

# **Creating Capacity: 9Cs for PLCs reducing variation within and between schools**

**Professor Louise Stoll**

**London Centre for Leadership in Learning  
Institute of Education  
University of London  
l.stoll@ioe.ac.uk**

**Presentation to  
SWAMWAC RAISE Conference  
20 October 2010  
Parc y Scarlets, Llanelli**



# **Learning: the Treasure Within**

**To know**

**To do**

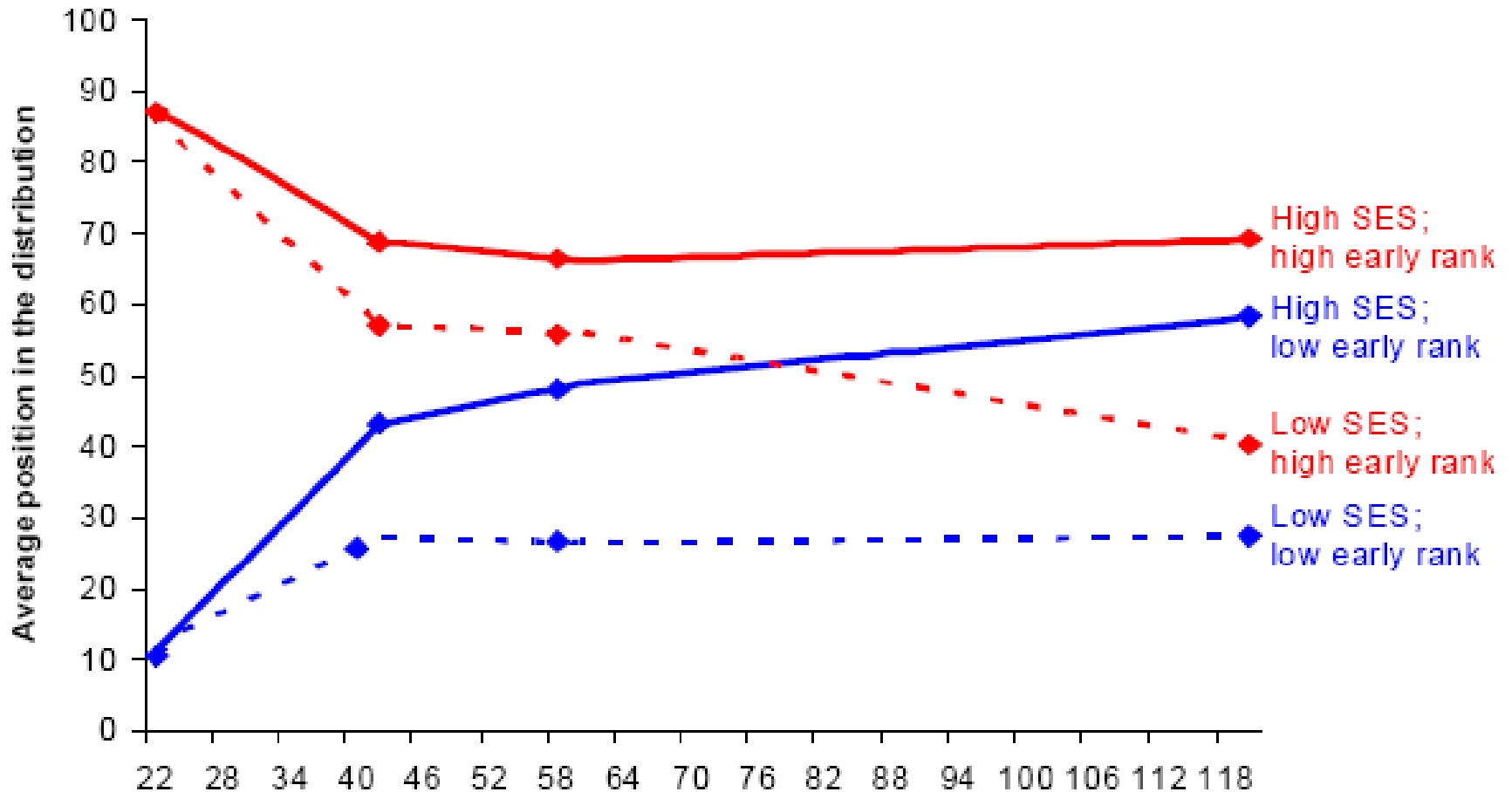
**To live together**

**To be**

**Delors et al (1996)**

**UNESCO**

# Differential trajectory of children by socio-economic group from 22 to 118 months



# 7 Survival Skills

- **Critical thinking and problem solving**
- **Collaboration across networks and leading by influence**
- **Agility and adaptability**
- **Initiative and entrepreneurship**
- **Effective oral and written communication**
- **Accessing and analysing information**
- **Curiosity and imagination**

# Capacity

**. . . allows [people, organisations or entire systems] routinely to learn from the world around them and apply their learning to new . . . situations so that they continue on a path toward their goals, even though the context is ever-changing.**

**Stoll and Earl (2003)**



When it comes to being intelligent it is clear that there is much more than simply what we can do as an individual; how we interact with others is a crucial element of how smart we are in the real world.

Lucas and Claxton (2010)

# **Professional learning community**

**...an inclusive and mutually supportive group of people with a collaborative, reflective and growth-oriented approach toward investigating and learning more about their practice in order to improve pupils' learning.**

