Collaborative Professionalism by way of Collective Efficacy

by

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Abstract

This project portfolio explores how, by improving teacher efficacy and enhancing collaborative professionalism, there are accompanying gains in student learning. The project is based around Ontario's *Policy and Program Memorandum (PPM) 159: Collaborative Professionalism*. It explores how existing Professional Learning Community (PLC) structures can be modified to better incorporate the potential of collaborative professionalism. The literature review explains the challenges of a managerial professionalism but also the difficulties of a fully collaborative model. It explores the possible middle ground, where professionals have agency, but a final reporting feature allows for increased accountability. As a meaningful product, a potential protocol which facilitates the work of a PLC team during a school year is provided. The protocol uses Jenni Donohoo's Collaborative Teacher Inquiry model as a base. It is modified and extended upon, to focus PLC teams in their collaboration. The PLC protocol is designed to increase the agency of those involved in the PLC, while generating both a measure of accountability for the work of the PLC team, as well as a way of generating possible future PLC foci.

Keywords: Collaborative Professionalism, Collective Efficacy, Professional Learning Communities. PLCs, PPM 159, Ontario Education, Student Learning

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Chapter One: Introduction

Ontario teachers are burning out. They are feeling the pressure of the increasing bureaucracy, rapidly changing technology, an increase in initiatives, workloads and expectations and a host of other factors, all of which have teachers' stress levels ever increasing (Miller, 2018). Teacher burnout is a phenomenon observed by both Hanson (2013) and Kulavuz-Önal and Tatar (2017), and, as Miller (2018) explains, remains a pressing issue in Ontario. This ever-increasing stress is one of the many reasons suggested as a cause for the increase in teacher illness and absenteeism (Miller, 2018). At the same time, many teachers are working to stay positive about the profession and see the value in being part of student development. In their study of Saskatchewan teachers, Martin, Dolmage and Sharpe (2012), found that, although they "prized being in a position to contribute to the growth and evolution of students, and ultimately to the betterment of society" (p. 27), teachers are experiencing the mental and physical strain of the increasing professional demands, which is having a negative impact on their mental and physical health.

In Ontario, the previous round of secondary school collective agreement negotiations involved the very issue of the increasing workload on teachers, due to the bombardment of Ontario Ministry of Education (OME) directed initiatives (Ontario Secondary School Teachers' Federation [OSSTF], 2017). One potential solution to feelings of teacher overload, developed by the OME in consultation with other groups, was the issuance of *Policy and Program Memorandum (PPM) 159: Collaborative Professionalism* (OME, 2016). PPM 159 is to outlines a framework though which collaborative professionalism can be fostered in Ontario schools. It also outlines the roles and responsibilities of various stakeholders in developing and

implementing new initiatives, rather than have them determined and delivered in a top down manner (OSSTF, 2017).

Although the issuance of this PPM is seen by teachers and unions as an opportunity to increase autonomy of teachers (OSSTF, 2017), allowing them more direction in their collaboration and in shaping their professional judgment, it also creates many questions, including what are the expectations of the OME on teachers reporting their efforts might be, and how accountable might teachers remain to conventional measures of student achievement, such as Ontario's Education Quality and Accountability (EQAO) testing? Setting the larger scale aside, for the time being, let us begin with the postulations, articulated in PPM 159, that collaborative professionalism "improve[s] student achievement and well-being of both students and staff" (PPM 159, 2016, p. 1). This position is supported by the literature (Donohoo, 2016, Hattie, 2012), so how might a school board approach implementing PPM 159? With the question of practical implementation for classroom teachers, I began to consider how gap between what the literature illustrates to be the benefits of collaborative professionalism and the challenges and road-blocks in a successful implementation of the initiative.

As a secondary teacher who is married to a secondary teacher and has many friends who are secondary teachers, I am party to frequent conversations about the current workload and perpetual download of initiatives. At the same time, I see the potential of motivated professionals, who have student success as their goal, but who also recognize the impact that teacher moral has on this goal. As soon as I heard of PPM 159, I could see its potential, but also anticipate its possible pitfalls. As such, my goal became to engage in a study to work on the direction of the development of collaborative professionalism in a school board, as well as

develop a way a school board can account for its effectiveness, or determine if the goals of the collaboration were, indeed, effective.

I recognize that dinner table and back yard BBQ conversations are only a very small part of the puzzle, and in order to obtain a more detached perspective, as my project for EDUC 5111: Introduction to Qualitative Research, I undertook a mini-qualitative study, including a selection of secondary teachers, across subject disciplines, including a selection of instructional leaders, with a focus on their perspectives on both the possibilities of collaborative professionalism, as well as the current barriers. My research uncovered several key themes. Firstly, teachers desire opportunities, but struggle with current practices and protocols, such as the downloaded OME agenda that seems to find its way into professional learning communities (PLCs). Further, teachers also noted that, in much of their experience, PLCs tend to result in feeling of disengagement, disorganized meetings and a continual sense of repetition. As a result of this previous work, I decided to develop a protocol which both provides teachers more autonomy in developing their own focus for collaborative professionalism, while still providing accountability, by qualitative and teacher guided measures.

Much of the literature with which I engaged presented what could be described as a dual view of managerialism and professionalism. These dueling views are presented in much of the literature, with slight variations: bureaucracy versus collegial arrangements (Spillane, Shirrell & Hopkins, 2016); managerial professionalism versus democratic professionalism (Whitty & Wisby, 2006; Sachs, 2010); managerial accountability versus professional accountability (Green, 2011) and bureaucratic organization versus professional organization (Tschannen-Moran, 2009). It the space between in which I hope to situate my work. As an individual who situated much of my later high school years, and early undergraduate years in a Conflict perspective (Macionis &

Gerber, 2002), I very much believe in the power of a dialectic; that in the space between two duelling ideas, if the two sides are amenable to change, there is tremendous power for longstanding and meaningful growth and change. As Rahim (2017) explain, in organization, the tendency is to avoid or minimize conflict, but when conflict is able to occur and when it is directed with purpose, it can kindle creativity and innovation. With this said there is a required balance between destructive and productive conflict. When directed, though, it can be a motivator for constructive change. Posner et al. (1982) note that for the idea of change to take root, and for meaningful action to take place, (1) "there must be dissatisfaction with existing conceptions", (2) "a new conception my be intelligible," (3) "a new conception must appear plausible," and (4) "a new conception should suggest the possibility of a fruitful research program"— more specifically, that it can open new areas of study and inquiry (p. 214). I believe that PPM 159 does open the space for this conversation to happen; in my portfolio project, I decided to develop a guiding framework and protocol, which has the potential to unlock the potential of collaborative professionalism.

The included literature review seeks to explore the definitions, current limitations or barriers, the role of teacher efficacy as well as explore a collaborative inquiry model, with the goal of developing collaborative professionalism. In it, I explore the role of the instructional leader in this potential framework, as well as discuss the precarious balance between the previously noted binaries, so as to meet accountability measures, while allowing for the democratic facilitation of PLCs. Ultimately, the protocol provides a possible framework which promotes collaboration, allows teacher agency, promotes meaningful teacher develop, and facilitates the development of future instructional leaders. Based on foundations established in the literature review, as well as informal conversations, my project serves as an outline,

presenting various suggested questions to guide a PLC, with a focus on collaborative professionalism. Central to this framework is the Collaborative Inquiry Model, developed by Donohoo (2016). In the spirit of PPM 159, which suggests established mechanisms be adapted, I modified and added to Donohoo's model, as informed by the information distilled in my literature review. The protocol is a two page document, with notes for facilitation and an outline and focus questions or touch points for each step. Beyond Donohoo's model, I added a reporting and feedback stage, which can facilitate next steps for the group and may also spark new direction for future PLC groups. The reporting stage does provide a step which produces a tangible report to meet accountability requirements; the accountably, however, is to peers, rather than a bureaucratic structure. The reporting feature, also, must be considered in the initial development of the PLC plan, improving the focus and direction of the team. The overreaching goal of this project to provide a potential structure for PLCs to follow, while allowing teachers more autonomy over the focus, progression and reporting of a year-long PLC group, engaged in collaborative professionalism. Ultimately, I recognize that, while I engage in this work and develop this tool, I, myself, balance on the edge of imposing a managerial framework; from this mindset, perhaps, in constructing this project, I can aim to, in the least, facilitate a dialectic on the possibilities and direction of change in PLCs, and submit a working protocol, which can grow to the needs of those who use it.

