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# Perceptions of Collaborative Process in a Professional Learning Focused University- Community-School Collaboration

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## ACCEPTANCE

This dissertation, PERCEPTIONS OF COLLABORATIVE PROCESS IN A PROFESSIONAL LEARNING FOCUSED UNIVERSITY-COMMUNITY-SCHOOL COLLABORATION, by LYNNAE L. PSIMAS, was prepared under the direction of the candidate's Dissertation Advisory Committee. It is accepted by the committee members in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree Doctor of Philosophy in the College of Education, Georgia State University.

The Dissertation Advisory Committee and the student's Department Chair, as representatives of the faculty, certify that this dissertation has met all standards of excellence and scholarship as determined by the faculty. The Dean of the College of Education concurs.

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## ABSTRACT

### PERCEPTIONS OF COLLABORATIVE PROCESS IN A PROFESSIONAL LEARNING FOCUSED UNIVERSITY-COMMUNITY-SCHOOL COLLABORATION

by  
Lynnae L. Psimas

The current study explored the collaborative processes present in a collaboration between an urban university in the Southeast United States, a state-funded educational support agency, and several urban and suburban school districts served by the state agency. To obtain a comprehensive understanding of the collaboration and relevant practices, perceptions were obtained from university, community agency, and K-12 school representatives through 12 individual and 2 group interviews. Data were collected and analyzed using Moustakas's (1994) transcendental phenomenology methodology. Findings indicated that participants perceived collaborative processes in the areas of collaborative structure, communication practices, characteristics of collaborators and organizations, and group dynamics. Participants also described outcomes of the collaboration in the areas of general impact on professional learning participants, learning, evolution of behaviors and beliefs, relationship development, emotional impact, sustainability, and generalizability. Comparison of the current results to Hord's (1986) model of inter-organizational collaboration and the literature on inter-organizational collaboration revealed strong support for a synthesis model of inter-organizational collaboration. Furthermore, the findings suggest implications for practice in the areas of goal alignment, communication, perceptions of collaborative involvement, system entry and assimilation, and personal characteristics.

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LEARNING FOCUSED UNIVERSITY-COMMUNITY-SCHOOL  
COLLABORATION

by  
Lynnae L. Psimas

A Dissertation

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in  
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in  
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in  
the College of Education  
Georgia State University

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## ABBREVIATIONS

BIP	Behavior Intervention Plan
ELL	English Language Learner
FBA	Functional Behavioral Assessment
ICA	Inter-Coder Agreement
ISPL	In-Service Professional Learning
NCES	National Center for Educational Statistics
NSDC	National Staff Development Council
PSPL	Pre-Service Professional Learning
RTI	Response to Intervention
SC	School-Community
UC	University-Community
UCS	University-Community-School
US	University-School

## CHAPTER 1

### INTRODUCTION

The current study explored the collaborative processes involved in a professional learning focused university-community-school collaboration through the qualitative methodology of transcendental phenomenology. The first chapter of this study provides a brief overview of the purpose of the study, the literature on inter-organizational collaboration in education, and the methodology used in the current study. In the second chapter, the literature on inter-organizational collaboration with and without a professional learning focus is explored in depth and compared to a model of inter-organizational collaboration. The third chapter provides a detailed explanation of the methodology used in the current study, as well as a description of the setting and participant demographics. In chapter four, the data are presented according to transcendental phenomenology recommendations. The fifth chapter includes a discussion of the current contributions to the literature as well as a comparison of current findings to a model of inter-organizational collaboration.

#### **Overview of Inter-Organizational Collaboration with a Professional Learning Focus**

Inter-organizational collaboration, or collaboration that involves two or more organizations such as K-12 schools, universities, and community agencies, occurs in various areas in education. For example, inter-organizational collaborations have been developed to streamline service delivery to students and families (Baker & Martin, 2008), develop embedded assessments for K-12 teachers (Brandon, Young, Shavelson, Jones, Ayala, Ruiz-Primo, Yin, Tomita, & Furtak, 2008), and increase educational and community opportunities for K-12 students (Miller & Hafner, 2008). When the goal of

the collaboration includes building the capacity of educators to meet student needs, the inter-organizational collaboration contains a professional learning, or high-quality training, component. In a review of the literature on collaboration in education, no study was identified that discussed the collaborative process involved in a professional learning focused university-community-school collaboration.

### **Significance of Inter-Organizational Collaboration with a Professional Learning**

#### **Focus**

There is a high demand for an inter-organizational approach to service delivery in the field of education. Factors that have prompted this demand include issues such as increasing student diversity (Hobbs & Stoops, 2002) and escalating social emotional and behavioral struggles (Youth Risk Behavior Surveillance, 2010). Inter-organizational collaboration has been called for in the areas of school-based delivery of mental health services (Atkins, Graczyk, Frazier, & Abdul-Adil, 2003; Bierman, 2003; Nastasi, 2004), conducting research (Adelman & Taylor, 2003; Karlsson, 2007), program planning for students (Crockett, 2003), implementing systems-wide change (Shapiro, 2000; Ysseldyke, 2000), and providing in-service professional learning to school psychologists (Crockett, 2003).

The demand for increased inter-organizational collaboration in education is supported by the research on benefits to students and educators. Correlations have been observed between student achievement and inter- and intra-organizational collaborations within educational settings (Goddard, Goddard, & Tschannen-Moran, 2007; McCoach, Goldstein, Behuniak, Reis, Black, Sullivan, & Rambo, 2010). For example, an examination of school characteristics associated with over- and under-performing

students as measured by national and statewide assessments revealed that over-performing schools tended to report higher levels of parent-teacher collaboration (McCoach et al., 2010), suggesting the importance of the collaboration between home and school. In within-school collaborations, increased teacher collaboration has been correlated with higher student achievement in math and reading (Goddard et al., 2007).

It is possible that these benefits stem from more efficient resource allocation when compared to traditional practices (Ehrhardt-Padgett et al., 2003; Goulet et al., 2003; Hord, 1986; Mattesich & Monsey, 1992). Inter-organizational collaboration has the potential to increase resources by combining personnel, funding, and knowledge (Mattesich & Monsey, 1992). Combining personnel from multiple organizations for the purpose of achieving a common goal might increase the amount of work that can be accomplished (Hord, 1986; Mattesich & Monsey, 1992). Furthermore, the diversified knowledge base available could allow for a more holistic approach to problem solving, which can benefit students by addressing a wider range of variables which might negatively impact academic, behavioral, or social-emotional functioning (Ehrhardt-Padgett et al., 2003).

When focused on the development and delivery of high-quality professional learning, inter-organizational collaboration may not only increase resources but has the potential to leverage them in a way that produces more widespread outcomes. Professional learning follows an indirect service delivery model intended to build the capacity of educators to address student needs. When inter-organizational collaboration is undertaken to develop and deliver professional learning, the multi-disciplinary, holistic approach to service delivery can be shared with practitioners rather than applied directly

to the client. If the practitioners who receive the training work with a multitude of clients, the number of clients who might benefit from the collaborative efforts is substantially higher than might otherwise occur. Therefore, inter-organizational collaboration with a professional learning focus represents a potentially beneficial approach to holistic, widespread service delivery.

### **Significance of the Current Study**

A review of the literature on inter-organizational collaboration in education identified few articles that described the interpersonal processes and factors that contributed to collaborative success. Within the identified articles, the focus of collaborative efforts included practices such as school reform, the integration of school and community service delivery in the areas of education and mental health, and the pre-service preparation of future educators. No articles were identified that addressed the collaborative processes involved in a professional learning focused inter-organizational collaboration. Furthermore, the articles reviewed often exhibited poor methodological rigor, limiting the reliability and generalizability of reported results.

#### **Methodological limitations of the current literature base.**

The most common methodological limitations identified in the articles reviewed involved vague or limited sampling procedures. For example, in a study of a university-community collaboration, Buys and Bursnall (2007) only obtained perceptions of the collaboration from university representatives, excluding community contributions. In a study describing a university-school collaboration, Frankham and Howes (2006) only provided their own perceptions of the collaboration in which they were involved, failing to seek potentially opposing views from school collaborators. Tillema and van der

Westhuizen (2006) drew conclusions regarding the collaborative processes involved in three intra-organizational professional learning communities from observations of collaborative interactions. They did not obtain participant perceptions regarding those interactions. Similar sampling limitations and vague sampling procedures were also observed in studies by Deslandes (2006); Baker and Martin (2008); Weinstein, Soule, Collins, Cone, Mehlhorn, and Simontacchi (1991); Brandon, Young, Shavelson, Jones, Ayala, Ruiz-Primo, Yin, Tomita, and Furtak (2008); and Marlow, Kyed, and Connors (2005).

Some studies reviewed also exhibited limitations with regard to their data analysis methods. Specifically, Deslandes (2006), Marlow et al. (2005), and Coronel, Carrasco, Fernández, and González (2003) each failed to specify the data analysis methodologies employed in their studies. Miller and Hafner (2008) constricted their analysis of interview data to the components of their theoretical framework of collaboration, potentially limiting interpretations of participants' perceptions. Grundy, Robison, and Tomazos (2001) limited interpretation of school collaborators' perceptions by only asking questions about specific strengths and weaknesses perceived by the authors, reducing the school collaborators' opportunities to provide additional or opposing viewpoints.

#### **Possible features of successful inter-organizational collaborations.**

Given the lack of rigorous research in the area, it is not surprising that little is known regarding the factors that contribute to making collaborations successful (Adelman & Taylor, 2003; Bierman, 2003). Many possible characteristics of successful collaborative process have been proposed; however, these characteristics generally are

not research-based (Adelman & Taylor, 2003; Bierman, 2003). Authors have asserted that merely expressing the desire to collaborate is insufficient (Adelman & Taylor, 2003). Dividing labor between two or more organizations is also insufficient to guarantee successful collaborative efforts (Goulet et al., 2003). A framework of practice such as Hord's (1986) model of inter-organizational collaboration might provide a starting point for developing characteristics associated with successful collaborations; however, this possibility has not yet been researched.

Hord (1986) proposed a model of inter-organizational collaboration that organized 16 guidelines into 5 categories: beginning process, communication, resources/ownership, leadership/control, and requirements/characteristics. Within the category of beginning process, Hord proposed guidelines that were designed to assist collaborators in engaging in new inter-organizational work. These included the guidelines of exchanging services, joining forces, and agreeing upon goals. Exchanging services was defined as follows: organizations should agree upon an exchange of products or services, and each organization should offer the other a product or service. The joint planning guideline stated that organizations should join forces to plan and execute the design of a shared project. Furthermore, personnel from each organization should be involved in developing the nature of the collaboration. The guideline of shared goals stated that collaborators should develop shared goals for the collaboration. Organizations should also agree on projected results, outcomes, products, and services.

Within the category of communication, Hord (1986) proposed the guideline of communication roles and channels. According to this guideline, collaborators should

establish defined roles and channels for communication to facilitate clear and accurate conveyance of information.

The category of resources/ownership contains the guidelines of shared workload, mutual funding, and shared ownership. Under the guideline of shared workload, Hord stressed the importance that each organization contributes staff time, resources, and capabilities. Contributions from each organization should be defined during the planning process, according to this guideline. The guideline of mutual funding stated that organizations should work together to obtain funding, possibly from an outside source, for the express purpose of supporting the collaboration. The guideline of shared ownership stated that shared ownership of the collaboration should develop over time.

The category of leadership/control contains the guidelines of dispersed leadership, delegated responsibility, and shared control. According to the guideline of dispersed leadership, collaborative leadership should be dispersed among the organizations. The guideline of delegated responsibility stated that responsibility for collaborative tasks should be delegated among the collaborators, and individuals should take initiative in assuming responsibility. The guideline for shared control stated that collaborators should assume shared, mutual control of the collaboration to facilitate congruent effort in accomplishing collaborative tasks.

Within the category of requirements/characteristics, Hord (1986) proposed the guidelines of expenditure of time and energy, action and risks, frequent meetings, compromise, combined staff, and contributions of expertise. The guideline of expenditure of time and energy stated that each organization should devote time and energy to the collaboration. According to the guideline of action and risks, each organization should



take action and risks within the collaboration. The guideline of frequent meetings stated that frequent large and small meetings between collaborators should be arranged. The guideline of compromise stated that compromise is a necessity and that various trade-offs must be made by each organization. The guideline of combined staff stated that a combined staff, in which representatives from each organization are present, should be developed. According to Hord, a staff trade or loan may be made to accomplish this goal. Finally, the guideline of contributions of expertise stated that each organization should contribute different kinds of expertise, as this is a primary motivator for collaborating.

Hord's (1986) model of collaboration is not research-based; however, it is the only identified model that addressed considerations unique to inter-organizational collaborations. Furthermore, several of the guidelines proposed by Hord are corroborated in other sources suggesting intra-organizational collaboration techniques.

### **Challenges associated with inter-organizational collaboration.**

The limited research on the topic is concerning in the face of the unique challenges associated with inter-organizational collaboration. Inter-organizational collaboration in education is rare and often poor in quality (Farmakopoulou, 2002). Members of different organizations might approach collaborations with dissimilar priorities (Adelman & Taylor, 2003; Stokols, 2006). For example, in collaborations between universities and schools or communities, university representatives are often most concerned with research specific practices such as controlling environmental variables and establishing comparison groups (Stokols, 2006). In contrast, school or community-based practitioners in those collaborations are often more concerned with

implementing effective practices across settings in ways that are feasible and fit within existing environmental conditions.

Competing priorities between organizations can lead to collaborator frustration and disillusionment, as occurred in Davies, Edwards, Gannon, and Laws' (2007) attempt to develop a theoretical approach to behavioral intervention through a university-school collaboration. This "project gone awry" was characterized by poor communication and "ongoing resistance and withdrawal" (Davies et al., 2007, p. 30). Participating teachers expressed frustration with the university's emphasis on theory as opposed to practical intervention, and the university representatives experienced "irritation at the school-based practitioners for not being open to the work required to develop new knowledge" (Davies et al., 2007, p. 31). In short, the conflict between the university's need for a research-based partnership and the school's need for practical professional development was too divisive to overcome.

Stokols (2006) offers an explanation for such challenges. He asserts that the increased complexity of inter-organizational collaboration when compared to intra-organizational endeavors adds another dimension of difficulty to the task of establishing and maintaining an effective collaborative relationship. As the number of stakeholders increases, collaborators encounter progressively more diverse perceptions, needs, and goals (Adelman & Taylor, 2003). Furthermore, political, economic, and personal interests and concerns become more varied and multifaceted, presenting further challenges to successful goal-oriented, interpersonal interactions.

An inter-organizational collaboration with a professional learning focus might be characterized by even greater complexity than inter-organizational collaborations with

other foci. High quality professional learning requires the provision of choice and self-direction for professional learning participants (National Staff Development Council [NSDC], 2001; Ryan & Deci, 2000; Lewis & Hayward, 2003). Therefore, some degree of collaboration between trainers and participants is necessary in any standards-based professional learning endeavor (NSDC, 2001). In a professional learning program designed and developed through inter-organizational collaboration, the collaborators must then negotiate the collaborative demands associated with inter-organizational collaborations along with the collaborative demands placed upon them within the training process.

**Need for further research.**

In conclusion, more information is needed regarding the process of establishing and maintaining effective inter-organizational collaborations with a professional learning focus (Stokols, 2006). Goddard, Goddard, & Tschannen-Moran (2007) asserted that while correlational studies have shown the link between the practice of collaboration and higher student achievement, more research is needed regarding the different types of collaborative practices employed in effective collaborations. As Adelman and Taylor (2003) and Beirman (2003) have noted, such research should focus on the specific practices or individual behaviors that contribute to the development of successful collaborative process. The dearth of methodologically rigorous studies assessing inter-organizational collaborations, as well as the lack of studies on inter-organizational collaborations with a professional learning focus, suggest that a methodologically sound study on this topic would provide a valuable contribution to the literature.

Furthermore, the increased complexity of collaborating with multiple organizations suggests the need for a holistic approach to the study of inter-organizational collaboration. Specifically, the phenomenon of participating in an inter-organizational collaboration would likely be best understood when examined from multiple perspectives. Obtaining representatives from each organization as study participants would facilitate the development of a more comprehensive view of the experience. Moreover, studies of collaborations spanning multiple years or endeavors would produce more trustworthy results when including participants who are representative of such ranges in time and task. In summary, the credibility of the conclusions drawn by studies of inter-organizational collaborations might be improved by holistic sampling techniques and a comprehensive examination of collaborator perceptions.

### **Purpose of the Current Study**

The current study addressed this gap in the literature by using a philosophically grounded and systematic qualitative methodology to assess the collaborative process involved in a professional learning focused university-community-school collaboration. The collaboration under study was an on-going collaboration between an urban university in the Southeast United States, a state-funded educational support agency (ESA), and several urban and suburban school districts served by the ESA. The collaboration was created to design and facilitate standards-based professional learning programs to K-12 educators. The collaboration, spanning five years, has involved collaborators with a variety of educational backgrounds, years of experience in education and with collaboration, and roles within the current collaboration. The collaborators involved have experienced the collaboration at different phases in partnership development, from

initiation to current practice. Furthermore, the collaboration itself has resulted in the development and facilitation of 13 professional learning programs designed to meet the needs of personnel from 6 local school districts. These qualities make the collaboration well suited for the intensive study of professional learning-focused inter-organizational collaboration. As such, that the study of this collaboration provided valuable insight into the practices necessary to establish and maintain an effective professional learning-focused inter-organizational collaboration.

### **Current Research Methodology**

Data were analyzed using Moustakas's (1994) transcendental phenomenology methodology, a qualitative methodology well-suited to study the proposed topic.

Transcendental phenomenology is grounded in transcendental philosophy, a philosophy that asserts that while an objective reality exists, we can only know about that reality through our perceptions. The transcendental philosopher learns about reality by understanding *noema*, or *what* is perceived, and *noesis*, or *how* interpretation and meaning of perceptions occur. According to this philosophy, the interaction between *noema* and *noesis* results in an individual's understanding of reality. Transcendental phenomenology seeks to identify the essence or meaning of an experience, event, or thing by obtaining perceptions of individuals who have been involved in that experience, event, or thing. However, as individuals, our understanding of phenomenon is limited by our own narrow experience with that phenomenon. Therefore, the transcendental phenomenologist utilizes data collection methods designed to elicit descriptions of the phenomenon under study from people who have a variety of experiences with that phenomenon. The perspectives are analyzed first in isolation and then in conjunction with

one another to produce a well-rounded and comprehensive description of the phenomenon.

To obtain a comprehensive understanding of the collaborative process involved in the collaboration under study, perceptions were obtained from six university representatives, three community agency representatives, one urban school district representative, and six peri-urban school district representatives. Stratified random sampling procedures for qualitative methodologies were utilized to obtain a representative sample of participants for 12 individual and 2 group interviews (Creswell, 1998; Trost, 1986). Interviews were conducted by the primary researcher to ensure consistency in data collection.

Interviews were analyzed by the primary researcher and a peer coder, who were both participant observers within the collaboration under study. Data analysis was accomplished using the systematic transcendental phenomenology data analysis process proposed by Moustakas (1994). Within transcendental phenomenology, data analysis consists of four broad phases: epoche, horizontalization, imaginative variation, and synthesis. Epoche represents the beginning of an ongoing process of bias reduction. During this phase, the primary and secondary researchers identified and documented their preconceived biases regarding collaborative process as it occurs within collaborations in general as well as the professional learning focused university-community-school collaboration in particular. These biases were discussed and compared to research conclusions periodically throughout the data analysis process.

The second phase of data analysis within this methodology involves the process of horizontalization. To achieve horizontalization, the researchers independently coded

each interview transcript to identify statements that answered the research question. These statements were compiled into a single document and examined for repeating and overlapping statements. As per Moustakas's (1994) recommendations, repeating statements were removed from the data set. The remaining statements were grouped according to meaning, resulting in meaning clusters. The meaning clusters provided a coding manual, which was compared to each researcher's epoche to determine the presence of possible biases in coding and reduce the impact of those biases.

In imaginative variation, each transcript was re-coded for meaning using the coding manual. Each coded transcript was then examined for statements that represented the participants' *noema* and *noesis* regarding the collaborative process involved in the collaboration under study. The experiences of *noema* and *noesis* associated with the collaboration were summarized into individual textural and structural descriptions for each transcript.

The final phase of data analysis, synthesis, included both a summary of the experience of collaborative process and a process of member checking to determine the reliability of the results. First, the textural and structural descriptions for each transcript were combined into individual textural-structural descriptions. According to Moustakas (1994), these individual textural-structural descriptions represent the experience of phenomenon under study as it was perceived by each individual collaborator. Each participant reviewed their individual textural-structural description and was asked to look for errors and omissions in interpretation. This process of member checking was conducted in person whenever possible. When errors were observed, corrections were made according to participant comments. To achieve a well-rounded and cohesive

description of the phenomenon of collaborative process as it occurs within a professional learning-focused university-community-school collaboration, the corrected individual textural-structural descriptions were then combined into one global descriptive summary of the phenomenon. This global textural-structural description provides a comprehensive explanation of the experience of collaborative process as it occurred within the collaboration under study.

Presentation of these results included a description of each meaning code employed during data coding as well as the frequency with which each meaning code was applied. As each individual's perceptions of the phenomenon under study are highly valued within transcendental phenomenology, low frequency codes were not eliminated or subsumed under other codes (Moustakas, 1994). The global descriptive summary of the phenomenon under study was also included to convey the essence of the phenomenon of collaborative process involved in a professional learning focused university-community-school collaboration.

### **Research Question**

The following research question guided the inquiry:

What are the university, community, and school representatives' perceptions of the collaborative process involved in a professional learning focused university-community-school collaboration?



**Glossary of Terms**

Collaboration – a mutually beneficial partnership between one or more parties entered into for the purpose of achieving a common goal

Composite Textural-Structural Description (also referred to as Synthesis) – the combination of the textural-structural descriptions developed for each participant into one composite textural-structural description intended to describe the phenomenon under study with intersubjective validity

Consultation – within the context of the collaboration under study, consultation activities included discussions with district representatives regarding the type and extent of PL services needed, appropriate PL content areas, and possible PL participants

Data Analysis – within the context of the collaboration under study, data analysis consisted of analyzing student data to assist school personnel in data-based decision-making practices

Didactic Training – within the context of the collaboration under study, didactic trainings involved large group trainings consisting of lecture, interactive activities, and discussion regarding PL content and application of PL content

Educational Support Agency – the community agency affiliated with the collaboration under study; a state-funded agency developed to support local school systems

Epoche – the process researchers engage in within the methodology of transcendental phenomenology to identify and eradicate their biases regarding the phenomenon under study

Horizons – individual statements identified through the process of horizontalization within the methodology of transcendental phenomenology

Horizontalization – the transcendental phenomenology process of identifying every statement made by participants that is relevant to the research questions under study

Imaginative Variation – the transcendental phenomenology process of determining how each participant in the study experienced the phenomenon under study and the ways in which the participant described the phenomenon in relation to themselves, their prior experiences, and other important variables such as time and relationships with others

Implementation Support – within the context of the collaboration under study, implementation support consisted of assistance from ESA representatives provided to school personnel to utilize content and materials in the school setting

In-Service – the state of being engaged in professional practice in a particular field

Intra-Organizational Collaboration – a collaboration as defined above involving members from a single organization such as a K-12 school, a university, or a community agency

Inter-Organizational Collaboration – a collaboration as defined above involving members from two or more organizations including, but not limited to, a kindergarten through twelfth grade school, a university, or a community agency

Intentionality of Consciousness – a concept of transcendental philosophy referring to the interaction between perception and interpretation of that perception which allows us to know about the world

Intersubjective Validity – credibility of a description of a phenomenon which is derived through the utilization of multiple descriptions from multiple perspectives

Invariant Constituents – those horizons which represent significant, non-repeating, and non-overlapping statements relevant to the research questions in transcendental phenomenology

Noema – a concept of transcendental philosophy referring to an individual's perception of a phenomenon

Noesis – a concept of transcendental philosophy referring to an individual's interpretation of their perception of a phenomenon

Observations – within the context of the collaboration under study, observations consisted of PL facilitators observing teaching practices within the classroom setting to determine the actual application of PL content with students; used to assist in program planning and to measure the efficacy of the ESA

Phenomenological Reduction – the transcendental phenomenology process of determining what each participant in the study experienced regarding the phenomenon under study

Pre-Service – the state of being prior to practice within the field of education during which preparatory training takes place

Professional Development School – a K-12 in which pre-service teachers and other educators obtain applied practice with materials and concepts learned in the pre-service training institution; usually involves collaboration between a training university and a K-12 school

Professional Learning – the process of learning concepts and skills associated with one's professional area of practice

Professional Learning Communities – collaborations developed between professionals for

the purpose of exploring a topic or skill related to their profession; usually involves individuals from within a single organization

Redeliver – the process of facilitating a previously attended training to additional personnel; usually includes some degree of revision of the training by the redeliverers who were participants in the initial training

School Reform – the process of changing systemic, or school-wide, practices in K-12 schools through changes in policy, data analysis, and/or teacher and administrator practices; sometimes involves a formal PL component

Support Visits – small group, site-based visits conducted by PL providers for the purpose of determining the learning status of PL participants and individualizing PL content according to setting and participant needs

Structural Description – individual summary developed in the methodology of transcendental phenomenology which describes how each participant experienced the phenomenon under study, including consideration of variables which might have impacted interpretation of the experience; a structural description is created for each individual participant

Textural Description – individual summary developed in the methodology of transcendental phenomenology which describes what each participant experienced with regard to a specific phenomenon; a textural description is created for each individual participant

Textural-Structural Description (also referred to as Synthesis) – the combination of the textural and structural descriptions derived from each participant's description of their experience with a phenomenon; a textural-structural description is created

for each individual participant

Training Revisions – within the context of the collaboration under study, training revisions consisted of the examination of the acceptability and efficacy of PL content and activities by previous PL participants for the purpose of modifying said content and activities for future use within a specific school system; includes the modification of content and activities

Transcendental Phenomenology – a qualitative methodology derived from the principles of transcendental philosophy in which the essence or nature of a phenomenon is understood through the analysis and synthesis of the descriptions of that phenomenon as provided by individuals who have experienced the phenomenon

Transcendental Philosophy – a philosophy derived from the work of René Descartes and Edmund Husserl, who sought to ascertain the relationship between reality and perception

Universal Screening – an assessment process used to determine which student within a school setting score in the lowest pre-determined percentile in a content area when compared to all students within that setting; used to identify students who might be in need of targeted intervention in one or more content areas

## CHAPTER 2

### LITERATURE REVIEW

#### **Introduction**

This chapter provides a comprehensive review of the literature on collaboration in education with a professional learning focus. The discussion begins with an assessment of the need for inter-organizational collaboration in education. A model of inter-organizational collaboration is compared to literature on collaboration in education. Several studies examining the strengths, weaknesses, and contributing factors within inter-organizational collaborations are reviewed. Next, the focus turns to an argument for standards-based professional learning delivered through inter-organizational collaboration. Studies examining the strengths, weaknesses, and contributing factors in professional learning focused collaboration are reviewed. Finally, a description is provided regarding an appropriate methodology for examining perceptions of collaborative processes involved in an inter-organizational collaboration that was developed to design and implement evidence-based professional learning for in-service educators.

#### **Inter-Organizational Collaboration in Education**

##### **Significance of educational collaboration.**

Several factors have influenced educators across disciplines to call for increased collaboration. According to the U.S. Census Bureau, student diversity is increasing across a range of demographic variables (Hobbs & Stoops, 2002). The No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB) has increased instructional demands on educators in the form of higher expectations for standards-based student achievement and educator accountability. In addition to academic demands, students are experiencing escalating social emotional and

behavioral struggles, increasing the demand on educators to address a range of developmental needs (Youth Risk Behavior Surveillance, 2010). The scope of expertise needed to successfully address this range of challenges may be best obtained through collaboration with professionals with diverse and applicable areas of expertise (Crockett, 2003; Sheridan & D'Amato, 2003).

The call for collaboration has occurred not only across disciplines but across applications. For example, authors called for greater collaboration in research, asserting that universities should involve stakeholders in research processes (Adelman & Taylor, 2003; Karlsson, 2007). Greater collaboration has been called for in school-based delivery of mental health services (Atkins, Graczyk, Frazier, & Abdul-Adil, 2003; Bierman, 2003; Nastasi, 2004), program planning for students (Crockett, 2003), addressing child abuse at the school and community levels (Crockett, 2003), providing services to English language learners (ELL) in the mainstream setting (Arkoudis, 2006), implementing systems-wide change (Shapiro, 2000; Ysseldyke, 2000), and establishing school-based learning communities (Watkins, 2005). Finally, there has been a call for greater collaboration with training institutions to provide in-service professional learning to school psychologists (Crockett, 2003).

#### **Need for inter-organizational collaboration.**

Inter-organizational collaboration in education might allow K12 schools to access the informational, personnel, and financial resources available within local universities and community agencies, and vice versa. Intra-organizational collaboration, or collaboration between members of a single organization, is often insufficient to address the range of challenges faced by educators (Buys & Bursnall, 2007), highlighting the

need for increased inter-organizational involvement. This perspective is supported by Hord (1986), who asserted that school improvement is best accomplished through collaboration between schools and other stakeholder groups. Erhardt-Padgett, Hatzichristou, Kitson, and Meyers (2003) suggested that collaboration between schools and other organizations can improve and streamline service delivery. Baker and Martin (2008) proposed that inter-organizational collaboration is an essential component of integrated service delivery in schools. In conclusion, a turn toward inter-organizational collaboration in educational settings is encouraged for effective service delivery.

#### **Definition of inter-organizational collaboration.**

Inter-organizational collaboration has been defined as a mutually beneficial relationship between two or more organizations (Adelman & Taylor, 2003; Mattesich & Monsey, 1992; Miller & Hafner, 2008) entered into for the purpose of achieving a common goal (Adelman & Taylor, 2003; Goulet et al., 2003; James et al., 2007; Mattesich & Monsey, 1992; Nelson & Slavit, 2008). In the field of education, organizations involved might include, but are not limited to, K-12 schools or school districts, universities, parents of K-12 students, and community agencies in the fields of mental or physical health, social work, and educational support.

#### **Model of collaboration.**

There is a dearth of research-based suggestions regarding effective approaches to collaborative process in the literature; however, several collaborative guidelines have been proposed in non-empirical sources. Only one model was identified which specifically addressed collaborative processes unique to inter-organizational collaborations. Hord's (1986) model of inter-organizational collaboration, while not



research-based, provides a framework for organizing 16 proposed guidelines into 5 categories: beginning process, communication, resources/ownership, leadership/control, and requirements/characteristics. A summary of the categories and guidelines proposed by Hord is displayed in Table 1. These guidelines are compared here to the findings of a literature review on collaboration in the fields of health, social sciences, education, and public affairs (Mattesich & Monsey, 1992), as well as several non-empirical sources discussing collaborative process, in order to provide support for Hord's model of inter-organizational collaboration. Guidelines lacking support from other sources are noted in this review. Table 2 depicts which guidelines of Hord's model received support from other sources.

***Beginning process.***

Three guidelines were proposed within the category of beginning process: exchanging services, joining forces, and agreeing upon goals (Hord, 1986).

***Exchanging services.***

Hord (1986) suggested that collaborating organizations should agree on an exchange of services or products. Each organization should offer the other a product or service according to this guideline. This suggestion is reflected in proposed definitions of collaboration, which state that collaborations should be founded on mutual benefit to each participating organization (Adelman & Taylor, 2003; Mattesich & Monsey, 1992; Miller & Hafner, 2008).

Table 1

*Hord's (1986) Model of Inter-Organizational Collaboration*

Category/Guideline	Definition
<b>Beginning Process</b>	
Exchanging services	Organizations should agree upon an exchange of products or services. Each organization should offer the other a product or service.
Joint planning	Organizations should join forces to plan and execute the design of a shared project. Personnel from each organization should be involved in developing the nature of the collaboration.
Shared goals	Collaborators should develop shared goals for the collaboration. Organizations should agree on projected results, outcomes, products, and services.
<b>Communication</b>	
Communication roles and channels	Collaborators should establish defined roles and channels for communication to facilitate clear and accurate conveyance of information.
<b>Resources/Ownership</b>	
Shared workload	Each organization should contribute staff time, resources, and capabilities. Contributions from each organization should be defined during the planning process.
Mutual funding	Organizations should work together to obtain funding, possibly from an outside source, for the express purpose of supporting the collaboration.
Shared ownership	Shared ownership of the collaboration should develop over time.
<b>Leadership/Control</b>	
Dispersed leadership	Collaborative leadership should be dispersed among

	the organizations.
Delegated responsibility	Responsibility for collaborative tasks should be delegated among the collaborators. Individuals should take initiative in assuming responsibility.
Shared control	Collaborators should assume shared, mutual control of the collaboration to facilitate congruent effort in accomplishing collaborative tasks.
Requirements/Characteristics	
Expenditure of time & energy	Each organization should devote time and energy to the collaboration.
Action and risks	Each organization should take action and risks within the collaboration.
Frequent meetings	Frequent large and small meetings between collaborators should be arranged.
Compromise	Compromise is a necessity. Various trade-offs must be made by each organization.
Combined staff	A combined staff, in which representatives from each organization are present, should be developed. A staff trade or loan may be made to accomplish this goal.
Contributions of expertise	Each organization should contribute different kinds of expertise, as this is a primary motivator for collaborating.

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Table 2

*Support of Hord's (1986) Model of Collaboration*

Category/Guideline	Article Support														
	SC		UC		US		USC		PSPL			ISPL			
	1	2	1	1	2	3	4	1	2	1	2	3	1	2	3
Beginning Process															
Exchanging Services												*			
Joint Planning												*			
Shared Goals		*	*				*		*	*					
Communication															
Communication Roles and Channels				*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
Resources/Ownership															
Shared Workload	*	*				*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
Mutual Funding	*	*								*	*	*	*	*	*
Shared Ownership															*
Leadership/Control															
Dispersed Leadership				*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
Delegated Responsibility			*				*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
Shared Control				*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
Requirements/Characteristics															
Expenditure of Time and Energy							*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
Action and Risks							*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
Frequent Meetings	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
Compromise		*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
Combined Staff															
Contributions of Expertise					*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*

*Note:* School-Community (SC) – 1= Deslandes (2006), 2= Baker & Martin (2008);

University-Community (UC) – 1= Buys & Bursnall (2007); University-School (US) –

1=Weinstein et al. (1991), 2=Frankham & Howes (2006), 3=Brandon et al. (2008), 4=Platteel et al. (2010); University-School-Community (USC) – 1=Robertson (2007), 2=Miller & Hafner (2008); Pre-Service PL-Focused Collaborations (PSPL) – 1=Rice (2002), 2= Marlow et al. (2005), 3=Coronel et al. (2003); In-Service PL-Focused Collaborations 1=Grundy et al. (2001), 2=Clark et al. (1996), 3=Jaipal & Figg (2011).

*Joint planning.*

Hord (1986) also suggested that organizations join forces to plan and execute the design of a shared project. In other words, personnel from each organization should be involved in developing the nature of the collaboration. The guideline of joint planning does not appear to have been suggested explicitly in other sources. However, the suggestions of shared decision making (Adelman & Taylor, 2003; Goulet et al., 2003; Miller & Hafner, 2008) and shared workload (Adelman & Taylor, 2003; Mattesich & Monsey, 1992) lend some support to this guideline.

*Shared goals.*

Hord's (1986) final guideline within the category of beginning process was for collaborators to develop shared goals for the collaboration. Hord suggested that organizations should agree on projected results, outcomes, products, and services. The importance of shared goals has been agreed upon by several authors (Adelman & Taylor, 2003; Goulet et al., 2003; James et al., 2007; Mattesich & Monsey, 1992; Miller & Hafner, 2008; Nelson & Slavit, 2008).

***Communication.***

Hord (1986) proposed one guideline in the area of communication: defined roles and channels of communication.

*Communication roles and channels.*

Specifically, Hord (1986) promoted the establishment of defined roles and channels for communication across organizations. Hord suggested that multiple levels of communication be developed to facilitate clear and accurate conveyance of information. This category is supported by Mattesich and Monsey (1992), who determined that formal and informal communication links between collaborators were characteristics of successful collaborations.

***Resources/ownership.***

Hord (1986) proposed three guidelines in the area of resources/ownership: shared workload, mutual funding, and shared ownership.

*Shared workload.*

First, Hord (1986) proposed the need for each organization to contribute staff time, resources, and capabilities. Hord suggested that contributions be defined during the planning process. The concept of shared workload has been recommended in the literature on collaboration (Adelman & Taylor, 2003; Mattesich & Monsey, 1992). Specifically, Mattesich and Monsey (1992) indicated that successful collaborations tend to share the workload associated with collaborative goals

*Mutual funding.*

The second guideline stresses the importance of mutual funding. Hord (1986) suggested that the organizations work together to obtain funding, possibly from an

outside source, for the express purpose of supporting the collaboration. The importance of funding has also been supported by the literature (Adelman & Taylor, 2003; Mattesich & Monsey, 1992). According to Mattesich and Monsey (1992), collaborations that were characterized as less successful cited a lack of funding as a contributing factor.

*Shared ownership.*

Hord's (1986) final guideline within the category of resources/ownership involved the development of shared ownership of the collaboration. This guideline was not well-defined by Hord, presented only as a process that develops over time. While not clearly defined, the concept of shared ownership has also received some support in non-empirical literature (Goulet et al., 2003).