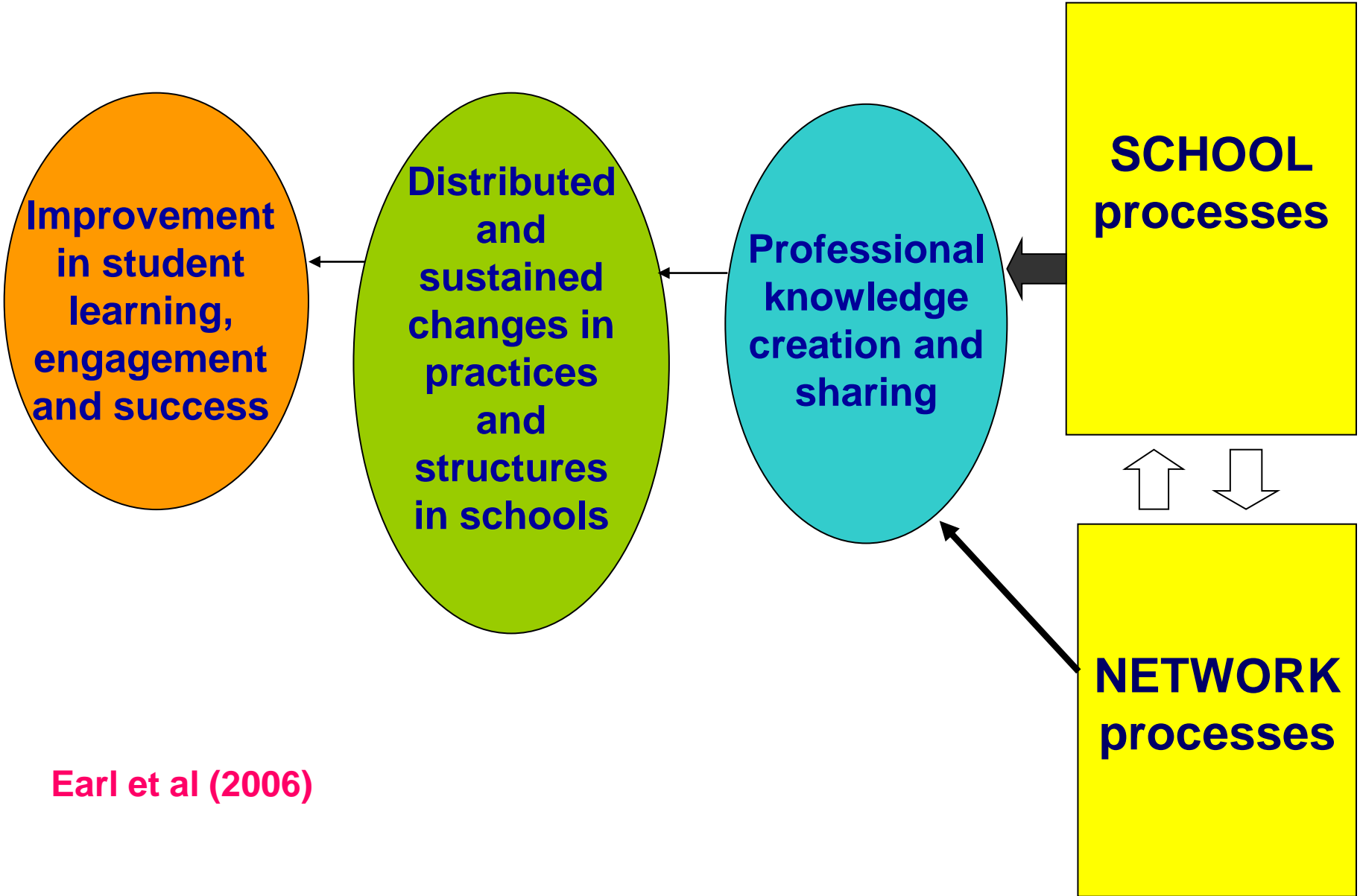
**Stoll (2007)**

# Learning network

**a group of schools that join together to plan, implement and monitor activities that will enhance learning and teaching within and across their schools . . . . . as well as creating capacity for learning and sharing knowledge between schools.**

**Crandall and Stoll (2005)**

# How Networks of Schools Work



Earl et al (2006)

# 9 Cs of PLCs: Creating Capacity for Learning

1. **Core purpose**
2. **Collective responsibility**
3. **Collaborative enquiry**
4. **Continuous professional learning**
5. **Challenging conversations**
6. **Culture**
7. **Coordination**
8. **Connections**
9. **Creative leadership**



# **Core purpose**

## **Effective Leadership for Narrowing Gaps**

- 1. Prioritising most vulnerable and developing local vision**
- 2. Championing voice of vulnerable groups and encouraging their participation**
- 3. Using good quality data to identify needs and provide services for vulnerable groups**
- 4. Fostering partnership working around vulnerable groups**
- 5. Developing and motivating workforce to improve outcomes for vulnerable groups**
- 6. Having unrelenting drive and passion to improve outcomes for vulnerable groups**

# **Collective responsibility**

## **Ubuntu**

**Umuntu ngumuntu ngabantu  
(Zulu maxim): “a person is a  
person through other persons”;  
“I am because we are”**

# Collaborative enquiry

Teacher inquiry and knowledge-building cycle to promote valued student outcomes

What knowledge and skills do our students need?

What knowledge and skills do we as teachers need?

What has been the impact of our changed actions?