Chapter Two: Review of Literature and Proposal

What Collaborative Professionalism Is and What It Is Not

Critical in undertaking a study is identifying what collaborative professionalism is, and differentiating it from what it is not, as reported in the scholarship. To do so, we can consider various views of professionalism, particularly as they have come to be defined in more recent

iteration of 'Professionalism' in the field of education. In the context of defining what

collaborative professionalism is, particularly in regards to Professional Learning (PL) and

Professional Learning Communities (PLCs), it is important to differentiate it from the common

conflation with professional development (PD)

      What is Professionalism in education? Furlong, Whitty, Whiting, Miles and Barton

(2000), explain that "[d]espite the widespread use of the term, the concept of a 'professional'

remains deeply contested in our society" (p. 4). When discussing the traditionalist view of

professionalism, Millerson (1964) notes that common characteristics of professionalism often

include, "the use of skills based on theoretical knowledge; education and training in those skills

certified by examination; a code of professional conduct oriented towards the 'public good'; a

powerful professional organisation" (cited in Whitty & Wisby, 2006, p. 27). Further, when

framing a discussion on professionalism among teachers, Furlong et al. (2000) specify the

context of physicians and health professionals. Hoyle and John (cited in Furlong et al., 2000),

explain that three central characteristics feature in conversations of professionalism: "knowledge,

autonomy and responsibility" (p. 4). They continue by noting that professionals are expected to

have both subject knowledge and professional training, which allows them the autonomy to work

on complex and unpredictable situations, allowing them to make reasoned judgments. Finally,

they discuss the critical element of responsibility, articulating how professionals balance both

their and their clients' interest in "a voluntaristic commitment to a set of principles governing

good practice and the realisation of these through day-to-day professional activities" (Hoyle &

John, 1995, p. 104). Furlong et al. (2000) expand that changes around the nature of and

definitions of these three elements, further clutter definitions of professionalism. These changes,

as well as accompanying policy shifts, have resulted in more nuanced definitions of

professionalism in education (Furlong et al. 2000; Sachs, 2010; Whitty & Wisby, 2006). Further

complicating definitions, Whitty and Wisby (2006) explain that education occupies a "'quasi-' or

'semi' professional" (p. 28) space, in which government still exert more influence than in many

other professional organizations. Sachs (2010) identifies two distinct discourses of managerial

professionalism and collaborative professionalism, which function at odds, in many educational

contexts.

Managerial professionalism. Furlong et al. (2000), Whitty and Wisby (2006) and Sachs

(2010), presenting a United Kingdom (UK) and Australian perspective, respectively, identify the

rise of bureaucratic management of education in the 1980s and 90s, in the form of managerial

professionalism, which can be framed in a market and managerial based system. Though much

of the literature cited is in a UK context, Osmond-Johnson (2016) notes that similar shifts have

occurred in Ontario, as they have throughout much of the western world. According to Sachs

(2010), "[m]anagerial discourses make two distinct claims: that efficient management can solve

any problem; and that practices which are appropriate for the conduct of private sector

enterprises can also be applied to the public sector" (p. 152). Central to this view is a conception

of universalism—that all organizations can be managed the same with the same results. Inherent

in this outlook is "centralised regulation, monitoring and even pedagogical prescription" (Whitty

& Wisby, 2006, p. 30). Sachs (2010) explains how this has also had an impact on school

principals, moving them from roles of "senior colleague to one of institutional manager" (p.

152). Arguably, this perspective has shifted professionalism from something inherent in the

profession to something placed upon professionals. Significant to this discussion, Sachs (2010)

argues that the "managerialist approach directly contrasts with collaborative and democratic

professionalism" (p. 152).

Further, Tschannen-Moran (2009) discusses a managerial bureaucracy system, depicted as the "traditional pyramid shape, with power and authority concentrated at the hands of the organizational leaders at the peak of the pyramid and with both forces flowing downward to the workers—in this case, to the teachers" (p. 219). She explains that when the few centralized leaders at the top of the pyramid overemphasize structural elements, such as formalization, centralization, and standardization, this creates a ridged bureaucratic structure, which prevents the cultivation of a environment in which professionalism can thrive. Tschannen-Moran continues, noting that communication, motivation and moral among teachers can be lowered by a managerial style, perpetuating and exacerbating problems of efficiency and effectiveness, which blunts the impact of any collaborative policy.

Collaborative and democratic professionalism. Whitty and Wisby (2006) articulate possible subsequent iterations of professionalism, beginning with collaborative professionalism, and shifting to democratic professionalism. This can be framed by considering first how collaborative professionalism differs from managerial models. Collaborative professionalism can be defined based on the PPM 159 (OME, 2016) as "working together, sharing knowledge, skills and experience to improve student achievement and well-being of both students and staff" (p. 1). Additionally, Fullan and Quinn (2016) identify that collaborative professionalism involves shifting the school culture to one of collaboration. They extend that fostering collaborative professionalism cultivates the expertise of everyone in the team on a focused and collective purpose. In such a model, the method of implementation is not to implement directed strategies and expect success, but to work together, learn from each other and develop practices and solutions to assist each other and to improve student learning (p. 33). To this conversation,

Whitty and Wisby (2006) add that this collaboration can extend to include other professionals and paraprofessionals.

Whitty and Wisby (2006) propose a shift beyond collaborative professionalism, to democratic professionalism. Democratic professionalism involves further broadening the range of individuals who collaborate as part of a professional community and includes a required sensitivity towards various stakeholders in education, including those who may not have traditionally been included in the dialogue (Whitty & Wisby, 2006). Sachs (2010) articulates, though, that at the core of democratic professionalism is effective and meaningful collaboration. In all cases, collaborative professionalism presents a fundamental shift in conceptions of professionalism.

Professional development (PD) and professional learning (PL). In defining collaborative professionalism, it is important to distinguish it from what it is not; one common conflation is between professional learning (PL) in collaborative contexts and professional development (PD). Although there is a development component to PL, it is important to distinguish it from older models of professional development (PD). Johnson (2009) explains that "traditionally, the professional development of teachers has been thought of as something that is done by others for or to teachers" (p. 95). Similarly, Easton (2008) discusses the implications of the word 'development,' as well as common iterations of PD: "the specialist arrives … to increase teachers' knowledge of standard. The university professor advances the careers of educators that offer credits to move up the salary grid" (p. 775). Easton continues that these are not activities without value, but, given the realities of the educator on a day to day basis and the changing needs of students, this is not enough to prompt effective teacher development, with a focus on student achievement.

Conversely, Webster-White (2009) cite a plethora of literature which discusses the effectiveness of professional learning, which is "the lived experience of continuing to learn as a professional," (p. 13) including professional agency in teachers directing their own learning; ultimately, they hold, PL should become part of a professionals lived practice. Webster-White (2009) continues by asking why, in light of research findings that suggest positive directions for change, few adjustments are made to existing PD processes. To this end, in their scanning of much of the literature searchable by online data base, Webster-White notes that "despite decades of research into effective PL, little has changed in PD research and practice across most professions" (p. 10). Several suggestions are offered to support the challenges in changing conceptions, including: bureaucratic working conditions, time and stress pressures, problems with change, the conception that learning requires "external direction," and finally – that despite growing literature on PL, "the way in which PD is usually conceptualized in contemporary research and practice is problematic – limiting critical evaluation and potential for change (p. 3). In this vein, Weber-White discuss the needed balance between agency and accountability, more particularly, the expectations of the school boards and government policies, with the provision of a context in which a provisional can learn and develop. It is in striking this balance that Webster-White notes that the framework for the balance between these elements is the next step in actualizing the possibilities of PL frameworks. PD may include collaboration, but it is not the intent as PD easily shifts to a managerial model. PL, however, is suited to working collaboratively, as educators work to learn as professionals, in a collaborative environment.