*Leadership/control.*

Within the category of leadership/control, Hord (1986) proposed three guidelines: dispersed leadership, delegated responsibility, and shared control.

*Dispersed leadership.*

Hord (1986) asserted that collaborative leadership should be dispersed among the organizations. Explicit support for this guideline was not identified in other sources. It is possible, however, that dispersed leadership has not been mentioned in other sources because it is a characteristic unique to inter-organizational collaborations. As noted previously, Hord's model of inter-organizational collaboration was the only model identified that addressed the distinctive needs associated with collaboration between organizations.

*Delegated responsibility.*

According to Hord (1986), responsibility for collaborative tasks should be delegated among the collaborators. Furthermore, individuals should take initiative in assuming responsibility. This suggestion has been supported by other authors who have asserted that collaborators should take joint responsibility for collaborative efforts and outcomes (Adelman & Taylor, 2003; Mattesich & Monsey, 1992).

*Shared control.*

The third guideline under leadership/control involved the importance of shared, mutual control. According to Hord (1986), shared control facilitates congruent effort on the part of the collaborators. The literature in the area of educational collaboration has supported the suggestion that collaborators should share in the decision making process (Adelman & Taylor, 2003; Goulet et al., 2003; Miller & Hafner, 2008).

*Requirements/characteristics.*

Finally, Hord (1986) posited six requirements and characteristics of inter-organizational collaboration which have not been mentioned explicitly in other non-empirical studies: expenditure of time and energy, action and risks, frequent meetings, compromise, combined staff, and contributions of expertise.

*Expenditure of time and energy.*

With the first requirement/characteristic, Hord (1986) asserted that each organization should devote time and energy to the collaboration. No further definition or recommendation was given for this guideline.



*Action and risks.*

With the second requirement/characteristic, Hord (1986) proposed that each organization should take action and risks within the collaboration. No further definition or recommendation was given for this guideline.

*Frequent meetings.*

Hord (1986) suggested that frequent meetings be arranged between collaborators. Both large and small meetings were recommended.

*Compromise.*

Hord (1986) also stressed the importance of compromise, citing it as a necessity. According to Hord, various trade-offs made by each organization are required for successful inter-organizational collaboration.

*Combined staff.*

The fifth requirement/characteristic involved the staffing arrangements within the collaboration. Specifically, Hord (1986) asserted that a combined staff, in which representatives from each organization are present, is important. Hord suggested the possibility of a staff trade or loan as a means for developing a combined collaborative staff.

*Contributions of expertise.*

Finally, Hord (1986) suggested that each organization contribute different kinds of expertise. According to Hord, this characteristic is among the primary motivations for entering into an inter-organizational collaboration.

**Benefits of collaboration.**

An examination of the potential benefits of collaboration provides insight into the increased demand for the practice. Authors propose that collaboration can reduce the cost of service delivery for each collaborating party (Ehrhardt-Padgett et al., 2003; Mattesich & Monsey, 1992) while making services more accessible (Atkins et al., 2003; Bierman, 2003; Ehrhardt-Padgett et al., 2003; Hord 1986; Mattesich & Monsey, 1992), increasing efficiency (Hord, 1986; Mattesich & Monsey, 1992), and improving results (Bierman, 2003; Hord, 1986; Ehrhardt-Padgett et al., 2003; Mattesich & Monsey, 1992). The combined efforts of organizations can result in products or services that might not have been possible if carried out by either organization alone (Hord, 1986). Furthermore, collaboration can provide assistance to the professionals involved through the addition of personnel, access to resources, and the provision of social support and encouragement (Ehrhardt-Padgett et al., 2003; Goulet et al., 2003; Hord, 1986).

**Challenges in implementation.**

Despite the considerable demand for collaborative process, inter-organizational collaboration in education is rare and often poor in quality (Farmakopoulou, 2002). We still do not know exactly what factors contribute to making collaborations successful (Adelman & Taylor, 2003; Bierman, 2003). Specifically, while many characteristics of the collaborative process have been proposed, insufficient research has been conducted to determine how to establish these characteristics as prescribed features of actual collaborations. Adelman and Taylor (2003) assert that merely expressing the desire to collaborate is insufficient. Goulet et al. (2003) add that simple division of the labor is also insufficient. The actions described in the requirements and characteristics category of

Hord's (1986) model of inter-organizational collaboration might provide a starting point for developing characteristics associated with successful collaborations; however, this possibility has not yet been researched.

The prospect of collaborating across organizations and disciplines adds another potential dimension of difficulty to the task of establishing and maintaining an effective collaborative relationship (Stokols, 2006). As the number of stakeholders increases, collaborators encounter progressively more diverse perceptions, needs, and goals (Adelman & Taylor, 2003). Furthermore, political, economic, and personal interests and concerns become more varied and complex. Members of different organizations might approach collaborations with dissimilar priorities (Stokols, 2006). For example, in collaborations between universities and schools or communities, university representatives are often most concerned with research specific practices such as controlling environmental variables and establishing comparison groups. In contrast, school or community-based practitioners in those collaborations are often more concerned with implementing effective practices across settings in ways that are feasible and fit within existing environmental conditions.

More information is needed regarding the process of establishing and maintaining effective inter-organizational collaborations (Stokols, 2006). An examination of the strengths and weaknesses reported in specific inter-organizational collaborations can provide insight into this challenging endeavor. However, such strengths and weaknesses might be presented in vague terms, making them difficult to replicate. As Adelman and Taylor (2003) and Beirman (2003) have noted, more information is needed regarding specific practices or individual behaviors that contribute to the development of

collaborative strengths and weaknesses. Consideration of the strengths, weaknesses, and contributing factors reported in studies describing inter-organizational collaborations in education might be facilitated by comparison with a model of collaboration, such as that proposed by Hord (1986).

Furthermore, the increased complexity of collaborating with multiple organizations suggests the need for a holistic approach to the study of inter-organizational collaboration. Specifically, the phenomenon of participating in an inter-organizational collaboration would likely be best understood when examined from multiple perspectives. Obtaining representatives from each organization as study participants would facilitate the development of a more comprehensive view of the experience. Moreover, studies of collaborations spanning multiple years or endeavors would produce more trustworthy results when including participants who are representative of such ranges in time and task. In summary, the credibility of the conclusions drawn by studies of inter-organizational collaborations might be improved by holistic sampling techniques and a comprehensive examination of collaborator perceptions.

#### **Previous studies assessing inter-organizational collaborations in education.**

A review of the literature on inter-organizational collaboration in education produced a variety of relevant studies. However, the majority of identified articles focused on the focus and product of the collaboration rather than the process of collaborating. While these studies offer a great deal to the literature regarding the potential benefits of collaboration, they do little to shed light on what qualities are characteristic of successful collaborations. Furthermore, they do not assist the reader in understanding what practices contributed to the development of those characteristics.

For the purpose of this literature review, the articles included were limited to those studies that assessed the collaborative process of specific collaborations as opposed to the focus or product. Studies were also limited to those articles describing collaborations which were developed in order to change the practice of K-12 educators or the functioning of K-12 students in some way. Only those collaborations which involved at least two distinct types of organizations were included. Types of organizations considered included K-12 school or school district, university, and community organizations. Finally, studies that did not describe methodology regarding data collection were included only when no empirical studies could be identified that described the same type of collaboration.

A limited number of studies were found that empirically identified the strengths and weaknesses of inter-organizational collaborations in education, as well as the practices that were believed by participants to contribute to those strengths and weaknesses. These studies involved collaborations between various K-12 school representatives, university representatives, and community representatives. They are organized here according to the organizations represented in the different collaborations. Specifically, the studies are organized as follows: school-community, university-community, university-school, and university-school-community. This organizational format was chosen because the type and number of organizations involved in a given collaboration might impact the complexity and challenges associated with the experience (Stokols, 2006). Furthermore, each study was examined individually to allow for a holistic examination of identified strengths, weaknesses, and contributing factors.

The important collaborative variables identified in each study are compared with Hord's (1986) model of inter-organizational collaboration, as summarized in Table 2. Any strengths, weaknesses, and practices not suggested by Hord are compared across studies to determine commonalities regarding collaborative experience, as summarized in Table 3. Finally, demographic variables such as the types of organizations involved and purpose of the collaboration are compared to the proposed study to determine relevance of the identified articles in regards to the proposed research question.

*School-community collaborations.*

School-community collaborations are defined here as collaborations that occur between private or public K-12 schools or school systems and community-based organizations, including non-profit, privately funded, and state or federally funded agencies. Examples of community-based organizations include local museums, churches, and parent groups. Agencies such as Head Start, a federally funded organization that provides educational and health services to low income children, and the Success for All Foundation (SFAF), a non-profit organization that promotes the school reform program Success for All, are also considered community-based. In a review of the literature on school-community collaborations, two studies were identified that systematically examined the perceived strengths and weaknesses of specific collaborations and addressed practices believed to impact the collaborative interactions of the team members.

Deslandes (2006) conducted an action research study to identify factors that either positively or negatively impacted the development and implementation of four school-community collaborative action research projects in Quebec, Canada. The collaborations

Table 3

*Additional Factors Identified in Literature Review that were not Included by Hord (1986)*

Article	Strengths/Helpful Practices	Weaknesses/Harmful Practices
SC1	Structure/focus	Abstract purpose
	Relationship	Limited outside support
	Relevance to school needs	Resistance to theory
	Amicable disagreements	Turnover in school personnel Competing demands
SC2	Self-organization	
	Relationship	
UC1	Equity between collaborators	Inequity between collaborators
	Relationship	
	Strong leadership	
	University support	
	Commitment to the collaboration	
	Clarifying goals	
	Reviewing goals	
	Attempting to understand perspective of other collaborators	
	Frequent social engagements	
US1	Climate of trust and respect	Competition
	Accepting criticism	Use of jargon
	Providing suggestions	
US2	Insider status	Unfocused conversations
	Expressing desire to work together	Unfocused efforts
	Asking for suggestions	
	Providing suggestions	
	Asking for reassurance	
	Providing reassurance Amicable disagreements	

US3	Relationship	Lack of focus Lack of proximity
US4	Guiding leadership Asking questions Voicing opinions Clarifying goals Challenging preconceived ideas Focusing discussions	Lack of guidance regarding research practices Unclear focus Inequity between collaborators Not answering questions
USC1	Giving input Asking questions Using suggestions from each collaborator Listening Equity between collaborators	Avoiding voicing opinions
USC2	Listening Asking questions Locations No titles Specific goals Concrete actions	Difficulty identifying goals Failure to voice opinions
PSPL1	Relationship Supportive leadership Prior history Encouraging others to continue with the collaboration Social engagements	Unwillingness to collaborate Turnover Relationship within organizations Relationship across organizations Unsupportive leadership Prior history Attempting to assert dominance
PSPL2	Relationship Attempting to understand perspective of collaborators Introducing collaborators as equals	



	Providing feedback on progress	
	Answering questions	
	Providing assistance	
PSPL3	Mix of experience	
	Equity between collaborators	
	Relationship	
	Treating all suggestions equally	
	Listening	
	Providing suggestions	
	Providing assistance	
ISPL1	Strong leadership	Inequity between collaborators
	Relationship	Mistrust of the university
	Encouraging relevant goals	
	Rejecting expert role	
	Providing information	
	Providing support	
	Representing self as similar	
	Disagreeing amicably	
ISPL2	Relationship	Initial suspicion
	Listening	Discomfort with collaborators
	Providing support	Not providing suggestions
	Avoiding judgment	
	Accepting difference in roles	
ISPL3	Climate of trust and respect	Lack of proximity
	Strong leadership	
	Meeting outside the school	
	Providing support	
	Providing mentoring	

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were undertaken with the purpose of improving educational practices in the school setting and did not follow a specific model of collaboration. Data collection methods included field notes and individual interviews with an unspecified number of collaborators at two points in time during the collaboration. Over the course of the study, participants reported the strengths of a structured and focused approach to school reform, positive relationships between collaborators, and the relevance of the collaboration's purpose to school needs. Participants believed that the practices of sharing the workload, engaging in frequent discussions, and approaching dissenting views without judgment facilitated these desirable conditions. Participants also described weaknesses that, in some instances, contradicted identified strengths. These included an abstract purpose, limited support from school personnel who did not participate in the collaboration, a resistance to theory on the part of the school-based collaborators, turnover in school personnel, a lack of resources, and competing demands within the school. One practice was reported to contribute to collaborative weaknesses: the inconsistent participation of school administrators.

A comparison of the results of the Deslandes (2006) study to Hord's (1986) model of collaboration reveals limited alignment, as displayed in Tables 2 and 4. Specifically, Deslandes supports the model component of shared workload by stressing the positive influence of sharing the workload and the perceived negative impact of the inconsistent participation of school administrators. The need for funding promoted by Hord is supported by Deslandes' finding that a lack of resources weakened the collaboration. Finally, Hord's suggestion to engage in frequent meetings is supported by Deslandes' finding that frequent discussions contributed to the strengths of the

Table 4

*Deslandes' (2006) Support for Hord's (1986) Model of Collaboration*

Category/Guideline	Article Support
<b>Beginning Process</b>	
Exchanging Services	Not discussed
Joint Planning	Not discussed
Shared Goals	Not discussed
<b>Communication</b>	
Communication Roles and Channels	Not discussed
<b>Resources/Ownership</b>	
Shared Workload	Not discussed
Mutual Funding	Negative impact: Lack of resources
Shared Ownership	Positive impact: Shared workload Negative impact: Inconsistent participation
<b>Leadership/Control</b>	
Dispersed Leadership	Not discussed
Delegated Responsibility	Not discussed
Shared Control	Not discussed
<b>Requirements/Characteristics</b>	
Expenditure of Time and Energy	Not discussed
Action and Risks	Not discussed
Frequent Meetings	Positive impact of frequent discussions
Compromise	Not discussed
Combined Staff	Not discussed
Contributions of Expertise	Not discussed

collaborations studied. It should be noted, however, that several model components remain unmentioned by the collaborators interviewed by Deslandes. Specifically, collaborators did not mention any of the guidelines within the following categories: beginning process, including the guidelines of exchanging services, joint planning, and shared goals; communication, including the guideline of communication roles and channels; and leadership/control, including the guidelines of dispersed leadership, delegated responsibility, and shared control. Collaborators also did not mention the resources/ownership guideline of shared ownership or the requirements/characteristics guidelines of expenditure of time and energy, action and risks, compromise, combined staff, and contributions of expertise.

Furthermore, collaborators identified several additional strengths, weaknesses, and contributing factors not proposed by Hord (1986), as displayed in Table 3. Specifically, the identified positive factors of a structured and focused approach to school reform, positive relationships between collaborators, the relevance of the collaboration's purpose to school needs, and approaching dissenting views without judgment do not seem to align with any of the model guidelines proposed by Hord. Additionally, the identified negative factors of an abstract purpose, limited support from non-collaborating school personnel, resistance to theory, turnover in school personnel, and competing demands within the school also do not seem to align with Hord's model. The limited alignment between Hord's model and Deslandes' findings suggests that Hord's model represents a viable starting point for understanding collaborative process but might not be comprehensive or sufficient for developing and sustaining successful inter-organizational collaborations in education.

Limitations are also evident regarding this study's methodology and ability to answer the proposed research question. In the area of methodology, the methodology was not described in sufficient detail, and the sampling procedures were vague and not replicable. It is possible that a holistic approach to data collection and analysis was not utilized, potentially limiting interpretation of the results. Regarding the proposed research question, the collaborations did not include university involvement, limiting their relevance to the current study. The limitation of the collaboration to two organizations potentially decreases the degree of difficulty found in establishing common goals (Stokols, 2006). The relevance of the study to the current research is also limited by the purpose of the collaborations described by Deslandes (2006), which did not include the development and implementation of evidence-based, in-service professional learning to educators. Also, limited information is provided regarding specific practices; for example, although several weaknesses were noted, only one practice was acknowledged as contributing to those weaknesses.

Baker and Martin (2008) conducted a qualitative case study to analyze the collaborative processes evident in a school-community collaboration. The collaboration occurred between several public schools and a neighborhood-based organization responsible for service delivery and planning. The goal of the collaboration was to provide integrated and streamlined service delivery to students by increasing access to educational and social services available in the school and community settings. No specific model of collaboration was used to guide the collaborative process. Data collection methods included observations, field notes, document analysis, and individual interviews with 10 stakeholders of the collaboration. According to participants, strengths

of the collaboration included self-organization, the relationship between the stakeholders, and commitment to a common goal. Individual practices that were reported as contributing to the strengths included flexibility of the collaborators and sharing the workload. Weaknesses noted included a lack of funding and time, which were reported to be complicated by the occasional practice of inflexibility with resources and decisions.

Baker and Martin's (2008) findings reveal limited alignment to Hord's (1986) model of collaboration, as displayed in Tables 2 and 5. Specifically, the identified factor of commitment to a common goal seems to support Hord's guideline of shared goals. The identified importance of flexibility of the collaborators and inflexibility with resources and decisions seem to support Hord's guideline of compromise. The identified factor of sharing the workload aligns with Hord's guideline of shared workload. The identified factor of lack of funding aligns with Hord's stress of the importance of funding, and the identified factor of lack of time supports Hord's assertion of the need to expend time and energy. However, several model components were not mentioned by Baker and Martin's participants, including exchanging services, joint planning, communication roles and channels, shared ownership, dispersed leadership, delegated responsibility, shared control, expenditure of time and energy, action and risks, frequent meetings, combined staff, and contributions of expertise. Furthermore, Baker and Martin's findings of self-organization and the relationship between the stakeholders do not appear to fit within Hord's model.

Limitations were also evident regarding methodology and relevance to the current study. The methodology was limited by the vague sampling procedures, which were not explicitly discussed. As such, it was unclear whether the sample was representative of the

Table 5

*Baker and Martin's (2008) Support for Hord's (1986) Model of Collaboration*

Category/Guideline	Article Support
<b>Beginning Process</b>	
Exchanging Services	Not discussed
Joint Planning	Not discussed
Shared Goals	Positive impact: Commitment to a common goal
<b>Communication</b>	
Communication Roles and Channels	Not discussed
<b>Resources/Ownership</b>	
Shared Workload	Positive impact: Shared workload
Mutual Funding	Negative impact: Lack of funding
Shared Ownership	Not discussed
<b>Leadership/Control</b>	
Dispersed Leadership	Not discussed
Delegated Responsibility	Not discussed
Shared Control	Not discussed
<b>Requirements/Characteristics</b>	
Expenditure of Time and Energy	Negative impact: Lack of time
Action and Risks	Not discussed
Frequent Meetings	Not discussed
Compromise	Positive impact: Flexibility of collaborators Negative impact: Inflexibility with resources and decisions
Combined Staff	Not discussed
Contributions of Expertise	Not discussed

collaboration, potentially limiting the holistic nature of the study. The relevance to the current research was limited by two factors. First, the collaboration consisted of only two organizations with no university involvement. Second, the focus of the collaboration was unrelated to in-service professional learning.

*School-community collaboration conclusions.*

It is difficult to draw conclusions about the practice of school-community collaborations on the basis of two studies. Furthermore, the methodology and sampling procedures used by these studies limit their generalizability. However, it is important to note that the findings described suggest more questions than they answer. Between the two studies identified that systematically examined school-community collaborations, limited alignment was revealed between the strengths, weaknesses, and contributing practices described in the studies and the components suggested by Hord (1986) to be needed for successful inter-organizational collaboration. Specifically, only Hord's model components of shared goals, shared workload, mutual funding, frequent meetings, and compromise were supported by one or both of the studies examined here. The model components of exchanging services, joint planning, communication roles and channels, shared ownership, dispersed leadership, delegated responsibility, shared control, expenditure of time and energy, action and risks, combined staff, and contributions of expertise were not mentioned.

Furthermore, several variables not proposed by Hord were identified by each study as impacting collaborative success. Deslandes (2006) identified the additional factors of a structured and focused approach to school reform, positive relationships between collaborators, the relevance of the collaboration's purpose to school needs,



approaching dissenting views without judgment, an abstract purpose, limited support from non-collaborating school personnel, resistance to theory, turnover in school personnel, and competing demands within the school. Baker and Martin (2008) identified the additional factors of the relationship between collaborators and the self-organization of the collaborators. When these additional variables are compared across studies, alignment becomes even more limited. Of these variables, the two studies only shared one strength in common: the relationship between collaborators. Clearly, more research is needed to understand the myriad strengths, weaknesses, and contributing practices that are possible in inter-organizational collaborations.

*University-community collaborations.*

University-community collaborations are defined here as collaborations that occurred between representatives of a university such as faculty or administrative staff and community-based organizations such as those described above. Only one article was identified that systematically examined the strengths and important factors of specific university-community collaborations.

Buys and Bursnall (2007) conducted a qualitative research study to analyze the perceived strengths and weaknesses of several university-community collaborations. No specific model of collaboration was employed to guide the implementation of collaborative practice. Data collection methods consisted of individual interviews with seven university faculty who participated in separate university-community collaborations involving research, consultancy, program development, and training in the fields of health sciences, law, sports recruitment, and arts education. Strengths cited included relationships between collaborators, a common purpose, strong leadership,

university support, and a commitment to the collaboration on the part of the collaborators. The participants also described several practices that they believed impacted the success of the collaborative process, including clarifying collaborative goals and collaborator roles, continually reviewing goals, meeting frequently in both professional and social engagements, and attempting to understand the perspective of the community partners. No weaknesses or contributing factors were noted.

The support for Hord's (1986) model is summarized in Table 2 and detailed in Table 6. Specifically, the finding of a common purpose suggests support for Hord's guideline of shared goals. The identified factor of clarifying collaborator roles suggests support for Hord's guideline of delegated responsibility. Finally, the identified factor of meeting frequently suggests support for Hord's guideline of frequent meetings. None of the remaining guidelines provided by Hord are mentioned by Buys and Bursnall's (2007) participants, including exchanging services, joint planning, communication roles and channels, shared workload, mutual funding, shared ownership, dispersed leadership, shared control, expenditure of time and energy, action and risks, compromise, combined staff, and contributions of expertise. Results also indicate several additional factors perceived to be important in these collaborations that Hord did not identify. Specifically, the identified factors of the relationship between collaborators, strong leadership, university support, commitment to the collaboration on the part of the collaborators, continually reviewing goals, frequent social engagements, and attempting to understand the perspective of the community partners did not appear to align with Hord's recommendations.

Regarding methodological limitations, the degree to which the results are

Table 6

*Buys and Bursnall's (2007) Support for Hord's (1986) Model of Collaboration*

Category/Guideline	Article Support
<b>Beginning Process</b>	
Exchanging Services	Not discussed
Joint Planning	Not discussed
Shared Goals	Positive impact: Common purpose
<b>Communication</b>	
Communication Roles and Channels	Not discussed
<b>Resources/Ownership</b>	
Shared Workload	Not discussed
Mutual Funding	Not discussed
Shared Ownership	Not discussed
<b>Leadership/Control</b>	
Dispersed Leadership	Not discussed
Delegated Responsibility	Positive impact: Clarifying collaborative roles
Shared Control	Not discussed
<b>Requirements/Characteristics</b>	
Expenditure of Time and Energy	Not discussed
Action and Risks	Not discussed
Frequent Meetings	Positive impact: meeting frequently
Compromise	Not discussed
Combined Staff	Not discussed
Contributions of Expertise	Not discussed

reflective of each collaborator's views is questionable for two reasons. First, a holistic approach to data collection and analysis was not employed. Although both community and university members were involved in the collaborations studied, only the opinions of university representatives were solicited, potentially limiting the results. Second, each collaboration was described by only one collaborator, providing even further restriction to the information. Finally, limitations were also noted with regard to relevance to the current research question. First, the relevance of the study to university-community-school collaborations was limited by the unspecified participation of K-12 schools. Specifically, while one of the seven collaborations described involved K-12 schools, the description of that collaboration was not differentiated in the study. Second, the collaborations were not developed for the purpose of providing in-service professional learning to educators. Third, no weaknesses or perceived harmful practices were discussed.

*University-community collaboration conclusions.*

As only one study with limited generalizability describing the strengths and weaknesses of a university-community collaboration could be found, conclusions cannot be made regarding the strengths, weaknesses, and contributing practices typical of university-community collaborations. The results must instead be examined within the scope of the larger literature base on inter-organizational collaboration in education. In that context, Buys and Bursnall's (2007) study shows some alignment with Hord's (1986) model of inter-organizational collaboration. Specifically, the model components of shared goals, delegated responsibility, and frequent meetings are supported by Buys and Bursnall. The model components of exchanging services, joint planning, communication

roles and channels, shared workload, mutual funding, shared ownership, dispersed leadership, shared control, expenditure of time and energy, action and risks, compromise, combined staff, and contributions of expertise were not mentioned by the university-community study.

Furthermore, several factors were identified by Buys and Bursnall that were not suggested by Hord (1986), including the relationship between collaborators, strong leadership, university support, commitment to the collaboration on the part of the collaborators, continually reviewing goals, and attempting to understand the perspective of the community partners. When these factors are compared with the additional factors described as occurring within school-community collaborations, only one commonality was found. Specifically, the relationship between the collaborators was reported as a strength in all studies.

#### ***University-school collaborations.***

University-school collaborations are defined here as collaborations between university representatives such as faculty or administrative staff and K-12 school personnel. Eight articles will be discussed in this chapter that systematically examined the strengths, weaknesses, and important practices of specific university-school collaborations. Four of those articles address collaborations with a professional learning focus and will be described later in the chapter. The remaining four articles will be addressed here.

Weinstein et al. (1991) conducted a case study to describe collaborative action research undertaken by university and school-based personnel in a high school in order to engage in school reform. The collaborators did not employ a specific model of

collaboration to guide collaborative process. The data collection methods used to ascertain variables associated with the collaborative aspects of the experience included the collection of narrative records of collaboration meetings. The results indicate a shift in collaborative functioning as collaborative errors were realized and corrected. In the initial phases of the collaboration, weaknesses were described as the primary facets of the collaborative experience. Specifically, there were inequities in power between the university and school-based collaborators, difficulties with communication, and an atmosphere of competition between school-based personnel. Practices that were believed to contribute to these weaknesses included the tendency of school-based personnel to seek leadership from university representatives, the decision of the university representatives to fulfill leadership roles, and the tendency of the university personnel to use research specific jargon in dialogue with school-based personnel. As the understanding of collaborative difficulties increased and collaborators became more comfortable with the process, practices changed. School personnel began to show greater involvement in suggestion and decision making practices, while university personnel decreased their leadership role. Teachers also began to approach criticism from colleagues with an attitude of acceptance. These changes in collaborator behaviors resulted in a shift in the balance of power to a more equitable arrangement and an eventual climate of mutual trust and respect.

Of the articles found to discuss strengths, weaknesses, and contributing practices, this study shows the relationship between the factors most clearly. However, the authors did not describe how the collaborators came to recognize which practices were

contributing to collaborative difficulties, nor did they indicate whether school or university personnel were the first to make changes in practice. The authors do provide support for Hord's (1986) model, as summarized in Table 2 and detailed in Table 7. Specifically, the identified factors of the tendency of school-based personnel to seek leadership from university representatives, decision of university personnel to fulfill leadership roles, and the greater involvement of school personnel and decreased involvement of university personnel in decision making practices all suggest support for Hord's guidelines of dispersed leadership and shared control. The identified factor of difficulty with communication might provide support for Hord's guideline of communication roles and channels; however, this is not conclusive, as the difficulty in communication within the Weinstein et al. (1991) study appeared to be influenced by the use of technical jargon, a factor not identified in Hord's model. Several model components were not mentioned by Weinstein et al.'s participants, however, including exchanging services, joint planning, shared goals, shared workload, mutual funding shared ownership, expenditure of time and energy, action and risks, frequent meetings, compromise, combined staff, and contributions of expertise. Furthermore, the identified factors of competition between school-based personnel, use of technical jargon, acceptance of criticism from colleagues, providing suggestions, equity and inequity between collaborators, and climate of trust and respect do not appear to align with Hord's model.

Limitations were also noted in the areas of methodology and relevance to the current research. Regarding methodological limitations, the authors only used one data source to obtain an understanding of the collaborative process, eliminating the

Table 7

*Weinstein et al.'s (1991) Support for Hord's (1986) Model of Collaboration*

Category/Guideline	Article Support
<b>Beginning Process</b>	
Exchanging Services	Not discussed
Joint Planning	Not discussed
Shared Goals	Not discussed
<b>Communication</b>	
Communication Roles and Channels	Possible negative impact: Poor communication
<b>Resources/Ownership</b>	
Shared Workload	Not discussed
Mutual Funding	Not discussed
Shared Ownership	Not discussed
<b>Leadership/Control</b>	
Dispersed Leadership	Negative impact: Tendency of school-based personnel to seek leadership from university representatives Negative impact: University personnel in leadership roles
Delegated Responsibility	Not discussed
Shared Control	Positive impact: Increases in shared decision making
<b>Requirements/Characteristics</b>	
Expenditure of Time and Energy	Not discussed
Action and Risks	Not discussed
Frequent Meetings	Not discussed
Compromise	Not discussed
Combined Staff	Not discussed
Contributions of Expertise	Not discussed



perspective of the majority of the collaborators. As such, they did not utilize a holistic approach to data collection and analysis. Regarding relevance to the current research, two limitations were noted. First, there was no community involvement in the collaboration. Second, the collaboration was not undertaken to design and implement in-service professional learning to the educators.

Frankham and Howes (2006) described a case study analyzing the process of initiating collaborative action research to engage in K-12 instruction reform in an elementary school. They did not follow a specific model of collaboration during this process. Data collection methods included observations, field notes, and analysis of communications between collaborators (such as e-mails). In describing the collaboration, the authors reported that the main strength was the eventual insider status of the primary university representative within the school setting. Practices that were believed to positively impact the collaboration included expressing the desire to work together, asking for and providing suggestions, asking for and providing reassurance, and approaching disagreements amicably. The authors cited the often unfocused nature of conversations and efforts as the collaboration's weaknesses. No practices were cited that might have contributed to these weaknesses.

The findings of Frankham and Howes (2006) did not appear to align with any of Hord's (1986) suggestions, as displayed in Tables 2 and 8. Instead, none of the model components were mentioned in the results of Frankham and Howes (2006), including exchanging services, joint planning, shared goals, communication roles and channels, shared workload, mutual funding, shared ownership, dispersed leadership, delegated responsibility, shared control, expenditure of time and energy, action and risks, frequent

Table 8

*Frankham and Howes' (2006) Support for Hord's (1986) Model of Collaboration*

Category/Guideline	Article Support
<b>Beginning Process</b>	
Exchanging Services	Not discussed
Joint Planning	Not discussed
Shared Goals	Not discussed
<b>Communication</b>	
Communication Roles and Channels	Not discussed
<b>Resources/Ownership</b>	
Shared Workload	Not discussed
Mutual Funding	Not discussed
Shared Ownership	Not discussed
<b>Leadership/Control</b>	
Dispersed Leadership	Not discussed
Delegated Responsibility	Not discussed
Shared Control	Not discussed
<b>Requirements/Characteristics</b>	
Expenditure of Time and Energy	Not discussed
Action and Risks	Not discussed
Frequent Meetings	Not discussed
Compromise	Not discussed
Combined Staff	Not discussed
Contributions of Expertise	Not discussed

meetings, compromise, combined staff, and contributions of expertise. Additionally, the identified factors of insider status within the school setting, expressing the desire to work together, asking for and providing suggestions, asking for and providing reassurance, approaching disagreements amicably, and unfocused conversations and efforts did not appear to fit within Hord's model.

Limitations were noted regarding methodology and relevance to the current study. Methodologically, a limitation was identified with regard to the sample employed in the study. Specifically, only the perspective of the authors regarding the strengths and weaknesses of the collaboration was described. Although these perceptions were developed on the basis of empirical data, validity is limited because no perceptions of the school-based collaborators were obtained to either substantiate or refute the perceptions of the university representatives. Therefore a holistic approach to data collection and interpretation was not undertaken in this study. Several limitations were also identified with regard to relevance to the current study. Specifically, no community involvement was described, the focus of the collaboration was unrelated to in-service professional learning, and no mention was made of the practices that might have contributed to collaborative weaknesses.

Brandon et al. (2008) conducted a case study to determine mistakes made during a collaborative action research project between a university and several school representatives designed to develop and evaluate assessments embedded into K-12 instruction. The authors did not follow a specific model of collaboration during the collaborative process. Data collection methods consisted of observations of collaboration meetings. The strengths cited included the relationship between collaborators and the

inter-disciplinarity of the team composition. Practices that were considered to contribute to collaboration strengths included discussing the roles of the collaborators, distributing the workload, and sharing resources such as technology and materials. Weaknesses cited included a lack of focus in initial discussions, inequity between collaborators, and a lack of geographical proximity. The only practice that was cited to contribute to weaknesses was the attempt to communicate through technology, which was described as ineffective and confusing.

Support for Hord's (1986) model of collaboration is summarized in Table 2 and detailed in Table 9. The identified factor of inter-disciplinarity of the team composition appears to support Hord's suggestion for contributions of expertise. The factor of discussing the roles of the collaborators suggests support for Hord's guideline of delegated responsibility. The identified factors of distributing the workload and sharing resources appear to support Hord's guideline of shared workload. The factor of communicating through technology suggests support for Hord's guideline of communication roles and channels. However, several of Hord's guidelines were not mentioned by Brandon et al. (2008), including exchanging services, joint planning, shared goals, mutual funding, shared ownership, dispersed leadership, delegated responsibility, expenditure of time and energy, action and risks, frequent meetings, compromise, and combined staff. Furthermore, the factors of relationship between collaborators, lack of focus in initial discussions, inequity between collaborators, and lack of geographical proximity do not appear to align with Hord's model.

Limitations were also noted with regard to methodology and relevance to the current research. In the area of methodological limitations, only observations were

Table 9

*Brandon et al.'s (2008) Support for Hord's (1986) Model of Collaboration*

Category/Guideline	Article Support
<b>Beginning Process</b>	
Exchanging Services	Not discussed
Joint Planning	Not discussed
Shared Goals	Not discussed
<b>Communication</b>	
Communication Roles and Channels	Negative impact: Communicating through technology
<b>Resources/Ownership</b>	
Shared Workload	Positive impact: Distributing workload Positive impact: Shared resources
Mutual Funding	Not discussed
Shared Ownership	Not discussed
<b>Leadership/Control</b>	
Dispersed Leadership	Not discussed
Delegated Responsibility	Positive impact: Discussing roles of collaborators
Shared Control	Not discussed
<b>Requirements/Characteristics</b>	
Expenditure of Time and Energy	Not discussed
Action and Risks	Not discussed
Frequent Meetings	Not discussed
Compromise	Not discussed
Combined Staff	Not discussed
Contributions of Expertise	Positive impact: Inter-disciplinary team composition

collected to provide data. As such, no perceptions of collaborators were obtained regarding the efficacy of the collaboration itself or the practices in which the collaborators engaged. Therefore, only the authors' perceptions regarding strengths, weaknesses, and contributing practices were provided. As such, the study was not holistic in design. With regard to relevance to the current study, no community involvement was described, again potentially limiting the complexity of the collaboration. Furthermore, the focus of the collaboration was unrelated to in-service professional learning.

Platteel, Hulshof, Ponte, Direl, and Verloop (2010) conducted a case study of three collaborative action research teams involving three university faculty and fourteen teachers. The collaborations were formed to research and develop effective practices in language instruction at the secondary level. The authors did not follow a specific model of collaboration during the collaborative process; however, they did identify roles for university representatives based on the literature regarding collaborative action research. Specifically, the university representatives served as facilitators and participants of the action research, focusing on data collection and participant observation. Data collection methods consisted of individual and group interviews, audio-recorded meetings, and document analysis. Grounded theory methods guided data analysis. Additionally, Wadsworth's (1997, 2001) metaphors describing action research process were used to conceptualize the collaborative process. These included the following metaphors: 1) compass, which refers to goals; 2) mirror, which refers to reflection; 3) magnifying glass, which refers to focus; and 4) map, which refers to the idea of finding your own way.

The strength cited by Platteel et al. (2010) included guiding leadership and frequent discussion. Specific practices that were considered to have a positive impact

included asking questions, voicing opinions, contributing expertise, clarifying goals, challenging preconceived ideas, focusing discussions, taking risks, and investing time and effort. Participants identified the weaknesses of a lack of guidance regarding research practices, unclear focus, competing goals in university and teacher research, inequity between collaborators, and unclear roles and responsibilities. Only one practice was cited as contributing to collaborative weaknesses: not answering questions.

Support for Hord's (1986) model of collaboration is summarized in Table 2 and detailed in Table 10. The identified factor of frequent discussions appears to support Hord's suggestion for frequent meetings. The identified practice of contributing expertise suggests support for Hord's guideline of contributions of expertise. The factor of taking risks suggests support for Hord's guideline of action and risks. The identified factor of investing time and effort suggests support for Hord's guideline of expenditure of time and energy. The factor of competing goals in university and teacher research appears to support Hord's suggestion of shared goals. Finally, the factor of unclear roles and responsibilities suggests support for Hord's guideline of delegated responsibility. Several of Hord's guidelines were not mentioned by Platteel et al. (2010), including exchanging services, joint planning, communication roles and channels, shared workload, mutual funding, shared ownership, dispersed leadership, compromise, and combined staff. Furthermore, the identified factors of guiding leadership, asking questions, voicing opinions, clarifying goals, challenging preconceived ideas, focusing discussions, a lack of guidance regarding research practices, unclear focus, inequity between collaborators, and not answering questions do not appear to align with Hord's model.

