

Collaborative Processes in Teacher Teams

By

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Abstract

In this project, I explored how school leaders can support and promote collaborative processes in teacher teams. The completed project provides a comprehensive literature review on various aspects of collaboration in teacher teams and leadership process and structure behind them. This study did not create new knowledge through academic research, but rather took existing research to synthesis into a manageable Professional Development template to be used in the future to inform and support the learning of practicing professionals in the field of K-12 education. I am a practicing secondary school teacher who has witnessed the benefits of collaboration first hand. My experiences in education have led to my desire to explore various issues surrounding collaboration on the K-12 education context through this project.

Glossary

21st Century Learning: A framework which outlines the skills and knowledge students will need to be successful in contemporary society (DuFour et al., 2008).

Community of Practice: Learning as a social process in which individuals share collectively to enhance knowledge around a topic of interest (Wenger, McDermott, & Snyder, 2002).

Collaboration: People working together interdependently to achieve common and individual goals (Dufour et al., 2008).

Collaborative Teacher Teams: A group of teachers working with a given structural framework or process with common goals aimed at improving professional practice (Ermeling & Yarbo, 2016; Pellegrino, Weiss, & Regan, 2015; Halbert, Kaser, & Koehn, 2011).

Professional Learning Communities: Schools that operate with a collaborative structure and strive for continued professional improvement through engaged reflection, improved instructional practice, shared leadership, and collaborative culture (Clausen, Aquino, & Wideman, 2009).

School Leaders: For the purpose of this study, school leaders are defined as school administrators and coordinators who are in charge of decisions affecting school structure: Activities and processes aimed at improving teacher understandings and practices around various topics associated with teachers' professional work (Broad & Evans, 2006).

Secondary School:

Teacher Self-Efficacy: Teacher beliefs and perceptions into their own professional practice and effectiveness (Wiggins & McTighe, 2006).

Acknowledgement and Dedication

I would like to dedicate this paper to my mother. A lifelong educator, a volunteer, a family woman, the most positive supportive influence I have had. You have loved me and provided me with opportunities I never dreamed were possible. I want to be like you when I grow up!

Chapter 1: The Research Framework

The idea of incorporating collaborative mechanisms in schools to facilitate school improvement and teacher development is imperative if schools wish to be successful regarding school reform. Eastwood and Louis (1992) identify the most important element of successful school reform as the ability to incorporate collaborative work environments. Recent studies document that school based teacher collaboration reduces isolated teaching practices, enhances a shared school vision, improves teacher instruction, and builds reflective cultures with an emphasis on student learning (Gallimore & Ermeling, 2010; Lewis & Hurd, 2011).

Building collaborative capacity in schools allows for problem identification, problem solving and conflict resolution through cooperative teamwork. The ability of school staff to engage in collaborative activities is crucial to school survival (Schlechty, 2005). A necessity for school improvement and improved teacher practice is the presence of professionals engaging in dialogue about effective teaching, observing colleagues practice, and supporting one another with assessments (Barth, 2006). Timperley, Wilson, Barr, & Fung (2007) identify elements of successful teacher development and link the development to student outcomes. Allowing “opportunities to participate in a professional community of practice” that are focused on analyzing issues related to teaching and students learning is documented as improving teacher and student performance.

Knowledge of the effectiveness of teacher collaboration in enhancing student learning and teacher development is widely documented (Dufour, DuFour, & Eaker, 2008; Hipp, Huffman, Pankake, & Olivier, 2008; Lomos, Hofman, & Bosker, 2011). I am a practicing teacher with five years of experience working in an international school setting. In my professional opinion, a culture of collaboration, inquiry, and action is necessary for shifting schools from traditional institutions to operating as professional learning communities.

Research shows that inter-school collaboration can benefit teachers through professional development opportunities that allow for engaged dialogue with other professionals (Armstrong, 2015).

Research points to the positive influence of inter-school collaboration on teachers and teaching, with practitioners reporting an increased motivation to engage in professional dialogue with their colleagues, knowledge mobilization and a general shift towards more learning-oriented and enquiry-based cultures in schools that have been collaborating (p. 3).

Much of what I reviewed about performativity and accountability suggests the United States of America places high importance on such. Too often, the structure of the American education system forces schools to compete with one another for achievement, resources, high scoring students, and the best teachers. The negative consequence of school leaders competing directly with one another instead of collaborating are the barriers posed for collective improvement thus, student learning is negatively affected (Hargreaves, Shirley, Harris, & Boyle, 2010). My experience as a teacher in an International School was different than the competitive American system described by Hargreaves et al. (2010). Our school has a branch of schools under the same ownership and routinely shares resources through online platforms, has school leaders meet regularly to learn from each other's experiences, and provides coordinated teacher professional development with school staff allowing for collective learning. While going through an International Baccalaureate (IB) authorization phase we were routinely presented with networking opportunities with other IB institutions. My professional teaching experiences are in line with Fullan (2005) who describes how successful organizations (including schools) develop their capacities through networking. This capacity building involves a collaborative process where professionals from different schools learn from one another in professional learning communities. In today's world, teachers are able to network with one another in online environments. Mitchell (2011) describes online teacher professional learning platforms titled as webinars. Webinars allow

teachers to engage with other professionals in virtual learning environments and engage in a wide range of topics. Fullan's (2005) model of capacity building through collaborative networking with different organizations is also relevant at a micro level. A collaborative team of teachers allows professionals in the same school environment to learn from one another when they begin to share their individual expertise and experiences with the group. The Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD, 2015) looks at schooling change projects at the meso-level and identifies "collaboration and co-operation" (p. 20) as a common feature of innovative learning environments. The collaboration and co-operation described in OECD (2015) involves formal and informal arrangements of networking that transcends districts and political borders.

In this particular project I reviewed existing literature to analyze how K-12 school leaders support collaborative processes in teacher teams through the following data collection and presentation methods: I performed a scholarly literature review of collaboration and networking in professional settings; I used a critical lens to analyze and synthesize the scholarly review to assist with informing education professionals on how to incorporate effective collaborative practices in schools through the creation of a Professional Development (PD) power point template that will inform educational practitioners regarding school improvement and reform resulting from effective collaborative mechanisms in schools. For the purpose of this project I will create a PD power point presentation to improve awareness on structuring collaboration in schools and present scholarly literature on how to make collaborative processes among teachers more effective.

Presently, I conceptualize teachers working in schools and collaborating as a community of practice. The concept of communities of practice has developed over time through the works of Jean Lave and Etienne Wenger (1991) is supported through the literature in subsequent years (Levine & Marcus, 2010; Wegner, 1998; Wenger, McDermott,

& Snyder, 2002). Historically, education and learning were thought of as individualistic linear endeavors resulting from teaching (Wenger, 1998). Alternatively, the situated learning model involved in communities of practice sees learning as social experiences resulting from daily life (Lave & Wenger, 1991). Communities of practice occur when individuals involve themselves in collective learning around a shared area of study. Essentially, it is a group of people who share an interest or concern learn collectively how to improve practice (Wenger et al., 2002). Levine and Marcus (2010) support the notion that collaborative work within communities is at the core of the learning process: “In communities of practice, the key mechanism for individual and group learning comprises access to observing and then participating in the practices at the core of the community” (p. 390). Teachers understanding of each student’s unique social context is critical his/her learning. However, new teachers who lack certain skills and support systems are often overwhelmed by the complexities and demands of meeting diverse student learning needs (Hammerness, Darling-Hammond, & Bransford, 2005). Based on the work of Hammerness et al. (2005) improved communities of practice could benefit teachers by allowing them to learn from one another through collaborative supports. According to Levine and Marcus the key to group success is having the ability to not just discuss, but witness practice in action. In my professional opinion, it is the removal of isolated practice in schools that is key to improving a group’s collective professional capacity. This study will provide accessibility to various informational resources regarding the processes and benefits resulting from teachers collaborating in teams thus, contributing to practitioners in the community of practice effective teacher team processes.

Study Focus: Reducing Teacher Isolation and Promotion of Collaborative Practice

Educational research has documented the need for professionals in education to adopt collaborative processes to move towards 21st century learning institutions (DuFour et al., 2008; Fulton, Yoon, & Lee, 2005). Moving from professional isolation towards collaboration

allows teachers to better identify problems, find solutions, implement strategies, and adjust teaching practices to suit student learning (Achinstein, 2002). Many contemporary teachers work within schools where isolated professional environments are both structured and cultural (DuFour et al., 2008). Research has shown that teachers working in isolation impedes school development and improvement, because it is difficult for individuals to overcome traditional structures and affect widespread organizational change if they work alone and the school culture is not collaborative (DuFour et al., 2008; Fulton, Yoon, & Lee, 2005). The traditional design of teachers working as self-contained units is fundamentally flawed. The prominent isolated design does not allow for teachers to engage with one another and learn from each other about effective practices through observations and conversations. When school staff are disconnected from one another any instructional improvement is left compartmentalized which does not benefit the larger stakeholders at a given school. Elmore, (2006) states the notion that instructional innovation left in isolation will die in the classroom if not shared. My current position as a secondary school teacher and professional observations of teacher perceptions on collaboration and organizational structures has led me to explore and expand my professional knowledge on the topic of teacher collaborative processes.

Study Rationale

I am a certified teacher presently working at a Canadian Accredited International Baccalaureate School in China. I also have some experience in the Canadian public school system. In my five-year career I witnessed educators who openly collaborated and others who were resistant to collaboration regarding student learning and teacher competencies. The scheduling of meetings by school administrators and school leaders is not enough to influence effective school reform that aims at improving student learning and developing teachers' competencies (DuFour et al., 2008). In my role as a teacher, I have observed staff

meetings that were, in theory, presented as collaborative learning opportunities. However, I felt there was a lack of coherent structure and observed what I thought to be teacher beliefs or lack of belief in the benefits of these meetings to the point of halting individual and collaborative learning. The meetings I observed lacked focus with disjointed information delivery processes that lead me to believe the overall message was that these meetings were a waste of teacher time that could be better spent preparing for their classes. I believe if the meeting agenda topics and processes were articulated in a clear and open manner while providing an opportunity for effective collaborative interaction and input there might not have been staff resistance thus, presenting school wide benefits, especially student benefits. Research states that collaboration amongst teachers has been proven to facilitate teacher professional growth, but teachers need to perceive the process as meaningful in order to engage and see professional benefits (DuFour et al., 2008). However, the observation I made was done at a time when I believed our school lacked a collaborative culture and shared goals which is why I felt our prescribed meetings were not effective. Two years later I see a shift in school culture in my location and our collaborative meetings have improved my professional practice as an educator. A study by Tam (2015) supporting the research of DuFour et al. (2008) that is, collaboration among teachers improves professional practice, revealed that the implementation of collaborative processes in schools in Hong Kong were successful in altering teachers' beliefs and professional teaching practices.

Upon reflection on my experience of working in an international school, the teaching staff tended to be transient in nature. Each year the range of experience varies from teachers who are new to the profession to those with extensive professional teaching experiences. In my opinion, all new staff members, in particular, would have benefited from an embedded culture of collaboration at my school. The teachers had expertise in a variety of areas but remained isolated to their classrooms because structures and culture were not in place to

support collaborative practices. Interventions were localized to classes, subject teams, or grades. Because of this, benefits of implemented programs were not school wide. My observations and reflections coincide with what was described by Elmore (2006) who stated that instructional initiatives are left isolated to individual classrooms and not benefited by the larger school staff if a culture of isolationism exists in the school.

For the previous two years the international school in which I work went through a transitional phase with the implementation of the International Baccalaureate Program which requires a great deal of curricular mapping and planning. Planning to implement a new curriculum requires the incorporation of various approaches to learning and assessment structures with which most of my staff lack experience. However, our teaching staff is routinely sent to professional development workshops throughout the region. Based on my experience, I think collaboration and capacity development through the implementation process is imperative for success during this transitional timeframe. It is because of my above mentioned experiences and personal location that I want to learn about, and inform others of effective collaborative practices in teacher teams.

Multiple research sources report that teacher isolation is the normal environment in which teaching practitioners work on a daily basis (Mawhinney, 2008; Pomson, 2005; Rogers & Babinski, 2002). An absence of collaboration in schools means there will be no meaningful improvement in curriculum development, staff development, or student assessment (Barth, 2006). A key to ensuring that the quality of teachers is high involves ensuring an organization structure that allows for teachers to learn from one another in established collaborative learning communities (DuFour et al., 2008; National Commission on Teaching and America's Future, 2003).

Despite the evidence based research on effective collaborative practices in schools, organizations still struggle to implement structures that support collaborative learning

(DuFour et al., 2008; Hipp & Huffman, 2010). Furthermore, a review of literature by Sawyer and Kaufman (2007) reveals that collaboration among teachers in schools is difficult to sustain. The structural failure of organizations and the reluctance of teachers to adopt collaboration have led to widespread isolated teaching in contemporary schools. It is important that school leadership adapts effective processes for facilitating systematic collaboration in their school culture (DuFour et al., 2008; Hipp & Huffman, 2010). This study will inform schools and organizations on how to move away from traditional isolated teaching practices to develop collaborative practice that will result in the enhancement teacher practice and student learning.

Research Questions

The main research question posed for the purpose of this project was: *How can education leaders develop collaborative processes that support teacher teams at their schools?* The purpose of this study was to answer the main question gaining insight into how educational leaders can develop and support effective collaborative processes in their ‘teacher teams’ in schools. The scholarly literature search assisted with defining and outlining what collaboration looks like in schools. After defining collaboration in the school context the research focused on what collaboration looks like and the various forms it can take while examining structures in place that support, or not, collaboration processes in schools. Furthermore, I analysed what effective leadership behind collaboration is in contemporary school settings. Effective leadership involves how to structure collaborative processes in specific school contexts, the allocation of resources, creating collaborative cultures, and providing effective instructional leadership. Finally, challenges and/or limitations that impede the collaborative process were examined. Through the literature review process, I kept an eye for academic literature of teacher experiences and that can be reported based on DuFour et al. (2008) notion that practitioners are drawn to stories.

Chapter Summary

In summary, this chapter provided the research framework, that is, study focus, study rationale, and general research questions, supported by my professional experiences and professional reflections in addition to the review of educational literature outlining(?) the importance of collaboration in schools. The research process provided evidence to determine and highlight the gaps regarding collaborative process. Chapter 2 consisted of a literature review of scholarly research around concepts of teacher collaboration, leadership, and professional development.

Chapter 2 Literature Review

The literature review chapter highlights academic literature on the topic of collaborative processes in teacher teams in schools. My intent is to define and understand collaboration in the K-12 school context. The chapter also explores the different ways that collaboration exists among teachers (what does it look like) and effective structures needed to ensure successful collaboration among teacher teams. The chapter will wrap up with an analysis of the literature regarding the impact effective leadership has on promoting collaborative processes and removing and/or minimizing barriers or challenges that impede collaboration.

Concepts of Collaboration in Schools

The following section outlines general understandings and different ways in which collaboration exists and consists of in schools. The purpose is to pinpoint what constitutes collaboration among teachers in schools, and to identify the different purposes and groups in which collaborative teams operate in the K-12 school setting.

Collaborative understandings. Developing collaboration in schools is not an easy initiative. There is no simple formula that can be applied in all locations. The context of the school will determine how successful implementation of collaboration should be undertaken but, despite reform, results may not be seen for several years (Fullan, 2007). Fullan (2000) stated the following about collaboration:

Even if you knew how particular schools became collaborative, you could never know precisely how you should go about it in your own school. There is no magic bullet; research can give us promising lines of thinking but never a complete answer. (p. 582)

Fullan's work (2000; 2007) provides insight into the difficulties of defining a universally applicable understanding of collaboration between teachers. There are a variety of purposes for teacher collaboration in educational institutions. Research shows both a need

and desire from K-12 schools to increase collaborative practices (McLeskey, Rosenberg, & Westling, 2013); however, Brownell, Griffin, Leko, and Stephens (2011) report that a universally applicable definition of collaboration in schools has yet to be clearly outlined. Pinpointing what collaboration among teachers' entails has remained elusive in contemporary academic literature. Definitions of collaboration are often vague, varied and theoretical. In general, the concept of teacher collaboration is associated with the relationships and working interactions between professionals (Woodland, Lee, & Randall, 2013).

Pellegrino, Weiss, and Regan (2015) synthesized the literature on collaboration and came to an understanding that true collaborative practices must be more than “pleasantries”, and instead, be grounded in purposeful action towards shared goals. Professional exchanges and encounters must move beyond dialogue into transformative action focused on student learning (Pugach & Blanton, 2009). A combination of definitions from Dufour et al. (2008) identifies collaboration as people interdependently working with each other through a systematic process. The team analysis focuses on professional practice in an attempt to advance both individual and collective results. The team refers to the group of individuals who are mutually accountable and engaged in working interdependently to achieve common goals. For the purpose of this study, teacher collaboration is defined as the process of professionals interacting with one or more colleagues towards improving professional practice and achieving professional goals (Dufour et al. 2008).

Identifying collaborative teams. Montague and Warger (2001) state that an interaction between teachers needs to involve planning or problem solving in order to be classified as collaboration. The literature identifies collaborative schools as having increased staff interaction and professionalism. Collaborative interactions involve collective problem solving, decision making through distributed leadership, and data sharing (McLeskey & Waldron, 2000; Walther-Thomas, Korinek, McLaughlin, & Williams, 2000). Schools that try

to improve their collaborative capacities strive for ways to open communication within their organization. This is done by encouraging reflection, sharing, and risk taking in school staff (Vescio, Ross, & Adams, 2008). Evidence from the literature indicates that in order for staff to feel free to take risks and be confident to collaborate the school must embrace and exhibit a supportive culture (Barth, 2006; DuFour et al., 2008). Collaboration can occur in both informal and formal contexts. Informal conversations between teachers that occur outside of school, in a school hallway, or the staff room are forms of collaboration and relationship building (Sawyer & Kaufman, 2007). Formalized collaboration is much more structured and occurs less frequently than informal collaboration as stated by Sawyer and Kaufman (2007):

Formalized collaboration, which happens less frequently, has protocols, guidelines and techniques, typically established by the school administration. Teaching teams, exchanging classes, co-teaching, peer coaching, study groups and small-scale conduction of applied research in supportive teams are several formal collaborative structures. (p. 213)

Introduction to Concepts of Teacher Team Collaboration

The literature provides insight to the variety and breadth in which teachers collaborate within a variety of contexts. The following categories briefly outline specific types of collaborative practices in teacher teams identified in the literature.

Partnerships between teacher teams and outside context experts. In an Outside Context Expert (OCE) partnership teacher teams interact and engage with experts in a given field. Examples may include university professors, educational researchers, industry professionals, and specialists. This method allows teams to work with together with professionals who are up to date on the latest research practices within a given educational concept or topic (Ermeling & Yarbo, 2016).

Collaboration between general and special educators. This partnership involves classroom teachers working with special education teachers who are in charge of supporting students with a variety of disabilities. The purpose of this type of collaboration is to ensure

the inclusivity of education and to attempt to have all students' needs met. This form of collaboration may involve co-teaching, involve communication where teachers develop Individual Education Plans (IEP's) for particular students, or include the sharing of resources (Pellegrino, Weiss, & Regan, 2015).

Co-teaching teams. Co-teachings are a practice where more than one teacher is in charge of planning and instructing a class as a collaborative process. Co-teaching has been identified as beneficial for teacher practice and student learning because it allows for individuals (teachers) with different levels of knowledge and expertise to provide input in the class and allows for individualized student instruction and attention (Murawski, 2008).

Interdisciplinary teams. Interdisciplinary teams operate when educators engage in the joint construction and instruction of interdisciplinary curriculum. Teachers with different expertise share decision making and instructional planning. This team teaching structure allows teachers the autonomy to alter schedules and conventional age configurations to meet the needs of the lesson and students (Shaefer, Malu, & Yoon, 2015).

Benefits of Collaboration in Schools

The following section synthesizes the benefits outlined in academic literature that result when collaborative practices occur in K-12 schools. This section shows the importance of studying the topic of collaboration in schools and presents the results associated with effective implementation of collaborative processes.

Shared Knowledge, Increased Capacity, and Decreased Ambiguity

Bolam, McMahon, Stoll, Thomas, and Wallace (2005) examined survey results and case study data regarding teacher perceptions on the impact of collaborative practices from over 400 schools. The data analysis indicated that teachers participating in collaborative activities had a positive impact on teaching practice as well as staff morale. Teachers interacting and sharing with one another allowed space and time to benefit from diverse

perspectives and experiences as opposed to individual experiences. Goddard, Goddard, and Tschannen-Moran (2007) concluded that collaboration “encourages teachers to move beyond reliance on their own memories and experiences with schooling and toward engagement with others around important questions of teaching and learning” (p. 892). Goddard et al. (2007) further contend that collaboration amongst teachers improves instructional practices and increases teachers’ abilities to solve critical problems in schools. This increased ability of teachers to solve critical problems subsequently, holds potential for increased student achievement. Teachers often note that effective collaboration can foster positive change in school because of a decrease in ambiguity surrounding how to approach challenging problems and working within a supportive culture (Sawyer & Kaufman, 2007). There is a correlation between collaborative practices in teachers that focus on issues related to student learning and increased student achievement (Williams, 2010).