Deepen professional knowledge and refine skills

Engage students in new learning experiences

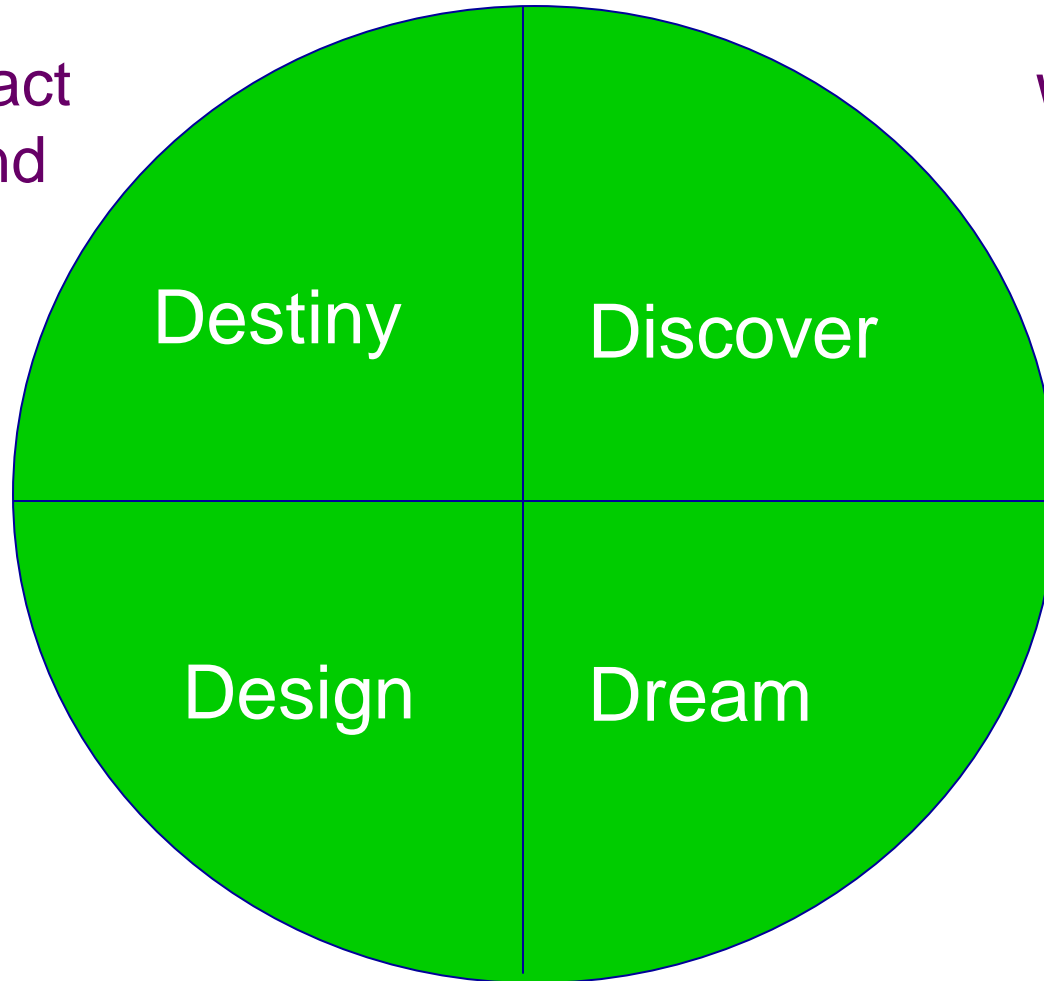
Timperley (2008)



# Appreciative Inquiry

How can we act reflectively and positively?

When are we at our best?



How can we construct the future together?

What would we really like to do?

Based on Cooperrider, and Srivastva (1987)



**What questions do/would you ask pupils to understand more about their learning?**

## Ealing PLC questions for conversation with student groups

- Describe what a good learner looks like? (The skills and habits they display)
- On a scale of 1 – 10 (10 is high) how good are you at the following:

*Enquiring, Questioning, Reflecting,  
Working as a team, Self-Managing, Participating*

- What kinds of things do your teachers do that help you most in becoming a better learner?
- When do you think you learn best? Give some examples
- Can you explain why you learn best in these areas and what are the conditions needed for really good learning to take place?
- Do your teachers make it clear to you how you learn as well as what you are learning? Can you give some examples?

