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Collaboration within Intercultural Professional Learning Communities a Case Study

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COLLABORATION WITHIN

INTERCULTURAL PROFESSIONAL LEARNING COMMUNITIES

A CASE STUDY

By

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This work is dedicated to my family.

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for their encouragement, support, and patience through this entire process.

To my parents
for providing opportunities for me to 'build character' which forged who I am.

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Abstract

Professional Learning Communities (PLCs) are a way of organizing the educational staff so that they can engage in purposeful, collegial learning with the aim of improving staff effectiveness so that all students learn successfully to high standards (Hord, 2008). The effectiveness of PLCs depends on the ability of educators to collaborate. At many international schools, teachers are recruited from various countries therefore bringing diversity to the school's teaching teams. Though studies of PLCs and collaboration exist, this qualitative collective case study was unique as it examined how teachers with such diverse backgrounds overcome the normal and intensified challenges to collaboration encountered in what I call an *intercultural PLC* context comprised of teachers of different nationalities and having different cultural backgrounds, educational and teaching experiences, and proficiencies with English at a private, international school in China. Multiple data collection methods were used in order to gain an understanding of the challenges to collaboration these teachers face, and the conditions that foster or hinder collaboration in this context.

The major themes from this study were, *communication*, *learning*, and *working together*. *Communication* had both a positive and a negative relationship with collaboration within an intercultural team. *Learning* was a major theme as teachers learned about themselves and their colleagues. The most common major theme, *working together,* was seen as an advantage to being on an intercultural team by enriching the education for children but was also seen as a disadvantage due to difficulties working with colleagues from different cultures.

The findings of this study suggest that though there were advantages and disadvantages to working collaboratively, and there were successes and challenges with communication, this intercultural PLC provided many opportunities for teachers to learn. Working together meant

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sharing responsibilities while working through the difficulties experienced working with colleagues who held opposing culturally-based attitudes and beliefs. There were different expectations, different opinions, colleagues presented different motivations and skills, and all the while PLCs were restricted by the constraints of time.

The findings also suggest the level of collaboration within this intercultural PLC was dependent on the teachers understanding the importance of, and efforts to move closer towards, several shared goals. Teachers should take the time to develop professional and personal relationships facilitated through honest and respectful communication and built on a foundation of trust. Teachers need to keep an open mind and accept differences as they learn about other cultures, teaching styles, and perspectives. As teachers work together, they need to find a way to share the responsibilities and make agreements on the expectations. Expectations regarding the roles and responsibilities of intercultural PLC members need to be agreed upon and documented. The provision of dedicated time for collaborative meetings had the greatest impact on supporting collaboration. For this intercultural PLC to be successful, a respectful school culture should continue to nurture professional, personal, and collaborative relationships.

Chapter 1 Introduction to the Study

Introduction

Hord justifies the use of Professional Learning Communities (PLCs) succinctly with the following argument (Hord, 2008).

- The purpose of schools is to maximize learning for all students.

- Teachers have the biggest influence on student learning.

- The effectiveness of teachers improves when teachers reflect on their instruction and learn how they can maximize learning for their students.

- Professional Learning Communities (PLCs) are becoming a popular model for teacher and student learning.

PLCs are a way of organizing the educational staff so that they can engage in purposeful, collegial learning with the aim of improving staff effectiveness so that all students learn successfully to high standards (Hord, 2008). Developing PLCs appears to hold considerable promise for capacity building for sustainable improvement and, as such, it has become a 'hot topic' in many countries (Stoll, Bolam, McMahon, Wallace, & Thomas, 2006). But what is it like trying to collaborate on an intercultural PLC?

I used a qualitative collective case study research design consisting of purposely-selected participants in order to study the issue of collaboration in the context of what I call an *intercultural PLC* comprised of teachers of different nationalities and having different cultural backgrounds, educational and teaching experiences, and English proficiency at a private, international school in China. The primary goal of a case study is to develop an adequate description (Creswell, 2007; Glatthorn & Joyner, 2005), interpretation, and explanation of the case (Maxwell, 2012) by gathering comprehensive, systematic, and in-depth information (Patton,

2002). Case studies may be layered or nested with a single program being a case study, however, within that single-program case, one may do studies of several participants (Patton, 2002). This collective case study collected data about and from four purposely-selected participants in order to show different perspectives (Creswell, 2007) and describe what it is like to collaborate on an intercultural PLC at this school.

This chapter explains the need for this study, purpose, context, research questions, significance, and limitations.

Need for the Study-The Problem

The effectiveness of PLCs depends on the ability of educators to collaborate. Attempts to promote collaboration among educators inevitably collide with the tradition of teacher isolation (DuFour, 2011). However, if educators collaborate, the process of reflecting on teaching and learning in order to determine what is best for the students lead to discussions about values, beliefs, assumptions, expectations, perspectives, and behaviors. This process of questioning activities and challenging values almost certainly leads to conflict (Hord, 1997).

International schools (for the purposes of this paper defined as schools where staff of different nationalities teach an international curriculum to students of different nationalities) interested in using the PLC model, may have magnified or unusual challenges when compared to schools where the teachers come from the same culture. At many international schools, teachers are recruited from various countries therefore bringing different cultural experiences to the school's teaching teams.

In addition, some international schools, while using English as the main language of instruction, hire teachers from the host culture. The local teachers may not be proficient English speakers, and may have very different cultural beliefs, educational backgrounds, and training and

yet are expected to work collaboratively on intercultural teams whose members come from different cultures. Thus further, specific challenges are faced in establishing collaboration in an intercultural PLC, when compared to PLCs composed of a mono-cultural background, as reported by previous research. "One of the key factors in successful collaboration is reconciling or accepting differing educational philosophies. These differences may well occur with a team of teachers from the same culture, but are even more likely to arise with teachers from different countries" (Carless & Walker, 2006). What are the unique challenges to the implementation of PLCs that rely heavily on collaboration within an intercultural context?

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to describe collaboration in the context of an intercultural PLC comprised of teachers of different nationalities and having different cultural backgrounds, educational and teaching experiences, and English proficiency at a private, international, International Baccalaureate (IB) Primary Years Programme (PYP) school in Shanghai, China. A review of the research literature indicated that no studies have yet been undertaken to examine how intercultural PLC teams with such diverse backgrounds overcome these normal and possibly intensified challenges to collaboration. If we can understand the challenges facing teachers who work on an intercultural PLC, and the conditions that foster or hinder collaboration in this context, then it is hoped this research can lead to a greater understanding of how collaborative relationships work and how to actively encourage them.

Context of the Study

The site for this case study was ideal and was chosen because of its intercultural teams consisting of teachers who have many differences in nationality, cultural background, educational and teaching experience, and English proficiency. The context of the intercultural

teams within this site is radically different when compared to teaching teams in the United States, other countries, or international schools with teachers from predominantly one nationality or culture. The teachers at this site are involved in intercultural PLCs, which aligned with the target group and goals for this case study.

The research site is a private, for profit, international school in Shanghai, China established in 2006. The school consists of separate Early Years, Primary, and Secondary Schools located together on a 16-acre campus. Separate principals lead each school with the Director overseeing the three individual schools. As of August 2014, approximately 130 teachers from 26 different nationalities work at the school. The school has 785 students from over 45 different nationalities. Over 50% of the students are European; Americans represent the largest nationality at approximately 12% followed by Germans and Koreans at approximately 11% each. School fees are approximately $32,000 per year.

The Early Years School has nine classes, consisting of two Nursery classes for 3 to 4-year-olds, three Pre-Kindergarten classes for 4 to 5-year-olds, and four Kindergarten classes for 5 to 6-year-olds. The Primary School has 20 classes consisting of four classes for each grade, Grades 1 through Grade 5. Nursery through Grade 5 classes have a maximum of 18 students in each class. To better meet the diverse needs of the students, every Early Years and Primary class uses an intercultural co-teacher model where one teacher is a Chinese national most often educated and trained through the Chinese school system and the other teacher is an expatriate educated and trained outside of Asia, most commonly in America, Canada, the United Kingdom, Australia, and New Zealand. Both teachers share responsibilities for teaching within the International Baccalaureate's (IB) Primary Years Programme (PYP) which has an inquiry-based, concept-driven curriculum framework which does not coincide with either teacher's own

educational background. In the Early Years, each class also has an assistant, a Chinese national, in addition to the two classroom teachers. Each grade level thus consists of an established intercultural PLC team comprised of smaller, co-teaching, classroom teams. Except for the 45-minute Chinese languages lesson each day, all instruction is in English. The Secondary School does not use the intercultural co-teacher model.

A collective case study format was used, including anonymous surveys, a focus group, observations, and individual interviews. The responses of purposely-selected participants were analyzed in an attempt to discover the challenges to collaboration faced by teachers on intercultural PLC teams. Teachers who work in the Early Years School were able to participate in the research and volunteer for the case studies. Each grade level is an established intercultural PLC, but as five of the 18 homeroom teachers working in the Early Years School are new to the school this year, they will be learning to collaborate in this new environment. The Nursery team has two classes with four teachers and two assistants. Two of the teachers and both assistants are Chinese and the other two teachers are expatriates. The Pre-Kindergarten team has three classes with six teachers and three assistants. Three of the teachers and all three assistants are Chinese and the other three teachers are expatriates. The Kindergarten team has four classes with three shared assistants. Four of the teachers and all three assistants are Chinese with the other four teachers being expatriates.

Research Questions

This study addressed the following research questions in order to describe, interpret and explain collaboration in the context of an intercultural PLC comprised of teachers with many cultural differences, at this private, international school in Shanghai. The questions have been written to facilitate understanding of the teachers' experiences, successes and challenges

collaborating in this unique context. As I work with intercultural teams, I have found these teams work well sometimes and other times they work poorly. Since studies have not been found in this context, I had hoped through the in depth study of these cases to gain a deeper understanding of the challenges these teachers experience and the conditions that foster or hinder collaboration.

Research Questions:

1. What experiences do these teachers have collaborating in an intercultural professional learning community at this school?

2. What are the successes of collaboration in this context?

3. What are the challenges to collaboration in this context?

4. How do these teachers address the challenges to collaboration?

5. What factors support or hinder collaboration in this context?

Significance of the Study

PLCs are a way of organizing the educational staff to engage in purposeful, collegial learning for the purpose of improving staff effectiveness so all students can learn successfully to high standards (Hord, 2008). The effectiveness of PLCs depends on the ability of teachers to collaborate. Though studies of PLCs and collaboration exist, this research study was unique as a review of the literature indicated that no studies have been undertaken to examine how intercultural PLC teams with such diverse backgrounds overcome the normal and possibly intensified challenges to collaboration provided in an intercultural PLC context. With the purpose of describing, interpreting and explaining collaboration within an intercultural PLC comprised of teachers of different nationalities, cultural backgrounds, educational and teaching experiences, and English proficiency at an international school, multiple data collection methods were used in order to gain an understanding of the challenges to collaboration these teachers

face, and the conditions that foster or hinder collaboration in this context. Collaboration is just as important for PLCs consisting of intercultural teams of teachers as it is for PLCs comprised of teachers of predominantly one nationality or culture. Though the research in this study was confined to four case studies in one context, it is hoped this research can lead to a greater understanding of collaborative relationships and how school leaders can foster these and other collaborative relationships for the benefit of teacher learning and ultimately student learning.

Limitations

As a qualitative collective case study, the purpose is to describe, interpret, and explain collaboration in the context of this intercultural PLC comprised of teachers with many cultural differences. The number of participants used was based on the need for an in depth understanding of the unique context and the different perspectives of the participants. Therefore, the findings of this study will add to the research base and is not intended to be generalizable.

As a private, tuition-based international school, with students from over 45 different nationalities, the context of its intercultural teams is unique when compared to teaching teams in the United States, other countries, or international schools of predominantly mono-cultural staff. Also, though the school has a Learning Support department and an English as an Additional Language department, which support 29 Early Years as well as Primary classrooms with no more than 18 students each, the school is selective in the admissions of applicants.

As the Primary School Principal at the research site, the participants from the Early Years School will know me professionally. Though I am not their supervisor, the professional relationship between the participants and myself may have affected the participant's attitude and openness regarding the study. My views on the benefits of strong, collaborative partnerships based on respect are known within the school community. Participation in any part of the study

was optional and the surveys were completed anonymously. The focus group and interviews took place away from the Early Years School building to provide a psychological and physical distance from the Early Years Principal and Deputy Principal. All participants were made aware of the methods used for ensuring confidentiality.

The study used several data collection methods to include anonymous surveys, a focus group, observations, and interviews to provide four completely different points for data collection enabling triangulation of sources. Each data collection method has strengths and weaknesses so by using four collection methods, the strengths of one method can compensate for the weaknesses of another. For example, when observing, my presence may affect the participant's behavior. I will only be able to observe during the arranged meeting times, and the observations may not reveal how the participants are feeling or thinking. By using interviews as well, the limitations of observations can be compensated for when participants are more freely able to share their feelings and thoughts. By interviewing each participant twice, during and after the observations, one data collection method will be able to inform the other collection method helping to ensure as much data is collected as possible to best understand the context and experiences. However, interviews also have limitations as participants may provide distorted responses due to personal bias, anger, anxiety, politics, and lack of awareness due to the interviewee's emotional state as well as limitations of recall and possible self serving responses (Patton, 2002). By using observations as well, the limitations of interviews can be compensated for. As my perception can affect the data, the focus group and interviews were transcribed.

The school's language of instruction is English, except for the one Chinese language lesson each day. As teachers in all teaching positions are required to have a high level of English for employment, data collection methods will be in English. However, as approximately half of

the participants are native-Chinese speakers, the survey part of the data collection will be translated into Chinese and a Chinese interpreter will be available for the other data collection methods if needed.

Organization of the Dissertation

This chapter explained the need for this study, purpose, context, research questions, significance, and limitations. Chapter 2 will discuss what research literature tells us about PLCs, working collaboratively, conflict, and working within intercultural teams. The research informs our decisions about how best to support and sustain intercultural PLCs for the purpose of improving student learning through collaborative practices. Chapter 3 will explain the methods that will be used for researching the challenges that intercultural teaching teams face when collaborating within PLCs.

Chapter 2 Review of the Literature

Introduction

The purpose of schools is to maximize learning for all students. Teachers have the biggest influence on student learning. Teachers' effectiveness improves when teachers reflect on their instruction and learn how they can maximize learning for their students. Professional learning communities (PLCs) are becoming a popular model for teacher and student learning. PLCs are a way of organizing the educational staff to engage in purposeful, collegial learning for the purpose of improving staff effectiveness so all students learn successfully to high standards (Hord, 2008).

The effectiveness of PLCs depends on the ability of educators to collaborate. Attempts to promote collaboration among educators inevitably collide with the tradition of teacher isolation (DuFour, 2011). However, if educators collaborate, the process of reflecting on teaching and learning will lead to productive discussions about values, beliefs, assumptions, expectations, perspectives, and behaviors. The process of questioning activities and challenging values almost certainly leads to conflict (Hord, 1997).

International schools (for the purposes of this paper defined as schools where staff of different nationalities teach an international curriculum to students of different nationalities) interested in using the PLC model, may have magnified or unusual challenges when compared to schools where the teachers come from the same culture. At many international schools, teachers are hired from various countries which means teachers bring different cultural experiences to the teaching teams. In addition, some international schools, while using English as the main language of instruction, hire teachers from the host culture. The local teachers may not be proficient English speakers, and may have very different cultural beliefs, education and training

and yet are expected to work collaboratively on intercultural teams whose members come from around the world. Thus further, specific challenges are faced in establishing collaboration in an intercultural PLC, when compared to PLCs composed of a mono-cultural background, as reported by previous research. "One of the key factors in successful collaboration is reconciling or accepting differing educational philosophies. These differences may well occur with a team of teachers from the same culture, but are even more likely to arise with teachers from different countries" (Carless & Walker, 2006). What are the unique challenges to the implementation of PLCs that rely heavily on collaboration within an intercultural context?

The purpose of this chapter is to understand what research literature tells us about PLCs, working collaboratively, and working within intercultural teams in order for us to make decisions at our schools for how to best support the development and sustainability of intercultural PLCs for the purpose of improving student learning through collaborative practices. Research related to defining and supporting PLCs, collaboration, conflict, and intercultural teams will be shared.

An initial scan of the literature was made to find recent, relevant and leading studies related to PLCs. The key term of *professional learning community* was used with the Education Research Complete and ERIC databases through EBSCOhost from the year 2004, in English, and from scholarly or peer-reviewed journals, yielding 1,058 results. The parameters were further reduced to limit the results to those from high-ranking, peer-reviewed journals, using the SCImago Journal & Country Rank indicator. "The SCImago Journal Rank indicator…is a measure of a journal's impact, influence or prestige. It expresses the average number of weighted citations received in a selected year by the documents published in the journal in the three previous years" (2007). Results were further filtered to only include articles from the 100 highest-ranking education journals based on the SCImago Journal Rank indicator yielding 71

results. Scanning the list for relevant research provided a comprehensive literature review by the Southwest Educational Development Lab and sponsored by the Office of Educational Research and Improvement (Hord, 1997); a meta-analysis of 10 American studies and one English study on the impact of PLCs on teaching practice and student learning (Vescio, Ross, & Adams, 2008) and case studies documenting the development of two schools, a PK-8 school and a middle school with Grades 6-8, in becoming PLCs (Hipp, Huffman, Pankake, & Olivier, 2008). Within these studies, the citations in the sections related to this research and the bibliographies were scanned for relevance to this research.

Next, the search continued with the Education Research Complete and ERIC databases through EBSCOhost from the year 2004, in English, and from scholarly or peer-reviewed journals using the search terms *international schools* as well as *collaboration*. Using the term international schools yielded 4,411 results and the term collaboration yielded 22,692 results. A combined search with the terms *professional learning communities* and *collaboration* yielded 237 results. Using the SCImago Journal Rank indicator again filtering only the 100 highest-ranking educational journals yielded 16 results that were then scanned for relevance to this study. A combined search using the terms *professional learning community* and *international schools* yielded seven results that were scanned for relevance.

The process continued with a search using the term *intercultural team* yielding 31 results that were then scanned for relevance to this study. None of the 31 results came through when filtered with the SCImago Journal Rank indicator as previously used. A combined search was then conducted using the search terms *intercultural team* and *professional learning community* with no results. A combined search was conducted using *intercultural team* and *international*

schools yielding one irrelevant result. A combined search was then conducted using the search terms *intercultural team* and *collaboration* yielding four results that were scanned for relevance.

Searching using the Education Research Complete and ERIC databases provided many results for *professional learning community*, *international schools* and especially *collaboration*, but minimal results when combined in different combinations. The search results suggest extremely limited literature related to intercultural teams, yet alone collaboration within an intercultural PLC team. The comprehensive search continued using additional methods.

As relevant research articles were found, the citations and bibliographies from each were inspected to discover more sources to include research reports, books, and a doctoral dissertation on collaboration within a PLC. Subsequent searches on EBSCOhost used the additional search terms of *literature review, meta-analysis, conflict,* and *team-teaching*. An additional search was conducted using ProQuest to look for additional relevant doctoral dissertations. Though literature was prioritized to the extent it was leading, current and relevant to this study, at times historically important studies or reviews related to the overarching theory were included. The search continued to include the other works of authors commonly cited in the reviews of PLC related literature and research studies previously found. Sometimes the process used located literature of more historical importance but most importantly, the process also provided the most recent literature by prominent authors in the field.

What Are PLCs?

The concept of PLCs has been around for many years and many authors have been trying to phrase the meaning of a PLC from an elusive into a universally accepted definition. The term is currently being used to describe every imaginable combination of individuals with an interest in education from grade-level teams, high school departments, a state department of education

and so on, so that the term is now in danger of losing all meaning (DuFour, DuFour, Eaker, & Many, 2010).

In 1990, Peter Senge wrote a book titled *The Fifth Discipline* describing collaborative learning organizations in the corporate world. That book fueled the interest of educators using collaboration within learning communities (Hipp et al., 2008; Hord, 1997). Another book, by Astuto, Clark, Read, McGee, and Fernandez in 1993, titled *Challenges to Dominant Assumptions Controlling Educational Reform,* as cited by Hord, focuses on what the authors called a *professional community of learners*, teachers in a school and its administrators continuously seeking and sharing learning, and acting on their learning with the goal of enhancing the effectiveness as professionals for students' benefit (Hord, 1997).

DuFour and Eaker stress the importance of a PLC, stating "The most promising strategy for sustained, substantive school improvement is developing the ability of school personnel to function as professional learning communities" (DuFour & Eaker, 1998 p. xi). DuFour and Eaker do not give a concise definition of a PLC but do describe the meaning of each of the three words. The authors describe a professional as someone with expertise in a specialized field, an individual who has not only pursued advanced training to enter the field, but who is also expected to remain current in its evolving knowledge base (1998). DuFour and Eaker describe learning as ongoing action and perpetual curiosity, and they describe community as a group linked by common interests (1998).

Numerous other definitions have attempted to describe a PLC. In 2000, Adam defines a PLC as a system that promotes collaboration between all members of an organization in the compulsory learning of all students. Morrissey describes a PLC saying the term describes itself with, "A school that operates as such engages the entire group of *professionals* in coming

together for *learning* with a supportive, self-created *community* [italics added by author]*"* (2000, p. 3). In 2005, a description of a PLC emerges, "An effective professional learning community has the capacity to promote and sustain the learning of all professionals in the school community with the collective purpose of enhancing pupil learning" (Bolam). Hord says the three words in the initialism PLC indicate that the professionals in a school are coming together as a group, in community, for the purpose of learning (2008). PLCs have been described as the process of the professional staff learning together to direct their efforts toward improved student learning (Hipp et al., 2008). In the same tradition of simple definitions, Hord later writes, "The three words explain the concept: Professionals coming together in a group-a community-to learn" (Hord, 2008). DuFour, DuFour, Eaker, and Many define a PLC as "an ongoing process in which educators work collaboratively in recurring cycles of collective inquiry and action research to achieve better results for the students they serve" (2010, p. 11).

No matter which definition is used, probably one of the most important features to understand about a PLC is the focus on the individual inspection of *teaching* has shifted to a focus on the collective analysis of evidence of student *learning* (DuFour & Mattos, 2013). PLCs are not just a place for faculty to meet regularly or groups coming together to work collaboratively (Hord, 2008).

Because of the possible misunderstanding of what PLCs may or may not be, Hord elaborates on what PLCs are not (2008). Hord explains that PLCs are not for managerial issues: ordering books and other instructional supplies, scheduling study trips away from the school campus, organizing teaching schedules to make good use of videos or guest speakers, a teacher reporting on a conference attended, or sharing an instructional activity used that students enjoyed. Hord reports that teachers found these meetings helped them be organized and in synch

with colleagues' plans for student activities, but unfortunately many are using these activities to describe their school's PLC (2008).

With the many variations in defining and explaining PLCs, the essential purpose can become lost, so DuFour defines the *three big ideas* that represent the core principals of PLCs (2004). The first big idea is to focus on students' learning rather than teaching. Common questions which represent the first big idea are to consider what we want students to learn, how we know when students have learned it, and how we respond when a student has difficulty. The second big idea is that the culture of collaboration in a PLC is to analyze and improve classroom practice for the collective purpose of learning for all. DuFour describes collaboration within a PLC as the systematic process in which teachers work together to analyze and improve classroom practice and further clarifies with five points about collaboration (2004):

- Everyone must belong to a team to participate

- Each team must have time to meet and collaborate

- The efforts must focus on the crucial questions related to learning and generate products that reflect that purpose, for example, lists of essential outcomes, different kinds of assessments, analyses of student achievement, and strategies for improving results

- Teams need to develop norms or protocols to clarify expectations of roles, responsibilities and relationships among team members

- Adopt student achievement goals which are linked with the school's and district's goals

The third big idea involves PLCs judging their effectiveness based on results (DuFour, 2004). Schools and teachers have many data but what they do with the data is important. DuFour says

teachers should welcome data and turn that data into useful and relevant information so teachers can identify how each student performed for the purpose of reflecting on concerns and soliciting the ideas, materials, strategies and talents of the entire team (2004). As the goals concern student learning, the importance of each student is made clear not by relying on averages to analyze student performance but by focusing instead on the success of each individual student (DuFour, 2004).

Simply put, and for the purposes of this paper, a PLC is a way of organizing the educational staff to engage in purposeful, collegial learning for the purpose of improving staff effectiveness so all students learn successfully to high standards (Hord, 2008).

How Do PLCs Work?

PLCs operate on the premise that students are not only taught, but to ensure that they learn (DuFour 2004). PLCs support the school's purpose of providing high quality learning by promoting quality teaching, the prime factor in whether students learn well (Hord, 2008). Participation in PLCs impacts teaching practice as teachers become more student-centered (Vescio et al., 2008).

To help us understand PLCs and how they work, the Southwest Educational Development Lab in Texas conducted a review of the literature and prepared a report for the Office of Educational Research and Improvement in Washington D.C. (Hord, 1997). After analyzing the literature, Hord identified five attributes of PLCs (1997). First, the leadership is supportive and shared. A school whose staff are learning together and participating in decisions about the school's operation requires a leader who can let go of their power and sense of omnipotence and omnicompetence, who can learn together with staff, and thereby share the leadership of the school (Hord, 1997). The second attribute of a PLC is collective creativity and

responsibility. Teams engage in reflective dialogue with conversations about students and teaching and learning, identifying related issues and problems, and applying new ideas and information to problem solving (Hord, 1997). Third, a shared vision and common values unite the PLC team. Hord describes this as a core characteristic of a PLC: staff are encouraged to not only be involved in the process of developing a shared vision, but to use the vision as a guidepost in decision making about teaching and learning in the school with an undeviating focus on student learning (1997). Fourth, supportive conditions are present for when, where and how staff come together, for staff to do the learning, decision making, problem solving and creative work. Supportive conditions also include the willingness to accept feedback and work toward improvement with trust and respect (Hord 1997). The fifth attribute described is of shared personal practice or simply peers helping peers (Hord, 1997). In a PLC, enabled by mutual respect and trust of staff members, teachers will visit each other's classrooms to observe, take notes, and discuss observations with each other for the purpose of community improvement. Hord continues by noting that teachers need an environment that values and supports hard work, the acceptance of challenging tasks, risk taking, and the promotion of growth (1997).

DuFour and Eaker (1998) describe five characteristics of PLCs. First, PLCs have a shared mission, vision, and values. Second, the authors describe PLCs as promoting collective inquiry questioning the status quo, seeking new methods, testing those methods and then reflecting on the results. Third, collaborative teams share a common purpose. Fourth, PLCs are action oriented and open to experimentation. Fifth, PLCs seek continuous improvement.

The Department for Education and Skills (DfES), the General Teaching Council for England (GTCe) and the National College for School Leadership (NCSL) conducted a 34 month long study involving a literature review, surveys to 393 schools across England, case studies in

16 school settings, and three workshop conferences for representatives from the case study schools, and the project steering group. In their research report titled Creating and Sustaining Effective Professional Learning Communities, the researchers sum up the five key characteristics of PLCs (Bolam et al., 2005):

1. *Shared values and vision*

2. There is a *collective responsibility* for students' learning as opposed to being the responsibility of just one teacher

3. *Reflective professional inquiry* conversations about serious educational issues or problems, examining teachers' practice, seeking and sharing of new knowledge, and applying new ideas to problem solving and solutions that meet students' needs

4. The *collaboration* that occurs is focused on learning

5. *Group as well as individual learning is promoted*

Most interesting to note, the researchers added three more characteristics for PLCs that emerged from a combination of the workshop conferences, case studies, and the survey (Bolam et al., 2005).

6. *Openness, networks and partnerships* outside of the school

7. *Inclusive membership* by including other professionals who closely work with students, like learning support assistants

8. *Mutual trust, respect, and support*

Not only do the eight characteristics help us understand a PLC, but also the characteristics provide a method for organizing the different areas that involve or can affect collaboration with a PLC.

Benefits of PLCs

The Southwest Educational Development Laboratory (SEDL) in Texas conducted a three-year study examining how schools undertaking comprehensive reform experienced these efforts at improvement (Morrissey, 2000). Collectively the sites faced the challenges which are symptomatic in American public school education of consistently low or falling achievement scores, unhappy and/or unmotivated students, sidelined parents, disengaged community members, and school staff who did not believe they could affect student learning (Morrissey, 2000). After reviewing the first year's work at each site, the SEDL researcher identified five core issues that were significantly affecting schools' past and present efforts at improvement of (a) organizational structures, (b) focus on improvement work, (c) personal and social dynamics, (d) contextual influences, and (e) leadership (Morrissey, 2000). The five core issues identified where low performing schools were weak were *barriers* to the improvement process while the five attributes of a PLC (Hord, 1997) were believed to be able to *support* the improvement process (Morrissey, 2000).

In 1997 Hord reported some of the benefits of PLCs as reduced teacher isolation, increased commitment to the school's mission and goals, a feeling of shared responsibility for the holistic development of students, an ethos of the powerful learning that defines good teaching and classroom practice, and an enhanced understanding of course content and teacher roles.

To help understand the effectiveness of PLCs, Bolam et al. describe three measures to include (a) student achievement, (b) professional learning, and (c) the extent to which four key processes are carried out (2005). The four key processes are optimization of resources and structures, promotion of individual and collective learning, the explicit promotion and support of an effective PLC, and the effective delivery of leadership and management. Bolam et al. also

conclude that PLCs are well worth adopting in order to promote school and system-wide capacity building for sustainable improvement and student learning (Bolam et al., 2005). The greater the extent that schools have strong professional communities, the greater the extent of student learning (Bolam et al., 2005).

Vescio et al. (2008) conducted a review of 10 American studies and one English study on the impact of PLCs on teaching practices and student learning. After searching through ERIC and EBSCO databases as well as various websites, 55 sources connected learning communities with teaching practice and/or student achievement. After selecting only published empirical studies that include data on PLC teaching practice or student achievement, 10 remained. The authors also included a large, multi-site research report (Bolam et al., 2005) from the General Teaching Council of England, Department for Education and Skills. The researchers reported that the collective results of these studies suggest PLCs can have a positive impact on both teachers and students (Vescio et al., 2008). The researchers found that PLC communities increase collaboration, encourage a focus on student learning, improve teacher authority or empowerment, and promote continuous learning (Vescio et al., 2008). Most importantly, the studies showed that students benefited when their teachers are in PLCs as indicated by improved achievement scores over time (Vescio et al., 2008).

The data would suggest that students learn more at a higher level than they would in a traditional school that requires compulsory attendance but not compulsory learning (Ivy, Herrington, & Kritsonis, 2008).

Importance of Collaboration in PLCs

The eight key characteristics of an effective PLC (Bolam et al., 2005; Stoll et al., 2006) have been described as:

1. shared values and mission

2. collective responsibility

3. reflective professional inquiry

4. collaboration

5. promotion of individual and group learning

6. mutual respect, trust and support

7. inclusive membership

8. openness, networks and partnerships

Though collaboration is an aspect of previous descriptions of PLCs, collaboration in this description is a key characteristic of a PLC. Three additional key characteristics, since the five key characteristics (Bolam et al., 2005), further stress the role of collaboration in a PLC (Bolam et al., 2005; Stoll et al., 2006). Collaborative cultures foster teacher and curriculum development (Hargreaves & Dawe, 1990). Collaboration is very important in a PLC and remains a popular concept with educators as working collaboratively equates with PLCs (Hord, 2008).

In a PLC, DuFour stresses that collaborative teaching conversations must quickly move beyond what we are expected to teach to how we will know when each student has learned (2004). The purpose of collaboration is not simply doing things together but to improve both our professional practice and the learning for our students (DuFour, 2011).

However, despite all the references to educators collaborating, collaboration faces a major obstacle. Attempts to promote collaboration among educators inevitably collide with the tradition of teacher isolation (DuFour 2011). DuFour later makes the argument that administrators should not ask educators to collaborate with the addendum *...if you want to*

because collaboration is a fundamental part of being a professional, and should not be optional, as collaboration brings benefits for educators and the students (DuFour, 2014).

But even if all teachers collaborate in set weekly meetings focusing on student learning, with agreements and linked goals, maybe that is still not enough as Datnow describes collaborative cultures as working relationships between teachers which tend to be spontaneous, voluntary, development-oriented, pervasive across time and space, and unpredictable (2011).

The Concept of Collaboration-Global Perspectives

At the University of California, Little described four different types of collaboration in a continuum ranging from independence to interdependence (1990). For what was described as *storytelling and scanning for ideas*, collaboration is at the independence side of the continuum. As teachers interact more frequently, and with more intensity, the possibility of conflict and mutual influence increases while moving towards the interdependence side of the continuum with two more types of collaboration described as *aid and assistance*, and *sharing*. On the far interdependence side of the continuum, the last type of collaboration is described as *joint work*. Joint work is the shared responsibility for the work of teaching.

Paine and Ma, American and Chinese researchers, wrote a dialogue about their perspectives on teacher collaboration based on their field research and professional experiences in China (1993). Though they characterize four types of teacher collaboration to include informal (encouraged by different status among teachers), invisible (relationship between staff and school), and distanced collaboration (teacher's stories in journals and books), they focused on the fourth type of collaboration the teaching research group referred to as *jiaoyanzu* (Paine & Ma, 1993). The researchers describe jiaoyanzu as the most obvious way that Chinese teachers work together and it is institutionalized throughout all elementary and secondary schools in the

country. Most elementary teachers, in both urban and rural schools, teach only one subject and are organized into jiaoyanzu groups. Each group has a leader who is recognized as the best, or one of the best, teachers in the group and the person with whom the principal will mainly work (instead of with individual teachers). Teaching follows a collective approach. For example, teachers have a designated common office space for their jiaoyanzu as opposed to individual teacher desks in classrooms. The goal of the jiaoyanzu is the improvement of the educational practice which is to be achieved through weekly group meetings and frequent group activities. The researchers describe the common tasks of the jiaoyanzu as:

- collectively studying and discussing the national teaching outline

- designing an instructional plan

- studying and exploring subject matter

- organizing student meetings to get feedback on teachers' work

- arranging and setting goals for peer observation of colleagues in the jiaoyanzu

- designing tests

- organizing and conducting inservice teacher evaluation

- facilitating the induction of new teachers

- organizing and supporting preservice teachers

Hargreaves, a Professor in Educational Administration at the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education, describes collaborative cultures as working relationships between teachers that tend to be spontaneous, voluntary, development-oriented, pervasive across time and space, and unpredictable (1994). Hargreaves further describes collaborative cultures as spontaneous as they evolve from teachers, though administrators may support the cultures. The collaborative cultures are voluntary as teachers collaborate not by compulsion but by believing that working together is

productive, enjoyable, and valuable. Teachers develop initiatives on their own or follow mandated initiatives they are committed to. Collaborative cultures may have scheduled meetings but the meetings are not the main way in which teachers work together. Finally, Hargreaves describes a collaborative culture where the outcomes of collaboration are uncertain and unpredictable.

In the United States of America, of the three big ideas DuFour uses to describe PLCs, the second describes a culture of collaboration involving a systematic process in which teachers work together to analyze and improve classroom practice for the purpose of learning for all (2004). DuFour defines five essential elements of collaboration:

- Everyone belongs to a team and participates

- Teams have time to meet during the workday and throughout the school year

- Teams focus their efforts on crucial questions related to learning and generate products that reflect that purpose, for example, lists of essential outcomes, different kinds of assessments, analyses of student achievement, and strategies for improving results

- Teams develop norms or agreements to clarify expectations of roles, responsibilities, and relationships among team members

- Teams adopt student achievement goals linked with school or district goals

At the University of Leuven in Belgium, Kelchtermans defines collaboration as referring to teachers' cooperative actions, actually doing things together, for job-related purposes (2006). Kelchtermans further clarifies the difference between collaboration and collegiality where collegiality refers to the quality of the relationships among staff members at school while the actual actions are defined as collaboration.

In Spain, Lavié discusses five discourses on teacher collaboration to include cultural, effectiveness, school-as-community, restructuring, and critical discourses (2006). The cultural discourse on teacher collaboration centers on the beliefs and values within collaborative relationships. The effectiveness discourse focuses on principals as cultural managers who use a shared vision and consensus in practices and expectations as a strategy for increasing student achievement through improvement and effectiveness. Schools are communities with relationships based on caring, acceptance of others, and inclusivity within the school-as-community discourse. The restructuring discourse on teacher collaboration describes expanding the role of the teacher outside of the classroom to include shared norms and values with a focus on student learning. The author describes collaboration as a collective practice with democratic and participative principles and shared reflection for the critical discourse.

In 2007, researchers in the UK analyzed the concepts of collaboration, reflective practice, and the primary task, by examining 18 primary schools in Wales (James, Dunning, Connolly, & Elliott, 2007). They described collaboration simply as joint working. Even though adults working in the school had different roles and responsibilities, everyone was equally valued for their contributions. The researchers proposed a model for collaborative practice with three interlinked foundational elements to include collaboration, reflective practice, and focus on the primary task of enriching teaching and learning for all students.

Sargent and Hannum researched teacher professional learning communities in the remote interior province of Gansu, China (2009). Qualitative data included observations and in-depth interviews with 30 teachers from 11 schools and quantitative data came from the Gansu Survey of Children and Families. The sample of surveys included 646 teachers in 73 schools located in 71 villages. The researchers described the institutional norms and structures in place for teachers

in rural primary schools in China to engage in collaborative activities that enable the construction of professional learning communities (Sargent & Hannum, 2009). These activities took place inside and outside of school to include peer observations and critiques, demonstration lessons, joint planning activities, and teacher research about teaching and learning.

At the University of Gothenburg in Sweden, Kougioumtzis and Patriksson studied teacher collaboration (2009). The aim of the study was to highlight teacher collaboration in Sweden and Greece using nationwide surveys of 707 Swedish and 451 Greek teachers. The researchers defined school-based teacher collaboration as formal cooperation, deprivatized practices, and personalized interaction. Formal cooperation referred to scheduled meetings with teachers initiated by school leadership. Deprivitized practices meant joint efforts to plan, share lessons, or work on common projects. Personalized interaction described the degree of professional intimacy associated with sharing and working together on a private level.

