

# LEADING FROM THE MIDDLE

## DEEPENING SYSTEM LEADERSHIP & PERSONAL LEARNING



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New Pedagogies for  
**Deep Learning™**  
A GLOBAL PARTNERSHIP



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**Know Yourself as a Learner**

**REFLECTION ACTIVITY**

WORKSHEET #1

- › Complete the worksheet.
  - Something I'm very good at ...
  - How I got better at this ...
  - The conditions that were most helpful for me to get better ...
- › Form a triad and discuss.

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1. Turning learning into visible practice

2. Constant exposure, Constant practice, Constant feedback

**TWO IDEAS TO DEEPEN LEARNING**  
*from the inside out*

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## Know Yourself vis-à-vis the SLQS

WORKSHEET #2

- On a scale of 1-10, how confident are you of your knowledge and skill to effectively embody each competency? (1=not at all / 10=fully)
- Based on your self-assessment, identify 1 or 2 competencies you would like to get better at over the next semester.

- [Building Effective Relationships](#)
- Modeling Commitment to Professional Learning
- [Visionary Leadership](#)
- Leading Learning
- Ensuring First Nations, Métis and Inuit Education for All Students
- School Authority Operations & Resources
- [Supporting Effective Governance](#)

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## Crafting a Personal Learning Plan

WORKSHEET #3

COMPLETE THE WORKSHEET AND SHARE WITH YOUR TEAM.

- **AREA OF GROWTH: PERSONAL GOAL(S)**  
Which competency(ies) have you identified that you would like to improve over the next six months?
- **EVIDENCE**  
How will you know you're getting better? What do you expect you'll know and be able to do six months from now that indicates progress?
- **ENABLING CONDITIONS**  
What conditions will you leverage/create to reach your goals?
- **EFFECTIVE STRATEGIES**  
What is your action plan?
- **STAY THE COURSE**  
What will you do to stay focused on your personal growth?

WHEN YOU ARE FINISHED, TAKE A FEW MINUTES TO READ HANDOUTS 1 & 2.

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### Fostering a Growth Mindset in Schools and Districts

- ▶ Hiring
- ▶ Teams
- ▶ Assessment

– Reinhorn, S., Johnson, S.M., & Simon, N. (Jan 2018). Blog, *Albert Shanker Institute*.

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### Fostering a Growth Mindset in Schools and Districts

HIRING	TEAMS	ASSESSMENT
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Look for willingness to constantly reassess and reinvent own practice</li> <li>• Demonstration lesson: candidate receives &amp; responds to feedback</li> <li>• Interview/meeting with current teachers</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Weekly blocks of time for collaboration</li> <li>• Joint work focused on improved practice</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Growth orientation</li> <li>• Timely, constant, direct feedback</li> </ul>

– Reinhorn, S., Johnson, S.M., & Simon, N. (Jan 2018). Blog, *Albert Shanker Institute*.

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### Nurturing Collaborative Cultures

- ▶ Letter off A, B, C.
- ▶ Read “Stop, Continue, Start”
- ▶ Report to your triad.

**STOP**

- ▶ Data teams at the expense of collaborative inquiry
- ▶ Importing external design
- ▶ Turnover

**Continue**

- ▶ Deepen collaborative cultures
- ▶ Soliciting feedback
- ▶ Linking big and little picture

▶ Student and teachers as change agents

▶ Mindfully leverage digital

▶ Collaboration across schools/districts

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## Deepening Collaboration

**WORKSHEET #4**

Complete the worksheet:

- › What makes collaboration strong in your district?
- › What are key areas where collaboration could be improved?
- › What does the district need to Stop, Continue, Start?

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### HERITAGE STAFF RESPONSES ON SCHOOL CULTURE SURVEY

Item	2016 A/SA*	2017 A/SA*
1 Students have at least one adult at the school who really cares about them.	84%	94%
2 Students feel safe at school.	71%	94%
3 Students are proud to attend this school.	65%	75%
4 Students ask questions when they don't understand.	33%	71%
5 This school is an inviting place for students to learn.	71%	81%

Note: A = agree SA = strongly agree

—Fullan & Pinchot, 2018

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### HERITAGE STAFF RESPONSES ON SCHOOL CULTURE SURVEY

Item	2016 A/SA*	2017 A/SA*
6 This school promotes trust and collegiality among staff.	68%	88%
7 This school has a safe environment for giving peer-to-peer feedback.	44%	93%
8 Site leadership fosters professional growth through constructive feedback, training and support.	30%	86%
9 Site leadership asks for and listens to staff suggestions prior to major decisions.	47%	75%
10 District leadership provides an opportunity for two-way communication.	50%	65%

