Plug Us In:

Using Digital Tools to Facilitate the Work of PLCs

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Session Website:
http://digitallyspeaking.pbworks.com/Plug-Us-In

Checking In:

Working with the participants at your table, share what brings you to this particular session.

What individual experiences or expertise do you bring to the conversation?

Coordination

[n: ko-or-de-nashe-ion]

The *harmonious functioning* of parts for effective results.

Checking In:

Working with the participants at your table, brainstorm examples of the kinds of tasks that members of a PLC have to *coordinate* with one another in order to produce *effective* results.

Activity:

Working with the participants at your table, create a *concept map* detailing the kinds of actions that PLCs *currently take* to coordinate their collaborative efforts.

Transaction Costs
[n: tran-sak-shuhn kawsts]

The time, attention, and/or money involved in *coordinating* the work of people in an organization.
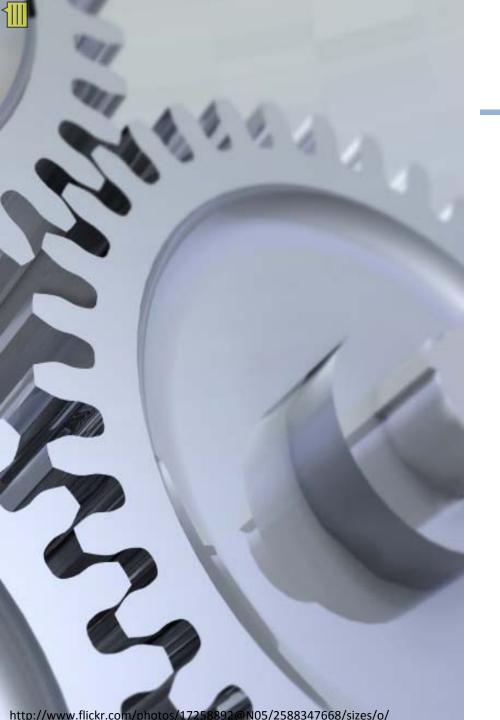
(Shirky, 2008)

"Teachers...weigh the *perceived benefits* of new interactions against the additional mental and physical demands of collaboration before *changing* their behaviors."

(Graham & Ferriter, 2010, p. 130)

New *technologies* can lower transaction costs by reducing the need for close *coordination* between colleagues. Such technologies allow people to work collaboratively *and* efficiently.
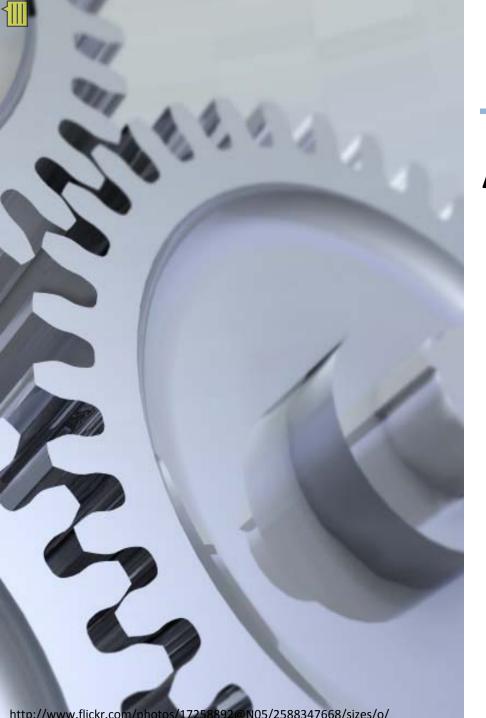
(Shirky, 2008)

Example One:

A PLC uses a *wiki* to organize common assessments, lesson plans, and student exemplars.

http://6lass.pbworks.com/

Example Two:

A PLC uses *shared tags* and a *social bookmarking* service to organize collections of websites connected to their curriculum.

http://snipurl.com/salem6ss_se

Example Three:

A PLC uses an *asynchronous discussion forum* to reflect on professional learning communities.
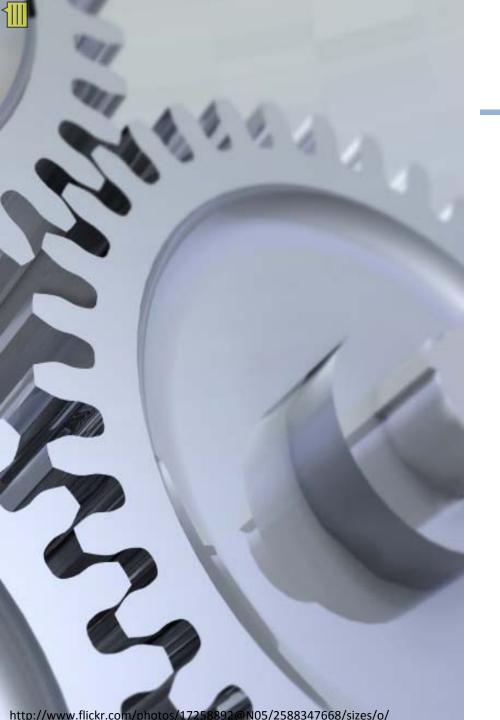
http://ed.voicethread.com/share /113288/