Associate Professor Tang Keow Ngang, from the Universiti Sains Malaysia, surveyed 210 secondary and high school teachers in Beijing, China, to study levels of agreement towards collaborative practice and implementation levels of collaborative practice (2012). The study was guided by six teacher collaboration dimensions: (1) creating energy, (2) building capacity, (3) securing environment, (4) extending the vision, (5) meeting and minimizing crisis, and (6) seeking and charting improvement. The creating energy dimension refers to teachers learning and cooperating with their colleagues to teach and guide handle students. Building capacity is when teachers provide students with opportunities to lead an activity or take additional responsibilities. Teachers ensuring the classroom environment is safe, that materials are ready, and records of students' information is kept summarizes the securing environment dimension. When extending the vision, teachers perform duties to achieve the vision and mission of

education. In the meeting and minimizing crisis dimension, teachers work with parents to manage student behavior and ensure the safety of the students. And finally, the dimension of seeking and charting improvement means teachers share ideas and techniques with colleagues, attend workshops or engage in other professional development.

In the Netherlands, Honingh and Hooge felt the concept of teacher collaboration lacked a consensus in definition (2014). They conducted a secondary analysis on large quantitative studies of 271 primary and 343 secondary schools to examine the extent that teachers collaborate and to also identify characteristics which affect teacher collaboration. The authors stated that teacher collaboration involves serious intellectual interaction between teachers concerning issues of curriculum and instruction. They operationalized teacher collaboration with such items as, 'In my school, we agree that good teaching involves teamwork', 'My colleagues and I try to improve the educational quality through joint discussions', and 'In my school, teachers make a habit of visiting each other's classes'. The researchers comment that this form of collaboration is the first step towards deprivatization of individual teaching practice (Honingh & Hooge, 2014).

In 2015, a systematic review of 82 studies related to the concept of teacher collaboration was conducted by the Centre for Research on Professional Learning & Development, at the University of Leuven, Belgium, with an aim of providing an overview of the terminological framework to describe teacher collaboration used in previous research (Vangrieken, Dochy, Raes, & Kyndt, 2015). The researchers discovered that different terms were used to describe teacher collaboration, teacher collaboration was vaguely defined, and the terms were used interchangeably. Collaboration was defined as the joint interaction in a group with all activities that are needed to perform a shared task. The authors also argue that different types of

collaboration occur at varying depths as collaboration can be seen as an umbrella term being part of different collaborative concepts (Vangrieken et al., 2015).

What Collaboration is Not

With so much use of the word collaboration, understanding the meaning for the purposes of a PLC can be further illustrated through describing what collaboration is not. Sometimes a collegial culture can erroneously be considered a collaborative culture. Hargreaves and Dawes elaborate on the differences between a collaborative culture and what they call *contrived collegiality* (1990). Contrived collegiality enhances administrative control when an administration contrives interactions among teachers where teachers meet and work to implement the curricular and instructional strategies developed by others (Hargreaves & Dawe, 1990). Contrived collegiality is administratively regulated, compulsory, implementation-orientated, fixed in time and space, and predictable and collaboration among teachers with these characteristics does not generally lead to meaningful or sustainable change (Hargreaves, 1994). Kelchtermans compares the difference in meaning of both words in the literature where collaboration is a descriptive term referring to cooperative actions and collegiality refers to the quality of relationships among staff members at school (2006).

Evolving Into a Collaborative Culture

As schools begin efforts to become PLCs, the starting culture may be one of contrived collegiality or superficial collaboration but then mature as the relationships within the teams grow. From research involving interviews, observations, focus groups and attendance at teacher development workshops, with 50 individuals in two districts in Texas and California, Datnow observed that what began as contrived meetings to discuss data evolved into spaces for more genuine collaborative activity wherein teachers challenged each other, raised questions, and

shared ideas for teaching (2011). Hargreaves also describes the maturing of the relationships as he describes collaborative cultures as comprising evolutionary relationships of openness, trust, and support among teachers where they define and develop their own purposes as a community (1990). "Professional learning communities can increase staff capacity to serve students, but success depends on what the staff do in their collective efforts" (Hord, 1997, p. 54).

Supporting a Collaborative Culture

How can a collaborative culture be supported? In an ideal situation, Graham describes the starting of new teams eager for collaboration at their research site in the first year of a new school where teachers could be selected based on their desire to work in a collaborative culture as opposed to the traditionally solitary one (2007). The main benefit of implementing a collaborative PLC in this situation is that integration does not involve assimilating an existing culture hostile to collaboration (Graham, 2007).

For schools interested in a collaborative community, and that are not starting with a new team, there will be some challenges. In a study by Lujan and Day, the issues of time factors, the isolated nature of teaching, and divergent points of view hinder the formation of collaborative communities (Lujan & Day, 2010).

DuFour recommends structures and cultures that embed collaboration in the routine practice, ensure collaborative efforts focus on the right work, and support educators as they build the capacity of professionals to work together instead of alone (2011).

Riordan and da Costa summarize five studies they conducted in elementary and high schools that focused on collaboration and as a result, jointly make six recommendations to help leaders foster teacher collaboration (Riordan & da Costa, 1998). Firstly, school leaders need to be thoughtful in recruiting and selecting staff. Graham reports hiring teachers eager for

collaboration as a benefit when recruiting every member of the new school's team (Graham, 2007). For those bringing in new members to an existing staff, it is best to select new staff who will welcome a collaborative culture. Their second recommendation specifies the careful delineation of work assignments and timetabling. If teachers have input into whom they work with on a grade level team, in a project or in delivering a program, they can select groupings based on people they trust, ensuring better collaboration (Riordan & da Costa, 1998). Thirdly, they recommend establishing collegial expectations with beginning teachers through induction and mentoring. Fourthly, schools should enable school-wide collaboration in departments or subject areas for the purpose of sharing and networking. Fifthly, they recommend that opportunities be provided for leadership and collaboration. And finally, leaders should clearly demarcate supervisory from collaborative relations, as enduring collaborations are unlikely to occur between teachers and administrators, therefore administrators should establish their own collaborative support network (Riordan & da Costa, 1998).

Morrissey's three years of research with the Southwest Educational Development Laboratory summarizes a supportive culture of collaboration (Morrissey, 2000). Teachers have sufficient time to meet and collaborate regularly, the teams meet in grade levels or subject areas, teachers respect and trust each other, teachers communicate with each other inside and outside of school as well as with parents and community members, and teachers support each other through informal visits or sharing advice and opinions. Morrissey reports the professional trust and respect that pervaded the campuses strengthened the staffs' unquestioned commitment to school improvement initiatives and allowed teachers to take risks in implementing new strategies (2000).

In Stamford, Connecticut, the school district implemented PLCs in all 20 schools for the 2007-2008 school year, leading to a lot more confusion among teachers than initially expected (Thessin & Starr, 2011). A major lesson was learned: "Simply putting well-meaning individuals together and expecting them to collaborate was not enough. They needed professional development and guidance to achieve this goal" (Thessin & Starr, 2011, p. 50). To provide more direction and support, the district offered eight, voluntary, six-hour training sessions for PLC facilitators and then later offered additional training for those who attended the first training for the purpose of learning how to lead professional development sessions on PLCs at school sites. PLC toolkits were developed and distributed that included articles and protocols for each of the six steps in the Stamford PLC process (Thessin & Starr, 2011). Providing clear expectations and differentiated support moved the collaborative meetings from planning routine activities to focusing on student learning.

Collaboration = Conflict

It can be challenging for educators to work collaboratively in a PLC. Hord states a reflective organization is one in which the members question the activities and challenge the organization's values and such reflection almost inevitably leads to conflict (1997). When teachers enact collaborative reforms in the name of community, teachers often run headlong into enormous conflicts over professional beliefs and practices (Achinstein, 2002). Professional learning activities often involve negotiation and strong differences of opinion (Graham, 2007) and the different points of view hinder teachers' abilities to collaborate (Lujan & Day, 2010). Conflicts occur when teachers attempt to collaborate based on different approaches to teaching, different values, and different personalities (Grossman, Wineburg, & Woolworth, 2001). Collaborating can expose different values, beliefs, and opinions about teaching practices causing

conflict and making further collaboration on a PLC team difficult. Even if educators align professionally, personality clashes during collaboration can cause conflict.

Conflict is not necessarily detrimental, especially in a PLC that is reflecting on core values and beliefs. Drawing from her two-year study of two school-wide PLCs in California, Achinstein believes the active engagement in conflict, or a dialogue of differences is a normal and essential dimension of a functioning teacher community; conflict can create the context for learning and thus the ongoing renewal of communities (2002). A reflective organization is one in which the members question the activities and challenge the organization's values; this reflection leads to conflict (Hord, 1997).

How is Conflict Addressed?

What usually happens when there is conflict? Too often, the normal approach for addressing conflict involves ignoring the conflict or trying to avoid the conflict altogether (Hord, 1997). After a two and one-half year long study involving 22 secondary school teachers, Grossman, Wineburg, and Woolworth noted the teams started with what the researchers called a *pseudocommunity* before growing into a more effective team:

> As community starts to form, individuals have a natural tendency to *play community*, to act as if they are already a community that shares values and common beliefs. Playing community, or *pseudocommunity*.... The imperative of pseudocommunity is to "behave *as if* we all we [sic] agree." The maintenance of pseudocommunity pivots on the suppression of conflict. Groups regulate face-to-face interactions with the tacit understanding that it is against the rules to challenge others or press too hard for clarification. This understanding paves the way for the illusion of consensus. Because there is no genuine follow-up, conversation partners are able to speak at high levels of

generality that allow each to impute his or her own meanings to the groups' abstractions. For example, if notions of "critical thinking" or "interdisciplinary curriculum" are never defined, every participant can agree to this common cause without giving it so much a second thought. (Grossman et al., 2001, pgs. 955-956)

A study of 53 Canadian elementary and secondary school teachers inquired about positive and negative incidents teachers had with their colleagues (Hargreaves, 2001). Participating teachers came from 15 schools of various sizes serving different types of communities; they were of different ages and subject specializations, and had differing attitudes to change. Teachers described coming into conflict when they were required to collaborate with colleagues whose views or interests were different from their own. The responses to the one and one-half hour long interviews showed that teachers tended to view conflict and disagreement as a problem, so conflict was avoided as the absence of conflict was highly desirable (Hargreaves, 2001). In response to the perception that conflict was a problem, teachers kept their distance from each other, avoided interactions, and engaged in what Hargreaves called superficial politeness (2001).

Conflict is to be expected in a growing community and the handling of conflict will determine the success of the group. Achinstein describes how the management of conflict, as learning organizations challenge themselves, determines the effectiveness of a PLC:

The kinds of organizational learning purported to result from building community among teachers are deeply linked to how they manage the differences amid their collaboration. The processes of conflict are critical to understanding what distinguishes a professional community that maintains stability and the status quo from a community engaged in ongoing inquiry and change. (Achinstein, 2002, p. 446)

In a mixed method case study investigating the relationship between PLC activities and teacher improvement, Graham noted that a sense of community began to develop during the first year of the middle school and two outcomes emerged (2007). First, a feedback loop was created as the team constructively dealt with conflict when it arose by structuring rules for verbal participation in the meetings and in turn, these changes supported deepening levels of community (Graham, 2007). Graham also reported that as teams began to develop a sense of community, the process created opportunities for teachers to learn from each other. As individual teachers grew in trust and respect, and as conversations increasingly addressed substantive issues of teaching and learning, teachers were noted as being able to "see through each other's eyes" so that each member benefitted from the collective wisdom of all members (Graham, 2007).

In a mixed-method study investigating how 37 educators perceived the impact of implementing a PLC model at a US elementary school, Lujan and Day reported the teachers felt their PLC developed a process to effectively resolve conflict as the group came to a consensus regarding learning outcomes, standards to assess learning, smart goals and norms, and developing common and formative assessments (2010).

How Can We Support Conflict Management?

With the understanding that conflict is an expected aspect of collaborative communities, especially within intercultural communities, the next question is what can we do to facilitate the management of conflict? Hord outlines three things effective leaders do to manage conflict (1997). First, effective leaders provide a safe forum for discussions. Second, effective leaders reinforce the values of the community. Third, effective leaders are willing to live with uncertainty and work through ambiguous issues with those involved.

In contrast to the typical response which is to avoid conflict, effective leaders consistently address disagreements. Principals can address conflict by providing an environment in which teachers resolve their dissension through discussion and debate, in essence, addressing disagreements by providing opportunities, for ongoing discussion and exploration (Hord, 1997).

The Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada funded a research projected titled The Emotions of Teaching and Educational Change. The study involved interviewing 53 Canadian elementary and secondary teachers, from 15 urban, rural, and suburban schools of different levels and sizes about teacher's (a) emotional relationships to their work, (b) their professional development, and (c) educational change where teachers were asked to describe particular episodes of positive and negative emotion with student's, colleagues, administrators, and parents (Hargreaves, 2001). Hargreaves reported that teachers in the study tended to view conflict and disagreement in their schools as a problem, and as a source of negative emotion, so the absence of conflict was highly desirable as teachers valued thinking alike, sharing the same values, and not debating their ideas (2001). Hargreaves also reported that teachers came into conflict when they were required to collaborate with colleagues whose views or interests are different from their own (Hargreaves, 2001). All but one secondary school viewed conflict as a problem, and not an opportunity, as teachers in the one secondary school were engaged in a learning community which cultivated and made space for inquiry as a routine part of the teacher culture, and with a strong emotional foundation built upon caring relationships with students and among staff (Hargreaves, 2001). Hargreaves recommends not sponsoring greater or lesser degrees of 'collaborative' friendship or more distanced 'collegial' friendliness in general but by:

- building strong professional communities where teachers both praise and support each other, receive support from each other, and work with a wide range of colleagues on joint projects together

- developing authentically close friendships between teachers that can and want to raise and deal with issues of professional difference and disagreement

- making the norms and practices of debate and inquiry central to the school's mission and professional culture

- taking professional discussion and dialogue out of the privacy of classrooms and basing it on visible public evidence and data of teacher's performance and practice such as sharing samples of student work or through the public presentation of student data

- embracing diverse views of teaching excellence so discussions of classroom practice do not treat differences between teachers as deficits

- making explicit commitments to caring about and for colleagues in an effort to build stronger emotional and intellectual understanding rather than close friendships that affirm consensus and identity among a few teachers while the rest engage in superficial politeness or friendliness

Hargreaves contends in an ideal situation teacher friendships should strive to be strong enough to encourage and withstand disagreement, norms of debate and inquiry legitimize and institutionalize such disagreement, evidence of achievement data or student work is made public as a basis for debate and inquiry, and relations of active caring among all staff establish the basic trust that insures teacher against the fear and anxiety that their collegial bonds might be broken (Hargreaves, 2001).

Trust

In 1994, the Consortium on Chicago School Research administered a survey to public elementary school teachers with the purpose of gathering teachers' views of the school environment, classroom learning, parental involvement, governance, and the professional work life of teachers. Researchers analyzed data from 5,690 teachers in 248 elementary schools and used the data to report that by far the strongest contributing factor of professional community is social trust among faculty members (Bryk, Camburn, & Louis, 1999). The researchers further explain that when teachers trust and respect each other, a powerful resource becomes available for supporting collaboration, reflective dialogue, and deprivatization characteristics of a professional community in which teachers observe each others' practices and joint problem solving is modal (Bryk et al., 1999). In addition, as the community develops, trust and respect are mutually reinforced (Bryk et al., 1999).

Others agree on the importance of trust within a PLC. Hord, who has done much research on collaboration within PLCs, explains that trust is a significant factor for the community and leaders should take steps to build on this important capital (2008). Strong learning communities will only develop when mutual trust exists, not only amongst the teachers but also between the teachers and the principal (Hord & Hirsh, 2009). As the process of addressing disagreement and confronting conflict is atypical, Hord recommends giving teachers guided practice in conducting appropriate conversations, making decisions, and managing conflict in order to help strengthen trust and therefore keep the focus on building student and teacher learning (Hord & Hirsh, 2009).

Cranston confirms that the existence of relational trust appears to foster collaboration (2011). In his 2011 study of, 12 principals in Manitoba, Canada, Cranston reports five themes. First, trust develops as teachers engage in professional relationships. Second, in order to foster a

safe, comfortable climate for professional growth, group norms concerning risk-taking and change orientation must be established. Third, relational trust supports effective collaboration. Fourth, the principal is central to establishing the climate of trust. Fifth, trust of the principal by the faculty is paramount. PLCs will fall flat if the faculty do not have relational trust (Cranston, 2011).

Setting Up a Successful PLC-Conditions for Success

Hord (1997) outlines five attributes of a PLC of (a) *supportive and shared leadership*, (b) *collective creativity* or applying new ideas and information to problem solving, (c) *shared values and vision*, (d) *supportive conditions* of when, where and how staff come together, and (e) *sharing personal practice*. Hord also notes that there is little information in the literature and few models to guide the creation of PLCs (Hord, 1997). A little over a decade later, in 2008, Hord summarizes the five components of research based learning communities similarly with (a) *shared beliefs, values and vision*, (b) *shared and supportive leadership*, (c) *supportive conditions both structural and relational*, (d) *collective intentional learning and its application*, and (e) *shared personal practice*. The only updates since the 1997 version are minor, with the addition of *beliefs* to *shared values and vision* and the rewording of *collective creativity* as the less ambiguous *collective intentional learning and its application*. In 2009, Hord also describes the six conditions for success in a PLC as (a) community membership whether in a grade level team or subject area team, (b) leadership, (c) time for learning or times for team learning, (d) space for learning that can accommodate the entire team (rotate classrooms), (e) data use support (help sorting and organizing data) and (f) distributed leadership where the principal shares the power and authority as a "guide on the side" (Hord, 2009).

A major literature review, related to the author's previous research with the General Teaching Council of England, Department for Education and Skills (Bolam et al., 2005), suggests other factors may help or hinder the creation and development of an effective professional learning community, including an individual's orientation to change and group dynamics (Stoll et al., 2006). The authors also note research from outside the education field stating that the effectiveness of teams depends on unified commitment from members with loyalty to and identification with the team fostered through a balance between the respect of individual differences and the need for unity (Stoll et al., 2006). Balancing respect for individual differences with the need for unity within the team can promote collaboration within an intercultural PLC.

In a mixed method case study attempting to identify the relationship between PLC activities and teacher improvement in a first-year middle school, 15 of the 20 full-time core academic teachers completed an activity survey and 10 teachers were purposely selected for interviews concerning the PLC activities in which they had participated (Graham, 2007). The researcher found that PLC activities had the potential to achieve significant improvements in teacher effectiveness as described in a three-layer model (Graham, 2007).

1. Principals provided the organizational structures and ongoing leadership strategies that facilitated collaboration. The organizational structures included setting up teaching teams and scheduling common planning times for those teams. Ongoing leadership strategies consisted of encouraging teacher commitment, requiring teacher collaboration, and supporting teacher team development.

2. PLC meetings involved active learning whereas teachers developed lesson plans, reviewed student work, and scored assessments

3. A cylindrical process of conversation and conflict support the development of community which is turn supports changes in knowledge, skills and teaching practices

Graham reported that the process of creating an effective team and building a successful community of teachers that are able to work collaboratively, ultimately determines the impact that PLC activities involving negotiation and strong differences of opinion would have on teacher improvement (2007). Graham notes that while the PLC structure increases the likelihood that substantive, collaborative, and ongoing conversations among teachers about issues of teaching and learning would take place, by no means did PLC activities ensure that they would because before those conversations could take place, teachers needed to develop a sense of community (Graham, 2007).

In their mixed-method study investigating how 37 educators perceived the impact of implementing a PLC in an elementary school in the Southeastern United States, Lujan and Day, make four recommendations, two of which relate to time (2010). The researchers confirm the importance of having shared planning time with the additional recommendation of ensuring others outside the group respect the time as being for PLC activities and not as a time to talk with the team about other matters. The researchers also recommend that shared planning time should be devoted to student learning. Finally, the researchers recommend induction training for new staff to ease their transition into an existing and collaborative PLC.

Most recently, DuFour and Mattos organize existing research into five steps for creating an effective PLC (2013). Step one recommends to embrace the premise that the purpose of a school is to ensure all students learn at high levels. Step two, to organize meaningful collaborative teams with shared and mutually accountable goals. Step three, to establish

guaranteed and viable curriculum and assessments. Step four, to use the evidence of learning to support students who need help and that teachers help each other to develop strategies to provide that support. Step 5, to implement a timely, directive, precise, systematic, and coordinated intervention plan (DuFour & Mattos, 2013).

International and Intercultural Collaboration

International schools, for the purposes of this paper defined as schools where staff of different nationalities teach an international curriculum to students of different nationalities, interested in using the PLC model may have magnified or unusual challenges when compared to schools where the teachers come from the same culture. Many international schools follow the international curriculum framework from the International Baccalaureate (IB). As of June 2014, almost 4000 IB World Schools exist of which almost 1200 offer the Primary Years Programme (PYP) for students aged 3-12 (IB fast facts.2014). For schools following the PYP programme, a high level of collaboration among teachers to develop and reflect on a programme of inquiry is expected within an ethos of sharing ideas and strengths, and with the primary aim of improving teaching in order to improve student learning (International Baccalaureate, 2009).

At many international schools, teachers are commonly hired and recruited from different countries which means teachers bring different educational cultures to the teaching teams. In addition, some international schools using English as the main language of instruction hire teachers from the host culture. These local teachers may not be proficient English speakers, and may have very different cultural beliefs, education and training and yet are expected to work collaboratively on intercultural teams whose members come from around the world. This particular set of circumstances differs from those reported in previous research about PLCs.

What are the unique challenges to the implementation of PLCs that rely heavily on collaboration within this specific intercultural context?

Working on a small team brings intercultural staff close together, and as the teams collaborate the concept of team-teaching brings intercultural staff even closer, magnifying the challenges that might arise during collaboration. Goodlad (1987) outlines three essential characteristics of good partnerships, confirmed in later studies (Bennett, Ishler, & O'loughlin, 1992; George & Davis-Wiley, 2000). First, the researchers report that the feeling of mutual satisfaction of self-interest or of getting something from the partnership was an essential characteristic. Second, each partner needs to possess some selflessness with a willingness to compromise or make the mutual satisfaction of self-interest possible. Third, the researchers felt there should be dissimilarity between the partners so that the partners complement each other. However, Murata debates the third essential characteristic of having dissimilarity positing an opposing belief that the partners should have shared philosophies and compatible professional attitudes (Murata, 2002).

At many international schools, or schools where teachers come from different backgrounds, differences in educational philosophies can also cause conflict. Carless has conducted research in Hong Kong schools on team-teaching, looking at two teachers together in the same classroom actively involved in instruction. In 2000, a two-year pilot project began in Hong Kong involving 20 native English teachers (NETs), 20 local English teachers (LETs), working with school English teachers (SETs) in 40 schools, called the Primary School English Development (PSED), for the purpose of developing innovative teaching practices, positively influencing students, and providing professional development opportunities for all participating teachers (Carless, 2006a). A NET, LET, and a SET would team teach together and was evaluated

positively by participants (Carless, 2006a). Based on responses to an open-ended questionnaire from 47 LETs, email and face-to-face interviews with 12 NET and eight NET teachers, interviews with key personnel, and classroom observations of six team-taught lessons, Carless made the following recommendations. First, team-teaching participants should be trained and experienced in English language teaching methods as well as receive training and support for collaborative forms of teaching. Second, teachers need to have strong interpersonal skills, a willingness to compromise, and a positive attitude towards collaboration. Third, in anticipation of future problems, plans for ongoing improvement should be implemented (Carless, 2006a).

After the PSED pilot project, the program was adjusted and evolved into the Primary Native-Speaking English Teacher (PNET) program consisting of approximately 400 NETs servicing the approximately 800 primary schools in Hong Kong (Carless, 2006a). Carless conducted three case studies focusing on good practices between team teachers in the East Asia Region where one teacher was a native English speaking teacher (NEST) and the other was a non-native English-speaking teacher (non-NEST) (Carless, 2006b). He studied one case each from the Japan Exchange Programme (JET), English Program in Korea (EPIK) and one from the Primary Native English Teacher (PNET) program in Hong Kong. After interviews and observations, he summarized some of the common difficulties when grouping native English teachers with non-native English teachers in these situations. First, in the JET and EPIK programs, the NEST teachers usually lacked the training and experience for being an English language teacher. Second, the teaching partners had different backgrounds and native languages. Third, the NEST teachers were unfamiliar with the host local culture or language. Fourth, the amount of training was not always sufficient to support the team teaching arrangements. Fifth, the teachers had little or no flexibility in choosing their teaching partners. Sixth, the concept of

team teaching was not integrated effectively within the curriculum. Carless describes what he calls three *enabling features* for successful team-teaching, divided into the factors of pedagogic, logistical, and interpersonal aspects (Carless, 2006b). In terms of pedagogy, both teachers should have training and experience in approaches to team-teaching, including understanding the definition of the complementary roles. In terms of logistics, success depends on time being available for planning and preparation, with the support of administrators. Concerning interpersonal relations, partners need to be able to cooperate and have sensitivity toward the views of the other teacher, especially when differences emerge (Carless, 2006b).

Research continued related to collaboration between NETs and LETs in team teaching situations where the two teachers work together in the same classroom actively involved in instruction, acknowledging the importance of mutual satisfaction of self interest, a willingness to compromise, and a dissimilarity between partners so their skill sets are complementary (Carless & Walker, 2006). The research followed a case study format studying what the researchers called *outliers* as the researchers felt the research base needed more examples of effective collaboration between native English teachers (NETs) and local English teachers (LETs) in Hong Kong schools in the form of examples of successful practice. Two pairs of teaching teams, from two different schools, were studied using observations, interviews, and detailed field notes. When teachers from contrasting backgrounds work together, differences are inevitable (Carless & Walker, 2006). Carless further explains the impacts of these differences can be minimized when (a) both teachers are trained in English language teaching, (b) become more experienced or more capable to collaborate, (c) become more culturally or interpersonally sensitive, (d) have a more positive view towards collaboration and, (e) if the teaching arrangements are aligned with the school's goals or priorities (Carless & Walker, 2006). The researchers believe diversity is an

asset to a team and the diversity enables partners to showcase different talents and emphasize different elements of the teaching and learning process, but this diversity does need to be balanced by some form of empathy for the views of the partner, even when they are sharply contrasting (Carless & Walker, 2006). International schools, or other schools with teachers from different backgrounds, may have additional challenges to collaboration with different sources of conflict stemming from divergent educational philosophies. These differences occur between teachers from the same culture, but are even more likely to occur with teachers from different cultural backgrounds (Carless & Walker, 2006).

In a similar study, Herbert and Wu researched the problems confronting teaching teams in Taiwan (2009). Yilan County in Taiwan is host to the Fulbright Taiwan English Teaching Program placing American college graduates, who may or may not be teachers, together with a local teacher with the purpose of teaching English to students. The joint venture between the U.S. Fulbright Foundation and the Yilan County Bureau of Education, is a small program when compared to the other English programs in East Asia, as the Taiwanese program is confined to one county and has only brought approximately 100 native speakers to the program in the first eight years. The researchers attended the one-month orientation and fortnightly seminars to understand the program first hand and establish trust with the teachers before interviewing them (Herbert & Wu, 2009). The researchers interviewed twelve native speakers, several local teachers, the academic advisor, and other panel members to learn more about the program and the challenges faced. The researchers reported local teachers experienced difficulties due to the expatriate teachers' lack of proficiency in the host language, the wide disparity in educational cultures, the lack of time allocated for communication and joint planning, and personality clashes. The researchers found these difficulties could be minimized with the introduction of a

strong administrative system aiming to follow-up interactions between teachers, establish joint

teacher development and feedback sessions, encourage study of the local culture by expatriate

teachers, develop a network to help expatriate teachers, and elicit support from the wider

community.

When working within intercultural teams, conflicts arise repeatedly (Schneider &

Romberg, 2011). Having worked with intercultural companies in Europe, Asia, and the United

States, Schneider and Romberg's expertise is in helping intercultural teams comprised of

different cultural backgrounds with different expectations, perspectives, and behaviors to

collaborate. Their experiences supporting intercultural teams have led them to believe that when

working with another culture, we not only need to understand the constraints of communication

but need to understand the conditions in which people operate. For example, understanding why

someone was *late*, instead of ethnocentrically interpreting the arrival at a different time than is

expected as a sign of disrespect, will bring an understanding about priorities, perspectives, and

behaviors. The authors feel that most often when intercultural corporate teams have difficulty

collaborating, management's response is to provide cultural awareness training about cultural

backgrounds and general communication rules, but this response is not enough as the aim should

be to understand each other's expectations and reach an agreement about how to collaborate

(Schneider & Romberg, 2011). Based on the author's experiences with intercultural team

collaboration, the authors developed a three-phase approach program, titled

Collaboration.Excellence, for supporting the development of intercultural collaboration. During

Phase 1: Intercultural Awareness, awareness of the differences and inner logic of both cultures is

raised, for example understanding the different perceptions of what *teamwork* means (Schneider

& Romberg, 2011). By understanding the values, expectations, and perspectives which lead to

the different behaviors, and accepting that each culture has valid logic, the team can reach a new conclusion about what collaboration should look like within their multi-cultural team (Schneider & Romberg, 2011). During Phase 2: Shared Performance System, team members (a) reach an understanding of goals, feedback, consequences, resources available, and the role of management, (b) clarify the different views, and then (c) negotiate different solutions (Schneider & Romberg, 2011). During Phase 3: Intercultural Communication, members of a team commonly feel insecure interacting with each other (Schneider & Romberg, 2011). To resolve conflicts, training is used to teach communication skills in work situations, using scenarios that lead team members to feel more secure in their collaboration (Schneider & Romberg, 2011). The authors believe that communication is only part of the solution for the challenges intercultural teams face and that the team needs to define and agree upon what successful collaboration means for the team (Schneider & Romberg, 2011).

Collaboration is just as important on an intercultural PLC team and has additional challenges. "One of the key factors in successful collaboration is reconciling or accepting differing educational philosophies. These differences may well occur with a team of teachers from the same culture, but are even more likely to arise with teachers from different countries" (Carless & Walker, 2006)

Conclusion

As schools look for the best ways to maximize student learning, the use of PLCs increases in popularity. Though many definitions and variations exist, simply put, a PLC provides a way of organizing the educational staff to engage in purposeful, collegial learning with the purpose of improving staff effectiveness so all students learn successfully to high standards (Hord, 2008). The three big ideas of PLCs have been described as a shift to focusing

on learning instead of teaching, a culture of collaboration for analyzing and improving classroom practice, and judging the effectiveness of the team on the basis of results (DuFour, 2004). The eight key characteristics of an effective PLC have been described as:

1. shared values and mission

2. collective responsibility

3. reflective professional inquiry

4. collaboration

5. promotion of individual and group learning

6. mutual respect, trust and support

7. inclusive membership

8. openness, networks and partnerships (Bolam et al., 2005; Stoll et al., 2006)

The use of PLCs provides benefits for teachers, staff, and students. For teachers, PLCs reduce teacher isolation, increase commitment to the school's mission and goals, create a shared responsibility for the total development of students, create powerful learning that defines good teaching and classroom practice, and facilitate understanding of course content and roles (Hord, 1997). For students, the studies have shown that students benefit when their teachers work within PLCs, as indicated by improved achievement scores (Vescio et al., 2008). The greater the extent that schools have strong professional communities, the greater the extent of student learning (Bolam et al., 2005).

Collaboration is central to the effectiveness of a PLC. Everyone must belong to a team, teams must have time to meet during the workday, the work must focus on learning, teams need to develop agreements for the expectations of roles, responsibilities and relationships, and the team's goals need to align with school and district goals (DuFour, 2004). Collaborative cultures

are evolutionary relationships of openness, trust, and support among teachers within which they define and develop their own purposes of community (Hargreaves & Dawe, 1990).

Collaborative cultures are fostered when school leaders (a) bring new members into the PLC teams who welcome collaboration, (b) carefully delineate work assignments and timetabling, (c) establish collegial expectations with beginning teachers through induction and mentoring roles, (d) enable across school collaboration in departments or subject areas, (e) provide opportunities for leadership and collaboration, and (f) clearly delineate supervisory and collaborative relations (Riordan & da Costa, 1998). Once teachers collaborate, the process of talking about values, beliefs, perspectives, and expectations will lead to conflict. A level of conflict within a PLC is good as conflict creates the context for learning and thus the ongoing renewal of communities (Achinstein, 2002). Though conflict is traditionally avoided, principals can address conflict by providing an environment where teachers can resolve their dissension through discussion and debate, in essence, consistently addressing disagreements through providing opportunities for ongoing discussion and exploration (Hord, 1997). Relational trust appears to foster collaboration and if PLCs do not have trust, they will fall flat (Cranston, 2011).

To create an effective PLC focusing on student achievement, DuFour and Mattos recommend using five steps (2013). Step one, to embrace the premise that the purpose of a school is to ensure all students learn at high levels. Step two, to organize meaningful collaborative teams with shared and mutually accountable goals. Step three, to establish guaranteed and viable curriculum and assessments. Step four, to use the evidence of learning to support students who need help and that teachers help each other to develop strategies to provide that support. Step 5, to develop a coordinated intervention plan that is timely, directive, precise, and systematic (DuFour & Mattos, 2013)

Many international schools have staff from different cultures with different educational backgrounds, training, and levels of English, yet there is the same expectation of collaboration as within schools consisting of one culture. Collaboration within intercultural teams is just as important but the process brings intercultural staff closer, giving rise to different or magnified challenges. "One of the key factors in successful collaboration is reconciling or accepting differing educational philosophies. These differences may well occur with a team of teachers from the same culture, but are even more likely to arise with teachers from different countries" (Carless & Walker, 2006)

"Professional learning communities - in which collaboration and collegiality are supposed to play a key role - ought to be conceived of not so much as structural arrangements but rather as cultural and political environments in which those forms of collaboration and collegiality can take place that really contribute to pupils' learning, teacher development and quality of school improvement" (Kelchtermans, 2006, p. 234). When creating and sustaining PLCs with intercultural teams, are the current structures adequate, or do other factors, such as cultural or political ideologies, also influence the level of collaboration? What are the challenges to collaboration faced by intercultural teams? How can administrators support collaboration in intercultural teaching teams within professional learning communities?

The purpose of this chapter was to highlight what research literature tells us about PLCs, working collaboratively, conflict, and working within intercultural teams in order for us to make informed decisions at our schools for how to best support the development and sustainability of intercultural PLCs for the purpose of improving student learning. The unique situation of intercultural PLCs will be researched, focusing on collaborative practices. The next chapter

explains the methods for this research to include the context, participants, instruments, and

method for analyzing those data to answer the research questions.

Chapter 3 Methods

The Case Context

At this private, international school in Shanghai, China, grade level teams are arranged in professional learning communities (PLCs) comprised of teachers of different nationalities and who have different cultural backgrounds, educational and teaching experiences, and experiences speaking English. Collaboration between teachers is essential for an effective professional learning community. These international and intercultural PLCs are expected to collaborate in the same ways as teams do at schools where the staff are of predominantly one nationality or culture.

Research Questions

The purpose of this study is to address the following research questions.

1. What experiences do these teachers have collaborating in an intercultural professional learning community at this school?

2. What are the successes of collaboration in this context?

3. What are the challenges to collaboration in this context?

4. How do these teachers address the challenges to collaboration?

5. What factors support or hinder collaboration in this context?

Research Design

I used a qualitative collective case study research design consisting of purposely-selected participants in order to study the issue of collaboration in the context of an intercultural PLC comprised of teachers of different nationalities and having different cultural backgrounds, educational and teaching experiences, and English proficiency at a private, international school

in China. A review of the literature indicated that no studies have yet been undertaken to examine the unique context of intercultural PLCs with such diverse backgrounds.

The use of qualitative research is ideal when the goal is to understand the experiences of participants and the actions they are involved with or engage in, or to understand the particular context within which the participants act and the influence that this context has on their actions (Maxwell, 2012). Qualitative research should be used when an issue needs to be explored, when we need a *complex* (emphasis by author), detailed understanding of the issue, when we want to empower individuals to share their stories and hear their voices, and when we want to understand the context participants address the issue (Creswell, 2007). Multiple sources of qualitative data were used to answer the research questions by illuminating how teachers are collaborating, the successes achieved, the challenges teachers face when collaborating on an intercultural team, and what supports or hinders collaboration in this context. Using qualitative collection methods allows participants the freedom to formulate their own words (Patton, 2002), and these responses could reveal complexities in the research data by opening up emergent themes not initially considered (Lujan & Day, 2010).

The primary goal of a case study is to develop an adequate description (Creswell, 2007; Glatthorn & Joyner, 2005), interpretation, and explanation of the case (Maxwell, 2012) by gathering comprehensive, systematic, and in-depth information (Patton, 2002). Case studies may be layered or nested with a single program being a case study, however, within that single-program case, one may do studies of several participants (Patton, 2002). This collective case study collected data about and from four purposely-selected participants in order to show different perspectives (Creswell, 2007) and describe what it is like to collaborate on an international and intercultural PLC at this school.

This case study follows the process for constructing a case study as outlined by Patton (2002). Step 1: Assemble the raw case data consisting of all the information collected about the person, program, organization, or setting for the case. Step 2: Construct a case record by organizing, classifying, and editing the raw case data into a manageable and accessible file. Step 3: Write a final case study narrative that is a readable, descriptive picture or story about the people so the reader can understand the case in all of its uniqueness. This case study is being presented thematically with any context necessary for understanding the case in-depth (Patton, 2002).

The structure of this case study followed the general structure as outlined by Creswell (Creswell, 2007) who adapted the work of Stake (1995): (1) entry vignette, (2) introduction including the questions, data collection, analysis, and outcomes, (3) description of the cases in their context, (4) development of issues, (5) detail about selected issues, (6) assertions, and (7) closing vignette.

