Increasing Global Awareness through Professional Learning Community: A Study from LATTICE

Dion E. Ginanto
Michigan State University, Michigan, United Stated
Email: ginantod@msu.edu

Abstract

Using three components of PLCs by DuFour (2004), I explored the learning communities at LATTICE (Linking All Types of Teachers to International, Cross-cultural Education). DuFour (2004) argued that PLCs is a form of learning communities held at the school level to improve the school quality. It means PLCs happen in the school context. However, Easton (2011) contended that learning community could happen inside or outside schools. This paper intends to analyze a learning community at LATTICE in creating more global perspective teachers. The study found that PLCs can also occur outside schools by including participants other than teachers. Based on the interviews and observations analysis, this study found that LATTICE did reflect PLCs and significantly helped K-12 educators foster their global understanding.

Subject Areas

Professional Learning Communities (PLCs)

Keywords

PLC, Professional Development, LATTICE, learning communities

1. Introduction

The world is getting smaller and borderless. We can easily witness what is happening in other countries within seconds. A single click can access any sources and information from around the world. The Students and teachers across countries could easily exchange knowledge by sitting in front of the screen (Spreen, 2009; Al-Smadi, 2008). We are now calling ourselves as global citizens. As a global citizen, there must be consequences. There must be norms and ethics that every global citizen holds. However, not all global citizens understand the cultural diversity. There are still groups who prefer referring it as cultural differences to cultural diversity.

We still read the news about oppression. We still hear the new forms of segregation around us. However, the marginalization against race, ethics, language, religions, and so forth is still occurring at schools around the world. We need to stop this marginalization. We need to start (teaching about diversity) in the classrooms because

schools are the basis of social changes, especially for new generations. However, not all schools are ready for the issue of differences and multiculturalism (Al-Smadi, 2008; Papanastasiou and Conway, 2002). In the US schools setting, for example, research keeps showing the misunderstandings and mistreatment against minority students (Al-Smadi, 2008).

We need to prepare teachers and the student teachers about global awareness (Spreen, 2009; Al-Smadi, 2008). Creating a professional community that addresses the issues of global understanding is believed to be an effective way to disseminate the legacy of pluralism for teachers (Schwille, 2017). One form of learning communities, which has been implemented so far in Greater Lansing Area, Michigan, is named LATTICE (Linking All Types of Teachers to International Cross-Cultural Education). This paper discusses the form of learning community in LATTICE, and how LATTICE promotes global awareness to its members.

2. Literature Review

2.1. The Definition of PLC

First, PLCs is a collective effort of individuals and groups who want to work collaboratively to increase the best possible outcomes for the students' success (Toole &Louis, 2002; Mitchell & Sackney, 2000; King & Newmann, 2001). Rosenholtz (1989) contended that when teachers have opportunities to collaborate with any inquiries, the teachers, therefore, will feel supported, and as a result, they will be more committed in the classrooms. Collaboration is the key element of PLCs (Louis et al., 1995). Dufour, Dofour, and Eaker (2012) describe PLCs as an activity in which teachers are working in a team continuously in a school setting to improve the student's achievement. PLCs enable teachers to work in teams (not just in a group) by focusing their activities on the success of their students (Stall et al., 2006).

Easton (2011) argued that learning in professional communities is aimed to fix the problems, involve many individuals, encourage discoveries, and move quickly from mistakes. She continued that learning can occur everywhere such as at schools or outside schools, and is self-organized according to its purpose, passion, and environment. Also, Lunenburg (2010) stressed the importance of shared vision among stakeholders. In this case, stakeholders include board of education, superintendent, faculty, support staff- works together to achieve a shared vision. Thus, PLC is a group of people (who have interests in education) who meet regularly by sharing knowledge and expertise to certain topics; who have the spirit of collaborating with others; and who have the same vision to increase student achievement.

2.2. Components of PLCs

There are three components of PLCs, according to DuFour (2004): 1) ensuring that students learn; 2) focusing on results, and 3) creating a culture of collaboration.

Further, DuFour (2004) asserted that improving schools by developing PLCs is becoming a trend in many schools in the United States of America and beyond. In line with this, Sparks (in Schmoker, 2006) emphasized that professional learning communities are indeed the best form of staff development so far.