Note: A = agree SA = strongly agree

—Fullan & Pinchot, 2018

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## Showcase and Connect

Work with your school authority team to:

1. Identify one or two SLQS competency(ies) where you/your district is proud to be breaking new ground or making important progress.
2. On a flip-chart sheet, create a short presentation describing the story of the work you're doing and the impact you're seeing.
3. Name a person in your team who will present your story to others during the next Team Leadership Learning session (1:30-2:30).
4. Post your chart in the section of the room designated for the competency most strongly highlighted in your presentation .
5. *Gallery Walk.* Walk around the room and look at the work posted by other teams. Identify 1 or 2 of the competency sections you would like to visit in the third Team Leadership Learning Session.
6. Identify at least one district whose work you would like to further learn and discuss. Find at least one person from the district(s) and their contact info.

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SESSION 3

## LEADING FROM THE MIDDLE



*Rolling up our sleeves*

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## Getting Alberta SLQS Right

NOT...	BUT...
Something to Implement	Something to Leverage
Mandates	Orientations
Compliance	Learning
Evaluation	Growth
An End in Itself	A Means for Improvement

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**YOU MIGHT BE STUCK WITH THE POLICY, NOT WITH THE MINDSET**

- › Taking into account the three sets of standards, how can you and your team leverage the SLOS to advance your district's priorities?
- › What key questions do you have?

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**Foster System Development**

- › Establish mechanisms for schools and districts to learn from each other.
- › Form a learning partnership with Alberta Research Network.
- › Foster Learning Agenda with other agencies (Alberta Education, ATA, ASBA).

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**Networking and Moving Forward**

- › If you're the designated presenter of your team, go to the room section where your team chart is posted.
- › If NOT a designated presenter, choose two competency sections where you would like to hear the presentations from other districts. Go to one of the two competency sections of your choice.

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### Networking and Moving Forward

#### ROUND ONE (20 minutes)

- Once in a competency section, name a Moderator and a Time Keeper.
- Moderator will allocate time so that in the 20 minute period each presenter has the same amount of time to present their story and there is time for Q&A and feedback from the audience.
- Time Keeper will make sure presentations and Q&A stick to the allocated time.
- After 20 minutes: presenters stay by their charts and the rest go to their second competency section of their choice.

#### ROUND TWO (20 minutes)

- Repeat steps 1-3 above.
- After 20 minutes, go back to your teams

#### BACK AT YOUR TEAM

- What are your key take-aways from the presentations?
- What are 2-3 actions that you and your team can undertake to strengthen leadership practice in your district?

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### WRAP UP

- ▶ What is your main take away from the day?
- ▶ What question about district/system change is foremost on your mind?

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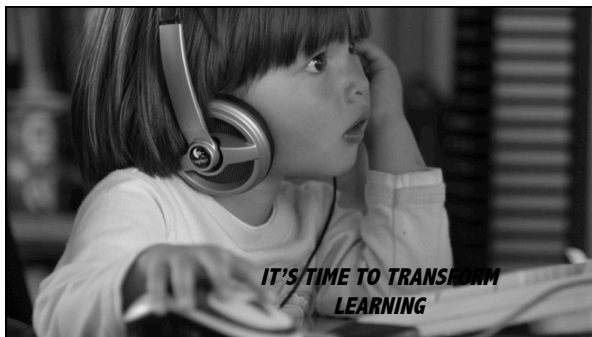
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# WORKSHEET 1

## Know Yourself as a Learner: Reflection Activity

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Something I'm very good at...

How I got better at this...

The conditions that were most helpful for me to get better...

