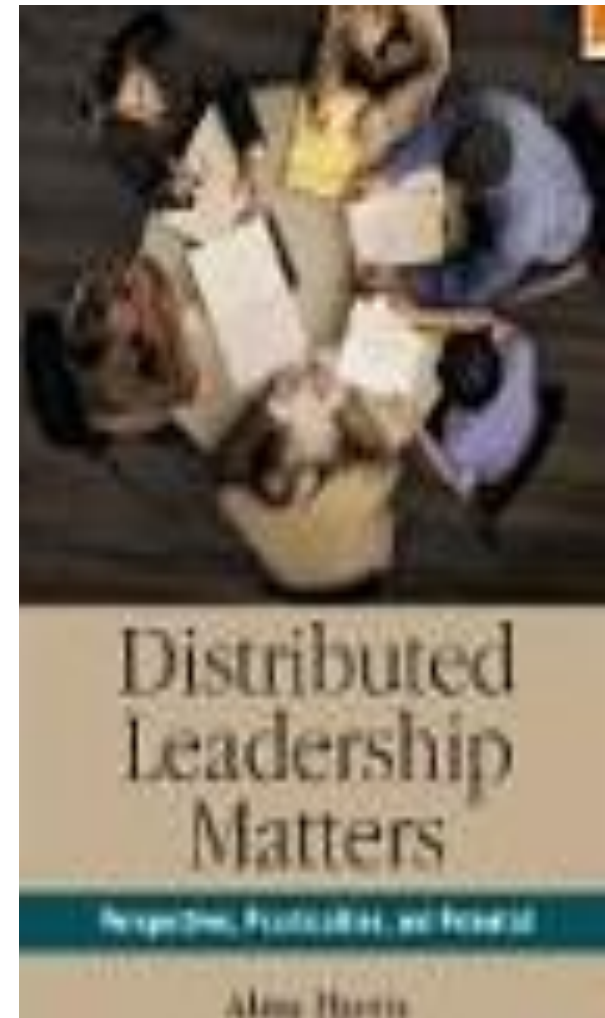


# DISTRIBUTED LEADERSHIP MATTERS

(HARRIS, 2013)

The *practice* of leadership –  
matters more than the *who* of  
leadership

Connections and relationships  
that *build* leadership  
capacity





# DISTRIBUTED LEADERSHIP

Distributed leadership is not the same as cosy consensus or unfocused co-operation.

It is not about locating, reinforcing or celebrating 'sameness'.