Ensuring that Students Learn

In PLCs, teaching focuses shift from 'focus on teaching' to 'focus on learning.' This means that teachers should understand that their job is not merely teaching, but also to make sure that their students learn (DuFour, 2005). In addition, DuFour listed four important questions to make sure that students learn: "(1) what do we want each student to learn?; (2) how will we know when each student has learned it; (3) how will we respond when a student experiences difficulties; and (4) what will we do if they already know it" (p. 26). These four questions need to be as teachers' consideration to increase students' motivation and engagement in the classrooms. To ensure that the students learn, the next step would be work in collaboration. Because according to (Stall et al., 2006) the teaching goals will never be achieved without collaborating with others.

Creating a Culture of Collaboration

"The powerful collaboration that characterizes professional learning communities is a systemic process in which teachers work together to analyze and improve their classroom practice" (DuFour, 2005, p. 36). Teachers' collaboration is one of the challenges that our educational problems face. DuFour (2005) argued that even though there has been a lot study showing the importance of collaboration, there are still schools whose teachers work in isolation. By collaborating with others, it creates a shift from working in groups to work in a team. There are many ways collaboration in learning communities such as superficial exchanges (Louis et al., 1995), practice and feedback sharing (Hord, 2004) or exchanging ideas which create a feeling of intercedence (Stoll et al., 2006). In the end, all our efforts are dedicated to the success of the students. PLCs is not called PLCs if its end goal is not for the students' success (Louis et al., 1995).

2.3. Focusing on Results

Even though PLCs focus on results, it does not mean that PLC does not value its process. Every member of PLCs participates in an ongoing process identifying problems or current level of student achievement, and then creating visions to improve to the current levels, then working together to achieve the goals, and finally creating evidence or evaluation of the progress (DuFour, 2005). I concur Stall et al., 2006 ideas about PLCs that the "key purpose of PLCs is to enhance teachers' effectiveness as professionals, for students' ultimate benefit" (p. 229). Therefore, all kind of professional learnings in the communities should address the problems or challenges that hinder the student's positive outcomes.

Characteristics of PLC

Characteristics of PLC are features that make learning communities make an impact on its members. There are at least five characteristics of professional learning communities that yield positive outcomes: shared values and vision, collective responsibility, and reflective professional inquiry, collaboration, and group, as well as individual, learning is promoted).

Shared values and visions

To make sure that students are learning, shared visions among individuals in the school are imperative.   Guided by a school principal, teachers and administrators need to promote the development, articulation, implementation, and stewardship of a community-supported school vision. (Whitehead, Boschee, & Decker, 2013).

Collective responsibility

Having collective responsibility creates a sustainable commitment, and eventually it "puts peer pressure and accountability on those who do not do their fair share and eases isolation" (Louise et al., 2006). The ultimate philosophy of PLC is people working together, helping each other succeed in daily interactions with all school stakeholders, and collectively achieving the goals. (Lunenburg, 2010)

Reflective professional inquiry

There are several activities that can be deployed to reflect teachers' professional inquiry, including reflective dialogue among teachers, conversations about serious educational issues, frequent examining of teachers' practices, observation and case analysis, joint planning and curriculum development, new knowledge seeking, and application of new ideas and information to problem-solving and solutions addressing students' needs (Louise et al., 2006).

Collaboration

As mentioned in earlier notes, collaboration is the backbone of a PLC. Louise et al. (2006) defined collaboration as "…staff involvement in developmental activities with consequences for several people, going beyond superficial exchanges of help, support, or assistance" (p. 227). Any form of teamwork is started with collaboration. Team building will not be built without the existence of collaboration. Through collaboration, teachers will not know that they are alone in dealing with students or any school problems or concerns.

Group, as well as individual, learning is promoted

The best educators are the great learners (Drago & Severson, 2009). In an effective PLC, everybody in the school is a learner; students are learners, teachers are learners, and administrators are learners. An effective PLC reflects a communal rather than solitary learning. The school learning community, therefore, allows its participants to engage in a serious way about any data or information which then be interpreted,

processed and delivered to them (Louise et al., 2006).

2.4. What is LATTICE?

LATTICE stands for Linking All Types of Teachers to International Cross-Cultural Education. According to the LATTICE brochure, "LATTICE is a learning community and international network that cultivates and supports a global perspective in K-12 classrooms through personal and professional development opportunities" (LATTICE brochure, n.d). As a professional learning opportunity for educators, LATTICE members meet monthly during the academic year for professional development.