Research Site and Participants

The international school chosen for the research site consisted of three separate schools, the Early Years School, the Primary School, and the Secondary School located together on one campus. Research participants were chosen from the Early Years School (see Figure 1). Each class used a co-teacher model where a Chinese national and an expatriate teacher shared instructional responsibilities for the class. The nursery team had two classes, the pre-kindergarten team had three classes, and the kindergarten team had four classes. In the Early Years School, each grade level followed the model of an intercultural PLC. As five of the 18 homeroom teachers working in the Early Years School were new to the school that year, each team was

learning to collaborate in this new composition. As all homeroom teachers in the Early Years School are on intercultural PLC teams, each were invited to participate in the research.

Only teachers, and not assistants, were selected as their role in a PLC aligns more closely with PLC research. Assistants do work with students but do not have major input into decisions regarding curriculum, assessment, and how to support struggling students - areas that are specifically indicated in a PLC as requiring collaboration.

Figure 1-Early Years School Homeroom Teachers
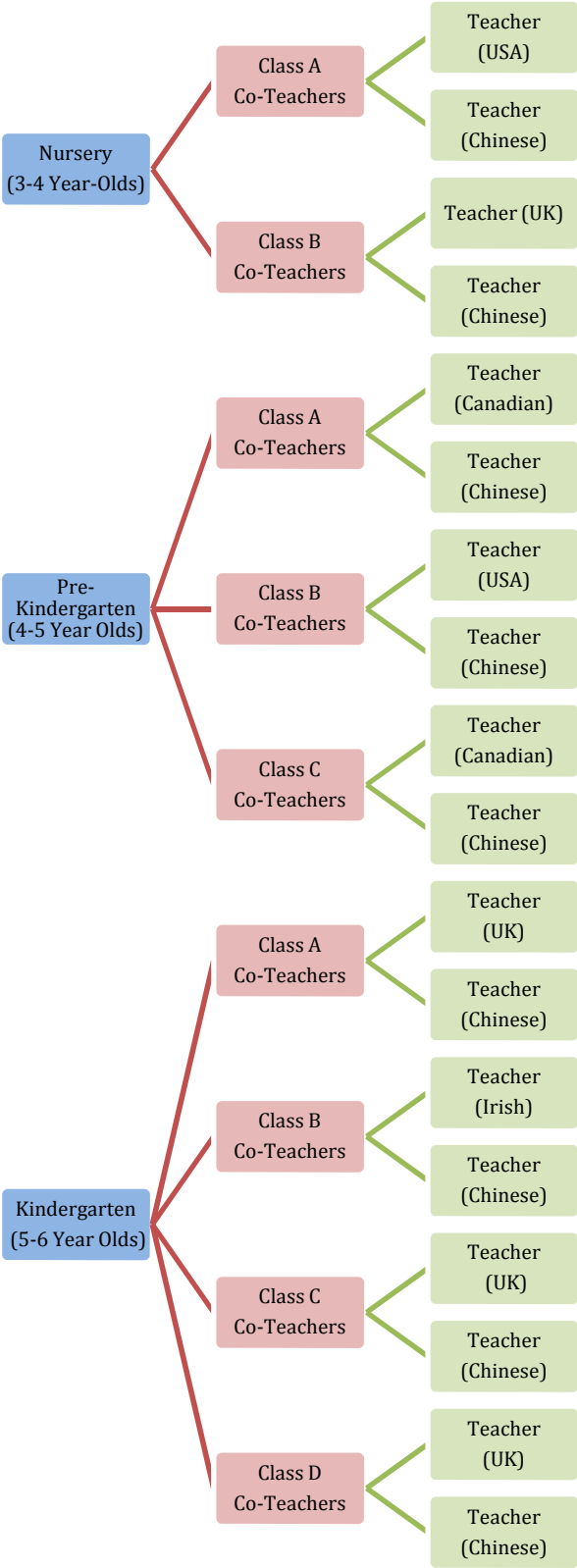
Methods of Data Collection

The study employed a six-step process for data collection (see Figure 2). A combination of documents, anonymous surveys, focus group interviews, pre-observation interviews, observations, and post-observation interviews were used (see Figure 3). Though collective case study research designs usually include multiple sources of information to include documents, interviews and observations (Creswell, 2007; Patton, 2002), the data collection methods of an anonymous survey and focus group interviews were included in this research design, as the topic of intercultural PLCs is new to the literature. When interviewing and observing the four case study participants, there might have been areas in which the four case study participants are either uncomfortable with sharing or unaware the existence of which are crucial for deeply understanding the context of the case and for describing collaboration on an intercultural PLC entails that an anonymous survey and focus group interviews might have been able to elude to the existence of. These two additional data collection methods provided an opportunity to further triangulate patterns in the data since collaboration within intercultural PLCs has little support in the literature for comparison, therefore providing a better opportunity for providing the most in-depth understanding and description of the context possible.

Prior to participating in the study, participants needed to give consent. To participate in the anonymous survey, participants were instructed that consent was provided by submitting the survey as described in the email requesting participation in the survey (see Appendix A). A reminder about the survey was sent a week later (see Appendix B). To participate in the focus group or as a case study participant, participants needed to read and agree to the Consent Form (see Appendix C). Emails requesting participation in the anonymous survey, and the Consent

Form for participation in the focus group interview or as a case study participant explained how confidentiality would be ensured.

Step 1-school documents.

To help understand details of the context, school documents related to PLCs, grade level teams and co-teaching teams were reviewed to analyze the present PLC structure. The documents included staff lists, schedules, Grade Level Meeting Minutes, and School Policy Documents. These documents provided information about teachers, dates of meetings, agenda items with meeting minutes, and written policies or agreements related to collaboration including the grade level's written Essential Agreements for their meetings.

Step 2-anonymous surveys.

The 18 homeroom teachers in the Early Years School were invited by email to complete an anonymous survey (see Appendix D). As approximately half of the possible participants invited to complete the anonymous survey speak Chinese as their first language, the survey was provided in both English and Chinese.

The anonymous survey was self-developed and consists of seven open-ended questions about intercultural teams and collaboration based on the research questions. The anonymous survey was piloted with teachers not in the Early Years School for general understanding and clarity in both English and Chinese. Adjustments were made based on the feedback.

Participants were asked to describe in their own words the benefits and disadvantages of intercultural teams, collaboration within their grade level, their experiences of collaborating, and how collaboration was supported or prevented. I acquired data from as many perspectives as possible regarding the complexities of collaboration in this context in order to establish general themes that formed the basis of the research in the next step.

The survey was administered using online survey software, Survey Monkey. By completing the survey online, from any location and at their convenience, those teachers wishing to complete the survey, but remain anonymous, were able to do so. Having the survey online made it convenient to transfer their digital responses to other software for organization and analysis.

Step 3-focus group interviews.

Volunteers from the original group of 18 homeroom teachers were invited by email (see Appendix E) to participate in focus group interviews to discuss themes and patterns that emerged from the survey questions. A reminder invitation was sent by email (see Appendix F) approximately a week later. Focus group interviews were used because participants had the opportunity to hear others' points of view making it easier for participants to have made comments beyond their original responses in response to what others say (Patton, 2002). This process may have been beneficial for soliciting more of a response from those using English as an additional language as unknown vocabulary was modeled by others. The meeting date and time was arranged through email (see Appendix G).

The same seven open-ended questions from the anonymous survey were used with additional probing questions. I read each question from the survey, followed by the analyzed results in the form of emerging themes and quotations of responses and asked the group to respond to the results, provide any possible insight, or elaborate on the responses. The focus group interviews were held in a room on campus away from the Early Years School in order to create a psychological and physical distance from the Early Years Principal and Deputy Principal demonstrating further efforts to keep participation and responses confidential. The focus group interview was audio recorded and then transcribed.

Step 4-pre-observation interviews.

For Steps 4-6, the data collection involved four teachers from the original group of 18 to each be a case study and then combined into a collective case study. Case study participants were invited by email (see Appendix E) and chosen according to several criteria. First, participants must have wanted to participate in the research as a case study participant. Second, it was preferred that a teacher participated along with their co-teacher. Since co-teaching teams share instructional responsibilities for the class, collaboration should be occurring throughout the day, every day. Collaboration outside of the PLC meetings is fundamental. By studying pairs of co-teachers, it was possible to include their perceptions of collaborative practices that occur outside of the PLC meetings. For example, co-teachers were both able to comment on their mutual collaborative planning, teaching, or assessment of a lesson. As each co-teaching pair is comprised of a Chinese national and an expatriate, this selection of participants further aligned with the research goal of describing intercultural PLCs and collaborative practices. The third criterion, was to select two co-teaching pairs from the same grade level team. Not only did this provide different perceptions within the same PLC meetings but also was more convenient as only the meetings from one grade level needed to be observed instead of all of the meetings for two grade levels.

After the selection of the four case study participants, I conducted pre-observation interviews with the four case study participants in order to have a more in depth study of each case in hopes the participants would open up more to discussing the successes and challenges faced in regards to collaborating in their intercultural PLC team. Interview times were arranged through email (see Appendix H). Interviews were used for three reasons: to allow me to learn about collaborative experiences which could not be observed; to allow the participants to share

their perspective; and to allow for expanded answers through probing or changing the line of questioning (Lujan & Day, 2010).

Using interviews had an advantage over focus group interviews. In focus group interviews, if a participant realized their viewpoint is in the minority, or if the discussion related to controversial or personal issues, the participant may not be inclined to speak up (Patton, 2002). By talking directly with me in an individual interview, some participants may have opened up more, providing additional data. The interviews took place away from the Early Years School building for the same reasons mentioned with regards to the focus group interviews. Data discovered in the interviews guided me in what to focus on in my observation of the grade level and co-teacher planning meetings.

During the 60 minute pre-observation interviews, I asked each case study participant questions using the Interview Protocol (see Appendix I). The Interview Protocol was self developed and was divided into two sections. The first section collected demographic and background information. The second section was based on the five points on collaboration DuFour mentions, to include (a) membership and participation, (b) time to meet, (c) focusing efforts on learning and generating products, (d) developed norms, and (e) student achievement goals (DuFour, 2004). Questions about respect and trust were also included within the second section, as research has shown the importance of these two conditions for collaboration. Lastly, there were open-ended questions specifically related to working specifically on intercultural teams as this related to the context of the case studies and the five points of collaboration. The interview protocol was piloted for general understanding and clarity. Adjustments were made based on the feedback.

The interviews were held in a room on campus away from the Early Years School in order to create a psychological and physical distance from the Early Years Administration Team, demonstrating efforts to keep participation and responses confidential. The interviews were audio recorded and then transcribed.

Step 5-observations.

Observations of the four case study participants were conducted during both grade level meetings and co-teacher planning meetings each week over a six-week period to provide data which described the collaborative practices of the PLC team as aligned with the five points about collaboration (DuFour, 2004), and also revealed additional emerging themes. The 90 minutes long, weekly grade level meetings, which include all classroom teachers on the team as well as the PYP Coordinator, were observed as that was when the most significant work of PLCs takes place. The grade level team discussed the curriculum, teaching, and assessment in a systemic process in which teachers collaborated to analyze and improve classroom practice (DuFour, 2004). In addition, observations were conducted during the weekly co-teacher meetings, which were approximately 60 minutes long. During these meetings, the smaller intercultural co-teaching teams planned. These observations provided more opportunities to see collaborative practices between the pair in a more personal setting.

During the observations of both grade level meetings and co-teacher meetings, detailed field notes were taken using the Observation Form (see Appendix J) to record not only the conversations but also to record the context and any non-verbal communication as well. The Observation Form was organized with three sections. The first section provided reminders of the five points about collaboration (DuFour, 2004). The second section included a list of emergent themes from the analysis of the anonymous survey, focus group interviews, and pre-observation

interviews. The third section simply provided an opportunity to document any other further points about collaborative practices. In addition, the detailed field notes included my thoughts of important points about the nature of collaboration and my reflections. Though the participants knew of me as I worked in the adjacent Primary School, I explained again my presence as an impartial researcher and commitment to confidentiality.

A total of six grade level meetings and 12 classroom teacher meetings were observed over a six-week period.

Whilst co-teacher meetings involved just two participants, grade level meetings had seven participants. Observing teachers during both kinds of meetings provided an opportunity to learn about any differences in the forms or amount of collaboration which might have been due to the size of the group. As well as observation, interviewees were asked about both types of meetings in order to understand more about the nature of collaboration within an intercultural PLC.

Step 6-post-observation interviews.

After observing six weeks of grade level meetings and co-teacher planning meetings, I interviewed each case study participant again in hopes of gaining further insight into each case by following up on the themes that I identified. Request for an interview time was made through email (see Appendix K). Thus, I was able to include probing and clarifying questions related to my observations in order to provide more insight about their collaborative relationships and practices (see Appendix L).

In addition, I interviewed with the Early Years Principal, for the purposes of discovering more information about the context of the Early Years School's intercultural PLCs. Request for an interview was made through email (see Appendix M). The purpose of waiting until Step 6 to

interview the principal is to allow for the collected data to be analyzed. The interview used some

demographic questions, open-ended questions from the anonymous survey, and questions

concerning the themes that emerged in previous steps (see Appendix N).

Each interview lasted between 30-60 minutes. I asked probing and clarifying questions

based on themes that emerged from the observations. The post-observation interviews were held

in the same room as the pre-observation interviews, away from the Early Years School, for

reasons of confidentiality. The interviews were audio recorded and then transcribed for later

analysis.

Figure 2-Six Step Timeline

Step 1 Documents

Purpose: provide context

Step 2 Anonymous Survey

Participants: All 18 Teachers

Purpose: establish general themes

Step 3 Focus Group Interviews

Participants: 4-8 Teachers

Purpose: provide deeper understanding of the themes emerging from the
anonymous survey

Step 4 Pre-Interviews

Participants: The 4 Case Study Participants

Purpose: provide demographic and background data, provide data for
describing existing elements of PLC collaboration, and discover new
emergent themes

Step 5 Observations (6 Weeks)

Participants: The 4 Case Study Participants

Purpose: support essential elements of a PLC as reported from pre-
interviews, provide data to support themes related to collaboration which
emerge from pre-interviews, discover new emergent themes

Step 6 Post-Interviews

Participants: The 4 Case Study Participants

Purpose: follow up on themes that emerge from observations

Figure 3-Data Collection Methods

Data Collection Methods and Their Purpose

Data Collection Method	Participants	Purpose	Framework	Data Analysis
Anonymous Survey	all 18 of the Early Years School homeroom teachers	• establish general themes of collaboration within intercultural PLCs	Intercultural PLC Collaboration Survey (consisting of 7 open-ended questions)	• analyze by themes
Focus Group Interviews	4-8 of the Early Years School homeroom teachers	• provide deeper understanding of the themes emerging from the anonymous survey	Intercultural PLC Collaboration Survey (with additional probing questions)	• analyze by themes
Pre-Observation Interviews	the 4 case study participants	• provide demographic and background data • describe existing elements of PLC collaboration • discover new emergent themes	Interview Protocol (consisting of demographic, 5 points of PLC collaboration, and probing of emerging themes questions)	• comparison with 5 points on PLC collaboration • analyze by themes
Observations	the 4 case study participants	• support essential elements of a PLC as reported from pre-observation interviews • support themes related to collaboration which emerge from pre-observation interviews • discover new emergent themes	Observation Form (organized by 5 points of PLC collaboration and emerging themes from pre-observation interviews)	• comparison with 5 points on PLC collaboration and themes from pre-observation interviews • analyze by themes
Post-Observation Interviews	the 4 case study participants	• follow up on themes that emerge from observations	probing and clarification questions based on themes from observations	• analyze by themes

Data Analysis

The analysis for a case study consisted of making a detailed description of the case and its setting (Creswell, 2007). As the setting in this case was particularly important due to its uniqueness when compared to other studies in the literature, I followed the advice of Creswell (2007) by analyzing the information to determine how this case fits into the setting by also collecting data through anonymous surveys and focus group interviews from teachers who work with the case study participants.

Though each set of data was analyzed slightly differently, generally data was analyzed by reading, re-reading while highlighting key words or phrases, and then categorizing into themes or comparing to literature. The goal for analyzing a case study is not for generalizing beyond the case, but for understanding the complexity of the case (Creswell, 2007).

Numerous methods were used to strengthen the credibility of the data collection, analysis, and interpretation. These methods include acknowledging researcher identity, triangulation of data collection, use of alternative explanations and negative case analysis, use of external analysts, and member checking.

Documents.

School documents related to the PLC structure were researched to include staff lists, schedules, Grade Level Meeting Minutes, and School Policy Documents. These documents provided information about teachers, dates of meetings, agenda items with meeting minutes, and written policies or agreements related to collaboration including the grade level's written Essential Agreements for their meetings.

Analysis procedure for documents.

Documents were analyzed for information about the context of being in an intercultural

PLC and were used for writing the narrative which describes each case and the context.

Anonymous survey.

The survey consisted of ten open-ended questions, based on the research questions, about

intercultural teams and collaboration: (1) What are the benefits to being on an intercultural team?

(2) What are the disadvantages to being on an intercultural team? (3) How would you describe

the collaboration within your grade level team? (4) What are some of the positive experiences

you have had collaborating? (5) What are some of the negative experiences you have had trying

to collaborate? (6) How do you feel collaboration in your team is supported? (7) What are the

challenges you face when trying to collaborate? The survey provided data to help establish

themes about the benefits and disadvantages to being on an intercultural team, to document

positive and negative collaborative experiences, and to provide examples of how collaboration is

supported or hindered.

Analysis procedure for anonymous survey.

Data from the survey was analyzed for themes for each question separately. First, I read

all of the responses to a question for a general overview of the responses. Second, I read all of

the responses again, this time identifying and highlighting key words or phrases and then coded

the data to summarize meaning. Third, similar codes were grouped together as emerging themes.

Fourth, I read all responses again confirming that all key words or phrases are coded into one of

the emerging themes or adjust the themes as necessary. The process continued for each question

and the results of this analysis were used to guide the focus group interviews. A summary of the

analysis results were created and will be shared in Chapter 4.

Focus group interviews.

Each of the ten open-ended questions from the survey read aloud, followed by the analyzed results in the form of emerging themes and quotations of responses. The group was asked to respond to the results, provide any possible insight, or elaborate on the responses.

Analysis procedure for focus group interviews.

Data from the focus group interviews was analyzed similarly to the procedures for analyzing the Anonymous Survey. First, I read all of the transcribed responses to a question for a general overview of the responses. Second, I read all of the responses again, this time identifying and highlighting key words or phrases and then coded the data to summarize meaning. Third, similar codes were grouped together as emerging themes. Fourth, I read all responses again confirming that all key words or phrases were coded into one of the emerging themes or adjusted the themes as necessary. Fifth, similar codes between the survey analysis and the focus group interviews analysis were grouped together. Themes appearing after the Focus Group Interviews, which were not included in the Anonymous Survey analysis, were coded and noted. The process continued for each question. A summary of the analysis results will be created and shared in Chapter 4.

Pre-observation interviews.

Each of the four case study participants were asked questions using the Interview Protocol (see Appendix I). The Interview Protocol is divided into two sections. The first section collects demographic and background information. The second section is based on the five points on collaboration DuFour mentions, to include (a) membership and participation, (b) time to meet, (c) focusing efforts on learning and generating products, (d) developed norms, and (e) student achievement goals (DuFour, 2004). Questions about respect and trust have also been included

within the second section, as research has shown the importance of these two conditions for collaboration. Lastly, there are open-ended questions specifically related to working specifically on intercultural teams as this relates to the context of the case studies and the five points of collaboration.

Analysis procedure for pre-observation interviews.

Pre-observation interview data from the four case study participants was analyzed using Creswell's template for coding a collective case study (2007). Data from the pre-observation interviews stemming from the first section of the Interview Protocol consisting of demographic and background data used for writing the narrative which describes each case and the context. Data from the second section was analyzed for alignment with the five points on collaboration (DuFour, 2004) and was used for describing collaboration within the intercultural PLC from the participant's perspective.

First, I sorted the data by context and description. This was easily accomplished by sorting all transcript data by question number and then further sorting data by case study participant number. The sorted data will enable me to describe each case and its context separately while also providing a way to easily compare data from each case.

Second, I read the context and descriptions of each case by question number. After reading each piece of data, I identified and highlighted key words or phrases and then coded the data to summarize the meaning. After coding all data for the first case, I continued with the subsequent cases for the same question using the same codes, when appropriate, for summarizing the meaning or creating new codes as new data emerged. After summarizing all data into codes, I grouped similar codes together within each case separately. This stage of the analysis enabled me to describe patterns or themes within each case.

Third, I conducted a cross-case analysis looking for similarities and differences between the themes in each case. Having already coded the themes from each case, I then grouped similar codes between cases together. Differences between codes were also analyzed. Negative case analysis was used during the analysis to look for examples that did not fit trends or contradict findings and then conclusions were adjusted until outliers as well as exceptions fit (Creswell, 2007). The cross-case analysis for each question were facilitated through the use of a grid where each code appeared on one axis and each case study participant number appeared on the other axis. After tallying what codes were related to each participant within the grid, a visual representation summarized which codes were present with each participant as well as how often codes were represented across all participants. Using data from the cross-case analysis grid allowed for themes to be ordered based on the number of case study participants who provided data related to each theme.

A summary of the analysis results up to this point was created and will be shared in Chapter 4. The analysis results were grouped into the five categories of (1) advantages to being on an intercultural team, (2) disadvantages to being on an intercultural team, (3) defining collaboration, (4) supporting collaboration, and (5) challenges to collaboration. Data from the pre-observation interviews and previous data collection methods were used to guide me in what to focus on in my observations of the grade level and co-teacher planning meetings.

Observations.

During the observations of both grade level meetings and co-teacher meetings, detailed field notes were taken using the Observation Form (see Appendix J) to record not only the conversations but also to record the context and any non-verbal communication as well. The Observation Form was organized with three sections. The first section provided reminders of the

five points about collaboration (DuFour, 2004). The second section included a list of emergent themes from the analysis of the anonymous survey, focus group interviews, and pre-observation interviews. The third section simply provided an opportunity to document any other further points about collaborative practices. In addition, the detailed field notes included my summary of important points about the nature of collaboration and my reflections.

Analysis procedure for observations.

The observational data from the grade level planning meetings and co-teacher planning meetings was analyzed for alignment with codes from previous data collection methods as well as alignment with DuFour's five points on collaboration (DuFour, 2004).

First, data from the observation notes was read for a general overview of the data. Second, I read each observation note separately and aligned it the relevant code or codes by writing the code(s) next to each observation note. At the same time, I marked each code on the code summary sheet using color-coded tallies to document the source for each occurrence of alignment. For example, observation notes which appeared during a grade level meeting were marked with black tallies on the code summary sheet, observation notes which appeared during the first pair's co-teacher meetings were marked with red tallies, and blue tallies for the other pair of co-teacher meetings. Third, I read over all codes and all responses again to confirm all data had been coded or if additional codes and further review were needed. A summary of the results will be included in Chapter 4.

Post-observation interviews.

Case study participants were interviewed after the observations to gain further insight into each case by following up on the themes that were identified previously. Interviews included

probing and clarifying questions related to my observations in order to provide more insight about their collaborative relationships and practices.

Analysis procedure for post-observation interviews.

Data from the post-observation interviews were analyzed depending on each section of the Post Observation Interview Protocol. Data from the first section consisting of demographic and background data was used for writing the narrative which describes each case and the context. The remaining sections were developed after the observations and asked case study participants to respond to themes from previous collection methods, provide additional information about the context I felt may have been underrepresented in the data, and reflections on their experiences as a case study participant.

First, I sorted the data by context and description. This was easily accomplished by sorting all transcript data by question number and then further sorting data by case study participant number. The sorted data enabled me to describe each case and its context separately while also providing a way to easily compare data from each case.

Second, I read the context and descriptions of each case by question number. After reading each piece of data, I identified and highlighted key words or phrases and then coded the data to summarize the meaning. After coding all data for the first case, I continued with the subsequent cases for the same question using the same codes, when appropriate, for summarizing the meaning or creating new codes as new data emerged. After summarizing all data into codes, I grouped similar codes together within each case separately. This stage of the analysis enabled me to describe patterns or themes within each case.

Third, I conducted a cross-case analysis looking for similarities and differences between the themes in each case. Having already coded the themes from each case, I grouped similar

codes together. Differences between codes were analyzed. Negative case analysis was also used during the analysis to look for examples that did not fit trends or contradicted findings and then conclusions were adjusted until outliers as well as exceptions fit (Creswell, 2007). The cross-case analysis was facilitated through the use of a grid where each code appeared on one axis and each case study participant number appeared on the other axis. After tallying what codes were related to each participant within the grid, a visual representation summarized which codes were present with each participant as well as how often codes were represented across all participants. Using data from the cross-case analysis grid allowed for themes to be ordered based on the number of case study participants who provided data related to each theme.

Fourth, along with the detailed description of each case, themes across all four cases were reported with the inclusion of replies from previous data collection methods. Any alignment with previous and similar research were noted as well as noting any emergent themes not found in other similar research. A summary of the analysis results up to this point was created, grouped by research question, and will be shared in Chapter 4.

Analysis closing.

Along with the detailed description of each case, themes across all four cases will be reported in Chapter 4 with the inclusion of replies from surveys, quotations from the focus group interviews and individual interviews, as well as inclusion of data from observations and documentation. Any alignment with previous and similar research will be noted as well as noting any emergent themes not found in other similar research.

Credibility

Recommendations of using numerous methods to strengthen the credibility of the data collection, analysis, and interpretation were followed (Creswell, 2007; Patton, 2002; Patton,

2014). First, my position as a supervisor at the research site and experience with the subject is identified and acknowledged. Second, multiple sources of data were used for triangulation of qualitative sources. Third, during the analysis, I searched for alternative themes, divergent patterns, and rival explanations as well as use negative case analysis (Patton, 2002). Fourth, additional analysts reviewed the themes and conclusions I have made from the data therefore triangulating analysts. Finally, the research participants were asked to respond to the descriptions, explanations, and conclusions made in the rough draft of the dissertation for any necessary revisions to help ensure I did not make assumptions about participant's thinking (Patton, 2002).

Researcher identity.

I am American who does not speak Chinese or have any cultural ties to China. I have worked in America, Japan, and China and have travelled to 15 countries. My wife is Japanese.

The school being used for the research site consisted of separate Early Years, Primary, and Secondary Schools located on the same campus. The Early Years School Principal gave me permission to work with teachers from the Early Years School for this study.

Though I worked across campus as the Primary School Principal since 2012, the participants from the Early Years School knew of me professionally, though I was not their supervisor. The study was introduced to Early Years staff through regular school communications, the weekly emailed newsletter *Early Years Edition* from the Early Years Principal, the same way other research opportunities have been announced to staff in the past. As I was also a principal at the research site, all communications regarding participation in the study stressed that participation was voluntary. For all data collection methods, volunteers were sought through emails from my personal email account and not my school account. By using email,

teachers were able to decline the invitation by simply ignoring the email as opposed to the awkwardness of trying to decline if approached individually or at a staff meeting. Participation in the survey was anonymous so I do not know who participated in the survey or who provided which answers. Participation in the focus group or as a case study participant was also voluntary and simply ignoring the email invitation could decline participation in any of the data collection methods. The participant pool consisted of 18 Early Years teachers. Though as many teachers participating in the anonymous online survey as possible would have been ideal, the purpose of the survey was only to establish general themes of collaboration within intercultural PLCs at the beginning of the study. The focus group required a minimum of four participants with nine teachers participating. The case study required a minimum of two participants and a maximum of four participants with four teachers participating.

As both the Early Years and Primary School used the PYP curriculum and an intercultural co-teacher model, training for teachers from both schools was sometimes combined. Much of my research during the doctoral program focused on supporting the intercultural co-teacher model. I provided the initial co-teacher training, lasting for approximately two hours, during orientation week at the beginning of each school year for both the Early Years and Primary Schools. My views on the benefits of strong, collaborative partnerships based on respect were likely known within the school community.

In 2012, I conducted an informal research study about the intercultural co-teaching situation within the Early Years and Primary Schools using an anonymous questionnaire and shared the results with the teachers, as well as the resultant action plan outlining how more support would be provided for improving the model.

The purpose of this study was to describe collaboration in the context of an intercultural PLC comprised of teachers of different nationalities and having different cultural backgrounds, educational and teaching experiences, and English proficiencies at this site. I was aware that my position at the school and presence as an educational researcher could have caused reactivity by affecting what was expressed and what I observed. A completely outside educational researcher may also have experienced reactivity in this context. I was aware that some teachers could have felt uncomfortable that I was a principal at the research site but I was also aware that some teachers may have felt more comfortable sharing with me as they know me or know of me. In order to successfully describe what was it like for the teachers, I needed to put myself in their shoes and tried to understand how they think, act, and feel without becoming too involved which could have clouded my judgment, while at the same time I was careful not to be too distant which could have reduced my understanding (Patton, 2014). In Patton 2014, empathic neutrality is described:

> "While empathy describes a stance toward the people we encounter in fieldwork, calling on us to communicate interest, caring, and understanding, neutrality suggests a stance toward their thoughts, emotions, and behaviors, a stance of being nonjudgmental. Neutrality can actually facilitate rapport and help build a relationship that supports empathy by disciplining the researcher to be open to the other person and nonjudgmental in that openness." (pg. 726)

My challenge was to maintain empathic neutrality while minimizing reactivity. Patton recommends keeping field notes which note how my presence may have or actually appear to affect things, describing the effects and their implications to my findings or ask key informants

how my presence affected the setting observed and the people interviewed (Patton, 2014). Most importantly, I needed to be sensitive and respectful to other people's culture, views, and beliefs.

Even though all of the Early Years School teachers need to be proficient in English to be employed, approximately half of the teachers were from China so English was not their first language, which could limit their participation, communication, and expression. To compensate for this, the anonymous survey was also available in Chinese with the ability to complete the survey in Chinese. When participants wrote responses in Chinese, they usually wrote the same comment in English as well. To ensure accuracy of the participant provided translations, an outside translator reviewed the provided translations. The translator also provided additional minor translations as needed. The services of a Chinese interpreter was offered during the focus group and individual interviews but was declined by participants.

The interactions of an interview are already complex, but with cross-cultural interviews, the possibility of misunderstanding are increased significantly because of false assumptions about shared meanings (Patton, 2014). Long-term relationships and in-depth participant interviews can reduce likeliness for misunderstanding when compared to short-term studies or brief visits (Patton, 2014). Even though my purpose for this study was as an educational researcher, I recognized that I may not have been seen that way as I was a principal at the research site which could affect what I observed and what was communicated to me. As both the participants and I worked at the same research site with similar environments, we usually knew something about each other and therefore the possibilities of misunderstandings may have been reduced. However, the possibility of misunderstanding because of false assumptions about shared meanings, especially due to cross-cultural differences, was still there.

Though the focus group and individual interviews had a Chinese interpreter available, Patton points out that interpreters may want to be helpful by summarizing and explaining responses which contaminates the interviewee's actual response with the interpreter's explanation which could be to a point where it is no longer clear whose perceptions are expressed (2014). To compensate for this, I could have explained to the interpreter that I did not want him or her to summarize or explain the responses but to try and interpret as closely as possibly therefore decreasing the chances of altering the perception. Another challenge Patton mentions is that some words or phrases cannot be translated (2014). As all of the participants have been working in the school for at least 6 months, their time in the environment could have reduced the chances of them not understanding words or concepts mentioned during any of the interviews but the possibility of misunderstanding because some words or concepts could not have been translated still existed.

Banks' *typology of crosscultural researchers* offers guidance on defining my position as a researcher interviewing early years teachers of different nationalities, ethnicities, backgrounds, training, and experiences (1998). Banks describes four categories within which research participants may locate the researcher based on whether the researcher was socialized in that culture and accepts the beliefs, perspectives, values, behaviors, attitudes, and knowledge of that group. If I were perceived as being socialized in the same culture group, and accepting the same culture, I would be considered an *indigenous-insider*. If I were perceived as being socialized in the same culture group, but accepting an outside culture, I would be considered an *indigenous-outsider*. If I were perceived as being socialized in a different culture group, but accepting the same culture as the research participant, I would be considered an *external-insider*. If I were perceived as being socialized in a different culture group, and accepting the outside culture, I

would be an *external-outsider*. Tillman uses Banks' typology for reflecting on the question, 'Who am I as the researcher?' (2006).

Banks' *typology of crosscultural researchers* can be applied to other status groups to include gender, social class, religion, or even occupation (1998). In this research study, in addition to nationality, perhaps we could expand the culture groups to include gender, early years teacher or primary teacher, teacher or administrator, employee or researcher. In the case of this research, I could have been perceived as being a part of the group and accepting the culture, being a part of the group but accepting another culture, being outside the group but understanding the culture, or even being outside the group and not understanding the culture.

Beachum, McCray, and Huang describe how a shared cultural background as African Americans conducting research in urban schools helped them gain access, encouraged openness in interviews with other African Americans, and helped with interpreting data. However, there were educators at the schools who questioned their intentions and wondered what kind of picture they would paint of their school and its students (2010). Concerning my research, I believe I may have been considered as indigenous or external, insider or outsider. Whilst one research participant may have perceived me as sharing their own American culture, others may have doubted my ability to understand their own particular nationality or culture. All research participants will have seen me as a male but did they perceive that I could relate to them as a female? I have no early years teaching experience; but was I perceived as being able to relate to the experience of an early years teacher? Though I was a principal, I was not their principal. Would I have been perceived as a principal or as a fellow educator? Was I an outside researcher or a colleague who was conducting research? How I was perceived would have affected their forthrightness and therefore my ability to access and witness the actual case context. In some

ways, the varied perceptions of my position may have benefitted the research, but in other ways, those perceptions could have been a disadvantage to the research by not 'letting me in' to observe what was really happening.

Triangulation of qualitative sources.

A combination of documents, anonymous surveys, focus group interviews, observations, and individual interviews were used for data collection. The use of multiple sources of data collection allowed for the triangulation of findings regarding participants' perceptions and experiences collaborating on an intercultural PLC. For example, the observations provided data that aligned with the data from the focus group interviews and pre-observation interviews, confirming emerging themes.

Assessing rival conclusions and negative case analysis.

When conducting the analysis, negative cases were also considered because sometimes the data may not align. "Where patterns and trends have been identified, our understanding of those patterns and trends is increased by considering the instances and cases that do not fit within the patterns" (Patton, 2002, pg. 554). By looking for data that did not fit the emerging themes or which provided alternative explanations or conclusions, I had an opportunity to learn why something did not fit and perhaps gained a deeper understanding about the complexities of intercultural collaboration.

Triangulation with multiple analysts.

A second and third analyst reviewed the themes I identified and the conclusions I made in order to identify possible researcher bias. Each analyst was provided with a copy of all data, in chronological order, which included my highlighting, coding, notes, and summaries. One

analyst was Chinese and the other analyst was American generally matching the predominant cultures in the study. Having additional analysts from different culture groups review the themes and conclusions provided unique perspectives while providing an opportunity to assess the trustworthiness of the findings and possibly suggest alternatives that needed to be considered. Questions about participant selection and methods were asked which I then clarified. Minor typos on the summaries were corrected. The use of the terms respondents and responses was questioned so more description was included in the next draft of the dissertation. The most significant feedback was in regards to my need for sensitivity and objectiveness to the different perceptions about a teacher's motivation because she was usually quiet during the meetings, which I reflected on and revised in the next draft of the dissertation. Both participants agreed with my analysis process and the concluding major themes.

Review by inquiry participants.

The draft analysis was shared with the four case-study participants. Sharing the analysis with the participants enabled me to learn about the accuracy, completeness, fairness, and perceived credibility of the analysis by asking the participants to respond to what I have described and concluded (Patton, 2002; Patton, 2014). Feedback included the need to correctly list a school's name with a preceding "a" instead of a "the" and additional information regarding the curriculum a school used. One respondent mentioned, "It is quite interesting to read about us. I find particularly interesting that many people noted that collaboration would hear laughing but in actual fact little laughter is noted."

Summary

PLCs are a way of organizing the educational staff to engage in purposeful, collegial

learning for the purpose of improving staff effectiveness so all students can learn successfully to

high standards (Hord, 2008). The effectiveness of PLCs depends on teachers' ability to

collaborate. This chapter has explained the methods that will be used for researching the

challenges that intercultural teaching teams face when collaborating within PLCs.

Chapter 4

The effectiveness of PLCs depends on the ability of educators to collaborate. If educators are able to collaborate, the process of reflecting on teaching and learning in order to determine what is best for the students will lead to discussions about values, beliefs, assumptions, expectations, perspectives, and behaviors. At many international schools, teachers are recruited from various countries creating what I call an *intercultural PLC* comprised of teachers of different nationalities and having different cultural backgrounds, educational and teaching experiences, and English proficiency. This chapter presents the results of the intercultural PLC research and is organized by data collection method to include (1) anonymous survey, (2) focus group interview, (3) pre-observation interviews, (4) observations of grade level meetings, (5) observations of co-teacher meetings, (6) post-observation interviews, and (7) the interview with the Early Years Principal.

Anonymous Survey

The 18 homeroom teachers in the Early Years School were invited by email to complete an online anonymous survey (see Appendix D). The anonymous survey consisted of 10 open-ended questions asking participants to describe in their own words the benefits and disadvantages of intercultural teams, how they would define collaboration, collaboration within their grade level, their experiences of collaborating, how collaboration is supported or prevented, and if collaboration is important to them. By acquiring data from as many perspectives as possible regarding the complexities of collaboration in this context, general themes were established that formed the basis of the research. Nine teachers completed the survey. 'Responses' refers to the number of different points provided which relate to the theme and not the number of respondents. Analysis of the anonymous survey is presented by question.

Question 1-What are the benefits to being on an intercultural team?