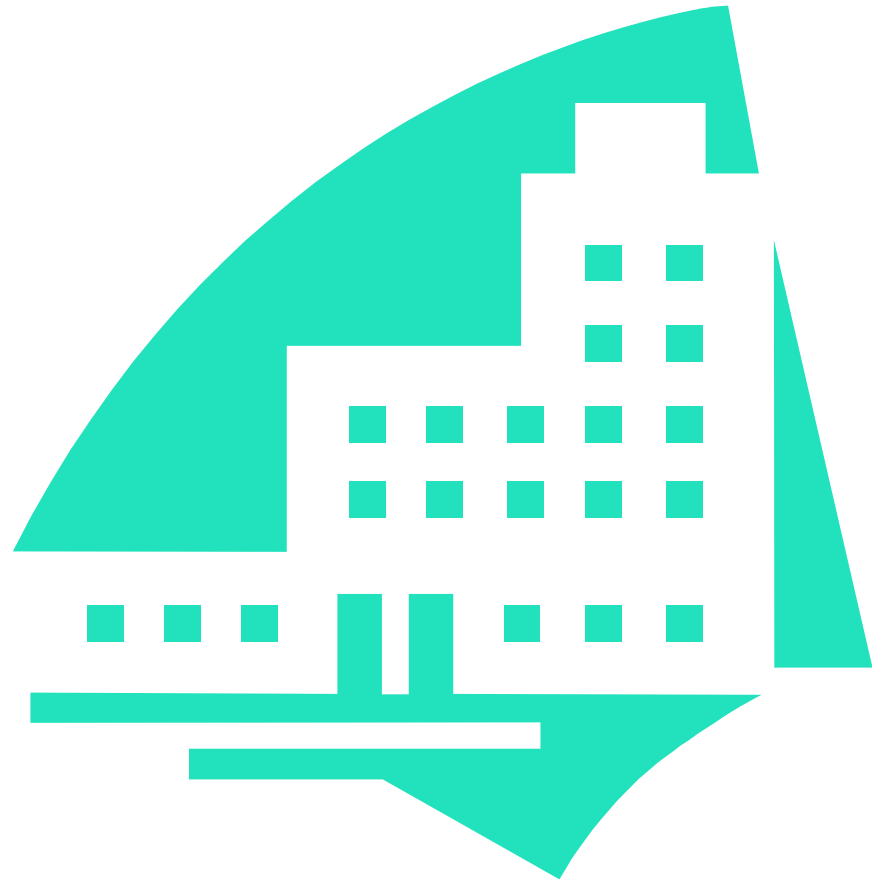


# IMPLICATIONS FOR THOSE LEADING PLCS

Leadership of the PLC  
shifts according to need

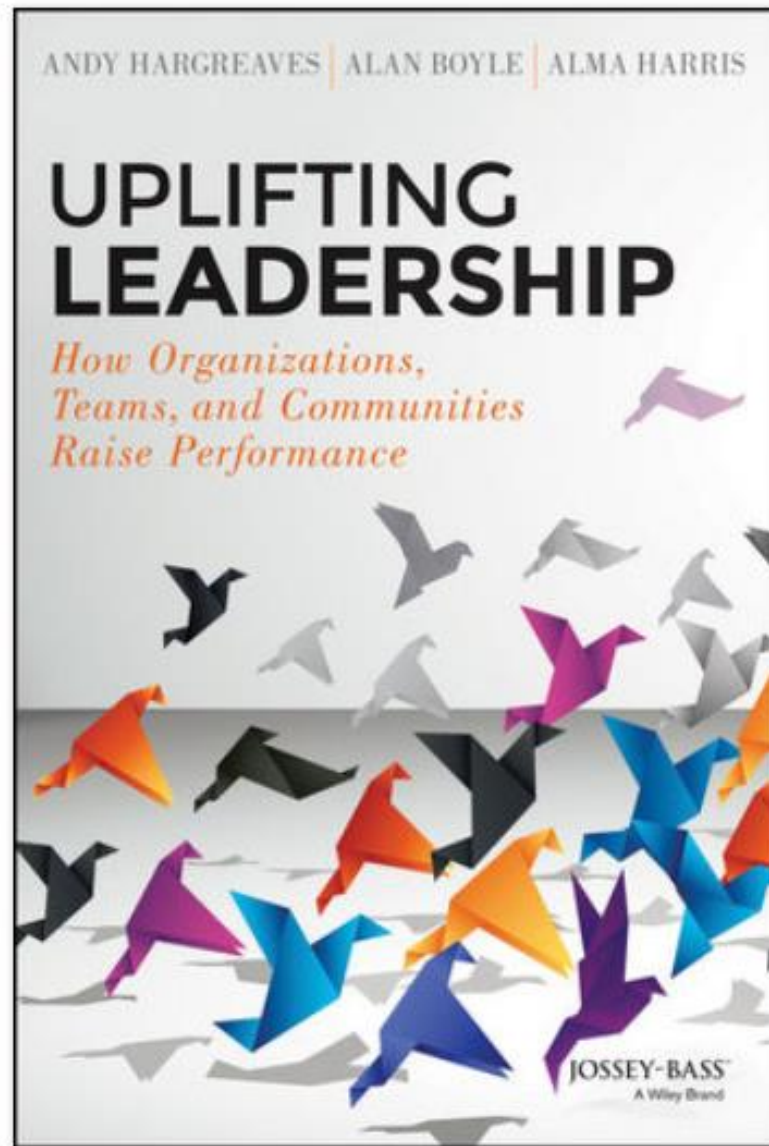
Collaborative teams are  
formed for specific  
purposes

Team membership  
changes according to  
task, roles and expertise.



SUSTAINING PLCS  
HARGREAVES, BOYLE  
AND HARRIS 2014

It is not just teams and teamwork that keep professional learning communities aloft; it is the **vibrant nature** of the teamwork itself.