## WORKSHEET 2

### Know Yourself Vis-à-Vis the SLQS

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#### Activity: Reflection

On a scale of 1-10, how confident are you of your knowledge and skill to effectively embody each competency? (1=not at all / 10=fully)

	Self-score (1-10)
Building Effective Relationships	
Modeling Commitment to Professional Learning	
Visionary Leadership	
Leading Learning	
Ensuring First Nations, Métis and Inuit Education for All Students	
School Authority Operations and Resources	
Supporting Effective Governance	

## WORKSHEET 3

### Crafting a Personal Learning Plan

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**Complete the worksheet and share with your team.**

AREA OF GROWTH:	
PERSONAL GOAL(S): Competency(ies) to improve over 6 months.	EVIDENCE: How will you know you're getting better? What will you know and be able to do six months from now that indicates progress?
CONDITIONS: Which conditions will you leverage/create to reach your goals?	
STRATEGIES: What is your action plan?	
STAY THE COURSE: What will you do to stay focused on your personal growth?	

# WORKSHEET 4

## Deepening Collaboration

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+ What makes collaboration strong in your district?	Δ What are key areas where collaboration in your district could be improved?
STOP	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1.</li> <li>2.</li> <li>3.</li> </ol>
CONTINUE	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1.</li> <li>2.</li> <li>3.</li> </ol>
START	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1.</li> <li>2.</li> <li>3.</li> </ol>

# WORKSHEET 5

## Showcase and Connect

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Competency(ies) to showcase:

- Building Effective Relationships
- Modeling Commitment to Professional Learning
- Visionary Leadership
- Leading Learning
- First Nations, Métis and Inuit Education for All
- School Authority Operations & Resources
- Supporting Effective Governance

Key Ideas to Showcase:

Districts/Folks to connect with:

Contact Info:

Date and time for next interaction/communication:



# HANDOUT 1

## Fostering a Growth Mindset in Schools and Districts

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### SHANKER BLOG

## What Do Schools Fostering A Teacher “Growth Mindset” Look Like?

by Stefanie Reinhorn , Susan Moore Johnson , and Nicole Simon -- January 31, 2018

*Our guest authors today are Stefanie Reinhorn, Susan Moore Johnson, and Nicole Simon. Reinhorn is an independent consultant working with school systems on Instructional Rounds and school improvement. Johnson is the Jerome T Murphy Research Professor at the Harvard Graduate School of Education. Simon is a director in the Office of K-16 Initiatives at the City University of New York. The authors are researchers at The Project on the Next Generation of Teachers at Harvard Graduate School of Education. This piece is adapted from the authors' chapter in Teaching in Context: The Social Side of Education Reform edited by Esther Quintero (Harvard Education Press, 2017).*

Carol Dweck's theories about motivation and development have become mainstream in schools since her book, *Mindset*, was published in 2006. It is common to hear administrators, teachers, parents, and even students talk about helping young learners adopt a “growth mindset” --expecting and embracing the idea of developing knowledge and skills over time, rather than assuming individuals are born with fixed abilities. Yet, school leaders and teachers scarcely talk about how to adopt a growth mindset for themselves—one that assumes that educators, not only the students they teach, can improve with support and practice. Many teachers find it hard to imagine working in a school with a professional culture designed to cultivate *their* development, rather than one in which their effectiveness is judged and addressed with rewards and sanctions. However, these schools do exist.

In our research (see [here](#), [here](#) and [here](#)), we selected and studied six high-performing, high-poverty urban schools so that we could understand how these schools were beating the odds. Specifically, we wondered what they did to attract and develop teachers, and how teachers experienced working there. These schools, all located in one Massachusetts city, included: one traditional district school; two district turnaround schools;

## HANDOUT 1 (cont'd)

two state charter schools; and one charter-sponsored restart school. Based on interviews with 142 teachers and administrators, we concluded that all six schools fostered and supported a "growth mindset" for their educators.

Although these schools differed notably in what and how they taught students, they were remarkably similar in how they organized the workplace for teachers. They all believed that a key piece of supporting students' learning was systematically attending to teachers' learning. As one school leader explained:

Our whole mission is to be a human capital organization. We are here to develop our kids. We are here to develop our teachers. We are here to develop our administrators. This is what we do and what we're all about.

In addition, our analysis confirmed that the teachers recognized and appreciated their schools' persistent focus on individual and collective improvement.

### **How did these schools foster a "growth mindset" for teachers?**

We found that three approaches to managing teachers' work — hiring, teacher teams, and teacher evaluation — were prominent and interdependent. Together they promoted a professional culture focused on continuous improvement for teachers, individually and collectively, all in service of student learning.