The word LATTICE cannot be separated from Sally McClintoch the founder and the backbone of LATTICE. A school principal retiree, who then began teaching at Michigan State University, brought her spirit of globalizing K-12 teachers into the community. She was inspired by her sabbatical work with her spouse in Poland and China, which was able to change the way she saw the world (Schwille, 2017). She then thought if K-12 teachers get the opportunity to do sabbatical works then teachers will get the good benefits from it (Schwille, 2017). However, sabbatical works would be difficult to be realized, and then she thought a different way of global interaction. Sally together with Michigan State University (MSU) faculties, K-12 teachers, and school principals established LATTICE in 1995 (Schwille, 2017). The response to LATTICE was positive, and LATTICE is still active today (Schwille, 2017).

LATTICE agenda focuses on current issues which promote global understanding for teachers and administrators which are practical and applicable (Al-Smadi, 2008). Lynn Bartley, a former associate principal of local high school, mentioned: "As a school administrator, I see LATTICE as an educator's window that allows us to look into the wide world with an open mind, which is an important shift from the traditional view" (LATTICE Brochures, n.d.). The International graduate students also benefitted from their participation in LATTICE. As mentioned by Dwi Yuliantoro, a graduate student at Michigan State University, "I feel very privileged to be a part of this community of committed educators who view the world as their classroom" (LATTICE Brochures, n.d.).

There are five opportunities that its members benefit from: "(1) meet and connect with people from around the world; (2) learn about local and global issues from MSU experts and others; (3) talk about experiences that shape your worldview; (4) gain inspiration from the committed educators you come to know; and (5) enjoy traditional foods from around the world" (LATTICE brochure, n.d).

What is Global Awareness?

A study conducted by Spreen (2009) and Al-Smadi (2008) found that there are still schools in the US settings that are struggling on addressing the issues of inequality, inequity, discrimination, and multiculturalism. Spreen (2009) argued that most of the universities in the US do not think globally, and do not produce graduates with

international skills. Therefore, Spreen (2009) contended that it is critical to change our concept of teaching from being local to be more aware of the global issues. Teachers and administrators need to find a new way to reform the educational structure by having more knowledge and skills to reflect upon and openly discuss the issue they face (Al-Smadi, 2008). Further, Spreen (2009) listed eight global competencies for educators:

(a) ability to understand and respect the cultures of others peoples; (b) work effectively with people from other countries and cultures with respect, open-mindedness, and understanding; (c) have had experience with persons from other cultures and demonstrate flexibility and respect when working in a team with people from other cultural/national backgrounds; (d) understand categories of similarity and difference among human beings and their cultures, and ask how and why particular similarities and differences exist; (e) self-assessed with respect to how to handle intercultural/international experiences; (f) translate knowledge and experience of one culture to learn about another; (g) recognize the existence and importance of non-verbal communication and its difference in varied cultures; and (h) recognize and analyze stereotypes (p.8).

Professional Learning Community at LATTICE

Fulan (2005) listed three level for professional learning communities: the school level, the district/regional level, and the state or province level. In this case, LATTICE is more in an informal setting beyond the three offered by Fulan (2005): community level. Informal community level means that the members of LATTICE will not always be teachers. It could be university students, retired teachers, community, etc. However, the focus will remain the same: ensuring students learn, creating a culture of collaboration, and focusing on results. The topics can be discussed and be based on the members' needs and interests.

Schwille (2017) argued that short-term training will not be able to change the teachers' perspective on global understanding. Therefore, LATTICE comes to offer a long-term learning community in which K-12 teachers are getting to know international students and learn from each other. That way, according to Schwille (2017) K-12 teachers would be able to transform teachers to be global educators through ongoing interaction and discussion in LATTICE sessions. Similarly, Al-Smadi (2008) argued that LATTICE is a "unique model of promoting diversity and multiculturalism as its agenda focuses on educators to foster a high understanding of diversity, ethnicity, gender, language, and religion" (p. 46). Also, Papanastasiou and Conway (2002) defined LATTICE as an in-service teacher's education focuses on various relevant topics to enhance international cross-cultural understanding. The term in-service here does not exclusively describe K-12 teachers, but it also serves internationally oriented faculty members at Michigan State University as well as local and international graduate students.