# Ealing PLC reviewer feedback form



## Area and focus of enquiry:

**What do you see, hear, think is going on for students?**

**So what conditions for learning or adult behaviours facilitate what is going on?**

**Summary comment for end of day feedback – what key strengths could the school build on to further develop learning?**

# Criteria for judging the effectiveness of a PLC

- Its ultimate impact on pupil learning and social development
- Its impact on staff morale and practice, with potential for developing leadership capacity
- The characteristics are in place and processes are operating smoothly – part of ‘the way we do things’

# Broad phases of the journey to develop a professional learning community

***Starting out*** – acquiring information and beginning to use ideas

***Developing*** – experimenting with strategies and building on initial commitment

***Deepening*** – well on the way, having achieved a degree of mastery and feeling the benefits

***Sustaining*** – introducing new developments, and re-evaluating quality – PLC as a way of life

**Deciding where you are as a PLC – Booklet 8 - Stoll et al (2006)**

**<http://www.innovation-unit.co.uk/about-us/publications/professional-learning-communities.html>**

# Continuous professional learning

Collaborative professional learning that makes a difference to teachers' practice and pupils' learning outcomes

- peer support
- specialist support
- planned meetings for structured discussion
- processes for sustaining the CPD over time
- recognition and analysis of teachers' individual starting points
- developing teachers' ownership

Cordingley et al (2003, 2005a&b, 2007)

And there's **Conversion** too (the 10<sup>th</sup> C?) – remember the practice and expertise it takes to convert a try (and you get extra benefits if you're successful).



**“Which 2 strategies have you found most powerful in helping teachers share their knowledge and ideas?”**

	<b>%</b>
<b>Learning conversation</b>	<b>36</b>
<b>Coaching/mentoring</b>	<b>31</b>
<b>Networking</b>	<b>12</b>
<b>Videos of practice/audio examples</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>Verbal presentations</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>Teacher designed materials</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>Written stories and reflections</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Web resources</b>	<b>2</b>



**What's the difference  
between talking to each  
other and sharing practice,  
and participating in a  
learning conversation?**

# Learning conversations

**. . . how educators make meaning together and jointly come up with new insights and knowledge. These conversations lead to intentional change to enhance practice and pupil learning.**