Self-Efficacy

Historically, Bandura (1977) has heavily influenced the study of teacher efficacy. Self-efficacy refers to individual teacher’s beliefs and perceptions of their own professional effectiveness in their job (classroom). A contemporary study states, “The commonly accepted definition of efficacy involves the ability to have or cause an effect” (Dickinson, 2009, p. 6). The same study, by Dickinson (2009), measured teachers’ perceptions of collaboration on teacher learning defined teacher self-efficacy as “the individual teacher’s belief or perception of their own effectiveness in the classroom” (p. 6). Teachers who have participated in collaborative efforts and associate themselves as being part of a professional team report an increase in their efficacy (Wiggins & McTighe, 2006). Wiggins and McTighe report that teachers showed an increased confidence and belief in their professional abilities when actively participating in teams. Their work implies that collaboration positively impacts teachers’ perceptions of their personal influence, power, and influence on students they work

with and thus their effectiveness in their roles as teachers. Ross and Gray (2006) conducted a study analyzing all of the elementary schools in two Canadian school districts leadership methods and their effects on teachers' efficacy. Results indicated that leadership had effects on teacher efficacy, commitment, and that efficacy indicated a commitment to partnerships. A leadership model that is shared, focused on change, and supports collaborative teacher practices increases teachers' self-efficacy.

Collaborative Cases

The following international and Canadian cases referenced below demonstrate collaborative approaches in education in different locations and contexts. The cases support the academic literature provided in the previous section showing the benefits of collaboration in schools by facilitating student achievement, professional learning and teacher beliefs as:

Case Study 1. Leane (2014) describes the success experienced when he implemented Richard DuFour's (1998) concept of a Professional Learning Community (PLC) in his swecondary school mathematics department. Leane's team reported success in improving grade 8 mathematics overall student academic achievement. Prior to implementing intervention plans, the team assessed that the majority of their classes were performing below state-wide grade level standards. A key element to DuFours' (1998) model is identifying what students should be able to know, figuring out how to assess if students have met the outcomes, and deciding on an intervention plan when students either meet or fail to meet the prescribed outcomes. As expressed by Leane (2014), the team's identification and intervention plan by following Dufours' PLC concept led to the majority of the mathematics classes improved achievement to meet state-wide standards. The team's collaborative approach was perceived by teachers to be a major reason for the improved student achievement.

Case study 2. An American nationwide study of a one to one teacher mentorship program for novice teachers exhibited that the collaborative partnership benefited both the novice and experienced educators. Teachers new to the profession gained both content and management competencies, while experienced teachers were able to share their knowledge as well as reflect on their practice (Kadji-Beltran, Zachariou, Liarakou, & Flogaitis, 2014).

One component of effective collaboration as professional development (PD) for teachers occurs when the PD is structured with collaboration opportunities built into the schedule (Gröschner, Seidel, Kiemer, & Pehmer, 2014). Professional development for teachers in England is generally less effective in improving teaching practices when it occurs over a short time frame in the form of traditional one day or weekend workshops, professional development in high performing schools is collaborative in nature and allows time for reflection. Higher achieving schools have professional development that is longer in duration, more active, and collaborative. Systems and structures are in place for networking and collaboration at schools which allow for long term, engaging, and collaborative professional development. Lower performing schools participate in short term professional development workshops and operate in conditions where their performance is evaluated regularly (Opfer & Pedder, 2011). Opfer and Pedder's study of the English system suggests that an open culture of collaboration is more conducive to success than a performance evaluative model and short term workshops aimed at enhancing teachers practice.

Professional Learning Communities

Schools that adopt learning community models have a positive effect on teacher development and student learning (Vescio, Ross, & Adams, 2008). A collaborative culture within schools is associated with the development of professional learning communities. A common theme among research into the successful development of professional learning communities in schools is the need for collaboration (DuFour et al, 2008; Hipp et al., 2008).

Schools operating as PLC's operate on the premise that critical reflection of lived experiences can improve practice, teachers actively engage to improve their professional capacity to improve student learning, and schools strive to promote collaborative work cultures (Vescio et al., 2008). Clausen, Aquino, and Wideman (2009) conducted a case study comparing a schools' implementation of a learning community to existing literature. In their literature search the authors presented a model which identifies general characteristics of what a learning community looks like. Specific components of this particular model include shared goals, shared power, flexible structures, and open communication. There are multiple references in the model to "group" and "community". PLC dimensions shown in Hipp et al. (2008, p. 175) state that schools operating as learning communities show "shared leadership, shared, values, collective learning, shared practice, and supportive conditions". Teachers engage in collaborative practices with greater frequency when they work in learning communities. Working in learning communities shifts the way teachers approach their work because a culture of isolationism is replaced with a team focus (Bolam et al., 2005). After identifying the need for collaboration the question then becomes how can schools move towards implementing structured that develop collaborative capacities in their organization?

Collaborative Models

Collaborative models identified in academic literature from K-12 education, community coalitions, and organizational change are presented throughout this section of the literature review. The goal of this section is to provide an array of models prevalent to education but also different fields regarding the general theme of collaboration. These models provide a framework from which education boards and/or individual schools can adopt or adapt when integrating collaborative processes in their organizations.

Waldron and Mcleskey (2010) provide a structure for establishing a collaborative culture in schools through comprehensive school reform (CSR) as: a) the first step of CSR

involves an initial whole school discussion on the importance of the reform as an ongoing process with a clear explanation of what the reform entails and expectations of teachers in their classrooms, and as; b) following the initial discussion a team including the principal and teachers is created to lead the change process; c) once the team is formed it analyses available data and focuses its attention on student issues in its location; d) next the team examines its options and capacity for school change by consulting with internal and external agents; e) the staff is then provided with extensive professional development to prepare for the change initiative; and, f) finally, once the specific reform is implemented the CRS team monitors the effectiveness of the change through data obtained from its staff to evaluate programming.

In our work, the CSR team has provided the foundation for developing a collaborative school culture as an effective, inclusive school is being developed. In these schools, the CSR team has provided the initial model in a school for a learning community. (Waldron & Mcleskey, 2010, p. 62)

McCarthy, Brennan, and Vecchiarello (2011) provide suggestions for developing positive collaborative relationships as: a) clearly define roles and responsibilities of team members; b) come to a consensus on a shared vision; c) establish a strategic plan for collaboration; and, d) assess and make adjustments to the plan.

Brodesky, Gross, Tigheand, & Palmer (2007) assert that teacher problem solving can be fostered through the following: a) increasing understandings of students and content; b) aligning student needs with strategic goals; c) implement strategies, incorporate reflection into the strategies effectiveness jointly with stakeholders; and, d) make sure lesson planning and assessments are done collaboratively.

Five essential characteristics of effective cooperation that promote higher organizational achievement and productivity are interdependence, individual accountability, positive interaction, effective utilization of social skills, and the group's ability to process.

The effective cooperative elements are based on a Positive Social Interdependence collaborative model (Johnson & Johnson, 2009).

Halbert, Kaser, and Koehn (2011) develop an inquiry framework for teacher teams titled *Spirals of Inquiry*. The authors argue for leaders to approach school transformation through “developing an inquiry mindset” (p. 2) and note that inquiry is effectively realized when teachers actively participate in a collaborative community. The model could be applied as a guide to help focus collaborative teacher team meetings and solve problems in individual contexts. The idea behind the spiral is that inquiry is never closed but, rather ongoing. Once one cycle is addressed teams move on to the phase one of the framework and begins the cycle with a new issue to address. There are six phases to the spirals of inquiry model as: a) identification of something that needs to be addressed which is the problem, issue, or learning need; b) a guiding question is posed; c) a criterion is developed for success; d) teacher learning is enhanced in the area of the issue being addressed; e) new learning and teaching emerges; and, f) learning (problem, issue, etc.) is reassessed (Halbert et al., 2011).

Foster-Fishman, Berkowitz, Lounsbury, Jacobson and Allen (2001) conducted an extensive analysis of collaborative competencies and processes in community coalitions. From their literature analysis they created a framework for developing collaborative capacity that could be applied to organizations. The authors’ findings suggest that coalitions need to identify and increase collaborative capacity in the following manner: a) within their members; b) within their relationships; c) within their organizational structure; and, d) within the programs they sponsor. The first phase of the model involves addressing the core skills and knowledge the group requires for collaborating and critically analysing programming effectively in the organization. Organizations need to first understand their current capacity, get the most out of the diverse knowledge they possess from different team members, and then develop knowledge through training and recruitment. A component of this phase is

increasing members' ability to communicate and collaborate with one another. The second phase is structured around building positive attitudes towards collaboration. If individuals feel that the cost of collaboration outweighs the benefit, then meaningful participation is not possible. Strategies for increasing collaborative motivation involve revisiting goals and vision with members, addressing dissatisfied participants, reducing the costs of participation, and enhance incentives for participation in collaboration. Next, organization involves building membership access. Different individuals and groups within an organization bring different experiences and skills that can increase overall organizational capacity if shared. Structures are required that promote inclusion and sharing in order to access diverse members in a group. The model also identifies relational capacity as critically important to collaboration. Relational capacity is promoted through building positive internal and external interactions. Strategies for developing relational capacity involve promoting informal opportunities to socialize and more formal procedures such as criteria for decision making and structures to ensure inclusive decision making. Another phase of the model involves increasing organizational capacity through a variety of means. Strategies involve building leadership, effectively allocating resources and structuring meetings, disseminating accurate information to inform team members, increasing professional development, and anticipating resource acquisition. The final phase involves the implementation of programming which the authors refer to as programming capacity. The central feature of enhancing programming capacity is the organization's ability to take community input and conduct ongoing assessments. The model is extensive with tables that clearly identify and present strategies to promote collaborative environments. For a more extensive review of the framework one should consult the work of Foster-Fishman et al. (2001).

A doctoral dissertation based out of Wilfrid Laurier University by Munger (2014) synthesized collaborative theory identifying tasks that are linked to collaborative

development of organizations as: a) assess organizational and personal attitudes and readiness; b) determine initial collaboration purpose and type; c) identify membership needs and conduct stakeholder analysis; d) establish the collaboration; e) specify collaboration purpose, mission, and structure with members; f) identify contextual characteristics of the collaboration; g) determine structural characteristics of the collaboration; h) manage group dynamics; i) retain members and grow membership; j); and, institutionalize the collaboration.

School Leadership and Collaboration

School leaders are responsible for numerous school operations and initiating the direction of the school. Educational research suggests that school leadership is essential in fostering supportive and effective collaborative settings for teachers. School leaders affect teachers' collaborative operations by initiating professional development opportunities, allocating time and resources, and providing instructional leadership to teachers. When instructional leadership is provided and prioritized by leadership, teacher collaboration occurs with greater frequency (Goddard & Miller, 2010). Sawyer and Rimm-Kaufman (2007) contend that administration should prioritize and model collaborative behaviors. This modeling by school leadership establishes a collaborative culture within the school and as a result, teachers are more likely to actively engage with similar behaviors. Research by Goddard and Miller (2010) concluded that there was a direct cause and effect between leadership practices and teacher collaboration. Goddard and Miller's work supports Sawyer and Rimm-Kaufman in showing the importance and influence that school leaders have on teacher collaboration. The implication of the work is that leaders should employ a cooperative shared leadership model and be actively engaged in instructional leadership in their location to promote collaborative practices in teacher teams.

Shared Leadership

Numerous studies report that effective leadership is not a unilateral role but, insist that leadership should be a collaborative process where staff constantly contributes, shares ideas, and works as a team (Waldron & Mcleskey, 2010). The authors note historically, principals have been the most important leaders in schools but, when schools embrace a collaborative culture there is an increased demand for leadership to come from a variety of roles within schools. Principals have duties that are beyond the scope of any one individual and the nature of collaborative schools is such that decisions are not made solely by a single individual. This notion is supported because of the need for enhanced leadership from school staff, the principal needs to effectively distribute leadership and increase the leadership capacities of members of the staff (Waldron & Mcleskey, 2010).

Effective leadership in a collaborative school community requires that principals' practice distributed leadership practices (Augustine-Shaw, 2015; Mangin, 2007). Distributed leadership involves the sharing of responsibilities among team members. The advantage of distributed leadership in the school setting is that generally one person does not hold expertise over the group in the diverse fields within a school (curriculum, instruction, special education, etc.). Mangin (2007) suggests that principals' support distributed leadership by making their willingness to share decision making, providing ongoing support for team leaders, and clearly communicates expectations.

Beyond distributed leadership, in a collaborative culture, principals need to understand collaboration and support collaborative dynamics in their location. Modeling collaboration is also required for a collaborative culture to flourish in schools (Mangin, 2007).

My experience has shown me that the role of K-12 school principals is vast. School leaders are responsible for the allocation of resources and financing in regard to school

infrastructure, scheduling, problem solving, relationship building, and providing a guiding vision for the development of all aspects of the school. When making decisions regarding all aspects of a school, leaders need to be cognizant of increasing the capacity of the school. Through resource allocation (physical resources, and getting the most out of teachers' capacity) principals set the conditions that either support or deter collaboration (Mangin, 2007).

Hipp et al. (2008) describe two cases of school journeys towards becoming professional learning communities. Both schools identified shared leadership as critical to the success and development of their school. In both documented cases administrators shared their trust in their staff to make decisions and describe that leadership comes from multiple locations in the school. "It's like an onion; it's in layers, because we have so many different people heading up different areas" (p.183).

Instructional Leadership for Re-Culturing and Vision

Fullan (2007) stated that developing collaboration in schools requires a re-culturing as opposed to a restructuring. Re-culturing occurs when professionals question their beliefs about student learning and adopt new processes that are shaped by collaboration. At the center of School re-culturing is a guiding belief about how operations should occur and the purpose behind them at school. Fullan referred to a key component of re-culturing as being the ability to note how effective leaders are at creating, articulating and developing a vision at their school that embraces collaborative practices.

In general terms, Instructional Leadership analyzes the powerful decisions principals and, to a lesser extent, teachers make in influencing individuals and processes within a school (Gulcan, 2012). The study of Instructional Leadership is primarily focused on the role the principal of a school plays in developing, implementing, and supervising the curriculum and pedagogical approaches of instruction (Hallinger, 2003). In Hallinger's (2000) earlier work,

he developed a broader model for constructing the roles of Instructional Leaders through the use of defining a school's mission and creating a positive culture, along with managing the instructional programs in the school. A review of literature by Gulcan (2012) states the five roles of an Instructional Leader as: to identify a clear school vision, determine the programming and administer programming within the school, facilitate staff professional development, monitor teaching, and create a positive climate. Hallinger (2003) shows that Instructional Leaders have both a direct and indirect impact on student achievement and school effectiveness based on the policies they enact. It is important for principals to build a shared vision and support effective learning. In the school I work in the staff was involved in the process of creating our schools mission statement and vision through open meetings, surveys, and an online discussion board. I believe this process helped our staff to take ownership of our school vision and direct us to where we wanted to be as an institution. Leaders should use research data to guide their decisions and constantly reflect and react to what is transpiring in their location (Ishimaru & Galloway, 2014). Effective principals do not let quality teachers and learning strategies remain isolated in their classroom (Augustine-Shaw, 2015).

Barriers and Limitations of Teacher Collaboration

It is important to note barriers or challenges that researchers have identified with regard to collaborative teacher teams. When administrators require teachers meet in teams and the teachers do not see the benefit or believe in the meetings they appear to apply a token effort into the group objectives (Hargreaves & Fullan, 2012). In order to have teachers engage in meaningful collaboration they need to feel that the process is meaningful and leaders need to have articulated a clear vision for the school that staff rallies around (DuFour et al., 2008).

Research into collaboration within school communities tends to yield simplistic and positive portrayals of collaborative reforms. However, it is critical for practitioners in schools to be aware of and understand how to deal with inevitable conflict that occurs within teams (Achinstein, 2002). Achinstein identifies conflict within teacher teams as a naturally occurring phenomenon which holds potential for organizational growth. The author describes border politics, conflict, and ideology as micro-political processes that lead to challenges in teacher communities as professionals interact with one another. Conflict arises because of differences in philosophy about the best course of action moving forward. “Fostering a culture of collaboration within a professional community may spark conflict. Communities are often born into conflict because they demand substantial change in school norms and practices” (p. 425). The contributions Achinstein has made in terms of research states that leaders need to articulate a clear mission for schools moving forward (Fullan, 2007; Gulcan, 2012; Hallinger, 2000).

Sawyer and Kaufman (2007) identify several factors identified in academic literature that serve as barriers to teacher collaboration. One factor is the ‘environment or culture’ in which teachers operate. If the school does not promote collaboration then teacher behaviours, beliefs, and attitudes are affected. Teachers may also not ask for help because they feel it makes them look inferior at their profession. Another detriment is that some teachers fear losing control (autonomy) of their classrooms and think that if they collaborate they will not receive the credit they deserve for team driven initiatives. Sawyer and Kaufman present the second factor as ‘physical’ in that teachers lack the time allocation necessary to formally collaborate effectively. Essentially, it comes down to an issue of scheduling. Finally, a third factor involves ‘social processes’ that are linked to a lack of effective collaboration. Because of traditional isolated structures, teachers lack experiences and skills required for effective

collaboration. Professional development is noted as a key to improving teachers' abilities to effectively collaborate (2007).

Teachers come to work with diverse individual characteristics which make collaboration inherently difficult. Difference may include but are not limited to personalities, individual and shared experiences, values, educational perspectives, beliefs on effective education. Diverse teacher characteristics can create negative social interdependence and lead to a negative collaborative culture if not managed well (Johnson & Johnson, 2009).

Formalized teacher collaboration generally takes place away from where teachers engage in their pedagogical practices with students. With the exception of peer observations and team teaching, collaboration often occurs in team meetings where teachers verbalize their experiences or show students work. What teachers learn from one another through collaboration is limited to what others are willing to share and micro political processes may shut down or steer professional conversations (Little, 2002).

Advocates for collaborative practices between educators have increased over the past twenty years and research shows a link between increased teacher collaboration and improvements in both teaching pedagogy and student achievement (Carroll, Fulton, & Doerr, 2010; Saunders, Goldenberg & Gallimore, 2009). However, the shift in improved educational practice is slow because teachers are hesitant to change their views and entrenched practices over time (Roth, Druker, Garnier, Lemmens, Chen, Kawanaka, & Gallimore, 2006).

Ongoing professional development is important in enhancing collaborative communities. However, traditional delivery of professional development (short term, expert lecture, no follow up) hinders collaboration. Timperley, Wilson, Barrar, and Fung (2007) contend that based on prevailing academic literature it is generally accepted that teachers listening to inspirational presenters and attendance of one day workshops rarely changes teaching practices to the extent that a significant improvement in student learning occurs. The

traditional method of professional development in education involves the assumption that knowledge about effective teaching practices is derived from researchers. The researchers then transmit the knowledge to teachers who are passive recipients in the process (Waldron & Mcleskey, 2010). The traditional structure of professional development makes no inclusion of collaborative processes. A study by Joyce and Showers (2002) found that 95% of teachers implemented new practices in their teaching when professional development followed a collaborative format. The 95% implementation rate that collaborative professional development models show is compared with a 5-10% rate of teachers who implement practices that come from traditional professional development models (Joyce & Showers, 2002).

Effective Professional Development for Teachers

Academic literature provides numerous definitions of what constitutes teacher professional development. Teacher PD can be formal or informal. It involves various processes of teacher learning experiences intended to improve understandings and practices (Broad & Evans, 2006). Conventional or traditional forms of teacher PD include conferences, one off lectures, teacher institutes. These conventional PD activities generally tend to be short term and involve teachers traveling to different locations in the hopes that what they learn will be implemented in their classroom and improve professional practice (Russo, 2004). Russo further contends that conventional PD activities have yielded disappointing results. Darling Hammond, Wei, Andree, Richardson, and Orphanos (2009) reported that professional learning for teachers is poorly executed and flawed. The major drawback of conventional PD workshops is that the time allocation does not allow for rigorous study of the topic or meaningful reflection. Time is rarely allocated for collaborative activities meaningful to the realities of a teachers' professional roles and responsibilities (teacher observations, collaborative sharing, problem solving, etc.), instead education boards spend

millions on conventional forms of PD that are disconnected from the realities of specific locations and the day to day operational challenges of teachers. PD in education should take a note from other professional fields (military, medicine, and business) and make professional learning continuous, collaborative, and hands on or focused on the specific challenges of the communities in which teachers work (Darling Hammond et al., 2009).

Darling Hammond et al. (2009) conducted an extensive report on PD in the United States and abroad (citing successful international examples). Their report identified several key findings related to effective PD and contemporary professional learning that occurs in education as: a) professional development learning that is collaborative based promotes school change and improvement that goes beyond individuals and individual classrooms; b) effective PD takes on the characteristics of being intensive, ongoing, connected to practice (what is going on in the location), and develops working relationships between teachers; c) new teachers (those with less than five years of working experience) benefit from support which is typically seen through mentorship and introductory programs; and, d) in order for sustained improved practice teachers require substantial time dedicated to PD in a particular area (around fifty hours). However, many teachers in the United States only attend short term and are not given adequate time to share or collaborate with colleagues (Darling-Hammond et al., 2009).