In LATTICE community, its members benefit from its learning activates. From its brochures, LATTICE divides its members into two main parts:

1. LATTICE teachers: (1) earn SBCEU credits; (2) provide your students with the global perspective they will need to succeed in the 21st century; (3) connect with international graduate students and invite them to visit your classrooms; (4) prepare your students to thrive in our shrinking world; (5) learn about free and low-cost professional development opportunities in the U.S. and abroad.

2. LATTICE graduate students: (1) learn more about the U.S. educational system; (2) network with K-12 teachers and share your culture in their classrooms and at LATTICE sessions; (3) receive a stipend when you participate in all monthly LATTICE sessions; (4) be eligible to apply for LATTICE fellowships (Lattice brochures, n.d).

LATTICE is a form of professional learning community consisting of K-12 teachers, graduate students (international and local), faculty member at Michigan State University, visiting scholars, and community (retired teachers, retired faculty members, and others who are interested in education) meet regularly to exchange knowledge and information about education and current issues using the global/international lenses (Schwille, 2017).

3. Method

This study is intended to answer the following questions: (1) what does PLC look like in LATTICE? (2) what elements of PLC reflected in LATTICE activities?; and (3) does LATTICE increase global awareness for its members? This study was conducted at Linking All Types of Teachers to International Cross-Cultural Education (LATTICE) sessions during Fall semester 2016.

There were four interviewees in this study. The first interviewee, Antonio (pseudonym), is a Master student at K-12 Educational Administration, Michigan State University. He has become a member of LATTICE since 2015. The second participant, Maria, is an educator in Michigan. She was a former Social Studies Teacher. She is a Technology Expert for Teachers Professional Development and is currently holding a position as an instructional specialist. She has been a member of LATTICE for quite a long time. The third participant was a visiting scholar from China, Chen. Chen had become a LATTICE member for one year. The last participant was a faculty member at Michigan State University, Brown. Brown was one of the LATTICE founders.

There were two methods of collecting the data: (1) Participant observation. The researcher took notes and maintained a journal, to record the phenomena happening at LATTICE activities for Fall 2016 sessions. I observed and at the same time became an active participant in the sessions. I engaged in the table discussion, did the activities, and gave feedback and questions to the large group as well. The session started at 12:30 and finished at 4:00 pm. I jot down some important aspect of PLCs elements as I participated in the session activities or programs at the same time.

(2) Interviews. Open-ended questions were used to gather a deeper response from the participants (Glesne, 2011). The interviewee was asked to describe their perceptions on LATTICE and PLC which included: opinions on the elements of PLC at LATTICE, their perception on LATTICE, and their perception of LATTICE's vision to increase global awareness to its member. The interviews lasted approximately for 25 minutes.

In analyzing the data, I used analytic matrices (Miles & Huberman, 1994). The columns of the Matrix consisted of names of interviewees; and I put three elements of PLC (DuFour, 2004) into the rows. I chose DuFour Elements of PLCs as my theoretical framework, because even though DuFour's theory is intended for improving school quality within the school; but at the same time, I also agree with Easton (2011) that learning can occur both inside and outside the school. I also added one additional row "global awareness" into the matrixes. I analyzed the analytic matrices to identify what PLC elements at LATTICE as well as whether LATTICE is truly reflecting global awareness to its members.

4. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS

The observation and interview provided evidence that LATTICE activities are considered as a professional learning community. LATTICE offers a new model of learning communities that go beyond the conventional PLCs which are commonly held at schools or is institutionalized by district or state officials. LATTICE, however, inclusively engage all parties who are interested in education to join the session.

4.1. Professional Learning Community in LATTICE

From the observation, I conducted September to November 2016; I noticed that the characteristics of PLCs are reflected in LATTICE activity. A *shared value*, *collective responsibility, reflective professional inquiry, collaboration, group/individual learning is promoted,* were observed in LATTICE for September, October, and November sessions. LATTICE members have the same visions which are to cultivate and support a global perspective in K-12 classrooms. The diverse members in LATTICE (local teachers, international students, faculties at MSU, community) who are blended into roundtables to discuss and share the global perspectives toward a better education proved that LATTICE has a shared vision in a collective responsibility as well as in a reflective inquiry. From my three observations, I noticed that all sessions contain a meaningful quality of collaboration, which values individual and group learning.