**Stoll (2010)**

**Intentional action/change**

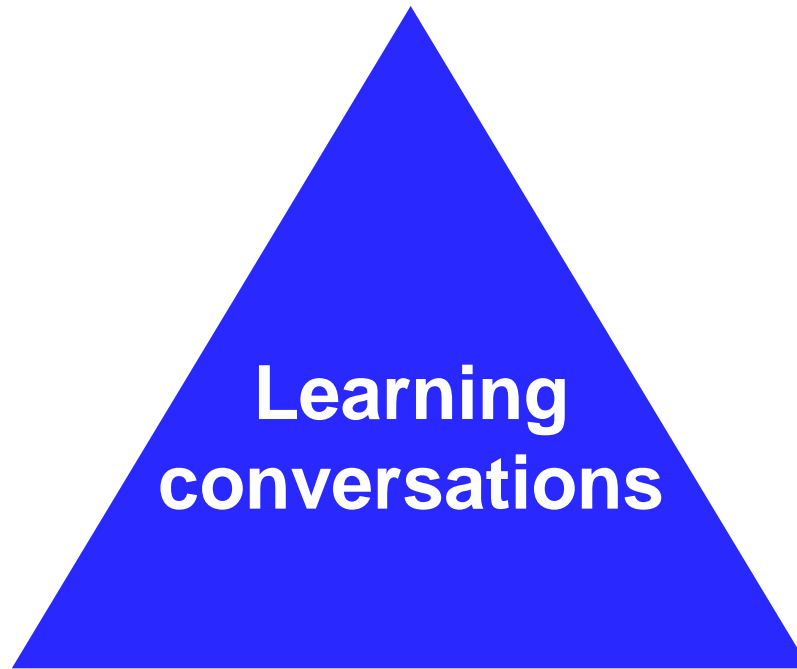


**Knowledge creation**



**Reflection that challenges thinking**

**Challenging  
conversations**



**Purpose and process**

**Engagement**

# Purpose and process

Focus – evidence or ideas

Experience + external knowledge/theory

Protocols and tools

Facilitation

# Engagement

Enquiry-mindedness

Respectful challenge

Risk taking

# Phases in protocol to look at pupils' work

<b>Protocol phase</b>	<b>Guidance to participants</b>
<b>1. Introduction (2 mins)</b>	<b>Remind norms – no fault, collaboration, consensus. Teacher providing work gives brief statement without qualitative comment</b>
<b>2. Describing the student work (10 mins)</b>	<b>Gather as much information as possible. Describe what see, no judgements or interpretations</b>
<b>3. Interpreting the student work (10 mins)</b>	<b>Try to make sense of what student doing, thinking and why. Multiple interpretations evaluated against quality of evidence</b>
<b>4. Implications for classroom practice (10 mins)</b>	<b>Based on observations and interpretations, discuss implications for teaching and assessment in the classroom</b>
<b>5. Reflect on the process (10 mins)</b>	<b>Reflect on how process worked. Share insights</b>

**Little and Curry (2008)**

## Stimulating learning conversations

All of the things I thought I deeply understood, I understood because I was looking at them through other people, with other people. . . Both of our understandings grew closer because we were able to discuss as we went through . . . I feel the professional learning community is all of those little conversations rather than the big, holistic 'this is the learning review'.

**Teacher**

# Culture



**If you were an anthropologist and you had to pick three artifacts that represented your efforts to reduce variation within and between your schools, what would they be and why?**

**Adapted from Investigating the culture of your PLC –  
Booklet 6**

**Stoll et al (2006)**

**The decisive factor is almost exclusively the “horizontal” trust of staff among themselves and the “vertical” trust between management and staff. Without horizontal trust, there can be no transfer of knowledge; without vertical trust, no willingness to take risks.**