Chapter Summary

The chapter provided a thorough review of academic literature related to the research questions on the topic of collaborative processes in K-12 education. Content reviewed various educational research sources to highlight the following topics of interest regarding teacher teams and collaboration in the K-12 school system such as: defining collaboration in teacher teams, outlining various ways in which collaboration occurs between teachers, presenting collaborative models, addressing barriers and challenges to collaborative practices

in schools, making the connection between 21st century education and collaborative practices, providing an overview of leadership that relates to collaboration in education, and outlining effective PD trends for teachers. The methodology for how the search was conducted is outlined in Chapter 3 of this project. Chapter 3 explains the search criteria, search procedure, limitations of the study, outline the specific research questions for this project, and explain the process that developed the project manual and PD template.

Chapter 3: Method

Chapter Three provides an overview of my method for data collection, data analysis and timeline for completion of this project. My project consisted of a literature review, an analysis/synthesis of the literature pertinent to my research questions, and the creation of a professional development power point template based on the results of my research. The purpose of the power point is to provide a medium to present my project to practitioners in K-12 education. The specific research questions I attempted to find through this study are also described below.

Literature Search Criteria

I examined a range of sources including research articles, reports, books, and periodicals related to my project topic of collaborative processes in teacher teams. The below bullets outline my selection criteria for academic data in my literature review and considerations for collaborative processes in K-12 education.

- Reports, articles, and books cited in my review included original research.
- Reports, articles, and books cited were from academics and organizations that are known in the scholarly community.
- The final report includes literature that was published both Nationally (Canadian content) and Internationally (worldwide).
- Literature was reported from both qualitative and quantitative studies.
- Literature was published, for the most part after 2000 to 2016 although, older studies that were prevalent to the topic were cited and referenced in the study.

Search Procedure

I began my search in April of 2015 and collected and analyzed sources until August of 2016 that met my search criteria outlined for my literature review. From September 1st to

21st 2016 I conducted my analysis of literature by using Braun and Clarke's (2006) model of thematic qualitative analysis. Articles that were saved with relevance to the project and met the search criteria were themed and categorized. Based on my analysis of literature I created the professional development template. The template was sent to my supervisor for review in October of 2016. The search of literature and data to support my project continued to be updated throughout my research process through comments, reviews, and suggestions from my project supervisor Dr. Catherin Whalen and committee members Dr. Peter MacMillan and Ms. Deborah Kohen. The final project product was submitted in December of 2016.

I found the academic literature used in the creation of this project through scholarly databases and books with key terms and combinations of terms for my literature search. Key search terms used to collect data were: Collaboration, Teacher Teams, Teachers, School Leadership, Collaborative Processes, Collaborative Environments, Schools, Collaborative Structure, Barriers to Collaboration, Perceptions of Collaboration, and Professional Development.

The following strategies indicated in the points below assisted me in accessing academic data and were analyzed in my literature review:

- Manual searches of relevant journals and books suggested my professors', colleagues, committee members, and research supervisor.
- Electronic searches of the following databases: Academic Search Complete, ERIC, Education Research Complete, Google Scholar, and ProQuest Dissertations and Thesis. The search terms (stated above) were cross referenced in the databases.
- Internet searches using the google search engine to identify relevant books.
- Scouring of the reference list of relevant articles, books, and research reports of literature I have reviewed for titles that match my topic.

Integrative Literature Review and Analysis

An integrative literature review approach by Torraco (2005) was used in the creation of Chapter 2. The importance and reason behind the exploration of collaborative processes in K-12 education was identified and articulated by myself in Chapter 1. Research questions around the research topic were identified and described in writing to initiate the search process. With the initiation of my search terms (described in the search procedure section above) categories were developed based on a broad conception of relationships identified in existing academic literature around the topic of collaboration in teacher teams in K-12 education. The articles I deemed to be relevant to my research questions were placed in a drop box on Microsoft OneDrive for the duration of my literature review. The same folder was used to keep a running annotated bibliography for articles, books, and reports I thought could be included in my literature review. The annotated bibliography served only to guide my project as a reference for reviewed articles. My project document served as a running document for review with email submissions and comments made by my Project Supervisor, Dr. Catherine Whalen. Articles were reviewed in relation to answering the research questions for this project. The research questions for this project formed the basis for creating a conceptual structure to analyze existing data that was extracted for critical analysis. Once academic literature has been compiled I adapted Braun and Clarke's (2006) model of thematic qualitative analysis to analyze the extracted information and conduct my analysis which, will lead to the future creation of the project's manual and professional development power point template. Steps for conducting the literature analysis included 1) familiarizing myself with data by reading and re-reading my literature review; 2) initial codes were searched for; 3) themes that emerge from the codes searched for and reviewed; 4) themes were then be placed in relation to the research questions identified for this project. The goal

of the analysis was to answer the research questions. The creation of the professional development template was based on the analysis of the literature review. The purpose of the future manual is to synthesize the literature with the purpose of weaving and connecting existing academic knowledge with new ideas around the topic of collaboration in teacher teams and K-12 education. The project power point template takes existing information to present a unique conception and model for practitioners to consider when implementing and improving collaborative processes in their K-12 educational context. My concept of synthesizing information for the future manual will be taken from pages 362 and 363 in Torraco (2005).

Research Questions

My overall research question is: *How can education leaders develop collaborative processes that support teacher teams at their schools?* Additional guiding questions for the study are listed below. The questions identified below guided my literature review, and the creation of the professional development template.

1. What does teacher collaboration look like in schools?
2. What specific types of behaviours do individuals that collaborate effectively exhibit?
3. How can team meetings be structured to promote collaboration?
4. How can leadership directly influence the level of collaboration among teachers?
5. What are people's experiences of effective teacher teams?
6. What factors impede collaboration in teacher teams?
7. How can barriers to collaboration be removed?

Limitations

The structure of this project does not contribute new knowledge to the academic field, but rather provides a synthesis of existing data and perceptions on collaborative processes in teacher teams. The newness and originality of this project was the creation of a professional

development template to guide education leaders with accessible information, reflective questions, and ideas to implement support collaborative processes in K-12 schools.

Chapter Summary

This chapter outlined my research methodology and steps that were taken to collect data for the creation of the final product of my project into collaborative processes in K-12 teacher teams. The Academic literature was found through a rigorous search of scholarly books, academic journals, and databases with combinations of terms around the topic of study. The focus of my analysis once the literature review was conducted was to answer the research questions outlined in the section above. While the literature produced after the year 2000 was prioritized to contemporize the project, older pertinent literature was included in certain sections of the literature review because of the foundational importance to educational reform over the past several decades. The analysis of the literature searches and review using Torraco (2005) and Braun and Clarke's (2006) assisted my efforts in creation of my project.

Chapter 4: Analysis of the Literature

This section presents my analysis and discussion based on a synthesis and review of the academic literature compiled in Chapter 2 of the project. The analysis was based on the focus research questions for this project and the main question of how school leaders can develop effective collaborative processes that support teacher teams in their schools? A description of the project PD template is also outlined.

What Does Teacher Collaboration Look Like?

Teacher collaboration involves professionals working together to address problems and improve practice in their locations. Collaboration takes on many forms and purposes depending on specific contexts but, true collaborative interactions must move beyond pleasantries and superficial discussions. Teacher collaborate when they participate in meaningful engaged dialogue that leads to purposeful process driven action around shared goals focused on student learning. Characteristics of collaborative teacher teams include problem solving, sharing, reflection, action, risk-taking, and striving for improvement (DuFour et al., 2008; Pellegrino, Weiss, & Regan, 2015; Pugach & Blanton, 2009; Vescio, Ross, & Adams, 2008). Collaboration occurs in both formal and informal environments. Informal collaboration typically takes the form of less structured interactions where teachers converse casually while formal collaboration involves structured meetings that are generally organized by school administration (Sawyer & Kaufman, 2007). In contemporary education environments where innovative learning environments are present teachers and others involved in education spend a considerable amount of time engaged in professional conversations about educational strategies tailored to specific individuals, and practices both inside and outside of the organization (OECD, 2015). In addition to discussion about professional practice collaboration could involve team teaching (OECD, 2015), interdisciplinary teams (Shaefer, Malu, & Yoon, 2015), partnerships with outside experts

(Ermeling & Yarbo, 2016), and collaboration between special and general educators (Pellegrino, Weiss, & Regan, 2015).

What Types of Characteristics do Individuals that Collaborate Effectively Exhibit?

An analysis of the literature suggests that individuals who possess the ability to collaborate effectively exhibit the following characteristics a) strong communication skills; b) self-awareness and reflection; c) conflict resolution; d) positive attitude and willingness to change with social processes; and, e) technological competence.

The inherent nature of collaboration involves communication between multiple individuals or groups. Collaboration is the process of individuals working together interdependently to achieve common and individual goals (Dufour et al., 2008). The role of teachers in collaborative teams requires sharing of data and ideas (McLeskey & Waldron, 2000; Walther-Thomas, Korinek, McLaughlin, & Williams, 2000). A common element of successful Professional Learning Communities is the ability of organizations to learn together through the sharing of lived experiences (Vescio et al., 2008). In order to effectively collaborate with colleagues and contribute to a team, teachers will need to be able to communicate their professional opinions, classroom data and observations, and lived experiences.

Several authors note the importance and primary purpose of collaboration in education is to solve problems in the teacher teams' location. Collaboration leads to improved instructional practices and improved teacher problem solving skills (Goddard et al., 2007). However, in order for teachers to be able to contribute to engaging dialogue that will solve problems they need to be aware of issues and target areas of improvement in their own classrooms. This awareness comes from observation and reflective analysis. If a teacher is either not aware of what is going on in their classroom or larger school community and passes their days without reflection they will not be able to identify and contribute to action

collaborative problem solving. In my professional experience, I have witnessed teachers record daily journals, make brief notes after observing something of interest, and keep video logs in order to reflect on what is going on at the school. In our school each teacher shares their reflections in weekly team meetings. Timperley et al. (2007) note that it is important for teachers and school leaders to know about effective practice, but another equally important component to professional practice involves knowing how to reflect on the process. It is through the reflective component that teachers can analyse effectiveness of their practice and share their work with others. The effectiveness of newly implemented teaching strategies is heavily reliant on the teachers' ability to understand the existing condition of their school environment and engage with new information.

Achinstein (2002) describes conflict as inevitable within collaborative environments. Conflict is present because of differences in philosophies, personalities, and changes to norms that individuals have grown comfortable with in the organization. Achinstein's work would suggest that individuals who are able to accept and respond to conflict positively and constructively would benefit teams. If conflict is inevitable, then having the ability to resolve and move forward conflict is an important characteristic of an individual who can collaborate effectively.

Shifts in teachers' professional practice are slow because of an unwillingness to change traditional practices that have become routine over time (Roth et al., 2006). A key component of effective collaboration and shifting schools towards 21st century Professional Learning Communities is teachers' reflection, action, and risk-taking to strive for constant improvement (DuFour et al, 2008; Hipp et al., 2008). A necessity of effective collaborative teams is teachers' willingness to take risks and actively engage within the social processes of the team and larger school organization.

Mitchelle (2011) discusses professional development opportunities that are available for teachers through online webinars. I am aware of several online platforms that allow for teacher PD. My colleagues are part of several teacher online support groups on Twitter. I connect with follow IB Theory of Knowledge (TOK) subject teachers globally to discuss concepts and share resource through a Facebook teacher support group. Coursera allows for free online classes around various educational topics. I am a member of an International Baccalaureate Theory of Knowledge teacher support group on Facebook where teachers from around the world share resources and lesson ideas. I have remained in connected with colleagues I participated in an online PD course on setting up an International Baccalaureate Middle Years Individuals and Societies. We share resources in a drop box. The staff at my current school shares resources and discusses various issues at the school via One Note. Technological competence and awareness is not a skill required for effective collaboration but, rather allows for greater global community collaborative opportunities and professional growth without the financial and time burden of traveling.

How can School Leaders Develop Effective Collaborative Processes?

A study by Winton and Polluck (2016) describes successful school leadership as steering direction, relationship development, developing school staff, organizational development, instructional programming, and ensuring accountability. In general terms the study of school leadership analyses the decisions principals and to a lesser extent teachers make in influencing people and structural processes within a school. Based on my analysis of the literature I contend that school leadership can develop effective collaboration in their school teacher teams by 1) removing barriers to collaborative processes; 2) creating a culture of openness in a positive environment; and, 3) supporting staff through effective professional development and instructional leadership. The question then becomes how does one go about implementing process and trying to sustain collaborative efforts.

Removing Collaborative Barriers

A study by Hargreaves et al. (2010) shows examples of American schools and districts competing directly with one another for achievement which in turn leads to funding and resources. The isolating nature of competition between schools in the American examples goes against scholarly research showing the benefits of collaboration between schools and larger divisions. I see a correlation between research on isolated teaching practices within schools and between larger schools. Collaboration among schools allows for teachers to gain insight from a greater number of professionals who have different professional experiences. In my professional experience, I have been invited to informal PD sessions on a variety of topics at neighboring international schools. Their staff and team leaders reached out to our staff through a mass email and communication with our administration. While going through our International Bachelorette authorization phase our school leaders communicated with other schools in our region who had gone through a similar process and were more experienced in implementing the curriculum. Documents were shared that allowed for templates for curriculum mapping and policy implementation. The openness and support by other schools helped our young staff through initial difficulties with a new curriculum model. School leaders can support collaboration between schools by reaching out to other institutions and inviting them to sessions, connecting for discussions in online platforms, or sharing curriculum planning materials. I witnessed our staff's professional capacity increase through external networking which is described by Fullan (2005) as creating external partners. An extensive academic report by the OECD (2015) into the creation of innovative learning environments cites several international examples where capacity creating occurs by sharing knowledge through networking and sustaining communities of practice. An objective of Australian reform is to "sustain and foster school networks and communities of practice" (p. 44). A strategy for educational reform in New

Zealand calls for learning through “a period of widespread experimentation to bring together schools” (46). By creating, sustaining, and making teachers aware of professional networks school leaders are opening an avenue for teachers to collaborate. Who initiates the collaboration is not important to increasing student outcomes, what is important is that teachers engage in the collaborative process and discussions around learning (Timperley et al., 2007). The authors show that it is not necessary that teachers volunteer, but rather engage. Through providing networking opportunities school leaders are allowing teachers to initiate with the engagement process.

Teachers routinely describe a lack of time as a hindrance to collaborative practices in their schools (Slick, 2002). Teacher workloads are great and time is rarely allocated to allow for the development of relationships between staff members or to work through complex problems in groups. Because of the heavy workloads, teachers may perceive collaboration as taking away from their professional practice (Sawyer & Kaufman, 2007). From my experience as a teacher I have witnessed the variety of roles, duties, and assignments teachers must participate with on a weekly basis. Teacher roles I have witnessed include but are not limited to are daily teaching, planning, formative assessing of students, grading of summative assessments, one on one meetings with students to help with work, supervision duties, communication with parents, communication and coordination with teacher support and guidance, vertical and horizontal meetings, coaching of sports teams, after school activity facilitation, etcetera. If daily collaborative time is not allocated by administration, it makes it difficult for teachers to find time in their busy schedule. Schools operating as Professional Learning Communities make allocating time for collaboration between staff a priority (DuFour et al., 2008). Slick (2002) adamantly postulates the importance of providing collaborative planning time for teachers in everyday scheduling. A study based on Slick’s argument by Warren and Payne (2001) showed that teachers who participated in

collaborative teams with common planning time showed greater efficacy towards their work, perceived their work environment as being positive, and developed cordial attitudes and relationships with their colleagues through their interactions. Timperley et al. (2007) identified allowing time for extended learning opportunities for teachers as a necessity for promoting professional learning which impact student outcomes. While time was a necessity, the extent to which time was used effectively was important towards impacting students.

The literature shows that teacher perceptions and entrenched cultures of isolation need to be overcome in order to sustain collaborative environments in schools. While scheduling of collaborative time is necessary, it in itself is not enough to facilitate effective collaboration in teacher teams. Teachers need to perceive their meetings and collaboration as being beneficial to their practice or else they will be physically present because of administrative requirement, but not actively engage with others (DuFour et al., 2008; Hargreaves & Fullan, 2012). When changes in culture are articulated well by school leaders and based on practical application teachers who were adamantly opposed to change have shifted their attitudes towards collaborative practices (Slick, 2002). A key factor in teacher attitudes towards collaboration is environmental and based on a lack of school culture that promotes and supports processes. Teachers may be unwilling to collaborate for fear of requesting assistance from colleagues, a perception they will not receive credit for success, and an unwillingness to give up control of their classrooms (Sawyer & Kaufman, 2007). The frequency and type of teacher collaboration can be identified by “the degree to which the school’s culture, processes and organization are barriers to collaboration and teachers’ beliefs about the degree to which faculty share educational goals and values” (p. 214). The question is then what steps can school leaders take to promote an effective school culture of collaboration at their school.

Creating Collaborative Culture

A common theme throughout academic literature is the importance of culture in the success of collaborative implementation and effectiveness of processes. The following categories were identified through an analysis as steps school leaders can take to improve and ensure a collaborative culture in their location.

Modeling behaviors. A review of literature by Sawyer & Kaufman (2007) identifies administrators as “integral in creating the culture of the school” (214). If administrators do not show an interest, or participate in collaboration then it is unlikely teachers will prioritize practices themselves. One-way school leaders can create a culture of collaboration is by modeling behaviors and processes in their daily duties. Elmore (2004) outlines the following:

The development of systematic knowledge about and related to, large scale instructional improvement requires a change in the prevailing culture of administration and teaching in schools. Cultures do not change by mandate: they change by the specific displacement of existing norms, structures and processes by others; the process of cultural change depends fundamentally on modelling new values and behaviour that you expect to displace the existing ones (p. 11)

Group relations. Teacher collaboration requires individuals to work with one another and communicate. A noted barrier to effective collaboration in the literature is teachers fear of asking questions from colleagues for fear of being perceived as inferior at the profession (Sawyer & Kaufman, 2007). I feel that school leaders can play a role in increasing group relations and reducing the fear associated with perceived inferiority by planning professional development workshops, activities, or retreats that allow staff to get to know and feel comfortable with one another before the school year begins. My school leaders routinely plan casual get-togethers and organize events at the start of the year to build team morale. In recent years an amazing race around our city was organized and a staff retreat to a beach was planned with numerous team building activities. There are documented academic narratives of cultural emersion sessions and teambuilding activities increasing teachers’ awareness and

strengthening bonds between diverse teaching staffs in K-12 schools and outdoor education programs (Burgess & Cavanagh, 2012; Lowan, 2009).

Shared goals. A key contributor to a strong collaborative culture is teachers and administrators working within an environment with shared educational goals and values (DuFour et al., 2008; Sawyer & Kaufman, 2007). The call for shared goals to foster collaborative environments for teachers' overlaps with the characteristics of schools operating as professional learning communities. What differentiates educational institutions is the common belief, understanding, and commitment towards a purpose that is culturally embedded in teachers and administrators alike (DuFour & Eaker, 2008). My experience as a teacher reiterated the call for shared goals and values. Our school held open meetings in which all staff were encouraged to attend and create our schools mission statement collectively. We also held focus groups at our staff meeting to gather input on the goals and vision we had a group moving forward. Once an initial school mission was drafted and goals outlined we met in small groups and open forums to make amendments and come to a collective understanding of each of the goals. Teachers were able to share ideas in scheduled meetings and on an online discussion board on how to improve practice and accomplish collective goals at our school. I felt and saw our staff take ownership of the goals because of the collective effort and vision as opposed to being prescribed by leadership. The following year we revisited our mission and goals and articulated the process that had taken place to new staff and the reasoning behind our goals and the collective process. My experience was similar to a scenario shared by DuFour and Eaker (2008) which describes a collaborative process for goal setting where school staff and stakeholders created value statements that led directly to the school mission. The scenario describes a new teacher coming into a school and being taken through the orientation process. School leaders can support culture by enacting processes that allow for teachers to come to a consensus and rally around joint goals. Initially

an open discussion allows for staff to give input and initiate dialogue around a topic. The first step outlined by Waldron and McLeasky (2010) in their collaborative model for school reform is an open discussion. A constant theme among literature into creating collaborative culture is the need for school leaders to enact shared leadership and create platforms for open dialogue and staff to share. The process of creating a positive collaborative culture at school is relational and done through modeling, articulation, and creation of collective processes. Academic literature states that a precursor to successful re-culturing in schools is an administrator's ability to identify and articulate the vision for staff (Fullan, 2007; Gulcan, 2012). The process and examples provided in this shared goals section call for a group creation of the vision. The school leaders' role is to find themes based on group responses to vision creation activities and then to effectively communicate the message.

Provide Effective Professional Development

Based on my analysis of Chapter 2, an important element for school leaders to consider when implementing collaborative processes in teacher teams is to provide opportunities for professional development that can support teachers' professional growth in the areas required for effective collaboration. When comparing literature on effective professional development and considering the conditions and skills necessary for effective collaborative environments in schools, my view is that school leaders should allocate time, effort, and resources towards the following PD activities. 1) provide teachers with platforms to connect with professionals from other schools; 2) organize team building activities to foster a platform for collegial relationships in teams; 3) facilitate PD opportunities that are long term as opposed to short term; and, 4) teach collaborative skills including communication, self-awareness, and conflict resolution skills.