From the interview, Antonio explained that LATTICE is a true example of a professional learning community:

"I see some ingredients or components that every PLC should have. First one is, it must be a community that shares something in common, and here we what have something in common is education and passion to help discover a new way to teach better, from various school and classroom so that students' outcome and students

learning can be improved.   Another thing which is interesting is that commitment to lifelong learning."

In this case, Antonio highlighted one of the PLC characteristics I mentioned before: shared values and visions. This is the unique of LATTICE, even though the participants are coming from diverse backgrounds, but they do come with a shared vision/value.

Another interviewee, Maria, also agreed that LATTICE is a form of PLC: *"I also believe that LATTICE is also a real Professional learning community. We use that term a lot. The reason that it is a true form of PLC is that we meet once a month, so we have long-term PLCs which is so rare."* This response indicates that the professional development that teachers usually have at schools is somewhat good; LATTICE, in this case, comes to fulfill the consistency of the learning community which is held every month with different topics which schools may not offer.

Similarly, Brown argued that LATTICE does reflect the spirit of the professional learning community by sharing our ideas *"but then we are all in it together and yes, we all bring our own strengths, but we also bring areas of weakness."* Also, Chen, a visiting scholar from China, argued that LATTICE session allows its members to discuss a similar interest: "*it provides people with same interests a chance to exchange their work experience and enhance their professional skills."* Both Brown and Chen agreed that LATTICE echoed the PLC characteristics: collaboration, collective responsibility, and reflective professional inquiry.

From both interviews and observation analysis, it can be concluded that LATTICE is a true form of a professional learning community. Not to mention from the LATTICE brochure that LATTICE called itself as a learning community: "LATTICE is a *learning community* and international network that cultivates and supports a global perspective in K-12 classrooms through personal and professional development opportunities." (LATTICE brochure, n.d).

4.2. Elements of PLC in LATTICE

The three elements of PLCs mentioned in above literature could be observed in LATTICE sessions held from September to November 2016.

Collaboration
Through my observations, I saw that the professional learning in LATTICE truly mirrored the collaboration practices. The table discussions, collaborative works, and peers' interactions were observed during Fall 2016 Sessions. When I asked Maria whether LATTICE activities represent collaboration, here is her respond: *"Absolutely. You can't foster international relation without at one point to getting collaborate internationally. So many international educators are going into the classroom to the local teachers. There are also local teachers who are participating in a project such as*

Chinese art project that the 4-H sponsored. Where students from China sent art paint-ing to students in Michigan and vice versa. And of course, it is all in the essence that the local teachers get a chance to collaborate with teachers, which is so unbelievably creative." During my observation, the discussion tables are managed to have diverse participants. The facilitator will remind people to sit with people who are from differ-ent countries.

Similarly, both Chen and Brown highlighted the mutual interest among members with foster collaboration. Brown responded, "learning a community to be a commu-nity to be a real community there has to be real mutuality." Like Brown, Chen an-swered: "*it provides people with same interests a chance to exchange their work ex-perience and enhance their professional skills*." In addition, Antonio also agreed that collaboration is the key for LATTICE activities. By collaborating at LATTICE ses-sions, the educators would benefit a lot from their teaching practices: *"I believe that as a teacher or educator you benefit so much from collaborating with other educators as well. That way together everyone can reflect on teaching practice, teaching meth-ods, so the problem we encounter in education, we can look up how can come up with solutions that can help us how to become good educators; so that we can hold a better classroom experiences."*

Learning communities in LATTICE is not only able engaging all participants to exchange knowledge and information; but it also able to make its participants under-stand that the different views and debate are considered the foundation of improve-ment. That way all participants are eager to participate in all conversation including the difficult knowledge on religion, oppression, and marginalization.