Table 1

Benefits to Being on an Intercultural Team

Thematic Category	Responses
Q1-What are the benefits to being on an intercultural team?	
Learn about other cultures, perspectives, and opinions	7
Learn about other teaching styles, methods, and philosophies	3
Relationships: communication and respect	3

When asked about the benefits of being on an intercultural team, the majority of responses related to learning about other cultures (see Table 1). One respondent wrote:

> It allows for learning curves to be thrown a "curveball." You think you have ideas about the way something should/would go, but someone from another culture (especially if they are VERY estranged, for instance chinese/american OR inuit/italian) may have a completely different opinion.

Other respondents wrote, "A good opportunity to learn from each other, share different opinions and respect people from different countries," and, "it can be really helpful when my partner explains perspectives of the Chinese culture in relation to students and parents that are Chinese."

Several responses mentioned learning different teaching styles and methods as a benefit.

Question 2-What are the disadvantages to being on an intercultural team?

Table 2

Disadvantages to Being on an Intercultural Team

Thematic Category	Responses
Q2-What are the disadvantages to being on an intercultural team?	
Communication: English, misunderstandings, not sharing	7
Understanding different cultural backgrounds and personalities	5
Different ideas and expectations	4
Time	4

The most common disadvantage to being on an intercultural team seems to be with communication (see Table 2). A respondent wrote, "There can be a challenge to communicate certain ideas to the extent that there is a clear and common understanding." Some respondents tried to explain with, "…there will be more opportunities to misunderstand each other…" and, "Language barriers can be difficult if they are there." Another respondent tried to explain why someone may not communicate as much in the group, "often some ideas are not shared by a member, they may not have ideas or don't want to be put on the spot to think of different ways to share ideas, they don't want to be embarrassed or lose face in front of a colleague."

Understanding different cultural backgrounds and personalities also appears to be a challenge:

> Cross-cultural team members need to spend more time getting to know each others' ideas, cultural backgrounds and personalities, spending more time to clarify their views, to convince others, there will be more opportunities misunderstand each other, but can not get a consensus, then leads to inefficient, low-yielding team work.

Question 3-How would you define collaboration?

Table 3

Defining Collaboration

Thematic Category	Responses
Q3-How would you define collaboration?	
Share the responsibilities	12
Learn from each other	4
Communicate with each other	3

Most comments referred to the sharing of responsibilities (see Table 3). One teacher

wrote, "share responsibilities of class: co-planning, co-implementing, co-assessing." Another

respondent defined collaboration as, "Working together, sticking together, maintaining a team

atmosphere." Learning from each other, communication, and respect emerged as common

themes regarding the benefits of an intercultural team and were also referenced when defining

collaboration:

> Listening, observing, viewing, learning, sharing and working together with a willingness
> to change what you do when exposed to an other persons ideas. Realizing that my ideas
> are not always the best and that i sometimes need to let go in order to learn and
> collaborate.

Question 4-If you were on a team that is collaborating well, what would you see, hear, and feel?

Table 4

What Collaboration Looks Like, Sounds Like, and Feels Like

Category	Thematic Category	Responses
Q4-If you were on a team that is collaborating well, what would you see, hear, and feel?		
See	Sharing and engaged	10
	Friendly interactions	7
Hear	Laughter	2
	Excitement and enthusiasm	2
Feel	Happy	7
	Comfortable	7

Question 4 was designed to elicit more details about the meaning of collaboration (see Table 4). One respondent organized his or her response around sharing, "See: constant exchanges. Hear: sharing of ideas. Feel: Safe in the knowledge that what is shared is respected even if not always agreed upon." Another comment described a collaborative environment, "I would see active and vibrant interplay between team members. I would hear open-minded answers as well as laughing between happy co-workers. I would feel a sense of comfort and relaxed vibes between the team members." One comment focused on the relationships, "team members are truly happy to work together…team member willing to share ideas, help each other not only because we work together."

Question 5-How would you describe the collaboration within your grade level team?

Table 5

Collaboration Within Grade Level Team

Thematic Category	Positive Responses	Negative Responses
Share the responsibilities	5	2
Learn from each other	2	0
Communicate with each other	0	2
Respect each other	5	0

The responses to this question (see Table 5) were analyzed using the six themes of defining collaboration from question 3 (see Table 3). Though most responses describing collaboration on their team were positive, some themes also received negative responses. For example, both positive and negative responses were made about sharing responsibilities. One respondent wrote:

> I would describe our working relationship as fine. We all handle our responsibilities and things get done on time and done well. Collaboration, as far as planning and classroom decisions, tend to fall on me because of (I believe) to be a sedate or shyness factor that is either shared amongst all of my co-workers, or is a cultural difference between us. While I am a more outspoken and forward-mover, my co-workers are more apt to listen and be moved. I work to watch my own actions to try and keep the team as evenly distributed as possible in power/control, but it is a task I do not always succeed in to my standards.

One theme, communication, only received negative responses, "as a grade level team I think we could collaborate more by having equal participation in discussion from all team members more often."

Question 6-What are some of the positive experiences you have had collaborating?

Table 6

Positive Experiences Collaborating

Thematic Category	Responses
Q6-What are some of the positive experiences you have had collaborating?	
Positive environment created (listened to, appreciated, respected, accepted, and valued)	10
Sharing the responsibilities	7
Supporting team members	5
Learning from each other	3

Most responses mentioned the positive environment created by the team (see Table 6). One reported, "i have felt that i have been listened to and my ideas have been apprenticed, I have given respect and received respect, i have been accepted by a team and mu ideas valued." Another wrote, "The most important point is that we respect each other, and if there are different opinions, we always try to make sure that no ones is being bossy."

Comments about sharing responsibilities and supporting team members were also common. One respondent commented, "helping my partner to set in at very beginning of the school year; contribute on planning and implement; help partner out at the time she needs."

Question 7-How would you define collaboration?

Table 7

Negative Experiences Collaborating

Thematic Category	Responses
Q7-What are some of the negative experiences you have had trying to collaborate?	
Partner not sharing responsibility	8
Respect and honesty	8
Partner's motivation	5
Partner's skill level	3
Communication	2

When asked about negative experiences of trying to collaborate, a partner not sharing the responsibility was one of the most common themes, most often referred to the in the co-teaching arrangement of two teachers working together in a classroom (see Table 7). One respondent wrote about having to ask her colleague to make formal observations of students instead of sitting and watching her teach. Another wrote, "sometimes feeling more responsibility for planning in particular for literacy and maths."

Another negative common theme was related to respect and honesty. Sometimes this referred to the whole grade level team of six teachers and at other times was referencing the classroom co-teacher arrangement. One respondent commented, "not being open minded to others ideas or not bringing ideas to the table when planning."

Comments about negative experiences related to a colleague's perceived level of motivation were also reported. One respondent wrote:

I have been on teams where people had, quite frankly, just bad ideas, or even didn't really care either way what happened. That is frustrating and difficult to deal with. Often team credit is given to the team as a whole, as it should in most cases, but when you're collaborating with a lazy/unhelpful person, it's frustrating to say the least. I don't believe in complaining to the boss about such things, so I'll just put my nose to the grindstone and get it done. Things tend to work out for the better, and I don't choose to let my work suffer because of an ineffective team member.

Question 8-How do you feel collaboration in your team is supported?

Table 8

How Collaboration is Supported

Thematic Category	Responses
Q1-How do you feel collaboration in your team is supported?	
Communication (collaborative checklist and honest communication)	3
Emotional support and caring	2

There were fewer responses to this question (see Table 8) when compared with the other questions. Two respondents mentioned communication. One respondent wrote, "The collaboration checklist with a lot of questions about each other at the beginning of the school year was helpful." The list referred to the document *Co-Teacher Discussion Questions 2014-2015*, which was designed to facilitate conversations between colleagues for the purpose of learning more about a colleague and their educational philosophies and methods in order to support collaboration (see Appendix O).

Question 9-What are the challenges you face when trying to collaborate?

Table 9

Challenges Faced Collaborating

Thematic Category	Responses
Q1-What are the challenges you face when trying to collaborate?	
Partner sharing responsibility	9
Communication	7
Partner's motivation	5
Partner's skill level	4

When teachers were asked about the challenges they face trying to collaborate, responses about sharing responsibility were the most common, though coming only from three respondents. One respondent wrote comments referring to his or her Chinese co-teacher not working equally in sharing the responsibilities for the class, motivation, and skill level:

> i feel that the co teacher model in this school in EYS does not really work unless the Chinese co teacher is willing to learn to adapt and wanting to develop their teaching skills and support equally in the class, no me or you do this or that, equal time and effort of planning resources and delivering lessons together my co teacher does not do this. i feel often the western teacher is left to do many of the tasks and the other teacher takes the easy way out, i don't know, i don't want to, its not in my contract, why should i, that's not co teaching, the co-teacher says she will sit at the back of the class and watch, this is how some are seeing this type of work. no support to discipline in the class, not ideas, not sharing ideas, not helping to follow what the essential agreement was agreed on. just very negative attitude when asked to help out. not helping with portfolios or storypark.

Seven out of the nine respondents made comments about communication being a challenge. One respondent found the unwillingness to communicate as a challenge and a another respondent wrote about colleagues misunderstanding each other. One response noted that communicating expectations was a challenge.

Question 10-Is collaborating with your team important to you? Why?

Table 10

Is Collaboration Important

Category	Thematic Category	Responses
	Q1-Is collaborating with your team important to you? Why?	
Yes N=8	Learn from each other	4
	Effectiveness of team	4
No N=1	Sometimes collaborating makes things complicated	1

Eight out of the nine respondents felt collaborating with his or her team was important (see Table 10). Of those who felt collaboration was important, learning from each other and the effectiveness of the team were common responses. One respondent wrote, "…collaboration is important to me because I think it gives me a better chance to be a better teacher." Another wrote, "…when we collaborate we can have a wealth of knowledge." Others wrote, "I learn so much from those around me," and "…we can share ideas and learn more."

One respondent felt collaboration was not that important by writing, "not that important. sometimes collaborating makes things complicated."

Analysis codes after anonymous survey.

After analyzing data from the anonymous survey the themes were organized by each survey question and summarized on *Anonymous Survey Analysis Summary* (see Appendix P).

Focus Group Interview

Seven volunteers from the original group of 18 homeroom teachers participated in the focus group interview to discuss themes and patterns that emerged from the survey questions. A focus group interview was used to give participants the opportunity to hear others' points of view

and then make additional comments in response to what others said (Patton, 2002). This process could also have been beneficial for soliciting more of a response from those using English as an additional language as unknown vocabulary might have been modeled by others.

I read each question from the anonymous survey, followed by the analyzed results in the form of emerging themes and quotations of responses, and asked the group to respond to the results, provide any possible insight, or elaborate on the responses. The results of the focus group interviews are organized according to support for major themes from the anonymous survey and additional themes provided.

Question 1-What are the benefits to being on an intercultural team?

During the focus group interview, one theme that emerged again was learning about other cultures (see Table 1). One teacher commented about sharing cultures recently supporting this theme:

> Well, we just worked on a unit on culture and what we've been able to do is invite teachers from different nationalities and different cultures to come and share their culture and celebrations with our class. If we just had monoculture, monolingual, we wouldn't have that ability. We had a number of teachers in our class that shared a culture.

Another theme commented on was learning about other teaching styles. One teacher gave a response, "I think also learning about, I guess, just partly, their different teaching styles and methods, but also just different curriculums as well, as everyone brings their home country curriculum experience."

Question 2-What are the disadvantages to being on an intercultural team?

Comments were made in regards to all of the themes raised in the second anonymous survey question (see Table 2). For the first theme, communication, it was shared that communication can be challenging and, "…keeping the open communication is huge. Huge." Two teachers commented on teachers whose first language is Chinese having difficulty with

English. They said, "…writing takes a really long time for a Chinese teacher to write the English …" and, "It also take a long time for the English native speaker to correct our writing."

Another teacher found it interesting that having different ideas and expectations was seen as a disadvantage when in the previous question both were seen as advantages.

Question 3-How would you define collaboration?

The theme of respect and openness to change from the anonymous survey drew the largest amount of discussion. One teacher describes how she respects her co-teacher when she teaches in a different way:

> Because I think sometimes there's that feeling that you have a way of doing something. When you're collaborating with somebody, you have to step away from the way you're going to do it. Sometimes where if somebody's taking over the lead in the lesson, they might not do it the way you would like to do it. But that's them, they're doing it their style and you have to find a way of controlling yourself. You feel like you want to step in and I'm sure the same is reversible.

Much discussion also centered on the vagueness of sharing responsibilities within the co-teaching teams:

> Obviously "sharing responsibilities" is quite ambiguous, like what does that actually mean because there are certain responsibilities that you are going to be suited to do and certain responsibilities that your co-teacher's going to be more suited to. To say that ... That formally suggests to me that you share your responsibilities equally which that's not always going to fit the classroom environment so I'd be interested to know what the comments were on the sharing responsibilities.

One teacher expressed her frustration with sharing responsibilities within the co-teaching arrangement as she felt her co-teacher was not taking equal responsibility. She said, "In reality, it's not 50-50. It will never ever be 50-50 in any reality. It can never be a 50-50 collaboration. It's a little bit of give and take as well."

Another teacher offered her view on co-teacher collaboration in regards to sharing the responsibilities, "But sometimes we can do, like, which part I'm good at, I can do more, and

which part is my co-teacher good at, she can do more then. That's how we collaborate." Another added the importance of being open minded to help with sharing the responsibilities, "…work with your strengths. But then also, learning from your person, but trying that out as well. Being a risk taker and trying areas out that you're not so strong in."

Question 4-If you were on a team that is collaborating well, what would you see, hear, and feel?

Some of the comments in the focus group interview were about what collaboration would look like. One teacher mentioned, "…of course, lots of smiles…" and continued with how that affects the students and parents and not just the collaborating teachers, "Because they can pick up on that very easily. The parents pick up on it really easily too."

Another teacher commented that in a collaborative environment, we would see the teachers showing awareness of how a colleague is feeling and taking initiative to be supportive:

> But if you see the other person is really struggling with the lesson or really struggling with the situation, like what you said, is just trying to think, how can I be useful here? Jumping in to help. Or there's a struggle with one student, so I'm going to quickly take the other fifteen and do something different but, like, reacting to those things by taking initiative now that we've been directed to do it.

The importance of laughter in a collaborative team was also discussed. One teacher commented, "Because I think its funny sometimes when you try to do something and it just goes so badly wrong, and you both just have to have a laugh about it because what else are you going to do, and just start again the next day."

Question 5-How would you describe the collaboration within your grade level team?

When discussing collaboration within the grade level team, the majority of the conversation focused on the documents which were used to guide essential agreements for working together. For example, one document referred to which teachers expressed helping with

collaboration was the *Co-Teacher Discussion Questions 2014-2015* (see Appendix O). After

working on the discussion questions together, teachers were then asked to create essential

agreements based on their discussions. One teacher explained how helpful she found the process

in facilitating collaboration with her partner:

> I remember the essential agreement being incredibly important because it gave us an opportunity to really talk about what were our strengths, what were our weaknesses, what were our teaching philosophies, our background and how we were going to bring those two things together. I thought that it was incredibly important that the beginning, before the children are coming into the classroom, you're both on exactly the same page to start with and then it's a nice working document to work with, if you do need to come back to it and say this is what we agreed on and so on and so forth.

Question 6-What are some of the positive experiences you have had collaborating?

Only one teacher made a comment describing experiences collaborating this year. The

comment mentioned how it can be easy when a teacher is working at a busy school to refer back

to what he or she has done from previous experience and continue to do what has always been

done, but there is a need to be reflective and ask if this the best way.

Question 7-How would you define collaboration?

Most of the conversation in regards to defining collaboration focused on the theme of a

partner's motivation. One teacher commented on a colleague's perceived level of motivation:

> I think the laziness can be explored as well, like, kind of natural motivation. It might be someone's demeanor that they are a little bit more laid back and they don't really want to work as hard. Just speculating on that and, perhaps, I could see how that would be very frustrating if somebody didn't have enough energy for what was happening in the classroom and then you were putting more energy into it. I could see how that would unbalance things.

In contrast, another teacher said some situations of perceived lack of motivation or

laziness could just be due to differing teaching styles.

Question 8-How do you feel collaboration in your team is supported?

For the question about collaboration being supported, the group appeared surprised when I shared the one negative comment, "Not much." One teacher asked, "Is that the full comment? Not much, or was there more?" I told them that was the entire response.

Question 9-What are the challenges you face when trying to collaborate?

When sharing the results from the anonymous survey about the challenges faced when trying to collaborate, the group was very interested with the theme of sharing responsibilities again and noted that sharing responsibilities seems significant as both an advantage and disadvantage to collaboration. One teacher noted, "But then I guess it really comes down to your personal interpretation of collaboration. If you think it is sharing responsibility, then that would be extremely important."

The apparent confusion about each of the co-teacher's responsibilities formed a large part of the conversation. Though every teacher has the detailed document, *Co-Teacher Roles and Responsibilities* (see Appendix Q), there was concern that it was not read by all. Others also agreed on the importance of everyone not only reading the document but reflecting on whether are doing what is described or not. Teachers also commented on the importance of re-reading this document and developing written essential agreements based upon it.

One teacher noted that the essential agreements document should be a work in progress and not just something teachers work on only at the beginning of the school year.

Question 10-Is collaborating with your team important to you? Why?

When sharing the results from the anonymous survey about teachers feeling if collaboration is important to them or not, it was noted that eight of the nine teachers responded

'yes' and one teacher responded 'no.' The focus group interview participants seemed surprised that one teacher responded that he or she did not feel collaboration was important.

Analysis codes after focus group.

Though more data was provided to support themes from the anonymous survey, no new themes emerged. After analyzing data from the anonymous survey and the focus group interview, the themes were categorized into the five major areas of (1) advantages to being on an intercultural team, (2) disadvantages to being on an intercultural team, (3) define collaboration, (4) supporting collaboration, and (5) challenges to collaboration within *Analysis Codes After Focus Group Interview* (see Appendix R). Each theme was coded to aid in the analysis of the Pre-Observation Interviews relating to those five major areas.

Pre-Observation Interviews

Four teachers, two co-teaching pairs from the same grade level team and from the original group of 18, were selected to be case study participants. By studying pairs of co-teachers, it was possible to include their perceptions of collaborative practices that occur outside of the grade level PLC meetings as well as collaborative practices that occur during collaborative grade level PLC meetings. I conducted pre-observation interviews with the four case study participants in order to have a more insight into the successes and challenges they experienced in regards to collaborating in their intercultural PLC team. Interviews were used for three reasons: to allow me to learn about collaborative experiences which could be observed; to allow the participants to share their perspective; and to allow for expanded answers through probing or changing the line of questioning (Lujan & Day, 2010). By talking privately with me in an individual interview, some participants may have opened up more, providing additional data, as compared to the focus group interviews.

I asked each case study participant questions using the Interview Protocol described previously (see Appendix I). Data from the demographic and background information was used for writing the narrative in Chapter 5. Some data was used to confirm that the grade level met the requirements for being a PLC. The remaining data was organized using the framework from the *Analysis Codes After Focus Group Interview* (see Appendix R).

Demographic and background.

The four case study participants represent different cultural experiences, educational backgrounds, training, and proficiencies in English within the school's intercultural professional learning community which comprises teachers from 28 different nationalities.

Different countries/cultural experiences.

The four case study participants represent different countries/cultural experiences. Two are from different areas of China, which can be described as rural and urban. One case study participant is from urban USA and the last participant is from urban Canada.

Educational backgrounds.

Growing up, the case study participants experienced different educational curriculums, types of schools, sizes of schools, and student/teacher ratios. The geographical locations of their schools ranged from a "little village" in China to major cities in western countries. Case study participants were educated using Chinese, American, and Canadian curriculums. The schools they attended were public, private, secular, non-secular, and ranged in size, facilities, and student/teacher ratios.

When the case study participants became teachers themselves, the schools they taught in were also varied. The latter included, a private Chinese school, a public Chinese school, an international school in China (IB), a private pre-school in the USA, and a private Canadian

Islamic school in Saudi Arabia. One case study participant has experience in educational leadership with regard to curriculum and teacher training and another case study participant has interests in educational research. The schools for which case study participants had worked ranged in size, facilities, and Internet access. The number of students in a class ranged from nine to 40.

Training.

The training the case study participants had to become teachers also was diverse, to include:

- Certificate in Early Years Teaching from China
- Bachelor's degree in Food Science and Engineering from China
- Bachelor's degree in International Trade from China
- Bachelor's degree in Child Development from the USA
- Bachelor's degree in Honors History from Canada
- Bachelor's degree in Elementary Education from Canada
- Master of Education degree in Pre-School Education from China
- Master of Education degree in Early Childhood Education from the USA

Proficiencies with English.

Case study participants have different levels of English proficiency. Two of the case study participants speak English as their first language and the other two case study participants speak Chinese as their first language with English being their second language.

Advantages to being on an intercultural team.

When asked about the advantages to being on an intercultural team, all four case study participants mentioned the benefits to their own professional development by learning from the different cultural experiences of the teachers on the team. One teacher mentioned how she learns new teaching methods, "The benefit we can know lots of the different teaching way to help you get more experience, and the other things you will know the things you never hear." Another teacher shared how she feels when she learns something new from a teacher who is from a

different culture, "Wow, I can do it like this, I can do it like ... I always get new things from different culture, because that's the most beneficial thing." Another teacher shared that when she is exposed to different practices and approaches, she becomes more aware of her own culture and practices and adds to her "own pack of knowledge."

Another teacher commented how learning about another culture helps her relate better with some of her students and the student's parents:

> I think we can learn about the other culture and, like, within our classroom, like I said, it helps me to understand some of the Chinese students and their parents, especially the concerns of the parents sometimes. I find that can be quite helpful to have somebody who is of that same culture shared to me and then I can do the same thing when it is children who are from a western culture, so that helps to understand the children and the parents better.

She also told me another advantage of working on an intercultural team has been to stimulate more reflective practice this year, "'Oh do I do this one? Do I do this or do I do this?' Think a bit also about why I do certain things the way I do. When you notice someone doing it a bit different, it makes me think about why I want to do it the way that I do."

Disadvantages to being on an intercultural team.

Two of the case study participants felt that miscommunication could be a disadvantage in an intercultural team. One teacher mentioned difficulties regarding different proficiencies of English on the team, "Sometimes I think there's language miscommunication based on people's levels of understanding." The other teacher told me that sometimes she has difficulty expressing something in English in ways that are perceived as polite:

> Because it's not your own language, it's not everybody can say your own language. Maybe it's harder sometimes, because when we were thinking about in Chinese we were just speak this way, maybe in English, it not very polite way. Sometimes I'm trying to say it nice to everybody.

One teacher mentioned a new theme of personality clashes sometimes being a disadvantage to being on an intercultural team. This teacher told me:

It'll be hard to really isolate if it is culture or personality but I do think some is just different experiences with teaching, different ways of doing it. I find explaining like how I would want to do it and why do it this way and I find within our own classroom [the other teacher] is always really interested to learn more about how we do things.

Having different expectations was also mentioned as a disadvantage. However, another told me when her co-teacher does or says something she does not expect, she assumes "goodwill," and that they are, "…fighting the same battle."

Define collaboration.

When case study participants were describing collaboration and collaborative experiences, the theme of sharing responsibilities was most common in their responses. One teacher described collaboration on her team as "pretty good" because they are sharing ideas, working together, and helping each other. Another teacher felt that everybody on her team volunteers to share the responsibilities and describes how she volunteers, "The first time I feel really great, just like, 'Oh, I can do that one. I can do this one.'" She continued with describing how teachers who speak Chinese help the team by communicating with the kitchen staff or arranging excursions in Shanghai with other people who speak Chinese.

The second most common theme in the responses was the sharing of ideas. Some of the responses described the sharing of ideas as positive:

Sharing ideas. And I know for me that's also helped me to understand things that I've been confused about. Being new to the school, it's been a chance for me to ask questions especially having another teacher in the room with me that's been amazing with me. I ask questions all the time. What about this? What about this? What about this? We talk about the students a lot. We notice this. How do you think about that? Within our classroom we share so much information about the students from the parents. It has really helped me to understand some of the Chinese culture better and so that's been really cool…I think the positive experience just seeing different perspectives, it is interesting how we approach the same unit in three different ways. Some of that is different children, but it is also the

teacher's different take on it. That's really interesting and trying to focus more on how. That's actually really cool.

Two of the teachers mentioned difficulties experienced with the sharing of ideas. The first example concerned the problematic beginning of the year when the teachers were not sharing but "working on their own things," a situation which improved as the year progressed. The second example concerned the different levels of sharing on the team, "I think some people share more ideas than other people."

When sharing positive experiences she had collaborating, one teacher stressed the importance of open and respectful communication within the group:

> Again, I feel like when I'm heard, people are genuinely making space for my ideas and my thoughts and you can feel that. You can feel when that's happening and that just being listened to. All definitions are being listened to. I feel it's a great feeling. When I feel that, I, of course, try to be more aware of how I'm making space for somebody else to feel comfortable and to trust me and to feel that it's a safe interaction.

Supporting collaboration.

Before the pre-observation interviews, a wide range of examples of how collaboration is supported had already been identified as themes, but other examples were new. Amongst these, the most frequently mentioned was the weekly, 90-minute, collaborative grade level meetings with the PYP Curriculum Coordinator, which are scheduled during the school day. One teacher described how she specifically, and the team, benefits from meeting with the coordinator due to the ideas and suggestions generated.

Teachers mentioned two other areas that support collaboration during these weekly 90-minute meetings. These include being given the time to meet and collaborate, and the opportunity to use the PYP curriculum planner together as a grade level team to continue to develop the school's existing written curriculum.

Communicating expectations by discussing and agreeing on essential agreements was

also mentioned as supporting collaboration within the team. Though each pair of co-teachers wrote an essential agreement for their pair at the beginning of the year, the grade level team as a whole did not write an essential agreement until months later when there were difficulties and they realized they needed to. One participant shared:

> I think setting the agreements and having those discussions really helped a lot and it was really important. I think especially, I guess, it is a good example for me too. [A teacher] and I did that right at the beginning and that helped and then within our team we never really did that right at the beginning and then, a couple of months in, we realized that we need this. Let's talk about our experiences and then, for me, my experience on the team really changed a lot. Things made a lot more sense. I think that helped a lot.

Challenges to collaboration.

Two new themes which emerged from the interviews related to challenges with collaboration. The first related to the difficulties of declining to try a new idea when the teacher rather not, or being able to disagree about something. The second new theme was that expectations may be too high for the teaching assistants. The teaching assistants do not attend the co-teacher planning meetings or the grade level meetings as they are supervising the classes of very young children during recess or during the single subject classes like art, music, or PE. Even though the roles and expectations of the assistant are explained to them outside of the planning meetings, frustration was expressed with the work that is done.

Analysis codes after pre-observation interviews.

After analyzing data from the pre-observation interviews, the themes from the anonymous survey and focus group interviews were combined with additional themes from the pre-observation interviews into the five major areas of (1) advantages to being on an intercultural team, (2) disadvantages to being on an intercultural team, (3) defining collaboration, (4) supporting collaboration, and (5) challenges to collaboration on the document *Analysis Codes After Pre-Observation Interviews* (see Appendix S). Each theme was coded, providing areas to

note when conducting the observations. The coding of all themes will also facilitate the analysis of the observations and post-observation interviews relating to those five major areas.

Observations of Grade Level Meetings

Observations of the four case study participants were conducted during grade level meetings each week over a six-week period to provide data which will describe the collaborative practices of the PLC team as aligned with the five points on collaboration (DuFour, 2004) and being on an intercultural team. The 90-minutes long, weekly grade level meetings, which include all six classroom teachers on the team as well as the PYP Coordinator, were observed as that is when the most significant work of PLCs takes place. During the observations of grade level meetings, detailed field notes were taken to record not only the conversations but also to record the context and any non-verbal communication as well. The results are summarized using the seven sections of (1) Collaboration Within a PLC, (2) Advantages to Being on an International Team, (3) Disadvantages to Being on an International Team, (4) Challenges to Collaboration, (5) Participation in Grade Level Meetings, (6) Occurrences of Laughter, and (7) Occurrences of Talking.

Collaboration within a PLC.

According to DuFour, collaboration within a PLC can be described using five points which can be summarized as (1) membership and participation, (2) time to meet, (3) focus efforts on learning and generating products, (4) developed norms, and (5) student achievement goals (2004). Data from grade level meeting observations align with all 5 points of collaboration.

Membership and participation.

This grade level team consisted of three pairs of co-teaching teams where each co-teaching team shared the instructional responsibilities for each of the three classes in the grade

level. Though the grade level team had three teaching assistants, the teaching assistants did not attend the weekly planning meetings as they were supervising the students during recess or while at single subject classes, for example, art, music, or PE.

Time to meet.

The grade level teachers, along with the PYP Coordinator would meet in a different classroom of the grade level each week. Meetings were allotted a time slot of 90 minutes and usually lasted during the full time period.

Focus efforts on learning and generating products.

The PYP Coordinator often led the meetings. On those rare occasions when the PYP Coordinator was not present, the Grade Level Coordinator led the meetings. The PYP Coordinator and the teachers were able to add items for discussion to the agenda ahead of time. Agenda items typically included delivery of the current unit of inquiry, English language instruction, Chinese language instruction, mathematics, and areas of other business. Discussions not only reviewed what was being taught but also involved planning for future curriculum and assessments.

Developed norms.

The roles and responsibilities for grade level team meetings are defined in the document *PYP Collaborative Planning Meeting Agenda Guidelines* (see Appendix T). The document describes the purpose of the team, the use of the agenda and documentation, team discussions and collaborative decisions. The role of the PYP Coordinator is defined in the *PYP Coordinator – Job Description* (see Appendix U) and the role of the Grade Level Coordinator is defined in the *PYP Grade Level Coordinators – Job Description* (see Appendix V).

The agreements for how the team should work together were defined and recorded on a

meeting agenda, after a couple of months into the school year, through the use of team-

developed essential agreements:

> In order to feel supported, we need:
> -To feel heard, listened to
> -Acknowledged of our different perspectives (not just an 'I understand,
>   buuuuut….')
> -Give everyone time to speak. (control interruptions, talking stick maybe?)
> -Be aware of how much each person is talking
> -Assume good will
> -honesty

Student achievement goals.

In addition to curricular and administrative matters, time was spent during the meetings

discussing and setting student achievement goals for both academics and behavior. In addition,

teachers discussed the documentation and reporting of student achievement. With academics,

examples of achievement in the areas of reading, writing, and within the units of inquiry were

shared and evaluated.

In addition to academics, student achievement with behavior was commonly discussed at

the grade level meetings. Student behavior during class time, snack time, recess time, and during

Student-Led Conferences was discussed.

The team also organized the documentation and reporting of student achievement with

report cards, writing books, and an assessment overview document. With report cards going

home at the end of the year, the team reviewed the report card criteria used as a guide for

consistently rating different areas of student achievement. In order to see students' writing

development, writing assessment books were being made which included samples of work

throughout the year. To aid in the organization of assessments, and to see if there are areas not

assessed, the team developed a master document that listed all of the assessment tasks used

during the year and organized by them by dates administered, data assessed, and how the data is recorded.

Advantages to being on an intercultural team.

Some advantages to being on an intercultural team were observed during the weekly grade level meetings. Instances demonstrating the advantage of learning about other cultures and several instances of learning about other teaching styles were observed.

During the fifth observed meeting, comments were made about seeing some parents on campus who were not normally present during arrival and dismissal times, due to the fact that there was a Chinese national holiday which the international school did not observe. After some of the Chinese teachers explained the Children's Day holiday, other teachers started sharing their experiences of holidays from their home countries to include New Zealand's A&P Show and the Canadian Memorial Day.

In addition to the regular sharing of what each class was taught during the previous week, more detailed and engaging conversations occurred in which teachers gave advice for forming hypotheses, developing scientific inquiry, and using social skills for handling student to student conflict.

Disadvantages to being on an intercultural team.

Some disadvantages to being on an intercultural team were also observed during the grade level meetings. One disadvantage related to communication in English, another with different work expectations, and a third on perceived pressure for everyone on the team to do the same.

While discussing a recent writing assessment, the questions came up of how to deal with students who decide not to complete the task fully when a teacher has observed them being able

to do more on other occasions, and how to address students of different cultures who can write a story fluently, just not in English. Two Chinese teachers then started discussing in Chinese, which others in the group could not understand. Discussion in smaller groups, in either Chinese or English, began until the group as a whole started discussing other concerns with the assessment.

During the second meeting, while the group was discussing English writing assessments, a Chinese teacher was observed typing on her cell phone. The teacher explained that she was checking her email. Another teacher asked her to not use her phone during the meeting as she found it distracting, and the remainder of the group appeared to concur.

With regard to student behavior choices, the Learning Support team offered to provide social skill lessons to the students. To ensure consistency of the delivery of skills instruction, the Learning Support team stipulated that all classes in the grade level should participate, as students mix together as a grade level at recess times. One teacher asked the group for a decision which she could share with the Learning Support team. Two of the Western teachers said "yes" and the third commented, "If we have to agree, then we are outnumbered." The three Chinese teachers did not comment.

Challenges to collaboration.

Some behaviors were observed which relate to the challenges to collaboration mentioned in the previous data collection methods. The behaviors fall into the categories of communication, a partner's or colleague's motivation, and time.

Within the category of communication, most communication can be summarized as teachers sharing what had been working well in their classroom the week prior and engaging in PLC type activities. However, there was an instance during the fifth grade level meeting that can

be categorized as communication being a challenge within an intercultural team. When the PYP Coordinator was noticed as being absent from the meeting that was about to begin, one teacher asked where she was. Another native English-speaking teacher said she assumed she was arriving. One of the Chinese teachers asked what that meant and another Chinese teacher translated for her.

Some other instances occurred during the grade level meetings that aligned with the previous theme of a partner's or colleague's perceived motivation being a challenge to collaboration. There were many documented instances were one teacher did not communicate at all, or very little, during the discussions unless she was required to share what she did in her Chinese lesson the week prior. More details about these instances, and the possible reasons for her silence, will be shared later in this chapter.

Many instances regarding the pressures of time were noted during the grade level meetings. For example, considerable meeting time was used with discussing items that did not result in a decision, forming class groupings for the next year, and performing numerous other required administrative tasks. For example, on one occasion when the group was getting off topic, one teacher had to prompt the group to focus again on planning for the administration of a grade level writing assessment. There was disagreement about what should be done so one teacher said she would email the group what was used last year for consideration; no decision was made during the meeting. Another example, during the fourth meeting, was when the Early Years Principal asked the team to decide which rooms each teacher would use next year, as it was not possible to have the team's classrooms together next year, due to school expansion. The team discussed the benefits and disadvantages of different arrangements but then eventually agreed to let the principal decide for them.

Class groupings for the next school year was discussed during five of the six observed meetings. Attempts were made to ensure classes are as balanced as possible in regards to nationality, gender, English proficiency, academic ability, special needs, and class size while considering social interactions between students.

Other administrative duties took time during the meetings. Assessments had to be created, planned, and moderated. Playground rotations had to change in order to observe social interactions to inform next year's class groupings, and later to separate classes when some students were diagnosed with a common, but highly contagious, childhood illness which needed to be contained. Time was also spent planning for classroom moves and the use of classrooms by the summer school. In addition, time was used for discussing the documentation of student progress.

Participation in grade level meetings.

For collaboration during a grade level meeting to be effective, participation from all team members is ideal. Observations were made to gain an awareness of how communication between team members and their perceived level of motivation affected the meetings. During some discussions I observed, some teachers rarely spoke while, at other times, an individual teacher talked more than almost everyone else combined. Teachers appeared to have different comfort levels speaking English. Instances were observed where some teachers appeared comfortable and outgoing while encouraging quieter teachers to speak and participate.

One regular occurrence during the weekly meetings was for co-teaching pairs to share with the rest of the team what went well during the week prior. For example, during the first meeting observed, with one co-teaching pair, the Western teacher did almost all the talking with her Chinese co-teacher contributing a short sentence. However, when it was the next co-teaching

pair's turn to talk, both teachers shared the week's lessons almost equally using the pronoun "we" in their conversations. During the second meeting, when a co-teaching pair was sharing, I was unable to hear the Chinese teacher's participation from where I was seated. While the whole grade level was having a discussion about forming hypotheses during the second meeting, every teacher contributed except for one Chinese teacher. An instance where two Chinese teachers lacked confidence in reading or evaluating four and five year olds' writing was observed when they were visibly uncomfortable when asked if they would participate with the rest of the team as they moderated writing samples. I could not hear one teacher's faint response and the other teacher was silent. The Grade Level Coordinator then said everyone would be moderating the writing samples together. When I asked the two teachers privately after the meeting if they had wanted to assess the English writing samples, they told me they had not and that they thought it would be best if the foreign teachers checked the writing samples.

Most Chinese teachers tended to speak less than the other teachers during the discussions if the discussion was not directly related to Chinese language lessons. When it was time for the Chinese language teachers to share what they did the previous week during Chinese language lessons, they were able to speak to the group. However, during the third meeting, when the topic was Chinese language assessments, one Chinese teacher took the lead, another commented, but the third teacher did not speak the entire time but occasionally nodded her head.

As discussed later in the chapter, when sharing the results of the 'mini-research,' a few, two, or even just one person sometimes dominated conversations. During the first meeting, when discussing how Chinese language learning would be shared in the upcoming Student-Led Conferences, the conversation was dominated with the PYP Coordinator talking and the Grade Level Coordinator occasionally contributing, while the other five teachers did not contribute to

the conversation. At other times, when some teachers wanted to contribute, another teacher interrupted the conversation. For example, when creating new class groupings for the next school year, one teacher made a suggestion of balancing out the classes by nationality first but then another teacher said they should sort the cards first, cutting her off. The interrupted teacher visibly slumped down in her chair in response. During the fifth meeting, one teacher shared some terms she taught students related to handling conflicts. When another teacher said she was thinking about something similar, the first teacher interrupted her and said that everybody on the team should be using the same terms.