Structuring Collaborative Processes

The academic literature about the structure of collaborative processes in schools points out that there is no one universally recognized model. Different locations require different needs and thus the structure in which collaborative processes are implemented should take into account the state of the school in which the implementation is taking place. It is important for school leaders to understanding the context in which they operate and then make choices based on the individual needs of the school and teams. Chapter 2 provides examples from which school leaders can choose from when considering setting up the structure of collaborative mechanisms in their teacher teams. Effectively structured professional opportunities are needed to impact student learning. How time is utilized within the collaborative process is more important than the amount of time given (Timperley et al., 2007). Effective teams structure their processes to allow for teachers to 1) process new understandings and challenge issues that arise from collaboration; and, 2) allow for an analysis of the impact of practices on student learning (Timperley et al., 2007). A synthesis of the structures presented in the collaborative models section of chapter shows that identified models of collaboration from academic literature suggest 1) engaging teaching staff in discussions about issues related to students learning; 2) allowing access to the process of collaboration; 3) once issues are identified, clearly identify teams and roles within the group; 4) research and implement strategies to address issues; 5) allow for reflection of interventions that have taken place and analyse collected data; and, 6) reassess issues and strategies.

Professional Development Template

The professional development template consists of a PowerPoint presentation, supporting materials, teambuilding activities, and reflection prompts. Supporting materials were based on academic literature used in the project analysis and created by myself. The PD template is designed to answer research questions and provide an opportunity for

practitioners to be presented with an overview of academic literature on the topic of collaboration in K-12 schools and teacher teams. The structure of the template allows for participants to share their experiences, professional practices, and reflect with discussion prompts. The PD session is designed to last for two three hour sessions because of the current structure and time offered for school PD sessions in my current school. However, the template can be taken and altered to meet the specific time allotment necessary. Activities and prompts can be easily adapted, removed, or added to meet the specific wants and needs of those conducting the PD. The PD template power point slides, supporting materials, time breakdown, and activities are found in the appendix section of this project.

Chapter Summary

This chapter presented the analysis of the project literature and a description of the Professional Development template that is located in the appendix section of this project. The PD template presents an analysis of academic literature that answer the highlighted focus research questions of this project and provide supporting tables with prompt questions for school leaders to consider when implementing collaborative processes in their schools. The PD session is presented through a PowerPoint presentation with additional supporting materials and prompt questions.

Chapter 5: Discussion

Chapter 4 presented the analysis of literature, explanations of the professional development template which, can be used to inform school leaders about various options, considerations, and actions to be taken when implementing effective collaborative processes in their K-12 school. The following chapter provides an overview of key findings learned through the literature search and analysis of literature portion of this project. Through the key findings, recommendations are outlined for school leaders to implement effective collaborative processes in their schools. This chapter also provides concluding thoughts discussing the strengths and limitations of the project are presented, as well as ideas for proposed extensions to future research based on the project.

Key Findings

Several key findings emerged in this study based on a systematic structured literature review and analysis of literature around the projects overall research question of: “*How can education leaders develop collaborative processes that support teacher teams at their schools?*”. It is important to note that seven supporting research questions (see chapter 3, page 32) were used to provide a breadth of information around various aspects of the topic of collaboration in K-12 education. The supporting research questions guided the literature review searches and informed the analysis of literature which led to the key findings and the creation of the professional development template.

Teacher collaboration occurs both formally and informally in schools and what it looks like will vary depending on the issues and structures in place in different school locations (Sawyer & Kaufman, 2007). Through my research I did not find a universally accepted definition of what collaboration was in the K-12 school context, but generally teacher education was documented in academic literature as involving focused and purposeful, problem solving, sharing, reflection, action, risk-taking, and striving for

improvement (DuFour et al., 2008; Pellegrino, Weiss, & Regan, 2015; Pugach & Blanton, 2009; Vescio, Ross, & Adams, 2008).

Based on my analysis into the characteristics of individuals who are effective collaborators, teachers who exhibit the following: a) strong communication skills; b) self-awareness and reflection; c) conflict resolution; d) positive attitude and willingness to change with social processes; and, e) technological competence should be successful in practicing collaboration.

School leaders are essential in the processes of creating a collaborative culture and setting up mechanisms that allow for effective collaboration to occur at schools. Leadership steers the direction of the institution, develops relationships between staff, is in charge of organizational developments, and teacher development through networking, allocation of professional development funds and opportunities, and instructional leadership (Winton & Polluck, 2016). My analysis of the literature showed that school leaders who support effective collaboration in their schools facilitate the; 1) removing barriers to collaborative processes 2) creating a culture of openness in a positive environment 3) and support staff through effective professional development and instructional leadership.

The academic literature identifies several benefits of teacher collaboration, but isolated teaching practices remain prevalent in contemporary K-12 education (DuFour, DuFour, & Eaker, 2008; Hipp, Huffman, Pankake, & Olivier, 2008; Lomos, Hofman, & Bosker, 2011). Barriers to collaboration can be overcome by school leaders 1) implementing a culture of collaboration; 2) networking and allowing for effective professional development; 3) and structuring various processes effectively for the purpose of the issues faced in the context of the specific school.

Recommendations for School Leaders

The project PD template outlines recommendations for school leaders to consider what implementing effective collaborative process in their schools. Through an analysis of the literature there were three domains identified and categorized to assist school leaders in setting up formalized collaboration in their teacher teams. The recommendations for creating a collaborative culture are: a) model collaborative behavior which involves practicing shared and distributed leadership, and allow for mechanisms where staff can give input into school policies and processes; b) create a common vision and shared school goals through articulation of the purpose, a review of institutional goals, transparency to stakeholders in what you are doing, and open contribution to the creation process; and, c) increase group relations by providing opportunities for staff to develop skills and connect with one another. The second recommendation is to provide effective professional development opportunities by: a) initiating and allocating resources towards PD that are collaborative based, allow for reflection, are focused on school issues, and are shared with other staff to increase institutional capacity; b) are focused on increasing collaborative skills; and, c.) do not involve short term one day workshops presented by outside experts that are not then shared with larger staff. The third recommendation for school leaders involves collaborative structures and models. My review and analysis of the literature show numerous collaborative models and structures that focus on different aspects of structuring collaboration. Chapter 2, the literature analysis, and the project manual document different structures, but it is noted that there is no one overriding model for school leaders. School leaders need to be aware of their context and select or adapt models that work for their school position and purpose. Based on my analysis of academic literature I recommend that school leaders work toward achieving the following: a) make sure time is allocated for formalized teacher collaboration; b) consider how school teams and meetings should be organized to best fit and address school issues; c)

review the structuring collaboration section of the project and complete the current practice and future implications table; and, d) decide what model to use or adapt for implementation.

Strengths of the Project

A key strength or benefit of this project is that it condenses a vast body of current academic literature on the broad topic of collaboration in teacher teams and K-12 education into an academic literature review and into a template that practicing school leaders can use when assessing their institution and implementing effective collaborative processes in their school. There is an ample body of current scholarly data that has been rigorously reviewed through a process outlined in Chapter 3 of this project. Chapter 4 is an analysis of the literature and the PD template has supporting materials that can be used to categorize the broad subject and act as a checklist and step by step guide when individuals assess their current school and ponder steps to reform practices. The PD template also provides reflective questions for school leaders to consider when assessing their current practice and reflecting on how they will approach implementation. The professional development template is a tool I will use to inform school leaders in my school and will be made accessible for others to consider and modify when conducting their own professional development sessions. The template provides reflective questions that allow individuals to consider their current professional views, reflect on practices, and consider how they want to move forward in their present positions in schools. The template can easily be adapted to fit the needs of the audience and adhere to the time constraints of the individuals participating in the presentation.

Limitations of the Project

The major limitation of this study is that it did not create new knowledge through a recognized academic study. Information was taken from pre-existing academic studies, reviewed, analyzed, and synthesized. While reflection questions, and tables were designed to

guide practitioners in K-12 schools in the PD template, they were created based on pre-existing available scholarly research.

Also the nature in which the topic was explored was based on a broad overall guiding research question. While a broad research question allows for an exploration of a breadth of information associated with various aspects of the topic, it does not allow for the depth of analysis into specific aspects of collaboration in teacher teams and K-12 education.

Despite the fact that the professional development presentation template can be adjusted and adapted the timeframe of the sessions was based on the schedule my current school provides for in school professional development sessions. Because of the nature of our time allocated towards staff run in school sessions, the presented schedule may not have fit the context of other schools and larger districts.

Extensions to Research

The nature of this research project allows for a number of extended research opportunities. One possible extension of the research involves an evaluation into school practitioners' perceptions of the effectiveness of the project PD template. Another extension could involve an analysis of the implementation of any aspect of the literature review, analysis of literature, or PD template in a school where they took recommendations from what was presented in this project. This project compiled a list of what research identified as the benefits of and barriers to collaboration. A series of qualitative interviews could assess whether teachers perceive the benefits and barriers to collaboration to be similar or different to that of those identified in the literature presented in this paper.

Chapter Summary

This chapter presented the key findings during my project and created a condensed section of recommendations for school leaders to consider when implementing collaborative processes in their school (a more elaborate version is found in the analysis of literature

section of Chapter 4). Chapter 5 also identified the strengths and weaknesses of the project. Finally proposed extension studies were identified which include questioning the effectiveness of the final products of this study and researching specific isolated aspects of what was proposed by this study when implemented in a specific school.

Concluding Thoughts

The purpose of this study was twofold. First objective was to learn about the various components of collaboration in teacher teams and K-12 schools because my school was going through a transition period towards a new curriculum and attempting to implement collaborative process. Secondly, I wanted to provide a comprehensive, but succinct product that could make my research accessible to practicing practitioners in K-12 education. In completing this project, I believe I have done both. Academic literature identifies a need for collaboration, but shows a lack of effective collaborative processes in contemporary schools (Dufour, DuFour, & Eaker, 2008). What I learned is that collaboration in K-12 schools is not straightforward, but complex and full of different layers that need to be scaffolded in order to have effective processes and structures in place in a school. What I have presented is a categorized synthesized version of what school leaders could consider, but ultimately schools are different and what works in one school context may not work in another. It is up to professionals to make their own decisions and analyze the effectiveness of reforms and policies in their own school locations. At the end of the day what I want is for structures to be in place that allow for teachers to learn from one another and ultimately for our students to have a positive learning environment. I hope practitioners benefit from the end product of this project.

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Appendix A: Facilitators Guide to Creating Collaborative Processes Professional

Development Workshop

Workshop Breakdown: Two three hour sessions.

Session 1:

Topic/Activity	Section of Template	Time
Facilitator Introduction	PowerPoint Slide 1	1-2 minutes
Participant Introduction Interview	PowerPoint Slide 2 & Appendix C	15 minutes
Workshop Breakdown, Purpose, & Goals	PowerPoint Slides 3-5	5 minutes
Primary Research Question & Brainstorm	PowerPoint Slide 6	5 minutes
Explanation of Research/Project Creation	PowerPoint Slide 7	1-2 minutes
Teambuilding Icebreaker	PowerPoint Slide 8 & Appendix D	10-15 minutes
Collaboration Definition	PowerPoint Slide 9	5 minutes
Break	None	5-10 minutes
Collaborative Contexts	PowerPoint Slide 10	5 minutes
Effective Collaboration Reflective Prompts	PowerPoint Slide 11 & Appendix E	20 minutes
Benefits of Collaboration	PowerPoint Slides 12-14	5 minutes

Collaborative Characteristics	PowerPoint Slide 15	1-2 minutes
Communication & Problem Solving Activities	PowerPoint Slide 16 & Appendix F & G	30 minutes
Break	None	5 Minutes
Problem Solving Activity Review/Debrief	Appendix G	10-15 minutes
Barriers to Collaboration Prompt & Discussion	PowerPoint Slide 17	10-15 minutes
Barriers to Collaboration	PowerPoint Slide 18	5 minutes
Barriers to Collaboration	PowerPoint Slide 19	Remainder of hour
Lunch	None	Varied

Session 2:

Topic/Activity	Section of Template	Time
Barriers to Collaboration	Review Group Responses to PowerPoint Slide 19	10 minutes
Leadership	PowerPoint Slide 20	5 minutes
Leadership	PowerPoint Slide 21	1 minute
Collaborative Culture	PowerPoint Slide 22	15 minutes
Collaborative Culture	PowerPoint Slide 23 &	25 minutes

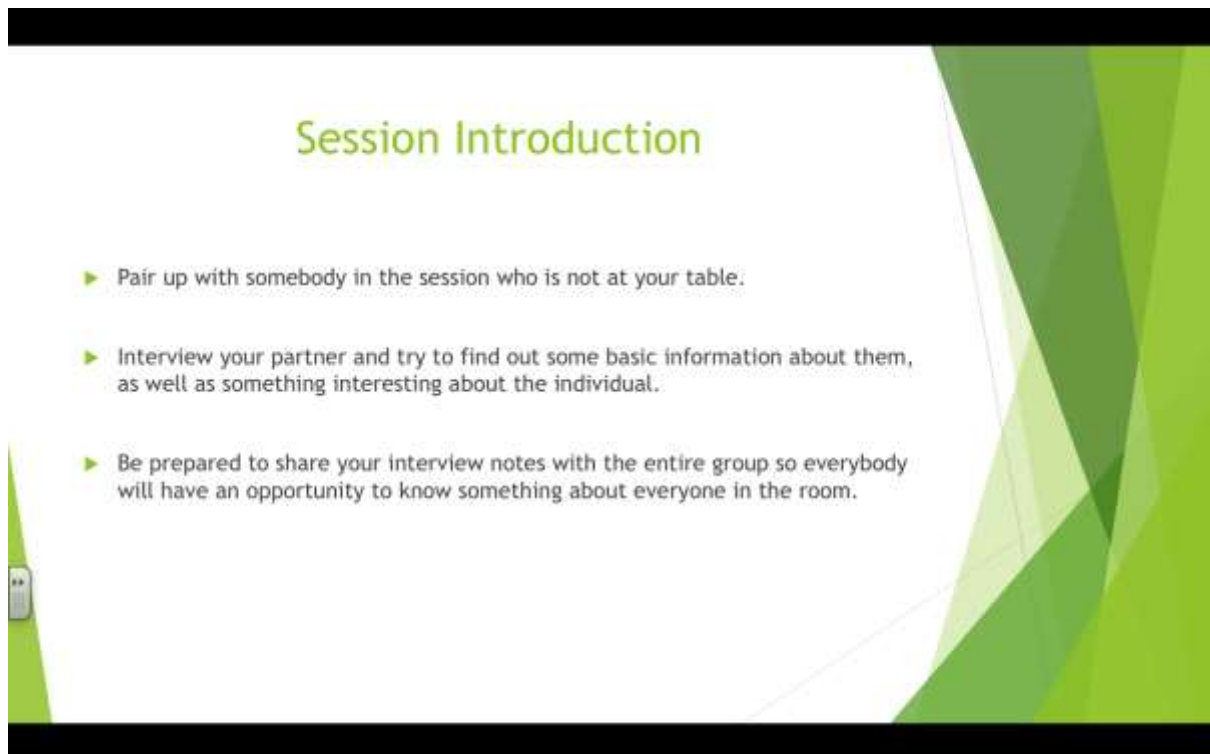
	Appendix H	
Break	Break	5 minutes
Collaborative Culture	PowerPoint Slide 24	5 minutes
Collaborative Culture	PowerPoint Slide 25 & Appendix I	20 minutes
Collaborative Culture	PowerPoint Slide 26	25 minutes
Collaborative Culture	PowerPoint Slide 26	10 minutes
Effective PD	PowerPoint Slide 27	15 minutes
Effective PD	PowerPoint Slide 28 & Appendix J	5 minutes
Collaborative Structures	PowerPoint Slide 29 & Appendix K	15 minutes
Collaborative Structures	PowerPoint Slide 30 & Appendix L & M	10 minutes
Final Thoughts	PowerPoint Slide 31	10 minutes

Appendix B: PowerPoint Template Slides

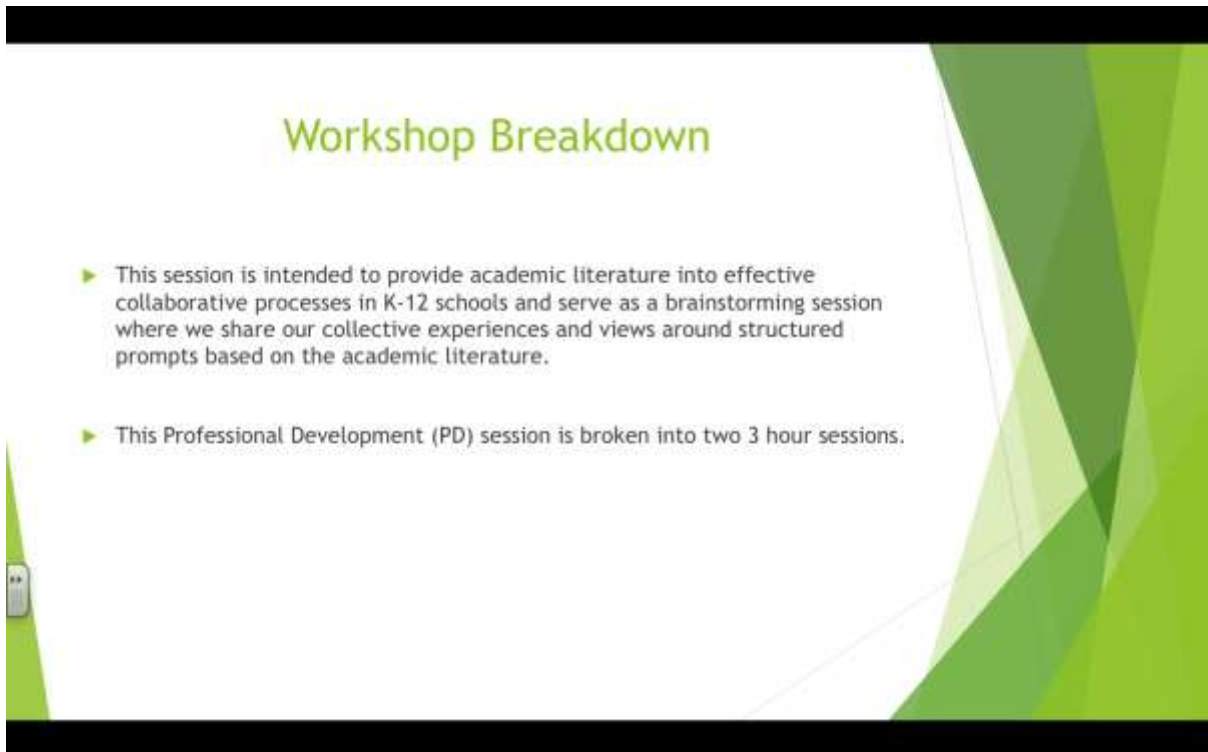
Slide 1



Slide 2



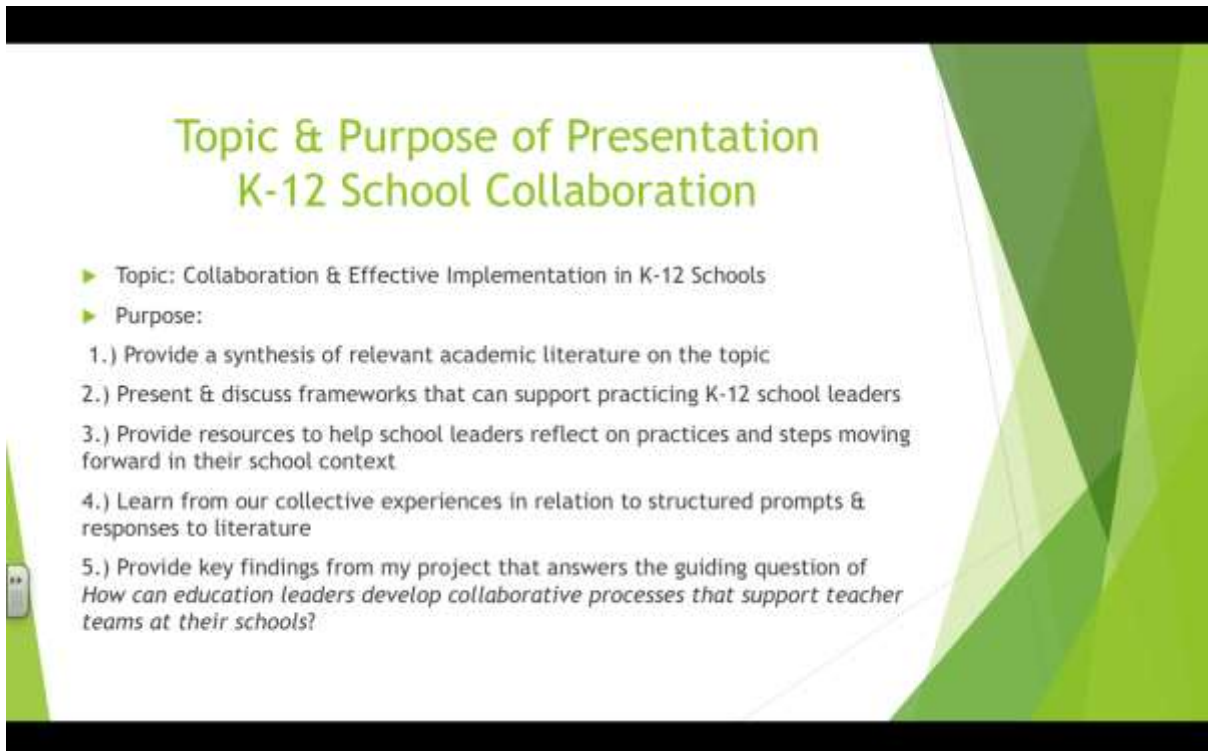
Slide 3

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Workshop Breakdown

- ▶ This session is intended to provide academic literature into effective collaborative processes in K-12 schools and serve as a brainstorming session where we share our collective experiences and views around structured prompts based on the academic literature.
- ▶ This Professional Development (PD) session is broken into two 3 hour sessions.