From the framework of the distinctions of the PD and PL, I made several critical observations. Arguably, the conflation of PD and PL, in the context of school organized PD days – even in contexts when a PL framework is intended – an imprecise balance can limit the

effectiveness in execution. Further, this distinction between PD and PL, both in execution of PL

and in the mindsets of educators asked to participate in PL, must be made clear to stakeholders,

who wish to facilitate collaborative professionalism and PL. Without these foundations, the

realization of the PLC structures discussed in following sections of this paper will, arguably,

continue to lack effect.

Current Perceptions and Limitations on Collaboration

Managerial models of professionalism have resulted in the creation of both a

misunderstanding of the nature of collaboration and an increased resistance to collaboration. In

conducting a survey of several teachers with experience in PLCs, all noted that a downloaded, or

managerial agenda, was one of the most significant frustrations in some of the iterations of PLCs

they have experienced. Further, managerial professionalism has created lasting impacts on

teacher health and well-being (Whitty & Wisby), creating further resistance to teachers'

inclinations to work collaboratively. The barriers will need to be addressed in order for

collaborative professionalism, as articulated in PPM 159, to develop and thrive. Because of the

established conflation of PD with collaborative professionalism and PL, both research into

iterations of managerial professionalism and teacher perceptions of PD can provide a frame for

this discussion. Further, connections to the importance of teacher agency, particularly as it

manifests in teacher efficacy, can be made.

Many teachers are feeling the strain of what Whitty and Wisby (2006) describe as

managerial professionalism, in the form of PD, which includes directives to work

collaboratively. Studies have shown (such as Martin, Dolmage & Sharpe, 2012; Hansen, 2013)

how current models of collaboration, based on top-down directives are contributing to teacher

burnout. Knight (2000) uses an ethnographic study frame to answer the question of why

educators, particularly in his Kansas school, reacted so negatively to a PD session. In his

findings, he articulates several key themes on what factors cause teachers to disengage:

> (a) a history of interpersonal conflict with other teachers; (b) a historical belief
>
> that professional development is impractical; (c) a feeling of being overwhelmed
>
> by the tasks they need to complete as teachers; (d) resentment about the top-down
>
> decision-making in the district; and (e) anxiety about changes taking place in their
>
> schools. (p. 10)

In elaborating on theses themes, Knight (2000), highlights, in more depth, how these issues

cultivate resentment towards teachers undergoing PD. He highlights how educators often feel

isolated, and are only bought together for mandated PD. Further, PD is often presented as "one-

shot" sessions, with little follow-up, leading to resentment as teachers feel they are needlessly

pulled away from their classrooms, contributing to their existing feelings of being overwhelmed;

this format prevents teachers from connecting with the PD learning, as there is no follow-up for

mastery (p. 17). Teachers, Knight (2000) furthers, tend to feel disconnected from the presenters

and models implemented, which they feel do not reflect the reality of the classroom.

Similarly, in studying self-efficiency in first year teachers Hoy and Spero (2005) discuss

that "criticisms from colleagues, isolation, work overload, lack of recognition or reward, and

inappropriate initial teacher training" are all sources of stress in their first year (p. 346). Hoy and

Spero (2005) also explain that top-down structures and a lack of mentoring set the foundation for

disengagement. Experiences in these first years, they continue, are foundational in future

practice and positive learning, and run counter a culture of collaboration.

Further, Katz, Earl, and Ben Jaafar, (2009) discuss what the wold of psychology can

teach us about top-down models of collaboration. They articulate the pitfalls of "collective

wisdom," such as "diffusion of responsibility, social loafing, group-think, and deindividuation" (Chapter 2). Thus, in working 'collaboratively' in such an environment, individuals have the tendency to be less connected to their goal, and less invented in the results, as they disassociate themselves from the process. Tschannen-Moran (2009) classifies this process of disengagement from protocols and goals with the purpose of encouraging the opposite as a "control paradox" (p. 224).

Finally, Kulavuz-Önal and Tatar (2017), in reviewing the relationship between teacher burnout and participation in professional learning, explain that "collegial and collaborative school environment where teachers or instructors are encouraged for professional learning contributes to teachers' better perceptions of their work environment and personal accomplishment" (p. 292). They suggest that by shifting the environment in which teachers work towards one that is conducive to PD and PL, there will be an increase in the effectiveness of PD and PL, as well as in teacher feelings of personal accomplishment – which can further lead to decreased levels of teacher burnout. Accordingly, effective PL and PLCs have the potential to assist teachers in developing in the profession, increase their sense of self-efficacy and reduce burnout, while also facilitating teachers in their work to improve student achievement.

Disengagement and a sense of alienation from the process of professional learning hinders a teacher's effectiveness and efficacy. Returning to Hoy and Spero (2005) and their discussion of early years teachers, they note that the first years of teaching are critical in helping educators develop a sense of self-efficiency, which contributes to the degree in which they engage in PD, among other factors; this can impact a teacher's entire career. Likewise, Knight (2000) illustrates the ways in which teachers have become disaffected and disengaged from top down PD structures. These are barriers which need to be overcome to move towards a model of

collaborative professionalism; a key part of the process, the literature indicates, involves

ensuring that educators feel they are part of the process and that they are professionals, as well as

a restructuring of bureaucratic and managerial models. With this foundation, teacher and

collective efficacy becomes central to the process.

Efficacies and Collaborative Professionalism

A foundation in self-efficacy and teacher self-efficacy. The concept of self-efficacy

was introduced by Bandura (1977), in the discipline of psychology. In his seminal work on the

subject, Bandura (1997) explores the relationship between an individual's sense of self-efficacy,

and their motivation and persistence. Central to this conceptual system is that idea that an

individual's outcome expectancy, which:

> is defined as a person's estimate that a given behavior will lead to certain
>
> outcomes. An efficacy expectation is the conviction that one can successfully
>
> execute the behavior required to produce the outcomes. Inherent in this model the
>
> formulation that self-efficacy can impact coping mechanisms when facing
>
> "obstacles and adverse experiences" (pp. 193- 194).

Bandura (1977) also notes that when individuals strengthened their sense of self-efficacy in one

domain, they were able to generalize this thing to others.

Protheroe (2008) expands on this and outlines teacher self-efficacy. She explains that it is

"a teacher's sense of competence—not some objective measure of actual competence" (p. 43).

Thus, it is a teacher's understanding their own abilities in facilitating students towards

educational goals. A high sense of self and teacher self-efficacy provides the added motivation

and persistence required for teachers to persevere in the professional learning and in working

towards improving student achievement. More recent constructs of collective efficacy can

further help both conceptualize the role of efficacy, as well as aid in articulating possible models of execution.

   Collective-efficacy and collaborative professionalism. Critical in developing collaborative professionalism is understanding frameworks in which it can develop and thrive. Research indicates a significant contributor to the development and success of collaborative professionalism is teacher efficacy, specifically collective efficacy, which ultimately results in improved learning outcomes for students (see Donohoo, 2016; Katz, Earl & Ben Jaafar, 2009). Tschannen-Moran and Barr (2004) define collective efficiency as "the perceptions of teachers in a school that the efforts of the faculty as a whole will have a positive effect on students" (p. 190). Donohoo (2016) expands that efficacy is high when teachers believe they can have an impact the lives and learning of students. Discourse and literature on collective efficacy has been increasingly entering the pedagogical frame since the publication of John Hattie's (2009) meta-analysis of influences on student achievement, followed by his (2012) elaborated discussion on how it is applicable to classroom teachers. Donohoo (2016) illustrates the role that professional learning, which includes what we could define as collaborative professionalism, has in developing and improving collective efficacy in schools. Further, Donohoo (2016) suggests that there is a link between efficacy building and the construction of collaborative cultures in schools. Thus, there is an iterative relationship between developing collective efficacy and facilitating collaborative professionalism.

   Donohoo (2016) extols the benefits of collective efficacy, as a way of moving professionalism and student learning forward, and away from the stagnation or disengagement, linked with managerial professionalism. Further, she expands and explains perceptions of current collaborative structures and provides suggestions for improving the quality of provisional

learning and collaboration. She discusses four sources of efficacy shaping beliefs, which include "mastery, vicarious experiences, social persuasion and affective states" (p. 8). Most of these sources involve a staff who works collaboratively, has the time and ability to experience successes, can learn from each other and feel they can work together to overcome challenges. Key to these developments is facilitating an environment in which teachers feel their voices matter (Donohoo, 2016).