#### *Hiring*

During the schools' two-way, information-rich hiring process, school leaders highlighted their expectations about development by telling candidates that, if they joined the school, they would have to, as one said, "be willing to constantly reassess, reinvent and really be creative." They showed what this meant by requiring candidates to teach a demonstration lesson and then respond to feedback. If a candidate made excuses or rejected the feedback, her was judged not to have the right mindset. As one current teacher said, this experience was "a great preview of what it would be like to work [there]."

Another explained that the feedback session during the interview process convinced her that she wanted to work at this school because of its explicit focus on supporting teachers.

An additional element of the hiring process was the opportunity to interview with current teachers, which enabled the candidate to know her potential future peers and their expectations. In some cases, applicants were invited to join in a teacher team meeting with what would be their future team, in order to understand and participate in their collaborative efforts. This allowed both the candidate and current teachers to assess to whether the candidate and existing faculty would be a good match.

#### *Teacher Teams*

Teachers in the schools we studied, like those in many schools, were expected to collaborate with their colleagues so that their efforts to improve the school would be coherent. Five of the six schools relied on teacher teams as a key strategy for improving their school, and they dedicated substantial blocks of time each week for teachers to meet. Most teachers we interviewed endorsed teams as a valuable mechanism for developing and maintaining an effective instructional program and monitoring students' experiences and progress.



## HANDOUT 1 (cont'd)

They said that their experience on a team reduced their isolation, supported them in developing curriculum and lessons, ensured that students received close attention, and contributed to a more successful school. When we asked a teacher leader with 6 years of experience whom she would go to for support, she quickly responded, "My team members." When asked further what kinds of support she might seek, she answered, "Everything." When we probed further about when this might occur, she said, "Every day, many times."

A teacher from another school described how his team spends its time:

Some of it is sharing best practices and ideas that we have; some of it's showing student work. We've done things like show videos of tutoring sessions or classes to talk about students' understanding. We brought in research to talk about together and also common planning. It's kind of a mixture of professional development [that feeds] into planning.

Across the schools, participants viewed teacher teams as a significant source of support for their development.

### *Supervision and Evaluation*

Administrators and teachers in all six schools said the primary purpose of evaluation was to develop teachers, not to assess, reward, or dismiss them. One charter administrator explained, "We believe that teachers, or just people in general, grow with immediate feedback and real-time instruction on how they are performing." In this sample, most teachers described participating in an intense, year-long cycle of observations, followed soon after by written or oral critique and recommendations. Approximately, 40 percent of the 97 teachers we interviewed said they were observed and received feedback at least twice per month. Another 20 percent estimated that they were observed and given feedback between five and 10 times per year. The final 40 percent reported that they were observed one to four times per year, consistent with state and district requirements. Virtually all teachers we interviewed endorsed the observations and feedback they received as a positive part of their professional experience. One teacher in her seventh year of teaching appreciated the feedback and said, "I constantly feel like I'm getting better."

### **How did these three professional systems interact?**

These processes for selecting, supporting and developing teachers were mutually reinforcing. Ambitious hiring procedures ensured that teachers were well matched with their schools and expected to engage in a community organized for continuous growth. Because administrators observed teachers' instruction often and discussed written feedback in face-to-face meetings, most teachers had ready access to critique and advice.

This close attention to individuals' development was complemented by teachers' experiences on teams, where they coordinated their planning and instruction, reflected on students' performance, and devised new approaches for improving the performance of their grade level or department.

These six schools serve as examples of how a school might foster a growth mindset for both educators and students. While we can't say definitively that this approach was responsible for their schools' attaining the highest rating in the state's accountability system, it likely contributed to it. Of course, the policy context in which each school operated directly and indirectly affected its practices. Our research suggests that several factors were essential: having sufficient autonomy to select teachers and redesign the schedule; having ample resources to provide time for teachers and administrators to participate in these activities; and having principals who were, themselves, skilled instructors, efficient managers and leaders who could promote a growth mindset in others.

## HANDOUT 2

### Doing Collaborative Professionalism

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Letter off A, B, C, and read “Stop, Continue, Start”. Report to your triad.



## HANDOUT 2 (cont'd)

**M**ost reports on professional collaboration and professional development typically end with a three-part advocacy for better leadership, more time, and more resources. Reports never conclude that we need poorer leadership, less time, and fewer resources! We want to add something else in this concluding chapter to the standard recommendations for time and resources. What we focus on instead is what we should do to strengthen collaborative professionalism, not only how much time or money we have to do it. In particular, we ask:

- What should we *stop* doing?
- What should we *continue* doing?
- What should we *start* doing?