Example Four:

A teacher uses a *microblogging service* to gather information and resources connected to his professional interests.
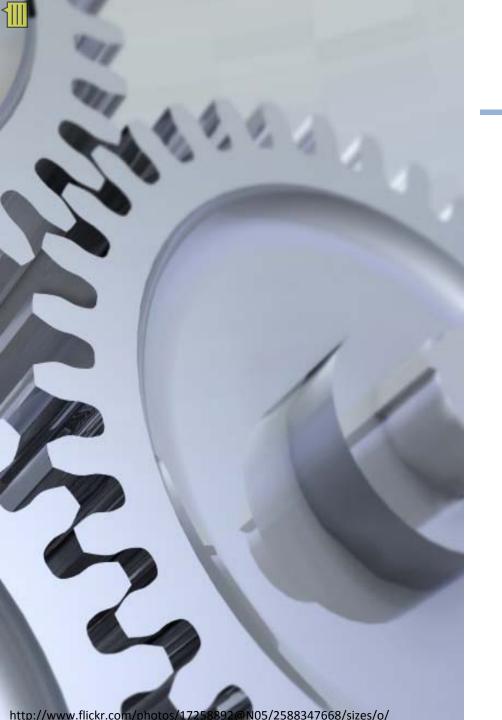
http://twitter.com/plugusin

Example Five:

A PLC uses a *collaborative document service* to generate a unit plan together.

http://snipurl.com/saunitplan

Example Six:

A PLC uses an *RSS Feed Reader* to organize a collection of content-based websites for their students to explore.

http://snipurl.com/cefeeds

"**By using digital tools, teachers can offer...targeted *support* to their peers from their classrooms, their workrooms, or their living rooms. The *costs of coordination* are reduced to just about zero."**
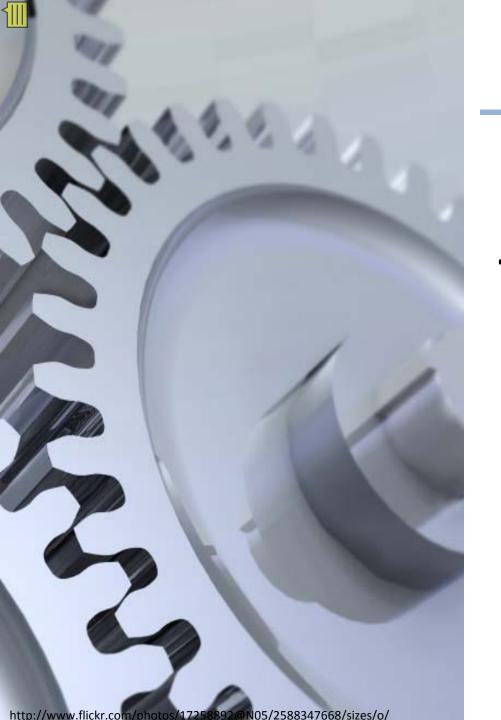
(Graham & Ferriter, 2010, p. 130)

"New digital tools will not ensure collaboration. *Shared values* **and goals between networks of likeminded individuals** *ensure collaboration* **—tools just make collaboration easier."**

(Graham & Ferriter, 2010, p. 131)

"There are no digital tools that will meet a team's *every need* because different tools do different things well. Successful *digital collaboration* depends on selecting the right tool for the right task."

(Graham & Ferriter, 2010, p. 131)

Activity:

Use the handouts titled Tools for Twenty-First-Century Learning Teams *Planning Guide* and *Matrices* to think through the kinds of digital work right for your learning team.

Works Cited

Shirky, C. (2008). *Here comes everybody: The power of organizing without organizations*. New York: Penguin.

Graham, P., & Ferriter, W. (2010). *Building a PLC at Work: A Guide to the First Year*. Bloomington, IN: Solution Tree.

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Bill Ferriter has about a dozen titles—Solution Tree PLC author and Associate, ASCD Columnist, Senior Fellow, the Teacher Leaders Network—but he checks them all at the door each morning when he walks into his sixth grade classroom!