Table 10

*Plateel et al.'s (2010) Support for Hord's (1986) Model of Collaboration*

Category/Guideline	Article Support
<b>Beginning Process</b>	
Exchanging Services	Not discussed
Joint Planning	Not discussed
Shared Goals	Negative impact: Competing goals in university and teacher research
<b>Communication</b>	
Communication Roles and Channels	Not discussed
<b>Resources/Ownership</b>	
Shared Workload	Not discussed
Mutual Funding	Not discussed
Shared Ownership	Not discussed
<b>Leadership/Control</b>	
Dispersed Leadership	Not discussed
Delegated Responsibility	Negative impact: Unclear roles and responsibilities
Shared Control	Not discussed
<b>Requirements/Characteristics</b>	
Expenditure of Time and Energy	Positive impact: Investing time and effort
Action and Risks	Positive impact: Taking risks
Frequent Meetings	Positive impact: Frequent discussion
Compromise	Not discussed
Combined Staff	Not discussed
Contributions of Expertise	Positive impact: Contributing expertise



Limitations were noted with regard to methodology and relevance to the current research. In the area of methodology, the authors employed a strong research design and utilized a holistic approach to data collection and analysis. However, their use of Wadsworth's (1997, 2001) collaborative action research metaphors to organize and conceptualize the study results potentially limited interpretation of the participants' responses. Regarding relevance to the current study, no community involvement was described, potentially limiting the complexity of the collaboration. Furthermore, the purpose of the collaboration was to identify effective instructional practices rather than develop in-service professional learning.

*University-school collaboration conclusions.*

Limited alignment was found between the university-school collaboration studies and the factors identified in Hord's (1986) model of inter-organizational collaboration. Specifically, Hord's model components of shared goals, communication roles and channels, shared workload, dispersed leadership, delegated responsibility, shared control, expenditure of time and energy, action and risks, frequent meetings, and contributions of expertise were identified by the university-school studies examined here. Several model components were not mentioned in these studies, including exchanging services, joint planning, mutual funding, shared ownership, compromise, and combined staff.

Furthermore, several additional factors were identified by these empirical studies that were not presented in Hord's model. Weinstein et al. (1991) identified the additional factors of competition between school-based personnel, use of technical jargon, acceptance of criticism from colleagues, and climate of trust and respect. Frankham and Howes (2006) identified the additional factors of insider status within the school setting,

expressing the desire to work together, asking for and providing suggestions, asking for and providing reassurance, approaching disagreements amicably, and unfocused conversations and efforts. Brandon et al. (2008) identified the additional factors of the relationship between collaborators, lack of focus in initial discussions, and lack of geographical proximity. Platteel et al. (2010) identified the factors of guiding leadership, asking questions, voicing opinions, clarifying goals, challenging preconceived ideas, focusing discussions, a lack of guidance regarding research practices, unclear focus, and not answering questions. A comparison of these additional factors reveals that no strengths, weaknesses, or contributing factors were found to be in common across university-school studies.

***University-school-community collaborations.***

University-school-community collaborations are defined here as those collaborations in which representatives from each type of organization are considered primary contributors to the collaboration under study. Two studies were found that systematically examined the strengths, weaknesses, and important factors of specific university-school-community collaborations.

In the first article, Robertson (2007) conducted a case study analyzing the process of collaborating to develop science-focused educational field trips. The collaborators did not follow a specific model of collaboration during implementation. Data collection methods included observations of collaborative meetings, pre and post individual interviews with each of the 10 collaborators, 2 additional interviews with each of 4 primary collaborators, and document analysis. Robertson described the strengths of the collaboration as including the inter-disciplinarity of the team composition, flexibility of

collaborator roles, good communication, and equitable power distribution. Practices that were credited with facilitating collaboration strengths included distributing the workload among collaborators, giving input during planning meetings, asking questions, using suggestions from each collaborator, compromising, and listening. Early in the collaboration, the weakness of poor communication was stated to occur during planning meetings. The practice cited as weakening communication was the avoidance of voicing opinions exhibited by some collaborators.

Robertson's (2007) study, which comprised stronger methodology than the other studies described to this point, provides considerable support for Hord's (1986) model of inter-organizational collaboration as displayed in Tables 2 and 11. Specifically, the identified factor of inter-disciplinarity of team composition appears to support Hord's guideline of contributions of expertise. The identified factors of flexibility of collaborator roles and compromise suggest support for Hord's guideline of compromise. The identified factors of good communication and poor communication support the importance of Hord's guideline of communication roles and channels. Finally, the identified factor of distributing the workload among collaborators appears to support Hord's suggestion of shared workload. Several of Hord's guidelines were not mentioned in Robertson's findings, including exchanging services, joint planning, shared goals, shared workload, mutual funding, shared ownership, delegated responsibility, expenditure of time and energy, action and risks, frequent meetings, compromise, combined staff, and contributions of expertise. Furthermore, several factors identified by Robertson do not appear to align with Hord's model, including giving input during planning meetings, asking questions, using suggestions from each collaborator, equity

Table 11

*Robertson's (2007) Support for Hord's (1986) Model of Collaboration*

Category/Guideline	Article Support
<b>Beginning Process</b>	
Exchanging Services	Not discussed
Joint Planning	Not discussed
Shared Goals	Not discussed
<b>Communication</b>	
Communication Roles and Channels	Positive impact: Good communication Negative impact: Poor communication
<b>Resources/Ownership</b>	
Shared Workload	Positive impact: Distributed workload
Mutual Funding	Not discussed
Shared Ownership	Not discussed
<b>Leadership/Control</b>	
Dispersed Leadership	Not discussed
Delegated Responsibility	Not discussed
Shared Control	Not discussed
<b>Requirements/Characteristics</b>	
Expenditure of Time and Energy	Not discussed
Action and Risks	Not discussed
Frequent Meetings	Not discussed
Compromise	Positive impact: Flexibility of collaborator roles Positive impact: Compromise
Combined Staff	Not discussed
Contributions of Expertise	Positive impact: Inter-disciplinary team composition

between collaborators, listening, and avoiding voicing opinions.

An examination of Robertson's (2007) study for limitations revealed a strong methodology; however, limitations were noted, with regard to relevance to the current research. Methodologically, Robertson used a variety of respondents and data collection methods, resulting in triangulation of the data and a holistic approach to data collection and analysis. This practice improves the validity of the study. Regarding relevance to the current study, the focus of the collaboration was unrelated to in-service professional learning.

In the second article, Miller and Hafner (2008) describe a case study of a university-school-community collaborative action research project designed to increase educational and community opportunities for K-12 students in a low income community. While Miller and Hafner followed a specific model of collaboration to analyze results, they did not employ this model to guide the collaborative process. Data collection methods included 25 observations, a document analysis, and individual interviews with 17 participants of the collaboration. The authors identified the strengths of shared goals and shared leadership of the collaboration as important indicators of collaborative success. They also identified several practices that were believed to contribute to the success of the collaboration. These included assigning representatives from each organization as co-leaders, listening, relinquishing control to other collaborators, asking for information from other collaborators, holding meetings in community locations, avoiding the use of professional titles of status, meeting in small groups, engaging in frequent discussions of progress, and focusing on specific goals and concrete actions. Weaknesses described included inequitable power distribution among collaborators and

difficulty identifying collaboration goals. The authors cited several practices that might have contributed to those weaknesses, including collaborators not voicing opinions in meetings, failure of some collaborators to recognize the power differential present, and the use of large group meetings.

The article provides valuable information regarding practices that can impact this type of collaboration; however, the study has limited alignment with Hord's (1986) model of inter-organizational collaboration as displayed in Tables 2 and 12. Specifically, the identified factor of shared goals reflects Hord's guideline of shared goals. The identified factors of shared leadership and assigning representatives from each organization as co-leaders suggest support for Hord's guideline of dispersed leadership. The identified factors of relinquishing control to other collaborators, inequitable power distribution among collaborators, and the failure of some collaborators to recognize the power differential present suggest support for Hord's suggestion of shared control. Finally, the identified factors of meeting in small groups and engaging in frequent discussions of progress provide support for Hord's guideline of frequent small and large group meetings; however, the perceived negative impact of large group meetings appears to contradict the same guideline. Several of Hord's guidelines were not mentioned by Miller and Hafner's (2008) participants, including exchanging services, joint planning, communication roles and channels, shared workload, mutual funding, shared ownership, delegated responsibility, expenditure of time and energy, action and risks, compromise, combined staff, and contributions of expertise. Furthermore, several identified factors were not predicted by Hord, including listening, asking for information from other

Table 12

*Miller and Hafner's (2008) Support for Hord's (1986) Model of Collaboration*

Category/Guideline	Article Support
<b>Beginning Process</b>	
Exchanging Services	Not discussed
Joint Planning	Not discussed
Shared Goals	Positive impact: Shared goals
<b>Communication</b>	
Communication Roles and Channels	Not discussed
<b>Resources/Ownership</b>	
Shared Workload	Not discussed
Mutual Funding	Not discussed
Shared Ownership	Not discussed
<b>Leadership/Control</b>	
Dispersed Leadership	Positive impact: Shared leadership Positive impact: Assigning co-leaders
Delegated Responsibility	Not discussed
Shared Control	Positive impact: Relinquishing control Negative impact: Inequitable power distribution Negative impact: Failure to recognize power differential
<b>Requirements/Characteristics</b>	
Expenditure of Time and Energy	Not discussed
Action and Risks	Not discussed
Frequent Meetings	Positive impact: Meeting in small groups Positive impact: Frequent discussions Negative impact: Meeting in large groups
Compromise	Not discussed

Combined Staff	Not discussed
Contributions of Expertise	Not discussed

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collaborators, holding meetings in community locations, avoiding the use of professional titles of status, focusing on specific goals and concrete actions, difficulty identifying collaboration goals, and failure to voice opinions during meetings.

Limitations were noted with regard to methodology and relevance to the current research. Regarding methodological limitations, the results were written from a very specific conceptual framework which might have limited the presentation of the results to those aspects that fit within that conceptual framework. Regarding the relevance to the current study, the collaborators did not engage in collaboration to develop and implement in-service professional learning.

*University-school-community collaboration conclusions.*

The studies describing the strengths, weaknesses, and contributing practices of university-school-community collaborations in education revealed limited alignment with Hord's (1986) model of inter-organizational collaboration. Specifically, the model components of shared goals, communication roles and channels, shared workload, dispersed leadership, shared control, frequent meetings, compromise, and contributions of expertise were supported by one or both of the university-school-community collaborations examined here. In contrast, the following model components were not mentioned: exchanging services, joint planning, mutual funding, shared ownership, delegated responsibility, expenditure of time and energy, action and risks, frequent meetings, and combined staff.



Furthermore, several additional factors were noted by each study. Robertson (2007) identified the additional factors of giving input during planning meetings, asking questions, using suggestions from each collaborator, listening, and avoiding voicing opinions. Miller and Hafner (2008) identified the additional factors of listening, asking for information from other collaborators, holding meetings in community locations, avoiding the use of professional titles of status, focusing on specific goals and concrete actions, difficulty identifying collaboration goals, and failure to voice opinions during meetings. When these additional factors are compared, only one factor is found to be repeated: the practice of listening, which was perceived to contribute to collaborative strengths in both collaborations.

***Inter-organizational collaboration conclusions.***

When comparisons are made across the articles describing specific inter-organizational collaborations in education that did not address PL, several strengths, weaknesses, and contributing factors are identified. These results provide some support for Hord's (1986) model of inter-organizational collaboration. Specifically, the model components of shared goals, communication roles and channels, shared workload, mutual funding, dispersed leadership, delegated responsibility, shared control, expenditure of time and energy, action and risks, frequent meetings, compromise, and contributions of expertise were each supported by at least one of the studies described to this point. However, no model component was supported by more than four articles. Furthermore, the components of exchanging services, joint planning, shared ownership, and combined staff were not mentioned by any article reviewed in this section. These findings suggest that Hord's model provides some valuable suggestions for developing successful inter-

organizational collaboration, but that the suggestions are not comprehensive.

Furthermore, it is possible that some of the components proposed by Hord are not perceived to be impactful by collaborators.

Each study described here also identified strengths, weaknesses, and contributing practices that were not identified by Hord (1986). Specifically, Deslandes (2006) identified the additional factors of a structured and focused approach to school reform, positive relationships between collaborators, the relevance of the collaboration's purpose to school needs, approaching dissenting views without judgment, an abstract purpose, limited support from non-collaborating school personnel, resistance to theory, turnover in school personnel, and competing demands within the school. Baker and Martin (2008) identified the additional factors of the relationship between collaborators and the self-organization of the collaborators. Buys and Bursnall (2007) identified the additional factors of the relationship between collaborators, strong leadership, university support, commitment to the collaboration on the part of the collaborators, continually reviewing goals, and attempting to understand the perspective of the community partners. Weinstein et al. (1991) identified the additional factors of competition between school-based personnel, use of technical jargon, acceptance of criticism from colleagues, and climate of trust and respect. Frankham and Howes (2006) identified the additional factors of insider status within the school setting, expressing the desire to work together, asking for and providing suggestions, asking for and providing reassurance, approaching disagreements amicably, and unfocused conversations and efforts. Brandon et al. (2008) identified the additional factors of the relationship between collaborators, lack of focus in initial discussions, and lack of geographical proximity. Platteel et al. (2010) identified the

factors of guiding leadership, asking questions, voicing opinions, clarifying goals, challenging preconceived ideas, focusing discussions, a lack of guidance regarding research practices, unclear focus, and not answering questions. Robertson (2007) identified the additional factors of giving input during planning meetings, asking questions, using suggestions from each collaborator, listening, and avoiding voicing opinions. Finally, Miller and Hafner (2008) identified the additional factors of listening, asking for information from other collaborators, holding meetings in community locations, avoiding the use of professional titles of status, focusing on specific goals and concrete actions, difficulty identifying collaboration goals, and failure to voice opinions during meetings. Of these additional factors, none was found to repeat across all or a majority of the studies summarized. This indicates that the literature available on this topic is not yet exhaustive.

In short, both Hord's (1986) model and the studies describing the strengths, weaknesses, and contributing factors in inter-organizational collaborations in education cannot be assumed to sufficiently represent the processes necessary to establish and maintain successful inter-organizational collaborations. Therefore, more information is needed regarding effective inter-organizational collaborative practices.

### **Collaborating to Design and Facilitate Professional Learning in Education**

#### **Significance of professional learning in education.**

The literature on the conditions of and student progress in K-12 schools indicates the need for systemic changes in educational practices (Shapiro, 2000). Issues of systemic racism (Fennimore, 2005; Fruchter, 2007; Weinstein, 2006), inadequate instructional methods for English Language Learners (ELL) (Datnow, Borman, Stringfield, Overman,

& Castellano, 2003; Weinstien, 2006), and lowered expectations for students in special education (Mamlin, 1999) suggest that teaching practices must be improved. Student achievement gaps highlight this problem. Achievement gaps between White, Black, and Hispanic students (fourth, eighth, and twelfth grade) showed no measurable change in math performance from 1990 to 2009 and no measurable change in reading performance from 1992 to 2009, as measured by the National Assessment for Educational Progress (NAEP) (Aud, Hussar, Planty, Snyder, Bianco, Fox, Frohlick, Kemp, & Drake, 2010). In 2009, twelfth grade students attending suburban schools scored significantly higher in reading and math than students attending schools in towns and rural settings and significantly higher in reading than students attending city schools (National Center for Education Statistics [NCES], 2010). Furthermore, the average reading score of all twelfth graders assessed was significantly lower in 2009 than in 1992.

Recent changes in educational law attempt to address these issues by increasing expectations for students of racial and ethnic minority, ELL status, and special needs (Darling-Hammond, 2007). As a consequence, expectations for teaching practice are also changing (Desimone, Smith, & Ueno, 2006). Teachers are expected to meet increased accountability standards at the state and federal levels (Crockett, 2003). Several states have also implemented a paradigm shift in the practice of educational service to incorporate a multi-tiered approach to identifying students at risk of school failure and implementing interventions to alleviate such risk (Berkely et al., 2007; Glover & DiPerna, 2007; Kovaleski, 2007; Kratochwill, Volpianski, Clements, & Ball, 2007; Marston, 2005; Stecker, Fuchs, & Fuchs, 2008).

Teachers do not feel prepared to meet these challenges (NCES, 2000). In 2000, the NCES conducted a survey assessing the preparedness of practicing public teachers in all 50 states and the District of Columbia. Respondents' self-reports of subject specific preparedness indicated less than ideal levels of perceived competency (NCES, 2000). Specifically, less than half of all teachers surveyed felt very well prepared to implement state or district curriculum and performance standards (44%), use student performance assessment (37%), and integrate educational technology into the grade or subject taught (27%). Furthermore, survey results indicated that only 32% of the teachers surveyed reported feeling very well prepared to work with students from diverse cultural backgrounds, and 6% reported feeling not at all prepared to address such needs. Only 27% of teachers of ELL students reported feeling very well prepared to address the needs of those students. An alarming 12% felt not at all prepared. Of teachers who worked with students with disabilities, only 32% reported feeling very well prepared. Five percent of those teachers reported feeling not at all prepared. In fact, the majority of the teachers surveyed reported feeling very well prepared in only two areas of instruction: meeting the overall demands of teaching assignments (61%) and maintaining order and discipline in the classroom (71%). Such findings suggest that additional training is warranted across instructional areas.

Teachers who spent more time on professional learning in a particular area of instruction were generally more likely to report feeling very well prepared to engage in related instructional activities, highlighting the importance of time-intensive, content-focused professional learning for educators (NCES, 2000). Therefore, to address increased expectations for student achievement and increase teacher competency in

relevant areas, intensive training of pre-service and in-service teachers, school psychologists, counselors, and other K-12 school personnel is necessary (Consortium for Policy Research in Education [CPRE], 1996).

### **History of professional learning in education.**

#### ***Ineffective practices.***

Professional learning endeavors in education have historically been of low quality and resulted in minimal change in attitudes and practice (CPRE, 1996; Garet et al., 2001; National Staff Development Council [NSDC], 2001). In 1998, the Consortium for Policy Research in Education (CPRE) conducted a study of professional learning programs and policies in all 50 states. The results indicated that professional learning quality was lacking across the country. According to the CPRE results, professional learning had limited effects on teaching practices and student outcomes. The content was only weakly related to teacher needs with too little attention paid to background knowledge. Professional learning delivery was of low intensity and short duration, with rare opportunities for observation, practice, and feedback. Generally, no follow-up was conducted to assist teachers with the application of materials in classroom settings. Additionally, these ineffective programs were very expensive, leading to questions about fiscal responsibility and the appropriateness of funding such initiatives.

#### ***Call for change.***

In 2001, the National Staff Development Council (NSDC) developed recommendations for best practices in professional learning that were organized into three standards: Context, Process, and Content (Hirsh, 2001; NSDC 2001; Wei, Darling-Hammond, Andree, Richardson, & Orphanos, 2009). The NSDC standards have been

compared with Hord's (1986) model of inter-organizational collaboration in Table 12 to identify commonalities. Within the Context standards, the NSDC asserted that professional learning in education should promote the development of learning communities among participants. Those participants of those learning communities should develop goals that are aligned with those of their school and school district. Professional learning should be situated within the context of strong school and district leaders who encourage continuous learning and devote necessary resources to learning initiatives.

Regarding Process, the NSDC (2001) stated that professional learning should be data-driven, using student data to determine adult learning needs, monitor progress, and help sustain improvement. Professional learning programs should continuously evaluate the results of training endeavors using multiple sources of information. They should prepare educators to apply research to decision making using learning strategies appropriate to the intended goal and applying knowledge about human learning and change. Participants should be given opportunities to practice the material learned in collaborative, supportive learning environments.

Within the Content standards, the NSDC (2001) called for material that addresses the needs of *all* students, providing evidence-based strategies that assist students in meeting rigorous academic requirements in safe and orderly learning environments. Professional learning should increase the knowledge of educators regarding research based instructional strategies and classroom assessments. Finally, professional learning programs should provide educators with the knowledge and skills needed to involve families and other stakeholders in educational practices and decisions.

**Need for professional learning focused collaboration.**

The myriad of characteristics that must be present in high quality professional learning indicates the need for professional learning providers with a wide range of experience, knowledge, and skills. Furthermore, the facilitation of long-term professional learning in which individualized feedback is provided requires a low participant to facilitator ratio. Collaboration among professional learning facilitators during the design and implementation of professional learning programs could assist with the delivery of NSDC Context, Process, and Content standards (2001). Furthermore, inter-organizational collaboration could be especially beneficial in this endeavor, as different organizations might offer different areas of expertise, all of which may be necessary to address NSDC standards. For example, university faculty are especially well suited to offer knowledge in the area of research-based practices and program evaluation, while K-12 school personnel have an in depth and practical understanding of training needs that exist at the local level (Stokols, 2006). Community representatives could potentially provide additional resources in the form of funding, time, and personnel (Buys & Bursnall, 2007), further contributing to professional learning programs.

Inter-organizational collaboration to produce professional learning offers benefits to the participants in addition to improving the quality of the professional learning program. When focused on the development and delivery of high-quality professional learning, inter-organizational collaboration not only increases resources but leverages them in a way that produces more widespread outcomes. The multi-disciplinary, holistic approach to service delivery that is the goal of inter-organizational collaboration is shared with practitioners rather than applied directly to the client. As professional learning



participants in education often work with a multitude of clients, the number of clients who might benefit from the collaborative efforts is increased substantially. Therefore, inter-organizational collaboration with a professional learning focus represents a highly beneficial approach to holistic, widespread service delivery.

### **Challenges associated with professional learning focused collaboration.**

An inter-organizational collaboration with a professional learning focus might be characterized by greater complexity than other inter-organizational collaborations. NSDC (2001) Content standards suggest that professional learning participants become involved in developing training goals. Such practice requires the provision of choice and self-direction for professional learning participants, features that research indicates contribute to motivation and learning (Ryan & Deci, 2000; Lewis & Hayward, 2003). Therefore, some degree of collaboration between trainers and participants is necessary in any standards-based professional learning endeavor (NSDC, 2001). In a professional learning program designed and developed through inter-organizational collaboration, the collaborators must then negotiate the collaborative demands associated with inter-organizational collaborations along with the collaborative demands placed upon them within the training process. As such, the complexity of the endeavor intensifies, introducing the potential for more varied and multi-faceted collaborative challenges.

### **Previous studies assessing professional learning focused collaboration in education.**

In a review of the literature on professional learning and collaboration in education, few studies were found that addressed collaborative professional learning for educators involving two or more organizations. As such, professional learning focused

collaborations involving only one organization, or intra-organizational collaborations, were also included. The studies presented in this section are organized into pre-service and in-service professional learning programs. Pre-service professional learning programs are programs designed to build professional capacities in individuals who have not yet begun to practice within the field of education. In-service professional learning programs are programs designed to build and maintain professional capacities in individuals who are concurrently practicing within the field of education at the time of training.

*Pre-service professional learning focused collaborations.*

Pre-service professional learning focused collaborations are defined here as collaborations existing with the primary purpose of designing and implementing PL programs for individuals who are training to enter the field of education. Articles describing the strengths, weaknesses, and contributing factors were found in two areas of pre-service professional learning: professional development schools and educator training in university settings.

*Professional development schools.*

Professional development schools are schools in which pre-service teachers engage in the supervised application of educational practices. Some professional development programs also include a collaborative action research component in which student teachers, supervising teachers, and university representatives develop and conduct research on educational practices. Professional development schools typically develop through collaboration between an educator training program within a university and a local K-12 school. Two studies will be described here that systematically examined

the variables that contributed to collaborative process. While more studies exist within this area, the first article discussed here is a meta-ethnography that considered 10 years worth of research in the area. The second article described was published after the meta-ethnography and as such will be added to this review of professional development school collaborative process.

Rice (2002) conducted a meta-ethnography of 20 studies describing the collaborative processes involved in professional development schools settings between 1990 and 1999. To identify relevant articles, content and methodology selection criteria were applied to 66 articles discussing professional development school collaborations, eventually narrowing the sample to the 20 articles that met selection criteria. The possible use of a specific model of collaboration by the professional development school collaborations was not explicated by Rice. In this study, Rice noted two strengths of professional development school collaborations across studies, including a good relationship across organizations and the presence of supportive leadership. Factors and practices that were believed to contribute to these strengths included prior positive history with collaborators, time to collaborate, encouraging other collaborators to make decisions, encouraging other collaborators to continue with the collaboration, and attending social engagements with collaborators. Several weaknesses were noted, as well. These included an unwillingness to collaborate among some collaborators, turnover in school-based collaborators, poor relationships across and within organizations, a lack of formal structure for partnership, inequity between collaborators, unsupportive leadership, miscommunication, a lack of funds and time, and conflicting goals between organizations. The factors and practices that were noted to contribute to collaboration

weaknesses included required as opposed to voluntary participation in the collaboration, prior negative history with collaborators, and attempting to assert dominance.

Rice (2002) offers a great deal of information regarding collaborative processes within professional development school partnerships; however, there is again limited alignment between her findings and the model of inter-organizational collaboration proposed by Hord (1986). Rice's support for Hord's model of collaboration is summarized in Table 2 and detailed in Table 13. Specifically, Rice's findings of the importance of time to collaborate and the negative impact of a lack of time to collaborate suggest support for Hord's guideline of expenditure of time and energy. The identified factors of encouraging other collaborators to make decisions, inequity between collaborators, and involuntary participation in the collaboration appear to support Hord's guideline of shared control. The identified factor of a lack of formal structure for the partnership suggests support for the guideline of joint planning, in which the nature of the collaboration itself is decided. The identified factor of miscommunication provides support for Hord's guideline of communication roles and channels. The identified factor of a lack of funds supports Hord's emphasis on mutual funding. Finally, the identified factor of conflicting goals between organizations supports Hord's suggestion of establishing shared goals. Several of Hord's guidelines were not mentioned by Rice, including exchanging services, shared workload, shared ownership, dispersed leadership, delegated responsibility, action and risks, frequent meetings, compromise, combined staff, and contributions of expertise. Furthermore, several of Rice's findings were not predicted by Hord, including a good relationship across organizations, supportive leadership, a positive history with collaborators, encouraging other collaborators to

Table 13

*Rice's (2002) Support for Hord's (1986) Model of Collaboration*

Category/Guideline	Article Support
<b>Beginning Process</b>	
Exchanging Services	Not discussed
Joint Planning	Negative impact: Lack of formal structure
Shared Goals	Negative impact: Conflicting goals
<b>Communication</b>	
Communication Roles and Channels	Negative impact: Miscommunication
<b>Resources/Ownership</b>	
Shared Workload	Not discussed
Mutual Funding	Negative impact: Lack of funds
Shared Ownership	Not discussed
<b>Leadership/Control</b>	
Dispersed Leadership	Not discussed
Delegated Responsibility	Not discussed
Shared Control	Positive impact: Encouraging shared decision making Negative impact: Inequity between collaborators Negative impact: Involuntary participation
<b>Requirements/Characteristics</b>	
Expenditure of Time and Energy	Positive impact: Having time to collaborate Negative impact: Lack of time to collaborate
Action and Risks	Not discussed
Frequent Meetings	Not discussed
Compromise	Not discussed
Combined Staff	Not discussed
Contributions of Expertise	Not discussed

continue with the collaboration, attending social engagements with collaborators, unwillingness of some collaborators to collaborate, turnover in school-based collaborators, poor relationships between and within organizations, unsupportive leadership, prior negative history with collaborators, and attempting to assert dominance.

An examination of the study revealed strong methodology; however, several limitations were noted with regard to the current research question. Regarding relevance to the proposed study, no community involvement was described as occurring in any of the collaborations included. Furthermore, the purpose of the collaboration was to provide professional learning to pre-service educators as opposed to in-service educators.

Marlow, Kyed, and Connors (2005) describe a professional development school university-school collaboration through a qualitative study of unspecified methodology. In contrast to the others studies described in this literature review, Marlow et al. employed a specific model of collaboration to guide the process of initiating and maintaining their inter-organizational collaboration. The model they employed consisted of the components of collegiality, collaboration, and *kuleana*. With regard to collegiality, the importance of a close-knit community of equals is emphasized. With regard to collaboration, the authors identify the importance of a mutually beneficial relationship designed to satisfy a common purpose. The concept of *kuleana* refers to a Hawaiian concept of trust which includes consideration of the values of others. It should be noted that these concepts are contained within Hord's (1986) model of inter-organizational collaboration. Data collection methods consisted of individual interviews with an unspecified number of collaborators from one PDS site. The strengths of the collaboration included a good relationship between collaborators and a sense of equity.

Practices that were believed to contribute to strengths included initiating discussions regarding mutual benefit, attempting to understand the perspective of other collaborators, introducing collaborators as equals, providing feedback on progress, answering questions, providing assistance, and sharing the workload. The participants also noted two weaknesses: initial difficulty seeing benefits to the school and finding research opportunities within the collaboration.

When the results of the Marlow et al. (2005) study are compared to Hord's (1986) model of inter-organizational collaboration, limited alignment is again noted and is displayed in Tables 2 and 14. The identified factors of discussions regarding mutual benefit, difficulty seeing benefits to the school, and difficulty finding research opportunities within the collaboration suggest support for Hord's guideline of exchanging services. The identified factor of sharing the workload reflects Hord's guideline of shared workload. However, several of Hord's guidelines were not mentioned by Marlow et al.'s participants, including joint planning, shared goals, communication roles and channels, mutual funding, shared ownership, dispersed leadership, delegated responsibility, shared control, expenditure of time and energy, action and risks, frequent meetings, compromise, combined staff, and contributions of expertise. Furthermore, several of Marlow et al.'s findings do not appear to align with Hord's model, including the relationship between collaborators, attempting to understand the perspective of other collaborators, introducing collaborators as equals, providing feedback on progress, answering questions, and providing assistance.

Table 14

*Marlow et al.'s (2002) Support for Hord's (1986) Model of Collaboration*

Category/Guideline	Article Support
<b>Beginning Process</b>	
Exchanging Services	Positive impact: Discussing mutual benefit Negative impact: Difficulty seeing benefits to school Negative impact: Difficulty finding research opportunities
Joint Planning	Not discussed
Shared Goals	Not discussed
<b>Communication</b>	
Communication Roles and Channels	Not discussed
<b>Resources/Ownership</b>	
Shared Workload	Positive impact: Shared workload
Mutual Funding	Not discussed
Shared Ownership	Not discussed
<b>Leadership/Control</b>	
Dispersed Leadership	Not discussed
Delegated Responsibility	Not discussed
Shared Control	Not discussed
<b>Requirements/Characteristics</b>	
Expenditure of Time and Energy	Not discussed
Action and Risks	Not discussed
Frequent Meetings	Not discussed
Compromise	Not discussed
Combined Staff	Not discussed
Contributions of Expertise	Not discussed



Limitations were noted with regard to methodology and relevance to the current study. Several methodological limitations exist within this article, including the lack of a stated methodology and vague data collection methods. Furthermore, it was unclear how many collaborators were interviewed and how representative the study participants were of the collaboration, potentially limiting the holistic nature of the study. With regard to relevance to the current study, no discussion was provided of factors or practices perceived to contribute to stated weaknesses, no community involvement was described, and the purpose of the collaboration was to implement pre-service professional learning as opposed to in-service professional learning.

*Professional development school collaboration conclusions.*

While the support for some of Hord's (1986) model components is enhanced by the professional development school studies described here, several factors remain unsupported. Specifically, the model components of exchanging services, joint planning, shared goals, communication roles and channels, shared workload, mutual funding, shared control, and expenditure of time and energy were supported by the professional development school studies examined here. In contrast, the following model components were not mentioned by the professional development school collaborations: shared ownership, dispersed leadership, delegated responsibility, action and risks, frequent meetings, compromise, combined staff, and contributions of expertise.

Furthermore, the professional development school studies described several practices not proposed by Hord (1986). Rice (2002) identified the additional factors of a good relationship across organizations, supportive leadership, a positive history with collaborators, encouraging other collaborators to continue with the collaboration,

attending social engagements with collaborators, unwillingness of some collaborators to collaborate, turnover in school-based collaborators, poor relationships between and within organizations, unsupportive leadership, prior negative history with collaborators, and attempting to assert dominance. Marlow et al. (2005) identified the additional factors of the relationship between collaborators, attempting to understand the perspective of other collaborators, introducing collaborators as equals, providing feedback on progress, answering questions, and providing assistance. When these practices are compared, only the strength of the relationship between collaborators was mentioned in both professional development school articles.

*Educator training in university settings.*

Pre-service professional learning for educators also occurs within the university and college based training programs in which aspiring educators obtain initial and graduate degrees. One study was found that discussed the strengths, weaknesses, and contributing factors in this type of collaboration. While the study did not describe empirical methods of data collection or analysis, it will be included here as it was the only study found in this area that focused on collaborative process as opposed to course work and student learning.

Coronel, Carrasco, Fernández, and González (2003) describe a collaboration between university faculty regarding the design and implementation of an undergraduate level course required of education majors in one university. The collaborators did not employ a specific model of collaboration. The methodology and data collection methods were not explicitly described; however, the authors did state that each of the four authors were also collaborators. It was unclear if these authors comprised the entire collaborative

team. Several strengths were noted within the collaboration, including a mix of experience among collaborators, equity between collaborators, the relationship between collaborators, and good communication. Contributing practices that the collaborators identified included treating all suggestions equally, listening, providing suggestions, engaging in frequent informal conversations regarding both the collaboration and other work-related situations, providing assistance, and formally scheduling frequent meetings.

While not inter-organizational, Coronel et al.'s (2003) findings will be compared to Hord's (1986) model of inter-organizational collaboration to identify any commonalities. The comparison is summarized in Table 2 and detailed in Table 15. Such comparison yields support for several of Hord's model components. Specifically, the identified factor of equity between collaborators suggests support for Hord's guideline of shared control. The identified factor of good communication suggests support for Hord's guideline of communication roles and channels. The identified factors of engaging in frequent informal conversations and scheduling frequent formal meetings both appear to support Hord's suggestion of frequent meetings. Several of Hord's guidelines were not mentioned by Coronel et al., however, including exchanging services, joint planning, shared goals, shared workload, mutual funding, shared ownership, dispersed leadership, delegated responsibility, expenditure of time and energy, action and risks, compromise, combined staff, and contributions of expertise. Furthermore, several identified factors were not predicted by Hord, including a mix of experience among collaborators, the relationship between collaborators, treating all suggestions equally, listening, providing suggestions, and providing assistance.

Table 15

*Coronel et al.'s (2003) Support for Hord's (1986) Model of Collaboration*

Category/Guideline	Article Support
<b>Beginning Process</b>	
Exchanging Services	Not discussed
Joint Planning	Not discussed
Shared Goals	Not discussed
<b>Communication</b>	
Communication Roles and Channels	Positive impact: Good communication
<b>Resources/Ownership</b>	
Shared Workload	Not discussed
Mutual Funding	Not discussed
Shared Ownership	Not discussed
<b>Leadership/Control</b>	
Dispersed Leadership	Not discussed
Delegated Responsibility	Not discussed
Shared Control	Not discussed
<b>Requirements/Characteristics</b>	
Expenditure of Time and Energy	Not discussed
Action and Risks	Not discussed
Frequent Meetings	Positive impact: Frequent informal discussions Positive impact: Frequent formal meetings
Compromise	Not discussed
Combined Staff	Not discussed
Contributions of Expertise	Not discussed

Limitations were noted in the areas of methodology and relevance to the current study. As stated previously, the study exhibited significant methodological limitations. The authors described no methodology for collecting or analyzing data, greatly limiting the validity of the results. As such, the holistic nature of the study cannot be determined. With regard to relevance to the current study, Coronel et al. exhibited other limitations as well. Specifically, only one organization was involved in the collaboration, the purpose of the collaboration was pre-service professional learning as opposed to in-service professional learning, and no mention was made of weaknesses or contributing factors.

*Educator training in university settings conclusions.*

Conclusions regarding collaborative practices among teacher educators within university settings cannot be drawn from a single article with questionable methodology. However, comparisons may be made to Hord's (1986) model of inter-organizational collaboration, revealing limited support of the model. Specifically, the model components of communication roles and channels, shared control, and frequent meetings were supported by Coronel et al.'s (2003) findings. The model components of exchanging services, joint planning, shared goals, shared workload, mutual funding, shared ownership, dispersed leadership, delegated responsibility, expenditure of time and energy, action and risks, compromise, combined staff, and contributions of expertise were not mentioned by Coronel et al.

Furthermore, Coronel et al. (2003) identified several additional factors not proposed by Hord (1986), including a mix of experience among collaborators, the relationship between collaborators, treating all suggestions equally, listening, providing suggestions, and providing assistance. Comparison of these additional factors to other

pre-service professional learning collaborations reveals only one repeating strength: the relationship between collaborators.

*Pre-service professional learning focused collaboration conclusions.*

The pre-service professional learning focused collaborations described here provided limited support for Hord's (1986) model of inter-organizational collaboration. Specifically, the model components of exchanging services, joint planning, shared goals, communication roles and channels, shared workload, mutual funding, shared control, expenditure of time and energy, and frequent meetings were supported by the pre-service professional learning studies examined here. The following model components were not mentioned by these studies: shared ownership, dispersed leadership, delegated responsibility, action and risks, compromise, combined staff, and contributions of expertise.