In contrast, instances were observed where teachers tried to encourage others to participate in the discussions. During the third meeting, after all but two teachers shared their thoughts about a recent unit, the PYP Coordinator simply said both of their names in a rising tone , inviting them to share. During the sixth meeting, a teacher complimented another teacher on her sharing, saying that she was so thoughtful and had put so much work into the Chinese lesson she was describing.

Occurrences of laughing mini-research.

During the second meeting, I noticed the group was laughing several times when an energetic and animated Chinese teacher was sharing some stories of what specific students did that week. I remembered when asking what collaboration sounds like, with question number four on the anonymous survey, laughter was mentioned in the responses. With this in mind, I decided to try and document the occurrences of laughter, or its absence, as much as possible, during the meetings in order to have another way of describing the context and teacher interactions (see Table 11). As my priority was taking detailed notes about who was saying and doing what during

the meetings, it is possible that I was not able to document all occurrences of group laughter involving at least two teachers.

Table 11

Occurrences of Group Laughter During Grade Level Meetings

Meeting Observed	Instances
Meeting one on May 7, 2015 (not documented)	NA
Meeting two on May 14, 2015	5
Meeting three on May 21, 2015	1
Meeting four on May 28, 2015	0
Meeting five on June 4, 2015	5
Meeting six on June 11, 2015	3

During the meetings, teachers were noted as laughing while teachers were sharing stories about their students, ideas and resources, their experiences visiting the recent Grade 5 Exhibition, personal stories, misconceptions of the definition of a scientist, a girl's intentional annoying of another student, assessment, math manipulatives, and children and changes.

Occurrences of talking during discussions mini-research.

While observing the first meeting, I noticed that some teachers were talking and sharing much more than other teachers. Two teachers in particular rarely contributed, so I decided to conduct mini-research on occurrences of talk during an approximately five minute span for each, while still taking detailed notes (see Table 12). Using a simple chart, I tallied each time one of the teachers spoke a complete sentence. Instances of nodding or speaking a short phrase or one-word utterances were not recorded, as I felt those occurrences were not a significant contribution to the conversation. If a teacher continued to talk, I marked an occurrence for

approximately every few sentences of major points they were contributing to the conversation. After the first week, I strategically selected discussions that had already begun and which ideally should have involved all teachers on the team. A 'NA' is used on the table when someone was absent.

Table 12

Occurrences of Talking During a Discussion (5-Minute Sample)

	Teacher 1/GLC	Teacher 2	Teacher 3	Teacher 4	Teacher 5	Teacher 6	PYPCO
First Language	English	Chinese	English	Chinese	English	Chinese	English
Meeting 1	11	2	5	0	6	4	1
Meeting 2	17	0	5	0	2	0	17
Meeting 3A	5	1	0	3	1	3	NA
Meeting 3B	27	3	14	2	13	12	24
Meeting 4A	6	0	3	1	5	4	NA
Meeting 4B	7	0	6	1	7	5	NA
Meeting 5	10	0	3	0	8	3	9

Instances of talking were documented when the group was discussing categories of report card comments, morning snack duty and how some students were taking proportionally too much food at snack time, reflections on a recent unit of inquiry, classroom allocation for next year, balanced placements of students in next year's classes, and student pass-up file records. Using 5-minute samples, talking during all six grade level meetings ranged from six occurrences to 83 occurrences with an average of approximately 34 occurrences per person. Chinese teachers spoke six, seven, and 31 times whereas Western teachers talked more often with 36, 42, and 83 occurrences.

Observations of Co-Teacher Meetings

Observations of the four case study participants were conducted during co-teacher planning meetings each week over a six-week period to provide data which will describe the collaborative practices of the PLC team as aligned with the five areas of collaboration (DuFour, 2004) and being on an intercultural team. The 60-minutes long, weekly collaborative meetings are when each co-teaching pair plans instruction and assessment as well as working on their other responsibilities. Co-teacher meetings are times when significant work of PLCs takes place. Each co-teaching pair had their own planning meetings, so a total of 12 planning meetings were observed over a six-week period, six meetings for each pair. The results are summarized using the four sections of (1) Advantages to Being on an International Team, (2) Challenges to Collaboration, (3) Occurrences of Laughter, (4) and Occurrences of Talking. As each co-teaching pair is unique and because different behaviors were observed for each co-teaching pair, the results of the observations for each co-teaching pair will be reported separately.

Advantages to being on an intercultural team-first pair of co-teachers.

Advantages to being on an intercultural team were observed during the weekly grade level meetings. Some instances of learning from other cultures and some instances of learning different styles or methods of teaching were observed.

During the fourth meeting, the teachers were reviewing the writing samples from their four and five year old students which included some drawings. When the western teacher looked at one drawing, she told the Chinese teacher the drawing reminded her of Mr. Potato Head. When the Chinese teacher told her she did not know what that was, the western teacher looked for pictures on Google to explain with. After the teacher explained what Mr. Potato Head was and how it was used in her country, the Chinese teacher said she had seen it before but not with

the hat. During the same meeting, when planning how to review some words with students, the western teacher recommend the other teacher use a Tic-Tac-Toe game format to review those words with the student. The Chinese teacher did not know what the Tic-Tac-Toe game was so the western teacher explained and demonstrated how to adapt the game to a learning context.

The Chinese teacher shared one way she felt communicating in Chinese and English was different during the fifth meeting. She described the Chinese method as sometimes saying, "Don't do that" but here she uses "I" messages or shares feelings. In Chinese, she said they do not share feelings but instead are more direct in telling someone to do something.

Examples of the teachers sharing different teaching styles and methods were also observed. During the second meeting, after the Chinese teacher shared some students' observations of the real bird's nest they had in the classroom for the current unit of inquiry, the western teacher shared an idea of using a chart to organize the student's observations. Then, the western teacher shared an experience she had having students observe a snail and developing hypotheses they could investigate. This led to both teachers sharing their experiences with scientific inquiry.

The Chinese teacher shared details of a lesson about how students soaked beans in different kinds of water to see the affects on seed germination during the third meeting. The western teacher shared the idea of using an egg carton for the experiment or even a wet paper towel to reduce the smell of soaking beans and asked whether the seeds should be transferred now or to wait until they grew leaves.

When the team was working on a unit about sharing and friends during the fourth meeting, the western teacher shared an idea about using the recent week's 'Art Monster' (the art teacher dressed in a monster costume) to write a letter to the students asking for advice with a

friendship problem. The teachers laughed as they shared ideas of getting the letter dirty and wrinkled to look like it actually came from an Art Monster. The team also discussed different learning stations for the week.

During the last two meetings, there were many occurrences where one teacher would use language to make recommendations or praise the other teacher's lesson idea, so I made a point to document as many as possible. For example:

Maybe teach them…
Maybe go…
Maybe we could…
We can try…
We can also do…
Should we try again…
I like the idea of…
That is a really good idea.

Challenges to collaboration, first pair of co-teachers.

Some instances, which relate to themes from previous data collection methods, were observed during the planning meetings. The instances were related to the themes of sharing the responsibilities, communication, inclusion of another's ideas, and the partner's skill level.

Instances related to sharing responsibility were observed. During the first meeting, the teachers were discussing lessons and what part of the lesson each was going to prepare. When discussing the student pass-up files containing student assessments for the next year's teacher, the teachers discussed how they would share the responsibility.

One instance of miscommunication was observed as well as numerous translations with parent communications. At the beginning of the third meeting, the teachers were looking at the next week's schedule as adjustments had to be made to accommodate the school-wide Art Week activities. When the western teacher said they needed to sign up for some of the Art Week activities next week there was a misunderstanding of the meaning of 'next week' and the 'week

after next', which the western teacher had to clarify four times. During the first week, the teachers received a parent letter written in Chinese that the Chinese teacher had to translate for the western teacher. An email had to be translated later during that meeting as well when a parent wanted to volunteer to help out in the classroom. The Chinese teacher replied to the parents on both occasions. A recount of how a young student was crying all morning for her 'ayi' (Chinese term roughly equivalent to nanny) was shared. When the ayi came to pick the girl up, the Chinese teacher had to speak to the ayi in Chinese in order to let her know what had happened that morning.

There were instances of including other's ideas and encouragement to share ideas and have mutual agreement. For example, during the third meeting, when the two teachers were reviewing the weekly planner together, wording was used such as, "Is that ok?" "I would like to suggest," and "Maybe we could do that here."   When the teachers were writing a letter to the 'Art Monster' during the fourth meeting, the western teacher asked, "What do we want the letter to say?" As previously mentioned, during the fifth and sixth meeting, the pair used words to include the other's ideas, encourage contribution, and mutual agreement.

One of the concerns shared during previously data collection methods was the partner's skill level, and phonics instruction was listed as an example. During the first meeting, the Chinese teacher expressed that she is sometimes confused as some of the phonics sound very similar to her. The team decides that the western teacher will lead the whole class lesson and then the western teacher plans a phonics activity for the Chinese teacher to do with a small group to reinforce previous instruction.

Occurrence of laughing mini-research, first pair of co-teachers.

Following the same procedures used during observations of the grade level meetings, I tried to document the occurrences of when both teachers were laughing together during the meeting as much as possible in order to have another way of describing the context and teacher interactions (see Table 13).

No occurrences of laughing were documented in the field notes for the second, third, and fifth meeting. The teachers laughed together three times during the fourth meeting and the most during the sixth meeting.

Table 13

Occurrences of Laughing During Co-Teacher Meetings-1st Pair

Meeting	Occurrences
2	0
3	0
4	3
5	0
6	6

Occurrences of talking mini-research, first pair of co-teachers.

Following the same procedures used with the observations of the grade level meetings, I wanted to document how much each teacher was talking and sharing during the planning meetings. On five occasions, I documented the instances of talking with 5-minute samples while still taking detailed notes (see Table 14).

Table 14

Occurrences of Talking During Co-Teacher Meetings-1ˢᵗ Pair (5-Minute Sample)

Meeting	Teacher 1 First Language English	Teacher 2 First Language Chinese
2	19	16
3	18	15
4	13	6
5	16	15
6	10	9

Conversations included preparations for the upcoming Student-Led Conferences and planning for the week.

Advantages to being on an intercultural team, second pair of co-teachers.

Advantages to being on an intercultural team were observed during the weekly grade level meetings. An instance of learning from other cultures and some instances of learning different styles or methods of teaching were observed.

During the fifth meeting the pair discussed an incident which had occurred the day before where a student scratched another child on her face. The western teacher asked the Chinese teacher if she thought it was bad. The Chinese teacher said it depends on the parents. Probably assuming she misunderstood her, the western teacher clarified with saying, "No, how did the injury look?" Not answering the question but instead changing to the perspective of the parents, the Chinese teacher said if the parents had not been Chinese, she would not have sent an email to them. Based on her experience of working previously in a Chinese school, The Chinese teacher wrote a full-page letter to the parents in the student's Communication Book. Probably sensing the injury was serious enough to warrant writing a full-page letter to the parents, the western

teacher asked if a photo should be taken of the injury. The Chinese teacher said they should just wait and see the next day. That morning, the grandmother told the bus monitor that someone had scratched the girl's face so the girl would not be going to school that day. The Chinese teacher told me Chinese parents often complain to protect their children.

Differences in teaching styles and methods were also observed being shared. During the first meeting, the Chinese teacher shared about a recent teaching experience with bubbles, a worksheet, and writing down what students said as they wondered. The western teacher gave her ideas on how to improve the activity. During the second meeting, when discussing the unit of inquiry about scientific inquiry when students had asked if an alligator lives in the river beside school, the Chinese teacher said she would bring in turtles. The western teacher asked, "Why? Why bring them in?" and the Chinese teacher appeared to think for a reason or was caught off guard by the question. She then said she was bringing them in for a Chinese lesson anyway.

Challenges to collaboration, second pair of co-teachers.

Some occurrences were observed which relate to previously identified challenges to collaboration themes. Some instances are related to sharing responsibility, communication, inclusion of ideas, and the partner's skill level.

As with the other co-teaching team observed, there were many instances during the planning meetings that indicated that they were sharing responsibilities. For example, the western teacher worked on the yearbook, portfolio entries, semester reports, and notes in the communication books while the Chinese teacher worked on emailing parents in Chinese, communicating with the bus monitor in Chinese, making portfolio entries, and writing notes in the communication book.

Sometimes the western teacher hinted that the Chinese teacher might help with the responsibilities. During the first meeting she asked, "Do you want to be in charge of…?" when discussing the possibility of making a PowerPoint for parents. The school was piloting an online portfolio system called Storypark where teachers had to upload photos and information online. During the second meeting, the western teacher hinted that if the Chinese teacher could put anything on Storypark (as it has been in operation for most of the school year) that would be "great". She further hinted at the imbalance of shared responsibilities by stating she was also doing the journal reflections herself.

At other times, the western teacher was more direct in mentioning that the responsibilities needed to be shared. When discussing preparations for a sensitive parent meeting, the western teacher told the Chinese teacher she "should contribute to the conversation" during the parent meeting. Also during the second meeting, when discussing the making of a large unit of inquiry paper, the western teacher asked the Chinese teacher, "What part do you want with it?"

Many instances of including or encouraging the inclusion of the partner's ideas were observed. For example:

How do you feel about…?
Anything you want to start with?
Any thoughts?
Do you think…?
What stations are you thinking?
Do you want to…?
Do you like how…?

A partner's skill level was identified as a concern when collaborating. Some examples of a partner's skill level were noted in the observations. As the ability for both teachers to teach phonics lessons was listed as a concern with previous data collection methods, so instances were noted in the observations. During the third meeting, both teachers had shared the portfolio entries

by dividing the class with one teacher completing the portfolio entries for half the class and the other teacher the other half. The western teacher made a comment that the portfolio entries the Chinese teacher was working on with the students were, "all messed up." The Chinese teacher agreed to sort them out with the students. Also during the third meeting, when the Chinese teacher volunteered to sign the class up for Art Week activities, she said she would need the western teacher to show her how to use the link in the email.

Occurrences of laughing mini-research, second pair of co-teachers.

Following the procedure used during the observations of the grade level meetings and the other co-teaching pair's planning meetings, I tried to document the occurrences of when both teachers were laughing together, or individually, during the meeting as much as possible in order to have another way of describing the context and teacher interactions (see Table 15). One occurrence of laughing was documented during the first meeting when the western teacher made a comment about the upcoming conference day and the Chinese teacher laughed.

Table 15

Occurrences of Laughing During a Co-Teacher Meetings-2nd Pair

Meeting	Occurrences
1	1
2	0
3	0
4	0
5	0
6	0

Occurrences of talking mini-research, second pair of co-teachers.

Following the same procedures used with the observations of the grade level meetings and the other co-teaching pair's planning meetings, I wanted to document how much each teacher was talking and sharing during the planning meetings. On three occasions, I documented the instances talking during an approximately 5-minute span each while still taking detailed notes (see Table 16).

Table 16

Occurrences of Talking During Co-Teacher Meetings-2nd Pair (5-Minute Sample)

Meeting	Teacher 1 First Language English	Teacher 2 First Language Chinese
2	30	26
5	13	6
6	18	14

Post-Observation Interviews

After observing six weeks of grade level meetings and co-teacher planning meetings, I interviewed each case study participant again in order to have a more in-depth study of each case. The hope was that the participant would open up more to discussing the successes and challenges faced in regards to collaborating in their intercultural PLC and their responses would allow me to follow up on the themes that I identified during the observations. After becoming more familiar with me during the six weeks of observations, I hoped participants would open up more during the individual post-observation interviews, providing additional data, as compared to the initial pre-observation interviews. Interviews lasted for approximately 60 minutes.

I asked each case study participant questions using the *Post-Observation Interview Protocol* explained previously (see Appendix L).

Data from the background section will be used in the narrative. The other data will be organized and presented in the six sections of (1) Advantages to Being on an Intercultural Team, (2) Disadvantages to Being on an Intercultural Team, (3) Challenges to Collaboration, (4) Participation in Grade Level Meetings, (5) Reflections From Being a Case Study Participant, and (6) Advice to Give Another Intercultural Team. All data was either aligned with existing codes or new codes were created. Sub codes were also added for more detail.

Advantages to being on an intercultural team.

When asked about the advantages to being on an intercultural team, the teachers described learning about another culture's perspectives and opinions and learning about other teaching styles as advantages.

Three of the participants commented that learning about another culture is an advantage to being on an intercultural team. One participant described how she learned how to put more importance on the individual child instead of the group. The first example was when a child could not eat the pork item in the lunch so the child only had 3 food items when all of the other students had four food items. At first, the Chinese teacher thought the western teacher was making a big deal out of nothing. But the western teacher convinced her that the child should have another option instead of the pork and have four food items like everybody else. She believes now it is important to try and meet the needs of every child.

Another participant shared how she learned about other cultural beliefs from an incident where a child had a minor injury. The Chinese teacher wrote a whole page in the communication book where the western teacher felt a simple note, to go along with the note already written by the nurse, would have been enough communication. The Chinese teacher explained that she

agreed normally that would be the case, but did so because the parents were Chinese, "I know Chinese families and I know that this is a big deal for them."

Learning about different cultural beliefs regarding gender roles was also mentioned. The participant shared that she was uncomfortable with comments made by other teachers towards children in her classroom wearing some of the items from the dramatic play area or their behavior in regards to gender roles. She told me, "Teachers will say, 'Don't cry. You're a boy. Boy's don't cry,' or maybe dress up stuff, 'Oh are you a boy? I'm sorry, are you a girl? Why are you wearing that? You're a girl. Girls don't wear that." She mentions she feels the comments are made in a playful way but, "…that struck a nerve like that just sounds like not something I'm used to hearing or would say." One participant told me that she felt learning about different cultural celebrations, parent perspectives, and communication were advantages to being on intercultural teams. Just recently, the class had been learning a lot about the Chinese national holiday of Dragon Boat Festival:

> It's my third year in China and I've always wondered a little bit what it is, and I know some of it, but this year, [her co-teacher] did quite a lot with the kids and we had some parents come in and make the dumplings. I think, especially this year, I've learned more about the celebrations, the Chinese New Year, the Dragon Boat Festival.

She also shared how she and her Chinese co-teacher talked about the Chinese parents' perspectives.

Learning about different teaching styles was also mentioned as an advantage to being on an intercultural team:

> The only thing I can think of is we've talked to a little bit about some of the more traditional Chinese approaches to teaching, so whereas we almost we do ours is completely different. Sometimes they will come up, "Oh, I really knew the Chinese school would be completely different. So that's interesting to hear about. Of course, [not] just the more structured textbooks about learning, but also to understand as well that that's what the parents are more familiar with. This is totally different from how they went to school.

One participant cited learning about the differences in mathematics instruction. Though her educational method connected math concepts to real life experiences, she said she still did not connect mathematics to practical situations when she taught, but she has since been inspired by watching a western teacher's lesson on patterning at this school. Two teachers saw advantages to contrasting instructional methods. One western teacher expressed she had learned more about whole-class instruction, usually from Chinese teachers. A Chinese teacher said she had learned more about differentiation. And finally, one participant expressed how she was learning deeper questioning techniques by watching her co-teacher ask what she initially thought were questions which were too difficult, but she told me how students respond well now to the challenge.

Disadvantages to being on an intercultural team.

One case study participant felt that understanding different cultural perspectives was a disadvantage to being in an intercultural team. The Chinese teacher cited the incident with the student injury already mentioned as an advantage by a western teacher. The western teacher thought a note to parents from the nurse was enough. The western teacher was surprised her Chinese co-teacher felt the need to write the parents a full-page response in the Communication Book as well as the principal requiring a photograph, documentation, and an incident report from her. The western teacher said, "For me, it wasn't that big of a deal." But the Chinese teacher disagreed and felt, "Chinese parents would be expecting more detail," but a western parent would not.

A difference of opinion of what is a professional approach to work was cited as a disadvantage when a western teacher noticed some teachers using cell phones at meetings.

One participant felt different levels of initiative can be a disadvantage as well. She cited an experience with the Chinese teaching assistant. In a previous school, she described an

assistant's internal thinking with, "Oh, the poster's on the ground, I'll just put that back." But with her assistant here she feels the teaching assistant does not take initiative and has to be told what to do, "Hey, can you put the posters on the wall, they're on the floor." She said she felt the situation was part cultural and part the individual initiative of looking around to see what needs to be done.

Three participants mentioned disadvantages related to communication in regards to appropriate teacher-student interactions and teacher-parent interactions when asked about any 'culture shock' moments. One participant described how she was surprised by another teacher's, "…harshness in her tone, the volume in her voice, and the words that she was using to reprimand the child," while noticing the child's reaction of what she felt was shame and embarrassment. She felt some teachers used a different tone, words, and body language while talking down to children, clapping really loud, or yelling where she describes herself as, "I'm down low. I'm using a little bit more warm and fuzzes."

When a Chinese teacher was describing an incident where a western teacher in the Learning Support department told parents, "You need to have your child tested for autism," during the conversation she shared she felt, "Specific to that culture is truly aggressive and strong."

Challenges to collaboration.

I wanted to collect more data about the challenges to collaboration on an intercultural team from each participant's perspective. When I wrote the Post-Observation Interview Protocol, I included questions that asked participants to comment on the five most common previous responses in regards to challenges to collaboration on an intercultural team. Those areas were (1) sharing the responsibilities, (2) communication, (3) a colleague's motivation, (4) a colleague's

skill level, and (5) time. As sometimes, with previous data collection methods, respondents would at times be referring to their co-teaching partnership and other times referring to their grade level team, I asked each question twice, once specifically referring to the grade level team and the second time specially referring to the co-teacher partnership.

Sharing the responsibilities.

When asked to recount any challenges sharing responsibilities on the grade level team, one participant described silence at the beginning of the year when team members were working on big projects, but that this is no longer an issue. Another participant felt there were not many challenges as the responsibilities were evenly distributed, "Whenever we get visiting students, we're on a rotation schedule. We take turns doing the minutes, the agenda. As far as grade level team, I think that's ok." One western participant described in detail how the team tried to divide responsibilities but the foreign teachers take on more responsibilities. She said Chinese teachers may not be able to take some responsibilities where a high level of English is needed.

When asked to tell about any challenges to sharing responsibilities within their co-teaching partnership, participants mentioned communication and different levels of initiative from their co-teachers. One participant shared that during a previous year, with a different co-teacher, how she felt the co-teaching pair did not discuss how to share the responsibilities before the year started which caused a problem on the second day as she described the western teacher complaining about her to another western teacher saying she taught all the lessons that day. The participant was confused, as she had thought she was sharing the responsibility. Another teacher mentioned the co-teaching pair discussing essential agreements at the beginning of the school year. She also mentioned that her western co-teacher would handle the emails with western parents and also check her English writing. A third participant described how she felt that she

takes on a lot, "I feel like I take on all of the paperwork, the reports, evaluations, learning support documents, portfolio pieces, initiation of curriculum, communication with parents." She felt bad asking for her co-teacher to help out more because, "I feel like it's not received well or it's not very open. She's not very open to doing it." Though the fourth participant shares, "I think my co-teacher is quite great in taking on responsibilities as well, and especially recently I find we're doing a lot more."

Communication.

Participants also shared how challenges with communication can occur on the grade level team. One participant mentioned it can take too long to discuss things and sometimes a decision is not made. She mentioned frustration with another time the team had a large discussion and made a decision but then the next day they did something completely different. Another participant described how she typically avoids communication when it becomes a challenge, "…I just withdraw and I just sit there and it's written all over my face. It's really horrible." However, another participant describes when she is silent in a meeting, it is for a different reason:

> For the grade level meeting, most of time, I were doing if not my turn to talk, I still will to respect to listen. I think this is a culture for other Chinese people because our ... When we are learning at school or in the college or we always just listen to the teacher first. If they didn't ask you something, and you also agreed, you would not say, "Oh, I want to say something, blah, blah, blah." Think most of time, it's for your personality, yeah.

When asked about any possible challenges communicating with their co-teachers, one participant told me, "Well, the language difference is the biggest one and so neither of us can really express things the way we need to, to be effective sometimes." One Chinese participant feels that communication has caused misunderstandings about how the responsibilities are shared.

Colleague's motivation.

Several points were mentioned when asked about any challenges related to a colleague's perceived level of motivation on the grade level team. One participant shared situations she feels demonstrates a lack of motivation by some of her colleague's on the team:

> I feel that in our grade level meetings, some people are so quiet and don't say anything. It's hard to take that as ... I don't know. I feel like if you're truly motivated, how can you sit so silently for such a long time, so it's hard to take that on participation as are not to take it as lack of motivation. Especially I think if someone's bringing cellphones to the meeting. To me, that's clearly you're not interested at all. I don't know how to deal with it really because I haven't done that anything, because I'm not sure what you do if some of these is not motivated.

Only one participant described the difference between her and her co-teacher's motivation.

> I think we just have different ideas of motivation maybe. For example, I do put a lot of thought and energy into our curriculum and the different forms of documentation and analysis of our work, trying to get creative and where we're going to go with things, really trying to get our work unique, that's where my motivation is. I think my co-teacher just prefers more of a different approach, just like it's more laid back or keeping it simple, taking it easy, maybe just different ideas of motivation.

Colleague's skill level.

None of the participants expressed challenges with their colleague's skill level on the grade level team. One participant also mentioned that team members had different skills:

> For example, some are able to think in that whole class kind of way, strategies that kind of incorporate breadth and unison among everyone and some are better with assessment and analysis. I feel like I'm really strong in small group stuff and really in-depth work in again the research and documentation side of it.

However, when discussing how a colleague's skill level can be a challenge within the co-teaching partnership, participants shared more about differences. One western participant commented on how she feels she has to write the reports, do the evaluations, and do the paperwork.

All four of the participants commented on Chinese teachers teaching English phonics. Two of the teachers mentioned that Chinese teachers were told they cannot take the lead in phonic lessons, but they can assist or work with a small group. One western teacher expressed that she understood how teaching phonics could be difficult for the Chinese teachers, "…my co-teacher, at the beginning of the year, did point out she doesn't like teaching phonics and literacy, of course I understand it's teaching the basics of language and your second language…"

When one Chinese participant talked about a colleague's skill level, she did not talk about it as a challenge, but as an inspiration:

> Now this year [her co-teacher] show me how individual, it's the whole station can look like, solving the different things and I just go, "Oh, my goodness." It's just that's… I want to be like that…I offer them to provide different levels and specific children's needs. That's great.

Time as a challenge.

In regards to a challenge with time within the grade level team, two of the participants shared that they did not feel there were challenges regarding time and one specifically mentioned the 90-minutes long weekly grade level planning meeting as providing enough time for the team to collaborate. The other two participants shared that they felt the team spent too much time discussing agenda items. One teacher felt, "Sometimes discussions take so long, or working on a rubric takes so long because there's so many people with different ideas." Teacher responsibilities outside meeting time were mentioned as, "…just not having enough time in the day to do it, time to do it with the children, not necessarily with grade levels or co-teacher."

For the co-teaching teams, most teachers felt time was not a challenge. One participant shared how she felt having an essential agreement made with her co-teacher at the beginning of the year helped.

Time is a challenge with her co-teaching partnership according to one participant as she feels she is responsible for the assessments, documentation, reports, and other paperwork. She feels she has to use more time working on these because, "…our language, our writing, and our language skills is just a big difference and that can make things difficult for either of us to contribute to the different curriculums."

Participation in grade level meetings.

For collaboration during a grade level meeting to be possible, participation from all team members is ideal. As mentioned before, I observed some teachers rarely ever speaking while sometimes other teachers dominated the conversations. Teachers appeared to have different comfort levels speaking English. When I asked participants if they could provide any insight into my observations, the most common responses were related to the topic of the conversation, English proficiency or confidence, and one teacher dominating some of the conversations. Sometimes teachers would encourage others to participate in the grade level meeting discussions.

All four of the case study participants told me they felt the topic of the conversation affected teachers' participation. Comments about Chinese teachers participating in conversations about Chinese language lessons, but less likely to participate in conversations about all other subjects, were common. One Chinese teacher told me:

> I don't mind they took over the discussions, it's more related to them. If they're talking about specific language assessment it's really hard for Chinese teacher to talking about English literacy part. It's quite hard for us. Sometimes I don't care about that. I feel like I'm learning. I listen to them and what they're talking about, it's just like ... There's something very little I can contribute, so I just listen at that moment.

Another Chinese teacher told me, "If the question is about us, I will reply them. If not, something would happen with the other class, and I will just listen." When I described an example of only three of the six teachers talking about math assessments, she explained as she already knew

about the math assessments, she did not need to talk. She also added, "We all know what the assessment looks like…I think we all know it already. I don't know why they got lots of questions." One of the western teachers explained that she understands the majority of the work "falls on certain individuals" so the conversation will "naturally fall on them," but also expressed that some Chinese teachers use that as an excuse to not participate while some push themselves in sharing the responsibilities. The other western teacher also noticed that some conversations involve just the three western teachers and she thought how boring it must be for everyone else and wondered, "Why isn't anyone else contributing? They must have an idea as well."

On a team with teachers who have different levels of English proficiency, the case study participants felt confidence with English and the ability to comprehend fast conversations affected participation in grade level meeting conversations. One western teacher told me she felt that if "English teachers are going at it," it probably gets quite fast and, "a little bit hard to understand." The other western teacher felt the meetings could be intimidating.

When some teachers are not participating in a grade level meeting discussion as much, the most common response was to try and encourage others to participate. She added that she wants others to feel part of the group and provide them with a comfortable space to say something, even if just one thing. Another teacher said she has turned to someone on the team before and said, "Ok, so your turn." Another teacher thought it would be helpful if someone tells each person, "It's your turn." She also feels others can be encouraged by praising people who are sharing to show their input is valued, for example, "Oh yea. Great idea. I'm glad that you've mentioned that…"

Analysis codes after post-observation interviews.

After analyzing data from the post-observation interviews, related previous themes were combined with additional themes from the post-observation interviews into the six major areas of: (1) advantages to being on an intercultural team, (2) disadvantages to being on an intercultural team, (3) challenges to collaboration, (4) participation in grade level meetings, and (5) reflections by case study participants, and (6) advice for other intercultural teams with *Analysis Codes After Post-Observation Interviews* (see Appendix W). The *Summary of Data Alignment with Research Questions* (see Appendix X) was then created which lists all codes and sub codes to date in order to categorize specific examples of support from grade level planning meeting and co-teacher planning meeting observation notes.

Early Years Principal Interview

After the post-observation interviews, I interviewed the Early Years (EY) Principal for the purposes of discovering more information about the context of the Early Years School's intercultural PLCs and to follow up on the themes that I identified through previous data collection methods. During the 30-minute interview, I asked the principal questions using the *Interview Protocol-EY Principal* (see Appendix N). The Interview Protocol-EY Principal was self developed and was divided into five section sections, (1) Demographics and Background, (2) Agreements, (3) Collaboration, (4) Intercultural Teams, and (5) Case Study Participation.

Data from the background section will be used in the narrative. The other data will be organized and presented in the six sections of (1) Agreements, (2) Advantages to Being on an Intercultural Team, (3) Disadvantages to Being on an Intercultural Team, (4) Supporting Collaboration, and (5) Advice to Give to Another Intercultural Team. All data was either aligned

with existing codes or new codes were created. Sub codes were also added to existing codes when appropriate for more detail.

Agreements.

When I asked if the early years school had established any agreements, the British principal told me that as a team, they quite often establish agreements for common practices. For example, there are agreements regarding playtimes and lunchtimes. She added that grade level teams and classroom teams, or co-teacher partnerships, also develop agreements. The whole school agreements are not stagnate. For example, the *Essential Agreements-Early Years Playground* (see Appendix Y), are reviewed by the whole school, which includes new teachers every year, and adapted as necessary. The playground agreement includes not only agreements about appropriate behavior, but the behavior of teachers on duty as well. The British principal told me the agreements include the behavior of teachers because safety is a big concern and what is safe is interpreted differently within this intercultural team, "We've had to work quite strongly on defining what we mean by things that perhaps would be commonplace in my experience at home.

Advantages to being on an intercultural team.

The principal feels there are several advantages to being on an intercultural team, to include learning about different cultures, learning about different teaching styles, and enriching the education of the children. She shared an experience of when she was a teacher and realized that her teaching style of teaching to the whole class for main teaching points in the UK was very different from what was being used where she was working in the Czech Republic as whole class time was mainly for songs. Having an intercultural team with many differences was mentioned as being a big advantage for the children's education.

The children that we have are also in that situation where they've come from different backgrounds, different experiences, different family traditions, different expectations. Just having an understanding of that from a personal point of view, to be able to assist those children through those changes is quite a big thing.

Disadvantages to being on an intercultural team.

The principal also felt there are disadvantages to being on an intercultural team as well in regards to communication, understanding different cultural backgrounds, and differences in teacher's backgrounds. With western teachers, Chinese teachers, and locally hired teaching assistants, she described having three varying levels of English on staff, which causes quite a few misunderstandings. She mentions how she tries to make staff aware that misunderstandings can occur.

Having different cultural backgrounds has also been a disadvantage, especially if a teacher has not lived out of their home country before. The principal described a situation years ago where a Canadian teacher in her late 50's joined the school. As she never lived abroad before, she found the whole experience of living in China overwhelming and quit after only two weeks.

Supporting collaboration.

The early years principal felt collaboration is supported three ways. Most importantly, collaboration is supported through the weekly meetings that occur during the school day, "We have a collaborative planning meeting which really helps to create accents of working together, planning together, creating together, rather than being left alone in classrooms to figure it out themselves." Second, she feels having grade level coordinators has created positive collaborating experiences for teachers with different experiences.

Developing relationships and building a positive sense of community is the third way of supporting collaboration. She feels it is important to give time to build those relationships, during

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orientation time at the beginning of the school year or times after school, to provide opportunities to get the relationships going. For example, she mentioned arranging holiday socials, having potluck lunches, or just having casual time to go to the school's café for coffee. She added teachers have shared with her, "You know, even though we went for coffee and it was meant to be a moment to have stepped out, we were able to sort some things out, because we were in a more casual setting.'"

Advice to give to another intercultural team.

Having an open mind is what the principal described as the best advice she could give another intercultural team:

> Trying not to come with expectations of the other person from the very beginning, unless it's required of the position. I think that's an immediate expectation of two people from two different cultures inhabit the same experiences in working fully together from the moment come in contact with each other, is just out of reach. I think to aim towards that is perfectly reasonable, and just having steps in place to be able to work towards that. Baby steps, don't take giant leaps and expect it all to change. I think that being accepting of other people's experiences as well, just because it's different, doesn't mean it's wrong. I think that's a big part of being able to be successful, being able to listen to each other, and nurture the working relationship, to be able to get to the point where it's a partnership that functions harmoniously.

Conclusion

It this intercultural PLC, teachers have different cultural experiences, educational and teaching experiences, training, and proficiencies in English. Though the teachers in this case study feel being on an intercultural team has advantages, they also acknowledge disadvantages and challenges with collaboration. This chapter shared those advantages, disadvantages, and challenges. Chapter 5 will include a case study narrative, a summary of the results, and a discussion of the themes.

Chapter 5

This chapter summarizes the results of the intercultural PLC research and is organized by (1) Statement of Problem, (2) Case Study Narrative, (3) Review of Methodology, (4) Discussion of the Results, (5) Implications for Practice, and (6) Recommendations for Further Research.

Statement of Problem

The effectiveness of PLCs depends on the ability of educators to collaborate. Attempts to promote collaboration among educators inevitably collide with the tradition of teacher isolation (DuFour, 2011). However, when educators collaborate, the process of reflecting on teaching and learning in order to determine what is best for the students leads to discussions about values, beliefs, assumptions, expectations, perspectives, and behaviors. This process of questioning activities and challenging values almost certainly leads to conflict (Hord, 1997).

International schools (for the purposes of this paper defined as schools where staff of different nationalities teach an international curriculum to students of different nationalities) interested in using the PLC model, may have magnified or unusual challenges when compared to schools where the teachers come from the same culture. At many international schools, teachers are recruited from various countries therefore bringing different cultural experiences to the school's teaching teams.

In addition, some international schools, while using English as the main language of instruction, hire teachers from the host culture. The local teachers may not be proficient in English, and may have very different cultural beliefs, educational backgrounds, and training and yet are expected to work collaboratively on intercultural teams whose members come from different cultures. Thus further, specific challenges are faced in establishing collaboration in an intercultural PLC, when compared to PLCs composed of a mono-cultural background, as

reported by previous research. "One of the key factors in successful collaboration is reconciling or accepting differing educational philosophies. These differences may well occur with a team of teachers from the same culture, but are even more likely to arise with teachers from different countries" (Carless & Walker, 2006). What are the unique challenges to the implementation of PLCs that rely heavily on collaboration within an intercultural context?

Case Study Narrative

Understanding and appreciation of this research study would not be possible, without first understanding some of what makes each case study participant who they are as people and as teachers. The four case study participants, Lan, Jieng-wei, Olivia and Emma (names are pseudonyms) are brought together through their work within an intercultural PLC though they have different cultural backgrounds, educational and teaching experiences, and English proficiency. The challenges they face and their thoughts about collaborating within an intercultural PLC will be shared.

Meet Lan.

Lan laughs as she shares with me, "I always wanted to be a psychologist." Lan is Chinese and was born in what she describes as a little village in Sichuan. The village is divided into 12 groups with her family being in a group with 14 other families who were close to each other. She went to:

> …a very small country school…The country school, as you can imagine, there's no window, there's no glass, it's only hole. And the table is really, really bad, the floor is mud. It's kind of the, it's dirt. Yeah, just really, really like a basic. The school is built by the soil, kind of thing, no windows and only hole, and the wood, wood things."