In the development of effective PLCs and networked learning communities (NLCs), Katz et al. (2009) explain the process of knowledge and practice building is made possible when teachers are able to work collaboratively. Many of their findings indicate the importance of shifting collaboration structures to a ground-up model, recognizing the voices and realities of teachers. Relevant to the focus of collaborative professionalism, Katz et al. (2009) note the important of relationships and effective collaboration. Positive relationships, they argue, help groups work effectively together and provide a shared sense of responsibility. Effective collaboration involves moving beyond "group-think, and deindividuation," and requires individuals to "engage in a dynamic process of interpretation and evaluation of practice," which involves using conflict to move understanding further, rather than avoiding it and halting progress (Chapter 2). Collective efficacy, based in teacher collaboration, has a transformative impact on both teachers and students (Donohoo, 2016; Hattie, 2012; Hoy & Spero, 2005; Katz, Earl & Ben Jaafar, 2009; Zonoubi, Rasekh & Tavakoli, 2017). These practices improve both the self and collective efficacy of all individuals, and facilitate engagement in working collaboratively, which can be seen in a collaborative inquiry model.

Collaborative Teacher Inquiry

Blending collaborative professionalism and collective efficacy, collaborative teacher inquiry has the potential to provide a framework in which both collaborative professionalism and collective efficacy can, cyclically, build on each other. Katz et al. (2009) and Donohoo (2016) discuss the development of teacher networks, in the form of PLCs, as well as the larger NLCs, as a way to improve collective efficacy, by reframing the ways in which educators work collaboratively. Donohoo (2016) and Fullan and Quinn (2016) suggest collaborative inquiry as a model to organize teachers in their collaborative professional development. Donohoo (2016) identifies a four-stage model, which has been successfully implemented in recent years. First, teachers determine a meaningful focus and develop a hypothesis. Next, they work collaboratively to develop their existing knowledge base and work towards changes in practice, while collecting evidence. Third, they examine the data by identifying patterns and themes. Finally, they determine results, draw conclusions and reflect on the process. This facilitates the next cycle. Donohoo (2016) argues that this cycle of inquiry ensures teachers are connected to the outcome of their self-directed development, mitigating many of the issues of dissociation she identifies, also found by Knight (2000), Hoy and Spero (2005) and Katz et al. (2009).

The collaborative inquiry model, with characteristics of effective PL, allows for meaningful collaboration and empowers teachers (Donohoo, 2016). This model also results in reaching overall goals of improving student learning (Donohoo, 2016). Katz and Dack (2013) discuss, though, that conceptual change, particularly among educational stakeholders, is necessary to implement this model, if the overall goal is permanent change. The focus of PLCs should be, firstly, PL fueled by a collaborative inquiry process. Critical to this is the understanding that if teachers are actively engaged in PL, they will be developing professionally,

which will impact both their sense of efficacy and wellbeing, as well as positively impact student learning.

Setting PLCs in Context

PPM 159 does present some flexibility in implementation, which is arguably necessary, as PLCs cannot function as a one size fits all model. Education policies, put forth by ministries of education must be interpreted by school district, individual schools within the districts and by individual teachers within the schools. This requires significant planning and communication. It also makes for a "process is fraught with opportunities for both misunderstandings and fruitful reconstruction of existing knowledge" (Spillane, 2005a, p. 2). Braun and Hoskins (2011) explain how understandings of policy are constructed by individual actors (teachers), as these policies are disseminated and interpreted. Further, they describe how policy enactment is directed and shaped by school-specific factors. They clarify by noting that "material, professional and external dimensions" influence the ways in which policy is enacted (p. 585). They note that even among schools which may appear similar, internal dynamics can make difference in implementation, as well as the impact on student achievement. In the same context, Braun et al. (2011) discuss how context and school specific factors impact the enactment of policy. They break this down into four main influences: (1) the situated context of the school, including "setting, location and history" (p. 588); (2) the professional contexts, including "teachers' values and commitments and experiences and policy management within schools" (p. 591); (3) the material contexts, consisting of the "'physical' aspects of a school: buildings and budgets, but also to levels of staffing, available technologies and surrounding infrastructure" (p. 593); (4) the external contexts, which includes "pressures and expectations from broader local and national

policy matters" (p. 594). All of these factors preclude the implementation of a central model of organization, planning or instruction.

Tschannen-Moran (2009) notes that "[s]tudent needs are complex and they are constantly changing, thereby necessitating a perennial adaptation of strategies" (p. 224). Further, Tschannen-Moran expresses that a managerial model of policy and direction can lead to resentment and stagnation; one can extend that teachers, as policy actors, must have a central role in both making meaning of policy in their context, and working within their own contextual frames in school based collaborative directives, in order to meet the needs of their students in each district and each school. A PLC provides a situated context in which initiatives and policies can be shared, decoded, refined, placed in context and tested, in order to meet the needs of a more particular group of students, and improve overall student achievement. Those in the PLC must feel a sense of efficacy from the process, as well as understand and connect with the process from their own context, and the context of their students. This requires a more situation specific approach to organization and planning, tailored to the nuances at the district or even the school level. As such, an effective PLC should be structured to recognise and support local considerations, rather than central and managerially derived initiatives. Teachers and teacher leaders require flexibility in determining a focus for collaborative work, which may be specific to a school district, a subject area, a specific school or even a specific group of students. The perceived understanding of the areas of learning for teachers and the specific areas of development for students in a school or district, this way, can be tailored to fit the focus and structure of the PLC.

Instructional/Teacher Leaders and Collaborative Professionalism

Teacher leadership and collaboration go hand in hand.   In a symposium on teacher leadership, Smulyan (2016) remarked that teachers who consider themselves leaders share several common characteristics, including a growth oriented mindset, a recognition of the political act of teaching, and most significantly to this context, a recognition that teaching is "a collaborative process that includes networking within and across school and districts with … the knowledge that will ultimately improve the education of all children" (p. 9). This perspective is closely linked with the agenda inherent in PPM 159 (OME, 2016). A key component of PPM 159 is that it "supports and recognizes formal and informal leadership and learning [grounded in] leadership practices that value the expertise and inclusion of all voices, perspectives and roles" (2016, p. 2). Inherent in this vision is both a role for current instructional leaders, as well as the possibilities and potential for the development of future leaders. As such, as short discussion of the role of the teacher or instructional leaders, particularly in the context of PD and collaborative professionalism is warranted. In the context of PLCs and collaborative professionalism, it is important to contextualize leadership factors.

What is a teacher leader? Teacher leadership is a rather amorphous concept. In reviewing literature on the subject of teacher leadership, Anfara and Angell (2007) note that there is a determined lack of consistency in the definitions of teacher leadership. Constructions of leadership can range from a teacher who leads by example to someone who has been placed in a leadership position. Similarly, Melville, Jones, and Campbell (2017) note that the term "teacher leader," particularly in a secondary education context, refers to both "those with formal leadership roles, such as chairs, and those who provide leadership within their department and beyond" (p. 125), and who are part of developing a learning environment. In secondary

education, there are designated authority positions, such as the department chair, who fulfill various administrated and management roles, but, as Melville et al. (2017) explain, teacher leadership is not always a formal designation. Further, they explain that, particularly in secondary school departments, leadership is "less defined by a hierarchy of power and more as based on a hierarchy in which authority is derived from the development of a shared sense of ideas for the teaching and learning of the subjects" (p. 19). By extension, in the context of PPM 159, both administrative leadership, in terms of department chairs, as well as informal leadership, both provided by department chairs or provided by and developed in those who have leadership qualities, are significant in developing a productive collaborative structure.