Furthermore, several factors were identified as strengths, weaknesses, or contributing practices that were not proposed by Hord (1986). Rice (2002) identified the additional factors of a good relationship across organizations, supportive leadership, a positive history with collaborators, encouraging other collaborators to continue with the collaboration, attending social engagements with collaborators, unwillingness of some collaborators to collaborate, turnover in school-based collaborators, poor relationships between and within organizations, unsupportive leadership, prior negative history with collaborators, and attempting to assert dominance. Marlow et al. (2005) identified the additional factors of the relationship between collaborators, attempting to understand the perspective of other collaborators, introducing collaborators as equals, providing feedback on progress, answering questions, and providing assistance. Coronel et al.

(2003) identified the additional factors of a mix of experience among collaborators, the relationship between collaborators, treating all suggestions equally, listening, providing suggestions, and providing assistance. A comparison of these factors across pre-service professional learning focused collaborations reveals only one commonality: the strength of the relationship between collaborators.

*In-service professional learning focused collaborations.*

In-service professional learning focused collaborations are defined here as collaborations existing with the primary purpose of designing and implementing professional learning programs for practicing K-12 school personnel, including teachers, counselors, school psychologists, administrators, and other school personnel. Articles describing the strengths, weaknesses, and contributing factors were found in three areas of in-service professional learning: professional learning communities, school reform with a formal professional learning component, and professional learning in which trainers and participants collaborate to determine the focus and nature of the professional learning program.

*Teacher development in the context of school reform.*

School reform efforts involve extensive changes to educational practices within the K-12 school setting which may or may not be accompanied by formal PL programs. Studies that addressed school reform with a formal PL component were examined. Within this area of PL-focused collaboration, one article was found to systematically examine the strengths, weaknesses, and contributing factors associated with a PL program situated in a school reform project.

Grundy, Robison, and Tomazos (2001) conducted a qualitative study described as a reflective deliberation to assess factors important to collaborative process in school

reform PL. The collaborations described by the authors involve inter-organizational involvement between a university and an unspecified number of K-12 schools and did not follow a specific model of collaboration. Data collection methods included individual interviews with three university collaborators who were also the authors of the study along with informal discussions with an unspecified number of school collaborators. The authors described the collaborations as enjoying the strengths of strong leadership, inter-disciplinarity of teams, and a good relationship between collaborators. Practices noted as contributing to collaborative strengths included encouraging school collaborators to develop goals relevant to school needs, rejecting an expert role, providing information, providing support, sharing the workload, leaving decision-making to school collaborators, defending the decisions of others, confronting other collaborators in inequitable situations, representing self as similar to collaborators, and approaching disagreements amicably. Weaknesses included a mistrust of university goals and inequity among collaborators, which were attributed to one school-based collaborator making the majority of decisions.

Some alignment with Hord's (1986) model was noted and is summarized in Table 2 and detailed in Table 16. Specifically, the identified factor of the inter-disciplinarity of teams appears to support Hord's guideline of contributions of expertise. The identified factor of sharing the workload reflects Hord's guideline of shared workload. The identified factors of defending the decisions of others, confronting other collaborators in inequitable situations, and one school-based collaborator making the majority of decisions support the importance of Hord's guideline of shared control; however, the identified factor of leaving decision-making to school collaborators appears to contradict



Table 16

*Grundy et al. 's (2005) Support for Hord's (1986) Model of Collaboration*

Category/Guideline	Article Support
<b>Beginning Process</b>	
Exchanging Services	Not discussed
Joint Planning	Not discussed
Shared Goals	Not discussed
<b>Communication</b>	
Communication Roles and Channels	Not discussed
<b>Resources/Ownership</b>	
Shared Workload	Not discussed
Mutual Funding	Not discussed
Shared Ownership	Positive impact: Shared workload
<b>Leadership/Control</b>	
Dispersed Leadership	Not discussed
Delegated Responsibility	Not discussed
Shared Control	Positive impact: Defending decisions of others Positive impact: Confronting collaborators in inequitable situations Negative impact: Lack of shared decision making
<b>Requirements/Characteristics</b>	
Expenditure of Time and Energy	Not discussed
Action and Risks	Not discussed
Frequent Meetings	Not discussed
Compromise	Not discussed
Combined Staff	Not discussed
Contributions of Expertise	Positive impact: Inter-disciplinary team composition

this guideline. Several of Hord's guidelines were not mentioned by Grundy et al., including exchanging services, joint planning, shared goals, communication roles and channels, mutual funding, shared ownership, dispersed leadership, delegated responsibility, expenditure of time and energy, action and risks, frequent meetings, compromise, and combined staff. Finally, several of Grundy et al.'s (2001) findings were not predicted by Hord's model, including strong leadership, a good relationship between collaborators, encouraging school collaborators to develop goals relevant to school needs, rejecting an expert role, mistrust of the university, providing information, inequity between collaborators, providing support, representing self as similar to collaborators, and approaching disagreements amicably.

Limitations were noted with regard to methodology and relevance to the current study. Regarding methodological limitations, only the authors' perceptions were obtained in an empirical way. Furthermore, the school collaborators' perceptions were only given in response to the data obtained from the university representatives, potentially limiting the responses of the school collaborators to those comments that related to university representative perspectives. As such, a holistic approach to data collection and interpretation was not utilized. Regarding relevance to the current research, no community involvement was noted.

*Teacher development in the context of school reform conclusions.*

Again, while no conclusions can be drawn on the basis of a single article, comparisons can be made to other descriptions of collaboration. Some support for Hord's (1986) model of inter-organizational collaboration is noted. Specifically, the model components of shared workload, shared control, and contributions of expertise are supported by Grundy et al.'s (2001) findings. The following model guidelines were not

mentioned: exchanging services, joint planning, shared goals, communication roles and channels, mutual funding, shared ownership, dispersed leadership, delegated responsibility, expenditure of time and energy, action and risks, frequent meetings, compromise, and combined staff.

Additionally, several factors were suggested that were not proposed by Hord (1986). Grundy et al. identified the additional factors of strong leadership, a good relationship between collaborators, encouraging school collaborators to develop goals relevant to school needs, rejecting an expert role, providing information, providing support, representing self as similar to collaborators, and approaching disagreements amicably. A comparison of these factors to other in-service professional learning focused collaborations reveals limited repetition. Specifically, in two of the three in-service professional learning focused collaborations reviewed to this point, the strength of the relationship between collaborators was repeated.

*Collaboration between facilitators and participants.*

Several articles were found that described collaboration between professional learning providers and participants regarding the content and process of a professional learning endeavor. However, only one of these articles was found to systematically examine the strengths, weaknesses, and contributing factors associated with a collaborative professional learning program. This article is included to examine the collaborative processes associated with collaboration between professional learning facilitators and participants.

Clark et al. (1996) present a readers theater script describing a university-school collaboration between four university representatives and six K-12 teachers which was

created to design and implement individualized professional learning programs for each teacher. The collaboration described did not follow a specific model of collaboration. The readers' theater methodology involved obtaining written reflections from each of the 10 collaborators, along with an analysis of two full-day, audio-recorded meetings involving all 10 collaborators. The collaborators described the strength of enjoying a good relationship with each other. Practices that were considered to contribute to this strength included listening, providing support, sharing responsibility, engaging in frequent conversations, sharing the workload, avoiding judgment of one another, and accepting differences in roles. Weaknesses noted included initial suspicion of university personnel and discomfort with collaborators. Only one practice was described as contributing to weaknesses: not providing suggestions.

Comparison of Clark et al.'s (1996) findings with Hord's (1986) model of inter-organizational collaboration reveals limited alignment. The results of the comparison are summarized in Table 2 and detailed in Table 17. Specifically, the identified factor of sharing responsibility appears to support Hord's guideline of delegated responsibility. The identified factor of engaging in frequent conversations suggests support for Hord's guideline of frequent meetings. The identified factor of sharing the workload reflects Hord's guideline of a shared workload. Several of Hord's guidelines were not mentioned by Clark et al., including exchanging services, joint planning, shared goals, communication roles and channels, mutual funding, shared ownership, dispersed leadership, shared control, expenditure of time and energy, action and risks, compromise, combined staff, and contributions of expertise. Additionally, several identified factors were not predicted by Hord, including a good relationship among collaborators, listening,

Table 17

*Clark et al.'s (2005) Support for Hord's (1986) Model of Collaboration*

Category/Guideline	Article Support
<b>Beginning Process</b>	
Exchanging Services	Not discussed
Joint Planning	Not discussed
Shared Goals	Not discussed
<b>Communication</b>	
Communication Roles and Channels	Not discussed
<b>Resources/Ownership</b>	
Shared Workload	Not discussed
Mutual Funding	Not discussed
Shared Ownership	Positive impact: Shared workload
<b>Leadership/Control</b>	
Dispersed Leadership	Not discussed
Delegated Responsibility	Positive impact: Sharing responsibility
Shared Control	Not discussed
<b>Requirements/Characteristics</b>	
Expenditure of Time and Energy	Not discussed
Action and Risks	Not discussed
Frequent Meetings	Positive impact: Frequent conversations
Compromise	Not discussed
Combined Staff	Not discussed
Contributions of Expertise	Not discussed

providing support, avoiding judgment of one another, accepting differences in roles, initial suspicion of university personnel, discomfort with collaborators, and not providing suggestions.

An examination of the study revealed strong methodology. The inclusion of each collaborator in the study sample indicates a holistic approach to data collection and analysis. The study exhibited limited relevance to the current study, however. Specifically, no community involvement was described.

*Collaboration between facilitators and participants conclusions.*

As only one study was reviewed that described collaborative approaches to PL design and implementation involving cooperation between facilitators and participants, no conclusions can be drawn in this area. A comparison to Hord's (1986) model reveals limited alignment. Specifically, the model components of shared workload, delegated responsibility, and frequent meetings were supported by Clark et al. (1996). The following components were not mentioned by Clark et al.: exchanging services, joint planning, shared goals, communication roles and channels, mutual funding, shared ownership, dispersed leadership, shared control, expenditure of time and energy, action and risks, compromise, combined staff, and contributions of expertise.

Furthermore, several additional factors were identified by Clark et al. (1996) that were not proposed by Hord (1986). These include a good relationship among collaborators, listening, providing support, avoiding judgment of one another, accepting differences in roles, initial suspicion of university personnel, discomfort with collaborators, and not providing suggestions. A comparison of these factors with additional factors identified by other in-service professional learning studies reveals that

two of the three in-service professional learning studies identified the strength of the relationship as an important factor.

*Professional learning focused collaborative action research.*

Several articles were found promoting collaborative action research as a vehicle for professional learning for pre-service and in-service educators. Of those articles, only one was identified which systematically examined the strengths, weaknesses, and contributing factors associated with the collaborative processes involved in a specific professional learning focused collaborative action research project. This study addressed professional learning for in-service educators and is included here.

Jaipal and Figg (2011) conducted a qualitative study of unspecified methodology to examine the collaborative processes involved in a university-school collaborative action research project intended to provide professional learning to in-service educators. The collaboration under study included 38 teachers divided into eight research teams. Each team was facilitated by two university faculty members, who were also the authors of the study. Three of the eight teams consisted of teachers from multiple schools; the remaining five teams consisted of single-school collaborations. Data collection methods included individual interviews with an unspecified number of teachers from three of the eight teacher teams, as well as classroom observations, field notes, and document analysis.

The strengths identified in the collaboration included a formal structure for communication, a climate of trust and respect, shared ownership of the research projects, dispersed leadership, strong leadership, and differences in expertise. Contributing factors included frequent meetings, meeting outside of school, sharing the workload, taking

risks, defining roles and responsibilities, providing support, and providing mentoring.

The participants identified the weaknesses of a lack of proximity and insufficient time to collaborate. No practices were mentioned that were perceived to have a negative impact on collaborative process.

Comparison of Jaipal and Figg's (2011) study of professional learning focused collaborative action research with Hord's (1986) model of inter-organizational collaboration are summarized in Table 2 and detailed in Table 18. Several of Hord's model components were supported by Jaipal and Figg's findings. The component of communication roles and channels was supported by the identified factor of a formal structure for communication. The component of shared workload was supported by the identified positive factor of shared workload. The component of shared ownership was supported by the identified factor of shared ownership. The component of dispersed leadership was supported by the identified factor of dispersed leadership. The component of delegated responsibility was supported by the identified factor of defining roles and responsibilities. The component of expenditure of time and energy was supported by the identified negative impact of insufficient time to collaborate. The components of action and risks, frequent meetings, and contributions of expertise were supported by the identified factors of taking risks, frequent meetings, and differences in expertise, respectively. Despite this considerable alignment with Hord's model of inter-organizational collaboration, several model components were not identified as influential by Jaipal and Figg, including exchanging services, joint planning, shared goals, mutual funding, shared control, compromise, and combined staff. Jaipal and Figg also identified several factors that do not appear to align with Hord's model. Specifically, the factors of



Table 18

*Jaipal and Figg's (2011) Support for Hord's (1986) Model of Collaboration*

Category/Guideline	Article Support
<b>Beginning Process</b>	
Exchanging Services	Not discussed
Joint Planning	Not discussed
Shared Goals	Not discussed
<b>Communication</b>	
Communication Roles and Channels	Positive impact: Formal structure for communication
<b>Resources/Ownership</b>	
Shared Workload	Positive impact: Shared workload
Mutual Funding	Not discussed
Shared Ownership	Positive impact: Shared ownership
<b>Leadership/Control</b>	
Dispersed Leadership	Positive impact: Dispersed leadership
Delegated Responsibility	Positive impact: Defining roles and responsibilities
Shared Control	Not discussed
<b>Requirements/Characteristics</b>	
Expenditure of Time and Energy	Negative impact: Insufficient time to collaborate
Action and Risks	Positive impact: Taking risks
Frequent Meetings	Positive impact: Frequent meetings
Compromise	Not discussed
Combined Staff	Not discussed
Contributions of Expertise	Positive impact: Differences in expertise

a climate of trust and respect, meeting outside of the school, providing support, strong leadership, mentoring, and a lack of proximity do not appear to align with Hord's model.

The study exhibited limitations with regard to methodology and relevance to the current study. Regarding methodological limitations, the sampling procedures were not specified. It is possible that the sample was not sufficient to represent the views of all collaborators, resulting in an approach to data collection that was not holistic in design. Regarding relevance to the current study, there was no community involvement.

*Professional learning focused collaborative action research conclusions.*

As only one study was reviewed that described professional learning focused collaborative action research processes, no conclusions can be drawn in this area. A comparison to Hord's (1986) model of inter-organizational collaboration to Jaipal and Figg's (2010) results reveals strong alignment, supporting the components of communication roles and channels, shared workload, shared ownership, dispersed leadership, delegated responsibility, expenditure of time and energy, action and risks, frequent meetings, and contributions of expertise. However, several components were not identified by Jaipal and Figg, including exchanging services, joint planning, shared goals, mutual funding, shared control, compromise, and combined staff.

Several additional factors were identified by Jaipal and Figg (2010) which do not appear to align with Hord's (1986) model. These include the factors of a climate of trust and respect, meeting outside of the school, supporting one another, strong leadership, mentoring, and a lack of proximity. A comparison of these factors with additional factors identified by other in-service professional learning studies reveals that the practice of providing support was identified as important in each article reviewed in this section.

*In-service professional learning focused collaboration conclusions.*

The in-service professional learning focused collaborations described here provide limited support for Hord's (1986) model of inter-organizational collaboration. Specifically, the model guidelines of communication roles and channels, shared workload, shared ownership, dispersed leadership, delegated responsibility, shared control, expenditure of time and energy, action and risk, frequent meetings, and contributions of expertise were supported by one or more of the in-service professional learning focused collaborations examined here. Several model components were not mentioned, however, including exchanging services, joint planning, shared goals, mutual funding, compromise, and combined staff.

Additionally, several strengths, weaknesses, and contributing practices were noted within this area of the literature that were not described in Hord's (1986) model. Grundy et al. (2001) identified the additional factors of strong leadership, a good relationship between collaborators, encouraging school collaborators to develop goals relevant to school needs, rejecting an expert role, providing information, providing support, representing self as similar to collaborators, and approaching disagreements amicably. Clark et al. (1996) identified the additional factors of a good relationship among collaborators, listening, providing support, avoiding judgment of one another, accepting differences in roles, initial suspicion of university personnel, discomfort with collaborators, and not providing suggestions. Finally, Jaipal and Figg (2011) identified the additional factors of a climate of trust and respect, meeting outside of the school, supporting one another, strong leadership, mentoring, and a lack of proximity. A comparison of these factors across articles reveals that only the additional factor of

providing support was identified in each article examined in the area of in-service professional learning.

***Professional learning focused collaboration conclusions.***

Within studies describing the strengths, weaknesses, and contributing practices among professional learning focused collaborations, several of the components of Hord's (1986) model of inter-organizational collaboration received support. These include agreement on an exchange of services, joint planning, shared goals, communication roles and channels, shared workload, mutual funding, shared ownership, dispersed leadership, delegated responsibility, shared control, equitable expenditure of time and energy, action and risks, frequent meetings, and contributions of expertise. Model components that were not supported include compromise and combined staff.

Several factors were also noted across the professional learning focused collaboration articles which were not identified by Hord's (1986) model. Rice (2002) identified the additional factors of a good relationship across organizations, supportive leadership, a positive history with collaborators, encouraging other collaborators to continue with the collaboration, attending social engagements with collaborators, unwillingness of some collaborators to collaborate, turnover in school-based collaborators, poor relationships between and within organizations, unsupportive leadership, prior negative history with collaborators, and attempting to assert dominance. Marlow et al. (2005) identified the additional factors of the relationship between collaborators, attempting to understand the perspective of other collaborators, introducing collaborators as equals, providing feedback on progress, answering questions, and providing assistance. Coronel et al. (2003) identified the additional factors of a mix of

experience among collaborators, the relationship between collaborators, treating all suggestions equally, listening, providing suggestions, and providing assistance. Grundy et al. (2001) identified the additional factors of strong leadership, a good relationship between collaborators, encouraging school collaborators to develop goals relevant to school needs, rejecting an expert role, providing information, providing support, representing self as similar to collaborators, and approaching disagreements amicably. Clark et al. (1996) identified the additional factors of a good relationship among collaborators, listening, providing support, avoiding judgment of one another, accepting differences in roles, initial suspicion of university personnel, discomfort with collaborators, and not providing suggestions. Finally, Jaipal and Figg (2011) identified the additional factors of a climate of trust and respect, meeting outside of the school, supporting one another, strong leadership, mentoring, and a lack of proximity. Among these factors, only the strength of the relationship between collaborators and equity among collaborators were noted in the majority of the studies examined.

### **General Inter-Organizational Collaboration Conclusions**

A comparison of the studies summarized in this literature review to Hord's (1986) model of inter-organizational collaboration reveals support for each of the following model components: exchanging services, joint planning, shared goals, communication roles and channels, shared workload, mutual funding, shared ownership, dispersed leadership, delegated responsibility, shared control, expenditure of time and energy, action and risks, frequent meetings, compromise, and contributions of expertise. The model component of combined staff was not mentioned by the articles reviewed in this chapter. Furthermore, no guideline was cited as significant by each study examined, and

only the component of shared workload was mentioned the majority of the articles reviewed. As stated previously, this limited alignment suggests that Hord's model provides some of the components necessary for developing and maintaining a successful collaboration but is not comprehensive or exhaustive. It also suggests the possibility that some of the components identified by Hord might not be necessary for developing or maintaining inter-organizational collaborations.

The studies reviewed also revealed several factors that were not proposed by Hord (1986). Examination of these factors indicates that no factor is repeated in each article. Furthermore, only the factor of the relationship between collaborators was repeated as a strength in the majority of the articles reviewed. In contrast to the dearth of shared strengths, weaknesses, and contributing practices among these articles, an abundance of new information was provided by each study. On average, each article contributed five variables that were not identified by Hord's model of inter-organizational collaboration, a rate that has not yet decreased over time when the studies are examined chronologically. Of these, an average of three factors was not repeated in any other study. This persistent influx of new information provides strong support for the continued study of inter-organizational and PL-focused collaborations. Furthermore, no study was found to describe a collaboration between a university, a community agency, and one or more K-12 schools created to design and implement evidence-based, in-service PL programs to K-12 educators. As such, a comprehensive qualitative study of this type of collaboration is warranted and could contribute significantly to the literature in this area.

### **Research-Based Model of Inter-Organizational Collaboration**

An in-depth, qualitative study of an in-service professional learning focused university-school-community collaboration would be improved if grounded in a research-based model of inter-organizational collaboration. Systematic comparison of Hord's (1986) non-empirical model of inter-organizational collaboration to research findings regarding collaborative process has revealed support for several of Hord's guidelines as well as a plethora of additional collaborative factors. Synthesis of Hord's model with these additional factors would result in a research-based model of inter-organizational collaboration which would facilitate further study of the topic. This synthesis will be presented here and summarized in Tables 19 and 20.

#### **Beginning process.**

##### *Original guidelines.*

Hord (1986) originally proposed the guidelines of exchanging services, joint planning, and shared goals under the category of beginning process. Exchanging services was defined as follows: organizations should agree upon an exchange of products or services, and each organization should offer the other a product or service. The joint planning guideline stated that organizations should join forces to plan and execute the design of a shared project. Furthermore, personnel from each organization should be involved in developing the nature of the collaboration. The guideline of shared goals stated that collaborators should develop shared goals for the collaboration. Organizations should also agree on projected results, outcomes, products, and services.

Table 19.

*Synthesis of Hord's (1986) Model of Inter-Organizational Collaboration and  
Additional Factors Found in Literature*

Category/Guideline	Definition/Additional Factors
<b>Beginning Process</b>	
Exchanging services	Organizations should agree upon an exchange of products or services. Each organization should offer the other a product or service.
Joint planning	Organizations should join forces to plan and execute the design of a shared project. Personnel from each organization should be involved in developing the nature of the collaboration.
Shared goals	Collaborators should develop shared goals for the collaboration. Organizations should agree on projected results, outcomes, products, and services.
<i>Relevant goals</i>	<p><i>Collaborators should develop goals that are relevant to each organization. This expands the guideline of shared goals as simple agreement upon goals does not ensure relevant goals.</i></p> <p><i>Accounts for the following additional factors:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>Relevance of collaboration to school needs (SC1)</i></li> <li><i>Encouraging relevant goals (ISPL1)</i></li> </ul>
<i>Clarifying focus</i>	<p><i>Collaborators should take time to clarify the focus of the collaboration. Care should be taken to ensure the understanding of each collaborator regarding the goals and purpose of the collaboration.</i></p> <p><i>Accounts for the following additional factors:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>Structure/focus (SC1)</i></li> <li><i>Abstract purpose (SC1, US4)</i></li> <li><i>Clarifying goals (UC1, US4)</i></li> <li><i>Reviewing goals (UC1)</i></li> </ul>



	<p><i>Unfocused conversations (US2)</i></p> <p><i>Unfocused efforts (US2)</i></p> <p><i>Lack of focus (US3)</i></p> <p><i>Specific goals (USC2)</i></p> <p><i>Concrete actions (USC2)</i></p> <p><i>Focusing discussions (US4)</i></p>
<p><i>Securing commitment from collaborators and supervisors</i></p>	<p><i>Commitment should be expressly secured from both the collaborators and the collaborators' supervisors within their given organizations. Securing commitment from organizational supervisors should decrease the competing demands on collaborators.</i></p> <p><i>Accounts for the following additional factors:</i></p> <p><i>Limited outside support (SC1)</i></p> <p><i>Competing demands (SC1)</i></p> <p><i>University support (UC1)</i></p> <p><i>Commitment to the collaboration (UC1)</i></p> <p><i>Unwillingness to collaborate (PSPL1)</i></p>
<p>Communication</p>	
<p>Communication roles and channels</p>	<p>Collaborators should establish defined roles and channels for communication to facilitate clear and accurate conveyance of information.</p>
<p><i>Listening</i></p>	<p><i>Collaborators should listen to the opinions and suggestions of other collaborators to ensure accurate understanding of their views.</i></p> <p><i>Accounts for the following additional factors:</i></p> <p><i>Listening (USC1, USC2, PSPL3, ISPL2)</i></p>
<p><i>Asking questions</i></p>	<p><i>Collaborators should ask questions of each other. They should seek the opinions and advice of other collaborators to facilitate open communication.</i></p> <p><i>Accounts for the following additional factors:</i></p> <p><i>Asking for suggestions (US2)</i></p>

<i>Voicing opinions</i>	<p><i>Asking questions (US4, USC1, USC2)</i></p> <p><i>Collaborators should voice opinions regarding possible goals, suggestions, actions, and decisions. Care should be taken to use clear language and avoid jargon.</i></p> <p><i>Accounts for the following additional factors:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>Use of jargon (US1)</i></li> <li><i>Providing suggestions (US2, PSPL3)</i></li> <li><i>Voicing opinions (US4)</i></li> <li><i>Not answering questions (US4)</i></li> <li><i>Giving input (USC1)</i></li> <li><i>Avoiding voicing opinions (USC1, USC2)</i></li> <li><i>Answering questions (PSPL2)</i></li> <li><i>Providing information (ISPL1)</i></li> <li><i>Not providing suggestions (ISPL2)</i></li> </ul>
<i>Structure for expressing and resolving conflict</i>	<p><i>A communication structure for expressing and resolving conflicts should be established. Emphasis should be placed on approaching disagreements with openness and acceptance.</i></p> <p><i>Accounts for the following additional factors:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>Amicable disagreements (SC1, US2, ISPL1)</i></li> <li><i>Accepting criticism (US1)</i></li> <li><i>Challenging preconceived ideas (US4)</i></li> <li><i>Avoiding judgment (ISPL2)</i></li> </ul>
<b>Resources/Ownership</b>	<p><b>Shared workload</b> Each organization should contribute staff time, resources, and capabilities. Contributions from each organization should be defined during the planning process.</p> <p><b>Mutual funding</b> Organizations should work together to obtain funding, possibly from an outside source, for the express purpose of supporting the collaboration.</p> <p><b>Shared ownership</b> Shared ownership of the collaboration should develop over</p>

	time.
<i>Providing assistance</i>	<p><i>Collaborators should provide assistance to one another when engaging in collaborative tasks. This can be differentiated from the guideline of shared workload in that the emphasis is not on an equitable distribution of work between organizations but on individual collaborators providing assistance within and across organizations. This can be differentiated from delegated responsibility, as well, in that the individuals are not assuming responsibility for tasks that will be accomplished independently.</i></p> <p><i>Accounts for the following additional factors:</i></p> <p><i>Providing assistance (PSPL2, PSPL3)</i></p> <p><i>Providing support (ISPL1, ISPL2, ISPL3)</i></p>
Leadership/Control	
Dispersed leadership	Collaborative leadership should be dispersed among the organizations.
Delegated responsibility	Responsibility for collaborative tasks should be delegated among the collaborators. Individuals should take initiative in assuming responsibility.
Shared control	Collaborators should assume shared, mutual control of the collaboration to facilitate congruent effort in accomplishing collaborative tasks.
<i>Strong and supportive leadership</i>	<p><i>The identified leaders within the collaboration should provide support for collaborators by demonstrating effective collaborative techniques, negotiating with organizational supervisors for time and resources, providing order and structure for collaborative tasks, and encouraging equitable collaborator participation in discussions and decision making.</i></p> <p><i>Accounts for the following additional factors:</i></p> <p><i>Strong leadership (UC1, ISPL1, ISPL3)</i></p>

	<p><i>Guiding leadership (US4)</i></p> <p><i>Lack of guidance regarding research practices (US4)</i></p> <p><i>Supportive leadership (PSPL1)</i></p> <p><i>Unsupportive leadership (PSPL1)</i></p> <p><i>Providing mentoring (ISPL3)</i></p>
<i>Equitable value</i>	<p><i>Each collaborator enjoys equitable value within the collaboration. As such, each collaborator is treated as an equal, and suggestions and opinions contributed by each collaborator are given equal weight.</i></p> <p><i>Accounts for the following additional variables:</i></p> <p><i>Competition (US1)</i></p> <p><i>Insider status (US2)</i></p> <p><i>Inequity between collaborators (US4, ISPL1)</i></p> <p><i>Using suggestions from each collaborator (USC1)</i></p> <p><i>Avoiding the use of titles (USC2)</i></p> <p><i>Attempting to assert dominance (PSPL1)</i></p> <p><i>Introducing collaborators as equals (PSPL2)</i></p> <p><i>Treating all suggestions equally (PSPL3)</i></p> <p><i>Rejecting an expert role (ISPL1)</i></p>
Requirements/Characteristics	
Expenditure of time & energy	Each organization should devote time and energy to the collaboration.
Action and risks	Each organization should take action and risks within the collaboration.
Frequent meetings	Frequent large and small meetings between collaborators should be arranged.
Compromise	Compromise is a necessity. Various trade-offs must be made by each organization.
Combined staff	A combined staff, in which representatives from each organization are present, should be developed. A staff trade or loan may be made to accomplish this goal.

Contributions of expertise	Each organization should contribute different kinds of expertise, as this is a primary motivator for collaborating.
<i>Relationship/Rapport (Organizing Category)</i>	
<i>Establishing rapport</i>	<p><i>Care should be taken to establish rapport among collaborators. Time should be spent prior to engaging in planning or collaborative tasks becoming acquainted with other collaborators.</i></p> <p><i>Accounts for the following additional factors:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>Good relationship (SC1, SC2, UC1, US3, PSPL1, PSPL2, PSPL3, ISPL1, ISPL2)</i></li> <li><i>Climate of trust and respect (US1, ISPL3)</i></li> <li><i>Poor relationship within organizations (PSPL1)</i></li> <li><i>Poor relationship across organizations (PSPL1)</i></li> <li><i>Discomfort with collaborators (ISPL2)</i></li> <li><i>Mistrust of university (ISPL1)</i></li> </ul>
<i>Requesting and providing reassurance</i>	<p><i>Collaborators should request reassurance from other collaborators in times of uncertainty regarding the collaboration. Collaborators should also provide reassurance during times of uncertainty.</i></p> <p><i>Accounts for the following additional factors:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>Asking for reassurance (US2)</i></li> <li><i>Providing reassurance (US2)</i></li> <li><i>Expressing desire to work together (US2)</i></li> <li><i>Encouraging others to continue with the collaboration (PSPL1)</i></li> </ul>
<i>Social engagements</i>	<p><i>Collaborators should arrange and attend social engagements with other collaborators from within and across organizations to facilitate interactions removed from the potential stressors affiliated with the collaborative tasks.</i></p> <p><i>Accounts for the following additional factors:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>Social engagements (PSPL1)</i></li> </ul>

<i>Addressing negative history if applicable</i>	<p><i>Meeting outside the school (ISPL3)</i></p> <p><i>Collaborators should address the possible harmful effects of previous negative experiences with collaboration. Experiences should be addressed regarding previous collaborations with different partners as well as previous collaborations with current partners. Any mistrust of organizational representatives should be addressed.</i></p> <p><i>Accounts for the following additional factors:</i></p>
	<i>Prior positive history (PSPL1)</i>
	<i>Prior negative history (PSPL1)</i>
	<i>Initial suspicion (ISPL2)</i>
<i>Attempting to understand the experience of fellow collaborators</i>	<p><i>Collaborators should attempt to understand the perspective of other collaborators. Care should be taken to understand experiences and concerns specific to working within the culture of different organizations. Collaborators should recognize and accept similarities and differences between themselves and other collaborators.</i></p> <p><i>Accounts for the following additional factors:</i></p>
	<i>Attempting to understand the perspective of other collaborators (UC1, PSPL2)</i>
	<i>Representing self as similar (ISPL1)</i>
	<i>Accepting difference in roles (ISPL2)</i>

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Table 20.

*Support for Synthesis of Hord's (1986) Model of Inter-Organizational Collaboration and Additional Factors Found in Literature*

Category/Guideline	Article Support															
	SC		UC		US				USC		PSPL			ISPL		
	1	2	1	1	2	3	4	1	2	1	2	3	1	2	3	
<b>Beginning Process</b>																
Exchanging Services															*	
Joint Planning															*	
Shared Goals		*	*				*		*	*						
<i>Relevant Goals</i>	*														*	
<i>Clarifying Focus</i>	*		*		*	*	*		*							
<i>Securing Commitment</i>	*		*									*				
<b>Communication</b>																
Communication Roles and Channels				*		*		*		*		*			*	
<i>Listening</i>								*	*			*			*	
<i>Asking Questions</i>					*		*	*	*							
<i>Voicing Opinions</i>				*	*		*	*	*		*	*	*	*	*	
<i>Structure for Expressing and Resolving Conflict</i>	*			*	*		*					*	*		*	
<b>Resources/Ownership</b>																
Shared Workload	*	*				*		*			*		*	*	*	
Mutual Funding	*	*								*						
Shared Ownership															*	
<i>Providing Assistance</i>											*	*	*	*	*	
<b>Leadership/Control</b>																
Dispersed Leadership				*					*						*	
Delegated Responsibility			*				*							*	*	
Shared Control				*		*		*	*	*		*	*			

	SC		UC		US			USC		PSPL			ISPL		
	1	2	1	1	2	3	4	1	2	1	2	3	1	2	3
<i>Strong and Supportive Leadership</i>			*				*			*			*		*
<i>Equitable Value</i>				*			*			*			*		*
Requirements/Characteristics															
Expenditure of Time and Energy							*			*					*
Action and Risks							*								*
Frequent Meetings	*		*				*		*			*		*	*
Compromise		*							*						
Combined Staff															
Contributions of Expertise						*	*	*					*		*
<i>Relationship/Rapport</i>															
<i>Establishing Rapport</i>	*	*	*	*		*				*	*	*	*	*	*
<i>Requesting and Providing</i>					*					*					
<i>Reassurance</i>															
<i>Social Engagements</i>										*					*
<i>Addressing Negative History if Applicable</i>										*			*		
<i>Attempting to Understand the Experience of Collaborators</i>				*						*	*			*	

*Note:* School-Community (SC) – 1= Deslandes (2006), 2= Baker & Martin (2008); University-Community (UC) – 1= Buys & Bursnall (2007); University-School (US) – 1= Weinstein et al. (1991), 2= Frankham & Howes (2006), 3= Brandon et al. (2008), 4= Platteel et al. (2010); University-School-Community (USC) – 1= Robertson (2007), 2= Miller & Hafner (2008); Pre-Service PL-Focused Collaborations (PSPL) – 1= Rice (2002), 2= Marlow et al. (2005), 3= Coronel et al. (2003); In-Service PL-Focused Collaborations 1= Grundy et al. (2001), 2= Clark et al. (1996), 3= Jaipal & Figg (2011).



*Additional guidelines.*

The following additional guidelines are proposed here within the category of beginning process: relevant goals, clarifying focus, and securing commitment from collaborators and supervisors.

*Relevant goals.*

The guideline of relevant goals will be defined as follows. Collaborators should develop goals that are relevant to each organization. This expands upon the guideline of shared goals as simple agreement upon goals does not ensure relevant goals. This guideline accounts for the following factors not addressed by Hord's (1986) model: relevance of the collaboration to school needs (Deslandes, 2006) and encouraging relevant goals (Grundy et al., 2001).

*Clarifying focus.*

The guideline of clarifying goals will be as follows. Collaborators should take time to clarify the focus of the collaboration. Care should be taken to ensure the understanding of each collaborator regarding the goals and purpose of the collaboration. This guideline accounts for the following additional factors: structure/focus and abstract purpose (Deslandes, 2006; Platteel et al., 2010), clarifying and reviewing goals (Buys & Bursnall, 2007; Platteel et al., 2010), unfocused conversations and efforts (Frankham & Howes, 2006), lack of focus (Brandon et al., 2008), specific goals and concrete actions (Miller & Hafner, 2008), and focusing discussions (Platteel et al., 2010).

*Securing commitment from collaborators and supervisors.*

The guideline of securing commitment from collaborators and supervisors will be operationalized as follows. Commitment should be expressly secured from both the collaborators and the collaborators' supervisors within their given organizations.

Securing commitment from organizational supervisors should decrease the competing demands on collaborators. This guideline accounts for the following additional factors: limited outside support and competing demands (Deslandes, 2006), university support and collaborator commitment to the collaboration (Buys & Bursnall, 2007), unwillingness to collaborate (Rice, 2002), and not providing suggestions (Clark et al, 1996).

### **Communication.**

#### ***Original guidelines.***

The category of communication within Hord's (1986) model contained the guideline of communication roles and channels, which was defined as follows.

Collaborators should establish defined roles and channels for communication to facilitate clear and accurate conveyance of information.

#### ***Additional guidelines.***

The following additional guidelines are proposed here within the category of communication: listening, asking questions, voicing opinions, and structure for expressing and resolving conflicts.

#### ***Listening.***

The guideline of listening is defined as follows. Collaborators should listen to the opinions and suggestions of other collaborators to ensure accurate understanding of their views. This guideline accounts for the following additional factors: listening (Robertson, 2007; Miller & Hafner, 2008; Coronel et al., 2003; Clark et al., 1996).

*Asking questions.*

The guideline of asking questions is defined as follows. Collaborators should ask questions of each other. They should seek the opinions and advice of other collaborators to facilitate open communication. This guideline accounts for the following additional factors: asking for suggestions (Frankham & Howes, 2006; Shank, 2005) and asking questions (Platteel et al., 2010; Robertson, 2007; Miller & Hafner, 2008).