Slide 4

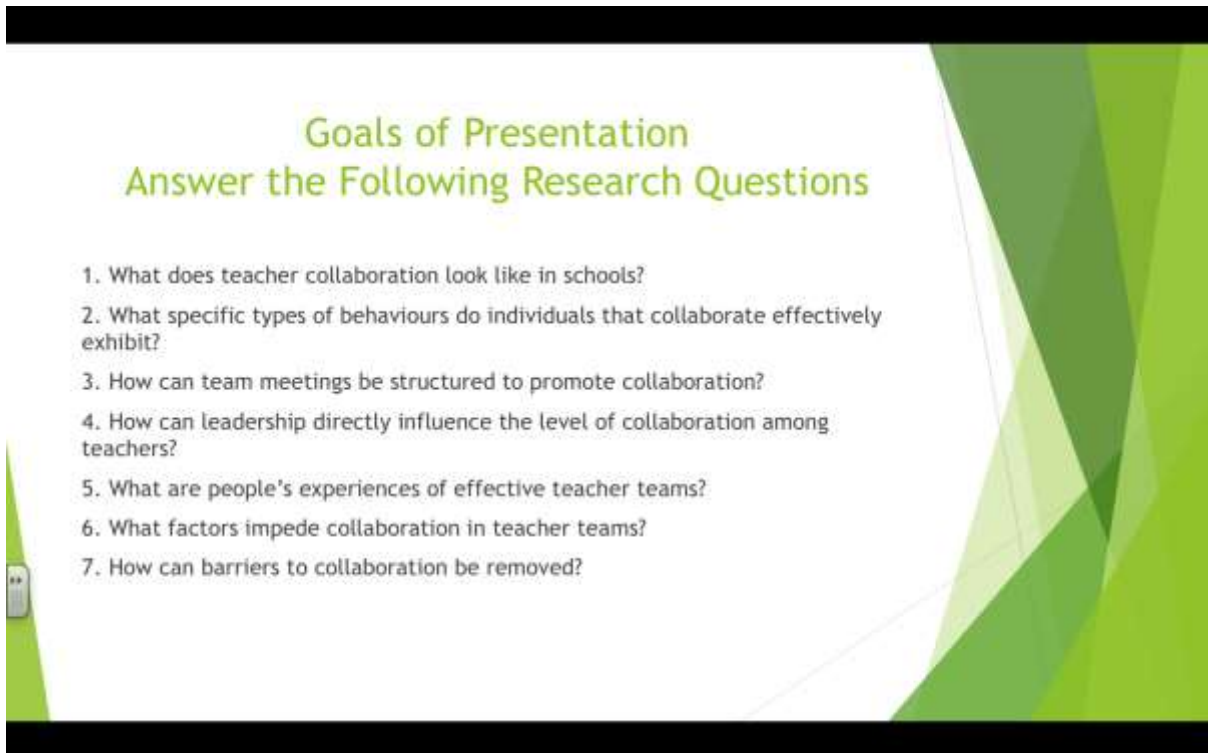
The slide features a title 'Topic & Purpose of Presentation' in a green sans-serif font, followed by a subtitle 'K-12 School Collaboration' in the same font. Below the subtitle is a list of items, starting with a green right-pointing triangle for the topic and a green right-pointing triangle for the purpose, followed by a numbered list from 1 to 5. The background is white with a decorative green geometric pattern on the right side. A small grey navigation icon is visible on the left edge.

Topic & Purpose of Presentation

K-12 School Collaboration

- ▶ Topic: Collaboration & Effective Implementation in K-12 Schools
- ▶ Purpose:
 - 1.) Provide a synthesis of relevant academic literature on the topic
 - 2.) Present & discuss frameworks that can support practicing K-12 school leaders
 - 3.) Provide resources to help school leaders reflect on practices and steps moving forward in their school context
 - 4.) Learn from our collective experiences in relation to structured prompts & responses to literature
 - 5.) Provide key findings from my project that answers the guiding question of *How can education leaders develop collaborative processes that support teacher teams at their schools?*


Slide 5



Goals of Presentation
Answer the Following Research Questions

1. What does teacher collaboration look like in schools?
2. What specific types of behaviours do individuals that collaborate effectively exhibit?
3. How can team meetings be structured to promote collaboration?
4. How can leadership directly influence the level of collaboration among teachers?
5. What are people's experiences of effective teacher teams?
6. What factors impede collaboration in teacher teams?
7. How can barriers to collaboration be removed?

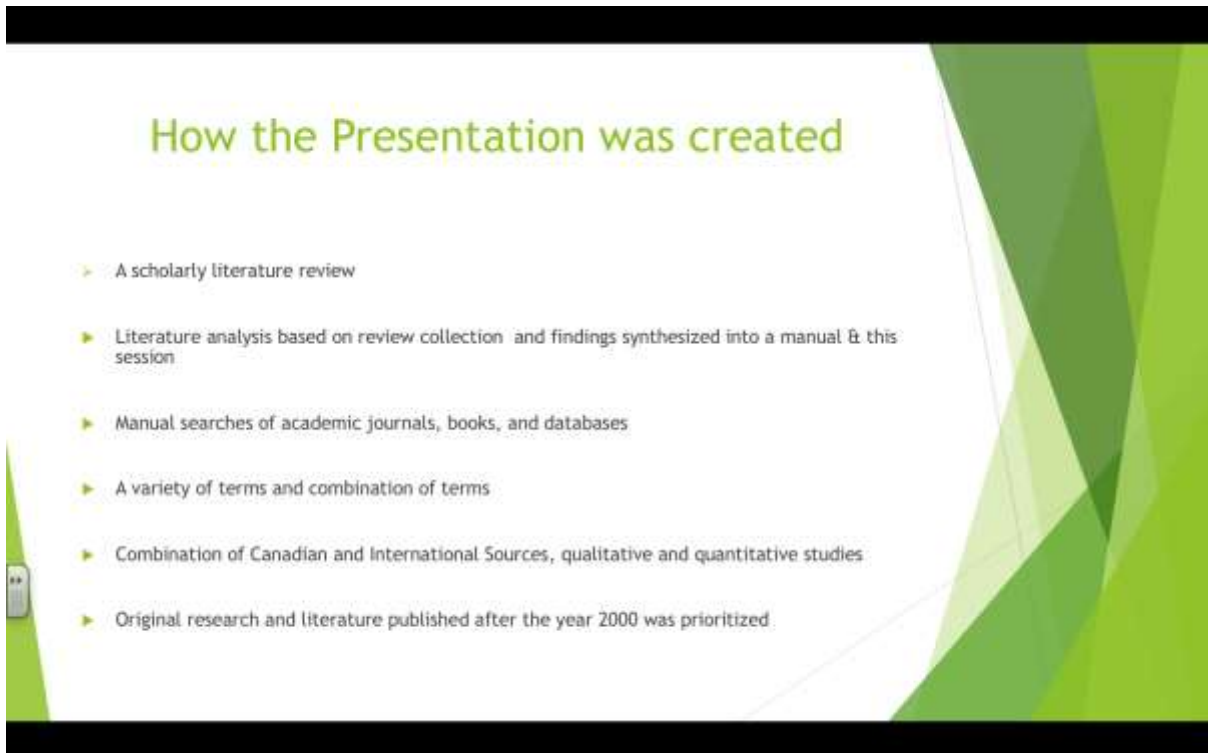
Slide 6



Primary Purpose & Goal
Answer & Inform

- ▶ *How can education leaders develop collaborative processes that support teacher teams at their schools?*
- ▶ **Brainstorm**

Slide 7



How the Presentation was created

- A scholarly literature review
- Literature analysis based on review collection and findings synthesized into a manual & this session
- Manual searches of academic journals, books, and databases
- A variety of terms and combination of terms
- Combination of Canadian and International Sources, qualitative and quantitative studies
- Original research and literature published after the year 2000 was prioritized

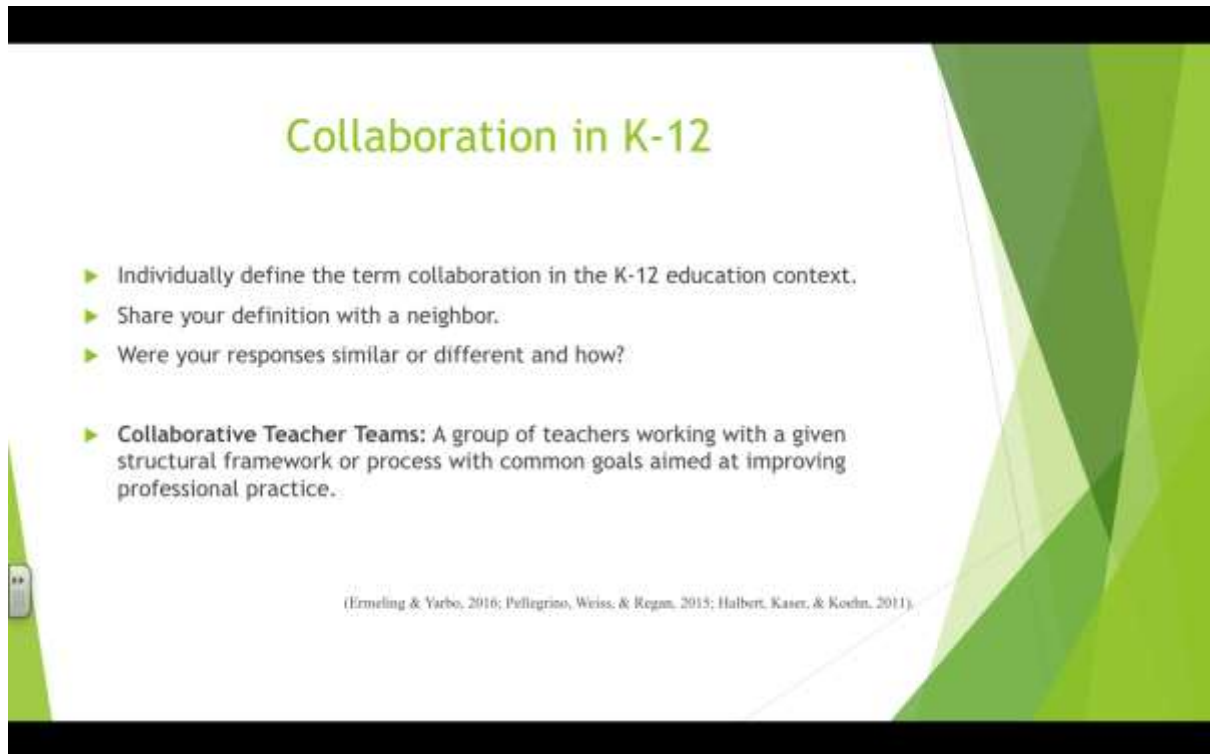
Slide 8



Teambuilding Icebreaker

- Each table group has been given five cards with discussion prompts.
- Analyze the cards and share your response answer with your group.

Slide 9

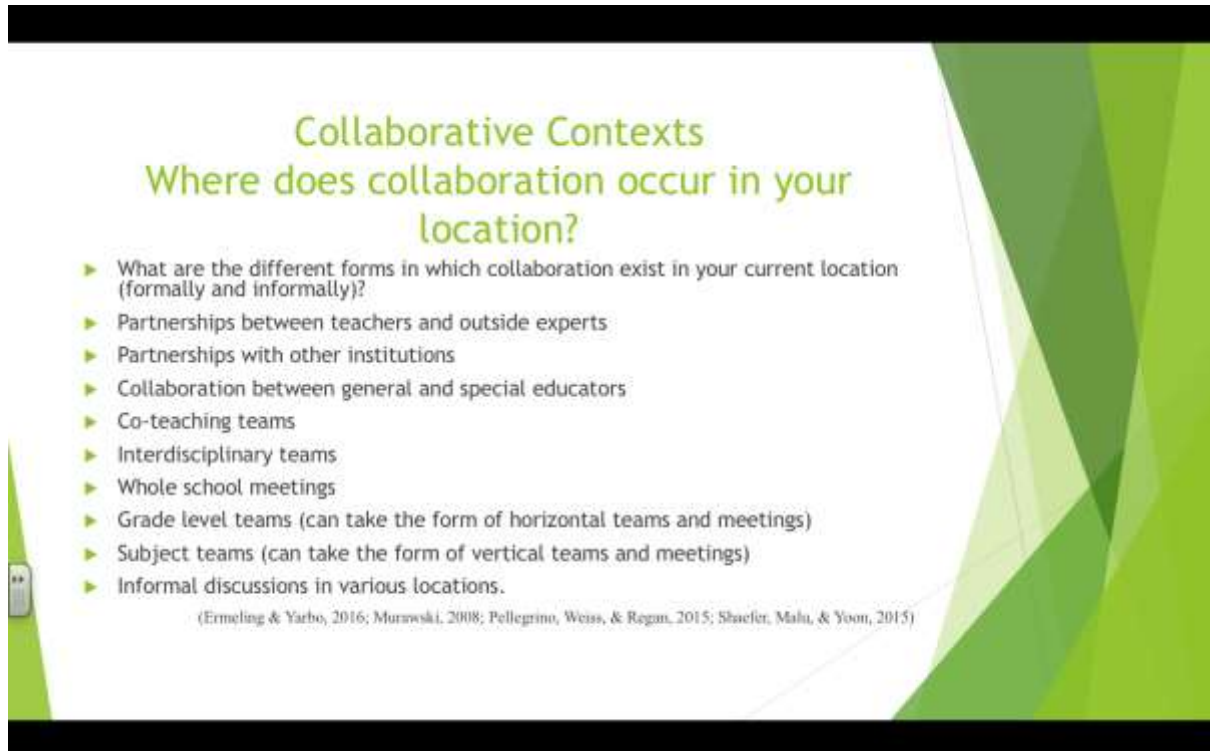


Collaboration in K-12

- ▶ Individually define the term collaboration in the K-12 education context.
- ▶ Share your definition with a neighbor.
- ▶ Were your responses similar or different and how?
- ▶ **Collaborative Teacher Teams:** A group of teachers working with a given structural framework or process with common goals aimed at improving professional practice.

(Ermeling & Yarbo, 2016; Pellegrino, Weiss, & Regan, 2015; Halbert, Kaser, & Koehn, 2011)

Slide 10



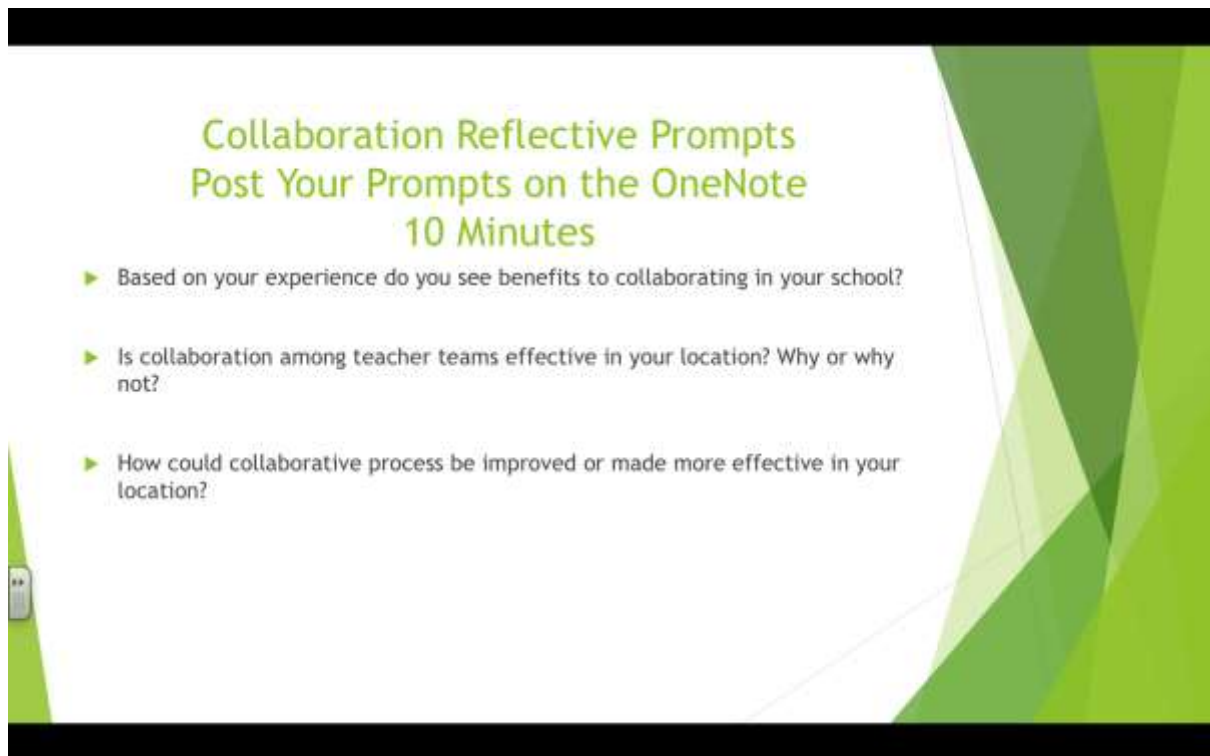
Collaborative Contexts

Where does collaboration occur in your location?

- ▶ What are the different forms in which collaboration exist in your current location (formally and informally)?
- ▶ Partnerships between teachers and outside experts
- ▶ Partnerships with other institutions
- ▶ Collaboration between general and special educators
- ▶ Co-teaching teams
- ▶ Interdisciplinary teams
- ▶ Whole school meetings
- ▶ Grade level teams (can take the form of horizontal teams and meetings)
- ▶ Subject teams (can take the form of vertical teams and meetings)
- ▶ Informal discussions in various locations.

(Ermeling & Yarbo, 2016; Murawski, 2008; Pellegrino, Weiss, & Regan, 2015; Shaefer, Malu, & Yoon, 2015)

Slide 11



Collaboration Reflective Prompts

Post Your Prompts on the OneNote

10 Minutes

- ▶ Based on your experience do you see benefits to collaborating in your school?
- ▶ Is collaboration among teacher teams effective in your location? Why or why not?
- ▶ How could collaborative process be improved or made more effective in your location?