### 1. What should we stop doing?

#### 1. Stop investing too much in data teams at the expense of collaborative inquiry

Children, learning, and teaching must come before dashboards and digits. This doesn't mean that we should abandon data in education. Data help us track and monitor progress. They enable us to identify gaps that need narrowing and gates that are closed to some groups more than others. They can draw attention to students whose needs are too easily overlooked, regardless of intentions—the quiet children in a class, or the unusually large numbers of students in the middle levels of performance, as found in Drammen, for example. Data can also help us solve problems by pinpointing the reasons for issues such as low graduation rates, grade retention issues, or high teacher turnover. Progress monitoring, problem solving, and accountability all function better with data rather than without it.

But data teams shouldn't dominate what teachers do or even what they think and worry about. And not all data are big data of numbers and algorithms. Too much emphasis on data analysis can bring together social scientists, bureaucrats, and technology companies in a disturbing alliance of self-interest that distracts teachers from the core of their work—teaching and learning. This triple alliance is overly inclined to believe it can control schools and society through pure science in a process that is linear and predictable rather than complex, improvisational, and messy—a delusion that has appealed to policy makers and academics since the 1800s.

What matters most of all is that educators inquire into what they are doing continuously and that they use the big data of numbers and the small data of professional judgments in combination as a way to inform the process.<sup>227</sup> Put big data first and the data drive improvement in the wrong directions, drawing teachers into time-consuming activities that are not the core of their work, which is teaching, learning, and the development of children. Data teams should be part of cultures of continuous collaborative inquiry, not the other way round.

## HANDOUT 2 (cont'd)

### 2. Stop importing unmodified alien designs

Many designs for collaborative professionalism, such as lesson study, end up being ineffective when they are adopted without any consideration of the culture in which they evolved. To avoid this frequent flaw of innovation efforts, we advise that every inquiry or improvement team should have, get, or develop a resident anthropologist. Anthropologists understand culture. They understand their community's own culture — what is important, how people interact, and how the community evolved over time. They understand other cultures — the values that define them, the distinctive nature of their relationships, and how all these things have been shaped by traditions in the country and by leadership over time in the school. When an innovation or collaborative design comes to the attention of a school or a system, the person or group assigned the responsibility of acting as anthropologists can help everyone figure out what can stay the same and what needs to change about the design to adopt it successfully in one's own community.

Reform is like ripe fruit, one of us once said. It rarely travels well.<sup>228</sup> Designs for collaborative professionalism are the same. But designs coming from afar can work if people actively figure out the relationship with their own culture. Will the new way of collaborating need more or less formality or hierarchy, more or less informality and “fun,” more or less prescription of stages and steps, if it is to transfer successfully? Without someone playing the role of anthropologist, though, many people not only find it hard to understand other cultures; they also don't even grasp the distinctiveness of their own. Cows don't know that it's grass that they're eating. All this may sound farfetched, but some companies have been able to reinvent themselves successfully by hiring actual anthropologists to figure out their own history and story so the company can add new chapters for the future.<sup>229</sup>

Whether it is lesson study, collaborative inquiry, helping another school, or being a critical friend for other educators, policymakers, principals, and all kinds of teachers must actively consider and decide how a new design for collaborative professionalism will and won't work in their own school. We should not embark on blitz campaigns to replicate new designs. Rather, we must inform educators of their potential collaborative options, present frameworks to them to help them personalize collaboration and make it more effective, and emphasize the importance of the human element — remembering their students, and the cultural and contextual factors that frame the learning that takes place.

## HANDOUT 2 (cont'd)

### 3. End high rates of educator turnover

It's hard to collaborate effectively when the personnel keep changing. When leaders keep changing, schools constantly lurch from one direction to another and either teachers leave as well, or they learn to wait while the tides of change wash in and out. When many or most of the teachers keep changing, things are even worse. Students start to feel that nobody cares enough to stay and when nobody else cares, neither do they. Teachers cannot collaborate with each other if they are making many new acquaintances every year. When there is a culture of high turnover, teachers behave as self-centered individuals who have to sink or swim by themselves. They feel overwhelmed and alone, and they lose hope quickly. Then they leave too, just like the others before them, perpetuating the very problem that defeated them.