Reviewing contemporary literature on instructional leadership can add further clarity to the various facets of teacher or instructional leadership, as it pertains to collaboration. Ingersoll, Sirinides, and Dougherty (2018) explain that effective instructional leadership invariably involves elements such as "fostering an atmosphere of trust, respect and teamwork in the building; promoting high and consistent academic standards and … providing support for the recognition of teachers" (p. 13). Further, Collinson (cited in Hunzinger, 2012) notes that in education, leaders are those who "'walk ahead', model learning and innovation, and develop relationships and networks to extend their own learning and influence others" (p. 1). Smulyan (2016) explains that, although administrative roles can be part of teacher leadership, this category also includes overall behaviours, such as mentoring, coaching, being a "critical friend" (p. 16) and working in collaborative development. Further, teacher leadership can be viewed as "a stance, a way of being a teacher that coalesces around being professional, and intellectual, a fierce advocate for students and colleges who ensures that everyone has the opportunity to learn and grow" (p. 16).

Similarly, others have noted that leadership involves those who model exemplary practice, values and aspirations, as well as involves supporting teachers in their professional goals and challenges (Melville et al., 2017; Hunzinker, 2017; Riley, 2000). Thus, current leaders are critical both in setting and facilitating the direction of professional learning but are also critical in the development of future leaders. Not all teachers are or have the desire to be teacher or instructional leaders, but each individual has a potential role to play. Additionally, a critical component of teacher leadership is recognising and encouraging the PD of each teacher, in their current and potential future context.

Leadership, in this context, is not just one individual, but an interaction amongst individuals in formal in informal leadership roles. Spillane (2005b) discusses distributed leadership; this frame focuses on "leadership practice rather than leaders or their roles, functions, routines, and structures" (p. 144). From this perspective, "leadership practice is viewed as a product of the interactions of school leaders, followers, and their situation" (p. 144). Spillane (2005b) continues that it is inadequate to discuss leadership by focusing on just those in formal leadership positions. He presents three key arguments to justify the insufficiencies of only using a formal definition: Leadership practice often involves multiple leaders, both in and outside of formal leadership position; leadership should be an active process and "not something done to followers," who are a critical part of this practice (p. 145). Instead, effective leaders should recognize that it is not the individuals, "but the interactions among them, that [is] critical in leadership practice" (p. 145). Accordingly, there are many roles for various types of leaders in the PLC process, dependant on how each individual functions within and amongst each other.

In the current context of education in Ontario, there are significant administrative and documentative task inherent in both the execution and reporting of progress on collaborative

professionalism, as it pertains to PPM 159, which could be fulfilled by the department chair.

However, a distributive model, which recognizes individuals within the group, and develops out

of their interactions, allows various individuals to develop their own roles. Effective distributive

leadership has the additional benefit of, conceivably, improving the sense of agency and efficacy

of each individual in the team.

Policy actors in a PLC.

Although instructional leaders are integral to a collaborative process, they are by far from

the only actors. Effective collaboration requires professionals to work together, with a focus of

their own professional learning, and a goal to improve student achievement. Ball et al. (2011a;

2011b) provide some context on the roles that individuals might play in a collaborative process,

such as the various policy actors, or roles, that different individuals in a school community play

in the understanding and enactment of policy. Writing from a UK context, they explain that a

headteacher, comparable to a department chair, might take on several roles but, most

specifically, will hold the role of *narrator*—interpreting and explaining policies, while

constructing the narratives though which teachers can frame them. Teacher leaders may also

take on the roles of *entrepreneurs*, "who originate or champion and represent particular policies,

or principles of integration" (p. 268) and *transactors*, who account for, report on an monitory

implementation. These same actors might exist in the actions of other PLC members. Braun et

al. (2011) identify seven 'policy actors': narrators, entrepreneurs, outsiders, transactions,

enthusiasts, critics, and receivers. They further provide a possible heuristic for various roles that

professionals can play in the PLC process.

The instructional leader in the PLC would most likely take on several of these roles but

would also encourage other members to find their suited roles, so each member has a visible and

viable role in the group. To this end, beyond these three major roles, Ball et al. (2011b) also

notes that some act as *enthusiast*, who invest in actions, and see them as ways to grow and

develop. *Receivers*, often newly qualified teachers, are still learning their profession and role

and are more focused on their day to day needs and plans. These individuals, while in this stage,

require more direction, but they should also be encouraged, when able, to shift the role they take.

In this context, the encouragement of teacher agency is critical. Finally, Ball et al. (2011b)

discuss the roles of the critics, who can provide counter-discourse, which can provide different

ways to think about policy and actions, as well as the outsiders, who may be "local authority

advisers, consultants, or edu-businesses [who] can play a key role in the policy process,

interpreting policies and in initiating or supporting translation work" (p. 628).

Arguably, balance amongst members of these groups is critical, as those who have less of

a sense of agency or self-efficacy in the PLC may retreat to the *receiver* role, for example.

Further, an outsider, not in tune with the school context, acting as *narrator*, may foster a sense of

download. Thus, the focus of the group should be maximising the collaborative role (or roles) of

each member. Further, as Ball et al. (2011b) explain, "teachers are positioned differently in

relation to policy in a variety of senses. They are at different points in their careers, with

different amounts of accumulated experience" (p. 637). Effective execution of a PLC requires

both acknowledging the realities of each teacher in the community, and working to ensure a

route of professional agency and efficacy in that community, which, as much of the literature

illustrates, leads to an improvement in student learning. Engaging all agents in the model as

critical members has the potential to improve the collective efficacy of each member, and

improve the function of the PLC and the quality of PL, as discussed by Donohoo (2016).

Towards a Synthesis?

In the introduction, I presented what can be viewed as a dichotomy of manager and professional with the question of finding a space between the two sides. There is some literature which supports the development of systems which presents possible means by which the two systems can work in tandem—operating not in parallel, but working in a system which allows both to affect their agenda, without muting the effectiveness of the other. Spillane, Shirrell and Hopkins (2016) discuss how, in one observed school district, when policy makers designed structures that involved "ongoing collaboration and reflective deliberations" (p. 106), teachers were able to develop deeper connections, not only with classroom applications, such as instructional strategies; it also helped develop a better understanding of the rational for theses activities, as well as new curriculums and policies. Further, teachers reported how their PLC became more than just a formal meeting. From this study, Spillane, Shirrell and Hopkins (2016) conclude that PLCs can be designed and deployed, so as to combine both collegial and bureaucratic structures. However, this requires careful design work, allowing for the melding of "bureaucratic and collegial structures" (p. 117).

Similarly, Tschannen-Moran (2009), presents a model between a machine bureaucracy, the traditional pyramid, where organizational leaders apply downward pressure on one side and professional organization, the inverted pyramid, where professionals hold the power and authority, and administrators serve supporting roles. Tschannen-Moran articulates how, due to the nature of public schools, it is unlikely that either a fully managerial or fully professional organization will function effectively. Instead, she offers what she calls professional bureaucracy, providing the visual of two pyramids imposed over each other, where power and authority can flow both ways. Tschannen-Moran explains that this can be done by "creating the

organizational conditions where teachers can exercise greater discretion in using their

professional judgment to respond to the needs of students" (p. 241). On the other side, with this

increased ability to realize their professionalism, teachers demonstrate this professionalism, but

continually developing their practice and competence; they have room for efficacy and agency.

Critical to this formulation is the development of trust.

Neither of these studies presents a definitive path to navigating the space between the

managerial and professional context, but do present arguments to support the possibility. Central

in each case is the recognition of the interactions between the individuals involved in these

structures, noting that careful design, which recognizes all those involved as professionals is

critical. It is not an easy path, but both Spillane (2016) and Tschannen-Moran (2009) recognize

that this not only impacts teacher effectiveness, but more significantly to most education

professionals, student learning. Both these formulations allow for a sense of self and

collaborative efficacy to be encouraged and developed, further motivating those engaged in the

process.