*Voicing opinions.*

The guideline of voicing opinions is defined as follows. Collaborators should voice opinions regarding possible goals, suggestions, actions, and decisions. Care should be taken to use clear language and avoid jargon. This guideline accounts for the following additional factors: use of jargon (Weinstein et al., 1991), providing suggestions (Frankham & Howes, 2006; Coronel et al., 2003), voicing opinions (Platteel et al., 2010), not answering questions (Platteel et al., 2010), giving input (Robertson, 2007), avoiding voicing opinions (Robertson, 2007; Miller & Hafner, 2008), answering questions (Marlow et al., 2005), and providing information (Grundy et al., 2001).

*Structure for expressing and resolving conflict.*

The guideline of structure for expressing and resolving conflict is operationalized as follows. A communication structure for expressing and resolving conflicts should be established. Emphasis should be placed on approaching disagreements with openness and acceptance. This guideline accounts for the following additional factors: amicable disagreements (Deslandes, 2006; Frankham & Howes, 2006; Grundey et al., 2001), accepting criticism (Weinstein et al., 1991), challenging preconceived ideas (Platteel et al., 2010), and avoiding judgment (Clark et al., 1996).

**Resources/ownership.*****Original guidelines.***

Hord's (1986) category of resources/ownership contained the original guidelines of shared workload, mutual funding, and shared ownership. Under the guideline of shared workload, Hord stressed the importance that each organization contributes staff time, resources, and capabilities. Contributions from each organization should be defined during the planning process, according to this guideline. The guideline of mutual funding stated that organizations should work together to obtain funding, possibly from an outside source, for the express purpose of supporting the collaboration. The guideline of shared ownership stated that shared ownership of the collaboration should develop over time.

***Additional guidelines.***

The following additional guideline is proposed here under the category of resources/ownership: providing assistance.

***Providing assistance.***

The guideline of providing assistance has been added to the category of resources/ownership and is defined as follows. Collaborators should provide assistance to one another when engaging in collaborative tasks. This can be differentiated from the guideline of shared workload in that the emphasis is not on an equitable distribution of work between organizations but on individual collaborators providing assistance within and across organizations. This can be differentiated from delegated responsibility, as well, in that the individuals are not assuming responsibility for tasks that will be accomplished independently. This guideline accounts for the following additional factors: providing assistance (Marlow et al., 2005; Coronel et al., 2003) and providing support (Grundy et al., 2001; Clark et al., 1996; Jaipal & Figg, 2011).

**Leadership/control.*****Original guidelines.***

Hord's (1986) category of leadership/control contained the original guidelines of dispersed leadership, delegated responsibility, and shared control. According to the guideline of dispersed leadership, collaborative leadership should be dispersed among the organizations. The guideline of delegated responsibility stated that responsibility for collaborative tasks should be delegated among the collaborators, and individuals should take initiative in assuming responsibility. The guideline for shared control stated that collaborators should assume shared, mutual control of the collaboration to facilitate congruent effort in accomplishing collaborative tasks.

***Additional guidelines.***

The following additional guidelines are proposed here within the category of leadership/control: strong and supportive leadership and equitable value.

***Strong and supportive leadership.***

The guideline of strong and supportive leadership is defined as follows. The identified leaders within the collaboration should provide support for collaborators by demonstrating effective collaborative techniques, negotiating with organizational supervisors for time and resources, providing order and structure for collaborative tasks, and encouraging equitable collaborator participation in discussions and decision making. This guideline accounts for the following additional factors: strong leadership (Buys & Bursnall, 2007; Grundy et al., 2001; Jaipal & Figg, 2011), guiding leadership (Platteel et al., 2010), lack of guidance regarding research practices (Platteel et al., 2010), supportive and unsupportive leadership (Rice, 2002), and providing mentoring (Jaipal & Figg, 2011).

*Equitable value.*

The guideline of equitable value states that each collaborator enjoys equitable value within the collaboration. As such, each collaborator is treated as an equal, and suggestions and opinions contributed by each collaborator are given equal weight. This guideline accounts for the following additional factors: competition (Deslandes, 2006), insider status (Frankham & Howes, 2006), inequity between collaborators (Platteel et al., 2010; Grundy et al., 2001), using suggestions from each collaborator (Robertson, 2007), avoiding the use of titles (Miller & Hafner, 2008), attempting to assert dominance (Rice, 2002), introducing collaborators as equals (Marlow et al., 2005), treating all suggestions equally (Coronel et al., 2003), and rejecting an expert role (Grundy et al., 2001).

**Requirements/characteristics.***Original guidelines.*

Hord's (1986) category of requirements/characteristics included the guidelines of expenditure of time and energy, action and risks, frequent meetings, compromise, combined staff, and contributions of expertise. The guideline of expenditure of time and energy stated that each organization should devote time and energy to the collaboration. According to the guideline of action and risks, each organization should take action and risks within the collaboration. The guideline of frequent meetings stated that frequent large and small meetings between collaborators should be arranged. The guideline of compromise stated that compromise is a necessity and that various trade-offs must be made by each organization. The guideline of combined staff stated that a combined staff, in which representatives from each organization are present, should be developed. According to Hord, a staff trade or loan may be made to accomplish this goal. Finally, the

guideline of contributions of expertise stated that each organization should contribute different kinds of expertise, as this is a primary motivator for collaborating.

***Additional guidelines.***

No additional guidelines are proposed here within the category of requirements/characteristics.

**Relationship/rapport.**

The category of relationship/rapport is proposed here as an additional category not originally suggested by Hord (1986).

***Additional guidelines.***

The category of relationship/rapport contains the guidelines of establishing rapport, requesting and providing reassurance, social engagements, addressing negative history if applicable, and attempting to understand the experience of fellow collaborators.

***Establishing rapport.***

The guideline of establishing rapport states that care should be taken to establish rapport among collaborators. Some time should be spent prior to engaging in planning or collaborative tasks becoming acquainted with other collaborators. This guideline accounts for the following additional factors: good relationship (Deslandes, 2006; Baker & Martin, 2008; Buys & Bursnall, 2007; Brandon et al., 2008; Rice, 2002; Marlow et al., 2005; Coronel et al., 2003; Grundy et al., 2001; Clark et al., 1996), a climate of trust and respect (Weinstein et al., 1991; Jaipal & Figg, 2011), poor relationship within and across organizations (Rice, 2002), mistrust of university representatives (Grundy et al., 2001), and discomfort with collaborators (Clark et al., 1996).

*Requesting and providing reassurance.*

The guideline of requesting and providing reassurance states that collaborators should request reassurance from other collaborators in times of uncertainty regarding the collaboration. Collaborators should also provide reassurance during times of uncertainty. This guideline accounts for the following additional factors: asking for and providing reassurance (Frakham & Howes, 2006), expressing the desire to work together (Frankham & Howes, 2006), and encouraging others to continue with the collaboration (Rice, 2002).

*Social engagements.*

The guideline of social engagements states that collaborators should arrange and attend social engagements with other collaborators from within and across organizations to facilitate interactions removed from the potential stressors affiliated with the collaborative tasks. This guideline accounts for the following additional factor: social engagements (Rice, 2002; Jaipal & Figg, 2011).

*Addressing negative history if applicable.*

The guideline of addressing negative history if applicable is stated as follows. Collaborators should address the possible harmful effects of previous negative experiences with collaboration. Experiences should be addressed regarding previous collaborations with different partners as well as previous collaborations with current partners. Any mistrust of organizational representatives should be addressed. This guideline accounts for the following additional factors: prior positive or negative history (Rice 2002) and initial suspicion of collaborators (Clark et al., 1996).



*Attempting to understand the experience of fellow collaborators.*

The guideline of attempting to understand the experience of fellow collaborators is proposed as follows. Collaborators should attempt to understand the perspective of other collaborators. Care should be taken to understand experiences and concerns specific to working within the culture of different organizations. Collaborators should recognize and accept similarities and differences between themselves and other collaborators. This guideline accounts for the following additional factors: attempting to understand the perspective of other collaborators (Buys & Bursnall, 2007; Marlow et al., 2005), representing self as similar (Grundy et al., 2001), and accepting differences in roles (Clark et al., 1996).

**Research-based inter-organizational model conclusions.**

The research-based model of inter-organizational collaboration proposed here combines Hord's (1986) model of inter-organizational collaboration with additional factors identified in studies systematically analyzing the strengths, weaknesses, and contributing factors of inter- and intra-organizational collaborations within the fields of education and PL. This research-based model accounts for 85 of the 97 individual factors identified by the studies reviewed here that were not suggested by Hord. Furthermore, all of the additional factors identified by Buys and Bursnall (2007), Weinstein et al. (1991), Frankham and Howes (2006), Robertson (2007), Grundy et al. (2001), and Clark et al. (1996) are accounted for within the revised research-based model of inter-organizational collaboration. The remaining 12 additional factors are as follows. Deslandes (2006) identified the unaccounted for additional factors of resistance to theory and turnover in school personnel. Baker and Martin (2008) identified the unaccounted for additional

factor of self-organization. Brandon et al. (2008) identified the unaccounted for additional factor of lack of proximity. Miller and Hafner (2008) identified the unaccounted for additional factors of locations of meetings and difficulty identifying goals. Rice (2002) identified the unaccounted for additional factor of turnover of school-based personnel. Marlow et al. (2005) identified the unaccounted for additional factor of providing feedback on progress. Coronel et al. (2003) identified the unaccounted for additional factor of a mix of experience among collaborators. Finally, Jaipal and Figg (2011) identified the additional unaccounted for factor of lack of proximity. These factors are summarized in Table 21.

### **Appropriate Qualitative Methodology**

In order to obtain a clear, detailed representation of the strengths, weaknesses, and contributing factors associated with a university-school-community collaboration designed to provide evidence-based, in-service professional learning to K-12 educators, a qualitative methodology that involves an in-depth study of the phenomenon is warranted. As such, the methodology of transcendental phenomenology is well-suited to address this topic.

#### **Transcendental phenomenology methodology.**

Transcendental phenomenology is a methodology intended to identify the essence or meaning of an experience, event, or thing (Moustakas, 1994). The transcendental phenomenologist utilizes data collection methods designed to elicit descriptions of the phenomenon under study from people who have experience with that phenomenon. The sampling procedures and data analysis methods are conducted in such a way as to produce an objective, well-rounded, and comprehensive description of the

Table 21.

*Additional Factors not Addressed in Research-Based Model of Inter-Organizational Collaboration*

Article	Strengths/Helpful Practices	Weaknesses/Harmful Practices
SC1		Resistance to theory Turnover in school personnel
SC2	Self-organization	
UC1	All factors accounted for	
US1	All factors accounted for	
US2	All factors accounted for	
US3		Lack of proximity
US4		
USC1	All factors accounted for	
USC2	Locations	Difficulty identifying goals
PSPL1		Turnover
PSPL2	Providing feedback on progress	
PSPL3	Mix of experience	
ISPL1	All factors accounted for	
ISPL2	All factors accounted for	
ISPL3		Lack of proximity

phenomenon by combining multiple perspectives of that phenomenon, resulting in an understanding of the phenomenon's essence. As such, the methodology is well suited for studying a phenomenon about which little is known, such as the experience of collaborating in a university-community-school partnership to create and facilitate evidence-based, in-service professional learning.

### **Transcendental philosophy.**

Transcendental phenomenology is rooted in the philosophical writings of René Descartes and Edmund Husserl, who sought to ascertain the relationship between reality and perception (Creswell, 1998; Moustakas, 1994). The conclusions drawn by these philosophers essentially assert that while a true reality exists, we can only understand this reality through our own perception. Our perception of this phenomenon or object is referred to as *noema*. How we perceive this phenomenon and assign meaning to it is *noesis*. Our mind interacts with the world around us through a constant interplay between noema and noesis, or perception and interpretation. This interaction is referred to as the *intentionality of consciousness*, and it is this construct that allows us to know about the world.

We are limited as individuals, however, to only understanding our own intentionality of consciousness regarding a phenomenon (Moustakas, 1994). This understanding might or might not convey the full reality of the object, as it is developed from only one perspective. Therefore, the transcendental phenomenologist seeks to extract the intentionality of consciousness regarding a phenomenon from a variety of people who have experienced that phenomenon. Each new perspective provides another set of details that contribute to the whole, shaping and refining our understanding until the phenomenon becomes clear. This process provides *intersubjective validity*, or credibility of the description of the phenomenon which is derived through the utilization of multiple descriptions from multiple perspectives.

Moustakas (1994) presents an analogy that conveys this process in a clear and concrete way. I will expand on that analogy here. Imagine the existence of a large oak

tree on a hill at sunrise. The tree is an object that exists in reality, but we can only know of it through our perceptions. I am standing on the east side of the tree. Because the sun is at my back, I see the texture in the brown bark of the trunk and the glint of yellow-pink light on the green, waxy leaves. I touch the tree to feel its warmth from the sun. The beauty of the tree fills me with wonder, and I feel inspired and energized. This is the noema of my experience. I generate an understanding of the tree through sight and touch. I also interpret this experience through knowledge I have previously attained regarding trees. As I study the tree, I mentally compare it to other trees I have seen (for example, the oak tree that was struck by lightning in the front yard of my childhood home). I note the differences in appearance from other trees such as the heightened color and visible texture. I note the way that viewing this tree at sunrise makes me feel (inspired and energized), which is different from the way other trees have made me feel. As I develop an understanding of this tree, I assign meaning to the tree and the experience that is distinct from my experiences of viewing other trees at other times of day. I decide that the tree itself is beautiful, inspiring, and energizing. This meaning is the noesis. For me, the intentionality of consciousness involves the interpretation of the color and texture of the tree as things of wonder, which leads to my belief that the tree at sunrise is beautiful, inspiring, and energizing.

You are standing on the opposite side of the tree. The darkness of the morning and the glare of the rising sun cast the tree into shadow. You see only the silhouette of the leaves and trunk. Perhaps because the texture and color are not visible to you, you focus on other details. You notice the shape of the tree and the stillness of its branches. You note that the silhouette prevents you from detecting imperfections in the surface of the

bark. You feel calm and at rest as you view the tree. This is the noema of your experience. Like me, you compare this tree to other trees you have seen (for example, the crepe myrtle in full bloom in your neighbor's yard). You also decide that the tree is beautiful, but unlike me, you decide that it is a calming and peaceful tree. This is the noesis of your experience. The intentionality of consciousness for you involves the interpretation of pure shape and stillness as the embodiment of beauty and peace.

If either of these interpretations were taken alone, the understanding of the tree as it exists in reality would result in a limited and ultimately incomplete picture of the tree itself. The combination of our experiences must be utilized to obtain a clearer understanding of the phenomenon of the tree at sunrise. Furthermore, it must be considered that one who views the tree from the north or south, where part of the tree is illuminated and part is in shadow, might assign yet another meaning to the experience, further enhancing our understanding of the reality of the tree. They might also interpret the tree in different ways because of the different trees that they have experienced. It must also be noted that these descriptions only tell us of the tree *at sunrise*. If we were to understand the tree as it exists at all times, we would necessarily gather more perceptions and interpretations of the tree from different perspectives taken at different times of day.

### **Stages of transcendental phenomenology.**

Transcendental phenomenology involves the recursive application of data collection and analysis, resulting in a non-linear research process. There are several distinct stages of transcendental phenomenology, including Epoche, Phenomenological Reduction, Imaginative Variation, and Synthesis.

***Epoche.***

Epoche refers to the process the researcher undertakes to understand and eliminate biases and preconceived ideas regarding the phenomenon under study (Creswell, 1998; Moustakas, 1994). The researcher does this by remembering his or her own experiences with the phenomenon before analyzing data. These can be personal experiences or events the researcher has read about or witnessed. These experiences are often written down and examined repeatedly, with newly remembered details added as they enter consciousness. The researcher attempts to acknowledge the meanings he or she has assigned to the phenomenon so that they might be set aside. This process is necessary to allow the researcher to view the descriptions given by study participants as they truly are and not as the researcher might otherwise interpret them.

***Phenomenological reduction.***

In the stage of phenomenological reduction, the researcher reduces the description of the phenomenon provided by a study participant into the noematic or *textural* descriptions of the phenomenon (Moustakas, 1994). This first requires the researcher to engage in *horizontalization*, determination of the *invariant constituents*, and clustering and thematizing of the invariant constituents. Horizontalization refers to the process of identifying every statement that is relevant to the phenomenon under study. The invariant constituents represent those horizontal statements that are significant, non-repetitive, and non-overlapping. When the invariant constituents have been determined, they are clustered into categories, resulting in themes. Each participant's description of the phenomenon is examined to determine the presence of these themes and coded accordingly, allowing the researcher to ascertain the nature of that participant's

experience with the phenomenon. Those statements identified as relevant to the study are then examined for noematic descriptions of the phenomenon. These descriptions are created for each participant, resulting in individual textural descriptions of the phenomenon under study.

***Imaginative variation.***

Imaginative variation is the process of developing noetic or *structural* descriptions of the phenomenon (Moustakas, 1994). The researcher examines each participant's coded statements to generate a structural description of the phenomenon. This involves describing how the phenomenon was experienced as well as the ways in which the participant described the phenomenon in relation to themselves, their prior experiences, and other important variables such as time and relationships with others. These descriptions are also created for each participant, resulting in individual textural descriptions of the phenomenon under study.

***Synthesis.***

After individual textural and structural descriptions have been generated for each participant, the researcher synthesizes the descriptions into a textural-structural description that describes the meaning or essence of the experience for each participant. These individual textural-structural descriptions are then integrated into a composite description of the meanings and essences of the phenomenon which represents the group as a whole.



### **Transcendental phenomenology and professional learning focused inter-organizational collaboration.**

The use of this methodology to study a multi-organizational collaboration would provide a multi-faceted picture of the experience of engaging in this type of collaboration. The perceptions of strengths and weaknesses, as well as contributing factors, could be obtained from each individual involved in the collaboration and combined to create a comprehensive understanding of the process.

### **Literature Review Conclusions**

Factors such as increasing student diversity and needs, as well as increased demands on educators, have resulted in a call for increased collaboration in education in multiple areas of service delivery. Such collaboration may be best met through inter-organizational arrangements in which university, school, and community agency representatives are involved. However, a limited understanding exists of the factors that contribute to successful collaborations, and few models have been proposed to guide the development of such collaborations. Hord (1986) proposes a model of inter-organizational that has not yet been systematically examined. An examination of inter-organizational collaborations in education identified a dearth in the literature on the topic. A comparison of the strengths, weaknesses, and contributing practices identified by these studies to Hord's model of inter-organizational collaboration reveals limited alignment. Furthermore, each study identified factors perceived to be important to collaborative process that were not proposed by Hord, suggesting the need for further study.

One area of education in which inter-organizational collaboration could be particularly beneficial is the practice of professional learning for pre-service and in-

service educators. Increasing demands on educators and high standards for quality professional learning highlight the need for a concentrated, inter-organizational effort in this area. An examination of factors identified as important in professional learning-focused collaborations revealed a dearth in the literature on this topic, as well. A comparison of the results of these studies to Hord's (1986) model of inter-organizational collaboration revealed limited alignment. Specifically, some of the model components proposed by Hord were unsupported in the literature on PL-focused collaborations, and some of the factors identified in those collaborations were not predicted by Hord. Furthermore, no studies were found that systematically examined the strengths, weaknesses, and contributing factors associated with in-service PL-focused collaborations between university, school, and community representatives. The qualitative methodology of transcendental phenomenology would be well suited to fill this gap, as it would provide a comprehensive, inclusive, and in-depth description of the processes involved in this type of collaboration.

## CHAPTER 3

### METHODOLOGY

#### **Methodology Overview**

An overview of the current chapter is displayed in Figure 1. Generally, study features will be discussed in the following order: 1) research question, 2) setting and participants, 3) data collection and procedures, and 4) data analysis.

#### **Research Question**

In an extensive review of the literature, no studies were found that described a university-community-school collaboration designed to create and facilitate in-service professional learning to educators. Currently, no research is available that addresses the factors that are perceived to contribute to the processes involved within this type of collaboration. The current study seeks to address this need by answering the following research question regarding a specific collaboration between a university, a community organization, and several local school systems implemented for the purpose of delivering high quality professional learning to educators:

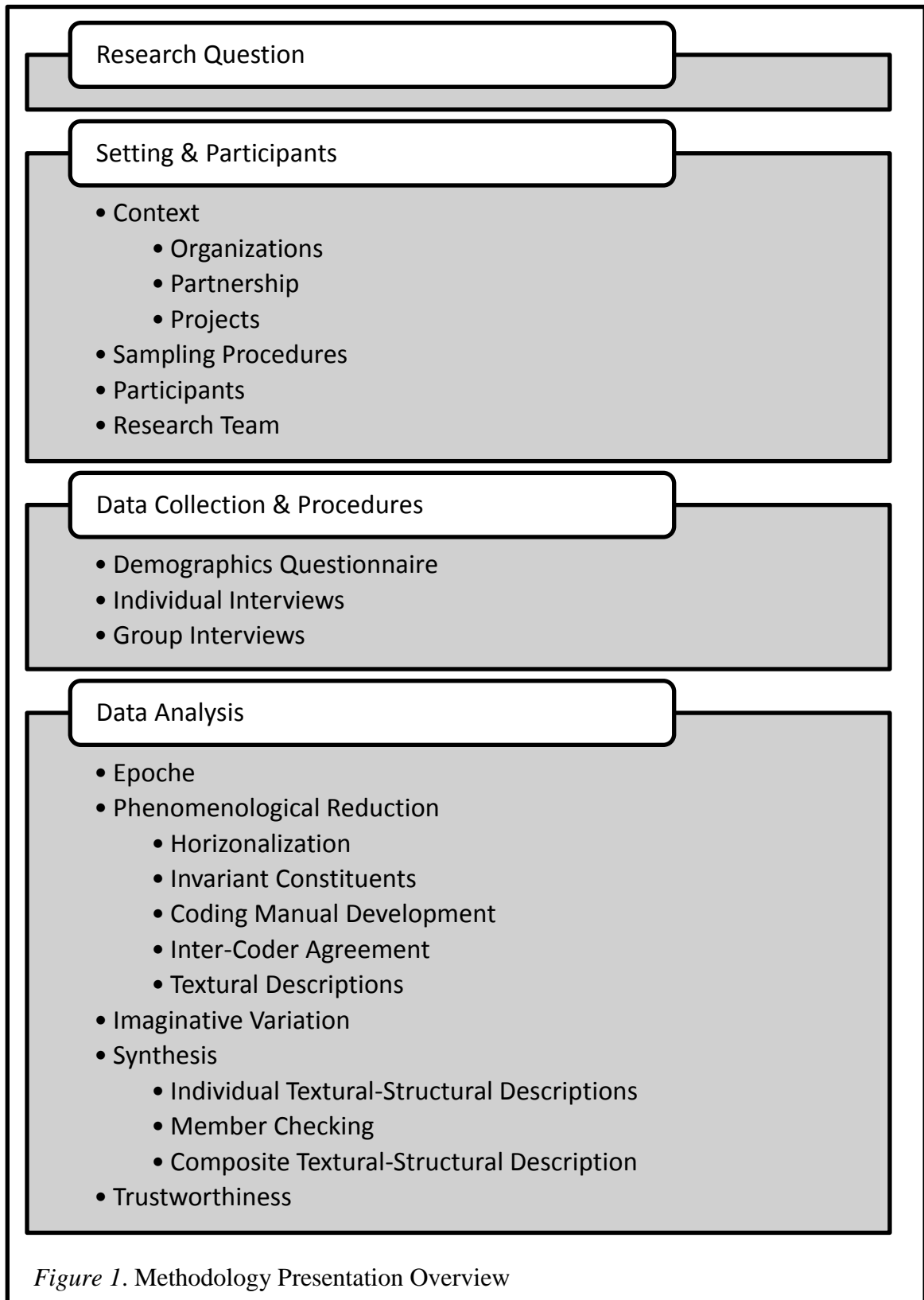
- *What are the university, community, and school representatives' perceptions of the collaborative process involved in a professional learning focused university-community-school collaboration?*

#### **Setting and Participants**

##### **Context.**

##### *The organizations.*

The inter-organizational collaboration under study included representatives from a university, a state agency, and several local school districts. These organizations are described here.



*University.*

The university involved in the current collaboration is an urban public university located in the southeastern United States. The university serves over 40,000 students total of which approximately 10,000 are graduate students. The following demographics were obtained in the fall of 2009. At that time, 61% of the university's students were female. Of the undergraduate students, 41% were Caucasian, 36% were African American, 12% were Asian, 4% were two or more races, 0.4% were American Indian, 6% were not reported, and 3% were non-resident aliens. Of the graduate students, 59% were Caucasian, 19% were African American, 5% were Asian, 2% were two or more races, 0.2% were American Indian, 4% were not reported, and 11% were non-resident aliens. Additionally, 7% of the undergraduate students and 5% of the graduate students identified as Hispanic.

*Community organization.*

The community organization involved in the current collaboration is one of several regional state-funded educational support agencies focused on special education practices. The state agency supports districts through the provision of in-service professional learning to K-12 educators in a variety of academic areas at the primary and secondary levels including mathematics and reading instruction, response to intervention (RTI), implementation of state curriculum standards, and co-teaching practices. Topics have also addressed behavioral functioning such as positive behavior supports, functional behavioral assessments (FBA), and behavior intervention plans (BIP). The state agency serves one urban city school district, one peri-urban city school district, one urban county school district, and four suburban county school districts in a large metropolitan area in

the southeastern United States. The university involved in the current collaboration is located within the urban county served by the state agency. Services provided by the state agency include organizational consultation, in-service professional learning, technology support, and instructional support.

*School districts.*

Representatives of both of the city school districts served by the state agency were actively involved in the current collaboration. The peri-urban city school district serves approximately 8,000 students in eight elementary schools, one sixth-grade school, one middle school, and one high school. The demographic breakdown of students is as follows: 19.3% Caucasian, 44.8% African American, 2.6 % Asian, 3% two or more races, and 29.8% Hispanic. The district employed 579 teachers in 2010, 100% of whom met Highly Qualified standards set by NCLB, with an average pupil to teacher ratio of 20:1.

The urban city school district serves approximately 48,000 students in 55 elementary schools, 16 middle schools, and 23 high schools. The demographic breakdown of students is as follows: 11.5% Caucasian, 80.4% African American, 0.8% Asian, 1.4% two or more races, 1.9% American Indian/Alaskan, and 3.7% Hispanic. Information regarding the qualification status of district educators and the average pupil to teacher ratio were not available for the urban district.

*The partnership.*

The current collaboration is grounded in the ongoing association between the university and the state agency. Discussions regarding this potential collaboration were initiated in the summer of 2005. At that time, the director of the state agency sought to initiate collaboration with an undetermined local organization for the purpose of increasing financial, personnel, and informational resources. Through participation in

local educational meetings, the assistant director of the state agency identified a university representative with long-term interest in and research on standards-based in-service professional learning for educators. The university representative was a faculty member in the school psychology program in the university's College of Education.

The university representative and the director and assistant director of the state agency engaged in several discussions between the summer of 2005 and the summer of 2006 regarding possible collaborative characteristics. Characteristics that were discussed prior to collaboration initiation included the purpose of the collaboration, the contributions of each organization, the roles of the various individual collaborators, the degree to which university graduate students would be involved in the collaboration, the degree to which representatives from each organization would work together and independently, and possible funding sources and concerns. In the summer of 2006, the university representative and the director of the state agency agreed to enter into a formal collaboration for the purpose of designing, facilitating, and researching standards-based in-service professional learning to educators served by the state agency.

Several initial characteristics were agreed upon prior to the initiation of the collaboration. Specifically, it was agreed that university graduate students would participate fully in the collaboration. The graduate students would be considered and introduced as state agency consultants. It was also agreed that the graduate students would collect data on behalf of the state agency regarding the impact of the professional learning programs administered. The data would be collected for the dual purpose of satisfying state requirements regarding establishing state agency efficacy as well as satisfying university priorities regarding research and publications. The university

representatives were to have full access to all data collected from professional learning participants that were relevant to and resulted from the current collaboration. In return, the university representatives were responsible for analyzing and writing descriptions of relevant data that were to be reported to the state. Regarding funding, the university faculty member and the director of the state agency agreed to examine funding status on a yearly basis to determine appropriate contributions and distributions of available funds. Both the state agency and the university contributed to funding for the graduate students. Specifically, the state agency provided a monthly stipend for each graduate student, while the university provided tuition for each student.

In the summer of 2006, the director of the state agency left the agency to serve as the director of special education for the peri-urban city school district. In the summer of 2007, the director of special education for the peri-urban district approached the university-state agency collaborative to discuss the possibility of collaborating on a behavior-focused professional learning program for the peri-urban district educators. From the summer of 2007 through the spring of 2010, university, state agency, and peri-urban district representatives collaborated to design and facilitate three separate professional learning programs for the peri-urban district educators, including an FBA/BIP training (M2), an FBA/BIP redelivery (M3), and a data-driven mathematics instruction training (M4). The peri-urban district contributed approximately \$15,000 to the M2 and M3 trainings as well as six personnel to the M3 training and two personnel to the M4 training.

In the spring of 2008, an administrator within the urban city school district approached the current director of the state agency to discuss the possibility of



collaborating to streamline the system's behavioral referral process. From the spring of 2008 through the spring of 2010, university, state agency, and the urban district representatives collaborated to design and facilitate one long-term in-service professional learning program for the urban district educators. The urban district contributed \$5,000 per year to the collaboration to assist with training funding.

*The projects.*

From the initiation of the partnership to the time of data collection, members of the collaboration collaborated to varying degrees on 13 professional learning projects and 1 software support project. Each professional learning project involved the provision of didactic trainings, and several involved the provision of small group, site-based support visits designed to differentiate instruction. Upon completion of three professional learning projects, plans were made to revise and redeliver the training in conjunction with district personnel for the purpose of redistributing training information. Other supports include educational consultation at the district and school levels, the purchasing and supported initiation of instructional and analytical software for individual schools, observations and feedback regarding educational practices, and support and implementation of universal screening measures.

Table 22 depicts the following information for each project: time of involvement, project name, project code, partners involved in the design and/or facilitation of the project, and services provided through the project. The time of involvement refers to the timeframe during which the collaborators worked together to design and facilitate the project. The project name provides information regarding the school district receiving the professional learning as well as the topic of the professional learning program. The

project code is an acronym developed for ease of reference to specific projects. The partners involved in the design and/or facilitation of the project include those organizations which provided representatives for the purpose of collaborating on the design and facilitation of the professional learning project. The services provided through the project include those specific services that were provided to all participants as a part of the project. Specific services are defined in the glossary of this document.

The trainings conducted as a result of this collaboration were generally comprised of several whole group training sessions spread over a period of two to six months. The collaborators conducted follow-up small group consultation visits entitled support visits in order to assess trainee needs and provide individualized support. Training content and foci were revised between whole group sessions in order to adapt to changing trainee needs and better answer trainee questions. Both formative and summative data were collected throughout training activities to inform the revision process and provide data to the state regarding training effectiveness.

***Collaborative activities.***

The collaboration was comprised of several types of interactive activities, including scheduling training sessions, planning training activities, developing training materials, facilitating trainings, and problem solving training related challenges such as poor attendance or changing trainee needs. Representatives from each organization contributed to these activities. The involvement of school district personnel was limited to collaborative activities related to trainings held within their school district. The state agency and university representatives, in contrast, contributed to collaborative activities across school districts.

Table 22

*Collaboration Projects*

Timeframe	Project	Project Code	Partners Involved	Services
12/06 – 5/07	Vocabulary Training	D1	State Agency University	Didactic Training
2/07 – 7/07	FBA/BIP Training	F1	State Agency University	Didactic Training Support Visits
4/07 – 10/07, 8/08 – 3/09	FBA/BIP Training	C1	State Agency University	Consultation Didactic Training Support Visits
8/07 – 7/07	RTI Training	M1	State Agency University	Didactic Training Universal Screening Data Analysis
8/07 – 2/07	FBA/BIP Training	M2	State Agency University	Didactic Training Support Visits
8/07 – 4/07	Multi-District Mathematics Training	MD1	State Agency University	Didactic Training Observations
9/07 – 4/08	Multi-District Mathematics Software	MD2	State Agency University	Implementation Support
4/08 – 5/09	FBA/BIP Training	A1	State Agency University Urban	Consultation Didactic Training Support Visits

5/08 – 6/08, 8/08 – 3/09	FBA/BIP Redelivery	M3	District State Agency University Peri-Urban District	Training Revisions Didactic Training Support Visits
9/08 – 3/09	Multi-District Co- Teaching Training	MD3	State Agency University	Didactic Training
2/09 – 5/10	Data-Driven Mathematics Instruction Training	M4	State Agency University Peri-Urban District	Consultation Didactic Training Support Visits
5/09 – 8/09, 12/09 – 2/10	FBA/BIP Redelivery	A2	State Agency University Urban District	Training Revisions Didactic Training Support Visits
9/09	FBA/BIP Redelivery	C2	State Agency University Rural District	Training Revisions

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Research related activities were also conducted within the scope of the collaboration. These activities included developing research questions, designing research studies, obtaining or developing research instruments, completing university and district level human subjects reviews, and analyzing and disseminating resulting data. Research related activities were conducted primarily by university representatives.

### **Sampling procedures.**

Purposeful sampling was employed to ensure the collection of meaningful and relevant data (Creswell, 1998; Miles & Huberman, 1994). In transcendental phenomenology, participants must have had experience with the phenomenon under study so that they might describe their own perceptions of the phenomenon (Moustakas, 1994). To obtain a description of the experience of current collaboration from a variety of perspectives, 20 collaborators were recruited to participate in this study. These 20 collaborators comprised the entire population of current collaborators who engaged in autonomous decision making regarding the content and delivery of at least one professional learning program or project.

Stratified random sampling procedures have been identified as a valid method for obtaining representative samples in qualitative methodologies (Creswell, 1998; Trost, 1986). As such, stratified random sampling procedures were used to assign participants to individual and group interview data collection conditions. Participants were stratified by the following variables: time of involvement, organization affiliation (i.e. state agency, university, or school district), and project affiliation. Table 23 presents the stratification variables and resulting groups of participants.

First, participants were stratified by the time of their involvement in the current collaboration. Specifically, all 20 participants were divided into two groups. The first group included those collaborators who were involved in the collaboration for more than one year. The second group included those collaborators who were involved in the collaboration for one year or less.

Within the group of participants who were involved in the collaboration for more than one year, the second level of stratification was decided by time of involvement. Specifically, participants were divided according to those participants who were present during the first year of the collaboration and those participants who were not present during the first year of the collaboration. The third level of stratification was decided by organization affiliation. Specifically, participants were divided according to the organization they represented during their involvement in the collaboration.

Within the group of participants who were involved in the collaboration for one year or less, the second level of stratification was decided by amount of involvement. Specifically, participants were divided according to those participants who were present at one to five collaborative sessions and those participants who were present at six or more collaborative sessions. The third level of stratification was decided by organization affiliation. Specifically, participants were divided according to the organization they represented during their involvement in the collaboration. This group of participants included eight peri-urban district representatives associated with two separate professional learning projects. These participants were divided further by project affiliation to facilitate discussion of common experiences.

Table 23

*Stratification Sampling Grid*

	Involved During Multiple Years		Involved During One Year or Less	
	Present 1 <sup>st</sup> Year	Not Present 1 <sup>st</sup> Year	1 – 5 Sessions	6 or More Sessions
University	Dalia	Mia		Rachel
	Sean	Katrina		
		Ashley		
State Agency	Tanya	Denise		
	Paige			
	Rebecca			
Urban District		Danielle		
Peri-Urban District, Multiple Projects	Debbie			
Peri-Urban District, M3 Project			Emma-M3 Brandon-M3	Shelley-M3 Evelyn-M3 Julia-M3
Peri-Urban District, M4 Project			Kelly-M4 Lillian-M4	Jessica-M4

One participant from each stratified group was randomly selected for recruitment in the individual interview condition. Group interview participation was determined by organization, project affiliation, and position within the collaboration. Specifically, at the time of the group interview, each university representative of equal status who had been previously involved or was currently involved in the collaboration was recruited to participate in the group interview. The associate professor was not recruited for participation in the university group interview as his status of elevated power might have limited the comments made by the other university representatives. The university representative with the pseudonym of Rachel had not yet joined the collaboration at the time of the group interview and was therefore not recruited for participation in the group interview. Each representative from the state agency organization was recruited to participate in the state agency group interview. As the peri-urban district representatives were involved in two separate projects, they were stratified according to project. As such, each representative from the M3 project was recruited to participate in the M3 group interview. Each representative from the M4 project was recruited to participate in the M4 group interview.

### **Participants.**

Participants include representatives of the university, the state agency, an urban school district, and a peri-urban school district. Table 24 depicts the following collaboration information for each participant: collaborator pseudonym, organization affiliation, dates of partnership involvement, project involvement, the average weekly rate of participation in the current partnership, and involvement in the current study. Table 25 depicts the following demographic information for each participant: age,



gender, race/ethnicity, highest degree earned, years of experience in education, and the average weekly rate of participation in general professional collaboration.