Slide 12

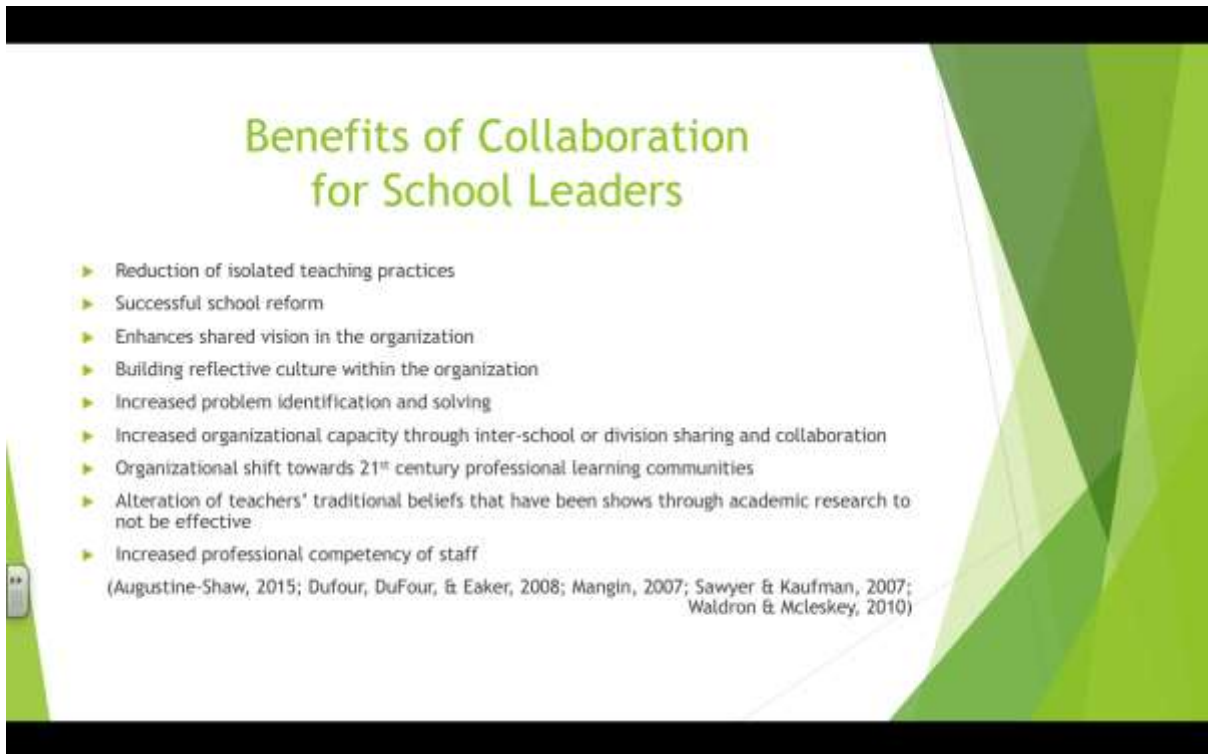


Benefits of Collaboration for Teachers

- ▶ Allows more more effective identification and resolution of problems
- ▶ Reduced isolated teaching practices
- ▶ Implement improved classroom strategies
- ▶ Sharing of knowledge, perspective, and experiences
- ▶ Decreased ambiguity among teaching strategies and school policies
- ▶ Increased self-efficacy
- ▶ Alteration of traditional beliefs that have been shown through academic research to not be effective
- ▶ Become more adaptable to meet student needs
- ▶ Increased professional competencies
- ▶ Increased professional development opportunities
- ▶ Increased networking opportunities
- ▶ Increased professional motivation
- ▶ Increased collegial support from staff
- ▶ Improved staff relationships

(Bolan, McMahon, Stoll, Thomas, & Wallace 2005; Sawyer & Keuffman, 2007; Tschannen-Moran & Hoy, 2007)

Slide 13

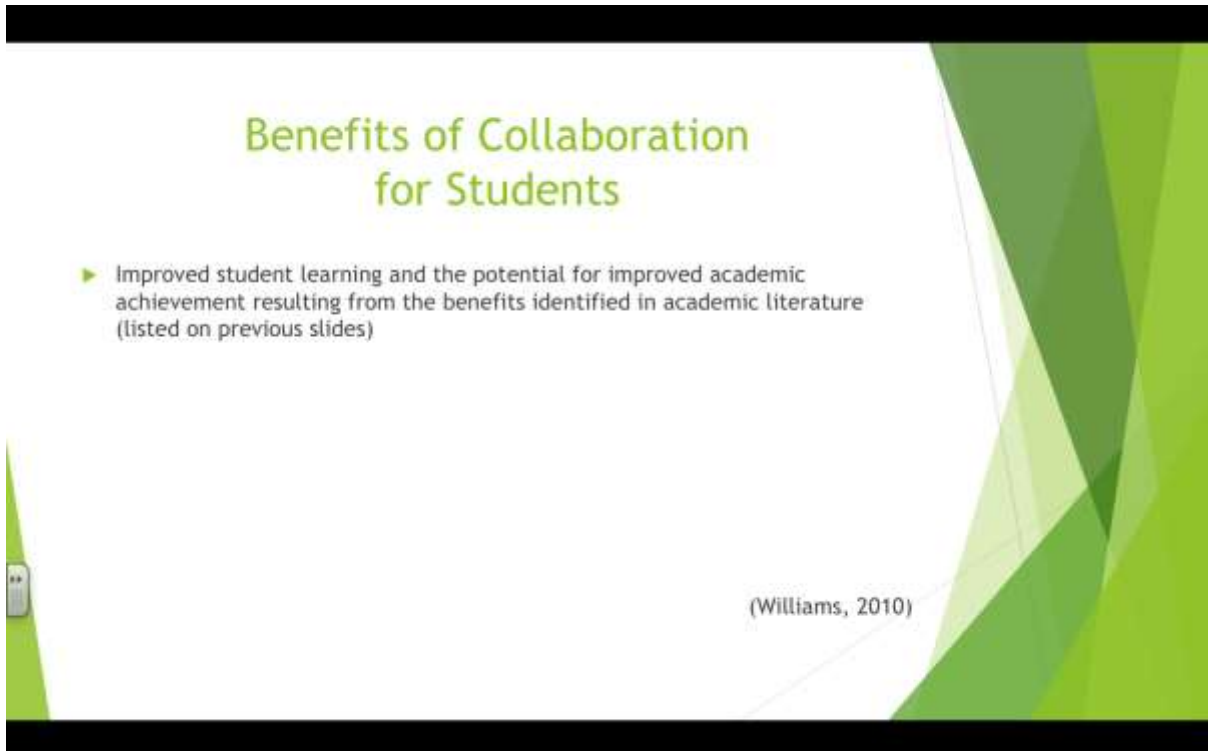


Benefits of Collaboration for School Leaders

- ▶ Reduction of isolated teaching practices
- ▶ Successful school reform
- ▶ Enhances shared vision in the organization
- ▶ Building reflective culture within the organization
- ▶ Increased problem identification and solving
- ▶ Increased organizational capacity through inter-school or division sharing and collaboration
- ▶ Organizational shift towards 21st century professional learning communities
- ▶ Alteration of teachers' traditional beliefs that have been shown through academic research to not be effective
- ▶ Increased professional competency of staff

(Augustine-Shaw, 2015; Dufour, DuFour, & Eaker, 2008; Mangin, 2007; Sawyer & Kaufman, 2007; Waldron & Mcleskey, 2010)

Slide 14



Benefits of Collaboration for Students

- ▶ Improved student learning and the potential for improved academic achievement resulting from the benefits identified in academic literature (listed on previous slides)

(Williams, 2010)

Collaborative Characteristics

- ▶ Communicators
- ▶ Problem solvers
- ▶ Willing to share
- ▶ Able to identify issues in their location
- ▶ Ability to take action and respond after analysing what has transpired during collaborative activities
- ▶ Reflective
- ▶ Strive to improve

(Dufour et al., 2008; McLeskey & Waldron, 2000; Roth, Druker, Garnier, Lemmens, Chen, Kawinaka, & Gollimore, 2006; Timperley, Wilson, Barrier, & Fung, 2007; Walther-Thomas, Korinek, McLaughlin, & Williams, 2000)

Activities

- ▶ Communication: Drawing a image and explaining. Directions via an email to get to a specific location or text. Girl from class on how to talk with others if you are upset and can relate to research.
- ▶ Provide a mini case study I create. Have groups identify the problem, create a solution to the problem, can research for 10 or 15 minutes, and reflect on the process/how you worked in teams etc.

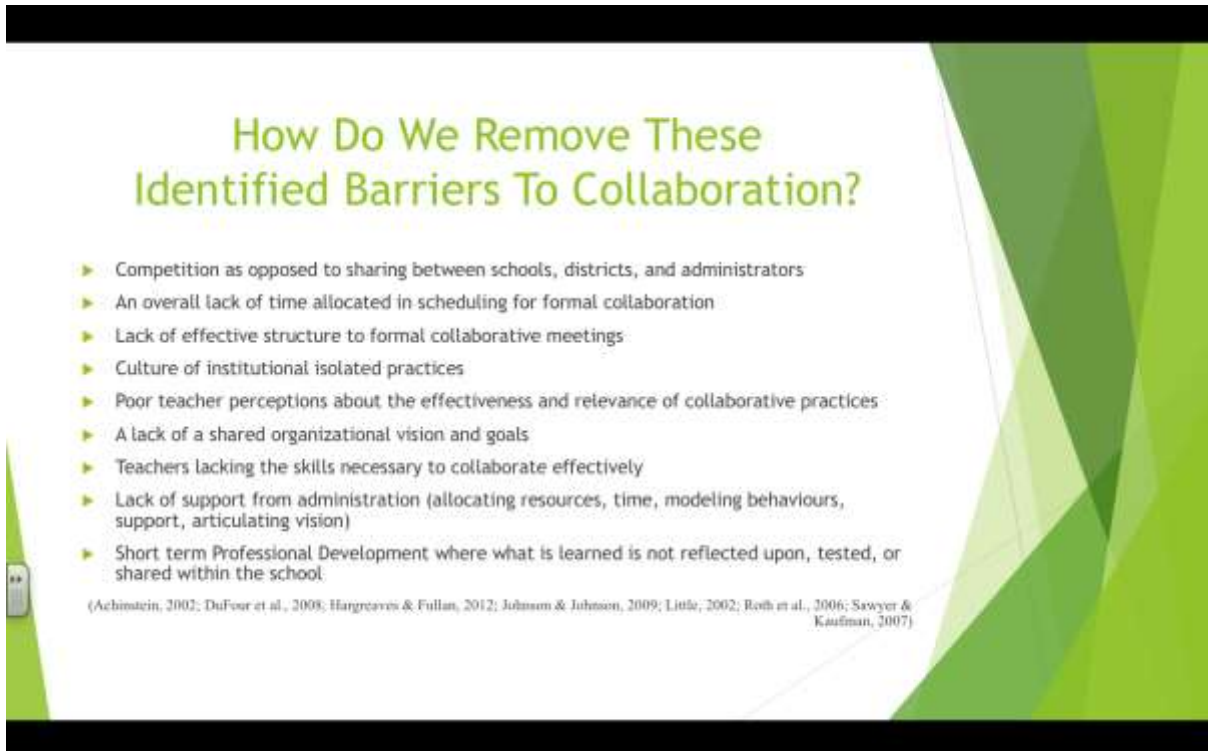
Slide 17



Barriers to Collaboration Group Prompts & Shared Response

- ▶ Are there barriers or challenges to collaboration in your location? Identify them.
- ▶ What do you think might be causing the barriers and challenges you identified?

Slide 18



How Do We Remove These Identified Barriers To Collaboration?

- ▶ Competition as opposed to sharing between schools, districts, and administrators
- ▶ An overall lack of time allocated in scheduling for formal collaboration
- ▶ Lack of effective structure to formal collaborative meetings
- ▶ Culture of institutional isolated practices
- ▶ Poor teacher perceptions about the effectiveness and relevance of collaborative practices
- ▶ A lack of a shared organizational vision and goals
- ▶ Teachers lacking the skills necessary to collaborate effectively
- ▶ Lack of support from administration (allocating resources, time, modeling behaviours, support, articulating vision)
- ▶ Short term Professional Development where what is learned is not reflected upon, tested, or shared within the school

(Achimstzin, 2002; DuFour et al., 2008; Hargreaves & Fullan, 2012; Johnson & Johnson, 2009; Little, 2002; Roth et al., 2006; Sawyer & Kaufman, 2007)

Slide 19



Identified Barriers to Collaboration

Group Work 15 Minutes

- ▶ In your group brainstorm initial ideas for how to remove the barrier's you were assigned from academic literature & from our experiences.
- ▶ Post your ideas on OneNote
- ▶ Share your response with the group

Slide 20



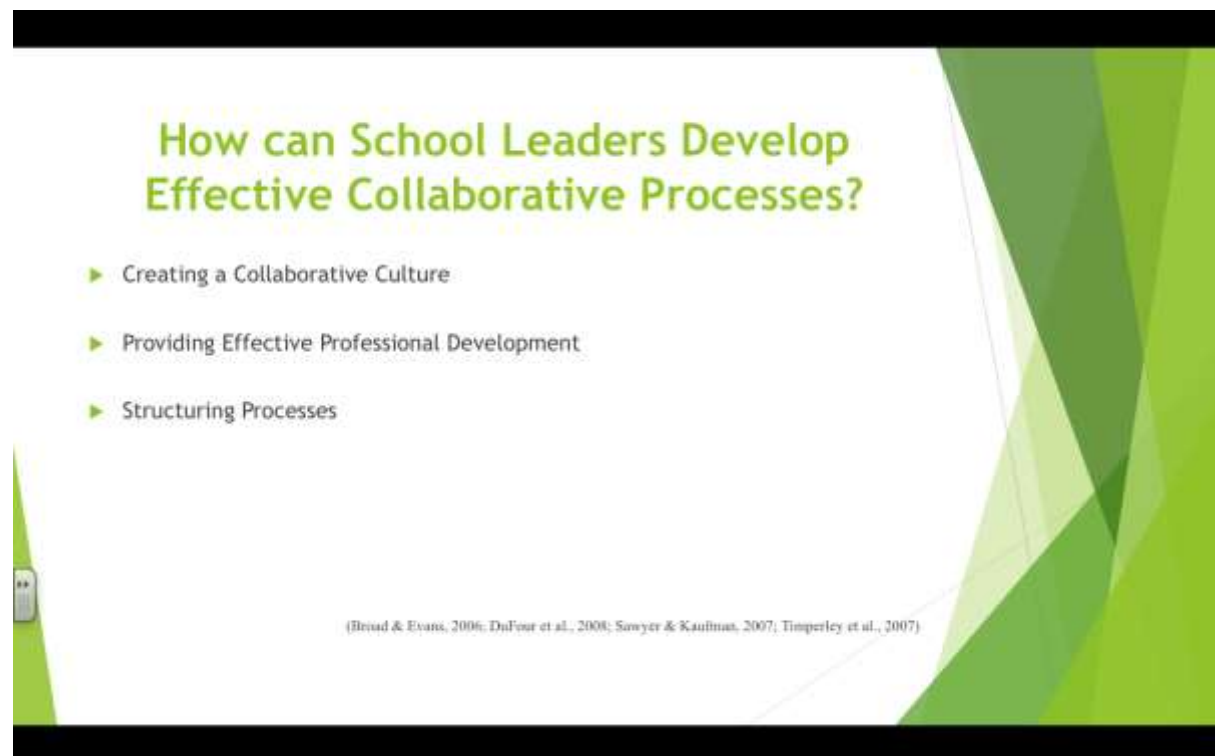
Does Leadership Matter?

Yes

- ▶ Direct correlation between leadership attitudes and behaviours and collaborative practices of teachers
- ▶ Allocation of resources for professional development
- ▶ Scheduling of staff
- ▶ Articulation and creation of school goals and direction/vision
- ▶ Instructional leadership
- ▶ The structuring of processes and distribution of roles
- ▶ Providing resources and support for teachers
- ▶ Networking with outside organizations, community agents, and schools.

(DeFour et al., 2008; Fullan, 2005; Hargreaves & Fullan, 2012; Sawyer & Kaufman, 2007; Slick, 2002; Timperley et al., 2007)

Slide 21



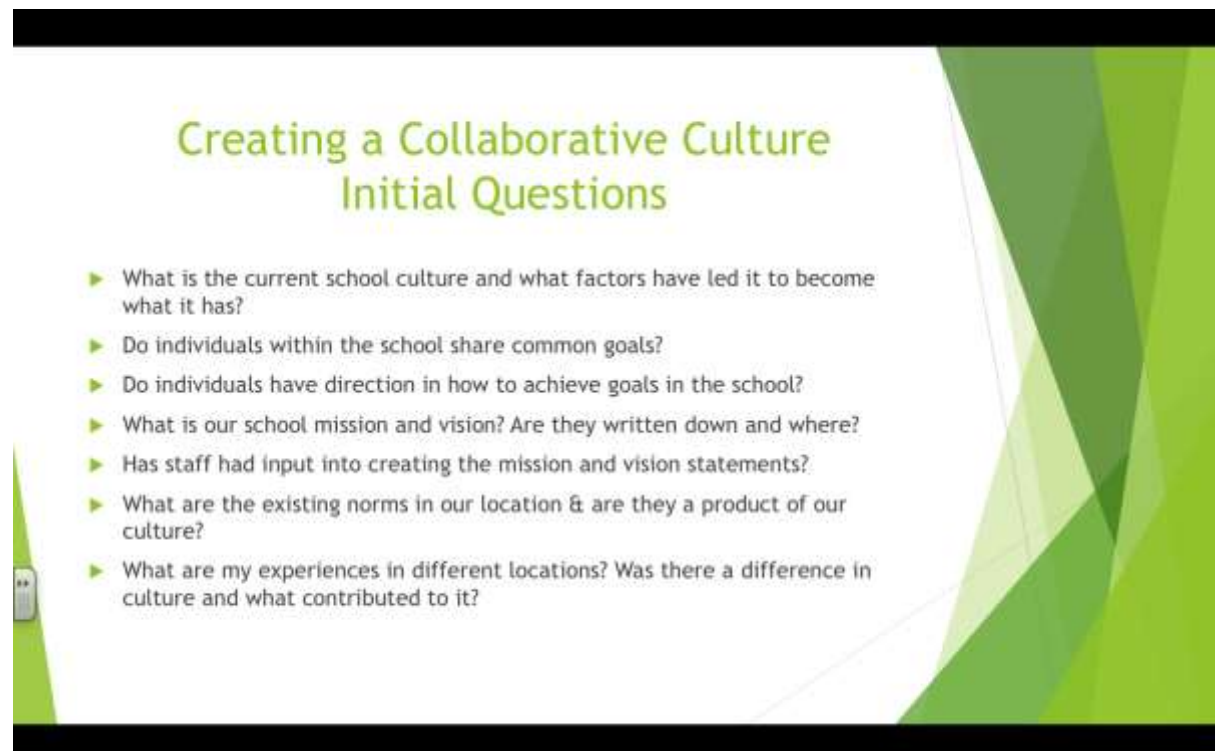
How can School Leaders Develop Effective Collaborative Processes?

- ▶ Creating a Collaborative Culture
- ▶ Providing Effective Professional Development
- ▶ Structuring Processes

(Bryd & Evans, 2006; DuFour et al., 2008; Sawyer & Kautman, 2007; Timperley et al., 2007)

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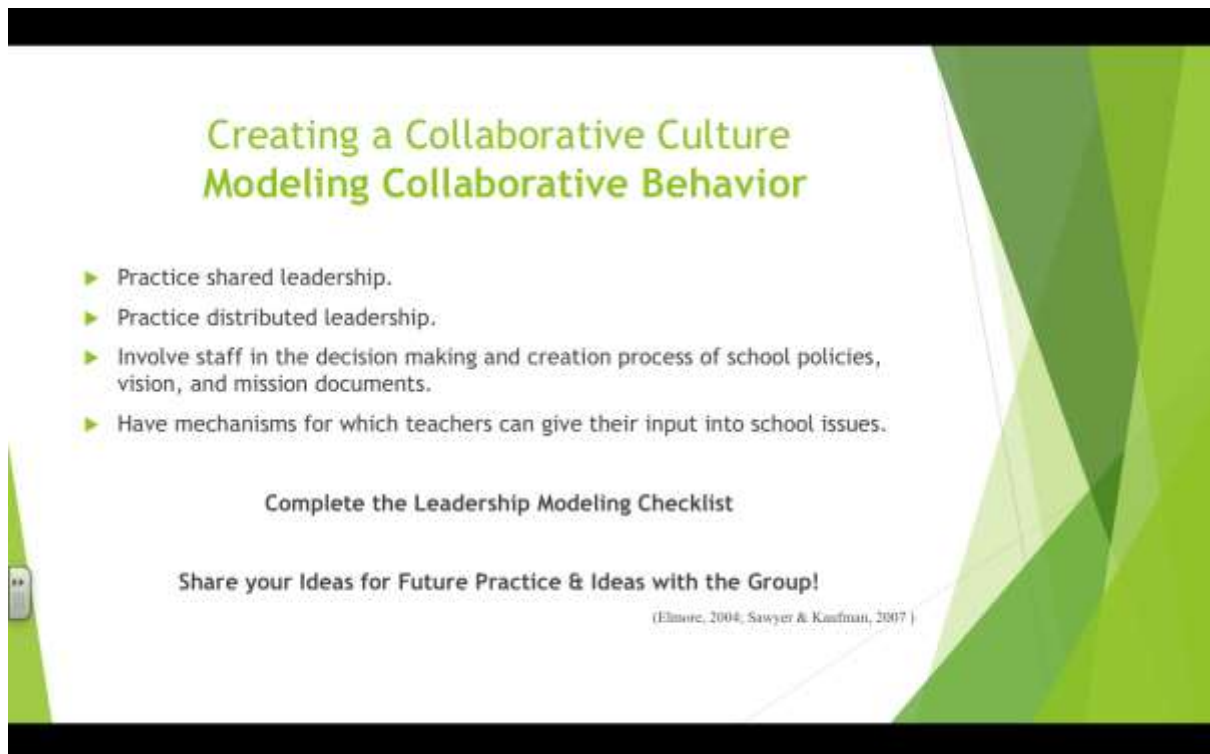
Slide 22



Creating a Collaborative Culture
Initial Questions

- ▶ What is the current school culture and what factors have led it to become what it has?
- ▶ Do individuals within the school share common goals?
- ▶ Do individuals have direction in how to achieve goals in the school?
- ▶ What is our school mission and vision? Are they written down and where?
- ▶ Has staff had input into creating the mission and vision statements?
- ▶ What are the existing norms in our location & are they a product of our culture?
- ▶ What are my experiences in different locations? Was there a difference in culture and what contributed to it?