Conclusions from the Literature

There is, generally speaking, a contradiction between managerial or bureaucratic model

and collaborative models, as noted in the Introduction. Moving completely to one model or the

other does not fit the nature of the current educational system. As Tschannen-Moran (2009)

notes, there is required element of bureaucracy due to the complex nature of the current

education system. Accordingly, due to the nature of the individual working within the system

and the ever-changing realities—which can be specific to each district or even each school—as

well as the impact of a top down bureaucratic model on teacher motivation, creativity an overall

feelings of personal and professional efficacy, a model which both allows for some bureaucratic

management as well as professional autonomy is required. The correct balance will allow for

educators to maintain a sense of professionalism and feel actualized in the work they are doing

for and with students, while still ensuring day to day bureaucratic functions are fulfilled. The

relationship between the managerial and professional discourses can be directed in certain

contexts, as both Tschannen-Moran (2009) and Spillane (2011) propose is possible. Further,

with a focus on collaborative professionalism, more work can be done on achieving a possible

way in which the two sides can function as part of a dialectic, with the forces working to draw

each other into a synthesis. As Katz et al. (2009) explain, collaboration based in collective

efficacy is a dynamic process, part of which is harnessing the power of conflict, collaborative

professionalism, seeded with collective efficacy, and is well suited to the space between these

often-competing sides.

The impact of collaborative professionalism, with a basis in collective efficacy and

collaborative inquiry has been well established (Donohoo, 2016; Katz and Dack, 2013; Katz et

al., 2009). Effective collaborative professionalism has not only an impact on teachers, but a

transformative effect on education systems. Razfar (2011) explains that, by building

collaborative partnerships, teachers feel they have the professional agency to build

transformative classrooms, which facilitate reflection, inquiry and critique. Smulyan (2016)

explains that critical to this collaboration and change process is teacher leadership, rather than

managerial pressure. Klassen (2010) also identifies the importance of collaboration, particularly

in the form of improving collective efficacy, in reducing teacher stress. Accordingly, there is

tremendous potential in making the shift from a top-down managerial model, to a model seeded

in collaborative professionalism. Currently, though, there are still barriers to implementing a

collaborative model, but PPM 159 provides an opportunity for school boards to be part of this

transformative process. Some questions remain, which will require action on behalf of school boards and educators; it is into this gap that this study and protocol fit.

       Shifting to a collaborative model will require shifting attitudes on behalf of many parties in the education system, including those at the administration level, when setting collaborative priorities and at the school-based level. Given the required bureaucratic component of both a blended model, as well as required administrative tasks, instructional leaders, particularly in the role of department chairs, play a necessary role in facilitating the PLC process (Melville et al., 2017). There is, however, critical positions for all members of the PLC team, including all of the policy actors articulated by Ball (2011b). Further, a key component is identifying that "[t]eachers are professionals, and when there is constant interference and constraints from administration and division personnel, it can cause a feeling of powerlessness and, furthermore, resentment" (Hanson, 2013, p. 51). Collaborative professionalism, by way of a collaborative inquiry and collective efficacy focused model, has the potential to change this, resulting in change on the system, with positive impacts on teacher well-being and student learning. Critical to this model is increasing a school board's trust of teachers' abilities to work professionally, and in increased role for teachers in the development of their professional learning. Trust of teachers, of their professionalism, as well an environment of trust, based around professional learning and the role of and future development of future leaders.

Proposed Task and Task Development

       Returning to Posner et al. (1982) and the criteria for change, I contend that many of the conditions for the shift to a collaborative professionalism model are in place, and I propose a possible way of working towards this constructive change. Firstly, there is clear dissatisfaction with existing conditions, evident in rates of burnout and teacher frustration. Secondly, with PPM

159, there is a clearly articulated ideology, supported by the OME, teachers' unions and teachers, which outlines a vision. Third, the work of Tschannen-Moran (2009) and Spillane (2016) indicate that it is possible for the often-competing frameworks to work in tandem, to which I hope to add another model by which this is possible. Finally, a key component of this project is teacher guided research, which can be shared, first within a board, but also beyond—as articulated in PPM 159—as part of the larger research into possible executions of collaborative professionalism.

As a final project, I will develop a frame which involves facilitating a teacher directed collaborative inquiry model with the goal of fostering collaborative professionalism. The model will allow more teacher direction in the outline of the PLC focus, and, by doing so, will hopefully improve teachers' sense of efficacy and feelings of well-being, which, as the research indicates, will directly result in an improvement in student learning. Teacher leaders, in terms of administratively organizing and documenting, setting and facilitation directions, and in guiding the process.

The practical and applicable outcome of this project will be a possible outline—including guiding steps and guiding questions—for self-directed collaborative professionalism, which can be under taken during a school year, in a professional development model. Teachers (and perhaps other professionals and paraprofessionals) will be able to set the direction for their collaboration for the year, determine their goals, as well as the means of reporting on these goals. Guiding questions will be designed to facilitate a possible structure for each step of the process. Measures will be qualitative, with educators planning their goals and reporting procedure at the beginning of the school year and sharing their results and perceptions at the end of the year, noting possible next steps for future collaboration. Imbedded in the progression of the cycle will

be key features from Donohoo's (2016) four stage model of plan, act, observe and asses, with the addition of a reporting stage. Determined at the beginning of the PLC cycle, members of the PLC group will determine what evidence they how to gather and how they will report on it. Members of the PLC group will report to other teams and results of their PLC that cycle, noting outcomes, key learnings and limitations; these reports can drive ideas for future PLCs. I propose that this reporting section will improve the degree to which PLC members feel accountable to their peers, rather than to a central bureaucratic authority.

Positioning and Reflection Pre-Final Development

Due to timeline and ethics considerations, as the developer, I will not be implementing and reviewing the implementation of the project but developing with the goal adding a possible protocol which can be used to further the goals of PPM 159. It is my ultimate goal that this project should not exist in a vacuum, and does, in the least, provide dialogue in the realization of the goals of PPM 159, as well in practical application of the eventual project. As such, I would encourage changes and adjustments over time, if the protocol were to be used.

In conducting my qualitative research study, conducting my literature review, spending time on self-reflection and in dialogues with colleagues, I recognize that there are practical and philosophical conundrums, which lay outside of the scope of this project. From a practical perspective, the semester system, in which teachers can fundamentally change the courses and subject areas in which they are teaching, as well as the realities in my particular school board, where declining enrollment has led to a high number of transitory teachers, who shift both departments and schools on a regular basis, presents a potential issue in regards to cohesion on a PLC, even in just one annual cycle; for these teachers, though, a protocol which allows them to work with the same group, despite a location change could be a solution. As a transitory teacher

myself, the opportunity to work in a PLC of similar teachers could allow us to focus on assessment issues, or planning approaches, which would still be relevant and recordable, dispite changes in departments or location. Further, much of my personal qualitative research found that teachers are interested in including Student Support Professionals (SSPs) into the PLC process.

Finally, I feel the need to reflect on my own internal dialectic on this process. I have found myself continually reflecting about the possibility that this project may, as much that came before, be considered as part of a downloaded agenda, rather than a possible framework with the possibility of teacher agency. It is with this in mind, I hope to gather feedback from regular classroom teachers, as well department chairs, while developing the guide. This will be done informally and will be used to refine both the outline for the process, as well as the guiding questions for PLC teams to consider, while planning and executing their determined foci.

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Chapter Three: Journal Submission

Professional Learning Community Protocol

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Abstract

This article explores the potential for collaboration and an improvement in teacher efficacy, collaborative efficacy, as well as student learning, by way of adapting the structure of Professional Learning Communities (PLCs), to bring them in line with *Policy and Program Memorandum (PPM) 159: Collaborative Professionalism.* It suggests a protocol which, using the PLC structure, improves the agency of those involved in the PLC, while generating both a measure of accountability for the work of the PLC team, as well as a way of generating possible

 Keywords: Collaborative Professionalism, Collective Efficacy, Professional Learning Communities. PLCs, PPM 159, Ontario Education, Student Learning

Introduction

Gone should be the days of educators, working in their own classrooms with the doors shut, focusing on just their students or just their subject area. The complex nature of modern education is such that teaching is a collaborative effort, and a critical part of this the required collaboration of various professionals, is what can broadly be termed collaborative professionalism. Fullan and Quinn (2016) speak directly to this shift. They explain how teaching is a collaborative profession, and that collaborative professionalism involves shifting the school culture to one of collaboration. They extend that it requires cultivating an environment in which everyone is focused on a collective purpose; educators work together to develop strategies, seek solutions and assist each other in improving student learning. This foundation is supported by the Ontario Ministry of Education, which notes that enhancing collaborative professionalism "improve[s] student achievement and well-being of both students and staff" (OME, 2016, p. 1). Effective collaboration can improve both teacher self-efficacy – "a teacher's [personal] sense of competence" (Protheroe, 2008, p. 43) – and collective efficiency – "the perceptions of teachers in a school that the efforts of the faculty as a whole will have a positive effect on students" (Tschannen-Moran & Barr, 2004, p. 190). Efficacy, collaborative professionalism, and student learning are all interconnected. In this equation, an increase in effective collaboration as well as teacher and collective efficacy correlates with an improvement in student learning (Donohoo, 2016).