***University representatives.***

Six university representatives were recruited for participation in this study. They included those individuals involved in the partnership through their affiliation with the university. The pseudonyms used for the university representatives are as follows: Dalia, Sean, Mia, Katrina, Ashley, and Rachel. Sean is a tenured associate professor of school psychology in the university's education department. Dalia, Mia, Katrina, and Ashley are doctoral students in school psychology. Rachel is an education specialist level student in school psychology. In the summer of 2009, two student representatives, Dalia and Katrina, participated in individual interviews regarding their perceptions of the collaboration. Each student involved in the collaboration at that time participated in the university group interview, resulting in the participation of Dalia, Katrina, Mia, and Ashley. Sean was recruited for an individual interview. He was not recruited to participate in group interviews with other university representatives, as his status of elevated power might have limited the discussion of the university student collaborators. Rachel joined the collaboration in the fall of 2009. She participated in an individual interview following a period of assimilation into the collaboration.

***State agency representatives.***

Four state agency representatives were recruited for participation in this study. They included those individuals employed by the state agency who collaborated with the university on the development or facilitation of at least one project. The pseudonyms used for the state agency representatives are as follows: Tonya, Paige, Rebecca, and

Table 24

*Participant Involvement in the Collaboration and the Current Study*

Participant	Organization Affiliation	Dates of Collaboration Involvement	Project Involvement	Average	Interview Participation
				Hours in this Collaboration by Week	
Tanya	State Agency	7/05 – 7/07	C1	11 – 15	Individual
Denise	State Agency	8/07 – Current	C1, M1, MD1, MD2, A1, M4, A2	5 or less	Individual
Rebecca	State Agency	8/06 – Current	D1, MD1, MD3, M4	5 or less	Individual
Sean	University	8/05 – Current	F1, C1, M2, A1, M3, M4, A2, C2	5 or less	Individual
Dalia	University	8/06 – 8/08	D1, F1, C1, M1, M2, MD1, M3	20 or more	Individual, University Group
Mia	University	8/07 – 5/09	C1, M2, MD2, A1, M3	20 or more	University Group
Katrina	University	7/08 – 7/10	C1, A1, M3, MD3, M4, A2	16 – 20	Individual, University Group
Ashley	University	7/08 – Current	C1, A1, M3, M4, A2, C2	11 – 15	University Group
Rachel	University	8/09 – Current	M4, A2, C2	16 – 20	Individual
Danielle	Urban	4/08 – 5/10	A1, A2	5 or less	Individual

	District				
Debbie	Peri-Urban	7/05 – 5/06,	M1, M2,	5 or less	Individual
	District	8/07 – 5/10	M3, M4		
Shelly	Peri-Urban	8/08 – 3/09	M3	5 or less	Individual,
	District				M3 Group
Emma	Peri-Urban	5/08 – 6/08,	M3	5 or less	Individual,
	District	8/08 – 3/09			M3 Group
Brandon	Peri-Urban	5/08 – 6/08,	M3	5 or less	M3 Group
	District	8/08 – 3/09			
Evelyn	Peri-Urban	5/08 – 6/08,	M3	5 or less	M3 Group
	District	8/08 – 3/09			
Jessica	State	9/09 – 5/10	M4	5 or less	Individual
	Agency				

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Table 25

*Participant Demographics*

Participant	Age in Years	Gender	Race/ Ethnicity	Highest Degree Earned	Years of Education Experience	Average Hours of General Collaboration by Week
Tanya (state agency)	36-45	Female	White	Doctorate	15 – 19	20 or more
Denise (state agency)	36-45	Female	Black	Doctorate	10 – 14	5 or less
Rebecca (state agency)	55+	Female	White	Masters +30	20 or more	11 – 15
Sean (university)	55+	Male	White	Doctorate	20 or more	6 – 10
Dalia (university)	36-45	Female	White	Educational Specialist	15 – 19	20 or more
Mia (university)	36-45	Female	White	Educational Specialist	10 – 14	20 or more
Katrina (university)	26-35	Female	Black	Masters	4 – 9	20 or more
Ashley (university)	26-35	Female	White	Masters	4 – 9	16 – 20
Rachel (university)	26-35	Female	White	Bachelors	0 – 3	20 or more
Danielle (urban district)	46-55	Female	Black	Educational Specialist	20 or more	6 – 10

Debbie (peri-urban district, multiple projects)	36-45	Female	White	Doctorate	15 – 19	6 – 10
Shelly (peri-urban district, M3 project)	36-45	Female	White	Bachelors	4 – 9	5 or less
Emma (peri-urban district, M3 project)	26-35	Female	White	Educational Specialist	4 – 9	20 or more
Brandon (peri-urban district, M3 project)	55+	Male	White	Doctorate	20 or more	11 – 15
Evelyn (peri-urban district, M3 project)	26-35	Female	White	Masters	4 – 9	20 or more
Jessica (peri-urban district, M4 project)	46-55	Female	White	Educational Specialist	20 or more	6 – 10

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Denise. Two of the state agency representatives, Tanya and Denise, served as regional directors of the state agency at different points in time. Two of the state agency representatives, Paige and Rebecca, served as consultants formally affiliated with the state agency. Paige, who participated in projects F1, C1, M1, and MD1, declined to participate in the current study citing insufficient experience with the collaboration. As the remaining state agency representatives did not all participate in the collaboration simultaneously, their perceptions of the collaboration were obtained through individual interviews as opposed to a group interview format. As such, Tanya, Rebecca, and Denise participated in individual interviews regarding their perceptions of the collaborative processes they experienced.

***Urban school district.***

The representative of the urban school district, Danielle, collaborated with the state agency and university representatives in the development and coordination of a multi-year professional learning project. She held an administrative role within her district which involved coordinating behavior services for students. Danielle participated in an individual interview.

***Peri-urban school district: multiple projects.***

One representative of the peri-urban school district was recruited for participation in this study due to her collaboration on multiple projects. During the course of her involvement with the partnership, she collaborated with the state agency and university representatives in the development and coordination of three single year professional learning projects. The pseudonym used for this representative is Debbie. Debbie previously held the role of regional director of the state agency and currently holds an

administrative role within the district involving the coordination of special education services. She participated in an individual interview. Debbie was not recruited to participate in group interviews with other peri-urban school district employees, as her administrative status might have limited the discussion of those employees who report to her.

***Peri-urban school district: FBA/BIP redelivery (M3 project).***

The pseudonyms used for the representatives of the peri-urban school district who collaborated on the M3 project are as follows: Emma, Brandon, Shelly, Evelyn, and Julia. Emma, Evelyn, and Julia were special education teachers in the peri-urban school district. Shelly serves as a regular education teacher, and Brandon serves as a school psychologist. Julia was not available for participation in the current study as she had relocated to a different area of the state at the time of the study. Emma and Shelly participated in individual interviews in the current study. Emma, Brandon, Shelly, and Evelyn participated in a group interview for the current study.

***Peri-urban school district: data-driven mathematics instruction training (M4 project).***

Three additional collaborators were recruited for participation in this study due to their collaboration on the M4 training. The pseudonyms used for the M4 representatives are as follows: Kelly, Lillian, and Jessica. Kelly and Lillian served as representatives of the peri-urban school district in the capacity of district level support for special education practices and mathematics instruction. Jessica was hired by the state agency for content-specific assistance with this professional learning project. As her only role within the partnership involved collaboration on this project, she was grouped in this stratification.

Kelly and Lillian declined to participate in the current study citing a lack of time available for participation. Jessica participated in an individual interview regarding her perceptions of the current collaboration.

**Research team.**

The research team consisted of the primary and secondary researchers, both of whom are Caucasian, female, doctoral level school psychology students. Both members of the research team served as participant-observers in the research process, as each researcher had professional experience within the collaboration under study. This is in line with Moustakas' (1994) recommendation that the researcher or researchers of a transcendental phenomenological study have both personal interest in and experience with the phenomenon under study.

The primary researcher was involved in the C1, M1, M2, MD1, A1, M3, M4, A2, and C2 projects in the capacity of university representative. The secondary researcher was involved in the A1, M3, M4, A2, and C2 projects in the capacity of university representative. Both researchers were considered to be state agency consultants in the context of the collaboration as determined by the formal agreement of roles established upon initiation of the collaboration.

The primary researcher conducted all individual interviews and group interviews. The primary researcher was the sole interviewer in an effort to maximize consistency throughout the data collection process. Furthermore, the primary researcher developed rapport with each of the participants through participation in the collaboration and has an understanding of the context and history of the collaboration.



## **Data Collection and Procedures**

Three instruments were used to gather data for the current study, including a demographics questionnaire, an individual semi-structured interview protocol, and a group interview questionnaire.

### **Demographics questionnaire.**

A demographics questionnaire was administered to determine the age, gender, race/ethnicity, highest degree earned, years of experience in education, and the average weekly rate of participation in professional collaboration for each participant.

### **Individual interviews.**

Twelve individual, semi-structured, audio-recorded interviews were conducted to achieve intersubjective validity from an individual perspective (Moustakas, 1994). The interview protocol provided in Appendix A was developed based on the primary researcher's experiences with collaboration, as per Moustakas's (1994) recommendations. The semi-structured nature of the interview protocol allowed for clarification and expansion of interviewee comments as needed. The individual interview duration ranged from 45 minutes to 90 minutes, with most interviews lasting approximately 60 minutes. Eight individual interviews were transcribed by a master's level graduate student in school psychology, and four individual interviews were transcribed by the primary researcher. The primary researcher listened to each interview that she did not personally transcribe in order to verify the interview transcriptions.

### **Group interviews.**

Two semi-structured, audio-recorded group interviews were conducted to achieve intersubjective validity from a multi-faceted perspective (Moustakas, 1994). The group

interviews were guided by a questionnaire, provided in Appendix B, which was designed to elicit descriptions of collaborative experiences. Participants were asked to complete the questionnaire prior to the group discussion to prompt memories of the experience and provide a measure of individual experience that was not influenced by the group discussion (Moustakas, 1994). After questionnaire completion, participants were asked to share with the group any responses they felt comfortable sharing. Participants were encouraged to react to the responses of others, including describing areas of agreement, divergent experience, and new recollections. The duration of the group interviews, which included completion of the questionnaire, was approximately 120 minutes for each interview. Each group interview was transcribed and verified by the primary researcher. The responses recorded on the focus group questionnaires were incorporated into the appropriate focus group transcript and organized by question.

### **Data Analysis**

#### **Epoche.**

Prior to data analysis, the research team engaged in the process of epoche to identify and reduce pre-conceived biases regarding intra- or inter-organizational collaborative experiences. The researchers described and documented their experiences with educational collaboration, listed any biases they perceived, and discussed those biases. The lists of biases were recorded to allow the researchers to refer to them during data analysis. Each epoche was compared to the first and final drafts of the coding manual to determine the possible impact of researcher bias. The language of the coding manual was critically examined and compared to both the researcher epochs and the transcripts to ensure that the language used to describe the data reflected the language of

the study participants. No impact of researcher bias was observed within the coding manual during either examination.

### **Phenomenological reduction.**

The process of phenomenological reduction consisted of the following steps: 1) horizontalization, 2) clustering and thematizing of the invariant constituents, 3) refinement of the coding manual, 4) establishment of inter-coder agreement, and 5) summarizing textural (noematic) descriptions from each transcript (Creswell, 1998; Moustakas, 1994).

### ***Horizontalization.***

The first step of phenomenological reduction involved the process of horizontalization. During this step, each transcript was independently examined by the primary and secondary researchers to determine horizontal statements, which were statements that appeared to answer the research question in some way (Creswell, 1998; Moustakas, 1994). Any disagreements regarding horizontal statements were resolved through discussion, and consensus was obtained regarding the horizontal statements for each transcript. These statements served as the meaning units for each transcript and were later coded for meaning following step four of the process of phenomenological reduction.

Each horizontal statement was transferred to a table for closer examination, which began the process of coding manual development. Repetitive statements, or statements that did not offer new information regarding a construct, were removed per Moustakas's (1994) recommendations. For example, the following statements would be considered repetitive as each new statement does not offer any new or expanded meaning: (1) *we were equals*, (2) *there was equality between collaborators*, and (3) *there was parity in the*

*group*. In this example, as each statement expresses the same sentiment, statements two and three would be removed from the table in order to maintain a list of statements that was a manageable size. The non-repetitive statements which remain represent the invariant constituents of the data. Table 26 provides a sample of invariant constituents derived from the current study.

#### ***Clustering and thematizing invariant constituents.***

The second step in the process of phenomenological reduction is the process of clustering and thematizing the invariant constituents, which continues the development of the coding manual (Moustakas, 1994). In this study, the invariant constituents were grouped by similar meaning to develop meaning clusters per Moustakas' (1994) recommendations. As new invariant constituents emerged from the data, the meaning clusters were reorganized to reflect new meaning groupings. After all invariant constituents were identified, the meaning clusters were finalized. This resulted in 46 distinct meaning clusters. An examination of the final 46 meaning clusters revealed that the meaning clusters could be organized into 5 overarching categories, referred to from this point as themes. A sample of meaning cluster groupings is provided in Table 27.

#### ***Coding manual refinement.***

The third step in the process of phenomenological reduction involved refining the coding manual. In this step, the coding manual was organized by theme and corresponding meaning cluster, which will be referred to from this point as subthemes. Each theme and subtheme was defined in order to provide consistency in coding. Coding definitions were derived from the language used by the participants. Exemplar quotes were included with each subtheme to provide guidance in the application of codes. The

Table 26

*Invariant Constituent Samples*

- 
- When you come on, you have to kind of learn [the state agency], and then you have to understand the projects, and then understand the research that we're trying to do within the projects.
  - It is a team, and so we all have to kind of get along and understand one another and be there for one another.
  - No one can be the expert on everything. So, understanding that you know, you may have a lot of knowledge, but there are other individuals who may have just as much, and if you put that all together that can just make the project even better
  - There was a skill-set that you brought to the table that we didn't have yet.
  - I think there needs to be more um, what's that word, encouragement from the...from your administrators on your site.
  - We were deciding exactly the power point slides and how we were going to [pause] and I thought, "Wow. This is really going to happen, and we really get to pick".
  - At one point I think you said, "Okay, here's the layout. Who's doing what?" And I realized like we can't – you're not going to do it for us.
  - I realized that some people – maybe it's too difficult for them to speak up in a group.
-

Table 27

*Meaning Cluster Samples*

Sample Cluster 1	Sample Cluster 2
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• I felt that was very equal.</li> <li>• I think that the participants saw all of us as equals.</li> <li>• The model of what we are doing in the collaboration depends so much on everybody...having an equal say.</li> <li>• For the most part of my experience of the collaborative we all tend to treat each other at equals.</li> <li>• To me, collaboration has some specific ideas involved in terms of the equalness of the people involved.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• You also have to kind of be flexible.</li> <li>• I think definitely we've adjusted as a group in working with the different school systems.</li> <li>• We've been very flexible with our time.</li> <li>• The things you say sometimes has to be toned down depending on the various systems that you work with.</li> <li>• I think that we at the system level often times come with a structured initiative that has very little room for wiggle.</li> </ul>

primary and secondary researchers discussed the coding manual to determine the appropriateness of definitions and exemplars. Definitions that were perceived as vague or limited in scope were revised over two iterations of discussion and revision. The coding manual was then compared to the researchers' epochs to determine the possible presence of researcher bias. No biases were perceived, and the researchers began the process of establishing inter-coder agreement.

***Inter-coder agreement.***

The primary and secondary researchers independently coded four interviews, one from each organization participating in the collaboration under study. Each coded interview was compared between researchers, with a goal of 90% ICA (Miles & Huberman, 1994). The researchers discussed discrepancies following the coding of each interview in order to reach consensus. Revisions were made to the coding manual to address definitions that were perceived as vague or limited in scope following each consensus discussion. The ICA following the first round of independent coding was 77% at the theme level and 64% at the subtheme level. The coding manual went through four revisions during the first round of ICA. The independent coding process was repeated, resulting in an ICA of 89% at the theme level and 83% at the subtheme level. This was deemed sufficiently close to the initial goal of 90% ICA, as three of the four interviews achieved greater than 90% ICA during this comparison. Thus, the ICA process was complete. The coding manual went through four additional revisions during the second round of ICA. The final coding manual was again compared to the researchers' epochs to determine the possible presence of researcher bias. No biases were perceived, and the coding manual was finalized. The finalized coding manual is provided in Appendix C.

***Textural descriptions.***

Following finalization of the coding manual, the meaning units identified in each individual and group interview during the horizontalization process of phenomenological reduction were coded by the primary researcher for themes and subthemes related to the research question (Moustakas, 1994). Each coded transcript was then examined to determine the presence of noematic or textural descriptions of the phenomenon under study. Specifically, each coded statement was examined to determine what was experienced by the participant regarding perceptions of collaborative process. This included descriptions of what they saw, heard, thought, and felt as they participated in the collaboration, as well as descriptions of events without assigned meaning or interpretation. Examples of textural statements are provided in Table 28. Key words that assisted with the determination of the textural nature of each statement are italicized. The textural statements within each transcript were combined to create individual textural descriptions for each interview, resulting in 14 individual textural descriptions.

***Imaginative variation.***

The coded statements of each transcript were also examined by the primary researcher to determine the presence of noetic or structural descriptions of the phenomenon under study (Moustakas, 1994). Specifically, each coded statement was examined to determine how the participants experienced the phenomenon. This included descriptions of how the participants experienced the collaboration in relation to themselves, their prior experiences with collaboration, the time in which they entered the partnership, the interactions they perceived between different aspects of the collaborative experience, and the relationships they experienced or perceived within others during their



Table 28

*Sample Textural Statements*

- 
- If one of us felt strongly about something *we would listen*.
  - *We would do brainstorming* and then we would come together with um mostly with the planning, planning for professional learning. So that was where we were involved.
  - *I just kind of listened* and was taking everything in and trying to get a feel for the collaboration that had already been started to see where it was. And it was more me just taking notes and seeing, you know, where I could maybe fill in, you know, or add to kind of thing.
  - I was never left, whenever I was first coming in, I was never left in the dark about anything, you know. *Everyone kept reminding me, "If you have any questions, just let me know. We don't expect you to know everything. If you need any help, we'll help you."* I wasn't thrown to the wolves in any situation.
  - *My roles each time kind of varied* just depending on my level of experience with, um, the setting and the people involved in the collaboration.
  - There were many times that *individuals and groups of participants, not participants, but facilitators or collaborators, um, changed what they were doing to ultimately accommodate the participants*, other collaborators, things like that.
  - You know, you're going to have people say, "Uh, this is frustrating. This is frustrating." But everybody still did it. *Everybody still did what they needed to do.*
-

participation. Participants' descriptions of how they interpreted their noemic or structural experiences, as well as their perceptions of the positive or negative impact of experiences both personally and professionally, were also considered noetic descriptions. A sample of structural statements is provided in Table 29. Key words that assisted with the determination of the structural nature of each statement are italicized. An individual structural summary was written for each transcript to provide an understanding of each participant's interpretations of their collaborative experiences. This resulted in 14 individual textural-structural descriptions.

### **Synthesis.**

The synthesis phase of transcendental phenomenology allows the researcher to determine how the participants perceived the various themes and subthemes within the data to relate to one another. The synthesis phase typically involves two steps: construction of the individual textural-structural descriptions and construction of a composite textural-structural description of the phenomenon (Moustakas, 1994). An additional step of member checking was also incorporated into this stage during the current study to increase the trustworthiness, or credibility, of the research conclusions by asking participants to identify any discrepancies within the results.

### ***Individual textural-structural descriptions.***

The primary researcher combined the textural and structural descriptions to create individual textural-structural descriptions for each transcript. These textural-structural descriptions summarized participant comments related to perceptions of the collaborative experience and how those perceptions were interpreted on an individual level. Individual

Table 29

*Sample Structural Statements*

---

- *It seemed like* there was a certain type of personality characteristic that allowed people to work in a collaborative manner.
  - Some systems have been *more* political, so to speak *than others* and that's just something that you have to do deal with, as we are supporting various systems and various systems have their own personalities.
  - *That was the weak part* of the collaboration process meaning that [she] wasn't involved at all. She came, brought information, and completely checked out. It was disappointing.
  - I felt like you all were putting a lot of energy into getting ready for the trainings and so forth and then to have a handful of people show up. *Because I know how that would make me feel*, you know. That was very frustrating on my end and [pause]. That's why, you know, almost a couple times I was like, you know, let's not do it again next year
  - So I've learned even from those sessions, where you may see it a totally different way than I do, it doesn't make either one of us wrong. But just *those have been valuable experiences* as well.
-

textural-structural descriptions were written for each of the individual and group interviews, resulting in 14 individual textural-structural descriptions.

***Member checking.***

Each participant was asked to review their individual textural-structural description to ensure accuracy of data interpretation. Specifically, participants were asked to identify any areas in which they disagreed with data interpretation or felt that important information was omitted. Those participants who participated in both individual and group interviews were asked to review the individual textural-structural descriptions derived from both interviews in which they participated. During the member checking phase, two participants identified aspects of their summaries which they wished to change. Both participants approved their revised summaries. A third participant expanded upon the summary presented but did not find any errors in data interpretation. No other errors or omissions were reported. In this way, the accuracy of the data interpretation was determined by the participants.

***Composite textural-structural description.***

Following the member checking process, the primary researcher combined the individual textural-structural descriptions to produce a composite textural-structural description of the phenomenon. This composite description represents the phenomenon of the community-university-school collaboration with intersubjective validity, as it was derived from the descriptions of multiple collaborators who engaged in the collaboration at varying times, from varying perspectives, and within varying collaborative roles.

**Trustworthiness.**

Trustworthiness refers to the extent to which qualitative data are credible and dependable (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Several techniques were used to ensure trustworthiness of the current study, including the triangulation of data, purposeful sampling procedures, member checking, and the frequent use of exemplars in the description of the results. Triangulation of the data was achieved through the use of multiple participants with diverse backgrounds and experiences within the partnership; multiple sources of data in the form of audio-recorded individual interviews, group interview questionnaires, and audio-recorded group interviews; and multiple researchers. Purposeful sampling was used to ensure that participants met the criterion for inclusion according to Moustakas (1994). Stratified random sampling for the two data collection conditions was used to ensure intersubjective validity (Creswell, 1998; Moustakas, 1994). In member checking, each participant was asked to review the individual textural-structural descriptions to which they contributed to ensure that the data interpretation accurately reflected the experiences of the participants. Finally, each theme and subtheme presented in the results is accompanied by exemplars from the data in order to allow the reader to understand the construct through the participants' voices rather than solely through the researchers' interpretations.

## CHAPTER 4

### RESULTS

This was a phenomenological study of participants' perceptions about a collaboration between a university, state agency, and school district developed for the purpose of designing and providing high quality professional learning to educators. Participants were asked to describe perceptions regarding the strengths and weaknesses of the collaboration, as well as the nature of their personal involvement in the collaboration over time. Participants were also asked to identify specific actions, factors, or behaviors that they found to help or hinder the process of working collaboratively with other individuals and organizations. Data were collected and analyzed according to transcendental phenomenology (Creswell, 1998; Moustakas, 1994). The results of this study are presented here.

#### **Presentation of the Data**

The data in a transcendental phenomenological study are often presented in the form of a list of themes and subthemes that were present throughout the transcripts (e.g. Gellert, 2008; Moerer-Urdahl & Creswell, 2004). These themes are followed by the composite textural-structural description of the phenomenon under study. The current study followed this format in order to protect the confidential responses of individual participants and to avoid implying the increased significance of any one participant's responses due to the length or complexity of their individual textural-structural description. Furthermore, participants were queried regarding the terminology they considered most descriptive of the collaboration under study. As such, the data are presented in the following order: 1) preferred descriptive terminology, 2) themes and

subthemes with corresponding example quotes, and 3) a textural-structural description of the phenomenon of collaborating in a professional learning focused university-school-community collaboration.

### **Preferred Descriptive Terminology**

The preferred descriptive terminology of the participants was obtained through individual interviews and individual responses on group interview questionnaires. The participants varied in their preferences regarding the terminology used to describe the relationship. Rebecca (state agency), Dalia (university), Mia (university), Katrina (university), Brandon (peri-urban district; project M3), Evelyn (peri-urban district; project M3), and Jessica (peri-urban district; project M4) found the term *collaboration* to be most descriptive of the relationship. The characteristics of the relationship that these participants found to be indicative of collaboration included a sense of equity between group members, the attempt to work together on all projects, the lack of daily interaction between group members, and the differences between organizational goals. Tanya (state agency), Sean (university), and Shelly (peri-urban district; project M3) preferred the term *partnership*. The characteristics that these participants found to be indicative of partnership included variable inter-organizational involvement and an initial inequity in the skill-sets of the different groups. Shelly (peri-urban district; project M3) also suggested the term *team* to indicate the tendency of the group to work in smaller teams to accomplish tasks. Ashley (university) felt that the relationship began as a partnership due to a lack of initial inter-organizational involvement and developed into a collaboration following increased inter-organizational involvement. Denise (state agency), Rachel (university), Danielle (university), Debbie (peri-urban district; administrator), and Emma

(peri-urban district; project M3) found both *collaboration* and *partnership* to be appropriate descriptors of the relationship. As the majority of the participants found the term *collaboration* to be acceptable, it will be used to refer to the relationship for the remainder of this paper.

### **Themes and Subthemes**

The interview responses resulted in the emergence of 5 overarching themes and 46 subthemes. The overarching themes included *Collaborative Structure*, *Communication*, *Characteristics*, *Group Dynamics*, and *Outcomes*. The subthemes will be discussed in their respective theme sections.

It should be noted that the determination of themes and subthemes was not impeded by the number of interviews in which a construct was discussed. Instead, the criteria for a theme or subtheme were established following Moustakas' (1994) recommendations. Specifically, each non-repetitive meaningful statement, or invariant constituent, provided by study participants was grouped according to similar meaning. As new invariant constituents emerged from the data, the meaning clusters were reorganized to reflect new meaning groupings. Finally, the meaning clusters were organized according to themes found within the data, resulting in the final themes and subthemes that represented the participants' experiences with the phenomenon under study.

As such, the current study contains some subthemes that were mentioned in as few as one or two interviews. This is in line with the transcendental phenomenological concept of imaginative variation, which asserts that the researcher must seek and consider all possible meanings and divergent perspectives (Cresswell, 1998; Moustakas, 1994). Divergent perspectives are actively sought to assist the researcher in obtaining



intersubjective validity, a construct which provides an understanding of the phenomenon under study through the consideration of multiple and varying perspectives.

### **Collaborative Structure.**

The first theme to be discussed here, *Collaborative Structure*, refers to factors related to the general nature of the collaboration itself or to the administration of the collaboration by organizational administrators. Each participant discussed structural aspects of the collaboration under study. Various aspects of the *Collaborative Structure* were perceived to impact *Communication* practices, *Group Dynamics*, and *Outcomes*. Subthemes discussed under this overarching theme included *Goals and Focus*, *Time and Resources*, *Administration and Supervision*, *Staff Changes*, and *Choice*. Participant support for the theme of Collaborative Structure and its corresponding subthemes can be found in Table 30.

### ***Goals and Focus.***

The first subtheme under the theme of *Collaborative Structure* is the subtheme of *Goals and Focus*. *Goals and Focus* refers to the perceived purpose of the collaboration itself as well as individual and organizational goals. Comments related to goal alignment or misalignment, organizational priorities, and the clarity or ambiguity of goals were also included in this subtheme. This subtheme was discussed in each interview.

Participants reported a general overarching goal of the collaboration related to the development of high-quality professional learning, as well as smaller organizational goals including increasing resources, receiving professional learning, obtaining research, building relationships, and gaining unique experiences. Tanya (state agency) described initial conversations regarding the state agency's goals for the collaboration:

Table 30

*Participant Support for Collaborative Structure and Corresponding Subthemes*

Theme/Subtheme	Participant Support													
	University					SA			UD	Peri-Urban District				
	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	1	1	2	3	4	5
Collaborative Structure	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
Time and Resources	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
Goals and Focus	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
Administration and Supervision	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*		*	*
Staff Changes	*	*	*	*	*	*	*			*	*	*	*	
Choice	*				*		*	*			*		*	*

*Note:* University – 1 = Dalia, 2 = Sean, 3 = Katrina, 4 = Rachel, 5 = University Group

Interview; State Agency (SA) – 1 = Tanya, 2 = Rebecca, 3 = Denise; Urban District (UD)

– 1 = Danielle; Peri-Urban District – 1 = Debbie, 2 – Shelly, 3 = Emma, 4 = Peri-Urban

District Group Interview, 5 = Jessica.

[Debbie (peri-urban district, multiple projects)] and I worked together on all of the projects we provided, so we kind of talked about ways we could pull in other resources. And I mentioned the school [psychology] program at [the university], and it just kind of went from there.... I was thinking that we didn't have a lot of money to spare. How could we maximize our resources with the university but get school psychologists a different kind of experience than you would typically get? Um, but then yet it would be a benefit to us because we would also get very qualified people. So we were hoping it would be kind of a win-win.

Several participants found the disparity between organizational goals to represent a challenge in terms of time allocation and task completion. For example, when discussing the interactions between the state agency and the university, Sean (university) commented:

You know part of the original and continuing contract is to research best practices in professional learning and to be able to do the research and to disseminate the research. So, um, we didn't quite know we would fit that part in with what [the state agency] needed to do in terms of providing services.

He went on to discuss the impact of changing organizational priorities within the collaborating school systems on the ability of the university to conduct long-term research:

One of the problems that we're running into now is the press between content and professional learning. And as we get more things from No Child Left Behind and annual yearly progress and all that kind of stuff that the schools have to think about, it seems as if it's getting more content driven without as much attention paid to whether there's going to be any long term impact for what happens.

Jessica (peri-urban district, M4 project) discussed the perceived goal disparity between the university and one of the school systems: "I felt at times that there was a disconnect between what, um, where the groups wanted to go, particularly with what [the peri-urban district] was perceiving was happening or not happening." She felt that increased communication between the two groups might have facilitated increased goal alignment.

Dalia (university) perceived the need to prioritize goals at times of goal misalignment.

She reported, “Even within the group at [the state agency], there’s some things you have to give up, but you have to be able to hone in on what’s most essential.”

***Time and Resources.***

*Time and Resources* refers to factors related to time, scheduling, funding, manpower, or competing demands. This subtheme was discussed in each interview. Participants reported that the collaboration required a great deal of time and manpower. In some cases, participants perceived the demands to outstrip the available resources, as Ashley (university) noted in the university group interview: “So we have been very limited on time in our own resources and constantly being pushed to deadlines and constantly being late and behind and trying to do things.” The number of individuals involved in the collaboration as well as the personal and professional demands experienced by the individuals that were unrelated to the collaboration made the task of scheduling planning meetings challenging. When asked about weaknesses within the collaboration, Rebecca (state agency) replied, “I think our schedules. Trying to get the two schedules to come together. Because you know I was working and the people from [the university] were going to school and had different things to do.” The physical location of the peri-urban district personnel involved in the M3 project was perceived as detrimental to scheduling efforts, as well:

I mean, one of the weaknesses is that we were all in different buildings. Um, so trying to find times that we could all get together, actually physically get together, was really hard for some people. Trying to have, trying to do it outside of school hours, you know, is really, really difficult. So I think that’s why we had to go into part of the actual work day to get things, which is really difficult when you are expected to be at one place. (*Emma, peri-urban district, M3 project*)

### ***Administration and Supervision.***

*Administration and Supervision* refers to factors related to administration of the collaboration in general or the organizations in particular. This included supervision or guidance of subordinates, multiple administrators, administrative support of initiatives, and perceived administrative perspective. This subtheme was discussed in 13 of the 14 interviews.

The process of supervision of subordinates required some negotiation between administrators, especially during the first two years of the collaboration. Tanya (state agency) described, “I wouldn’t say [the university students] needed supervision, any more supervision than we would give a consultant we hired like [Rebecca (state agency)]. But it was just a matter of who did that supervision, like, defining that supervision.” The presence of multiple organizational administrators resulted in the need of the university students to report to both the state agency and university administrators. As Katrina (university) stated in the university group interview, “We do have two individuals that we’re responsible for reporting to.” Ashley (university) described a weakness of the collaboration as the “uncertainty of hierarchy and who to report to or responsible to.”

Several school system personnel attributed the lack of sustained professional learning impacts on their district’s practices to a lack of administrative support of initiatives. Shelly (peri-urban district, M3 project) stated, “And then, too, again, it wasn’t your fault or even our fault, or the [pause] or the other team’s fault, but I think there needs to be more encouragement from the [pause] from your administrators on your site.” Other M3 personnel reported a “lack of system administrative support” (Brandon, peri-

urban district, M3 project) and “follow-up by system/top doesn’t know” (Evelyn, peri-urban district, M3 project) as weaknesses of the collaboration.

***Staff Changes.***

*Staff Changes* refers to changes or turnover in organizational staff. This subtheme was discussed in nine interviews. Examination of group and individual responses revealed that the university group was the only group in which each interview contained mention of *Staff Changes*.

Participants described frequent changes in both administrative and consultative staff at the educational support agency during the first two years of the collaboration. These changes were cited as negatively impacting system entry efforts, as exemplified by Sean’s (university) comment: “Then [Tanya (state agency)] left and got a new, another director. And we kind of started all over again with that person.” Changes in the staff of any organization were perceived to cause anxiety or discomfort in the remaining collaborators. As Shelly (peri-urban district, M3 project) stated, “We lost [state agency] people that we had become comfortable with.” This concern was expanded upon in the M3 group interview:

Evelyn: Well, and I put that, too. That the changes in participants I think affected us, but I think also...

Shelly: You mean the people who were there?

Evelyn: Yeah, but I think also the presenters. And I know it’s the nature of, you know, getting a degree or whatever but I think maybe, Lynnae, you’re the only one that started with us originally. And so it’s kind of like, you know, people are like, “well, I don’t really know cause I’ve just kind of started this process, or whatever”. So I wish that we could, in a perfect world, stay with everybody that we started with.

Shelly: I think that affected, like, you want to talk about the collaborative part. I thought that affected it. Cause there was a sense of comfortableness, and then

when, maybe you had some students under you that came the second year, it was kind of like, “ahh...”

Evelyn: “Who are you?” and “Don’t I know more than you?”

Dalia (university) described changes in university personnel, “and then you and [Mia] joined us. So there were four of us. And um, that was scary at first.”

***Choice.***

*Choice* refers to voluntary or involuntary participation in the collaboration. This subtheme was discussed in eight interviews. Examination of group and individual responses revealed that the M3 and M4 participant groups were the only groups in which each interview contained mention of *Choice*.

Most individuals involved in the collaboration joined the collaboration voluntarily. Several individuals found the voluntary nature of participation to be a strength of the collaboration. For example, when asked about strengths of the collaboration, Emma (peri-urban district, M3 project) replied, “It was definitely voluntary.” In the M3 group interview, Shelly (peri-urban district, M3 project) stated, “It was voluntary. That ended up being successful.”

Jessica (peri-urban district, M4 project) addressed the concept of choice from the perspective of the professional learning participants. She observed that some participants were not given choice regarding their attendance to the training, a factor that complicated her attempts to work collaboratively with those teachers: “The teacher participants in the particular building I worked in – they made it very clear they had been told they had to do this. That it wasn’t a choice, you know. They weren’t particularly happy about that.”

### **Communication.**

*Communication* refers to descriptions of behaviors related to communicating thoughts and ideas, support, and emotions. Each participant discussed communicative behaviors perceived within the collaboration. *Communication* practices were perceived to impact various subthemes within the themes of *Group Dynamics* and *Outcomes*. Subthemes discussed under this overarching theme included *Talking*, *Brainstorming*, *Clarifying and Asking Questions*, *Listening*, *Supportive Communication*, *Negotiation*, and *Body Language*. Participant support for the theme of Communication and its corresponding subthemes can be found in Table 31.

### ***Talking.***

*Talking* refers to voicing or withholding ideas, opinions, or feedback. General references to discussion and communication were also coded under the subtheme of *Talking*. This subtheme was discussed in each of the 14 interviews.

Perceptions regarding the ease of communication differed between participants. For example, Rachel (university) reported, “It was very easy to communicate.” In contrast, Tanya (state agency) expressed the need for better communication when describing challenges that arose from differences in opinion. When asked what she could have done differently to handle such challenges, she replied, “I probably would have brought [Sean (university)] into it and made it more of a group to kind of just discuss all of those aspects.”

*Talking* was generally perceived to be a positive communicative behavior, as conveyed by Danielle’s (urban district) advice of, “Speak out, have a voice.” At times, the reticence of some individuals regarding voicing opinions was seen as detrimental to



Table 31

*Participant Support for Communication and Corresponding Subthemes*

Theme/Subtheme	Participant Support													
	University					SA			UD	Peri-Urban District				
	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	1	1	2	3	4	5
Communication	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
Talking	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
Brainstorming	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
Clarifying and Asking														
Questions	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*		*	*
Listening	*		*	*	*		*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
Supportive														
Communication		*		*				*		*	*		*	
Negotiation	*	*			*	*					*			
Body Language			*				*	*						

*Note:* University – 1 = Dalia, 2 = Sean, 3 = Katrina, 4 = Rachel, 5 = University Group

Interview; State Agency (SA) – 1 = Tanya, 2 = Rebecca, 3 = Denise; Urban District (UD)

– 1 = Danielle; Peri-Urban District – 1 = Debbie, 2 – Shelly, 3 = Emma, 4 = Peri-Urban

District Group Interview, 5 = Jessica.

collaborative efforts. For example, Debbie (peri-urban district, multiple projects) reported, “I don’t know that I’ve given the feedback necessary to take us necessarily to the next level with this.” Jessica (peri-urban district, M4 project) stated, “I felt there were times that I wanted to push [the peri-urban district] to speak up a little bit more.” Participants also discussed the importance of knowing when not to speak. As Shelly (peri-urban district, M3 project) stated, “A lot of the times, you might present a slide and it was like, ‘great, let’s just [*pause*] we don’t need to pick this apart just to say we collaborated on it.” This concept was corroborated by Emma (peri-urban district, M3 project) in the M3 group interview: “You can sit back and wait for your turn to contribute. Or maybe not if that’s not the right time or whatever.”