**Sprengrer (2004)**

# Coordination

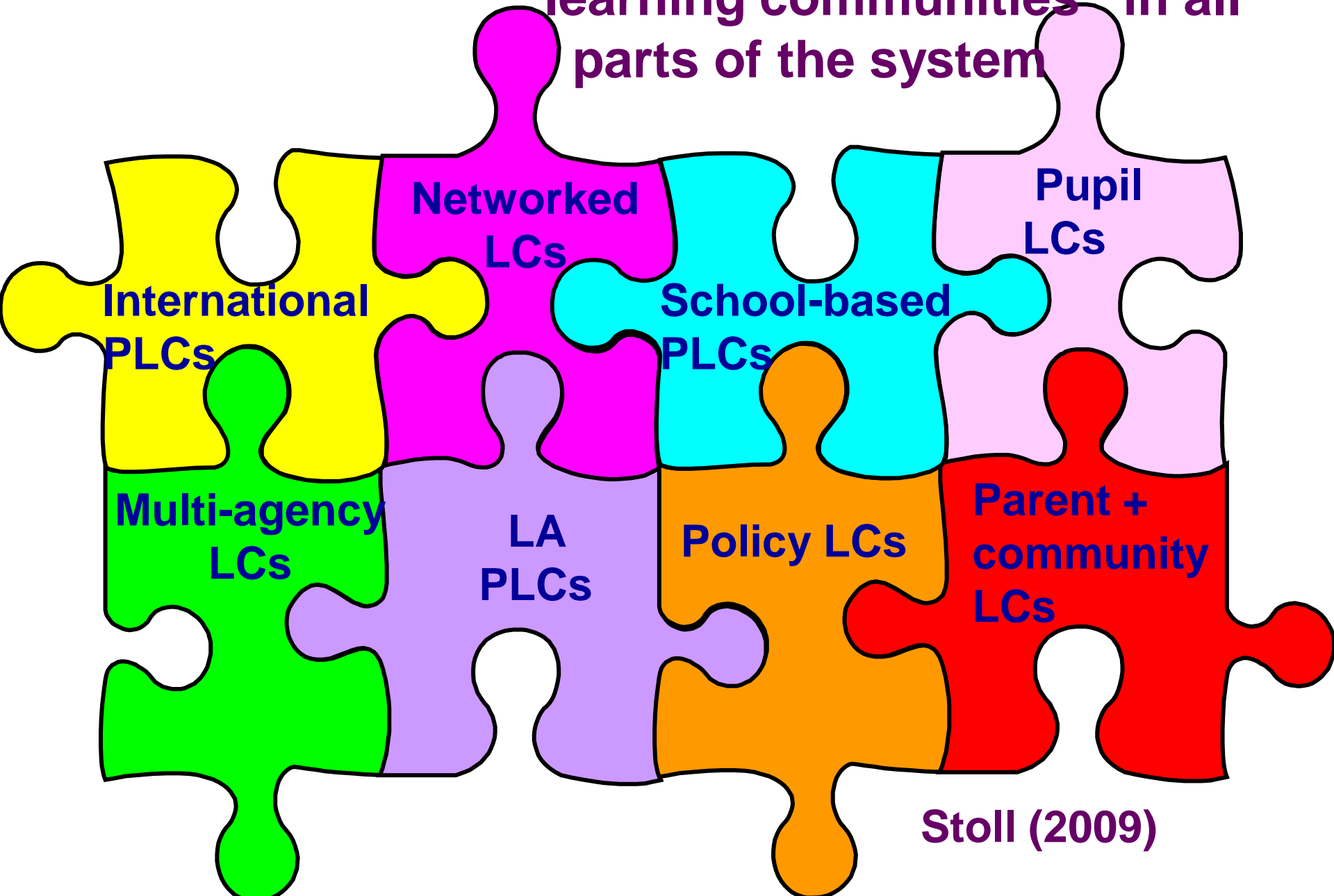
# Structural conditions supporting PLCs



**Bolam et al  
(2005)**

# Connections

Developing and connecting learning communities in all parts of the system



Stoll (2009)

**. . .if creativity does not infiltrate the DNA of an organization, it is unlikely to be passed on to the next generation**

**Gardner (2006)**

**. . . Developing and exploiting creative capacities calls for a systemic strategy to create a culture of innovation across the whole organisation . . .**

**Robinson (2001)**

# Creative leadership

. . . collaborative, imaginative and thought through responses to opportunities and to challenging issues that inhibit learning at all levels. It's about seeing, thinking and doing things differently in order to improve the life chances of all students.

**Creative leadership is both:**

- being creative leaders yourselves
- providing the conditions and opportunities for others to be creative

**Stoll and Temperley (2009)**

# Conditions for promoting and nurturing the creativity of your colleagues

- model creativity and risk taking