The teacher used a chalk and black board. "We would all sit at the table, face the teacher, and we listen. What we're told is what we get. There's no encouraging to do independent thinking, we just do what we're told. That's kind of thing we're trained." One room held the four, five, and six

year olds. "I still remember when the four years old have the lesson and the five and six would turn from a side to another side." In the higher grades, there was one class for each grade. When I asked her how many students would be in a class, she said, "Because it's in a small village and the children is not so many, I think it's 20-30." But when Lan later went to what she describes as a "big town countryside school," each grade level had two classes per grade with about 60 children in each class. "That's normal there."

As a young adult, Lan stayed in the Sichuan Province where she attended Sichuan University and earned a Bachelor's degree in Food Science and Engineering. She later attended East China Normal University, with a full scholarship, in the much larger city of Shanghai, where she earned a Master's of Education degree majoring in Pre-School Education.

Lan's first teaching job in 2008 was at a private Kindergarten in China. She described the building as, "It's a concrete building, of course, and it's nice, big, and clean, and bright, and it's shaped like the L. We got a bathroom here, and they ran a play area here, and this is quite big. Compared to my experiences, it's huge." Though the classrooms did not have Internet access, there was Internet access in the teacher's office. She taught 22 students her first year which was also the first year the school was attempting to provide an international education by blending local kindergarten curriculum in Chinese with some English instruction. "When the international education started, they start put in English, that was put in, and trying to get more and more international education things in there." During that time, she was the first to co-teach with a foreign teacher. She found the teaching challenging as she found the teaching ideas very different from what she learned at the university and from what she experienced as a little girl. "That's a really hard time for me, it's been a really, really hard time." But Lan wanted to learn

the different teaching methods. "We want to do other theory, but still hard. There's no fresh things coming, and we want to do like that, but how?"

After having one year of experience working with a co-teacher, for her second year, she was promoted to be in charge of the curriculum and provide teacher trainings. Though Lan was quickly promoted to an administrative position in the private Kindergarten, she left the position to be a teaching assistant at an international school in Shanghai. When I asked her why, she explained first how she was struggling to make a living, as local teachers are not paid very much and she had to work other part-time jobs. Lan was making 2700CNY ($436US) per month after taxes. As the only child, after paying her living expenses, she wanted to send money to her parents who live in a very small village. "I kind of got a responsibility of my family, and my mom and my dad really have a bad healthy, and she always going to the hospital, and that stress me a lot." The country house is not doing well. " …Our house is really, really broken because of the earthquake, that thing is getting bad and bad, so we have to rebuild on more." She describes her dad as a country doctor and her mom as a farmer. "I have stress about my family, so I try my best to help them, I want, but this situation, I can do nothing."

She also explained that she found the administrative work very difficult after only one year of experience in the classroom:

> I got quite excess at the last year, the third year, but my stressed out, and I think my personality is not really good at administration, that's my thinking, because I don't want to cost a lot of my time to think about dealing with teachers and dealing with my principal, because it's really hard.

She felt the job was negatively affecting her health and wanted a change. "I really want to focus on teaching curriculum and teacher development…" Though she applied for a position at her current school when she graduated, it was not until years later that she was thrilled and impressed to be contacted for an interview:

'Wow, they're still kept my file, this must be a really good school, because they had kept the document for the people who applied.' I said, 'Oh, it must be really good.' Maybe I just want have a see, and I came here and said, 'Hmm, that's what I want, I think' so I just quit my job, I came here.

After three years at the private Kindergarten, Lan worked as a teaching assistant for an international school in Shanghai, which follows the International Baccalaureate's (IB) Primary Years Program (PYP) international curriculum in English. The following year, she moved to a larger international school, her current school, also as a teaching assistant. For the past two years, Lan has been a co-teacher sharing instructional responsibilities for her Pre-Kindergarten class of 16 students. She travels 50 minutes on the staff bus to get to school.

Lan's favorite part of teaching is seeing the children changing from the beginning to the end, especially the students who were struggling in their first months. "Its good to be a teacher at that moment."

Meet Jieng-wei.

"In the college, I got experience for the part-time job, for teaching. I love this job, so I changed to study about education. Then, I become a teacher." Jieng-wei proudly tells me she was born and raised in Shanghai, China where, "I'll feel much more..how to..proud of the city." For university, she went to a technology university, which is for learning a trade, not for learning how to be a teacher. She was working towards earning a Bachelor's degree in International Trade. While at university, Jieng-wei held a part-time job as a teaching assistant at an English training centered catering to afterschool lessons for children in the afternoons. "When I'm teaching the children I feel from in my heart I feel I love it. I just love it, no reason." Six months later, after she graduated, Jieng-wei continued teaching English at the training center full-time for a total of two years. She then took on a part-time job teaching the Confucian in a Chinese local school for grades Kindergarten through Grade 3 while studying at the Shanghai Normal

University for an Early Years Teaching Certificate during the next two years. She describes the school as big with a very big playground. Teachers would sit at a large desk with a computer and students would have individual desks and chairs. While teaching at the Chinese local school, she had approximately 30-40 students in each class. She taught the Confucians through songs, games, Chinese characters, and stories. The children would sit at their desks in rows with their hands behind their back. "Yeah, so they pay attention that you listen." Jieng-wei smiled and laughed as she rolled her head around in circles showing me how students would roll their heads while reading the Confucian. "That's very traditional from the beginning of China. When the children some learning some basic for the Chinese stories, they always doing like this." She explains why, "I feel if they just sit and read, they were not very interesting. I gave them some game for them, and they like to roll their heads just like the older people in China."

After two years teaching Confucian at a Chinese local school and having earned an Early Years Teaching Certificate, Jieng-wei looked into full-time work in either a local school or an international school. "I feel like I would like to go into the international school maybe. It's very open minded than the local school." Jieng-wei soon accepted a position at an international school in Shanghai, which also follows the IB's PYP programme. She taught Chinese and was a teaching assistant full-time for Kindergarten. There were nine students in the class, which eventually increased to 14.

After one year, her friend asked her if she was interested in being a co-teacher at her larger international school instead. She told her friend, "Of course I would like to try. I want to be a co-teacher, not a teach aid, just a teaching assistant." Jieng-wei accepted the position at her current school as a teaching assistant understanding she had a chance to move up to a co-teacher

position if she showed she could handle the additional responsibilities. When asked about taking on the additional responsibilities she told me:

> I feel I loved to teach the children. When they got lost, the things you teaching them, and you will feel very proud, so I just love it. That's why I want to be a teacher, not just doing some…I love to doing some work, but I want to take more responsibility for myself.

She did and was promoted to co-teacher during her second year and just completed her third year with the school. Because she lives farther away from school than the staff buses travel, Jieng-wei rides approximately 90 minutes using a combination of staff bus and subway to get to school.

Jieng-wei also owns a restaurant with her boy friend, which she spends considerable time after school hours at. She told me her boyfriend is good at restaurants and the previous owner did not want it. Along with her full-time job, the restaurant keeps her extremely busy. She smiles with, "It's fine for me."

Jieng-wei's favorite part of being a teacher is the pride. "When you're teaching something and they quickly pick it or something you want to, they learn, that's making you feel so proud of them, and so happy, also about yourself."

Meet Olivia.

"Initially, I went into the field not really having any intention of becoming a teacher…I wanted to be the world's best mom…but it wasn't until I was in my undergrad and I met a PC instructor who really inspired me. Just the way she talked about education, the way she talked about children and advocating and changing the field was so inspiring. I was so motivated. From then, I was hooked." Olivia is an American who grew up in San Francisco, California. She went to a private Chinese/Christian school from pre-school through Grade 5, a private French/Catholic school for Grades 6-8, and then to a public high school. She remembers class sizes being from 20-33 students.

She went to San Francisco State University. She earned a Bachelor's degree majoring in Child Development with the concentration of Young Children and Family. She continued at San Francisco State University to earn a Master's degree majoring in Early Childhood Education.

While working on her undergraduate internship, Olivia worked part-time once or twice a week as the only substitute teacher at a private, Reggio-inspired preschool in San Francisco. Then during her undergraduate and graduate degree work, she worked full-time for two years as a co-teacher in another Reggio-inspired school. Olivia's master's thesis focused on her one and one-half month long volunteer work in Chengdu, China at a public kindergarten demonstrating what inquiry looks like in a play-based curriculum as part of an ongoing San Francisco State University project with Chengdu principals. Her time in Chengdu helped her to reflect on whom she was as a play-based teacher and as an American from San Francisco when compared to her experiences at the Kindergarten. As she previously only worked with 12 students at a time with a co-teacher, she asked to work with 10 four and five-year-old students at a time in a separate room instead of the whole class of 44 students at once. Olivia worked with a co-teacher and a translator. She used an integrated curriculum but had another teacher work with her as she did not know the students or what they were currently studying. In addition she told me, "I didn't have a relationship with them and those are key things for me to plan a curriculum." One of her lessons was based on the very common lesson in America about "oobleck," made out of cornstarch and water. Oobleck is a substance that has the properties of both a liquid and a solid and is inspired by Dr. Seuss's book, *Bartholomew and the Oobleck*. "We just started from there and a lot of questions came up of what the material was and how we can replicate it and then it just kind of took its own direction from there." Observations of her lessons by and presentations for local teachers were common occurrences. As Olivia talks about her experiences, it is clear

that educational research is Olivia's passion and she was not there to just teach but to learn from them as well.

Having fallen in love with international education and recently finishing her graduate degree, Olivia joined her current international school in Shanghai this year. She travels by staff bus which usually takes between 45-60 minutes to get to school.

Having completed her first year of teaching now, Olivia tells me that she loves teaching:

> I will state that I think it's one of the least appreciated, unacknowledged and not so respected profession just in general among a lot of people, along with some of the lowest paying that I feel for the work that we do, but I do feel it's really rewarding and it's such an empowering feeling to know that you influence children and families and other educators on a daily basis, the way that we do.

Her favorite part of being a teacher is the research side. "I love sharing my work and I love presenting, sharing with other educators what I found."

Meet Emma.

"When I was doing my first degree, I've volunteered in an elementary school once a week for three years and they really loved it, so that's when I knew that I wanted to do teaching." Emma is Canadian who was born and raised in Calgary, Alberta, Canada.

Emma earned her Bachelor's degree majoring in Honors History from the University of Western Ontario in Ontario, Canada. Emma earned her second Bachelor's degree majoring in Elementary Education from the University of Alberta.

After her first year in university, she considered switching to a major in education but her dad thought it was a poor choice as she should diversify to have more employment options. She volunteered at an elementary school for one morning a week for three years:

> I really loved that. I loved being with the kids and I liked the diversity of teaching, being with other people, adults, and children. I think for me too I really wanted to make a difference in the world. Not just sit and type numbers that may or may not ever get used

but I really like that I can actually have an impact and help somebody develop or struggle. If they are struggling, I can help them with that.

Though she loved history, she pursued her second degree and became a teacher.

Though Emma was educated in Canada, she never taught in her home country. Her first teaching job was at a Canadian Islamic school in Saudi Arabia. The school based its curriculum on the Alberta curriculum, which Emma was familiar with from university. During her first year, she taught Kindergarten with both boys and girls in her class. The following year, she taught a class of 18 Grade 1 boys as boys and girls were educated in separate classrooms from Grade 1 through Grade 3. The school had a special exemption to have both girls and boys in the same school. At her school, men were not allowed during working hours. Then at Grade 4, the boys would go to a separate school where girls and women were not allowed. Though she missed teaching the girls, she says she learned a lot about classroom management having a room full of boys with no co-teacher and only an assistant a couple of hours a week.

After two years in Saudi Arabia, Emma taught Kindergarten, with a teaching assistant, for two years in an international IB school using the PYP programme in Wushi, China. During her first year, her class had 20 students and during her second year her class had 14 students. Living in a city in China with not many other expats and working at a really small school where she was the only teacher on her grade level, made life difficult for Emma. Though she worked on a team, they did not have collaborative meetings.

Wanting to continue her IB experience and keep trying to learn and do better with the PYP in a larger school with more classes at each grade level, Emma joined her current international school in Shanghai this year walking approximately 5 minutes to get to school. Her grade level team of one increased to a grade level team of six teachers and three assistants with the move, "…which was a bit of a struggle but it has been good."

After five years as a classroom teacher Emma tells me being a teacher is not always as wonderful as being a student teacher. "I think it's still really great, but there's so many more responsibilities now, then I think sometimes that can be a bit overwhelming and sort of take my focus from the more important things of the kids." She describes the best parts of being a teacher as, being with the kids, watching them learn, especially after they were struggling and suddenly they understand, and realizing at the end of the year how far everybody has come.

Bringing them together.

Lan, Jieng-wei, Olivia, and Emma all work together now at a school which is very different from most of their experiences. The school is a private, for profit, international school in Shanghai, China, which consists of three separate schools, the Early Years School, the Primary School, and the Secondary School sharing one campus. Approximately 800 students from almost 50 different nationalities attend the school with the most common nationalities being American, German, and Korean. Approximately 130 teachers at the school represent 28 different nationalities. The 16 acre campus has 10 major buildings, approximately 100 classrooms, four sports fields, three theatres, two gyms, two indoor swimming pools (15m and 25m), an art wing, a music wing, and much more. Lan, Jieng-wei, Olivia, and Emma work in the Early Years School which educates 3-year-old students in the Nursery classes through students in Kindergarten. Tuition for a child attending the Early Years School ranges from 135,800RMB ($21,945US) to 169,750RMB ($27,432US) per academic year. According to the school's web page, the early years classrooms are the largest in Shanghai. With a maximum of 16 students in a class, each class has approximately 170 square meter (1,800 square foot) of space to include dedicated bathrooms, and eating areas, along with numerous educational and technological resources. The early years building also has a large community room, two fully equipped

playgrounds, a mini soccer pitch, shaded soft surface play areas, and a training pool for swimming lessons.

The Pre-Kindergarten grade level where Lan, Jieng-wei, Olivia, and Emma work is comprised of three classes. Each class uses a co-teacher model where one teacher is Chinese and the other teacher is a foreigner from outside of China. Teachers work in co-teaching pairs with Olivia and Jieng-wei teaching together and Emma and Lan teaching together. Both teachers share the responsibilities for teaching within the International Baccalaureate's (IB) Primary Years Programme (PYP), which has an inquiry-based, concept-driven curriculum framework. Both teachers teach in English all day except when the Chinese teacher teaches a Chinese language lesson for approximately 45 minutes per day. There are six teachers, in three co-teaching pairs, on the team as well as three Chinese assistants.

The Early Years School is lead by a British principal. After receiving a certificate and degree in education, she started teaching in the United Kingdom. Now, she has been at this school for seven years, four of which as the Early Years Principal. She feels her intercultural team has very good collaboration and work very well together, not only in their co-teaching partnerships and in their grade level teams, but across the whole school. She believes the team comes up with new initiatives, and tries to generate extra enthusiasm beyond the normal planning and implementation in the classroom. She feels the greatest way to improve collaboration is by providing the grade level teams with time to have collaborative planning meetings.

After taking the students to their art and music lessons, Olivia, Jieng-wei, Emma, and Lan meet with the other teachers on their team, and the curriculum coordinator, in Olivia and Jieng-wei's room for this week's meeting. Before the meetings, the group tends to chat about things

like what plans people have for the weekend, how someone's newly adopted cat is doing, or someone sharing a funny story about something that happened with their class recently as they smile, laugh, and pass around snacks that have been brought to the meeting. Each meeting is chaired by a different teacher and someone volunteers to type as they project the weekly *Collaborative Planning Meeting* agenda/minutes on the projector screen. The agenda is shared on one of the school's servers so everyone on the team has access and is able to add agenda items throughout the week.

A review of the current unit of inquiry is usually first on the agenda as co-teaching pairs share what they have been doing with their students the week prior. When each pair is sharing, other teachers ask questions, make comments, share funny similar stories, and on some occasions, offer advice for the next steps. The team also discussed English language curriculum, Chinese language curriculum, mathematics, and areas of other business. Throughout the two hour meetings, the team reviews work they have done, plans their curriculum, designs assessments, moderates student work, sets goals, and takes care of other administrative matters like how to document student progress for the teachers who will have the students next year. Though there are smiles and laughing, occasionally there is silence as the team thinks and reflects. The team also decides how to share the responsibilities. For example, when the grade level coordinator asks who is interested in posting what is happening with the grade level's Chinese lessons on the school's intranet page, Jieng-wei volunteers. As the meeting comes to an end, the conversation usually becomes more casual and sometimes more stories are shared as the teachers laugh and pass the snacks around the table again.

On one occasion, after a busy day with the students, the teachers headed to one of the unused classrooms. The Early Years Principal arranged for 'Dragon Boat' races as a social

activity related to the Dragon Boat Festival, a Chinese national holiday. A swimming pool was temporarily set up in one of the rooms as teachers designed and tested their unique dragon boat designs. As the social went on, the teachers relaxed more and more to a point where even a couple teachers found themselves in the pool.

What they think about intercultural PLCs.

Though I would have not guessed it considering her talkative and outgoing personality, Lan admits she was very nervous and a little scared to work with foreigners at the beginning. "Maybe it's because of my language skills or something like we'll have different points of views over things. My personality is not to speak out for myself, stand up for myself." She understands now when the teachers argue over something, it's about that thing, and it's not about her. "I would take in personal. I guess maybe most of the Chinese people do like that." But after working on the intercultural team, "I'm not scared about arguing something or stand up for my point of view."

When asked about the benefits about being on an intercultural PLC, Lan says the most important point is the professional development opportunities:

> In this kind of cultural team, we can see, like my partner has a really great strategies like activities for his students, he has great ideas I have never think before. That makes me feel wow. 'Wow, I can do it like this, I can do it like that." I always get new things from different culture, because that's the most beneficial thing.

She feels a team is really good when they share responsibilities and she appreciates that her team is quick to help her out when she feels stressed. But she also feels sometimes making an agreement or decision within the group can take too much time. Upon reflection, she has realized that, "We waste so much energy talking about this tiny thing," is sometimes due to different cultural priorities like prioritizing the needs of one student versus prioritizing the needs of the group.

Jieng-wei also believes that the intercultural PLCs have advantages of providing an opportunity for teachers to share their ideas and experiences:

> I think for good things is because we are foreign from different country. Sometimes we will have different idea. We also have the different experience for the teaching. Everybody will share their ideas. I like more things when they have the different idea of when they're teaching. I think it is very helpful.

She also tells me, "The benefit we can know lots of the different teaching way to help you get more experience, and the other things you will know the things you never hear." However, she also understands that there can be disadvantages, "I think at the beginning we'll see some, from us I feel is all the co-teachers have different opinions from their own. Maybe if you got your own opinions maybe you don't want to change. We cannot make a grade together." She always finds working in English instead of Chinese difficult. "Maybe it's harder sometimes, because when we were thinking about in Chinese we were just speak this way, maybe in English it not very polite way."

When working in her intercultural PLC, Olivia finds it interesting how other teachers on the team have unique approaches:

> This is my first time working even in PYP. Working with a central idea and all the lines of inquiry and all that jargon that I'm still getting used to, to this day, it's interesting to see how two other classes are approaching it…I think that it's really important to be exposed to the different practices and different approaches. I think in doing that, that makes me very aware of my own culture and my own practices because before leaving the states and working in the states, I only knew what I knew. Now, I know what I lived and breathe.

Olivia goes on with a clever analogy of her intercultural experiences being like the experiences in Leo Lionni's children's picture book, *Fish is Fish*, when a fish tries to comprehend the experiences his friend the frog describes away from the pond. When talking about her experiences on her intercultural PLC, Olivia reflects on her awareness of different perceptions and ideas:

You have to be aware of that is the lens that you're looking through, because it's easy to come out of where you're from and go into somewhere else and your first instinct…I guess for anybody, your first instinct would be to criticize. 'Why did they do it? Is it already serious? This is what they're doing? That's what they're saying?' You have to be conscious of it. You've got to step back and say, 'Okay, this is different.'

But sometimes with those different ideas frustrations come:

I do feel a lot of the time that there is a pressure to conform and to do things exactly the same way as other classes…You have to choose your battles and that's something that I am still learning which battles to choose as I'm navigating my way through it…I couldn't stop asking, 'Why?'

Emma shares similar benefits to being on an intercultural team as her colleagues:

I think for me the biggest thing is sharing ideas. Sharing ideas about assessment or learning or field trips or just, 'Oh, I'm really struggling to teach this area or with this student.' Is it so nice to have people who have that shared experience of the same age group and the same curriculum. You can talk to people. I think as well sharing some of the responsibilities, some of the paperwork to go through can be nice if you can split that up a little bit more and just not feeling alone. I think the last school, I felt quite isolated some times. Just me and the computer working away or me and my kids. It is nice to have that chance to be with other people and I guess it comes back to sharing those idea and supporting each other.

Emma also feels there are disadvantages as well if personalities are different. "Maybe takes a little bit of time getting used to each other and how it all works." When Emma worked on a grade level team alone, she could get work done quickly but with six teachers on a team, even though she understands discussion is valuable, "…when it is six people talking and trying to find a shared path, it can take a long time some times."

Emma feels another benefit to intercultural teams in the learning about other cultures. For example, she understands more about Chinese students and their parents' concerns when another teacher from the Chinese teacher shares with her:

I think as well it challenges me to think about my own thinking…Think a bit also about why I do certain things the way I do. When you notice someone doing it a bit different it makes me think about why I want to do it the way that I do.

Having different expectations though can be a challenge for Emma:

It's interesting to learn about some of the Chinese ways but at times it is not so bad but just explaining this is how we would do it. Sometimes I think there's language miscommunication based on people's level of understanding.

Their place in the study.

Lan, Jieng-wei, Olivia and Emma are each unique but are brought together through their collaborative work within an intercultural PLC. Their individual values, beliefs, assumptions, expectations, experiences, and behaviors shape their perceptions of, and within, this context. The purpose of this study is to describe the challenges to collaboration these teachers face, and the conditions that foster or hinder collaboration in this context in order to lead to an understanding of how collaborative relationships work and how to actively encourage them.

Review of Methodology

Multiple data collection methods were used in order to gain an understanding of the challenges to collaboration these teachers face and the conditions that foster or hinder collaboration in this context. This study used a combination of documents, anonymous surveys, focus group interviews, pre-observation interviews, observations, and post-observation interviews (see Appendicies). When interviewing and observing the four case study participants, it was felt there might be areas about which the four case study participants were either uncomfortable or unaware but which were nevertheless crucial for fully understanding the context of the case and for describing collaboration on an intercultural PLC. For this reason an anonymous survey and focus group interviews were also used to collect data. These two methods, not typically found in a case study, provided an opportunity to further triangulate patterns in the data since collaboration within intercultural PLCs has little support in the literature for comparison.

Summary and Discussion of the Results

A summary and discussion of the results will be presented through the research questions. Each research question will be divided into the same sub-categories used in Chapter 4.

Research question 1-What experiences do these teachers have collaborating in an intercultural professional learning community at this school?

Define collaboration.

Collaboration on an intercultural PLC was defined by Early Years teachers at this school as when team members (1) share the responsibilities, (2) learn from each other, (3) establish a positive culture, (4) support each other, and (5) are focused on the same student learning goals. First, collaboration is when the team shares the responsibilities to include leading or coordinating the team and administrative work. Second, team members learn from each other by exchanging ideas, modeling, coaching, and teaching each other. Third, a team collaborates by establishing a positive culture of respect, open mindedness, and compromise. Fourth, team members are supported emotionally and professionally. And fifth, all teachers on the team are focused on the same student learning goals.

DuFour mentions five points about collaboration within a PLC (2004). The first is in regard to membership and participation. The intercultural PLC of which the case study participants were part comprised six teachers who worked together. The team met DuFour's second point regarding regular meeting times, as they met for two hours every week during the school day. Third, the team focused their efforts on learning, including planning for each class in relation to the current unit of inquiry, English language instruction, Chinese language instruction, mathematics, teaching of social skills, simply planning curriculum, sharing advice, and providing professional development for members of the team. The roles, responsibilities, and relationships

were defined in accordance with DuFour's fourth point. They accomplished this through written meeting guidelines, job descriptions, essential agreements, and roles and responsibilities documents. This intercultural PLC met DuFour's fifth point regarding collaboration within a PLC by focusing on student achievement goals. The goals included reviewing achievement in reading, writing, and within the unit of inquiry, moderating writing samples, setting behavior goals, planning assessments, and documenting and reporting student achievement to other teachers on the team.

Research question 2-What are the successes of collaboration in this context?

Teachers described the opportunity of professional development as one advantage to being on an intercultural team, including (1) *learning about other teaching styles, methods, and philosophies*, (2) *learning about other cultures, perspectives, and opinions*, and (3) *reflecting on own culture and teaching practices*. The purpose of collaboration is not simply doing things together but to improve both our professional practice and the learning for our students (DuFour, 2011). When citing learning about other teaching styles, methods, and philosophies, teachers provided examples of learning about traditional Chinese instructional methods, Western mathematics instruction ideas carrying over into Chinese language lessons, and discovering deep questioning techniques. Teachers also mentioned learning about other cultures, perspectives, and opinions. Some examples were the priority of the needs of one versus the needs of the group, parent communication being dependent on the nationality of parents, physical risk-taking acceptance levels, gender roles, and cultural celebrations. Being on an intercultural PLC also caused some teachers to reflect on their own culture and teaching practices when exposed to differences.

The Early Years Principal described intercultural PLCs as enriching children's education:

Being able to bring all those elements in from different countries, different experiences, different upbringings, different family lives, different traditions. All of that has helped enrich what the children are learning, but also support the children in their own environment. The children that we have are also in that situation where they've come from different backgrounds, different experiences, different family traditions, different expectations. Just having an understanding of that from a personal point of view, to be able to assist those children through those changes is quite a big thing.

Research question 3 & 4-What are the challenges to collaboration in this context and how addressed?

Both being on an intercultural team and collaboration presented challenges. Disadvantages were described as *difficulties working with different cultures, expectations, and opinions* as well as *difficulties with communication*. Challenges to collaboration included *sharing responsibilities, communication, colleagues' motivation, colleagues' skill level,* and *time*.

Disadvantages to being on an intercultural team.

Two themes emerged in regard to the disadvantages of being on an intercultural team. The first theme was *difficulties working with different cultures, expectations, and opinions*. One example concerned the amount of communication a teacher provided being dependent on the nationality of the parent. A Chinese teacher felt Chinese parents would expect much more communication compared to the non-Chinese parents, based on her experiences in Chinese schools. Another example was the differing opinions regarding the appropriate use of cell phones at a team meeting. In addition, different levels of expectations for taking initiative were also noted. The second theme was *difficulties with communication*. Some teachers noted differences in expectations for what constituted appropriate teacher-student interaction, for example, talking down to students or getting down to talk with students. Difficulties with communication also occurred in communications with parents.

Challenges to collaboration.

During the research, five themes emerged which were related to challenges to collaboration within the intercultural PLC. When interviewing the case study participants after the observations, I asked them to comment on the challenges within their grade level team and co-teaching team separately. Sometimes different challenges were found depending on the type of team.

The first theme was *sharing the responsibilities*. In the grade level team, challenges to collaboration included a perceived reluctance to volunteer and the resultant tendency of the foreign teacher, with the first language of English, to take on more of the responsibilities compared to the Chinese teachers. However, some responsibilities were evenly distributed with rotating schedules for routine matters like hosting a visiting student or coordinating the grade level meeting, and some responsibilities were shared for a particular unit of inquiry. Within the co-teaching teams, responsibilities were not perceived as being evenly distributed, for example, teaching English phonics, creating portfolios, and writing reports being the western teacher's responsibility.

Communication was the second theme in challenges to collaboration. In the grade level teams, discussions were noted as taking too long causing some teachers in the team to withdraw. In the co-teaching pairs, communication was a challenge as neither teacher could fully express herself to their co-teacher.

The third challenge to collaboration within this intercultural team aligned with the theme of *colleague's motivation*. A colleague's perceived lack of motivation could have caused the impression that making decisions within the grade level team take too long but the motivation could be wanting to make a timely decision versus wanting to do what is best for the students. In

the co-teaching pairs, it was uncertain if a colleague's laid-back style was the result of motivation or personality.

A *colleague's skill level* presented a fourth challenge to collaboration while also presenting a benefit to collaboration. In the grade level team, some teachers felt challenges to collaboration were due to the different experiences and skills the teachers on the team had. However, the different experiences also had a benefit of teachers contributing different skills to the team. Similarly, within the co-teaching pairs, differences in skill level provided challenges and benefits to collaboration. Though the foreign teachers were noted as having to take on more responsibilities which require skill or proficiency in English like writing reports, completing paperwork, or teaching phonics, one teacher mentioned that the different skill level of her co-teacher was an inspiration to her.

The fifth theme for challenges to collaboration was *time*. Two of the four case study participants felt time for collaboration was not an issue due to the provision of a two-hour weekly grade level collaborative meeting, while the other two case study participants felt that sometimes the time was not used efficiently. Conflicting views on time were also apparent within the co-teaching pairs. One case study participant felt time was a challenge as she had to administer the assessments, write the reports, and complete other paperwork when compared to her co-teacher. The other three case study participants felt time was not a challenge within the co-teaching teams and noted the essential agreements made by the co-teaching teams as facilitating the effective use of time.

For collaboration during a grade level meeting to be possible, participation from all team members is the ideal. Four themes emerged from observations and interviews which describe what participation in a grade level meeting was dependent on: (1) *topic of conversation*, (2)

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confidence in the language used for the conversation, (3) *contributions of others in the conversation*, and (4) *encouragement from others to share and contribute*. The topic of the conversation affected teachers' participation. Comments and observations were commonly made about Chinese teachers effectively participating in conversations about Chinese language lessons, but noting that they were less likely to participate in conversations about all other subjects. Confidence with English and the ability to comprehend fast conversations was also observed and mentioned as affecting participation in grade level meetings. Sometimes a few, two, or even just one person dominated the conversations. At times, when one teacher wanted to contribute, another teacher interrupted, visibly affecting the first teacher's level of participation afterwards. Instances of teachers trying to encourage other teachers to participate in discussions were also observed and commented on. Sometimes the encouragement was in the form of praise about what was said and other times in the form of asking the teacher if they had anything they wished to share.

Research question 5-What factors support collaboration in this context?

Five themes emerged in regard to supporting collaboration within an intercultural PLC, (1) *having collaborative planning meetings*, (2) *communicating expectations and agreements*, (3) *building a respectful culture*, (4) *understanding each other* and (5) *supporting each other*. These themes are similar to Morrissey's findings during three years of research with the Southwest Educational Development Laboratory and which summarize the elements of a supportive culture of collaboration (Morrissey, 2000). She writes that teachers have sufficient time to meet and collaborate regularly, the teams meet in grade levels or subject areas, teachers respect and trust each other, teachers communicate with each other inside and outside of school as well as with

parents and community members, and teachers support each other through informal visits or by sharing advice and opinions.

In this study, the weekly, two-hour long, collaborative meetings with the PYP Curriculum Coordinator were mentioned often as supporting collaboration. Having honest communication and using the *Co-Teacher Discussion Questions 2014-2015* (see Appendix O) to facilitate communication was also mentioned as supporting collaboration. Building a respectful culture was a theme to include talking and laughing together as relationships develop. Another theme was understanding each other. Examples included just taking the time to share personal details about weekend leisure time or how someone's newly adopted cat is doing. Finally, the importance of supporting each other emotionally and professionally was recognized as a theme. Some examples included support from the PYP Curriculum Coordinator, Grade Level Coordinator, collegial emotional support during moments of stress, or simply offering to cover someone's supervision duty when work pressures were overwhelming.

Occurrences of talking during meetings.

Occurrences of talking were documented as much as possible, using 5-minute samples, during both the weekly grade level meetings and the weekly co-teaching planning meetings beginning in the second week of observations.

During the grade level meetings, all three Chinese teachers, who were using English as a second language, spoke less than all the Western Teachers during the 5-minute samples. This would suggest that English proficiency affected participation in collaborative meetings. Two of the Chinese teachers rarely spoke during the 5-minute samples, which may suggest that something else affected their participation in addition to English proficiency, for example, personality or the perceived relevance of the topic of conversation.

Whilst grade level meetings consisted of six classroom teachers and a PYP Coordinator, co-teacher meetings involve only two teachers, which appears to facilitate more occurrences of talking from each teacher. The Western teacher always talked more during the 5-minute samples, however, the difference in the number of contributions of a Chinese teacher and a Western co-teacher was less significant in the co-teacher meetings compared to differences in contributions during grade level meetings, suggesting that even though proficiency with English did have an impact in smaller meetings, the impact was not so great when compared to the impact in larger meetings.

Major themes from all research questions.

When the themes from each of the research questions were analyzed, three major themes emerged. The major themes from this study are, *communication*, *learning*, and *working together*.

Communication.

Communication had both a positive and a negative relationship with collaboration on an intercultural team. With grade level meetings, communication surfaced as both a positive and a negative theme.

Table 17

Communication-Major Theme From All Research Questions

RQ#	Section	Theme
3	Disadvantage to being on an intercultural team	Difficulties with communication
3	Challenges to collaboration	Communication
4	Participation in grade level meetings	Confidence in language used for conversation
4	Participation in grade level meetings	Contributions of others in conversation
4	Participation in grade level meetings	Encouragement from others to share and contribute
5	Supporting collaboration	Communicating expectations and agreements
5	Advice to give another intercultural team	Communicate honestly, respectfully, and with an open-mind

Communication was noted as a disadvantage, a challenge, and negatively affecting participation in grade level meetings. Teachers noted disadvantages due to different expectations for the appropriate way to communicate with students and differences when communicating with parents. Communication was also noted as a challenge when discussions during grade level meetings were perceived as taking too long, causing some teachers to withdraw. With the co-teacher relationships, sometimes teachers felt it was a challenge to fully express themselves to their co-teacher due to differences in English proficiencies. With the grade level meetings, confidence in English and ability to comprehend fast conversations in English negatively affected participation in discussions. At other times, the contributions of a few, a couple, or one teacher in the conversation hindered the participation of others.

However, communication also was noted as a positive theme in regards to participation in grade level meetings, supporting collaboration, and with advice to give others on the team. Teachers encouraged each other to communicate during the meetings through praise and inviting others to contribute to the discussion. Collaboration was supported through communication with team members, especially with the use of the *Co-Teacher Discussion Questions 2014-2015* (see Appendix O). Communicating honestly, respectfully, and with an open-mind helped the collaborative relationships grow.

Learning.

Table 18

Learning-Major Theme From All Research Questions

RQ#	Section	Theme
5	Supporting collaboration	Understand each other
5	Advice to give another intercultural team	Learning about other teaching styles, methods, and philosophies
5	Advice to give another intercultural team	Learning about other cultures, perspectives, and opinions
5	Advice to give another intercultural team	Reflecting on own culture and teaching practices
5	Advice to give another intercultural team	Know your team

Hord describes a PLC as, "Professionals coming together in a group-a community-to learn" (2008). *Learning* was a major theme as teachers learned about themselves and others. When team members took the time to learn about each other, not just about their teaching styles and beliefs, but about who they are as a person, that knowledge built stronger relationships which then supported collaborative practices. Much of the advice shared for guiding intercultural

teams to collaborate related to learning. It was recommended by case study participants that

teachers should learn about their colleagues professionally and personally as well as learn about

different cultures, perspectives, and opinions. Learning was also a theme as teachers reflected on

their own culture and teaching practices.

   Working together.

Table 19

Working Together-Major Theme From All Research Questions

RQ#	Section	Theme
2	Advantages to being on an intercultural team	Enriching education for children
3	Disadvantage to being on an intercultural team	Difficulties working with different cultures, expectations, and opinions
3	Challenges to collaboration	Sharing responsibilities
3	Challenges to collaboration	Colleague's motivation
3	Challenges to collaboration	Colleague's skill level
3	Challenges to collaboration	Time
4	Participation in grade level meetings	Perception of conversation's relevance
5	Supporting collaboration	Collaborative planning meetings
5	Supporting collaboration	Respectful culture
5	Supporting collaboration	Supporting each other
5	Supporting collaboration	Make agreements

   The most common major theme, *working together,* was both positive and negative.

Working together on an intercultural team was seen as enriching the educational experience for

children. However, working together on an intercultural team was also seen as a disadvantage

due to the difficulties of working with colleagues from different cultures. Working together

posed difficulties regarding unequal sharing of responsibilities, the perceived levels of a colleague's motivation and skill, and time. Working together also supported collaboration through collaborative meetings, a respectful culture, supporting each other and making agreements.

Summary.

The findings of this study suggest that though there are advantages and disadvantages to working collaboratively, and there are successes and challenges with communication, intercultural PLCs provide many opportunities for learning for teachers. Working together means sharing responsibilities while working through difficulties arising from different cultural practices, different expectations, different opinions, different motivations and skills, and all the while restricted by the constraints of time. Sometimes communication was difficult, restrained by lack of self-confidence, or stifled by others. But at other times, colleagues who also want honest, respectful, and open-minded relationships facilitated communication through praise and encouragement. Students may have benefited as teachers improved their own instructional practices having learned about their colleague's different teaching styles, methods, philosophies, cultures, perspectives, and opinions. Learning about other cultures and practices prompted some teachers to reflect on their own culture and practices. The Early Years Principal sums the benefits of working through the challenges of an intercultural PLC:

> I think because we have so many different experiences, I'll say there can be challenges that actually bring richness to the classroom environment and to the education of the children. Being able to bring all those elements in from different countries, different experiences, different upbringings, different family lives, different traditions. All of that has helped enrich what the children are learning, but also support the children in their own environment.

Implications for Practice

Collaborating within a mono-cultural PLC is already a challenge, but for teachers like Lan, Jieng-wei, Emma and Olivia, collaborating within an intercultural PLC provides unique and very difficult challenges. The implications for a school wanting to start an intercultural PLC, or which already has an intercultural PLC, are many. The findings suggest practical recommendations when working within intercultural teams or within intercultural co-teaching arrangements to include (1) Develop the relationships, (2) Set weekly meeting times, (3) Make agreements, (4) Learn from each other, (5) Reflect, and especially from school leaders, (6) Support.

Develop the relationships.