High turnover can sometimes be inherently hard to avoid, as in international schools, where many teachers develop their lives and careers by moving from one school and country to another about every three years. High turnover is, however, also an effect of deliberate policies that endlessly expose educators in urban schools in some countries to top-down reforms and interventions. Even worse, the system or the school can be so driven by profitability that it seeks a teaching force that is young, cheap, and forever moving on in order to lower the cost of education and reduce resistance to the principal's and owner's wishes, or to imposed change. This helps explain the reason for the arguments we reviewed earlier that oppose collaboration or criticize its effectiveness.

The collaborative designs that were adopted in Hong Kong, Ontario, and Drammen emerged when there had been years of leadership stability that had built a strong culture of collaboration alongside and around specific designs such as professional learning communities, lesson study, and co-operative learning. But what should schools do if this culture does not already exist; if high turnover is part of the problem the present staff have inherited?

Paradoxically, one of the causes of high turnover is lack of investment in social capital and collaborative professionalism. The research of Susan Moore Johnson and her colleagues shows that teachers are more likely to stay in their school or the profession if their work occurs in cultures of collaboration.<sup>230</sup> Any effort to build collaboration as a leader to provide support, fulfillment, and a growing repertoire of effective strategies for young teachers will increase the likelihood that they will become more resilient and persist.<sup>231</sup> And, like Fanling school in Hong Kong, training new teachers in skills like teamwork and appointing them on the basis of those capacities can accelerate how quickly effective cultures of collaborative professionalism can be established. The best way to develop collaborative professionalism is with collaborative professionalism. So, if you do something and get started, there is a good chance you will initiate an upward spiral.

## HANDOUT 2 (cont'd)

### 2. What should we continue doing?

#### 1. Keep evolving the complexity of collaborative professionalism

Moves to establish stronger collaboration may start out simply — perhaps through having some social gatherings to build relationships, or through creating teams that work on particular tasks like curriculum development. Over time, though, the move from professional collaboration to deeper collaborative professionalism occurs when the formal and informal, long-term and short-term aspects of collaborative activity become increasingly complex and integrated as a way of life and not just a set of activities or events. In the case of NW RISE, for example, we saw how collaborative professionalism evolved deliberately from relying on project resources and central backbone structures to becoming more crystalline in nature where participating educators increasingly initiated collaborative activities with each other. Through these more sophisticated practices, we have seen the value of increasing teacher capacity in collaboration, making collaboration relevant and applicable to teachers, and providing many teachers with bits of time to collaborate, rather than creating full-time coordinating positions for a few.

The first challenge of building professional collaboration, therefore, might be getting some new ways of collaborating started. Once these start to succeed though, it is important not to stop there. Keep evolving the collaboration to incorporate other aspects that help it become more sophisticated, embedded and widespread — such as introducing more and better feedback, pushing professional conversation to a deeper level, or involving students more in collaborative activities.

#### 2. Continue soliciting critical feedback

Feedback is in fashion as one of the chief priorities for improvement in many countries.<sup>232</sup> But not any feedback will do. Feedback that is too harsh, or infrequent, or from sources lacking in credibility, will have little positive impact on those who receive it. However, if we solicit constructive and critical feedback in multiple forms from a range of colleagues, not just through one isolated process or structure, the feedback will not feel awkward or artificial.

Separating criticism of the lesson, the process, or the innovation from criticism of the person behind it can be done through lesson study or robust processes of peer review. It can also be achieved by giving people roles of acting as critical friends for each other in staff development processes or teacher networks. For principals and other leaders, resistance to change can also be legitimized by asking teachers to brainstorm risks and problems associated with new programs or innovations, by presenting multiple options for staff to consider rather than forcing acceptance or rejection of one, and by dividing groups randomly into those that have the task of identifying benefits of a change and those that have to list all the problems.

## HANDOUT 2 (cont'd)

If teachers are to accept engagement in feedback that has critical components, leaders must also model how they value such feedback for themselves by routinely procuring such feedback, really listening to it, then acting upon it when it is presented. You won't be successful in recommending critical feedback for other people if you are not seen as being willing to engage with it yourself.

### 3. Keep everyone engaged with the big picture and little picture together

Collaborative professionalism means not just collaborating on a bit of the big picture you have been given, such as developing a behavior management strategy or an induction program for new teachers. It means seeing how changes such as these fit into the big picture, too. Are all staff members and, indeed, students engaged in developing the vision and mission of the school, like the teachers at Drammen? Do leaders constantly explain how specific changes or team tasks fit into this larger vision as they do in northwestern Ontario? Can teachers and students articulate that connection, as well? When asked what kind of school they are involved with, will you get the same sort of answer from teachers, students, bus drivers, janitors, parents, and administrative assistants, as well as the principal – as was very evident to us in our site visit at *Escuela Nueva*?