In 2016, the Ontario Ministry of Education (OME) issued *Policy and Program Memorandum (PPM) 159: Collaborative Professionalism* (OME, 2016). PPM 159 provides and framework though which collaborative professionalism can be fostered in Ontario schools and outlines the roles and responsibilities of stakeholders in developing and implementing new

initiatives. PPM 159 establishes itself as *only* a starting point, noting that "[d]istrict school boards and school authorities will establish a mechanism, or use existing mechanisms, to foster consultation, collaboration, and communication with federation and other union locals and associations for the implementation of new and existing initiatives" (p. 3). Thus, PPM 159 is prescriptive in some respects, but also offers significant flexibility in its development and implementation. With the understanding that one common way the facilitate collaboration is Professional Learning Communities (PLCs), I considered how the existing PLC structure might be used as an existing initiative, which could be improved with both new and modified elements in order to increase the degree to which it accomplishes the goals of collaborative professionalism and how the efficacy of teachers and other educators can, relatedly, be improved.

The Problem

Teachers are struggling. Martin, Dolmage and Sharpe (2012), found that, although they are focused on the development of students, and goals of social improvement through education, teachers are experiencing the mental and physical strain of the increasing professional demands, which is having a negative impact on their mental and physical health. Relatedly, they are feeling a decline in their sense of efficacy. Tschannen-Moran (2009) notes that one of the major reasons for such decline is the sense teachers have that are being managed. They feel they are checking boxes, rather than experiencing a sense of professional efficacy. Much of the literature, with which I engaged when researching this topic, presented what could be described as a dual view of managerialism and professionalism. These dueling views are presented with slight variations: bureaucracy versus collegial arrangements (Spillane, Shirrell & Hopkins, 2016); managerial professionalism versus democratic professionalism (Whitty & Wisby, 2006; Sachs, 2010);

managerial accountability versus professional accountability (Green, 2011) and bureaucratic organization versus professional organization (Tschannen-Moran, 2009). The dichotomy limits the effectiveness of collaboration. The sense of being managed can lead to stagnation (Tschannen-Moran, 2009). Due to the complex nature of public schools, a wholly professional driven model of collaboration will also be ineffective (Tschannen-Moran, 2009). The tension between the two approaches can be phrased as a question: What can be done to improve the degree to which origination and policy implementation fosters collaboration, rather than alienation, while remaining focused enough to be effective?

Additionally, a one size fits all model of collaboration or PLCs, is not possible. Braun and Hoskins (2011) explain how understandings of policy are constructed by individual actors (teachers) and are shaped by school-specific factors. They note that even among schools which may appear similar, internal dynamics can make difference in implementation, as well as the impact on student achievement. They further that school specific factors impact the enactment of policy. Such factors can be broken down into four main influences, including the history of the school, the values and contexts of the teachers, the material context of the building and budgets, as well as the policies enacted by ministries of education. All of these factors preclude the implementation of a central model of organization, planning or instruction, and further encourage the importance of a collaborative PLC model which can be adapted to the nuances of each school or board, or group of teachers and professionals.

With this foundation, I arrived at the question: How might managerial foci, such as a required mechanism of accountability, be combined with a model that allows for improved teacher efficacy. How too can this approach provide enough structure and cohesion to ensure productivity, as well as allow for the required flexibility needed for the diversity across both

school boards and schools; how can it function as a synthesis of accountability and agency? To phrase in a comprehensive statement, how might a PLC model be flexible enough to provide teacher agency, increase a sense of teacher efficacy, include adaptability to the needs of specific school and or board, and also provide measures of accountability to school boards and the Ministry of Education?

Towards a Balance

There are ways to balance both the required managerialism, as well as the required liberties of more collaborative model. Spillane et al. (2016) discuss how, in one observed school district, when policy makers designed structures that involve ongoing collaborating and deliberations, teachers were able to develop deeper connections with classroom applications. At the same time, they were also better able to develop an improved rational for the same activities and applications, increasing the effectiveness of their execution. Further, teachers reported how their PLC became more than just a formal meeting. From their study, Spillane et al. conclude that PLCs can be designed and deployed to combine both collegial and bureaucratic structures; however, the melding both the bureaucratic and collegial structures requires careful design.

Similarly, the work of Spillane et al., Tschannen-Moran (2009) suggests what she calls professional bureaucracy. She explains that this bureaucratic structure facilitates the development of organizational conditions where educators have the discretion to use their professional judgement, in order to respond to student needs, and other contextual factors. Within an organized structure, the increased ability to demonstrate their professionalism, educators are able to are continually develop their practice and competence; they have room for efficacy and agency. It is while walking along the proverbial knife's edge, of balancing both required managerialisms along with room for meaningful professional collaborations, that I

situate my protocol. Upon this edge, to maintain this precarious balance, there must be an underlying foundation of trust between all parties involved (Tschannen-Moran, 2009). The proposed protocol presents a measure of accountability, which can underlie this relationship of trust.

The Proposed Protocol

Dononhoo's (2016) Collaborative Teacher Inquiry Four-Stage Model presents an effective framework to guide teacher led inquiry. First, teachers determine a meaningful focus and develop a hypothesis. Next, they work collaboratively to develop their existing knowledge base and work towards changes in practice, while collecting evidence. Third, they examine the data by identifying patterns and themes. Finally, they determine results, draw conclusions and reflect on the process.

A challenge in enacting this model is that external expectations of accountability may be inserted into the process, in order to meet board or Ministry initiatives or to track particular data sets. Although there is potential value in theses measures, this decreases the degree to which established goals of teacher and collective efficacy can be actualized. It is in this accountability gap, that I situate my adaptations of Donohoo's model.

In the modified protocol, members of a PLC team use guiding questions to structure their focus at each stage, while the planning occurs both sequentially and circularly. At the beginning of the PLC cycle, members of the PLC group determine what evidence they wish to gather, how they will gather and how they will report on it. They determine *why* their focus is important, as well as justify their quantitative or qualitative measures, in the context of their focus. When the PLC cycle is complete at the end of the school year, PLC group report to other teams and results of their PLC cycle, noting outcomes, key learnings and limitations; these reports can drive ideas

for future PLCs. Accordingly, groups have more flexibility in their focus and are accountable to themselves and peers, while a substantive record of what the group accomplished in their PLC cycle, which forms the foundation of something that can be reported to boards or the Ministry.

In the vein of navigating both professionalism and management, the foundation of this protocol is not to provide a proscriptive method, but rather a suggested framework, which can function as a working document. In each iteration, based on the dynamics of the individuals, groups, schools and boards involved, the protocol functions as a working document, which adjusts and adapts to different contexts. My goal is not to suggest a new managed model, but to – in the spirit of PPM 159 – use and adapt an "established mechanism," while potentially allowing for the development of new mechanisms, which "foster consultation, collaboration and communication . . . for the implementation of new and existing initiatives" (OME, 2016, p. 3).

The Role of Instructional Leaders

In order to facilitate the balance in collaborative structure, internal teacher leadership is central; a teacher leader, such as a secondary department chair or an agreed upon PLC facilitator is required. This individual should be someone to both act in a managerial role, who ensures administrative and documentative tasks are complete, and someone who can foster an environment of trust, respect and collaboration.

This PLC leader should also have an understanding of distributed leadership – an understanding of the overlapping and interconnectedness of administrative leadership and teacher leadership, as well as the role of all members of the PLC group, encouraging others to take on leadership roles, as part of the larger whole. The teacher leader functions as part of the larger coordination of individuals and recognizes that the role of the leader to encourage collaboration, rather than to manage all interactions (Spillane, 2005). The teacher leader sees the

objectives of the group as not just the product created by their actions, but as a result of cumulative interactions.