Build a respectful school culture which nurtures professional, personal, and collaborative relationships facilitated through honest and respectful communication and built on a foundation of trust. The importance of trust among teachers in fostering collaboration within a PLC already permeates the literature (Bryk, Camburn, & Louis, 1999; Cranston, 2011; Hord, 2008; Morrissey, 2000). These relationships will allow teachers to know each other and learn how to support each other. Teachers need to keep an open mind and accept differences as they learn about other cultures, teaching styles, and perspectives. Relationships can be developed by facilitating communication through the use of pre-determined questions to ask each other, sharing about oneself, and engaging in social opportunities.

One teacher shared how at the beginning of the year, the team disagreed a lot but then later in the year, after she began to know a few people a bit better, she realized she understands that perspective more. She said even by learning a bit about them, for example, if they like cats, "I think it is really important, and it makes the team work a lot better." She told me she would

like to try to spend a bit more time at the beginning of the year getting to know everybody on the team and spend time together.

To facilitate conversations, particularly those difficult conversations where there is a potential for conflict, and to learn about each other at the beginning of the year, they used approximately 80 questions from the *Co-Teacher Discussion Questions 2014-2015* (see Appendix O). This is recommended for intercultural teams of 2 or more teachers as this was cited numerous times as being especially helpful for starting conversations and for creating essential and collaborative agreements.

One teacher recommended teachers making a short presentation about themselves to colleagues about their personal and professional backgrounds, including topics like hobbies and fun things the teacher likes to do.

Providing opportunities for teachers to socialize is also recommended. This can be accomplished through cultural and holiday social events or informal gatherings like a coffee break together.

Set weekly meeting times.

Set dedicated collaborative meeting times weekly. The findings suggest the most important factor in supporting successful collaborative meetings is the provision of dedicated meeting times for both co-teacher meetings and the larger grade levels meetings. Teams should have time to meet during the workday and throughout the year (DuFour, 2004). Hargreaves describes collaborative cultures having scheduled meetings but the meetings are not the main way in which teachers work together (1994). Having set times is a start but as the collaborative relationships grow, the collaborative culture will be spontaneous and evolve from teachers (Hargreaves, 1994).

As schools begin efforts to become collaborative intercultural PLCs, the starting culture may be one of contrived collegiality or of superficial collaboration but will then mature as the relationships within the teams grow. Datnow observed that what began as contrived meetings to discuss data evolved into spaces for more genuine collaborative activity wherein teachers challenged each other, raised questions, and shared ideas for teaching (2011).

Make agreements.

Define roles and responsibilities and make essential agreements. Expectations for the roles and responsibilities of PLC members must be agreed upon and documented to include grade level coordinators, curriculum coordinators, teachers and assistants. This is especially important in an intercultural team as members could bring significantly different expectations. Essential agreements should include working within the grade level team, collaborating during meetings, and collaborating within co-teaching arrangements. DuFour supports this point when he describes an essential element of collaboration - teams developing norms or agreements to clarify expectations of roles, responsibilities, and relationships among team members (2004).

Learn from each other.

Learn from the educational and training experiences of others on your intercultural team. One of the advantages of being on an intercultural team is the cultural and professional learning opportunities available from colleagues. Teachers should observe other teacher's lessons, discuss perceptions, philosophies, and approaches to teaching, offer advice and accept feedback, and provide learning opportunities by sharing professional practice through teachers teaching teachers. For example, case study participants commented on how they were inspired by learning sometimes opposite instructional methods or philosophies then they were used to,

like whole class instruction versus differentiation, and the needs of the group versus the needs of one student.

Reflect.

Reflect on how well the intercultural team is collaborating and adjust as needed. Essential agreements are not just for the beginning of the year, they are for the whole year. It will be necessary for teachers to review the co-teaching team and PLC team agreements throughout the year to assess how well the agreements are working, especially if everyone is new to working together. Upon reflection, areas needing adjustment, additional support, or growth should be identified and targeted for additional support.

Support.

School leaders need to support teachers in building a collaborative culture. While trying to improve collaboration within a school district in Connecticut, researchers summarized with, "Simply putting well-meaning individuals together and expecting them to collaborate was not enough. They needed professional development and guidance to achieve this goal" (Thessin & Starr, 2011). Building and sustaining intercultural collaborative teams will require much support from school leaders due to the many difficult challenges those teams present. When building a collaborative team, or adding new members to a collaborative team, hire teachers who value collaboration (Graham, 2007). After hiring teachers who believe collaboration is beneficial and understand established policies and expectations, the process continues by supporting teachers as they work through the first 5 practical recommendations already mentioned.

At the beginning of the year, and throughout the year, provide opportunities for teachers to socialize and develop relationships. Relationships are based on trust and built with communication and shared experiences.

Adjust the master schedule as needed in order to provide time for teaching teams and co-teaching teams to meet and collaborate during the school day. Facilitate the making and documenting of essential agreements at the beginning of the year as well as being reflected on and adjusted throughout the year.

Also at the beginning of the year, and throughout the year, ensure new and existing teachers understand the established collegial expectations within the intercultural PLC (Riordan & da Costa, 1998). Facilitate the making of essential agreements within co-teaching and PLC teams. Those agreements should include details on sharing the responsibilities. Little described the interdependence form of collaboration on her continuum as "joint work" or sharing the responsibilities (1990).

Provide professional learning opportunities on collaboration and cultural understanding for the whole team internally or from outside experts. Thessin also emphasizes the importance of professional development in supporting collaborative relationships (2011). Whole team professional learning opportunities can facilitate common approaches to teaching and cultural understanding, especially in co-teaching teams where teachers share responsibilities all day in the same classroom. For example, whole faculty discussions can follow some pre-made cultural comparison presentations found on the Internet. These presentations can illustrate perceptions of individualism versus collectivism, polite communication, how to talk to or with students, the role of the teacher and students in a classroom, and other areas. Even though some pre-made cultural presentations only compare two "cultures," for example the host "Chinese" culture and foreign "Western" culture, the presentation can be used to start discussions about what each teacher feels is appropriate from their cultural perspective by saying if they align closely with one perception presented or have an alternative view. These discussions can help develop more cultural

understanding on an intercultural team. In the international school setting, presentation and discussion of the host culture in particular would be especially helpful in developing cultural understanding and building collaborative relationships.

Teachers should also have opportunities to learn from each other through observing other classes, sharing a presentation or workshop, or working on projects together, like curriculum or assessment planning, requiring the sharing of perceptions, approaches to teaching, philosophies, and ideas, eventually reaching agreement. Visiting classes was described as the first step towards deprivatization of individual teaching practice (Honingh & Hooge, 2014).

In addition, be sure to provide opportunities for teachers to reflect on their collaborative relationships giving opportunities to share within their co-teaching teams and on grade level or subject teams. Teams and school leaders should also discuss their perceptions of how well the teams are working, what areas they feel could use additional support, and how additional support can be provided. School leaders should be aware of how well the collaborative relationships are working and provide support as needed as teachers will not be able to overcome the unique and difficult challenges of working on an intercultural team on their own.

Recommendations For Further Research

The purpose of this study was to describe collaboration in the context of an intercultural PLC comprised of teachers of different nationalities and having different cultural backgrounds, educational and teaching experiences, and English proficiency at a private, international, PYP school in Shanghai, China. As the number of participants used was based on the need for an in depth understanding of the unique context and the different perspectives of the participants, the findings of this study will add to the research base but are not intended to be generalizable. The findings merely offer an insight into this particular intercultural PLC context. It is hoped this

research will lead to a greater understanding of collaborative relationships and how school leaders can foster these and other collaborative relationships for the benefit of teacher learning and ultimately student learning. As many international schools have intercultural PLCs, more research is needed to understand the experiences and perceptions of other intercultural PLC members regarding the advantages and disadvantages to being on an intercultural team, the successes and challenges of collaborating, and discovering what supports collaboration within an intercultural PLC.

From the findings of this study three major themes arise upon which further research should focus: communication, learning, and working together. Additional research could provide more data on how these three areas affect collaboration within an intercultural PLC and could also uncover other areas that may affect collaboration within this context.

There were different responses to *communication* and *working together* related themes depending if teachers were referring to their experiences within a co-teaching team or within the larger grade level team. This would suggest that more research is needed with regard to communication and working together within both an intercultural co-teaching team and an intercultural PLC consisting of more than two teachers. For example, Chinese teachers appeared to participate more in co-teacher meetings than in larger grade level meetings, which suggests a teacher's confidence in English affects their contribution.

Final Thoughts

The effectiveness of PLCs depends on the ability of educators to collaborate. While trying to improve collaboration within a school district in Connecticut, researchers summarized with, "Simply putting well-meaning individuals together and expecting them to collaborate was not enough. They needed professional development and guidance to achieve this goal" (Thessin

& Starr, 2011). Collaborating within a mono-cultural PLC is already a challenge, but for teachers like Lan, Jieng-wei, Emma and Olivia, collaborating within an intercultural PLC provides unique and very difficult challenges. Understanding the challenges within an intercultural PLC and providing appropriate support will facilitate efforts to collaborate with the ultimate goal of improving student learning through teacher learning.

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Appendix A-Request for Anonymous Survey

Subject Heading: Anonymous Collaboration Survey-Brunton

Dear Early Years School Teacher,

You are invited to participate in a research study about collaboration within an intercultural professional learning community (PLC), or team, by completing an anonymous survey consisting of 7 open-ended questions provided in both English and Chinese. You were selected as a possible participant because you are a teacher in the Early Years School and work within an intercultural team. This research study is for my dissertation at Lehigh University.

The purpose of this anonymous study will be to describe collaboration in the context of an intercultural team comprised of teachers of different nationalities and having different cultural backgrounds, education, teaching experiences, and proficiencies of English. If we can understand the challenges facing teachers who work on an intercultural team, and the conditions that foster or hinder collaboration in this context, then it is hoped this research can lead to a greater understanding of how collaborative relationships work and how to actively encourage them. Your opinions and input as an intercultural team member would be very valuable for this research. Participation is voluntary and confidential.

The results of this anonymous survey will be used to identify general patterns or themes about collaboration within the Early Years School and to provide a basis for discussion with 4 to 8 Early Years School teachers at a later date. The anonymous survey does not aim to collect any information that will make it possible to identify you or your answers, as confidentiality is extremely important.

To participate, please click on the link below. By submitting the survey, you are giving consent to participate in the anonymous survey part of the study.

PASTE SURVEY LINK HERE

Your participation and support of this research is sincerely appreciated.

Kind Regards,

Greg Brunton

Appendix B-Reminder for Anonymous Survey

Subject Heading: Anonymous Collaboration Survey Reminder-Brunton

Dear Early Years School Teacher,

You are invited a week ago to participate in a research study about collaboration within an intercultural professional learning community (PLC), or team, by completing an anonymous survey consisting of 7 open-ended questions provided in both English and Chinese. You were selected as a possible participant because you are a teacher in the Early Years School and work within an intercultural team. This research study is for my dissertation at Lehigh University.

As of now, _____ teachers have completed the survey. Since the survey is anonymous, I have no way of knowing who has completed the survey or not. If you have already completed the survey, please accept my thanks and disregard this reminder email. If you have not completed the survey please consider doing so as your insights about collaboration within an intercultural PLC or team would be very valuable to this study and sincerely appreciated. Your participation is voluntary and confidential.

The purpose of this anonymous study will be to describe collaboration in the context of an intercultural team comprised of teachers of different nationalities and having different cultural backgrounds, education, teaching experiences, and proficiencies of English. If we can understand the challenges facing teachers who work on an intercultural team, and the conditions that foster or hinder collaboration in this context, then it is hoped this research can lead to a greater understanding of how collaborative relationships work and how to actively encourage them.

The results of this anonymous survey will be used to identify general patterns or themes about collaboration within the Early Years School and to provide a basis for discussion with 4 to 8 Early Years School teachers at a later date. The anonymous survey does not aim to collect any information that will make it possible to identify you or your answers, as confidentiality is extremely important.

To participate, please click on the link below. By submitting the survey, you are giving consent to participate in the anonymous survey part of the study.

PASTE SURVEY LINK(S) HERE

Your participation and support of this research is sincerely appreciated.

Kind Regards,

Greg Brunton

Appendix C-Consent Form

CONSENT FORM
Collaboration Within Intercultural Professional Learning Communities—A Case Study

You are invited to be in a research study of collaboration within intercultural professional learning communities. You were selected as a possible participant because you are a teacher on an intercultural team. We ask that you read this form and ask any questions you may have before agreeing to be in the study.

This study is being conducted by: Greg Brunton, a doctoral student in Educational Leadership at Lehigh University, under the direction of Dr. Jill Sperandio, a professor in the College of Education, Lehigh University.

Purpose of the study
The purpose of this study will be to describe collaboration in the context of an intercultural professional learning community (PLC) comprised of teachers of different nationalities and having different cultural backgrounds, education, teaching experiences, and English proficiencies at a private, international school. If we can understand the challenges facing teachers who work on an intercultural PLC, and the conditions that foster or hinder collaboration in this context, then it is hoped this research can lead to a greater understanding of how collaborative relationships work and how to actively encourage them.

Procedures
If you agree to participate in the focus group, you will answer questions along with 3-7 other participants for approximately 60 minutes. If you agree to participate as a case study, you will be observed during six grade level meetings and six co-teacher planning meetings. You will also be interviewed twice for approximately 30-60 minutes each time. With your permission, I will audio-record the focus group and interviews so I do not have to take notes during the interview sessions.

Risks and Benefits of being in the study
While I do not foresee any risks for participating in the study, you may feel unable or uncomfortable to answer some of the interview questions. If you do not feel comfortable answering any of the interview questions, you can choose to not answer the question. You can also opt to end the interview at any time or indicate that you prefer your responses to not be included in the study. By participating in the study, you will provide helpful information about how you experience collaboration within your professional learning community. You will not be compensated for participating in this study.

Confidentiality
All of your answers shared during the interview are confidential. In any sort of report I might publish, I will not include any information that will make it possible to identify you or your answers. Research records will be stored on my personal laptop, which is password protected. All audio recordings and interview notes will be deleted after the dissertation is completed.

Voluntary Nature of the Study
Participation in this study is completely voluntary. If you decide to participate, you are free to not answer any question or withdraw from the interview or study at any time.

Contacts and Questions
You may ask any questions you have now. If you have questions later, you may email me at gsb211@lehigh.edu or my supervisor, Dr. Jill Sperandio at jis204@lehigh.edu. If you have any questions or concerns regarding this study and would like to talk to someone other than the researcher(s), you are encouraged to contact Naomi E. Coll, Lehigh University's Manager of Research Integrity, at (610)758-2985 or nac314@lehigh.edu. All reports or correspondence will be kept confidential.

Statement of Consent (You will be given a copy of this information to keep for your records)
I have read the above information. I have had the opportunity to ask questions and have my questions answered.

    ____I consent to participate in the focus group
    ____I consent to participate as a case study participant

Participant's Name: _____

Participant's Signature: _____ Date:_____

Appendix D-Anonymous Survey

1. What are the benefits to being on an intercultural team?
   成为跨文化团队的一员带给你的益处是什么？

2. What are the disadvantages to being on an intercultural team?
   成为跨文化团队的一员所带给你的劣势是什么？

3. How would you define collaboration?
   你对"协作"两字是如何定义的？

4. If you were on a team that is collaborating well, what would you see, hear and feel?
   如果你身处在一个协作性很好的团队中，你会看到，听到并感受到些什么？

5. How would you describe the collaboration within your grade level team?
   在你的年级组里，你会如何形容你们之间的团队协作？

6. What are some of the positive experiences you have had collaborating?
   在你所经历过的团队协作事例中，有哪些积极的经历？

7. What are some of the negative experiences you have had trying to collaborate?
   在你所经历过的团队协作事例中，有哪些消极的经历？

8. How do you feel collaboration in your team is supported?
   你觉得团队协作在你们的团队中达成度如何？

9. What are the challenges you face when trying to collaborate?
   当你试图和他人协作的时候，你所面临的挑战是什么？

10. Is collaborating with your team important to you? Why?
    团队之间的协作性对你来说重要吗？为什么？

Appendix E-Request for Focus Group and/or Case Study Participation

Subject Heading: Collaboration Study Participation Request-Brunton

Dear Early Years School Teacher,

Thank you to those who have completed the anonymous survey part of the intercultural collaboration study. Your participation and support for this unique research is appreciated.

There are two more opportunities to participate in the research I would like to request your help with.

The first is participation in a **Focus Group Interview** with 3 to 7 other Early Years Teachers. We would discuss the results of the anonymous survey involving no more than one hour of your time.

The second is participation as a **Case Study Participant**. You would be observed during six grade level meetings and six co-teacher planning meetings. You will also be interviewed twice for approximately 30-60 minutes each time.

Both the Focus Group Interview and the Case Study Participant individual interviews would have Chinese interpreting available.

The purpose of this anonymous study will be to describe collaboration in the context of an intercultural team comprised of teachers of different nationalities and having different cultural backgrounds, education, teaching experiences, and proficiencies of English. If we can understand the challenges facing teachers who work on an intercultural team, and the conditions that foster or hinder collaboration in this context, then it is hoped this research can lead to a greater understanding of how collaborative relationships work and how to actively encourage them. Your opinions and input as an intercultural team member would be very valuable for this research. Participation is voluntary and confidential.

To participate, just reply to this email expressing interest. I will then arrange a time to speak with you in person to answer any questions you may have and will provide you with a printed copy of the consent form to sign.

Any help you could provide for this research would be sincerely appreciated.

Kind Regards,

Greg Brunton

Appendix F-Reminder for Focus Group and/or Case Study Participation

Subject Heading: Reminder-Collaboration Study Participation Request-Brunton

Dear Early Years School Teacher,

You are invited a week ago to participate in a research study about collaboration within an intercultural professional learning community (PLC), or team, by participating in a Focus Group Interview and/or as a Case Study Participant. There is still time to volunteer to help with this unique research opportunity if you would like to help.

The first is participation in a **Focus Group Interview** with 3 to 7 other Early Years Teachers. We would discuss the results of the anonymous survey involving no more than one hour of your time.

The second is participation as a **Case Study Participant**. You would be observed during six grade level meetings and six co-teacher planning meetings. You will also be interviewed twice for approximately 30-60 minutes each time.

Both the Focus Group Interview and the Case Study Participant individual interviews would have Chinese interpreting available.

The purpose of this anonymous study will be to describe collaboration in the context of an intercultural team comprised of teachers of different nationalities and having different cultural backgrounds, education, teaching experiences, and proficiencies of English. If we can understand the challenges facing teachers who work on an intercultural team, and the conditions that foster or hinder collaboration in this context, then it is hoped this research can lead to a greater understanding of how collaborative relationships work and how to actively encourage them. Your opinions and input as an intercultural team member would be very valuable for this research. Participation is voluntary and confidential.

To participate, just reply to this email expressing interest. I will then arrange a time to speak with you in person to answer any questions you may have and will provide you with a printed copy of the consent form to sign.

Any help you could provide for this research would be sincerely appreciated.

Kind Regards,

Greg Brunton

Appendix G-Focus Group Interview Meeting

Subject Heading: Focus Group Interview Meeting

Dear _____,

Thank you for agreeing to participate in the Focus Group Interview for my research and for signing the consent form. I sincerely appreciate your willingness to participate in this study. I would like to hold the Focus Group Interview on _____ from_____to_____in_____.

Attached to this email are the questions that were asked in the anonymous survey followed by the general results. I would like to discuss the results of the survey with the group.

Thank you again for your support.

Kind Regards,

Greg Brunton

Appendix H-Case Study Participant Interview Request

Subject Heading: Case Study Participant Interview Request

Dear _____,

Thank you for agreeing to participate as a Case Study Participant in my research and for signing the consent form. I sincerely appreciate your willingness to participate in this study. The first step is to arrange an interview with you before the observation of the grade level meetings and co-teacher planning meetings begin. We would likely need between 45 and 60 minutes for the interview. Could you let me know some dates and times you would be available please?

Attached to this email are the questions I will be asking during the interview in case you would like to see them before we meet.

I look forward to hearing from you. Thank you again for your support.

Kind Regards,

Greg Brunton

Appendix I-Interview Protocol

Name: **Date:**   **Time:**

Demographics and Background
1. What is your nationality?

2. What is your first language?

3. Where did you grow up?

4. Where did you go to university?

5. What degrees to you have?

6. What is your teaching background?

7. How long have you been teaching at this school?

8. How long have you been on this grade level team?

1-Membership and Participation
9. What are the benefits of grade level teams?

10. What are the disadvantages of grade level teams?

11. Describe how you feel about working on your grade level team.

2-Time to Meet
12. How often and for how long does your team meet for Grade Level Meetings?

13. Does the structure of your grade level meetings allow for sufficient time for teachers to collaborate?
    o   If so, how? If not, why do you think this is so?

14. Does your team meet outside of Grade Level Meetings? If so, how often? What is the purpose of these meetings?

3-Focus Efforts on Learning and Generating Products
15. What does your team do during the Grade Level Meetings?

16. Does your team plan curriculum and share ideas about what they teach in their classrooms?

17. Does your team develop common assessments? If so, how have you discussed the

results of those assessments?

4-Developed Norms (Roles, Responsibilities, Relationships)

Agreements
18. What agreements has your team established?

19. Describe your team's effectiveness in following the agreements you have established.

Collaboration
20. How would you describe the collaboration within your grade level team?

21. What are some of the positive experiences you have had collaborating?

22. What are some of the negative experiences you have had trying to collaborate?

23. How do you feel collaboration in your team is supported?

24. What are the challenges you face when trying to collaborate?

Communication
25. How would you describe the level of open communication on your team?

26. What does your team do when different points of view occur?
    o   If you disagree with something, do you speak up? Why?

27. Do you feel that your suggestions will be given serious consideration by the group?

Respect
28. How would you describe the level of respect on your team?

Trust
29. How would you describe the level of trust on your team?

Intercultural
30. What are the benefits of being on an intercultural team?

31. What are the disadvantages to being on an intercultural team?

32. What advice would you give another intercultural team about how to collaborate with one another effectively?

5-Student Achievement Goals
33. Do the student achievement goals your team has for your students align with the school goals?

Case Study Participant(s):

Date: **Time:**   **PLC Meeting or Co-Teacher Meeting**

5 Points About Collaboration:

   1-Membership and Participation
- Examples of the benefits of grade level teams

- Examples of the disadvantages of grade level teams

   2-Time to Meet
- Was this enough time for the agenda to be completed?

   3-Focus Efforts on Learning and Generating Products
- Items discussed:

- Planning Curriculum:

- Sharing ideas about what they teach in their classrooms:

- Common assessments:

- Discuss results of those assessments:

   4-Developed Norms (Roles, Responsibilities, Relationships)

- Agreements (established and effectiveness following):

- Collaboration (positive, negative, supported, challenges):

- Communication (openness, different points of view, speak up to disagree, suggestions considered serious by group)

- Respect:

- Trust:

- Intercultural (benefits and disadvantages):

5-Student Achievement Goals

- Goals discussed and alignment with school goals:

Emergent Themes From Survey and Focus Group

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Summary of Important Points and Reflections:

Appendix K-Case Study Participant Final Interview Request

Subject Heading: Case Study Participant Final Interview Request

Dear _____,

Now that I have completed the observations of the grade level meetings and co-teacher planning meetings, I would like to meet with you one last time to ask you some questions about what I have observed. I would likely need about 30 minutes. Could you let me know some dates and times you would be available please?

I look forward to hearing from you. Thank you again for your support.

Kind Regards,

Greg Brunton

Appendix L-Post Observation Interview Protocol

Demographic/Background
1. Why did you want to become a teacher?
2. How do you feel about being a teacher now?
3. What is your favorite part of the job?
4. How do you travel to school? How long does it take? How much does it cost?
5. Is there anything else you would like to share about you as a teacher?
6. Is there anything else you would like to share about you as a (nationality)?

Being on an Intercultural Team
7. When asking about the advantages to being on an intercultural team, the most common response was to learn about other cultures, perspectives and opinions. Can you think of any examples of what you feel you might have learned?
8. Have you experienced any "culture shock" moments when you were surprised to learn something that is different in another culture? If so, how did you handle it?
9. When asking about the advantages to being on an intercultural team, the second most common response was to learn about other teaching styles and methods. Can you think of any examples of what you feel you might have learned?
10. Have you experienced any "wow" moments when you were surprised to learn a different teaching style or method? If so, what were they?
11. Have you experienced any "teaching shock" moments when you were surprised to learn something that is different in another culture related to teaching or working with children? If so, what were they?

Challenges to Collaboration
The five most common responses to the challenges to collaboration on an intercultural team were:
- Sharing the responsibility
- Communication
- Colleague's motivation
- Colleague's skill level
- Time
12. Can you tell me about any challenges sharing the **responsibility** on your **grade level team**? If so, how did you handle it?
13. Can you tell me about any challenges sharing the **responsibility** within your **co-teaching partnership**? If so, how did you handle it?
14. Can you tell me about any challenges **communicating** on your **grade level team**? If so, how did you handle it?
15. Can you tell me about any challenges **communicating** within your **co-teaching partnership**? If so, how did you handle it?
16. Can you tell me about any challenges with a **colleague's motivation** on your **grade level team**? If so, how did you handle it?
17. Can you tell me about any challenges with a **colleague's motivation** within your **co-teaching partnership**? If so, how did you handle it?

18. Can you tell me about any challenges with a **colleague's skill level** on your **grade level team**? If so, how did you handle it?
19. Can you tell me about any challenges with a **colleague's skill level** within your **co-teaching partnership**? If so, how did you handle it?
20. Can you tell me about any challenges with **time** on your **grade level team**? If so, how did you handle it?
21. Can you tell me about any challenges with **time** within your **co-teaching partnership**? If so, how did you handle it?

Participation in Grade Level Meetings
22. After 6 weeks of observing the Grade Level Meetings, I noticed it was extremely rare for one teacher to speak or contribute during any of the meetings. Can you tell me anything about this?
23. I noticed during some discussions, one teacher, or a small group of teachers could take over the discussion. Can you tell me how you felt about this and what you did or wanted to do?

Reflection From Being a Case Study Participant
24. Can you tell me about any possible positive or negative affects on you, your co-teaching partnership, or grade level team because of participation in this study?
25. Are there any further reflections about the study you would like to share?

Appendix M-EY Principal Interview Request

Subject Heading: EY Principal Interview Request

Dear Fiona,

Thank you for allowing my research to take place within your school over the past two months. The Early Years teachers, and especially the Case Study Participants, have been extremely open and helpful with this unique research.

As the last step, I would also like to interview you for your thoughts about intercultural collaboration.

Would you have any times available which are convenient for you to talk with me next week? Attached to this email are the questions I will be asking during the interview in case you would like to see them before we meet.

I look forward to hearing from you. Thank you again for your support, I sincerely appreciate it.

Kind Regards,

Greg Brunton

Appendix N- Interview Protocol- EY Principal

Name: Date: Time:

Demographics and Background

1. What is your nationality?

    2.   What is your first language?

    3.   Where did you grow up?

    4.   Where did you go to university?

    5.   What degree(s) do you have?

    6.   What is your administrative background?

    7.   How long have you been at this school?

    8.   How long have you been the EY Principal?

Agreements

    9.   Has your team established any agreements? Is so, what are they?

    10.   If your team has established agreements, describe your team's effectiveness in
            following those agreements.

Collaboration

    11.   How would you describe the collaboration within your school?

    12.   What are some of the positive experiences you have had collaborating?

    13.   What are some of the negative experiences you have had trying to collaborate?

    14.   How do you feel you, or anyone else, support collaboration in your school?

    15.   What are the challenges you face when trying to collaborate?

Intercultural Teams

    16.   What are the benefits of being on an intercultural team? Do you know of any
            examples?

17.　　What are the disadvantages to being on an intercultural team? Do you know of any examples?

18.　　Have you experienced any "wow" moments when you were surprised to learn something that is different in another culture? If so, how did you handle it?

19.　　Have you experienced any "culture shock" moments when you were surprised to learn something that is different in another culture? If so, how did you handle it?

20.　　Have you experienced any "wow" moments when you were surprised to learn something that is different in another culture related to teaching or working with children? If so, what were they?

21.　　Have you experienced any "teaching shock" moments when you were surprised to learn something that is different in another culture related to teaching or working with children? If so, what were they?

22.　　What advice would you give another intercultural team about how to collaborate with one another effectively?

Case Study Participation

23.　　Can you tell me about any possible positive or negative affects on you or your teachers because of participation in this study?

Appendix O-Co-Teacher Discussion Questions 2014-2015

Directions: By reading and answering the questions below with your co-teacher, it is hoped you will find it easier to discover any possible differences of opinion, beliefs, expectations, and assumptions with the goal of respectfully and professional resolving any possible differences and making essential agreements to ensure a successful co-teacher relationship. It is acknowledged that the success of a co-teacher relationship depends on the quality of communication between co-teachers and the quality of communication is determined by the level of trust and respect for each other. Just as we take the time at the beginning of every year to help students understand what we expect of them, please take the time to chat with your co-teacher about what you expect of them. As you will not be able to talk about everything during one chat, please check off each question as you go along and find time soon to complete the rest.

Background:
- What do you like to do outside of school?
- Do you have a family or pets?
- What is something about you most people do not know?
- Where have you worked?
- What do you like to teach best?
- What do you like to teach the least?
- What do you feel are your strengths?
- How can you add to the team?
- What would you like to improve on this year?
- Do you feel you need a mentor? If so, who would you like to be your mentor?
- How would you like for the other teacher to support you?
- How do you think you can help the other teacher this year?
- How would you determine if your co-teaching team is working well?
- What would be some signs that your co-teaching team is not working well?
- What do we agree to do if things are not working well?

To Do List:
- [Each teacher is expected to take initiative to know what needs to be done to support the needs of the students and to give that support]
- Where are we going to keep a shared *To Do List* that each of us will add to and work on? (to include items like displays needing work, Primary at WISS, getting supplies…)
- How will me manage the list? (add items, indicate urgency, mark completed items…)

Attendance:
- How will we share the taking of attendance?
- How will we share information about absences?

Planning:
- When will we have our weekly planning time together every week? (art class?)
- As one co-teacher needs to plan for 5 Chinese lessons, during what two blocks will the Chinese language teacher be released from working with the students in the classroom?
- When can we have daily chats about student progress, planning or other items?
- What are you confident and comfortable planning?
- How will planning show which of the 6 Co-Teaching Structures we are using for each lesson? (One Teach One Observe, Parallel Teaching, Station Teaching, Team Teaching…)
- How will we handle routine tasks like copying and laminating?

Teaching:
- [As the purpose of co-teaching at WISS is to provide differentiated support for students, both teachers are expected to understand the objectives of the lessons and be working with the

students during all instructional times (except Chinese lessons and the 2 release periods for Chinese language lesson planning)]
- What are you confident and comfortable teaching?
- How would you like for me to support you when you are taking the lead during teaching?
- If I notice something is wrong with what you said while you are teaching, what would you like for me to do?
- If I have an idea to add while you are teaching, what would you like for me to do?
- What should I not do while you are teaching?
- How will you get student's attention and recorded?
- How will share leading the class meetings?
- If I need to leave the classroom during a lesson for something very important, how should I let you know that I need to leave and when I will come back?

Sharing Assessing:
- What are you confident and comfortable assessing?
- How will we make observational assessments?
- How will be document and keep a record of what is observed?
- How will we both be involved with the PM Benchmark assessments? (if applicable)
- How will we manage Storypark posts? (if applicable)

Marking:
- What are you confident and comfortable marking?
- How will we share marking classwork?
- How will we share marking homework?
- When will marking take place?
- How will you communicate what you learned from marking student work to the other teacher?
- How will marking be reflected in goal setting/feedback with directions?

Reports:
- How will I have knowledge of each student's progress so the report writing can be shared?
- How will our 'grading' be consistent?
- How will both teachers work together to write the comments?
- How will the comments be written on the computer?

Classroom:
- Where is my work space and personal area? (desk, lockable filing cabinet…)
- Each classroom has 6 student computers and one computer for the projector. Where will we place the computer for the projector so we can both use it?
- Where will we keep the teacher resource books? (PM folders/Maths/Language/UoI…)
- Where will we keep the teacher binders?
- Where will we keep the assessment folders?
- Where will we keep the portfolios?
- Where will we keep the Take Home Folders or Communication Books?
- What do students need to do to keep the room tidy? (push in chairs, throw away their own trash, put away supplies themselves, not leave the room until they have done all of these things…?)
- How will students know to do those things to keep the room tidy?
- How will we enforce keeping the room tidy? (check before students leave each time?)
- What do students need to do at the end of the day? (tables, cubbies, floor, resources…?)
- How will we each of us keep the room clean?
- How will we update the display boards outside the classroom?
- How will we update the display boards inside the classroom?

Supervision:
- [Both teachers are responsible for the active supervision of students in their class by following the guidelines, expectations, and policies; children must not be left alone]

- Arrival of students supervision
  - Who will supervise inside the classroom as students enter each day?
  - Who will supervise outside the classroom as students enter each day?
- Who will share the supervision of students to and from each single subject? (Art, Music, PE, Swimming)
- Who will share the supervision of students to and from snack each day?
- Who will share the supervision of students to and from lunch each day?
- Library – As both teachers are expected to work with students when visiting the library, how will each teacher support the students at the library?
- Dismissal of students supervision
  - Who will supervise which students to the buses?
  - Who will supervise which students to the cafeteria?
  - As there is one clipboard, how will we share the information? (Ask Nadya and Lynn)

Student Behavior:
- What do we expect of student behavior?
- How will the students know about our expectations?
- How will be handle misbehavior?
- How will we not handle misbehavior?
- Since both teachers need to enforce the class Essential Agreements for Behavior consistently, how will both teachers have input making those agreements?

Communication:
- How will we email parents? (use both names, cc other teacher, BCC for multiple families…)
- If you talked to a parent, how will you inform me? (shared communication log?)
- If you talked to another teacher, how will you inform me?
- If an incident has happened with a child, how will we both be kept informed?
- If something is bothering me, how would you like for me to let you know?
- If I disagree, how would you like for me to tell you?

Meeting Time:
- When can we meet for a coffee or to chat?

Appendix P-Anonymous Survey Analysis Summary

Analyzed data from the anonymous survey were organized by themes for each survey question.

18 Early Years Teachers invited to complete survey
9   Respondents
( ) number of comments made related to that theme

1.   **What are the benefits to being on an intercultural team?**
       成为跨文化团队的一员带给你的益处是什么？
   - Learn about other cultures, perspectives, and opinions (7)
   - Learn about other teaching styles, methods, and concepts (3)
   - Relationships: communication and respect (3)
   - Opportunity to reflect on own culture, teaching style, open-mindedness, and ability to accept differences (2)
   - Combine culture and thoughts to overcome own weaknesses and acquire strengths of others (1)

2.   **What are the disadvantages to being on an intercultural team?**
       成为跨文化团队的一员所带给你的劣势是什么？
   - Communication: English, misunderstandings, not sharing (7)
   - Understanding different cultural backgrounds and personalities (5)
   - Different ideas and expectations (4)
   - Time (4)
   - Differences in educational backgrounds and teaching experiences (1)

3.   **How would you define collaboration?**
       你对"协作"两字是如何定义的？
       When team members:
   - Share the responsibilities (12)
   - Learn from each other (4)
   - Communicate with each other (3)
   - Respect each other (2)
   - Understand and support each other (2)
   - Are open to change and compromise (1)

4.   **If you were on a team that is collaborating well, what would you see, hear and feel?**
       如果你身处在一个协作性很好的团队中，你会看到，听到并感受到些什么？
       See
   - Sharing and engaged (10)
   - Friendly interactions (7)
   - Listening and learning (4)
   - Supportive (3)
   - Compromising (2)
   - Smiles (2)

Hear
- Laughter (2)
- Excitement and enthusiasm (2)
- Positive communication (1)
- Open-mindedness (1)

Feel
- Happy (7)
- Comfortable (7)
- Respected (4)
- Love and warmth (3)
- Confident (3)

5. **How would you describe the collaboration within your grade level team?**
   在你的年级组里，你会如何形容你们之间的团队协作？
   Based on definition of collaboration created from analysis:

Theme Within Definition	Positive Comments	Negative Comments
Share the responsibilities	5	2
Learn from each other	2	0
Communicate with each other	0	0
Respect each other	5	0
Understand and support each other	1	1
Open to change and compromise	0	2

6. **What are some of the positive experiences you have had collaborating?**
   在你所经历过的团队协作事例中，有哪些积极的经历？
   - Positive environment created (listened to, appreciated, respected, accepted, valued) (10)
   - Sharing responsibilities (7)
   - Supporting team members (5)
   - Learning from each other (3)
   - Helping students (2)

7. **What are some of the negative experiences you have had trying to collaborate?**
   在你所经历过的团队协作事例中，有哪些消极的经历？
   - Partner not sharing responsibility (8)
   - Respect and Honesty (8)
   - Partner's motivation (5)
   - Partner's skill level (3)
   - Communication (2)
   - Guidance and support (2)

- Compromising (1)
- Time (1)

8.   How do you feel collaboration in your team is supported?
    你觉得学校各部门对于你们团队的支持度如何？
- Communication (collaborative checklist, honest communication) (3)
- Emotional support, caring (2)
- Observations and recommendations by Principal and Deputy Principal (1)
- Professional learning opportunities (1)
- Respect (1)
- Not much (1)

9.   What are the challenges you face when trying to collaborate?
    当你试图和他人协作的时候，你所面临的挑战是什么？
- Partner sharing responsibility (9)
- Communication (7)
- Partner's motivation (5)
- Partner's skill level (4)
- Time (3)
- Organization (1)

10.   Is collaborating with your team important to you? Why?
    团队之间的协作性对你来说重要吗？为什么？
- No [1 respondent]
    - sometimes collaborating makes things complicated
- Yes [8 respondents]
    - Learn from each other (4)
    - Effectiveness of team (4)
    - Positive environment (2)
    - Building team relationships (2)
    - Easier (1)
    - Helping students (1)
    - Support each other (1)

Appendix Q-Co-Teacher Roles and Responsibilities

2012-2013 Version

Fostering Collaboration and Celebrating Our Host Country

WISS offers a unique classroom set up and one that fosters the IB spirit of collaboration. It places ongoing learning, reflective practice, critical friendships, professional dialogue and professional development at the heart of everything it does. WISS openly celebrates the richness of life in our host country and it believes that by offering a co-teacher classroom model, our students will be more able to appreciate cultural diversity and develop a comprehensive understanding of China and the Chinese language and culture. The co-teacher model also promotes and supports differentiated instruction and allows teachers to cater specifically for a variety of student needs. WISS, therefore, has one qualified foreign teacher and one qualified Chinese teacher in every class from Nursery to Grade Five.