- stimulate 'urgency'
- expose colleagues to new thinking and experiences
- self consciously relinquish control
- provide time and space and facilitate the practicalities
- promote individual and collaborative thinking and design
- set high expectations about the degree of creativity
- use failure as a learning opportunity
- keep referring back to core values

**Stoll and Temperley (2009)**

# Assessing your 9Cs of PLCs



<b>1. Core purpose</b>	<b>G</b>	<b>A</b>	<b>R</b>
<b>2. Collective responsibility</b>	<b>G</b>	<b>A</b>	<b>R</b>
<b>3. Collaborative enquiry</b>	<b>G</b>	<b>A</b>	<b>R</b>
<b>4. Continuous professional learning</b>	<b>G</b>	<b>A</b>	<b>R</b>
<b>5. Challenging conversations</b>	<b>G</b>	<b>A</b>	<b>R</b>
<b>6. Culture</b>	<b>G</b>	<b>A</b>	<b>R</b>
<b>7. Coordination</b>	<b>G</b>	<b>A</b>	<b>R</b>
<b>8. Connections</b>	<b>G</b>	<b>A</b>	<b>R</b>
<b>9. Creative leadership</b>	<b>G</b>	<b>A</b>	<b>R</b>

How will you address red and amber Cs and what support will you access? How will you share green Cs?