Conclusions

Collaborative professionalism, teacher self-efficacy and collaborative efficacy are all shown to have an impact on student learning. PPM 159 presents a clear and present opportunity to enhance the effectiveness of PLCs, increasing the opportunities for collaboration, and the sense of teacher efficacy. Improvements in these areas leads to improvements in student learning. Shifting away from a reliance on the management of teachers to trusting education professionals to justify, and critique, their own learning will enable a more holistic enactment of provincial policy. Used effectively, PLCs allow individuals, who work with students on a daily basis, to relate policy to their work in a meaningful manner. PPM 159 opens the door for professional collaborations to take place, and represents the trust of the Ministry of Education in those working within the education system. This proposed protocol, enacted and adapted, presents a conceivable and adaptable framework for aligning education policy directly with the goals of collaborative professionalism.

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Chapter Four: Protocol

COLLABORATIVE PROFESSIONALISM PROTOCOL

Notes for Facilitation:

The proposed protocol for Professional Learning Communities (PLCs) is a guide for PLC teams throughout a full year. In the ideal context, groups would meet at least 6 times over the year. Following the initial meeting, groups should aim to meet 4-5 times, focusing on steps 2-4, and then again to finalize the "report," which is delivered to other PLC teams, either within a school or in similar interest groups across a school board. The goal of the report stage is to make the PLC members accountable to themselves, to each other, and to colleagues.

Forming the Professional Learning Community:
- Based on the needs, requirements and structure of the board and schools, there should be some flexibility in the formation of the groups. Factors which might be considered are groupings within a school, or across subject areas, based on a similar interest (i.e. the use of digital portfolios for assessment) or in like subject areas across schools (i.e. Foods and Nutrition teachers work together to develop rich tasks).
- Consideration will be required for release time, so some central co-ordination and a proposal process will be required.
- A suggested meeting schedule can be co-ordinated centrally and in collaboration with the PLC group, to ensure that the team has multiple opportunities to meet during the school year.

In Step One:
- The team meets and determines their focus. The guiding questions assist the team in better defining their focus, as well as facilitate discussion on why they consider this focus to be worth pursuing.
- During this initial phase, the team also considers what qualitative or quantitative measures they will use and justify these measures in relation to their goal. These measures must be something of value to the team and the focus of the PLC, rather than to external accountability measures. This will help to ensure the team feels they have ownership over the final product.
- The team also considers the reporting process (step 5), so they can develop their PLC with the end in mind.

In Steps Two and Three:
- In the first several meetings, the team puts their plan in to action, and in subsequent meanings, discuss their findings and adjust as needed.

In Step Four:
- In the second last meeting, the team discuss their data, observations, outcomes and professional and personal learning.

In Step Five:
- Teams present their focus, plans, observations, findings and relative strengths and weaknesses to other PLC teams in a final staff meeting or in a professional development session.
- Reports should be limited to a 20-minute discussion, in the format determined by the team. This MAY include a short digital presentation, a film of findings or student interviews, a portfolio to share or any other methods determined by the team as an effective way to share their results.
- Finalizing the PLC cycle, sharing and discussion amongst participates in different groups, can precipitate possible future directions, and launch possible future iterations.

COLLABORATIVE PROFESSIONALISM PROTOCOL

Outline for PLC Cycle:

The questions and outline of steps below are intended to guide teams in determining and structuring their meetings, as well as assist them in planning with their final goals in mind.

Step 1 – Plan

PLC group considers:

- What is our focus?
- Why is this focus important?
- What do we want to achieve (intended outcomes)?
- How to we plan to go about executing it?
- How do we plan to observe it?
- What will we consider as measures of success, or areas for improvement?
- How do we plan on reporting our results (consider step 5 while engaged in step 1)?

Step 2 – Act

- Meet and co-plan/co-develop according to action plan.
- Determine how to track observations, results (make these specific to the plan).
- Plan how to communicate the expectations/goals to students.
- Execute plan (in a collaborative manner, as far as possible).

Step 3 – Observe and Provide Feedback

- Observe students, their process, product and conversations (based on measures determined in step 1 and 2).
- Discuss progress and relative strengths and weaknesses in meetings, to refine and support the action plan.
- Modify as warranted.

Step 4 – Assess

- Look at student data.
- Assess based on initial framework and expectations.
- Consider and discuss their professional learning as a team, and strengths and weaknesses of their project and provide feedback.

Step 5 – Report

- Present the focus, plans, observations, findings and relative strengths and weaknesses of your PLC to other teams. This can present opportunities to continue with this team, present ideas for other teams, provide new ideas or new directions.
- Present a final thought – where do you see this going to improve (1) student learning and (2) collective efficacy.

Chapter Five: Final Self-Reflection

In the spirit of PPM 159, I used and modified existing mechanisms to increase the degree to which collaboration takes place, and the degree to which it is meaningful to participants. I worked to blend a model already in use and, through reading literature on the subject and informally discussing current iterations of PLCs, modify it to better fit my interpretation of the goals of PPM 159. As a result of this process, there is potential in this protocol, particularly if it is used as a starting point, as intended, and not as a prescriptive method.

In all candor, my final project did included far more challenges than initially anticipated. I had initially intended to conduct interviews but, due to the challenges of gaining ethics approval, I decided to remove this component. By conducting interviews, I had hoped to document the ways in which my final protocol included elements of collaboration in its creation – making the protocol itself more collaborative. As there were some concerns raised by the Research Ethics Board about participants remaining anonymous, after several re-submissions, I decided to not pursue the interviews. The decision to forgo interviews also required me to remove an initially envisioned section on suggestions for implementation, as this was a question I had hoped to include in my interviews. Relatedly, I feel that, though I learned a lot while attempting to gain ethics approval, my time-based decision to forgo further modifications of my interview process, left some possibly beneficial elements out of my final portfolio. In all, as it is in my nature to consider all experiences as part of my learning, I learned a lot from working on the literature review, attempting the ethics review and finding a work around to finalize a project that is slightly different from my initial ideal. I am not completely happy with the result, but it also my nature to very critical of my own work.

Beyond the challenges noted at the end of my Literature Review and proposal, I foresee more possible challenges in implementation; the foremost of which is the neo-liberal focus of government initiatives to seek qualitative measures of success. I anticipate that this will present a challenge for implementation in many regards, as trust is a pre-requisite for this work; specifically, the requirement that those in management positions trust classroom educators to select and manage their own documentation measures and their own methods of reporting findings.

I also anticipate challenges in funding and planning time. There is a required time commitment for this process, as well as the needed time for instructional leaders to facilitate the process. The required time commitment for all involved does need to take the form or release time, which comes at a monetary cost. Again, in the ideal, motivation will come from feeling actualization and agency in the process and the end product, but as a parent of young children myself, and as a secondary teacher who often has a heavy course load, I do know that, even when the product in meaningful, there are only so many hours in a day, and afterschool time is often about finding the time for marking and planning, while shuttling children, coaching, working secondary or tertiary jobs and the host of other requirements that are already on hard working individuals. These are all issues that are outside of the purview of my protocol.

Further, recent political changes are expected to decrease the amount of teaching and support staff, particularly at the secondary level. This will add to the increased work load of current teachers and will likely exacerbate existing issues of teacher burnout. Further, with the change in government, it is still unknown as to how much funding will be allocated to Professional Development and what new initiatives will become the focus. Finally, with this change in government, PPM 159 could be revoked, if it is determined to be of no further use.

As a potential boon to the development of this protocol as a working document, in gathering informal feedback on the process and the tool itself, one secondary school does plan to use my protocol as part of their reframing of the PLC process this year. I have asked for feedback on how the tool is adapted and how it grows and develops as a working guide. As noted in my project, my goal is not to direct, but to be part of growth. In this simple way, I do see something developing with links to this protocol as a success of the spirit of the protocol itself.

In conclusion, my protocol reflects the sprit of PPM 159. I effectively engaged with the literature as a way of supporting my approach to improve collaborative professionalism. The remaining questions or issues are systemic, and may, in reality, be some of the hindrances to effective collaborate models in general. I hope that I have at least created something which can be the basis of conversations on a required shift in education, so that it can function in a way that benefits all stakeholders, including teachers and students.