Focus on Student Learning

LATTICE session offers its members, activities which enable them to focus on student learning. From international students' perspective, Antonio highlighted that LATTICE activity would increase their value on the assignments especially the real practice and application that they will not get from the campus classroom:

> *"Like I said it is a monthly session. So, we could take back to the classroom, to the school, to build the skills and knowledge and then apply them. So, you have time at least one month to apply them, then you can come back and reflect why it did not work."*

In addition, as an educator, Maria viewed LATTICE's learning community contrib-uted significantly to the teachers' perspective on students learning. She also stressed the importance of the long-life education for teachers to foster student learning:

> *"Imagine if students only went to school only meet twice a year… so then the teachers only meet twice a year. So, when the teachers constantly meet in a com-munity with other teachers, that it fosters growth in the professional develop-ment of a teacher."*

I also have a note on my observation journal, that both facilitator and LATTICE

members at the end of the session will have a discussion and sharing sessions on how they can utilize what they had learned today into their classroom. I also noticed that LATTICE topics and activities are driven to be relevant to the current situation which enables teachers to develop their curriculum and materials based on the authentic experience gained in LATTICE.

Focus on Results

Brown shared his personal experience on his participation in LATTICE *"I have learned so much from the interaction with teachers learning more about here and there."* Brown also highlighted that it is obvious that not only K-12 educators who benefitted from their interaction with international students: "*actually they get a rich understanding of the world and even of their own country. And a lot of international students do not have experience outside of their home country and even of their region.*" In line with Brown's response on who benefitted from the participation at LATTICE, Chen mentioned: "*Through participation in LATTICE, I've gained some insights into the core value of American education, especially in elementary school and high school levels.*"

From the perspective of an educator, Maria connected LATTICE activities to the effort on increasing student awareness on their global perspectives:

"I mean students today becoming more globalized no matter how much we try to control their access to information; the information is everywhere it's in their pocket. It is not something new. So, the fact that we are as LATTICE trying to globalize their educators. It likes a domino makes the students make the teachers delivery like content delivery a lot more global therefore multisided and it makes students completely able to see more side of a single issue.

Through my observation, I learned that the guided questions that were prepared by the LATTICE planning team were designed to connect the topics on the day of professional development to the school classroom practices. LATTICE members were expected to work collegiality and collaboratively to help everybody foster students' achievement as well as students' global awareness. I also notice that LATTICE prepared its participants to the relevant questions that student may ask including those on radicalism, Islamophobia, race and gender issue, and other difficult questions. LATTICE educators so far have been able to help students understand through their involvement in LATTICE professional development.

4.3. LATTICE Fosters Global Understanding

Increasing global awareness is becoming the number one goal in LATTICE. When being asked whether LATTICE fosters global understanding, Maria responded:

"Oh, my goodness. Again, I was a social studies teacher, I taught geography, history, economics, business. You know I taught in a rural area where…. even though

I have international background myself I feel I am still isolated. I lived abroad as I was growing up, but as an adult, I live pretty much in Michigan. I try my very best to travel abroad, but still, it's very personal. Because it was personal and because I was personal for me it was predictable. I do know the answer because I wrote all the questions. But suddenly I started attending LATTICE where I was able to meet people from around the world where they answer the same question so different. I was also in a place that I can meet a teacher like myself. They are immigrants from other countries, and how they teach here in the US. How our interpretation is. So, I find a lot of commonality from the teacher all around the world. But specifically, it broadens the way I see the world as an international it's cool to teach global studies. I eat international food also."

Maria's testimony on LATTICE reflected on Sally McClintock's view that inspired her to form a learning community for teachers. In line with Maria, Antonio also agreed that his experience on LATTICE had brought him into a deeper awareness of global issues:

For me that's …. I could never have learned that if I do not come to that short special time. I was doing a personal study, every time I come to LATTICE I learn about global education, global practices, global trends, issues, and concerns. For me, I mean it makes me to become globally aware, of things you know on global issues on kids' education, equality, and ... how to I mean what is K-12 education looks like in Japan, at that time we have somebody from Japan that gives her experience of certain things that their government does to improve K-12 education that our government didn't do. They also can learn from what we do and what we didn't do. So, it is very interesting to interact with people from diverse cultures."

Maria added that LATTICE created a professional development's atmosphere that fosters the open-mindedness of its members:

"We are doing it in a very safe environment, in a very open environment, in a very open-minded setting. We also have diversity members; it is very well balanced global perspective. I think on "aha" moment is that every time I leave LATTICE I always walk away knowing something that I didn't know before. What Professional Development do you find like this."