At the same time, are formal leaders witnesses to and participants in the little pictures of change? Do ministers, secretaries of education, or district superintendents go into schools on a weekly basis, hold some of their meetings there, and make announcements from them – not just in the top schools, or the ones on the leading edge, but in all kinds of schools in the system? Do principals regularly go to see what is happening in students' classes, interact with students and teachers, and participate in the classes themselves – not just to monitor and evaluate, but because they really want to know? The big picture makes no sense without all the dots that make up the little pictures. Conversely, without a big picture to join up those dots, people's efforts will feel scattered and disconnected.

## 3. What should we start doing?

### 1. Make students into change-makers with their teachers

If collaborative professionalism is to become more meaningful for teachers and students alike, we must find more ways to involve students in the process. Among the many global competencies that young people must develop, one is the ability to initiate and manage change – to be a successful change maker.<sup>233</sup> This might mean coming up with a new idea, developing a start-up company, rectifying an injustice, or building a movement for a cause. In all of these, young people will need to learn explicitly and not just by chance how to organize, advocate, listen, negotiate, inspire, collaborate, fund-raise, build coalitions, and so on. Some of these competencies can and will be addressed

## HANDOUT 2 (cont'd)

in the formally taught curriculum. But many will or will not also arise in the hidden curriculum of how the school does its work and in what part students play in that.<sup>234</sup> How can students become change makers in their society if they are not encouraged to be change makers in their schools?

Students should not only be the objects or recipients of their teachers' ideas shared through collaboration, however well intentioned those ideas might be. Students have the right to express and share their ideas, as well, and to have the same kinds of transformative experiences that so many teachers have enjoyed. We have seen glimpses of this student engagement and even activism in *Escuela Nueva* and the NW RISE network, but there is opportunity for so much more.

Of course, faced with the prospect of student collaboration in the life and destiny of the school, teachers are sometimes apprehensive about collaborative student involvement for similar reasons that administrators worry about collaborative decision-making among teachers. If teachers have more collaborative rights, will teacher unions rule the roost over principals and school districts superintendents? If students get more collaborative input, will they make immature decisions, or irresponsible ones for communities and educators whose tenure in the school will outlast the time that many students are there? These are anxieties about loss of autonomy, power, and control that arise in all movements towards greater collaboration.

In general, people who are insecure about their own autonomy from those above are anxious about yielding it to those below. Stronger collaborative professionalism among teachers is, therefore, typically a precondition for effective collaborative engagement with students. The more confident teachers are in their own authority, the more able they will be to let go of it a little so others can have autonomy and authority, as well. In the words of the Vietnamese Zen Buddhist monk, Thich Nhat Hanh, "Fear is an element that prevents us from letting go. We're fearful that if we let go, we'll have nothing else to cling to. Letting go is a practice; it's an art."<sup>235</sup>

### 2. Adduce the added value of digital technology

Some of the cases we have highlighted show clear benefits for the value of digital technology in supporting and sustaining the development of collaborative professionalism. In the rural and remote Northwest of the United States, and across the Ontario wilderness in Canada, digital and video technology is connecting teachers and students in ways that were geographically impossible or financially exorbitant just a few years ago. Teachers can plan and reflect together. Students can provide peer review on assignments. School district leaders and teachers can exchange ideas and build a vision. Rural schools in Colombia are just seeing the beginning of this. In Hong Kong as in other Asian systems, enthusiastic teachers are using a range of digital platforms to keep and share photographic records of their ideas and their impact.



## HANDOUT 2 (cont'd)

At the moment, on average, the global evidence of the OECD is that countries that are implementing technology most rapidly are showing the least gains in student achievement.<sup>236</sup> But this does not repudiate the benefits of technology per se. It is more a commentary on the indecent haste and spread of implementation that is often fuelled by the massive financial investments made by technology companies in climates of austerity where other funding for public education is otherwise in short supply.