### ***Brainstorming.***

*Brainstorming* refers to general acts of planning as well as references to specific planning sessions and problem solving activities. This subtheme was discussed in each of the 14 interviews.

Descriptions of planning included “we would put the ideas out on the table” (Rebecca, state agency) and “throw ideas around and kind of bounce ideas off of each other” (Emma, peri-urban district, M3 project). As Rebecca (state agency) said, “Planning was so much a part of it. We would come together with the plans and put our ideas together.” *Brainstorming* involved adapting professional learning materials to suit school system needs, as described by Shelly (peri-urban district, M3 project) in the M3 group interview: “We customized the power point to fit.” It also involved planning future events, as described by Danielle (urban district): “We planned. We looked forward to the next year.” The act of joint planning was seen as a strength by several participants. Both

face to face and e-mail planning efforts were seen as generally positive. For example, Emma (peri-urban district, M3 project) described, “I remember e-mailing. Lots of e-mails. Going back and sending, you guys sending the power point to us. And us looking over and somebody maybe making a suggestion and somebody making another suggestion.”

***Clarifying and Asking Questions.***

*Clarifying and Asking Questions* refers to asking or not asking questions, clarifying the meaning of others, paraphrasing the comments of others in order to ensure understanding, and asking for feedback. This subtheme was discussed in 13 of the 14 interviews. Group and individual responses were compared to one another to determine the possible presence of group- or role-specific patterns of response (e.g. each member of one group or role within the collaboration describing a subtheme as important). Examination of group and individual responses did not reveal a response pattern for this subtheme.

The process of clarifying meaning through questions and paraphrasing was seen as positive and important to collaborative success. When asked about the strengths of the collaboration, Rachel (university) reported that it was “very easy to ask questions.” Shelly (peri-urban district, M3 project) found the process of asking questions to assist with establishing agreement and understanding between collaborators, stating that she now “[checks] in with everyone in the group before proceeding forward.” She stated that she also finds the act of asking questions to assist in encouraging others to participate in collaboration. Specifically, Shelly stated that she now “[asks] more open-ended questions...not as a challenge.”

Collaborators also found asking questions to be helpful when determining school system needs. For example, Tanya (state agency) reported that collaborators “got feedback from teachers about what they needed and how to really kind of shape things and make it more meaningful for the teachers.” Rachel (university) described the clarifying attempts of other university personnel as beneficial in reducing confusion:

You would say something back to her like, “Well, let me make sure I’m understanding what you’re saying correctly.” And she would say, “No, no, no. You didn’t understand me right.” But the majority of the time, she was like, “Yeah, that’s what I was trying to say.”

### ***Listening.***

*Listening* refers to listening or not listening to the comments, opinions, or suggestions of others. This subtheme was discussed in 12 interviews. Examination of group and individual responses did not reveal group- or role-specific patterns of response for this subtheme.

The act of *Listening* was perceived as important to collaborative success. When asked to describe the strengths of the collaboration, several participants mentioned the tendency of themselves and other collaborators to listen to one another. For example, Rebecca (state agency) reported, “We could hear each other.” She went on to state, “If one of us felt strongly about something, we would listen.” In the M3 group interview, Shelly (peri-urban district, M3 project) went so far as to define collaboration in part as listening: “Maybe that’s what collaboration is. I would think active listening would be one.”

### ***Supportive Communication.***

*Supportive Communication* refers to the act of making or the lack of supportive statements, comments, or gestures. It also refers to the act of validating or invalidating

the comments of others. This subtheme was discussed in six interviews. Examination of group and individual responses did not reveal group- or role-specific patterns of response for this subtheme.

Participants found *Supportive Communication* to assist in working with individuals who were expressing frustration within the collaboration. For example, Rachel (university) described the reactions of university and state agency personnel to the frustrations expressed by a school system representative: “I think everyone was going with validating the feelings and the needs expressed by the people within the system.... ‘We understand you all keep getting switched around. We understand that some other people have to be at other trainings.’” Denise (state agency) described working with frustrated individuals: “I think sometimes you just have to show that you are concerned.” Some participants also found *Supportive Communication* to be helpful when working with individuals who were perceived as uncomfortable voicing opinions or becoming involved in collaborations. Shelly (peri-urban district, M3 project) suggested being supportive to make these individuals feel more at ease: “Making a statement that’s almost supportive to reinforce, like, ‘I can see why your [*pause*] I can see why you might want to do it this way. Will this fit in this spot in the slide show?’”

### ***Negotiation.***

The subtheme of *Negotiation* refers to the process of negotiating terms, roles, or conditions of the collaboration. References to ebb and flow, give and take, and back and forth within discussions were also coded under the *Negotiation* subtheme. This subtheme was discussed in five interviews. Examination of group and individual responses did not reveal group- or role-specific patterns of response for this subtheme.

Participants found *Negotiation* to be an integral part of collaboration, as Dalia (university) stated in the university group interview, “I think there’s always negotiations.” Negotiations were necessary regarding the allocation of funds. According to Tanya (state agency), “We had to do some negotiating with the state..., the Department of Education.” Dalia (university) discussed negotiations regarding goals and system entry: “There’s always those negotiations about figuring out how it is going to fit in this school system. And to me that’s part of the challenge of solving the puzzle.”

Tanya (state agency) also discussed negotiation of goals:

The [state agency] is – you’re beholden to the special ed directors....They’re your broad of directors. Um, they’re part of approval of projects so, you know, so working with special ed director, she kind of had multiple things to negotiate between what she wanted and expected in some of those group wide trainings versus what the teachers in the schools needed with some of that follow up that [the trainers] did after that.

### ***Body Language.***

The subtheme of *Body Language* refers to comments related to facial expressions, body language, or reading people. This subtheme was discussed in three interviews. Examination of group and individual responses did not reveal group- or role-specific patterns of response for this subtheme.

Some participants expressed the concern that *Body Language* might have conveyed a sense of frustration. For example, Katrina (university) stated, “She probably saw my facial expressions too, so [*pause, laughter*]. So even though the words may have been okay, maybe the facial expressions or the body language wasn’t.” Rebecca (state agency) described assessing *Body Language* to determine the preferences of other collaborators: “So yeah, to get a read on them. I can see that, too.”

### **Characteristics.**

*Characteristics* refers to the qualities, attributes, or characteristics of individuals, organizations, or the collaboration as a whole. Each participant discussed the characteristics attributed to the parties involved. Various characteristics were perceived as having a positive or negative impact on *Communication* practices, *Group Dynamics*, and *Outcomes*. Subthemes discussed under this overarching theme included *Experience*; *Attitudes, Priorities, and Beliefs*; *Competence and Skill*; *Flexibility and Openness*; *Personality*; *Passivity or Aggressiveness*; *Comfort or Anxiety*; *Organized and Prepared*; *Culture*; *Understanding*; *Expert-Oriented*; *Taking Personally*; *Self-Motivated*; *Social and Team-Oriented*; *Detail-Oriented*; and *Humor*. Participant support for the theme of *Characteristics* and its corresponding subthemes are presented in Table 32.

### ***Experience.***

The subtheme of *Experience* refers to references to the backgrounds and previous experiences of collaborators regarding the process of collaboration itself as well as the subject matter of the professional learning projects. Factors related to new or unfamiliar experiences were also coded within the subtheme of *Experience*. This subtheme was discussed in each of the 14 interviews.

Several participants reported that having prior experience with a given task or topic was beneficial to their participation in this collaboration. For example, when asked what she brought to the collaboration, Rebecca (state agency) replied:

One is experience. You know in the classroom. I've had lots of experience in the classroom. Lots of experience working in lots of different schools. With both leadership and with teachers and [pause] with professional learning, adult learning, data collection, as far as collecting the data through classroom observations and that sort of thing.

Table 32

*Participant Support for Characteristics and Corresponding Subthemes*

Theme/Subtheme	Participant Support														
	University					SA			UD	Peri-Urban District					
	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	1	1	2	3	4	5	
Characteristics	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	
Experience	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	
Attitudes, Priorities, and Beliefs	*	*	*	*	*		*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	
Competence and Skill	*	*	*	*	*	*		*	*	*	*	*	*	*	
Flexibility and															
Openness	*		*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	
Personality	*	*	*	*	*		*	*	*		*	*	*	*	
Passivity or															
Aggressiveness	*		*	*	*		*	*	*	*	*	*		*	
Comfort or Anxiety	*		*	*	*		*	*	*	*	*	*		*	
Organized and															
Prepared	*			*	*	*	*	*		*	*	*	*	*	
Culture	*	*	*	*	*			*	*	*			*		
Understanding		*	*	*	*			*	*					*	
Expert-Oriented	*		*		*						*		*		
Taking Personally			*					*			*				
Self-Motivated			*							*			*		
Social and Team															
Oriented			*				*					*			
Detail-Oriented							*		*						
Humor			*												

*Note:* University – 1 = Dalia, 2 = Sean, 3 = Katrina, 4 = Rachel, 5 = University Group

Interview; State Agency (SA) – 1 = Tanya, 2 = Rebecca, 3 = Denise; Urban District (UD)



– 1 = Danielle; Peri-Urban District – 1 = Debbie, 2 – Shelly, 3 = Emma, 4 = Peri-Urban District Group Interview, 5 = Jessica.

Katrina (university) stated, “I feel like the individuals coming – who’ve never been in schools, no experience whatsoever – kind of struggle in this [*pause*] in this setting.” Both Danielle (urban district) and Debbie (peri-urban district, multiple projects) reported having prior experience with collaboration as beneficial to their involvement in this collaboration. Dalia (university) described the benefits of prior experience with professional learning material:

I think the other piece that helped is that [we] were both more familiar with Dr. Riffle’s model so it wasn’t like we were teaching something brand new and we knew how to change. We knew some things that we wanted to change and how we might do it differently.

***Attitudes, Priorities, and Beliefs.***

The subtheme *Attitudes, Priorities, and Beliefs* refers to participant expressions of attitudes toward collaboration in general, as well as enthusiasm or a lack thereof regarding this collaboration or specific projects. This subtheme was discussed in 13 of the 14 interviews. Examination of group and individual responses did not reveal group- or role-specific patterns of response for this subtheme.

The participants reported positive feelings about collaboration in general and this collaboration in particular. For example, Mia (university) commented during the university group interview, “I just really think that everyone should participate in collaboration.” Regarding collaboration, Debbie (peri-urban district, multiple projects) stated, “It is educational malpractice to not take full advantage of all your resources.”

Shelly (peri-urban district, M3 project) joined this collaboration with a positive attitude: “I came to it enthusiastically. I’m not saying other people didn’t, but I was really – I looked forward to it. I was kind of charged up about it.” Participants also discussed perceptions regarding the attitudes and beliefs of others. For example, Sean (university) discussed Denise (state agency)’s attitudes toward the professional learning practices employed by the university: “Honestly, I think [Denise (state agency)] was kind of pre-disposed to that. So it’s nice. She was primed to incorporate that stuff.”

***Competence and Skill.***

The *Competence and Skill* subtheme refers to participant perceptions regarding their own competence or lack thereof as it related to the act of collaboration or specific project demands. This subtheme was discussed in 13 of the 14 interviews. Examination of group and individual responses did not reveal group- or role-specific patterns of response for this subtheme.

Participants discussed competence regarding the subject matter of specific professional learning projects. In general, participants felt competent in these areas. For example, when asked about strengths of the collaboration during the M3 group interview, Emma (peri-urban district, M3 project) replied: “Everybody that participated was knowledgeable of the subject matter....” Participants felt less knowledgeable regarding the skills needed to engage in collaboration. During the M3 group interview, Shelly (peri-urban district, M3 project) stated:

Maybe I don’t have a clear picture of what collaboration is. And we’ve talked about that before. They kind of throw this term around, like, “Oh, go collaborate!” And you’re not really trained on it, right? At our school, they use it a lot. It’s kind of like, what does that mean, really? I think you need a little professional development in how to collaborate at a table with a group of people.

When describing the initial phases of the collaboration, Sean (university) reported:

The hard part came afterwards when we actually started to do it because we didn't know how. We didn't know how to do it at [the university], or I didn't know how to do it [at the university]. And [the state agency] didn't know how to do it there.... We didn't know how to make the collaboration work.

***Flexibility and Openness.***

*Flexibility and Openness* refers to the perceived or reported flexibility or rigidity of individuals or groups. Descriptions of adjusting or not adjusting to situations, as well as openness or a lack thereof to feedback, were also included in this subtheme. *Flexibility and Openness* was discussed in 12 of the 14 interviews. Examination of group and individual responses did not reveal group- or role-specific patterns of response for this subtheme.

In the university group interview, Dalia (university) described the act of flexibility thusly, “Agree to do things I really did not want to do because they needed to be done.” Participants perceived flexibility within the collaboration to be positive and important. Danielle (urban district) stated, “I think working with people and giving them the opportunity to be open with you is always the best way.” Rebecca (state agency) described important characteristics in a collaborator: “Being open to learning a new way of doing something. Not having to have it the way – ‘Oh, I have always done it this way.’ Got to learn new ways to do it.” Denise (state agency) described the importance of flexibility to the success of professional learning projects: “We have to differentiate our efforts as we are networking with these systems, because you have to – basically, you’re on their turf. So you have to tailor it so you are successful.”

Some individuals described themselves as being “open to change,” as reported by Shelly (peri-urban district, M3 project) in the M3 group interview. Others reported

having difficulty with flexibility. For example, in the M3 group interview, Evelyn described attempting to increase her flexibility while working with professional learning participants:

I'm a very black and white person. Like, this is the rule, you must follow it, and if you don't, then, you know, whatever. And in our particular group that Shelly and I were working with, that approach wasn't working very well.

Collaborators also commented on the openness or flexibility of organizations or groups. For example, Jessica (peri-urban district, M4 project) said of the university group, "I felt like the group was very open and accepting." Debbie (peri-urban district, multiple projects) described the university and the state agency as flexible:

You guys have been very accommodating. I have definitely felt like I sat down in the meeting and you guys thought you were going over here, and it's clear that you guys felt you were going over there. And I was like, 'Well, gosh, I really should move over, because this is just not fair.' And yet I found that [the university] or [the state agency] were willing to come over here.

Approaching situations with flexibility was perceived as somewhat tiresome over time. For example, Katrina (university) described frequent adjustments to situations and challenges:

It's hard, though, because that whole collaboration this is, like, you're constantly trying to adjust your behavior. And at some point, you kind of have to say, "I'm done adjusting." Cause you can't really just redefine yourself every single time for every individual that you encounter, not totally.

Furthermore, not all individuals within the collaboration were perceived as operating with equal flexibility. Dalia (university) described her involvement in a professional learning project: "I don't think anybody would have been real receptive to the idea that I was doing vocabulary infusion differently than everybody else was doing it." When Rachel (university) was describing a disagreement between herself and the state agency, she reported an agency consultant's reaction to her suggestion: "She said, 'That's not how we

do things.” The concept of flexibility was not confined, however, to agreeing to any suggestion. Rachel (university) went on to report that her ability to voice disagreements was also a measure of flexibility.

***Personality.***

The subtheme of *Personality* refers to comments regarding personality styles that did not specify a particular characteristic. This subtheme was discussed in 11 interviews. Examination of group and individual responses did not reveal group- or role-specific patterns of response for this subtheme.

Participants attributed the ability to work within a collaboration to personality. For example, Dalia (university) said, “It’s almost like it’s got to be something within the people working in the collaborative that allows them to work in a collaborative manner.” Personality was also discussed when participants talked about working together. When asked about weaknesses of the collaboration on the group interview questionnaire, Dalia (university) reported, “One staff member almost impossible to work with.” Shelly (peri-urban district, M3 project) said of the M3 group, “There were certain personality types that were a little strong to me, but that’s not, like, really my personality to call them on the carpet.” Individuals described their own personality styles, too, in relation to their ability to work within the collaboration. For example, Rachel (university) stated, “It takes me a while to warm up,” when discussing her slowness in participating in collaborative discussions. In the university group interview, Mia (university) described how her personality made it difficult for her to rely on her teammates: “Being a graduate student and very Type A, I have definite opinions about how things should be. Or ideas about how things should move and directions things should move in.”

***Passivity or Aggressiveness.***

*Passivity or Aggressiveness* refers to discussion of aggressive behaviors or comments, as well as persisting with or pushing an issue during a discussion. The converse of this construct, denoted here as passivity, was also included in this subtheme. These included descriptions of patience with or acceptance of a situation, individual, or group, such as letting things go during an argument or disagreement. This subtheme was discussed in 11 of the 14 interviews. Examination of group and individual responses did not reveal group- or role-specific patterns of response for this subtheme.

Some comments conveyed a general acceptance of difficult situations. For example, Katrina (university) said of facing challenges, “Everything’s still fine. Like, tomorrow still will come.” Denise (state agency) stated, “Like I said, it is what it is.” Some individuals discussed the need to approach situations with patience. For example, Denise (state agency) said, “You have to be a lot more patient with some [individuals] than with others.” Danielle (urban district) discussed the importance of letting issues go during disagreements: “I just didn’t say anything because...I did it that way because, you know, we just need to let it go.” Not all individuals were perceived as approaching situations with acceptance, however. Rachel (university) described one collaborator thusly, “She was basically considered by some as aggressive in how she would – how they were coming across.”

***Comfort or Anxiety.***

The subtheme of *Comfort or Anxiety* refers to comments regarding feelings of anxiety or comfort and going beyond an individual’s comfort zone. Discussions of confidence or a lack thereof were also included in this subtheme. This subtheme was

discussed in 11 interviews. Examination of group and individual responses did not reveal group- or role-specific patterns of response for this subtheme.

Participants discussed their comfort level with the collaboration in general. For example, Katrina (university) stated, “It is a little overwhelming being on this [graduate research assistantship] in general.” She went on to describe her comfort level during a professional learning activity that occurred early in her involvement in the collaboration.

I want to say before the training I was okay. I was like, “Okay, this is not going to go too bad.” And then maybe during the training, I was like, “This is a lot. This is – this is a lot going on!”

Participants also discussed comfort as it related to specific tasks or behaviors. For example, Jessica (peri-urban district, M4 project) discussed her perceptions regarding the comfort of school system personnel to join in planning sessions:

There were a few times that I felt like, because the next large group teacher session had been planned by the [university] team, that the [M4] team did not feel comfortable saying, “What about this?” Or maybe, “Change it to do that.”

Dalia (university) linked comfort to the construct of the expert-role:

I think some people who maybe are confident in what they are bringing to the table can shift toward that. But when you get people who are a little less secure, then it is very hard for them to give up that expert role. Or if you put them into new situations where they are less confident giving up the expert role is hard.

Rachel (university) discussed the importance of comfort regarding her level of involvement in the collaboration: “At first, you know, I kind of felt more comfortable taking a backstage role or presence until um, I was more comfortable with the whole process, the collaboration, with everyone.”

***Organized and Prepared.***

*Organized and Prepared* refers to the perceived organization and preparation, or lack thereof, of individuals or groups. Descriptions of foresight or a lack of foresight

were also included in this subtheme. This subtheme was discussed in 11 interviews.

Examination of group and individual responses revealed that this subtheme was discussed by each state agency representative as well as each peri-urban district representative.

Participants' comments regarding this subtheme suggest that a balance is needed in terms of the organization and preparation brought to the collaboration. Specifically, insufficient organization or preparation was perceived to have a negative impact on outcomes. For example, on her group interview questionnaire, Mia (university) described one weakness of the collaboration: "We needed more of a clear research plan from the beginning." In her individual interview, Tanya (state agency) described the need for more preparation when initiating the collaboration: "I think we kind of went into it with some notions that we'd just hire people. You know. We didn't realize how broad it could be.... There were more things that we needed to define than we had thought about." Rebecca (state agency) said of a planning session she found to be ineffective, "I don't think we all had the end product in mind. We didn't have what we were expecting."

An appropriate level of organization or preparation was seen as conducive to collaborative success. Debbie (peri-urban district, multiple projects) described the organization of the university personnel: "You guys were really organized, so it was a good model to start with." In the M3 group interview, Shelly (peri-urban district, M3 project) described a behavior that she had observed in others and found positive: "Always have a little plan B in the background." However, some participants perceived the possibility that too much preparation could impede collaborative efforts by limiting flexibility. Jessica (peri-urban district, M4 project) described the negative impact of



preparation on the group's ability to adjust a professional learning project: "We were too driven to do what we had planned to next on our agenda."

***Culture.***

The subtheme of *Culture* refers to qualities attributed to systemic culture, politics, or norms. This was differentiated from the subtheme of *Personality* by the reference to systems or organizations as opposed to individuals. *Culture* was discussed in nine interviews. The university group was the only group in which each interview contained mention of *Culture*.

Several participants described the different school systems affected by the collaboration as having different cultures or personalities. For example, Denise (state agency) reported,

Some systems have been more political, so to speak than others. And that's just something that you have to do deal with, as we are supporting various systems and various systems have their own personalities....And you know, we have had the real easy systems to work for. You've had the more difficult ones to work for.

In the university group interview, Mia (university) discussed the process of learning this construct:

I had to really try to understand the context or the culture of where we're trying to implement change for. I hadn't realized how much that really impacted how things move forward in working with people. And so to me, that's something that I actually really think more about and conscientiously try to understand. So I'm more thoughtful about that.

The characteristics of different systems were perceived to impact system goals, which in turn impacted the content of professional learning projects. Consider this discussion during the university group interview regarding the impact of cultural changes on professional learning topics:

Dalia: Is that because of state preferences? Preferences coming down from the state level? And I'm asking because I know where I'm working there's a much bigger focus on math right now.

Ashley: It's a combination. A combination of their needs and our needs. I think, correct me if I'm wrong, from my experience as a [university] team, we have definitely started moving away from FBAs and BIPs to diversify our content and to try to model a variety, as well. So that's been, especially with our boss, there what the state needed in a specific county that we were aware of. The state mandated that they needed – they needed this. So we took a ... A third factor is the money. There's federal money out there that we're also trying to get additional funds for –

Mia: Is related to math.

Ashley: Is related to math and science. So kind of, that's how I would see them coming together.

Dalia: I was just curious because...I know we tried to change it before and it didn't work. So I was wondering what outside influences finally allowed the shift to happen.

Katrina: Yeah, I think it was more of a...

Dalia: It sounds like that's where the money is.

Katrina: Well, more of the need of a system change. Like, the system no longer had this primary need for FBAs and BIPs. They received a mandate from the state that, "You need to do something about your math and your special education students, so..."

The culture of education in general was linked with concepts such as *Choice*. Dalia (university) stated:

The choice component of it is - has become more of a struggle for me when I think about it because when you are dealing with education there's a certain amount of – yes, you want the teachers to have choice into what they are learning and what they are doing in the classroom. But the nature of public education means that there are always initiatives that have to go into a school system. And if we – if for our collaboration, choice is a big part of it, then there is a whole big group of information that becomes very – or staff development content – that it becomes hard. We really have to think creatively about how we are saying that we are providing choice and those kinds of things when it is dictated by, um, by administration or by the state or by whoever.

Katrina (university) linked the concepts of *Culture* and *Flexibility and Openness*: “You find out, that’s kind of how things work in this system. So we were flexible in that system too, understanding ‘Okay, this is how it kind of goes. And how can we work within their culture?’”

***Understanding.***

The *Understanding* subtheme refers to comments regarding understanding or not understanding the perspective of others. This subtheme was discussed in seven interviews. Examination of group and individual responses did not reveal group- or role-specific patterns of response for this subtheme.

Participants described the ability of some collaborators to understand the perspective of others as a strength of the collaboration. For example, Danielle (urban district) reported “a lot of understanding each other’s expertise” to be helpful in establishing goals and workload distribution. Jessica (peri-urban district, M4 project) reported, “I find myself always looking at something from the teacher’s eyes,” a behavior that she believed assisted with planning practices. Denise (state agency) said, “I think it’s a must in order to be successful, because you can kind of get stuck in this tunnel and not see something from a different perspective.”

***Expert-Oriented.***

The subtheme *Expert-Oriented* refers to the perceived need of some individuals to be an expert in a given situation. Descriptions of the desire to take on an expert role and the ability or inability to give up an expert-role were also included in this subtheme.

*Expert-Oriented* comments appeared in five interviews. Examination of group and

individual responses did not reveal group- or role-specific patterns of response for this subtheme.

Participants felt that the perceived inability of some collaborators to give up the expert-role was a weakness of the collaboration. For example, Dalia (university) stated, “When people have been unable for whatever reason to give up that expert role in order to go with the collaboration, I think that’s been a weakness.” Some individuals reported a process of learning to give up the expert-role over the course of their involvement in the collaboration. They found their ability to give up the expert-role to be a positive experience. Katrina (university) said, “I don’t feel the need to feel like I know all the answers. Like, I’m okay with saying, ‘I don’t know, but I can find out.’” In the M3 group interview, Shelly (peri-urban district, M3 project) and Evelyn (peri-urban district, M3 project) expressed a similar sentiment:

Shelly: When we went and visited another school, and they kind of shared all the things that they were doing, you know, it was kind of like, well, I don’t have to have an answer every time. I don’t know why that kid does that. You know. We didn’t – you didn’t have to be an expert. Like, that’s not what collaboration is, where one person has all the answers and one person needing them. It’s like a team thing. That’s what I thought.

Evelyn: I agree. I thought the same thing. Sometimes I just – you’re so used to people coming to you and needing you to tell them what to do and give them that that sometimes you just kind of have to [*pause*]. I was like, “I can just sit back and let other people-” not let them do the work, but she has suggestions. He has suggestions. You don’t always have to be the one to answer.

### ***Taking Personally.***

The subtheme *Taking Personally* refers to comments regarding taking or not taking experiences personally. Comments related to resentment or a lack thereof were also included in this subtheme. This subtheme was discussed in three interviews.

Examination of group and individual responses did not reveal group- or role-specific patterns of response for this subtheme.

Participants discussed the importance of not taking personally any collaborative challenges. Katrina (university) said, “When you think of collaboration, I think so much – I don’t know how to articulate this, but it’s not kind of about you.” Denise (state agency) offered a similar sentiment: “I just kind of had to tell myself that particular situation probably wasn’t really about [the state agency.] It was probably something else going on and I just happened to be there.” Shelly (peri-urban district, M3 project) posited the link between flexibility and not taking things personally: “I felt you were really open to making those changes. It didn’t feel like we were hurting your feelings. I know my feelings would have been hurt [*laughter*].”

***Self-Motivated.***

The subtheme *Self-Motivated* refers to comments regarding self-initiation, self-motivation, or the lack thereof. This subtheme was discussed in three interviews. Examination of group and individual responses did not reveal group- or role-specific patterns of response for this subtheme.

Participants who discussed self-motivation perceived it to be beneficial to collaborative efforts. Katrina (university) stated:

I think also to be – to do this, it requires like some characteristics of the individual. Like, you have to be able to kind of be self-initiated. Like being able to go out and say “Okay, I think this is what I need to do, so let me to do this, this and this” and not necessarily wait on someone to tell you everything that you need to do.

Debbie (peri-urban district, multiple projects) attributed a lack of sustainable changes in her school system to perceived insufficient self-motivation in personnel: “The people don’t seem to be self-motivated towards it.”

***Social and Team-Oriented.***

The subtheme of *Social and Team-Oriented* refers to comments regarding social or non-social personality characteristics, as well as statements regarding being a team player. This subtheme was discussed in three interviews. Examination of group and individual responses did not reveal group- or role-specific patterns of response for this subtheme.

Participants who discussed this *Characteristic* perceived social or team orientation to be beneficial to collaborative efforts. As Emma (peri-urban district, M3 project) stated, “You had to be more of a team player.” Rebecca (state agency) corroborated this view in her individual interview when describing what she brought to the collaboration: “And then a team player. A good ole team player.” Katrina (university) expressed the belief that comfort with social interaction was an important *Characteristic* in a collaborator: “Collaboration also involves, like, a good level of just social interaction. And if you’re not a social individual, then that may pose a problem.”

***Detail-Oriented.***

The subtheme *Detail-Oriented* refers to comments regarding an individual perceived as oriented or not oriented toward details. This subtheme was mentioned in two interviews. Examination of group and individual responses did not reveal group- or role-specific patterns of response for this subtheme.

Participants who mentioned this subtheme did so in reference to themselves. Their comments suggested the perception that approaching planning and decision-making discussions from a *Detail-Oriented* perspective might have limited the effectiveness of the discussions. For example, Danielle (urban district) said when describing what she perceived as a difficult planning situation, “I may be a little detail-oriented.” Rebecca (state agency) described a different planning session in which she perceived some disagreement:

I tend to be a very detailed person. Right up front, very detailed...I think I would get too detailed. Yeah, trying to, “But what if this happened? What if we do, you know, that?” Some of that can just wait.

***Humor.***

*Humor* refers to comments regarding humor or comedy. This subtheme was mentioned in one interview. Examination of group and individual responses did not reveal group- or role-specific patterns of response for this subtheme.

When asked what she brought to the collaboration, Katrina (university) replied, “I think sometimes I do just kind of, like, bring in some comedy to the situation. I’m all about having a good time.” Later, she expanded on this comment:

I think too sometimes I just try to kind of use a little humor to try to get through difficult situations. I’m not saying I’m the best at it at all times, because some days I’m just, like, “Whatever.” But um, just trying to use a little bit of humor about the whole thing. And at the end of the day, it’s really not that serious.

**Group Dynamics.**

*Group Dynamics* refers to factors related to the interpersonal interactions and relationships between group members. Each participant discussed the dynamics that occurred within the collaboration. Various aspects of *Group Dynamics* were perceived to impact and be impacted by one another. They were also perceived to impact the

*Outcomes* of the collaboration. Subthemes discussed under this overarching theme included *Power Differential*, *Workload and Involvement*, *Familiarity and Rapport*, *Collaborative Roles*, *Group Composition*, *Agreement*, *Intangible Contributions*, *Management*, *Assimilation*, *Modeling*, *Ownership*, and *Formality*. Participant support for the theme of Group Dynamics and its corresponding subthemes are presented in Table 33.

***Power Differential.***

*Power Differential* refers to perceptions of power differential or equity within the collaborative group. Comments regarding decision-making practices as they relate to power differential, as well as comments discussing equal or unequal voice, were also included in this subtheme. *Power Differential* was discussed in every interview.

Participant comments suggested that an equitable distribution of power among collaborators was desired. For example, Danielle (urban district) stated, “I think having more than one voice at any major decision is important.” In the M3 group interview, Shelly (peri-urban district, M3 project) compared the power distribution in this collaboration to power distributions in other collaborations:

I think sometimes if you’re looking at professional development – and even with collaboration – you know, you kind of have someone who has a set agenda. Like [Emma (peri-urban district, M3 project)] was saying, maybe one person’s opinion was how it was going to go anyway. And this time around that wasn’t true.

Emma (peri-urban district, M3 project) expanded on this concept during her individual interview:

I definitely think there were probably people, there were people there who maybe liked a certain portion or didn’t like a certain portion...the consensus is “Let’s leave this in. We’re going to leave it in.” I think that people were really respectful of that. If most people wanted it one way, then we kind of kept it that way or –



Table 33

*Participant Support for Group Dynamics and Corresponding Subthemes*

Theme/Subtheme	Participant Support														
	University					SA			UD	Peri-Urban District					
	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	1	1	2	3	4	5	
Group Dynamics	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	
Power Differential	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	
Workload and Involvement	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	
Familiarity and Rapport	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	
Collaborative Roles	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	
Group Composition	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	
Agreement	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	
Intangible Contributions	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	
Management	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	
Assimilation	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	
Modeling	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	
Ownership	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	
Formality	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	

*Note:* University – 1 = Dalia, 2 = Sean, 3 = Katrina, 4 = Rachel, 5 = University Group

Interview; State Agency (SA) – 1 = Tanya, 2 = Rebecca, 3 = Denise; Urban District (UD)

– 1 = Danielle; Peri-Urban District – 1 = Debbie, 2 – Shelly, 3 = Emma, 4 = Peri-Urban

District Group Interview, 5 = Jessica.

and, uh, I can't think of anybody who had a really strong opinion about something and we just rode on that one opinion.

Some participants did not find the power distribution to be equitable in all endeavors, however. Danielle (urban district) stated, "Position may have played a role in this collaboration." She later expanded on this comment, critiquing the practice of voting employed during a discussion as a decision-making approach:

Any one voice is going to have to be heard and valued. I think there has to be some clearly defined rules of engagements set at the very beginning so that, uh, any one voice is heard. And that the process of voting, I don't know whether a vote is something that you can use.

***Workload and Involvement.***

*Workload and Involvement* refers to factors related to workload or effort, sharing or not sharing the workload, and distribution of the workload. Comments related to assisting others, perceptions of general involvement in the collaboration, and attendance at planning sessions and trainings were also included in this subtheme. *Workload and Involvement* was discussed in each interview.

The level of joint involvement or workload varied over the course of the collaboration. Katrina (university) described this concept well:

Like I feel like we collaborate at a pretty intense level, like we do a lot of it. Um, but we also have different levels, because like we really, really collaborated on the [urban district] research proposal. But it may...there may have been like a time throughout where one of us may have just took the power point and put it together and say "here it is, it's done". So, like those different – different levels, like sometimes it'll be like two or more individuals really getting in there working together on every kind of piece. Or it just may be like at some point in time, an individual kind of taking the lead and then the other individuals may be contribute just a little bit to it.

Several participants discussed the importance of a fair or equitable distribution of the workload. For example, Debbie (peri-urban district, multiple projects) described a weakness of the collaboration:

The weakness perhaps is the fact that, um, more on our side than on your side, we are not necessarily able to maintain the same level of partnership that [the university] has come in with. And it's necessary for us to be able to collaborate, that we both maintain that level.

Rachel (university) described a situation of inequitable distribution of the workload:

“Everything was falling on a couple peoples’ shoulders and that wasn’t – that’s not how a collaboration is.” She later described a situation which caused her some frustration: “I guess maybe they felt that we weren’t collaborating, and I felt they weren’t collaborating the same.” In contrast, Shelly (peri-urban district, M3 project) felt that an equitable distribution of the workload was a strength of the collaboration. She stated, “I don’t really feel like anyone dropped the ball or didn’t hold up their end.” She later discussed the importance of not taking on the workload of another collaborator: “I think the way we had set it up where everyone kind of took a turn, um, I felt that was the fairest way. So it’s like, ‘I’m not going to take your turn for you.’” Emma (peri-urban district, M3 project) corroborated this sentiment: “You have to be careful that you’re going into a situation where you’re not going to be stuck doing everything, because then it’s not a real collaboration.” During the M3 group interview, Emma (peri-urban district, M3 project) described the workload distribution:

When we came to the table, people knew what needed to be done and what they were supposed to do. And it just kind of re-emphasized the importance of that when you’re working with other people, that you are not just liable to yourself but that they’re depending on you, too.

Several participants described assisting other collaborators who were overwhelmed by the amount of work they were attempting to accomplish. In the university group interview, Katrina (university) described receiving assistance from the state agency personnel:

I know on the first math project, that project had observations and stuff built into that. And when I told them, “I can’t do that. That portion of the project just won’t occur for me,” that was fine. They were like, “Okay, we’ll just handle the observations.”

Rachel (university) described filling in when she perceived a need: “I felt like, okay, this is where – there needs some more people over here at [the urban district]. This is where I can fill in a gap.” Katrina (university) reported approaching a need for assistance with the following thoughts:

Okay, she’s a little bit overwhelmed with all this, so let me help her with these tasks on this list or whatever, or I can knock that out for her real quick. And, you know, she can be done with that.

Emma (peri-urban district, M3 project) said, “I offered my help. You know, just let me know what I needed to do.”

Perceptions of involvement were related to perceptions of attendance. Debbie (peri-urban district, multiple projects) described her decreased attendance as a weakness of the collaboration:

I think that the first year I attended probably at least every other training. I think that as you went into the individual growing the people (that’s why I chose the word waning [regarding my involvement]), I would like to have sat in on some of that and um, did not.

Danielle (urban district) attributed low attendance to competing demands within the school system. She described this as a weakness of the collaboration:

Now, in focusing on, on when we met, myself and with your group, I think most of those meetings, 90-95% of those meetings were, um, we met the schedule. On the other ones, sometimes we had as little as 50% minimum participation.

***Familiarity and Rapport.***

The subtheme of *Familiarity and Rapport* refers to familiarity or unfamiliarity between group members, feelings of trust or distrust, rapport, and general references to the relationship between group members. References to popularity and respect were also included in this subtheme. *Familiarity and Rapport* was discussed in each interview.

Participants described a level of trust between organizations. For example, Debbie (peri-urban district, multiple projects) described not feeling the need to control the course of the collaboration: “I guess I felt trust with [the state agency] and [the university] that – I didn’t feel like I needed – because I already trust them. I felt trust in them.” Rachel (university) described respect between the state agency and the university: “I feel like they respect our insight very much.” In some situations, participants perceived a lack of rapport between collaborators. For example, Rachel (university) described the relationship between two collaborators: “There was always a tension between the coaches that I just felt made it very uncomfortable. Unfortunately, toward the end it really started to show.” In other situations, the perceived popularity of some collaborators was believed to impact group decisions. Danielle (urban district) stated, “I think there’s always going to be a popularity piece in everything we do.”