Similarly, Brown argued that LATTICE influences the way teachers see the curriculum: *"...professional goal in term of helping teachers internationalize their curriculum in a way that was meaningful to the teachers."* In addition, he also stressed constructivism as a teaching approach modeled by LATTICE: *"in term of LATTICE modeling ways in which in terminology that even we use outside of international in terms of teacher education is sort of constructivism and so that you work with student who constructs become part of their own production of knowledge and so forth."*

Chen, who just came from China amazed by how diverse the LATTICE members is: *"I was shocked by it's the cultural diversity and the stress on extra-curriculum activities."* He added that all LATTICE participants are encouraged to engage in a

conversation regardless their cultural backgrounds: *"Students from different cultural backgrounds have their lives and studies happily. And the students enjoy the time at school by pride, participation, and honor they gain from many activities."*

Also, from my observation, I noticed that LATTICE had come up with the local and international topics and then tried to engage discussion around how to connect the topics into teaching and learning in the classroom. The highlight of my LATTICE observation was that the participants in addition to learning contents, they also learn other people cultures thought, international costumes, and the languages.

Through my observation and interview, LATTICE does reflect the professional learning community both from its element and its characteristics. Here are some common topics appeared from the interview regarding the elements of PLC at LATTICE.
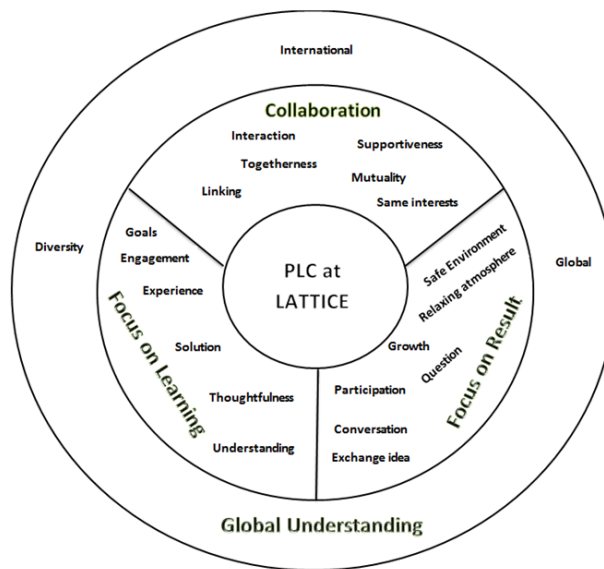

Figure1: Element of PLC at LATTICE

Figure 1 illustrates how professional learning communities at LATTICE looks like. Within collaboration elements, there were common topics which found in LATTICE sessions including interaction, togetherness, linking, supportiveness, mutuality, and same interests. Within Focus on result I found some common topics: exchange ideas, conversation, participation, question, growth, relaxing atmosphere, and safe environment. Finally, the common topics found in focus on learning element include goals, engagement, experience, solution, thoughtfulness, and understanding. These three elements make LATTICE as a learning community beyond the school contact that fosters global understanding.

4.4. Engaging Communities in Professional Development

LATTICE has been a phenomenal learning community which successfully empowers communities outside the school. LATTICE member which consists of K-12 educators, graduate International students, visiting scholars, university staff/professors, and those who have passion in education give a message that professional learning can also be conducted outside the school and at the same time involving communities as resources.

Professional development has been exclusively conducted inside or around the school context (Stoll et al., 2006) and managed by the school-related personnel. The outside player of learning community so far was only the speaker or panelists. LATTICE, however, offers a new paradigm of learning communities and professional development, by empowering the communities which has a strong connection to education. By having outsider elements in the process of professional development, LATTICE has not only benefitting the collaboration atmosphere but at the same time LATTICE members also benefited the diverse knowledge and information. Learning communities by LATTICE fills the gap between the conventional professional development and has some potential benefits if applied in other contexts or settings.

LATTICE offered a solution to the missing link between school and universities, as well as school and communities in general. LATTICE also offers a real-life experience of international graduate students who will be a future teacher and leader. The university students not only learn from their involvement but at the same time, they also become resources and teachers to their fellow LATTICE members who want to know more about educational system outside the United States of America.