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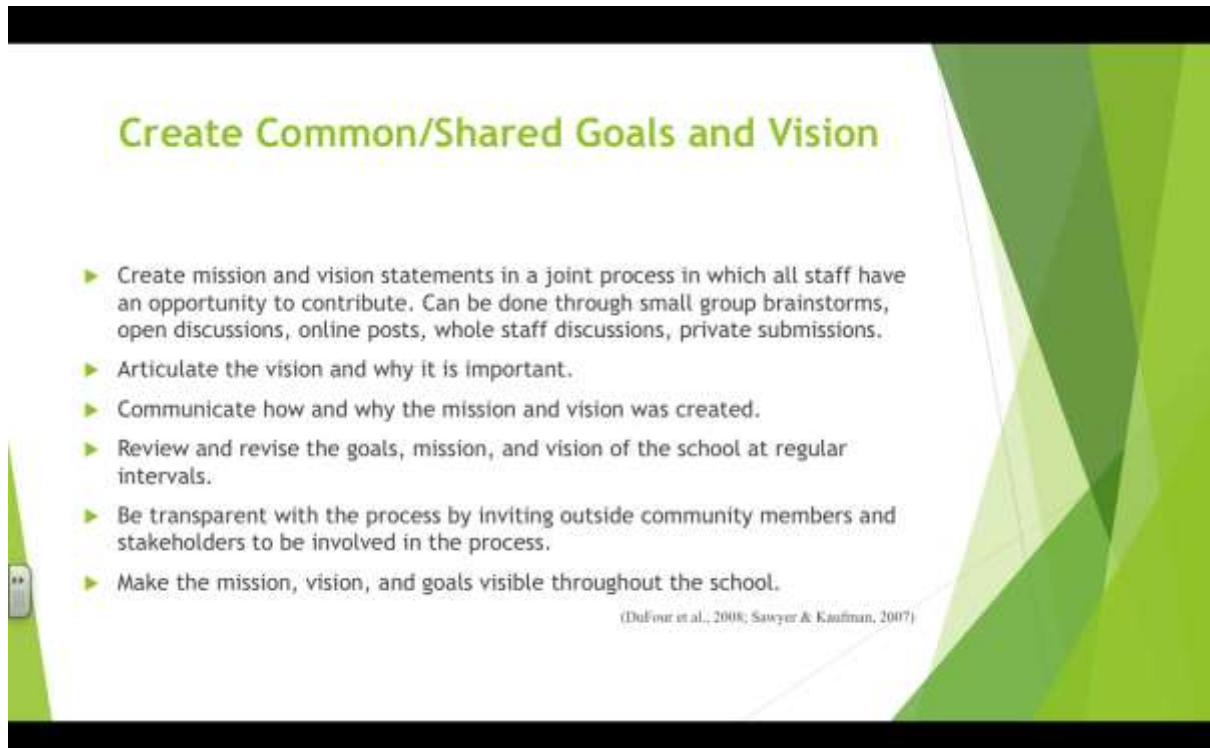
Creating a Collaborative Culture Modeling Collaborative Behavior

- ▶ Practice shared leadership.
- ▶ Practice distributed leadership.
- ▶ Involve staff in the decision making and creation process of school policies, vision, and mission documents.
- ▶ Have mechanisms for which teachers can give their input into school issues.

Complete the Leadership Modeling Checklist

Share your Ideas for Future Practice & Ideas with the Group!

(Elmore, 2004; Sawyer & Kaufman, 2007)



Create Common/Shared Goals and Vision

- ▶ Create mission and vision statements in a joint process in which all staff have an opportunity to contribute. Can be done through small group brainstorm, open discussions, online posts, whole staff discussions, private submissions.
- ▶ Articulate the vision and why it is important.
- ▶ Communicate how and why the mission and vision was created.
- ▶ Review and revise the goals, mission, and vision of the school at regular intervals.
- ▶ Be transparent with the process by inviting outside community members and stakeholders to be involved in the process.
- ▶ Make the mission, vision, and goals visible throughout the school.

(Dufour et al., 2008; Sawyer & Kaufman, 2007)

Slide 25



Create Common/Shared Goals and Vision

- ▶ Please take 15 minutes to fill in the organizational action plan for shared goals guiding sheet that is provided to create a plan for your school.
- ▶ Share your ideas with the class when completed!

Slide 26



Group Relations Documented Cases of Increasing Group Relations

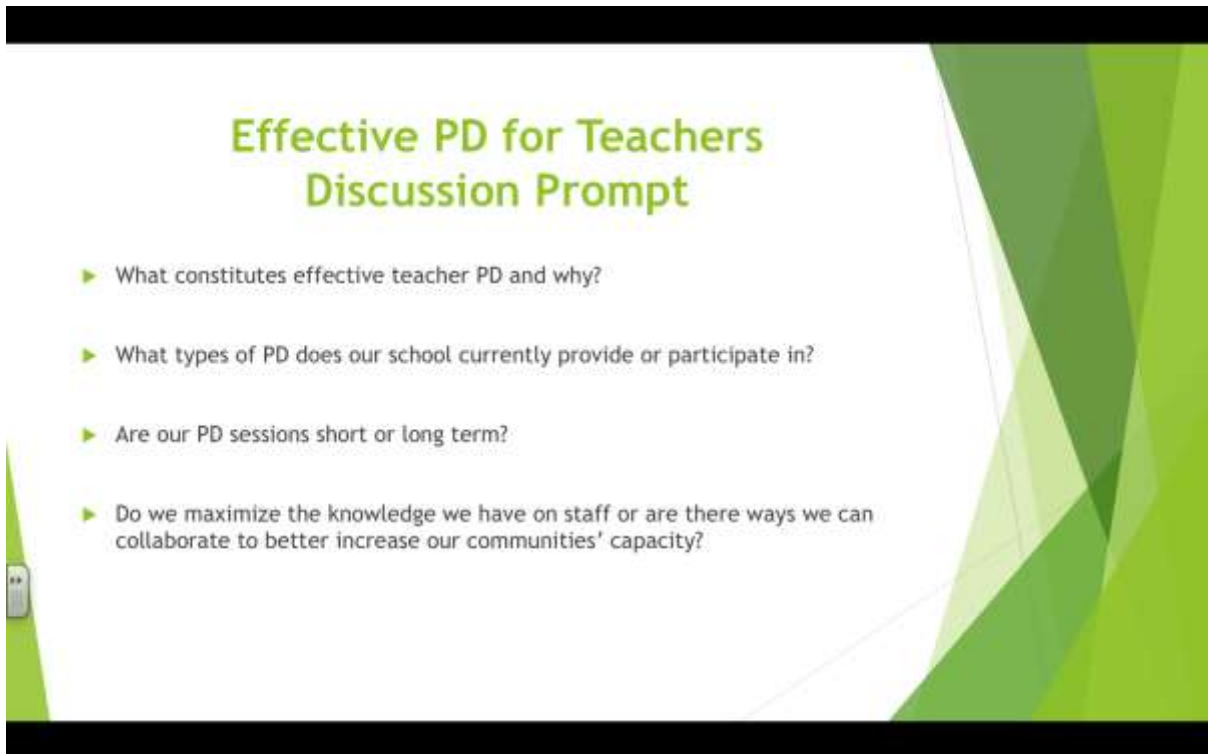
- ▶ Staff Retreats.
- ▶ Teambuilding exercises.
- ▶ Cultural emersion and understanding activities (PD) during orientation weeks.
- ▶ Professional Development that teaches collaborative skills and conflict resolution.

In your Table Group take 10 minutes to create or research a teambuilding exercise & lead the class in it!

From your experience are teambuilding exercises beneficial or not and why?

(Burgess & Cavatagh, 2012; Lowan, 2009)

Slide 27

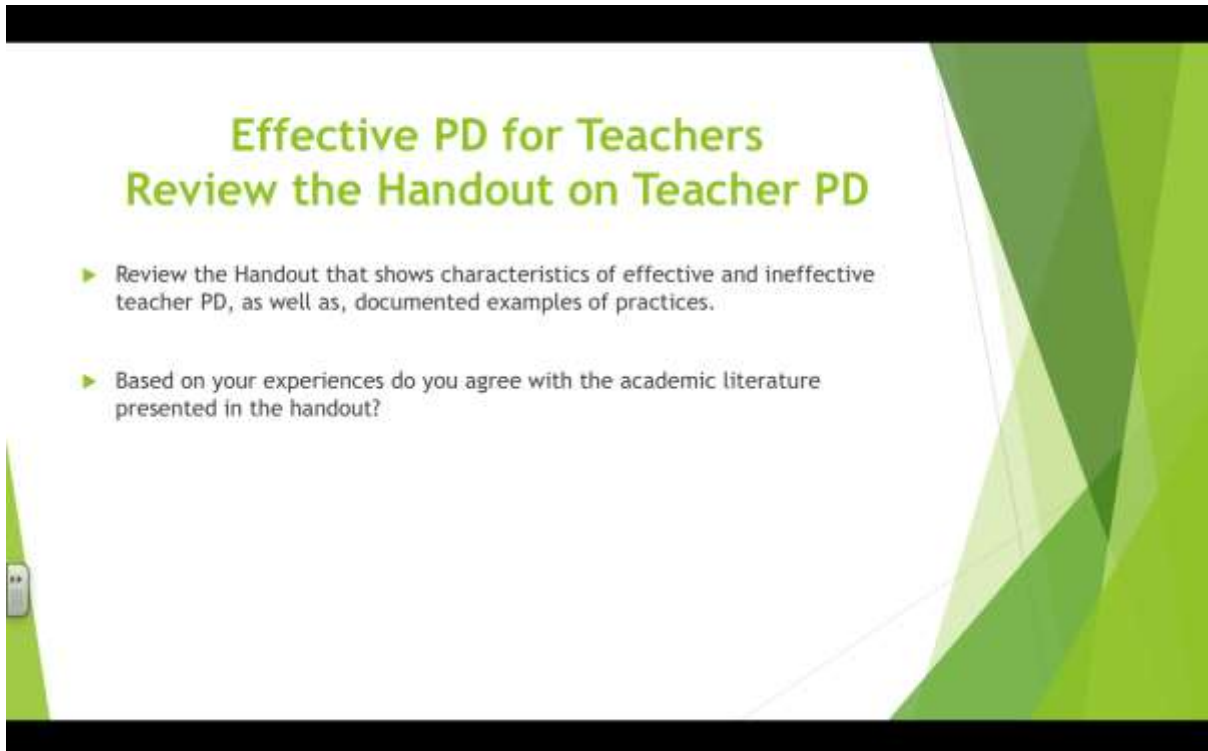


Effective PD for Teachers
Discussion Prompt

- ▶ What constitutes effective teacher PD and why?
- ▶ What types of PD does our school currently provide or participate in?
- ▶ Are our PD sessions short or long term?
- ▶ Do we maximize the knowledge we have on staff or are there ways we can collaborate to better increase our communities' capacity?

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Slide 28

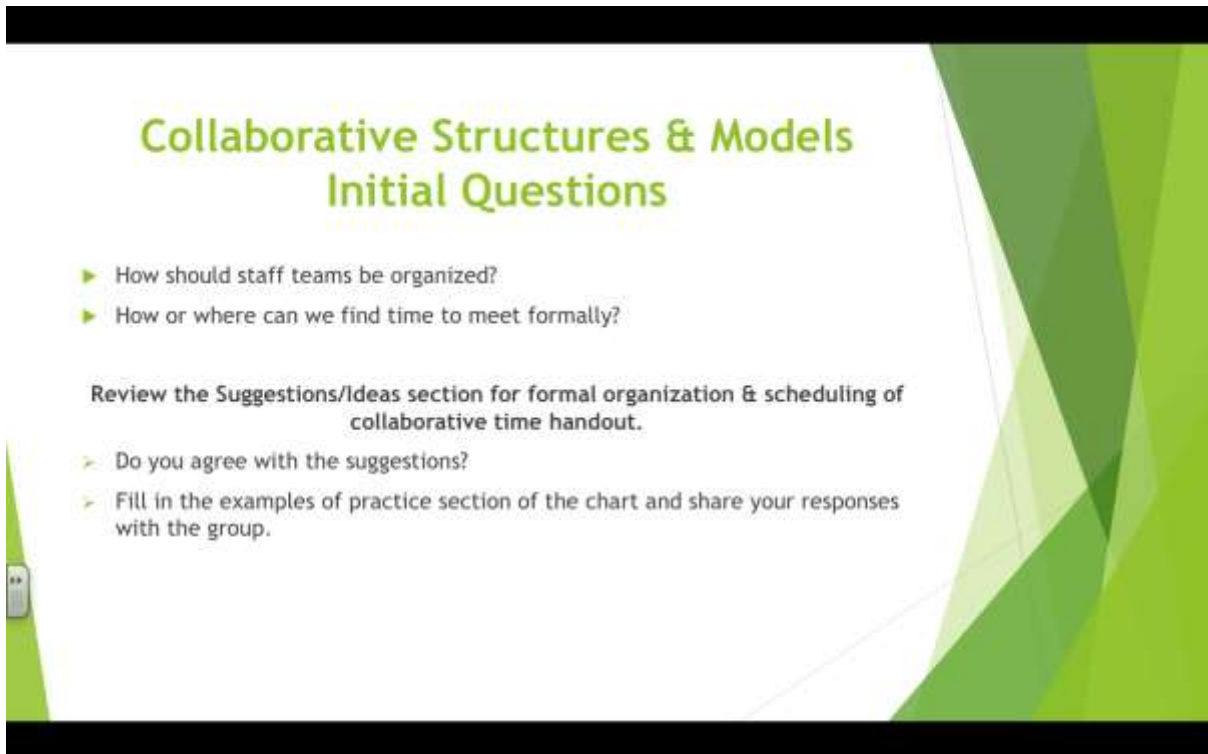


Effective PD for Teachers
Review the Handout on Teacher PD

- ▶ Review the Handout that shows characteristics of effective and ineffective teacher PD, as well as, documented examples of practices.
- ▶ Based on your experiences do you agree with the academic literature presented in the handout?

Slide 28 features a white background with a green geometric pattern on the right side. The title "Effective PD for Teachers Review the Handout on Teacher PD" is centered at the top in a green font. Below the title, there are two bullet points, each preceded by a green right-pointing triangle. The text is in a black font. A small grey navigation button with two arrows is visible on the left edge of the slide.

Slide 29



Slide 29 features a title "Collaborative Structures & Models" in a large green font, followed by a subtitle "Initial Questions" in a slightly smaller green font. Below the subtitle, there are two bullet points in green: "► How should staff teams be organized?" and "► How or where can we find time to meet formally?". A paragraph in black text follows, stating "Review the Suggestions/Ideas section for formal organization & scheduling of collaborative time handout." Below this, there are two more bullet points in green: "► Do you agree with the suggestions?" and "► Fill in the examples of practice section of the chart and share your responses with the group." The slide has a decorative green geometric pattern on the right side and a small navigation icon on the left.

Collaborative Structures & Models

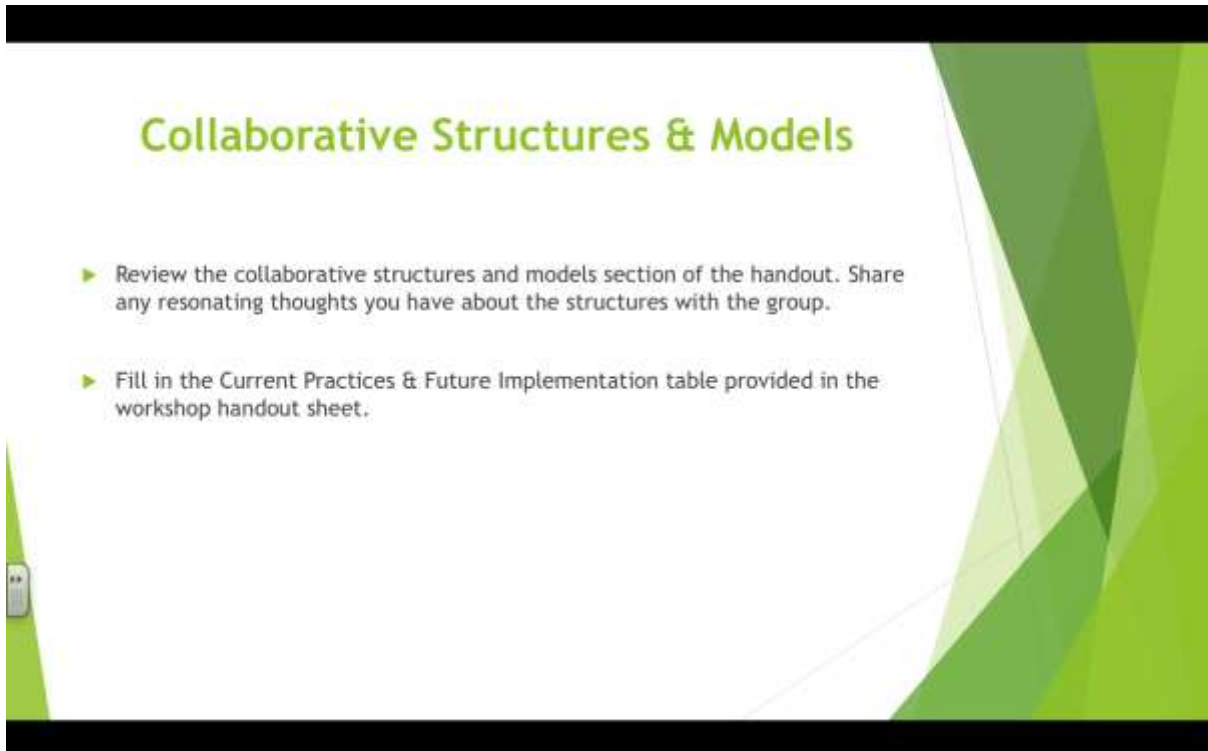
Initial Questions

- How should staff teams be organized?
- How or where can we find time to meet formally?

Review the Suggestions/Ideas section for formal organization & scheduling of collaborative time handout.

- Do you agree with the suggestions?
- Fill in the examples of practice section of the chart and share your responses with the group.

Slide 30

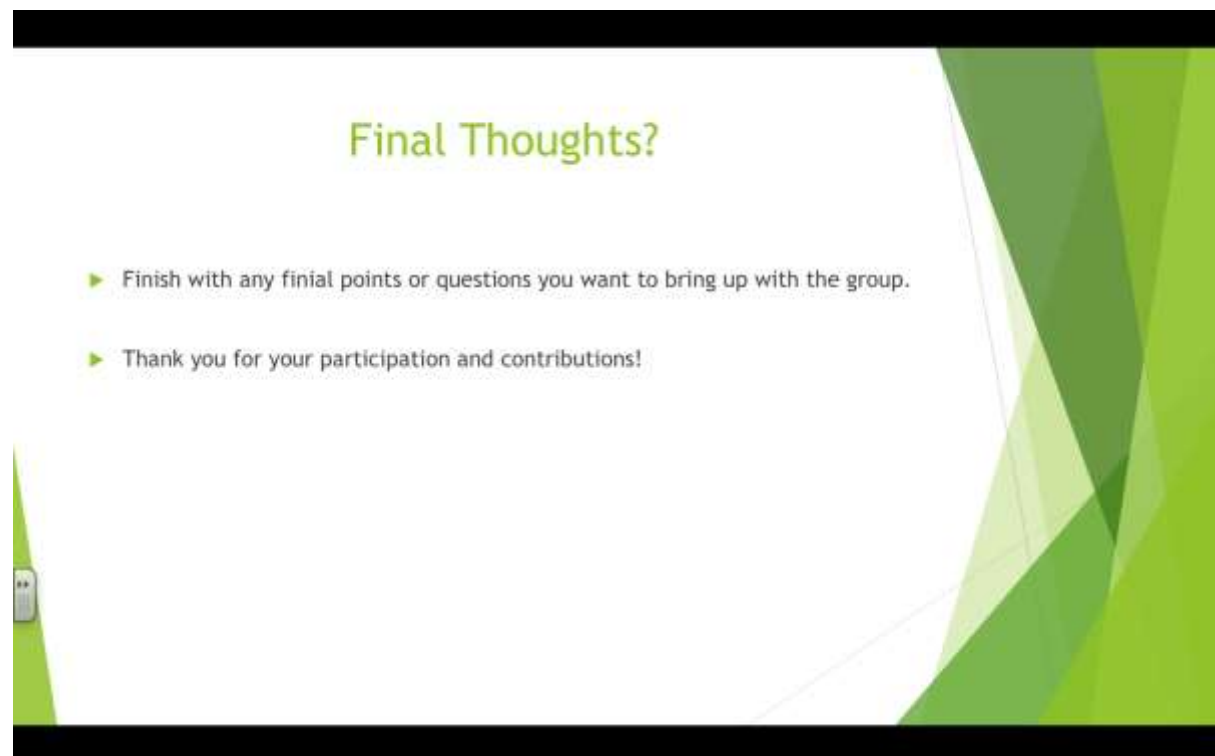


Slide 30 features a title "Collaborative Structures & Models" in a large green font. Below the title, there are two bullet points in green: "► Review the collaborative structures and models section of the handout. Share any resonating thoughts you have about the structures with the group." and "► Fill in the Current Practices & Future Implementation table provided in the workshop handout sheet." The slide has a decorative green geometric pattern on the right side and a small navigation icon on the left.

Collaborative Structures & Models

- Review the collaborative structures and models section of the handout. Share any resonating thoughts you have about the structures with the group.
- Fill in the Current Practices & Future Implementation table provided in the workshop handout sheet.