In the heated arguments for and against more technology in schools, it is time now not to see what the average outcome is, but to figure out what are the best results for students with and without technology and to discern where technology can distinctively add value to collaborative professionalism that cannot be added any other way. Technology can enable students and teachers to give and receive challenging feedback that might be harder to cope with from colleagues in their own small school with whom they work every day. Technology can connect teachers who have similar interests and grade levels when those colleagues do not exist nearby, and it can give them online tools for collaborative planning and review. Technology platforms can sustain relationships and professional interactions on a month-by-month basis that have been established and consolidated face-to-face just a couple of times a year. Technology also offers ways to circulate and share great ideas and their impact in real time with other teachers, the principal, and the student's parents.

But technology is not and should not be the answer to everything. In Norway and other countries in that region, teachers and students derive great value in terms of knowing each other better by playing, having shared adventures and undertaking activities outdoors in nature together. Too much time on data analysis can become distracting and divert teachers from the whole child and from undertaking fulfilling projects because the teachers are gathered round screens and looking at dashboards to an excessive extent.

Digital technology is one of the newest aspects of and opportunities for building collaborative professionalism. We must learn fast and learn well about its benefits without presuming what the end game should be. Ultimately, what matters most is that children learn well and that their teachers learn well, too. We must therefore assess carefully where investments of money and time in digital technology will add value to things that are of high educational and professional importance without significantly subtracting value from other things of equally great or even greater significance such as physical and emotional wellbeing.

## HANDOUT 2 (cont'd)

### 3. Build more collaboration across schools and systems

Organizations flourish or flounder from the head down. If teachers want students to learn cooperatively, then, like the teachers at Drammen, they should model how to work together cooperatively themselves. Principals who want teachers to collaborate with other teachers should themselves be ready and willing to collaborate with principals in other schools – like the district-wide professional learning community in northern Ontario, or the principals who worked with other principals in the NW RISE network. What message does it send when principals and superintendents urge their teachers to collaborate, but their stance with neighboring schools or systems is to compete?

In our original design for this study, we were eager to investigate examples of systems that worked closely with other systems. It turned out, though, that two of the sites we examined were too preliminary or temporary in nature to warrant inclusion. But in earlier work, we have studied how school districts in Ontario worked together to implement the province's vision for special education by developing solutions that were responsive to the needs and diversities of their own communities, yet shared and communicated with each other in a culture where all the systems took collective responsibility for each other's success.<sup>237</sup> We have also previously reported on local authorities or school districts in England where state schools and systems that were in a competitive relationship for student numbers helped each other even when they struggled. The result was that all the schools in the authorities improved and more parents kept their children enrolled there. Everybody benefitted. Not only were schools strongly urged by senior leadership to collaborate, but provision of assistance to other schools was also specified in the school leaders' contracts.<sup>238</sup>

Wherever possible, therefore, systems should find ways to collaborate with other systems and for their schools to collaborate with each other, even when they are in a competitive relationship. We can train educational leaders in the benefits of cooperation, even with competitors. We can also consider incorporating responsibilities for collaboration and its outcomes in principals' contracts. Indeed, if your school is doing well and you want to know what to do next, one answer is to help another school.

## HANDOUT 2 (cont'd)

### 4. Last Words

Nothing in the world is entirely individual. Olympic medalists, Academy Award winners and teachers of the year have undoubted talents and accomplishments, but they also benefit from years of experience, training, leadership, mentoring support, and even competition that enables them to grow over time and become the best they can be. Collaborative professionalism is about group achievements that actually enhance individual accomplishments and contributions of many kinds in countless ways.<sup>239</sup> Strong groups foster shared decisions, but they also underpin, inform, and enhance individual professional judgments. When law enforcement officers are confronted with a threat, when doctors have to make a life and death decision, or when teachers make one of the hundreds of judgments a day that characterize their classes, these autonomous judgment benefits from the weight and the strength of collaborative professionalism behind them.

Collaborative professionalism benefits the individual and the group, it develops the student and the teacher, it expresses solidarity in the face of adversity, and it embraces collective as well as individual autonomy based on shared expertise. Collaborative professionalism welcomes rather than fears feedback, critique, and improvement. In the past quarter century, teaching has made great strides in building more *professional collaboration*. It is now time for this to progress into *collaborative professionalism*, rooted in inquiry, responsive to feedback, and always up for a good argument. Are you a collaborative professional? Are you ready for this kind of challenge? For this — collaborative professionalism — is one of the next big step changes we can and should now make in the global movement for educational innovation and improvement.