LATTICE learning communities should apply to all context. In Global South context in which English is not spoken daily will be a good prospect to adapt LATTICE idea. Learning Communities which aims at improving cross-cultural education quality will be more likely suitable for English teachers. English teachers are those who expose the most of global understanding and diversity knowledge and cultures as its topics and curriculum include not only the language piece but also its culture. LATTICE could be a model for both student teachers and educators in responding to the rapidly changing and developing educational setting. LATTICE learning communities is a learning model that promotes global understanding. In addition, LATTICE also increases collaboration among teachers and beyond, which hopefully able to fill the gap of the current professional development for teachers. Therefore, school principals, superintendent, university leaders are recommended to create a similar learning community in their educational settings.

5. Conclusion

As the world become borderless, students connect to the other world easily and quickly. As a result, the students will interact with the various cultural backgrounds, languages, traditions, and rules. As an educator or future educators, we need to prepare ourselves to scaffold students in interacting with the more global world. One way

to equip teachers' ability and quality on global awareness pedagogy is by teaching them on global understanding. However, our mainstream professional development has not really tapped into this kind of issues. One learning community that offers teachers and students teachers on the issues of increasing teachers' competency on global issues and awareness is PLCs at LATTICE. The monthly meetings which consist of diverse participants who have the same vision on global education: teachers, international students, MSU faculties, visiting scholars, and community; allow them to foster collegial activities toward a better global awareness both from outsider and insider perspectives. The global understanding that teachers and students benefit from is expected to decrease the marginalization and oppression, which often occurred in schools' settings. Also, LATTICE offers a way of engaging teachers and education stakeholders in authentic and valuable learning experiences. LATTICE is therefore highly recommended to be branched to other states, or even other countries to create a global citizen who sees the world as their classroom

REFERENCES

[1] Al-Smadi, R.T. (2008). Professional development for peace: Linking all types of teachers to international, cross-cultural education. In Lin, J., Brantmeier, E.J., & Bruhn, C. (Eds.), *Transforming Education for Peace*. North Carolina: Information Age Publishing.

[2] Atknison, E. (2004). Thinking outside the box: An exercise in heresy. Qualitative inquiry, (10), 111-129.

[3] DoFour, R. (2004) What is a professional learning community. *ASCD Journal*, *61*(8), 6-11.

[4] Drago-Severson, E. (2009*). Learning adult learning: Supporting adult development in our school.* California: Corwin.

[5] Dufour, Dofour & Eaker. (2012). A big picture look at professional learning community. Solution Tree.

[6] Easton, L. B. (2011). *Professional learning communities by design: Putting the learning back to PLCs.* California: Corwin.

[7] Fullan, M. (2005). Professional learning communities writ large. In DuFour, R., Eaker, r., DuFour, R. (Eds.), *On common ground the power of professional learning communities* (p. 209). National Education Services: Indiana.

[8] Glesne, C. (2011). *Becoming qualitative researchers*. Pearson. Boston: Massachusetts

[9] Miles, M., & Huberman, M. (1994). *Qualitative Data Analysis*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

[10] LATTICE Brochure (n.d) LATTICE: Linking all types of teachers to international cross-cultural education.

[11] Louise, et al., (2006). Professional learning communities: A review of the

literature. *Journal of Educational Change*, (7) 221-258.

[12] Lunenberg, F. C., (2010). Creating a professional learning community. *National Forum of Educational Administration and Supervision Journal, 27*, 1-7

[13] Papanastasiou, E. C., Conway, P. F. (2002). Teacher professional development through LATTICE an international-intercultural project. *Studies in Educational Evaluation*, *28*(2002), 305-328.

[14] Rosenholtz, S. (1989). *Teachers' workplace: The social organization of schools*. New York: Teachers College Press.

[15] Schmoker, M. (2004). Start here for improving teaching and learning. *School Administrator*. *61(10),* 48.

[16] Schwille & John. (2017). *Internationalizing a school of education*. International Race and Education Series. East Lansing: Michigan State University Press.

[17] Spreen, C. A. (2009). Teaching global awareness. TEAC's 10th Annual Meeting. Chicago.

[18] Stoll, L., Bolam, R., McMahon, A., Wallace, M., & Thomas, S. (2006). Professional learning communities: A review of the literature. *Journal of Educational Change*, 7, 221-258.

[19] Whitehead, B., Bjoschee, F., & Decker, R. (2013). *The principal: Leadership for a global society*. Los Angeles CA: Sage.