Slide 31

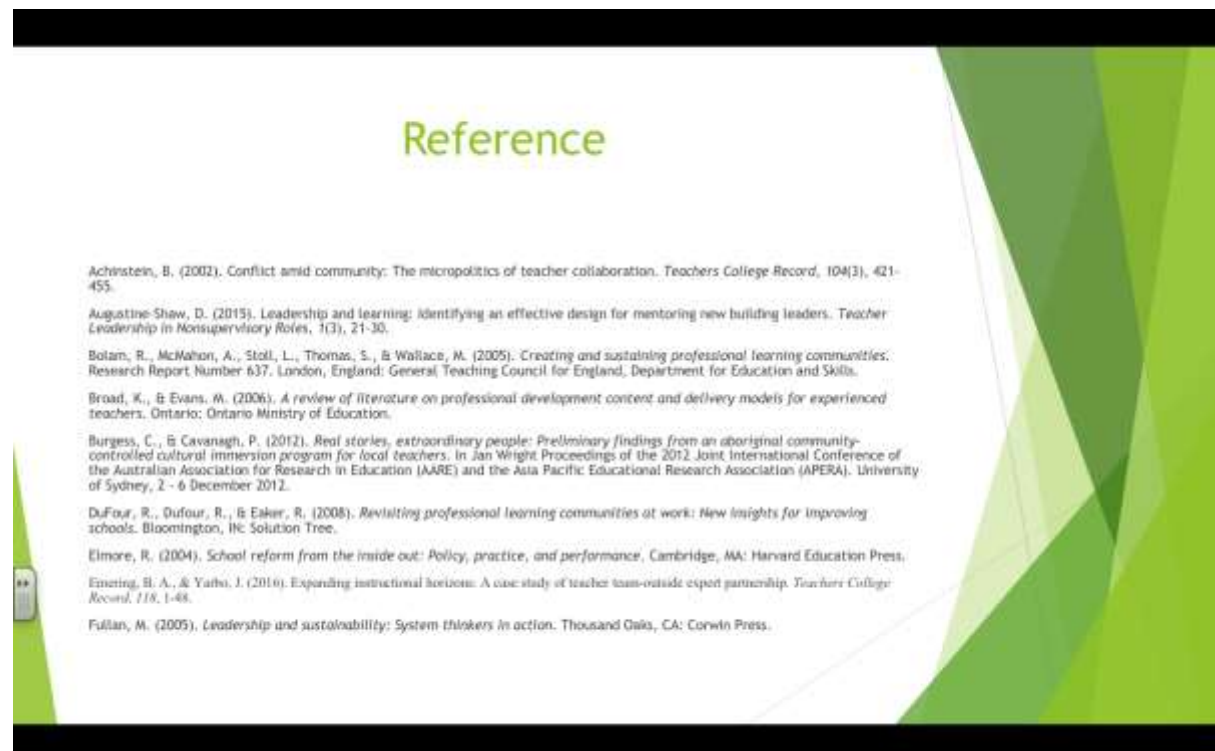


Slide 31 features a white background with a green geometric pattern on the right side. The title "Final Thoughts?" is centered at the top in a green font. Below the title, there are two bullet points, each preceded by a green right-pointing triangle. The first bullet point says "Finish with any final points or questions you want to bring up with the group." and the second says "Thank you for your participation and contributions!". A small navigation icon is visible on the left edge.

Final Thoughts?

- ▶ Finish with any final points or questions you want to bring up with the group.
- ▶ Thank you for your participation and contributions!

Slide 32



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Reference

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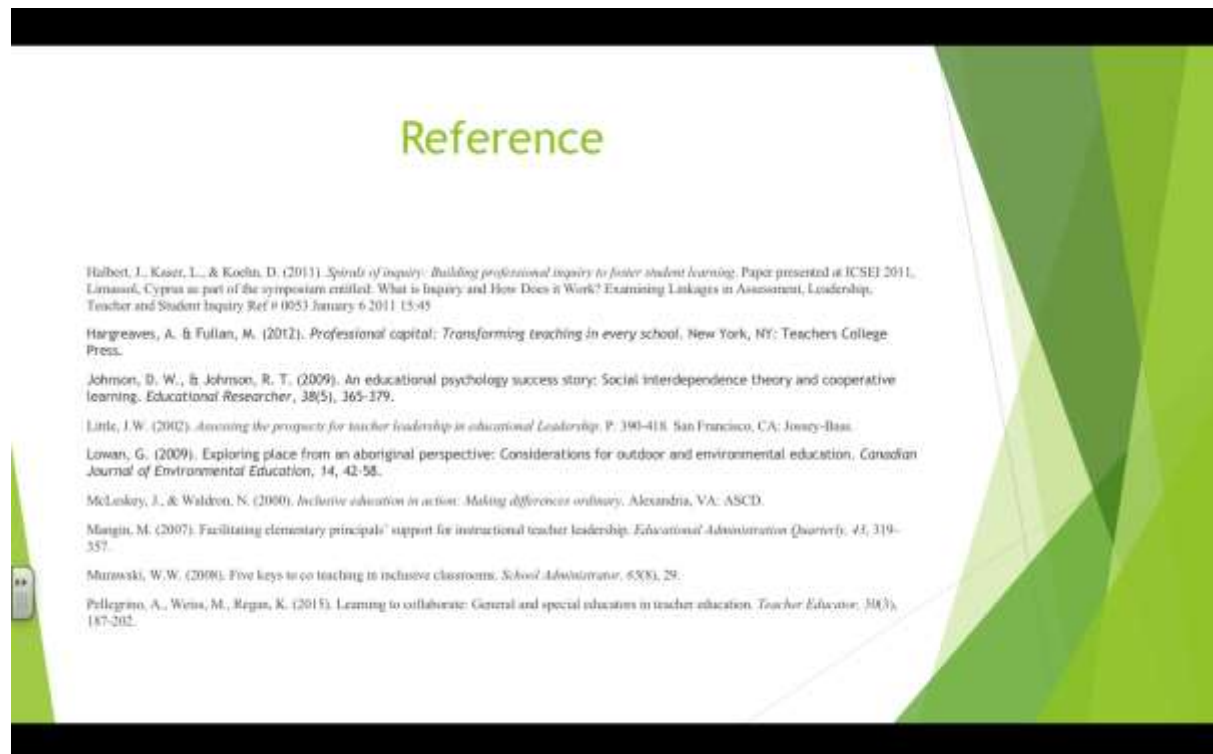
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Slide 33



Reference

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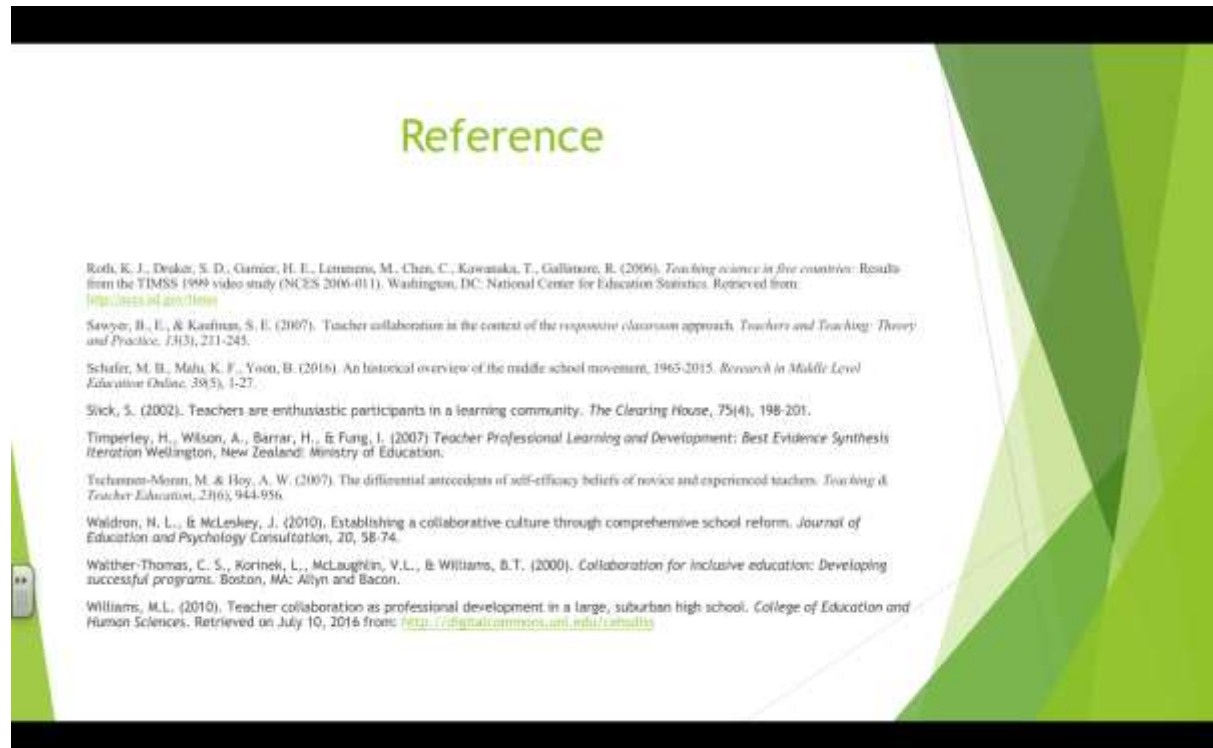
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Slide 34



Reference

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Appendix C: Session Introduction Explanation

This activity is indented to allow for participants to learn a bit about each other and feel comfortable sharing with the group. A portion of the session involves group work and sharing of experiences. The aim of this activity is to make participants more comfortable with one another and set the tone for sharing and openness within the sessions.

Steps:

- 1.) Instruct group members to pair up. If there is an odd number of participants, the facilitator can join with a participant.
- 2.) Explain to participants that they will be conducting a short two-minute interview of their partner. Their goal of the interview is to learn some basic background about the individual and one interesting thing you think nobody in the session would know. The questions they ask can vary, but the goal is to learn background information and one interesting thing about the individual. Participants could take notes while conducting their interview.
- 3.) Start a clock and inform participants when it is time to switch between interview and interviewee.
- 4.) Allow time for individuals to share what they learned and introduce their partner to the class.

Appendix D: Teambuilding Icebreaker Prompts

The icebreaker prompts are intended to be fun way for session participants to open up about their opinions to the provided guiding questions. This activity builds on the initial session interview allowing participants to become more comfortable with one another while sharing their views. The discussion prompts should be prepared on cards for distribution or alternatively could be written on a white or smart board.

Steps:

- 1.) Split the class into groups of four or five.
- 2.) Provide the five prompts to each group.
- 3.) Allow for ten to fifteen minutes of group discussion. This can be judged based on observation and when groups finish discussing the guiding questions.

Discussion Prompts

- 1.) Should school days only be for half a day?
- 2.) Should homework be outlawed?
- 3.) Respond to the following prompt with a yes or no and explain your answer. A noisy classroom is a good classroom?
- 4.) Explain what constitutes sound evidence of student learning.
- 5.) Defend or refute the following statement. Teamwork is essential to any successful organization. Explain your response.

Appendix E: Benefits of Collaboration Prompts Explanation

The prompts written on slide 11 of the template are intended to facilitate an initial discussion on the benefits and effective process behind collaboration in schools based on participant experience. The slide describes that the responses should be posted on OneNote. Microsoft OneNote is an online application included with Microsoft 365 that allows teachers to set up a class page and collaboration space. The collaboration space allows for ideas and responses to be saved and viewed in real time, but also requires a license. I have included OneNote in my plan because teachers at my current school have Microsoft 365 licenses. As an alternative to OneNote facilitators could simply discuss the prompts, write them on a piece of poster paper, or use another online format.

Appendix F: Communication Activity Explanation

Slide 15 discussed the importance communication skills have in collaboration amount professionals in K-12 Schools. This activity can be used as an engaging starting point in discussing communication and can be used by school leaders during staff orientations or induction sessions. The activity shows the importance of effective oral communication in achieving a goal. This activity requires that you come to class with a picture ready to show to the activity volunteer.

Steps:

- 1.) Have one member of the session volunteer to come up to the front of the class.
- 2.) Once you have the volunteer explain to the class that nobody is allowed to speak except the volunteer.
- 3.) Show a picture you have brought to class to the volunteer, but not the rest of the group. The picture you select is up to you, but it could be a relatively simple structure or object.
- 4.) Instruct the class to get out a piece of paper and a pen or pencil.
- 5.) Explain to the class that the volunteer is going to orally explain how to draw the picture in front of him that they have not observed and that only the volunteer is allowed to speak.
- 6.) Instruct the volunteer to begin.
- 7.) Once the activity is complete conduct a debrief discussion about peoples thoughts and what constitutes effective communication.

Appendix G: Problem Solving Case Activity

The three cases described below are to be given to groups in the PD session. Each group will receive one case. Be sure to understand the number of participants in your group and prepare the cases on paper to be given to groups. More than one group can have the same case. The goal of the activity is to have session participants run through a simulated collaborative teacher team scenario, assess the issue or problem, and pose potential solutions.

Steps:

- 1.) Split the class into groups and provide one case to each group who is acting as a simulated teacher team.
- 2.) Explain that their goal is to identify potential issues or problems in their case based on the information provided and present potential solutions.
- 3.) Explain that groups will share their case and solutions after they have completed.

Case 1:

Middlebury is a Middle School and last year had an enrolment of 120 students in grades 6 through 9. The school is expecting an influx of students who have immigrated from foreign countries and next year the student population is expected to exceed 180. Among the new students expected to attend almost all are not native English speakers. What are potential issues Middlebury may face and what measures could be taken to ensure a smooth transition and success?

Case 2:

During a recent horizontal meeting it has been reported that numerous teachers are having problems with Jim. Jim is routinely late for class and disengaged, but not disrespectful towards teachers or other students. Some teachers have described him as “lazy”. The one class where he is performing well is in Physical Education class and he is a member of several school sports teams where coaches describe him as a great athlete and a hard worker.

Several teachers have noted that they think Jim should not be allowed to play sports if he does not improve his studies however, no current policies are in place that state he should not be allowed to play sports. What are suggestions your team has to help Jim?

Case 3:

You are a school administrator who works in a remote community in Northern Canada. Your town has one K-12 school with approximately 140 students total. It is April and the majority of your staff has informed you that they are not returning next year. This means you will have to begin your hiring process and start next year with the majority of staff who is new to the community. What are potential issues and problems with this scenario and what measures does your group suggest to address this situation?

Appendix H: Leadership Modeling Checklist

Checklist Question	Yes	Sometimes	No	Examples of current practice	Goals/ideas for improved practice	Action plan for improving in the field
Do I currently practice shared leadership?						
Am I effective in distributing leadership responsibilities?						
Do I give my staff a voice in the creation of or input into school policies?						
Do I provide accessible mechanisms for my staff give input on school issues?						
Do I currently model collaborative processes and behaviors?						

Does my staff engage in collaborative processes and behaviors?						
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Appendix I: Organizational Action Plan for Creating Shared Goals

Question	Step/Action	Timeline for Completion
When do we plan to revisit/revise our current school goals?		
What are the steps we are going to take to ensure our goals are aligned?		
How and where are we going to communicate our goals to our school community?		
How are we going to ensure everybody in our community has the opportunity to provide input in the process?		

Appendix J: Teacher Professional Development Information Handout

Professional development (PD) for teachers takes on many forms with many definitions. In education it generally involves processes, interactions, and experiences aimed at improving teachers' understandings and practices. Effect teacher PD increases professional capacity and when structured well can increase collaborative practices in teachers. When professional capacity is increased in a community there is an opportunity for new knowledge and practices to be shared in the community.

Initial Questions:

- What types of PD does our school currently provide or participate in?
- Are our PD sessions short or long term?
- Are our current PD practices effective and how do we know?
- If they are short term is the knowledge shared or do, we focus on subject specific trainings?
- Do we maximize the knowledge we have on staff or are there ways we can collaborate to better increase our communities' capacity?
- Are we aware of cost effective resources or frameworks that allow for PD opportunities in school without travel?

Reasons Behind Ineffective PD for Teachers:

- Short term conferences, lectures, and institutes for teachers often yield disappointing results and little change in practice because there is a lack of time necessary for rigorous study and reflection.
- Time is not allocated to teachers to adequately share their learning once they return to their schools so knowledge remains isolated.
- The money spent by boards on one off PD sessions can be removed from the realities of the teachers in specific locations and thus not relevant.

An analysis of literature on PD for teachers shows that the main theme behind inadequate or underperforming PD is the time horizon of PD activities. It is important for school leaders to focus their PD on issues in their context and allocate time for adequate study, reflection, and sharing between teachers.

Characteristics of Effective PD for Teachers:

- Collaborative based
- Focused on school wide initiatives not individual classrooms
- Intensive and reflective
- Ongoing and allowed time for reflection

Documented Examples of Collaborative PD:

- Ongoing teacher mentorship programs.
- Teacher meetings with specific goals, practice, reflective notes, and debrief at next meeting.
- Teachers who attend outside PD conferences share practices of what they have learned when they return.
- PD focused on improving skills necessary to collaborate (see collaborative characteristics above).
- Spirals of Inquiry Model.

Appendix K: Scheduling Collaboration Suggestions

Planning Suggestions for Team Organization:	Resources & Samples of Practice:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Have staff work together across defined school teams? ➤ Address what issues are common for different groups of teachers and where individual teachers could benefit most. ➤ Teams can be defined by students taught and content covered (horizontal & vertical teams). ➤ Individuals can sign up to work in teams and reflect on specific topics of interest. ➤ Consider what teachers do not fall into a group and consider where they could be placed (languages, technology, etc.). 	
Planning Suggestions for Scheduling:	Resources & Samples of Practice:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Assess your current meeting schedule and the effectiveness of the groupings and timeframe. ➤ Prioritise collaborative group 	

<p>meetings over whole school meetings.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Save time by eliminating agenda items that can be achieved through email or other online platforms. ➤ Search for time slots prior, during, or after school where teams can have time to meet. ➤ Clearly define roles and responsibilities, and purpose of meetings before they start. ➤ Roles do not need to be the same for every team depending on the group size and context of issues pertaining specific groups. 	
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Appendix L: Collaborative Structures Handout

Academic literature notes that there are no universally accepted or applicable collaborative structures. Effective structures are largely determined by the goal, type of process, and specific location and context of the individual school. The following models are documented in academic literature and can be used as a model, guide, or adopted based on the schools' individual situation.

➤ Collaborative Culture Model for School Reform (Waldron & Mcleskey, 2010):

- a.) An initial whole school discussion on the importance of the reform as an ongoing process with a clear explanation of what the reform entails and expectations of teachers in their classrooms.
- b.) A team including the principal and teachers is created to lead the change process.
- c.) An analyses of available data focused on issues to be addressed.
- d.) An examination its options and capacity for school change by consulting with internal and external agents.
- e.) Extensive professional development for teachers focused on various aspects of the proposed change.
- f.) Upon implementation of reform, effectiveness is monitored through data collection and observation from staff.

➤ Collaborative Structuring for Positive Relationships (McCarthy, Brennan, & Vecchiarello, 2011):

- a.) Clearly define roles and responsibilities of team members.
- b.) Come to a consensus on a shared vision.
- c.) Establish a strategic plan for collaboration.
- d.) Assess and make adjustments to the plan.

- Structured Steps for Increased Teacher Problem Solving (Brodesky, Gross, Tigheand, & Palmer, 2007):
 - a.) Increasing understandings of students and content;
 - b.) Aligning student needs with strategic goals.
 - c.) Implement strategies, incorporate reflection into the strategies effectiveness jointly with stakeholders.
 - d.) Make sure lesson planning and assessments are done collaboratively.
- Framework for Teacher Teams to Address Issues on School Context; Spirals of Inquiry (Halbert, Kaser, & Kohen, 2011):
 - a.) Identification of something that needs to be addressed (a problem, issue, learning need).
 - b.) A guiding question is posed.
 - c.) A criterion is developed for success.
 - d.) Teacher learning is enhanced in the area of the issue being addressed.
 - e.) New learning and teaching emerges.
 - f.) The issue being addressed is reflected upon and reassessed.
- Increasing Collaborative Capacity; A Model from Outside the K-12 School Setting (Foster-Fishman, Berkowitz, Lounsbury, Jacobson, & Allen, 2001):
 - a.) Understand the current capacity and areas of strength and weakness within the organization.
 - b.) Address the core skills and knowledge needed for effective collaboration and critical analysis of programing in the organization.
 - c.) Educate and build positive attitudes towards collaboration.
 - d.) Increase membership access.
 - e.) Increase relational capacity.

f.) Increase organizational capacity.

g.) Address programing capacity.

➤ Collaborative Development in Organizations: A View from Outside of K-12

Education (Munger, 2014):

a.) Determine initial collaboration purpose and type

b) Identify membership needs and conduct stakeholder analysis

c) Establish the collaboration

d) Specify collaboration purpose, mission, and structure with members

e) Identify contextual characteristics of the collaboration

f) Determine structural characteristics of the collaboration

g) Manage group dynamics

h) Retain members and grow membership

i) And, institutionalize the collaboration

Questions to Consider for Category:

➤ How will you organize and structure formal collaboration in your school and why?

➤ How will you assess whether the structures you put in place are effective or not?

Appendix M: Current Practices and Future Implementation

Category	Examples of Current Practice:	Ideas for Future Implementation:	Reflection on Implementation & Adaptations:
Collaborative Culture			
Professional Development			
Structure of Collaboration			