TRUE LEADERS  
DON'T CREATE  
FOLLOWERS,  
THEY CREATE  
MORE LEADERS

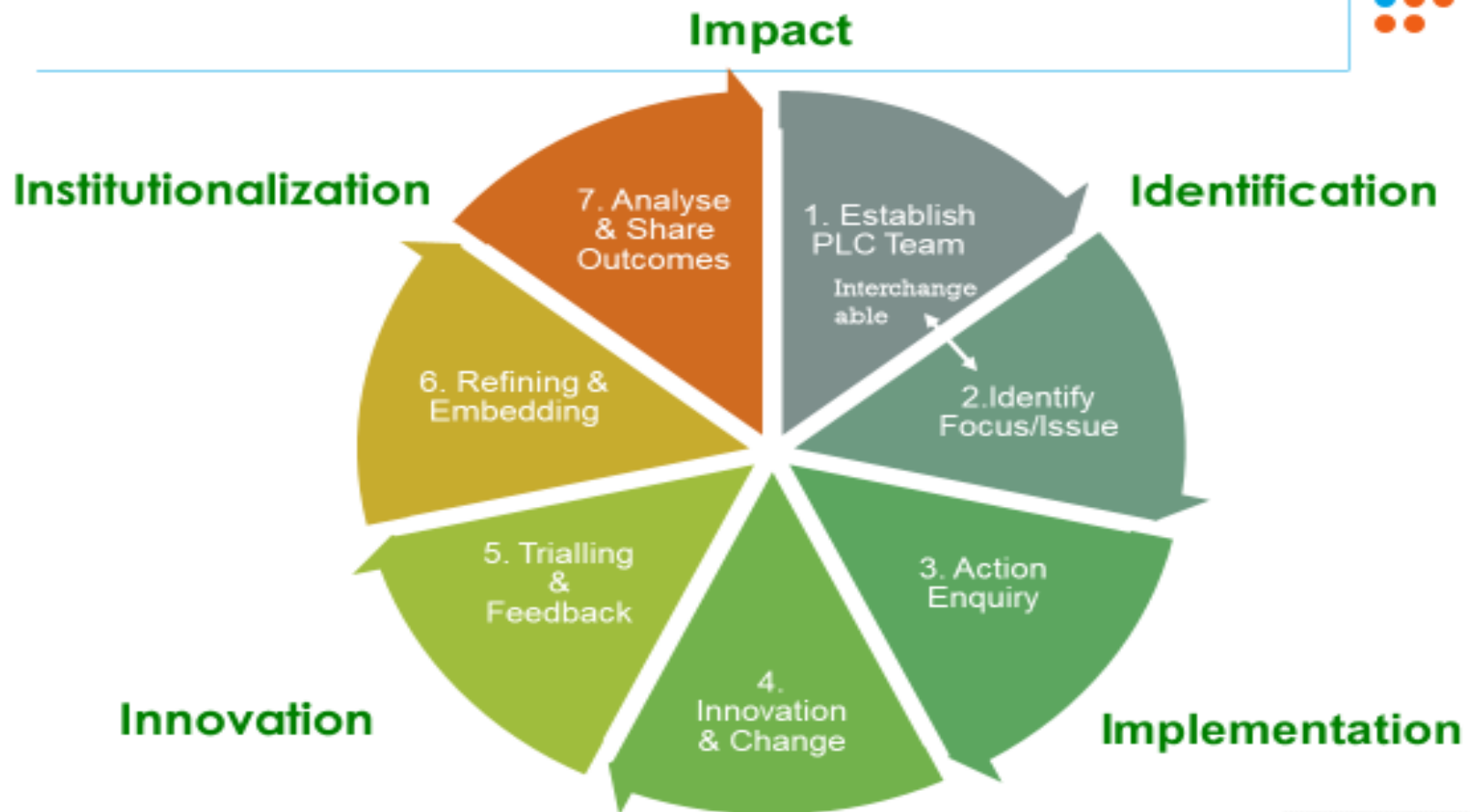
# IMPLICATIONS FOR SCHOOL LEADERS

Distribute leadership  
widely and wisely

Professional responsibility  
and Accountability

Clear protocol and rules of  
engagement for the PLCs (  
a model)

# PLC cycle



# A PLC OR NOT A PLC?

A PLC	Not a PLC
Group of professionals working as a team to address specific learner needs arising from the analysis of data/evidence.	Formally established or existing group with a continued focus on a theme, subject or topic.
Chooses the focus of enquiry and the membership of the group.	Prescribed focus and membership (e.g. a working party is given its task or brief).
Imperative to generate new ideas and new practice.	Expectation of sharing of existing knowledge, information or practice.
Operates within a clear cycle of action enquiry.	<b>Enquiry is not an expectation.</b>
Leadership is widely distributed and the group chooses its own facilitator.	There is a designated or pre-existing leader of the group.
Each member is accountable for the outcomes of the PLC – there is reciprocal accountability.	One person is responsible for producing minutes, sharing the outcomes, reporting etc
<b>Disbands and reforms with a new focus on enquiry and changed membership.</b>	Continued membership and work of established group is ongoing.
Assesses its impact directly on learner outcomes and has a responsibility to share these outcomes with others.	Engages in reporting and written dissemination.
Independent and Interdependent learning	Dependent learning
Reflection upon individual and collective learning based on evidence.	
Community of Learners	Co-operative Participants

# BARRIERS





Developing professional collaboration requires shared and focused leadership.

# CONTACT



Alma Harris

innovation

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## Welcome to my website



Welcome to my website. I hope you find it informative and useful. I am committed to working with schools and school systems to raise achievement and to secure effective learning for all students in all settings. I am also passionate about working with schools in the most disadvantaged contexts.

My research areas include school leadership, organisational change, system improvement and transformation.

In 2009-12, I was a Senior Policy Adviser for the Welsh Government assisting with system transformation and reform. During this time I led the National Professional Learning Communities (PLC) programme that involved all schools in Wales.

I am a Professor of Educational Leadership at the Institute of Education, London. Currently, I am working at the University of Malaya, Malaysia, where I am Professor and Director of the 'Institute for Educational Leadership'. I am leading a major research project focusing on 7 different education systems (Malaysia, Hong Kong, Singapore, Australia, Russia, Indonesia and England).

To enquire about conference inputs and workshops please [contact me](#).

### What's New