Essentials for a Successful Co-Teaching Relationship

A good co-teaching relationship is developed over time with strong communication, mutual respect, appreciation, a positive attitude, and shared responsibility and ownership of the classroom and learning experiences to ensure a safe classroom environment while meeting the student's learning needs.

Purpose of Co-Teachers

The co-teacher model promotes and supports differentiated instruction and allows teachers to cater specifically for a variety of student needs.

Co-Teacher Shared Responsibilities
Both classroom teachers have a shared responsibility for the pastoral care of their students and for student learning. These responsibilities include:
- making all students feel safe, comfortable and confident;
- completing the daily register of the class;
- transitioning students to and from classes;
- organising and designing the classroom set up such as furniture and other classroom items;
- designing, managing and creating classroom displays;
- preparing instructional resources to include copying and laminating;
- planning and collaborating in relation to Units of Inquiry as well as well discussing the weekly classroom program;
- planning and organising field trips within the local community;
- assisting students in rehearsing/preparing for performances.

Co-Teaching Structures

When the foreign co-teacher is the lead teacher of a lesson, the Chinese co-teacher should be involved with one of the below Co-Teaching Structures. Please see the document title Co-Teaching Structures for detailed descriptions and recommendations of when each is best used.
- One Teach One Observe
- Parallel Teaching
- Station Teaching

• Alternative Teaching
  • One Teach, One Assist
  • Team Teaching

Role of the Foreign Co-Teacher

As well as providing joint pastoral care for their students, the Foreign Co-Teacher's primary role is to plan, prepare and teach the WISS curriculum under the guidance of the PYP Coordinator. The Foreign Co-Teacher has the lead role in teaching language, mathematics and the Programme of Inquiry. Classroom lessons should be designed and planned by the foreign co-teacher, utilizing the expertise, skills and knowledge of his/her Chinese Co-Teacher during planning meetings to support student learning. The Foreign Co-Teacher should take the lead role in teaching the majority of lessons.

The Responsibilities of the Foreign Co-Teacher are to:

  • plan, teach and review the English, mathematics, science, social studies, and personal and social education curriculum (where appropriate through the context of transdisciplinary Units of Inquiry within the Programme of Inquiry);
  • where possible and appropriate, teach through an inquiry-based approach;
  • explicitly teach ongoing and transdisciplinary skills;
  • differentiate classroom instruction;
  • support student learning through one of the six teaching structures when not the lead teacher
  • assess and document student progress using a variety of assessment tools and strategies;
  • complete (in consultation with the Chinese co-teacher) student reports;
  • participate in parent/student interviews and conferences;
  • promote good lines of communication with colleagues, parents and the wider school community.

The Role of the Chinese Co-Teacher

As well as providing joint pastoral care for their students, the Chinese Co-Teacher's primary role is collaborate with the foreign Co-Teacher to plan, prepare and teach the WISS curriculum under the guidance of the PYP Coordinator. Though the foreign co-teacher has the lead role in teaching language, mathematics and the Programme of Inquiry, Chinese co-teachers should support student learning through one of the six teaching structures mentioned above. The Chinese co-teacher is also responsible for the planning, resourcing, delivery and review of the Chinese Curriculum at WISS under the guidance of the PYP Chinese Co-ordinator.

The Responsibilities of the Chinese Co-Teacher are to:

  • collaborate with the Foreign Co-Teacher to plan, teach and review the English, mathematics, science, social studies, and personal and social education curriculum (where appropriate through the context of transdisciplinary Units of Inquiry within the Programme of Inquiry);
  • where possible and appropriate, teach through an inquiry-based approach;
  • explicitly teach ongoing and transdisciplinary skills;
  • differentiate classroom instruction;
  • support student learning through one of the six teaching structures when not the lead

teacher
- assess and document student progress using a variety of assessment tools and strategies;
- complete the Chinese language sections of school reports and consult with the Foreign Co-Teacher for the other sections of the reports;
- participate in parent/student interviews and conferences;
- promote good lines of communication with colleagues, parents and the wider school community;
- plan, resource and deliver the Chinese Curriculum;
- assist with translations in parent communication for mother-tongue Chinese students;
- help the foreign co-teacher access local community resources and assist with the planning and risk assessment for field trips.

Co-Teaching Structures

One Teach One Observe

One Teach One Observe-when one teacher is responsible for whole group instruction while the other teacher observes the students and gathers information on their academic, social, and behavioral skills. This co-teaching structure allows co-teachers an opportunity to gather information about their students, and each other as well.

One Teach, One Observe is an excellent strategy to implement during the first few weeks of school. It may be used during any lesson to determine which students are contributing to the lesson, as well as to identify students who need extra encouragement and support to contribute to class discussions. One teach, one observe also may be used to collect student data, monitor and support student behavior, and write and evaluate students' individualized education program objectives in preparation for meetings with parents and colleagues.

Parallel Teaching

Parallel Teaching-when the co-teachers place the students into two equal groups and each teacher simultaneously teaches the same material to his or her small group. The benefit of this co-teaching structure is that it allows for increased teacher interaction and student participation as well as differentiation of instruction.

Parallel Teaching may be used in many different ways. The strength of the format is that it enables teachers to work with smaller numbers of students and to provide all students an opportunity for individualized and hands-on learning. Parallel teaching is an excellent format to use in science lessons, particularly those with experiments, especially because the teachers are working with a smaller number of students and have a better chance of controlling the variables.

Station Teaching

Station Teaching--when the co-teachers arrange the students into two or three equal groups, and the students rotate through each of the instructional stations. In this structure, the stations should not build on one another, but rather be nonsequential. The advantage of this co-teaching structure is that it also allows for increased teacher and student interactions.

Station Teaching is a good format to use in any curricular area. For example, in an English language arts lesson, the students, who are working in small groups, rotate through one of three stations. The teachers teach two stations (e.g., grammar and spelling) while other students work independently on narrative writing activities.

Alternative Teaching

Alternative Teaching-when one teacher teaches the whole group and the other teacher teaches a small group of students. The grouping for this structure should change according to students' needs. This coteaching structure allows either teacher the opportunity to teach (e.g., remediation, pre-teaching, vocabulary development and enrichment activities) for a short period of time.

Alternative Teaching is an exceptional format to provide students with more intense and individualized instruction in a specific academic area. For example, many students have difficulty solving word problems. Therefore, one teacher can provide them with explicit instruction on solving word problems twice weekly for 15-20 minutes per session, while the other teacher works on other word problem-solving activities with the remaining students in the class.

One Teach, One Assist

One Teach, One Assist-when one teacher instructs the whole group and the other teacher assists individual students. The co-teaching structure allows the drifting teacher the opportunity to provide brief periods of individualized instruction to students who may be struggling with the academic content.

One Teach. One Assist is an excellent strategy to check for student understanding. For example, during a math lesson, while one teacher is teaching, the other teacher can provide additional one-to-one assistance, such as reminding students about the first step to solve a problem, prompting students' use of a diagram to help understand the problem, or providing the definition of a concept to address students' difficulties and to ensure their understanding of the new material.

Team Teaching

Team Teaching-when both teachers deliver instruction simultaneously to a large group of students. This structure affords the team teachers the chance to interact with the students. It also provides them with an, opportunity to ask clarification questions of one another, thereby eliminating the potential confusion in instruction.

Team Teaching can be used in any academic subject, especially when presenting new material. In this instance, the co-teachers set up the lesson to question one another when a difficult concept is presented, thereby taking the pressure off of the students who may have difficulty understanding the new material. This structure also helps the teachers support each other as they present the material to ensure they addressed all steps and accurately reinforced the concepts.

Sileo, J. M. (2011). Co-teaching: Getting to know your partner. Teaching Exceptional Children, 43(5), 32-38.

Though more data was provided to support themes from the anonymous survey, no new themes emerged. After analyzing data from the anonymous survey and the focus group interview, the themes were categorized into five major areas.

( )   Number of occurrences theme mentioned during Anonymous Survey
(FG)   Relocation of theme from different question after Focus Group Interview

Advantages to being on an intercultural team
    A1-Learn about other cultures, perspectives, and opinions (7)
    A2-Learn about other teaching styles, methods, and concepts (3)
    A3-Relationships: communication and respect (3)
    A4-Opportunity to reflect on own culture, teaching style, open-mindedness, and ability to
        accept differences (2)
    A5-Combine culture and thoughts to overcome own weaknesses and acquire strengths of
        others (1)

Disadvantages to being on an intercultural team
    D1-Communication: English, misunderstandings, not sharing (7)
    D2-Understanding different cultural backgrounds and personalities (5)
    D3-Different ideas and expectations (4)
    D4-Time (4)
    D5-Differences in educational backgrounds and teaching experiences (1)

Define collaboration
When team members:
    C1-Share the responsibilities (12)
    C2-Learn from each other, share ideas (4)
    C3-Communicate with each other (3)
    C4-Respect each other (2)
    C5-Understand and support each other (2)
    C6-Are open to change and compromise (1)
    C7-Positive environment (smiles, laughter, excitement, comfortable…) (FG)
    C8-Helping Students, effectiveness (FG)

Supporting collaboration
    SC1-Communication (collaborative checklist, honest communication) (3)
    SC2-Emotional support, caring (2)
    SC3-Observations and recommendations by Principal and Deputy Principal (1)
    SC4-Professional learning opportunities (1)
    SC5-Respect (1)
    SC6-Time (FG)

Challenges to collaboration
    CC1-Partner sharing responsibility (9)

CC2-Communication (7)
CC3-Partner's motivation (5)
CC4-Partner's skill level (4)
CC5-Time (3)
CC6-Organization (1)

After analyzing data from the pre-observation interviews, the themes from the anonymous survey and focus group interviews were combined with additional themes from the pre-observation interviews into the existing 5 major areas.

( )   Number of occurrences theme mentioned during Anonymous Survey
(FG)   Additional theme after Focus Group Interview
[ ]   Number of Case Study Participants who mentioned theme during Pre-Observation Interview

Advantages to being on an intercultural team [Pre-Observation Interview Question #30]
    A1-Learn about other cultures, perspectives, and opinions (7)
    A2-Learn about other teaching styles, methods, and concepts (3) [4-professional dev]
    A3-Relationships: communication and respect (3)
    A4-Opportunity to reflect on own culture, teaching style, open-mindedness, and ability to accept differences (2) [2]
    A5-Combine culture and thoughts to overcome own weaknesses and acquire strengths of others (1)

Disadvantages to being on an intercultural team [Pre-Observation Interview Question #31]
    D1-Communication: English, misunderstandings, not sharing (7) [2]
    D2-Understanding different cultural backgrounds and personalities (5)
    D3-Different ideas and expectations (4) [2]
    D4-Time (4) [1]
    D5-Differences in educational backgrounds and teaching experiences (1)
    D6-Personalities [1]

Define collaboration [Pre-Observation Interview Questions #20, #21]
When team members:
    C1-Share the responsibilities (12) [3]
    C2-Learn from each other, share ideas (4) [2]
    C3-Communicate with each other (3) [1]
    C4-Respect each other (2)
    C5-Understand and support each other (2)
    C6-Are open to change and compromise (1)
    C7-Positive environment (smiles, laughter, excitement, comfortable…) (FG)
    C8-Helping Students, effectiveness (FG)

Supporting collaboration [Pre-Observation Interview Question #23]
    SC1-Communication (collaborative checklist, honest communication) (3) [1]
    SC2-Emotional support, caring (2)
    SC3-Observations and recommendations by Principal and Deputy Principal (1)
    SC4-Professional learning opportunities (1)
    SC5-Respect (1) [1]
    SC6-Time (FG) [1]

SC7-GL meetings with PYPCO [2]
SC8-Set curriculum plan [1]
SC9-Know colleagues [1]

Challenges to collaboration [Pre-Observation Interview Question #24]
CC1-Partner sharing responsibility (9)
CC2-Communication (7)
CC3-Partner's motivation (5)
CC4-Partner's skill level (4)
CC5-Time (3)
CC6-Organization (1)
CC7-Expectations too high for assistants [1]
CC8-Agreeing with new ideas [1]

<h1>Appendix T-PYP Collaborative Planning Meeting Agenda Guidelines</h1>

Purpose Statement

Each grade level team will meet every week during the grade level's PE lesson time. The purpose is to work collaboratively as a team to plan all parts of the PYP programme and curriculum to include the Unit of Inquiry, Language (both English and Chinese), Mathematics, Science, Social Studies, Personal, Social and Physical Education and the Arts as either stand alone or integrated. As planning and collaboration are viewed as essential for any team in a PYP school, the PYP Planning Meeting is not meant to be only time the team meets.

The Grade Level Team
- The Grade Level Team will consist of all homeroom teachers, the PYPCO, EAL teacher along with support or single subject teachers when applicable and possible

Chairing
- The Grade Level Leader (GLL), is responsible for ensuring that there is a different person designated each week who will be the Chair for the meeting and that the venue is rotated

Agenda and Documentation
- The GLL, or designated Chair, is responsible for ensuring that the meeting agenda is set before the weekly planning meeting and that all team members have an opportunity to add to and view the agenda before each meeting
- Each week, agenda items should include UOI, Mathematics, Language (English), Language (Chinese), EAL and other items, AOB, as time permits like Newsletter or Important Dates to Remember
- Some agenda items may only need to share how it is going with the topic in each classroom and an exchange of ideas or lessons so time can be focused on higher need areas
- The Chair is responsible to ensure the weekly planning meetings are collaborative in nature
- The Chair is responsible for ensuring the minutes are recorded with who will take what action and then saved in the appropriate shared folder
- The Chair, along with the GLL, ensures that any follow up from the weekly planning meetings takes place

Discussions and Decisions
- Though each member of the team has different roles and responsibilities, each member has an equal voice in the discussions
- Each member should share their ideas and opinions with the whole team for consideration
- Each member should consider all ideas and opinions
- The Chair, with support for all team members, is responsible for keeping the agenda items moving within the time allowance of the meeting
- There should be consistency within the grade level team with pre and post assessments and with the scope and sequence's learning outcomes in all subject areas
- Exactly how the learning outcomes are achieved in each classroom can be left to teacher professionalism while still trying to provide consistency when possible and appropriate
- Any items which the team feels cannot be discussed in the time allowed should be

placed on the agenda for the next meeting
- Priority items on the agenda are those which relate to the curriculum, other items involving grade level coordination can also be discussed if there is time remaining, otherwise, they should be discussed at other grade level meetings

Decisions
- Each member of the team is responsible for reaching a consensus which supports student learning
- The PYPCO is responsible for ensuring that all decisions align with the PYP programme, the school's curriculum and the school's s vision
- If a team is unable to make a consensus, the area principal should be consulted for guidance on reaching a consensus.

Last Updated 6th of December 2012

Appendix U-PYP Coordinator-Job Description

Purpose Statement

All PYP schools must appoint a PYP Coordinator. Together with the senior management team, the PYP Coordinator is involved in the whole-school implementation of the PYP and, therefore, has a central function in the organization of the program. The PYP Coordinator maintains contact with area leaders, subject area coordinators and teachers, and with the IB.

The PYP Coordinator will provide curriculum leadership for teachers and students. It is expected that the PYP Coordinator will work closely with teaching staff and is expected to delegate tasks to other members of the team in consultation with the Curriculum Director and Area Principal as necessary for completion in a timely and efficient manner.

The Primary Years Programme Coordinator reports directly to the EY and Primary Principals. They must in:

General:
- Be committed to and demonstrate support for the values and ethos of the school, as outlined in policy documents.
- Keep abreast of education issues and developments, through regular professional development and reading in line with school and personal goals.

Particular:

Administrative Leadership
- Assist with the review of reporting and assessment that allows for effective communication to parents and students in line with IB requirements
- Ensure that the copies of the IB publications pertaining to their sections of the school are available to all staff members.
- Check that IB Unit planning documents are completed per school policy
- Ensure that the school's scope and sequence documents are consistent with the IB philosophy.
- Develop an action plan that is specific to the Primary Years Programme, in line with the school
- School Strategic Plan and the recommendations given in the Evaluation Report received from the IB evaluation visit.
- Oversee the PYP PD budget.
- Keep a record of workshops and school visits.
- Circulate all relevant information received from the IB.
- Prepare and submit any documentation required for evaluation with the support of the area principals.
- Ensure that all requirements and procedures set by the IB concerning the programme are adhered to.
- Respond to requests for information from the IB.
- Act as a liaison between the school and the IB.

Educational Leadership
- Work with the administration team to maintain an ongoing focus on the learner profile as a central pillar of the school's philosophy and practice.

- Liaise with MYP and DP Coordinators to achieve alignment of the PYP, MYP and DP programmes.
- Providing leadership to teams and individuals in the written, taught and learned elements of the PYP curriculum framework and the ongoing development of both an environment of inquiry and subject-based and transdisciplinary units of inquiry.
- Support the teachers responsible for, and the students involved in, the PYP exhibition in the final year of the programme.
- Monitoring assessment practices and procedures to ensure a balanced approach at each year level in line with the assessment policy and the PYP.
- Assist in preparing teachers for and the implementation of Student-Led Conferences.
- Participate in planning team meetings across the primary years to model the process of team planning and assist teams in developing units of work.
- Lead the process of development and review of the PYP's Program of inquiry and publish.
- Ensure that essential agreements are formulated for assessment and teaching and learning practices, in line with the school's assessment policy and current educational research.
- Be involved with setting up and supporting curriculum advisory groups.
- Support the programme of inquiry and ensure that scope and sequence documents are practical documents which support an inquiry-based, concept driven approach to learning.
- Mapping or tracking of the written curriculum within the taught curriculum within and outside of the units of inquiry.
- Supporting teaching teams with resources to further support teaching in the classroom.
- Work with the area principals to plan, develop and lead PYP staff meetings to address the Standards and Practices, skill shares and collaboration meetings.
- Work with the area principals to ensure that adequate professional development opportunities are provided for teachers both on and off campus and that they are made aware of these opportunities.
- Plan and deliver workshops for staff on aspects of PYP as part of the school's overall professional development plan (E.g. for new teachers as they join the school).
- Provide guidance for planning teams to ensure that units of inquiry have an international focus and focus on language development
- Make recommendations for suitable resources to support the programme.
- Assist teachers in identifying local people and resources that can be used to support the programme.
- Ensure that there are resources for the programme which cater to the needs of second language learners and the various cultural backgrounds of the students in the school.

Community Relations

- Encourage regular dialogue among teachers about all aspects of teaching and learning in the school.
- Facilitate systems for communication and collaboration among community members (E.g. conduct both formal and informal)
- Publish articles relating to the programme in the school newsletter when appropriate.
- Promote contact with the wider community of learners through such media as the OCC discussion forum, email contact with colleagues and school visits.
- Establish / maintain links with other PYP schools in the region.

Last Updated 23rd of November 2012

Appendix V-Grade Level Coordinators-Job Description

Purpose Statement
Grade Level Coordinators (GLCs) will provide coordination for each grade level team. It is expected that the GLC will work closely with all other members on the grade level team, EAL teachers, learning support teachers, single subject teachers, librarians and if applicable of the grade level, teaching assistants. GLCs are teachers' first point of contact and are there for additional support and information.

The Grade Level Coordinators report directly to the Early Years or Primary Principal. They must in:

General:
    ☐ Be committed to and demonstrate support for the values and ethos of the school, as outlined in policy documents.
    ☐ Keep abreast of education issues and developments, through regular professional development and reading in line with school and personal goals.

Particular:

Administrative Leadership
    • Promote a collaborative working environment for all members within the grade level team where each member is valued, appreciated and respected for what they bring to the team
    • Serve as a formal/informal mentor as a guide to the other teachers on the team as they integrate into the grade level and WISS teams
    • Ensure that a meeting agenda is set before the weekly planning meeting and that all team members have an opportunity to add to and view the agenda before each meeting
    • Ensure the weekly planning meetings are collaborative in nature and that the minutes are recorded and saved in the appropriate shared folder
    • Ensure that any follow up from the weekly planning meetings takes place
    • Oversee the Primary at WISS intranet postings, ensuring there are regular postings on the site by the responsible team members. Proof read Grade level postings on Primary at WISS.
    • Survey the team for any matters requested by the principal and report back
    • Coordinate the use of the grade level shared areas

Educational Leadership
    • Work with the PYPCO to maintain an ongoing focus on the learner profile as a central pillar of the school's philosophy and practice within the grade level
    • Work with other GLCs and the PYPCO to achieve vertical alignment of the PYP programme
    • Working with the grade level team and the PYPCO, help ensure formal or informal grade level essential agreements are formulated for assessment, teaching, learning practices, student behavior, informal reporting, collaborating as a team and meeting as a team are in line with the school's policy and current educational research
    • Coordinate, or delegate the coordination of, field trips and incursions for your grade level, ensuring that the necessary paperwork is completed
    • Liaise with the librarians and PYPCO to coordinate grade level resources

• With the PYPCO, help ensure consistency in the content of the programme across the grade level

Community Relations
• Take responsibility for communicating relevant Grade level information by including it in the weekly Primary at WISS posting.
• Publish articles relating to the Grade level in the school newsletter when appropriate.

Last Updated 27th of May 2015

Appendix W-Analysis Codes After Post-Observation Interviews

Data from the demographic and background section (questions POI1-POI6) were used in the narrative for Chapter 5. The other data is organized and presented into six sections. All data was either aligned with existing codes or new codes were created. Sub codes were also added for more detail.

( )   Number of occurrences theme mentioned during Anonymous Survey
(FG)   Additional theme after Focus Group Interview
[ ]   Number of Case Study Participants mentioning theme during Pre-Observation Interview
PRI   Pre-Observation Interview question number (33 questions total)
POI   Post-Observation Interview question number (25 questions total)
GL   Grade Level Team
CT   Co-Teacher

Advantages to being on an intercultural team (POI7, POI9, POI10)
- A1 Learn about other cultures, perspectives, and opinions (7)
  - 1-Needs of one versus needs of the group-food choices POI7
  - 2-Physical risk taking POI7
  - 3-Parent communication over simple injury dependent on nationality of parents POI7
  - 4-Gender roles in play POI7
  - 5-Celebrations POI7
  - 6-Parent perspectives based on nationality (Chinese) POI7
  - 7-Daily parent questions (Chinese) POI7
- A2 Learn about other teaching styles, methods, and concepts (3) [4-Professional development]
  - 1-Needs of one versus needs of the group-special needs, advanced learners POI7
  - 2-How they teach the children POI7
  - 3-How to lead POI7
  - 4-How to do lesson plans POI7
  - 5-Mathematics instruction ideas carryover to Chinese language lessons POI9
  - 6-Whole class instruction POI9
  - 7-Differentiated instruction POI9
  - 8-Traditional Chinese instruction method with textbooks POI9, POI10
  - 9-Deep questioning techniques POI10
  - 10-Same communication for every student POI10
- A3 Relationships: communication and respect (3)
  - Everyone trying best, listening, appreciation GL POI18
- A4 Opportunity to reflect on own culture, teaching style, open-mindedness, and ability to accept differences (2) [2]
- A5 Combine culture and thoughts to overcome own weaknesses and acquire strengths of others (1)

Disadvantages to being on an intercultural team (POI8, POI11)
- D1 Communication: English, misunderstandings, not sharing (7) [2]
  - Children not speaking English POI11
- D2 Understanding different cultural backgrounds (about 5)
  - 1-Parent communication-children scratching another child POI8
  - 2-Complaints from parents (Chinese) POI8
- D3 Different philosophies, ideas and expectations related to teaching/working (4) [2]
  - 1-teacher/student relationship POI8, POI11
  - 2-Approch to work-cellphones usage POI8
  - 3-noticing things, taking initiative POI8
  - 4-follow schedule or outline for big events POI8
  - 5-communicate with parents about "autism" POI11
- D4 Time (4) [1]
- D5 Differences in educational backgrounds and teaching experiences (1)
- D6 Personalities (about 5) [2]

Challenges to Collaboration (POI12-POI21)
- CC1 Partner sharing responsibility (9)
  - 1-Silence for volunteering with big Projects in GL POI12
  - 2-evenly distributed work in GL (visiting students, rotating schedule, minutes and agenda) POI12
  - 3-Foreign teacher doing more GL POI12
  - 4-Not 50/50 CT POI13
  - 5-Portfolios, writing, reports CT POI15
- CC2 Communication (7)
  - 1-not discussion expectations at prior of year CT POI13
  - 2-partner getting lost and getting mad CT POI13
  - 3-following essential agreements CT POI13
  - 4-GL coordinator changing GL decision GL POI14(X2)
  - 5-listening=respect GL POI14
  - 6-play schedule GL POI14
  - 7-avoid communication when difficult GL POI14
  - 8-WeChat CT POI15
  - 9-partner taking over lesson CT POI15
  - 10-language difference and not being able to express clearly CT POI15
  - 11-communication with parents CT POI15
  - 12-communication about a child CT POI15
  - 13-Poor communication with assistant CT POI15
- CC3 Partner's motivation (5)
  - 1-initiative CT POI13
  - 2-inclusion of other's ideas GL POI14
  - 3-suggestions not taken openly CT POI15
  - 4-getting work done GL POI16
  - 5-one person excited at a time taking the lead GL POI16
  - 6-silent all meeting GL POI16
  - 7-cellphone usage GL POI16

- o 8-different ideas of motivation versus laid back CT POI17
- o 9-choosing battles CT POI17(X2)
- CC4 Partner's skill level (4)
  - o 1-foreign teacher doing more GL POI12
  - o 2-EAL teacher checking writing of teacher CT POI13
  - o 3-different skills like whole class, breadth, assessment, analysis, small group, research, documentation GL POI18
  - o 4-teach group versus whole class CT POI19
  - o 5-ability to take lead teaching phonics CT POI19(X3)
  - o 6-assess, evaluate, document, reports CT POI19
- CC5 Time (3)
  - o 1-time spent discussing, disagreements and then no decision GL POI14, POI20
  - o 2-getting work done GL POI16
  - o 3-time spent on class groupings GL POI16
  - o 4-developing assessments GL POI20
  - o 5-planning excursions GL POI20
  - o 6-admin required responsibilities GL POI20
  - o 7-one teacher has to head out to bus and other stays CT POI21
  - o 8-one teacher felt enough time for everything due to essential agreements CT POI21
  - o 9-having TA helps with time CT POI21
  - o 10-phonics, assessment, documentation, evaluation CT POI21
  - o 11-ok with time but more nice for talk, reflect, think, plan CT POI21
- CC6 Organization (1)
- CC7 Expectations too high for assistants [1]
  - o 1-Poor communication with assistant CT POI15
  - o 2-assistant negative interactions with students GL POI18
- CC8 Agreeing with new ideas [1]

Participation in Grade Level Meetings (one silent, others dominating) (POI22-POI23)
- PGL1 others try to encourage contributing POI22(X3) POI23(X2)
- PGL2 if conversation related to them, responsibility for, like English literacy POI23(X4)
- PGL3 influence from previous negative experiences CT POI23
- PGL4 CT not explaining lessons with partner so they can help other CT POI22
- PGL5 typical Chinese not initiative POI22
- PGL6 confidence in English, intimidated, speed of conversation POI22(X4)
- PGL7 personality POI22
- PGL8 assertive/confidence speaking up when needed GL POI22
- PGL9 being new to the team POI22, POI23
- PGL10 dominating GLC or PYPCO with perceived authority POI23(X2)
- PGL11 this was how done last year POI23

Reflections by Case Study Participants (POI24 POI25)

- REF1 improving communication and collaboration POI24(X9) POI25
- REF2 inspire reflection POI24(X4) POI25(X2)
- REF3 pressure of being observed POI24
- REF4 less individual time due to more collaboration time POI25

Advice to give another intercultural team about how to collaborate (PRI32)
- AD1 share backgrounds and know each other as teachers and people by taking time to get to know each other and develop relationships and culture [4] POI25
- AD2 questionnaire to set essential agreements about expectations at the beginning of the year [2]
- AD3 shared readings [1]
- AD4 open and honest communication [1]
- AD5 have fun together [1]
- AD6 have a shared goal and not do so much individually lesson wise [0] POI25

Except for demographic and background data from questions POI1-POI6, which were used in the Narrative for Chapter 5, the data was organized by research question.

( )   Number of occurrences theme mentioned during Anonymous Survey
(FG)   Additional theme after Focus Group Interview
[ ]   Number of Case Study Participants mentioning theme during Pre-Observation Interview
PRI   Pre-Observation Interview question number (33 questions total)
POI   Post-Observation Interview question number (25 questions total)
GL   Grade Level Team
CT   Co-Teacher

Research Question 1-What experiences do these teachers have collaborating in an intercultural Professional learning community at this school?

Definition of PLC
- PLC1 Membership and Participation (PRI9-PRI11)
- PLC2 Time to Meet (PRI12-PRI14)
- PLC3 Focus Efforts on Learning and Generating Products (PRI15-PRI17)
- PLC4 Developed Norms (Roles, Responsibilities, Relationships) (PRI18-PRI19, PRI25-PRI29)
- PLC5 Student Achievement Goals (PRI33)

Define Collaboration (PRI20 some PRI21)
When team members:
- C1 Share the responsibilities (12) [3]
- C2 Learn from each other, share ideas (4) [2] [2]
- C3 Communicate with each other (3)
- C4 Respect each other (2)
- C5 Understand and support each other (2)
- C6 Are open to change and compromise (1)
- C7 Positive environment (smiles, laughter, excitement, comfortable…) (FG)
- C8 Helping Students, effectiveness (FG)

Research Question 2-What are the successes of collaboration in this context?

    Advantages to being on an intercultural team (PRI21, PRI30)

    Being on an intercultural team (POI7, POI9, POI10)

- A1 Learn about other cultures, perspectives, and opinions (7)
    - o 1-Needs of one versus needs of the group-food choices POI7
    - o 2-Physical risk taking POI7
    - o 3-Parent communication over simple injury dependent on nationality of parents POI7
    - o 4-Gender roles in play POI7
    - o 5-Celebrations POI7
    - o 6-Parent perspectives based on nationality (Chinese) POI7
    - o 7-Daily parent questions (Chinese) POI7
- A2 Learn about other teaching styles, methods, and concepts (3) [4-Professional development]
    - o 1-Needs of one versus needs of the group-special needs, advanced learners POI7
    - o 2-How they teach the children POI7
    - o 3-How to lead POI7
    - o 4-How to do lesson plans POI7
    - o 5-Mathematics instruction ideas carryover to Chinese language lessons POI9
    - o 6-Whole class instruction POI9
    - o 7-Differentiated instruction POI9
    - o 8-Traditional Chinese instruction method with textbooks POI9, POI10
    - o 9-Deep questioning techniques POI10
    - o 10-Same communication for every student POI10
- A3 Relationships: communication and respect (3)
    - o Everyone trying best, listening, appreciation GL POI18
- A4 Opportunity to reflect on own culture, teaching style, open-mindedness, and ability to accept differences (2) [2]
- A5 Combine culture and thoughts to overcome own weaknesses and acquire strengths of others (1)

Research Question 3&4-What are the challenges to collaboration in this context and how addressed?

Disadvantages to being on an intercultural team (PRI22, PRI31, POI8, POI11)
- D1 Communication: English, misunderstandings, not sharing (7) [2]
  - Children not speaking English POI11
- D2 Understanding different cultural backgrounds (about 5)
  - 1-Parent communication-children scratching another child POI8
  - 2-Complaints from parents (Chinese) POI8
- D3 Different philosophies, ideas and expectations related to teaching/working (4) [2]
  - 1-teacher/student relationship POI8, POI11
  - 2-Approch to work-cellphones usage POI8
  - 3-noticing things, taking initiative POI8
  - 4-follow schedule or outline for big events POI8
  - 5-communicate with parents about "autism" POI11
- D4 Time (4) [1]
- D5 Differences in educational backgrounds and teaching experiences (1)
- D6 Personalities (about 5) [2]

Challenges to Collaboration (PRI24, POI12-POI21)
- CC1 Partner sharing responsibility (9)
  - 1-Silence for volunteering with big Projects in GL POI12
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  - o 10-phonics, assessment, documentation, evaluation CT POI21
  - o 11-ok with time but more nice for talk, reflect, think, plan CT POI21
- CC6 Organization (1)
- CC7 Expectations too high for assistants [1]
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- PGL2   if conversation related to them, responsibility for, like English literacy POI23(X4)
- PGL3   influence from previous negative experiences CT POI23
- PGL4   CT not explaining lessons with partner so they can help other CT POI22
- PGL5   typical Chinese not initiative POI22
- PGL6   confidence in English, intimidated, speed of conversation POI22(X4)
- PGL7   personality POI22
- PGL8   assertive/confidence speaking up when needed GL POI22
- PGL9   being new to the team POI22, POI23
- PGL10   dominating GLC or PYPCO with perceived authority POI23(X2)

- PGL11   this was how done last year POI23

Research Question 5-What factors support collaboration in this context?
Supporting Collaboration (PRI23)
- SC1 Communication (collaborative checklist, honest communication) (3) [1]
- SC2 Emotional support, caring (2)
- SC3 Observations and recommendations by Principal and Deputy Principal
-     (1) [1]
- SC4 Professional learning opportunities (1)
- SC5 Respect (1) [1]
- SC6 Time (FG) [1]
- SC7 GL meetings with PYPCO [2]
- SC8 Set curriculum plan [1]
- SC9 Know colleagues [1]

Reflections by Case Study Participants (POI24, POI25)
- REF1 improving communication and collaboration POI24(X9) POI25
- REF2 inspire reflection POI24(X4) POI25(X2)
- REF3 pressure of being observed POI24
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- AD4 open and honest communication [1]
- AD5 have fun together [1]
- AD6 have a shared goal and not do so much individually lesson wise [0] POI25

Appendix Y-Essential Agreements for EY Playground

- Encourage all students to make **safe, respectful** and **responsible** choices

- Class teachers should introduce all students to play equipment and demonstrate appropriate use before playing on them for the first time. These expectations should be reinforced regularly with students and during playtimes when staff are on duty.

- Staff should support and encourage children to use play equipment appropriately when on duty with minimum risk to themselves and other students.

- Teachers should be aware of their duty of care and the responsibilities that accompany this.

- Staff should ensure children are dressed in appropriate clothing is worn during outside playtimes. (Jackets in winter, hats in summer, no flip flops, crocs or ballet slip on shoes – all shoes worn should be safe for the children to run and climb in)
    - All students and teachers should wear a jacket outside in the winter
    - No dress up clothing on large play equipment.
    - No hat, no play – children are to wear their hats during the hotter months (usually August to October/November and March/April to June). If students do not have a hat, they cannot play out in the open and must play under some shade.

- If a staff member witnesses an accident. Accompany the children to the nurse and report the incident to the class teachers.
    - Nurse will give treatment and begin completion of the **Note from the Nurse**
    - Details of the incident will be added by the class teacher or the teacher witnessing the incident
    - The three copies of the Note from the Nurse will be distributed as follows:
        - One is kept by the Nurse
        - One is kept by the class teachers and placed in the student's manila folder (with admissions information)
        - One is sent home

- Staff are to circulate the whole playground area in order to observe all students and provide supervision of the whole playground.

- Teaching Assistants will put out play equipment in the morning.

- Children should tidy away equipment into the storage boxes and bring the boxes (with duty staff assistance as necessary) to the equipment storage under the coloured staircases.

- Behaviour management
    - Staff respond to incidents immediately
    - **REMOVE** ⟶ **REFLECT** ⟶ **RESTORE**
      Take children   What happened?   How will I make
      Aside   What can I change   it better?
                         next time?

- Report all incidents to appropriate class teachers

- Encourage the children to be RISK TAKERS and to try something new

Expectations When Using Equipment

- Students to travel down the slide only
- Students should only hand underneath monkey bars, there should be no students climbing or sitting on top of the monkey bars
- Students should ONLY climb inside the frames, stairs, ladders. No students should be climbing over the side of railings or frames and students should not be sitting on the outside of tunnels or any roof structure.
- One child at a time in small tunnels, on a car/bike and on stairs, ladders, climbing walls and slides

Vita

Greg Brunton has a strong background in international education. He has been the Primary School Principal at the Western International School of Shanghai (WISS) in China since 2012 and in 2016 became the Director.

At K International School of Tokyo (KIST) in Japan he began working as a Grade 3 PYP teacher (2005) and was appointed Primary School Principal, leading Grades 2-5 (2009). He was subsequently promoted to Elementary School Principal, leading the early childhood program from 3 year olds through Grade 5 (2010).

In America, he taught both elementary and middle school students at Windy Ridge PreK-8 School in Orlando, Florida from 1996-2005.

Greg received a Bachelor of Arts degree majoring in Public Administration (1991) and a Bachelor of Science degree majoring in Elementary Education (1996) from the University of Central Florida (UCF). He was a Lockheed Martin UCF Academy Fellow and earned a Master of Education degree in K-8 Math and Science Education (2005).

His work in international environments comprised of teachers of different nationalities and who have different cultural backgrounds, educational and teaching experiences, and proficiencies with English inspired his dissertation topic. His dissertation, *Collaboration Within Intercultural Professional Learning Communities-A Case Study,* received the IB's Jeff Thompson Research Award in 2015.