***Collaborative Roles.***

*Collaborative Roles* refers to perceptions of roles within the collaboration, role confusion, and the act of defining roles. This subtheme was discussed in each interview.

The process of defining collaborative roles was perceived as especially important during the initial phases of the collaboration. Sean (university) reported, “Nobody quite knew what the roles were going to be....So that meant in the beginning the students had to kind of – and the [state agency] folks – had to negotiate out: What roles were the students going to play?” Tanya (state agency) also described the process of establishing roles early in the collaboration:

And I can remember meeting with [Sean (university)] a couple of times and really, once we got into it, how things had kind of unfolded, [talking] more about okay, well we, not that it’s a negative thing, but just now that we know more, how can we define roles? And what is [Sean’s] role in this? And what is our role? And in terms of also, what is the, uh, the intern or the doctoral students’ roles?

Denise (state agency) reiterated the importance of defining roles: “I think the main thing you have to do upfront is decide each other’s roles and responsibilities.” Katrina (university) described a weakness of the collaboration: “Roles and responsibilities are not always clear.” Emma (peri-urban district, M3 project) felt that determining collaborative roles assisted the collaborators in establishing an equitable workload distribution, as well as individual contributions: “[We] decided how we were all going to work together. And what everybody’s role is, so everybody has something to do and something to give to the collaboration.”

Some collaborators had differing opinions regarding appropriate roles for the university students, a factor which caused some tension. Sean (university) stated that one individual “saw them as being graduate students, as being practicum students, as being school psychology [practicum] students.” Tanya’s (state agency) comment expands on this statement:

Because there was some debate, not between [Debbie (peri-urban district, multiple projects)] and I. Debbie and I always saw that, um, you weren’t interns

that had to be supervised in a sense because you had experience, you were consultants that came in. Um, [Sean (university)] and I talked about that, and everybody was on that page. What the problem became is when we brought in other people that when Debbie left and I was director, um, kind of conveying that same understanding and people having different ideas of what people's roles should be. So kind of facilitating that process of everybody getting kind of getting back on the same page of: What's everybody's role?

This viewpoint was shared by some university students, as denoted by Dalia's (university) comment in the university group interview: "[She] had some – still has – some very definite ideas about how graduate students can be helpful." In contrast, Sean (university) described other collaborators as "very supportive of the roles of the students."

***Group composition.***

The subtheme of *Group Composition* refers to comments regarding the construction and composition of the collaborative group, including any references to inter-disciplinarity or a lack thereof. This subtheme was discussed in each interview.

The group was generally described as having a diverse composition. For example, Dalia (university) stated: "I guess it's collaborative, but I see it as um, like there's three parts to the collaboration. So there's the [university] folks, there's the [state agency] folks, and then there's the whichever school system." During the M3 group interview, Shelly (peri-urban district, M3 project) described the inter-disciplinarity of the group as a strength of the collaboration:

I liked that we were a mix of different teachers in different roles. Instead of just always kindergarten or always special [education]. It was nice to hear from other people, even having the [paraprofessionals] there that work with some of the students. So I liked that.

***Agreement.***

*Agreement* refers to discussions of agreement or disagreement between collaborators. This subtheme was discussed in 13 of the 14 interviews. Examination of group and individual responses did not reveal group- or role-specific patterns of response for this subtheme.

The level of agreement or disagreement varied over the course of the collaboration. Jessica (peri-urban district, M4 project) stated of the M4 project, “I don’t feel like we ever disagreed.” Tanya (state agency) said of the initial phases of the collaboration, “I think [Sean (university)] and [Debbie (peri-urban district, multiple projects)] and I were always on the same page.” In contrast, other collaborators perceived some disagreement at times. For example, in the university group interview, Mia (university) stated, “Sometimes it was difficult to come to consensus or make decisions.” In this interview, participants linked disagreement with different backgrounds, inequitable workload, misalignment of goals, and feelings of stress. Consider the following exchange:

Mia: Between us sometimes it was difficult to come to a consensus. [*group agreement*] And depending on who was in the mix of the discussion or what we were talking about, that makes it sometimes easier or sometimes harder to come to a consensus. [*group agreement*] And so while I think, just from my perspective, when Dalia and Lynnae and myself were the students, somehow we were very...we were able to come to consensus fairly easily about a lot of things. And we didn’t have a lot of – there wasn’t a lot of heated discussion, and I think it’s because – for some reason – our background kind of... While we were different, we have similar ways that we thought about things.

Dalia: Mm-hmm.

Mia: And then you guys left and Ashley and Katrina came onto the project, and it was sometimes harder to come to consensus. Like we really talked and processed, I think, a lot more before we could come to an agreement than we did. And I’m not saying one was better than the other. Because I think that through that process



we learned a lot about different ways to look at things and learned a lot about each other.

Katrina: Oh, yes.

Mia: But it was – So I think that that was definitely just something noticeable in the way that we are able to work together. And I don't know. You kind of want that consensus to come easy, because sometimes it's uncomfortable when people have different opinions. [*group agreement*] But then again, you, I really feel like you kind of grow more. [*group agreement, laughter*]

Dalia: Through the project itself, not only do you just grow more, but the end result of the project that you have –

Mia: Is better.

Dalia: Can be much better.

Mia: It can be, yes.

Ashley: I think some of what you're saying – I was trying to just think about it – is that kind of...maybe a contributing factor is the high demand.... And you know I can't speak to – I only know that there were less projects on the plate before. In my experience, we had a very high demand of responsibilities. Which is not only led to, I think, higher energy –

Mia: Stress.

Ashley: Yes – situations.... And also limited in our ability to do what we all came together to do, which was essentially research. So we have been very limited on time in our own resources and constantly being pushed to deadlines and constantly being late and behind in trying to do things. I think that just the way – of this collaboration, that unfortunately there's been a slight imbalance at times of the work put on us. And I think that's kind of affected the collaboration in general.

Dalia: Yeah, and I would add to that, that I think that if we're going to talk about research weaknesses of the collaboration, I think that because – I don't know if it's because maybe because we work mostly out of [the state agency], when something's going to get short shrift, it tends to be the research.

Mia: Mm-hmm.

Ashley: I agree.

Dalia: And for us as students, that's a problem. Because what we need most from the project is the research.

Mia: And that was my third one. We needed more of a clear research plan from the beginning. It took us a while to kind of formulate where we were going research-wise. And we weren't really sure. And so if we had had a more clear research plan from the beginning, I think that we would have been able to make...it would have made our decision-making process maybe a little easier. I don't think it would have solved the problem that you pointed out, Ashley. We had too much work [*group agreement*] and not enough resources. Our resources were stretched so thin [*group agreement*]. I do think that that heightened stress level and pressure –

Katrina: Contributed.

Mia: Contributed to our –

Katrina: The heated discussions.

Mia: The heated discussions. [*laughter*]

### ***Intangible Contributions.***

The subtheme of *Intangible Contributions* refers to contributions of collaborators that were not related to time, effort, or attendance. Specifically, references to the offering of perspectives, skill, and expertise were coded under the subtheme of *Intangible Contributions*. Furthermore, references to a general need for each other as well as references to a lack of contributions or need for each other, were also coded under this subtheme. This subtheme was discussed in 12 of the 14 interviews. Examination of group and individual responses did not reveal group- or role-specific patterns of response for this subtheme.

Participants described the intangible contributions of other collaborators in a favorable light. For example, Jessica (peri-urban district, M4 project) said, “There was a tremendous amount of expertise. There was a lot of brain power in the room; that was obvious.” Denise (state agency) stated, “You all have your strengths. We have ours. And

it's just a, you know – when we bring them all together it just kind of benefits everyone.” Emma (peri-urban district, M3 project) reported, “I think that everybody had a lot to give to the whole thing, which was a huge strength.”

***Management.***

*Management* refers to attempts to manage the behavior of others. Descriptions of efforts to focus collaborative endeavors, facilitate discussions, manipulate the behavior of others, and employ tactfulness during discussions were also included in this subtheme.

*Management* was discussed in 12 of the interviews. Each school system representative discussed the concept of *Management*.

Participants described the process of facilitating or focusing collaborative efforts as beneficial to the process. For example, Danielle (urban district) stated, “I think when you have a collaboration, you are going to have a person that facilitates.” She later reported employing *Management* to keep the collaborative group focused on the goals set forth by urban district: “There was sometimes when I had to redirect the group, in my opinion.” Some participants reported using *Management* practices to impact the behavior of collaborators who were perceived as negatively impacting collaborative efforts. Dalia (university) discussed working with an individual she perceived to be *Expert-Oriented*: “In some ways, If I’m being snotty, I’ll say I was managing [her] through my behavior.” She later described this behavior in more detail: “I was minimizing her negative reaction so that we could begin to move forward.”

Emma (peri-urban district, M3 project) described her attempts to manage the M3 group as one of her contributions to the collaboration: “I think one of my strengths was that I’m trying to break things down. Like, ‘Who’s doing this?’ And, you know, ‘You’re

doing this part, I'm doing this part.” Likewise, Danelle (urban district) felt that her primary role within the collaboration involved the process of management. Specifically, when asked about her role within the collaboration, she responded, “I think you could say facilitator. You could call my role the owner of the project...in pulling it together. And initiating it. Making sure that we had the piece for the schools’ participation done correctly.”

***Assimilation.***

*Assimilation* refers to the process of entering the group or collaboration, being eased or thrown into the collaboration, and references to system entry processes. Discussion of these issues were coded under *Assimilation* when participants referenced both the individual and group levels. This subtheme was discussed in 11 interviews. An examination of group and individual responses revealed that each of the administrators, as well as each university representative, discussed facets of *Assimilation*.

Several participants discussed the experience of being eased into the collaboration. Katrina (university) said:

I don't think that you all were expecting us to come in and just, like from the get go, you know, run with something. I think that, you know, you all really tried to kind of ease us into the project.

Rachel (university) offered a similar sentiment: “I wasn't thrown to the wolves in any situation. So that was nice.” The process of assimilating into the collaboration was not always perceived as easy. During the university group interview, Ashley (university) said, “It was difficult to initially learn and become part of the whole collaboration.”

Katrina (university) reported that her experience of assimilation took some time, despite being supported by other collaborators: “When you come on, you have to kind of learn

[the state agency], and then you have to understand the projects, and then understand the research that we're trying to do within the projects.”

### ***Modeling.***

*Modeling* refers to demonstration or modeling of behaviors or skills. This subtheme was discussed in 10 interviews. Analysis of group and individual responses revealed that each administrator and each individual involved in the M3 project discussed the concept of *Modeling*.

Several participants described the process of modeling collaborative behaviors. For example, Debbie (peri-urban district, multiple projects) described modeling flexibility for her school district: “So I really felt like we were modeling the ‘what ifs’ and ‘how abouts.’” Rachel (university) discussed learning from the modeling of others in situations involving aggressive individuals: “It was nice to kind of sit back and see how everyone else handles a situation that I considered to be kind of difficult to deal with.” Shelly (peri-urban district, M3 project) noticed the modeling of other behaviors: “I think you guys were great models for kind of how, when you move into another level of education, or in research, this is how to present yourself.” Some participants felt that the conscious modeling of professional learning behaviors assisted in promoting those behaviors in others. For example, Sean (university) reported:

We needed to demonstrate things that we did. And the support visits and all those kinds of things that were part of the model that [the university] was working on were not at all part of what they were doing at [the state agency]. So we need to demonstrate how that stuff would work first, I think.

### ***Ownership.***

The subtheme *Ownership* refers to a sense or lack of ownership, investment, or commitment regarding the collaboration or specific projects. This subtheme was

discussed in eight interviews. Examination of group and individual responses did not reveal group- or role-specific patterns of response for this subtheme.

Participants reported a sense of ownership or commitment to the project to be important to collaborative success. Danielle (urban district) reported, “The commitment that was there would be a strength.” A lack of ownership was seen as a detriment, as conveyed by Debbie’s (peri-urban district, multiple projects) statement: “I don’t feel like the teachers own the process at a level that I’d like them to own it.” Participants also discussed a sense of ownership regarding specific project endeavors. During the M3 group interview, Brandon (peri-urban district, M3 project) described a commitment to the behavioral process that was the focus of the M3 project:

I think for me personally it was trying to continue to keep this alive at the system level cause I’m chairing the system level SST committee through our meetings with the assistant coordinator, so I’m kind of pushing this out there that we’ve got people trained in this. We could come in, we could do some more staff development. This does meet best practice, for at least tier 3 behavior intervention planning. So I guess I sort of feel invested in it because I participated all along and have kind of promoted it as well. So I have a stake.

***Formality.***

*Formality* refers to descriptions of the level of formality or informality within the group setting. This subtheme was discussed by two participants. Examination of group and individual responses did not reveal group- or role-specific patterns of response for this subtheme.

Both participants who discussed formality found less formality to be more conducive to discussion. When asked about strengths of the collaboration, Katrina (university) stated, “I think it was a little bit more informal.” Shelly M3 corroborated this view: “I think you would tie in a positive feeling with collaboration if you had it in a

more relaxed atmosphere.” She also attributed a decrease in formality to feelings of increased involvement: “I kind of felt that there was a very easy atmosphere in there as opposed to, bringing your homework and presenting it to the teacher. I liked that part about it.”

### **Outcomes.**

*Outcomes* refers to perceived or measured outcomes of the collaboration itself or the impact of participation in the collaboration on collaborators. Each participant discussed various *Outcomes* of the collaboration. Subthemes discussed under this overarching theme included *General impact, Evolution, Learning, Emotional Outcomes, Sustainability and Generalization, and Relationship Development*. Participant support for the theme of Outcomes and its corresponding subthemes are presented in Table 34.

### ***General Impact.***

*General Impact* refers to perceptions of the general impact of the collaboration on organizations or individuals and perceived successes or failures that could not be attributed to other outcome categories. This subtheme was discussed in each interview. Perceptions regarding the impact of the collaboration were largely positive. Sean (university) asserted, “Overall, I think it’s been a great experience for the students.”

Emma (peri-urban district, M3 project) said, “I thought we got a good finished product out of it.” Debbie (peri-urban district, multiple projects) said the following of the collaboration: “It’s been good. I think everyone’s been very impressed with it.” Rachel (university) said of a project that was perceived by many to be difficult: “They all had positive reactions even though it was a difficult experience for everyone.” Some collaborators questioned the general impact of the collaboration on the school districts

Table 34

*Participant Support for Outcomes and Corresponding Subthemes*

Theme/Subtheme	Participant Support														
	University					SA			UD	Peri-Urban District					
	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	1	1	2	3	4	5	
Outcomes	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	
General Impact	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	
Evolution	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	
Learning	*	*	*	*	*		*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	
Emotional Outcomes	*		*	*	*		*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	
Sustainability and															
Generalizability	*	*		*	*		*	*	*	*		*	*		
Relationship															
Development					*		*	*	*		*		*	*	

*Note:* University – 1 = Dalia, 2 = Sean, 3 = Katrina, 4 = Rachel, 5 = University Group

Interview; State Agency (SA) – 1 = Tanya, 2 = Rebecca, 3 = Denise; Urban District (UD)

– 1 = Danielle; Peri-Urban District – 1 = Debbie, 2 – Shelly, 3 = Emma, 4 = Peri-Urban

District Group Interview, 5 = Jessica.



involved. For example, Sean (university) said, “You know, our end goal is to try to influence teachers and school districts. I’m less clear about that. I think there’s been some individual impacts.” He later said, “So overall, there’s been some good – It’s mixed. There’s been some good outcomes, some that are less good.”

***Evolution.***

*Evolution* refers to growth, development, change, or evolution of the collaboration or individuals over time. References to *Learning* were *not* included in this subtheme. The subtheme of *Evolution* was discussed in each interview.

Several participants discussed changes in the collaboration itself. For example, Sean (university) said, “One of the things that surprises me – has surprised me about the project over time – is that it hasn’t been linear at all. It goes back and forth.” He later expanded on this idea: “In some ways how it’s going to work is ongoing. It’s a work in progress. It changes. It changed this year from what it was before.” During the university group interview, Ashley (university) commented, “Throughout my journey there it’s becoming more collaborative.” During the M3 group interview, Shelly (peri-urban district, M3 project) discussed the importance of personal growth: “I thought the growth from – we were participants, and then we became kind of like leaders. I thought that was valuable. You know, sometimes you want to be like, ‘Is this worth my time?’”

Collaborators also attributed changes in their behaviors to their experience within the collaboration. For example, Emma (peri-urban district, M3 project) said, “It made me much more organized when I’m collaborating and working with other people.” She also reported increased flexibility and willingness to listen:

Before I may have, um, just basically redeliver information, “This is the way it is. We’re going to do this and this.” But I think now I’m more, I’m more likely to

listen to people and listen to their ideas and maybe changes things based on their wants and their needs and their ideas.

Mia (university) said, “I am more comfortable relying on the strengths of others, letting go a little.” During the university group interview, Ashley (university) said, “I try to listen more.” Debbie (peri-urban district, multiple projects) also described changes in her system: “I think we’ve moved a little bit as a system in terms of not just shutting things down right away, which is a really exciting change to see.”

### ***Learning.***

The subtheme *Learning* refers to comments regarding learning from the collaborative experience and perceptions of an increase in knowledge. This subtheme was discussed in 13 interviews. Examination of group and individual responses did not reveal group- or role-specific patterns of response for this subtheme.

Participants reported learning about educational and collaborative practices as a result of their involvement. For example, Dalia (university) said, “I think that the two years on the project probably built my consultation skills and skills at collaborating.” During the university group interview, Katrina (university) said, “My understanding of the [professional learning] model components became clearer.” When asked what she got out of her experience in the collaboration, Danielle (urban district) replied, “An experience to hear other’s opinions about this subject which we were working with. To hear some of the current research on the subject we were involved in.” Rebecca (state agency) stated, “I learn a lot from the different people who are involved. Again, staying current, what’s going on currently.” Jessica (peri-urban district, M4 project) attributed her learning to the multi-disciplinary nature of the group: “I learned a tremendous amount

from the special [education] side. I know the math content, but the special [education] side was just fascinating.”

***Emotional Outcomes.***

*Emotional Outcomes* refers to comments expressing frustration, stress, or burnout; calming down from frustration or upset; excitement, enjoyment, or happiness; and perceptions of gratitude. This subtheme was discussed in 12 of the 14 interviews. An examination of group and individual responses revealed that each school system representative discussed *Emotional Outcomes*.

Participants reported feelings of frustration in relation to various factors. Debbie (peri-urban district, multiple projects) described feeling frustrated and discouraged by the impact of competing demands on collaborative efforts:

It was very discouraging for me that we were at that crossroad where I knew I had a principal who was very involved and interested in the training. I knew I had teachers who were invested and definitely were getting from the training all or more than what they expected and yet life was conflicting for them. Um, so the [pause] my latest involvement was really a frustration of how do we do this. We want to do this, we just don't know if we can.

Dalia (university) described frustration stemming from her perceptions of the treatment she received at the hands of another collaborator: “By the end of the first year I was frustrated enough that I wasn't sure that I wanted to keep going.” Denise (state agency) described frustration in response to a lack of perceived involvement and insufficient attendance at a professional learning project: “Okay, and that made me mad. Okay? And it made me frustrated.”

Participants also described positive feelings regarding collaborative process. For example, Emma (peri-urban district, M3 project) described her reaction to the M3 group's communication practices: “Everybody listened to what people had to say, and I

felt good about it.” Some participants reported feelings of excitement related to perceived success. For example, Rachel (university) discussed encouraging a school system representative to think critically about an educational program:

That was kind of neat to be able to see him – and he honestly went back and talked with different people and talked with the principal and tried to figure out why did they do that. So it made me feel really good. I was really excited.

***Sustainability and Generalization.***

*Sustainability and Generalization* refers to perceived success or failure to sustain or generalize the collaboration, research, or professional learning content. References to future behaviors of seeking or not seeking collaboration were also coded under this subtheme. *Sustainability and Generalization* was discussed in 10 interviews. A comparison of group and individual responses revealed that each organizational administrator discussed this subtheme.

The university personnel discussed the generalization of professional learning approaches within the state agency. Sean (university) said:

You know, that we can see some concrete evidence of things that are part of what we’ve tried to do there are now kind of standard protocol. Which were clearly not there before and are clearly not there at other [state agencies]. So I think there’s good reason we’ve had a positive impact on them....At least as long as [Denise (state agency)] is – wherever [Denise (state agency)] is doing this kind of thing, she’ll be thinking in those terms.

During the group interview, university students also perceived this trend:

Ashley: And they’ve been taking ideas and stuff that we do and just kind of using them. And I think we probably do the same. We take a lot of their knowledge.

Dalia: But that’s the whole idea behind the sustainability.

Mia: Yep.

Denise (state agency) corroborated these sentiments: “We have incorporated bits and pieces of that into what we do.”

Participants also discussed the sustainability of the professional learning content.

Shelly (peri-urban district, M3 project) said:

This is something that I can use next year and the next year and the next year. So I think that’s just, it just kind of made it more valid to me that I could now take this back to my school to other people, and it can make a difference.

Despite perceiving the general benefits of the professional learning content and expressing sustainability at an individual level, collaborators on the M3 project expressed frustration regarding a perceived lack of sustainability at the system level. Consider the following exchange:

Evelyn: ...I’m not sure that there was a clear expectation for what are we going to do now that we know how to do this. Like, we spent all these two years on this process, and I don’t know that the people in higher places even understood it.

Shelly: No.

Brandon: That’s one of [my weaknesses]. Lack of administrative support.

Shelly: I said that, too.

Emma: Mhmm.

Shelly: No buy-in.

Brandon: Yeah, we had to have my department set this up, but really didn’t have much interest after-

Shelly: Didn’t come.

Brandon: Didn’t come.

Evelyn: I think maybe the first one said hello.

Brandon: And didn’t really sustain anything. There was no responsibility delegated to anybody else. There was no administrative buy-in, as you said. So we

were kind of – took the ball and ran with it. And I think there’s still, at least on my part, the belief that this would be-

Emma: A system-wide kind of thing?

Brandon: It should be system-wide in implementation.

Evelyn: And beneficial. It’s not like it would be, I think, just another piece of paper. It’s very beneficial.

Brandon: And this is very useful methodology for functional behavioral assessment and behavior intervention planning. It’s what we ought to be implementing systematically for at least our tier 3 and tier 4 students. And yet, ...it’s alive. It’s still out there smoldering in the grass. You know the idea that this would become a real wave of change within the school system hasn’t begun to happen, so [*pause*]. And again, there’s nobody pushing it who controls the money and authority to get this going. So it still falls back on the grass roots at this point to keep it going.

Finally, participants discussed the impact of this experience on their plans to seek collaboration in future endeavors. During the M3 group interview, Brandon (peri-urban district, M3 project) said:

I was thinking, “Well, yeah, heck, the teachers in this system are a lot smarter than me. I better keep collaborating with them.” [*laughter*] So, I don’t know, in a lot of ways it just reinforced that nature of approach in my work.

Ashley (university) stated on her group interview questionnaire, “I look around more widely for people and groups to collaborate with.”

### ***Relationship Development.***

The subtheme of *Relationship Development* refers to perceptions regarding the development or lack thereof of a relationship between collaborators. This subtheme was discussed in seven interviews. Examination of group and individual responses did not reveal group- or role-specific patterns of response for this subtheme.

Some participants described perceiving the development of a relationship between collaborators. For example, Danielle (urban district) said, “In the collaboration piece, a

relationship had started to develop. An understanding, at least it was supposed to take whether it was fully understood.” Jessica (peri-urban district, M4 project) described establishing a relationship with professional learning participants: “I was able to connect with the teacher group that I was working with.” Shelly (peri-urban district, M3 project) described collaboration as a conduit for *Relationship Development*: “It’s a great way to connect – not feel so isolated.”

### **Textural-Structural Synthesis Presentation: The Phenomenon of Collaborating in a Professional Learning Focused University-Community-School Collaboration**

The composite textural-structural synthesis of the data provides an understanding of how the participants perceived the various themes and subthemes to relate to or impact one another (Moustakas, 1994). This aspect of data analysis is meant to represent the participant group as a whole by combining the perceptions of all participants. As such, the perceptions of the participants regarding the phenomenon under study and the meaning they derived from their experiences are not attributed to individuals. However, the inter-organizational nature of the current sample resulted in some variations of experience that were unique to particular organizational groups. In order to accurately reflect the experiences of the collaborative group as a whole, as well as the different organizational groups, the current textural-structural synthesis differentiates those experiences that were unique to a particular organizational group from experiences shared across organizations.

The participants in the current study described collaborative process as a complex and multi-faceted experience involving a multitude of variables that were interrelated in a variety of ways. An examination of the textural and structural experiences of each

participant revealed that these interrelated variables, or subthemes, could be synthesized into seven main ideas, including Group Composition and Intangible Contributions, Goals and Focus, Assimilation and System Entry, Involvement in the Collaboration, Collaborative Roles, Personality, and Outcomes. The present textural-structural synthesis presents each of these main ideas in the language of the participants themselves. Furthermore, the participants' descriptions of these main ideas was examined in detail to ascertain the relationships participants perceived among the myriad subthemes identified in this study. An overview of the main ideas and the themes and subthemes participants reported to be related to those main ideas is presented in Table 35.

#### **Group composition and intangible contributions.**

A visual representation of the Group Composition and relevant factors is presented in Figure 2. The diverse composition of the collaborative group was seen as a strength by collaborators across organizations. The mix of professional backgrounds allowed the collaborators to provide different perspectives regarding professional learning content and delivery, as well as approaches toward the process of collaborating. Many collaborators felt that the diversity of the collaborative group contributed to individual learning and personal growth. Furthermore, the different organizations provided unique contributions to the collaboration. Specifically, the schools brought the consideration of practical issues, the state agency assisted with funding and dissemination of information across the state, and the university brought a research and problem solving perspective. Collaborators believed that the contributions of each organization were needed to make the collaboration effective.



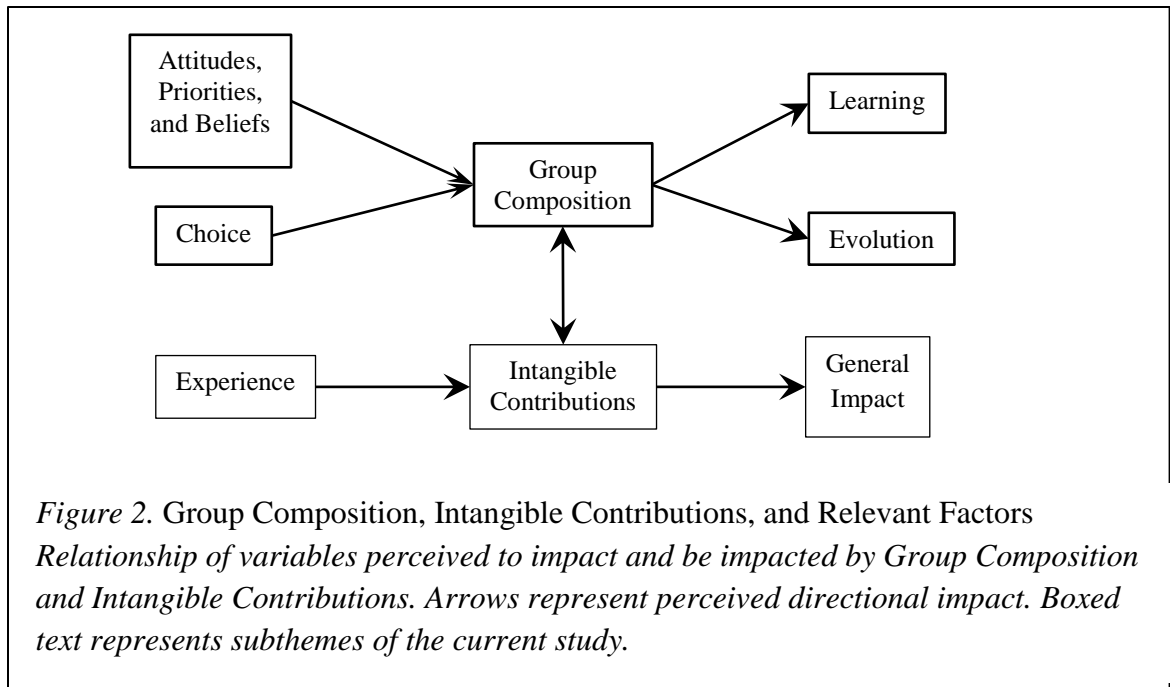
Table 35

*Textural-Structural Synthesis Overview*

	Collaborative Structure	Communication	Characteristics	Group Dynamics	Outcomes
Group Composition and Intangible Contributions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Choice</li> </ul>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Experience</li> <li>• Attitudes, Priorities, and Beliefs</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Intangible Contributions</li> <li>• Group Composition</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Learning</li> <li>• Evolution</li> </ul>
Goals and Focus	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Goal Misalignment</li> <li>• Administration and Supervision</li> <li>• Time and Resources</li> </ul>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Culture</li> <li>• Flexibility and Openness</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Group Composition</li> <li>• Workload and Involvement</li> <li>• Agreement</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• General Impact</li> <li>• Emotional Outcomes</li> </ul>
Assimilation and System Entry	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Goals and Focus</li> <li>• Staff Changes</li> <li>• Time and Resources</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Supportive Communication</li> <li>• Clarifying and Asking Questions</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Competence and Skill</li> <li>• Personality</li> <li>• Comfort and Anxiety</li> <li>• Culture</li> <li>• Flexibility and Openness</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Collaborative Roles</li> <li>• Familiarity and Rapport</li> <li>• Group Composition</li> <li>• Workload and Involvement</li> <li>• Modeling</li> <li>• Agreement</li> <li>• Management</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Emotional Outcomes</li> <li>• Relationship Development</li> </ul>
Involvement in the Collaboration	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Goals and Focus</li> <li>• Time and Resources</li> <li>• Administration and Supervision</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Brainstorming</li> <li>• Clarifying and Asking Questions</li> <li>• Talking</li> <li>• Listening</li> <li>• Negotiation</li> <li>• Body Language</li> <li>• Supportive Communication</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Organized and Prepared</li> <li>• Competence and Skill</li> <li>• Comfort and Anxiety</li> <li>• Self-Motivated</li> <li>• Passivity and Aggressiveness</li> <li>• Expert-Oriented</li> <li>• Understanding</li> <li>• Taking Personally</li> <li>• Culture</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Workload and Involvement</li> <li>• Ownership</li> <li>• Group Composition</li> <li>• Agreement</li> <li>• Power Differential</li> <li>• Management</li> <li>• Familiarity and Rapport</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Emotional Outcomes</li> <li>• Relationship Development</li> <li>• General Impact</li> </ul>
Collaborative Roles	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Administration and Supervision</li> <li>• Goals and Focus</li> <li>• Time and Resources</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Negotiation</li> </ul>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Group Composition</li> <li>• Workload and Involvement</li> <li>• Agreement</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Relationship Development</li> <li>• Emotional Outcomes</li> <li>• General Impact</li> </ul>
Personality	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Goals and Focus</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Talking</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Flexibility and Openness</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Agreement</li> <li>• Management</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Emotional Outcomes</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Time and Resources</li> </ul>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Self-Motivated</li> <li>• Team-Oriented</li> <li>• Expert-Oriented</li> <li>• Detail-Oriented</li> <li>• Comfort and Anxiety</li> <li>• Organized and Prepared</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Workload and Involvement</li> <li>• Power Differential</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• General Impact</li> </ul>
Outcomes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Goals and Focus</li> <li>• Administration and Supervision</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Listening</li> <li>• Clarifying and Asking</li> <li>• Questions</li> <li>• Talking</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Expert-Oriented</li> <li>• Flexibility and Openness</li> <li>• Self-Motivated</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Management</li> <li>• Workload and Involvement</li> <li>• Power Differential</li> <li>• Collaborative Roles</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• General Impact</li> <li>• Learning</li> <li>• Evolution</li> <li>• Sustainability and Generalizability</li> <li>• Relationship Development</li> <li>• Emotional Outcomes</li> </ul>

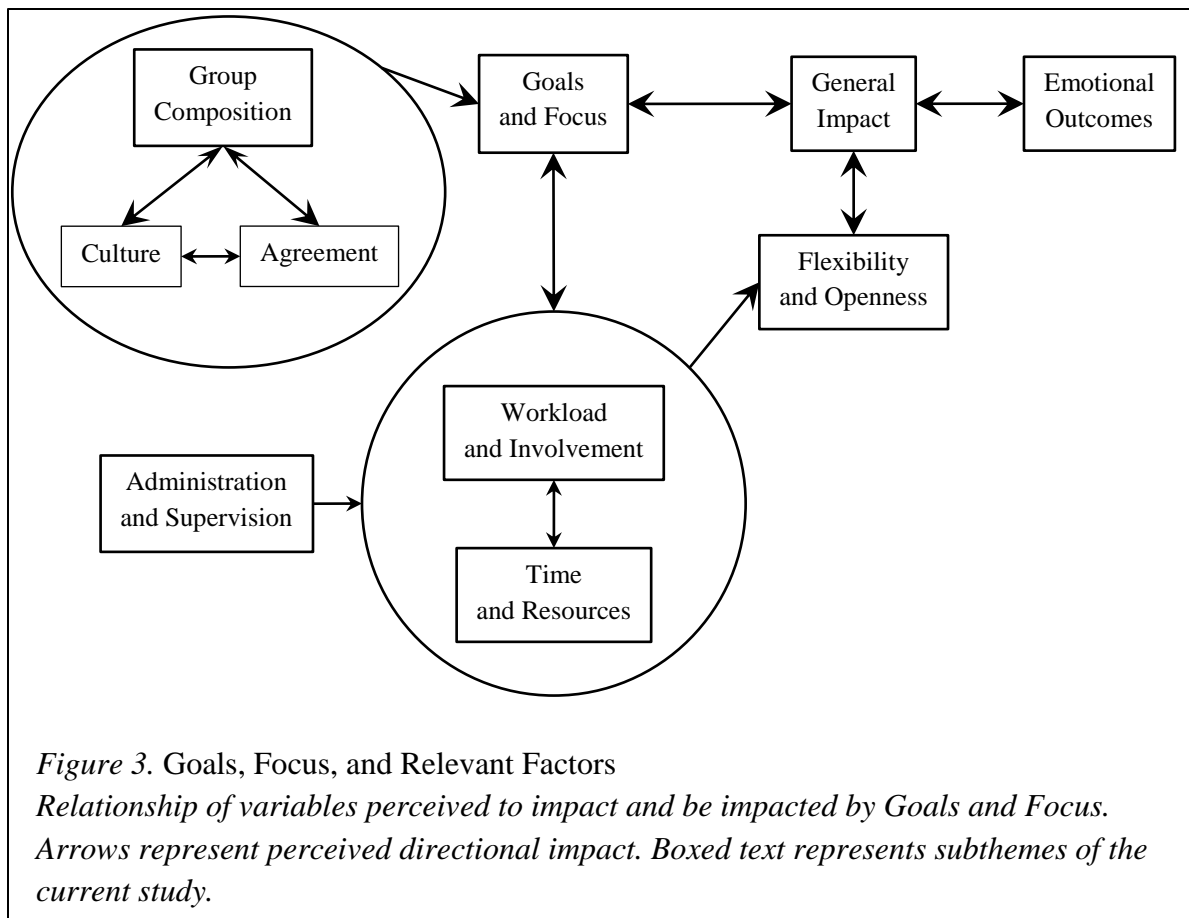
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Nearly every collaborator entered the collaboration with feelings of excitement about and a belief in the effectiveness of collaboration. While some individuals experienced a decrease in excitement about this specific university-community-school collaboration as their feelings of frustration with various challenges grew, their attitudes toward collaboration in general did not change. Nearly every collaborator joined the collaboration voluntarily, a factor which was seen as a strength by most collaborators.

### **Goals and focus.**

A visual representation of the Goals and Focus of the collaboration and relevant factors is presented in Figure 3. The collaboration was created with the overarching purpose of developing and delivering high quality professional learning and professional



support to local educators; however, the collaborators across organizations had differing opinions regarding the practices associated with high quality professional learning. This made the process of developing projects and sustaining changes in professional learning delivery difficult. Furthermore, the different organizations involved entered into the collaboration with additional unique goals. For example, the state agency engaged in the collaboration with the primary purpose of increasing resources and manpower. The university entered into the collaboration with the primary purposes of researching professional development practices and building long-term relationships with the state agency and local school districts. The effort to conduct research was made more

challenging for the university students by limited supervision and guidance. The effort to build relationships was made more challenging during initial phases of the collaboration by different expectations among collaborators regarding the role of university students. Both university and non-university collaborators believed that the university's focus on building relationships increased the power of the collaboration. In contrast, the school systems that joined the collaboration did so with the primary purpose of receiving training and support in predetermined content areas. Some university collaborators perceived this focus to limit research efforts in part because the focus of the school systems often changed yearly, limiting the university's ability to determine long-term impacts of the professional learning projects. The school system administrators also discussed the secondary goal of building relationships with the state agency and university; however, this goal was not addressed by other school system personnel such as teachers and support staff. One school system expressed the additional goals of engaging in research and increasing teacher ownership over educational practices.

***Goal alignment and prioritization.***

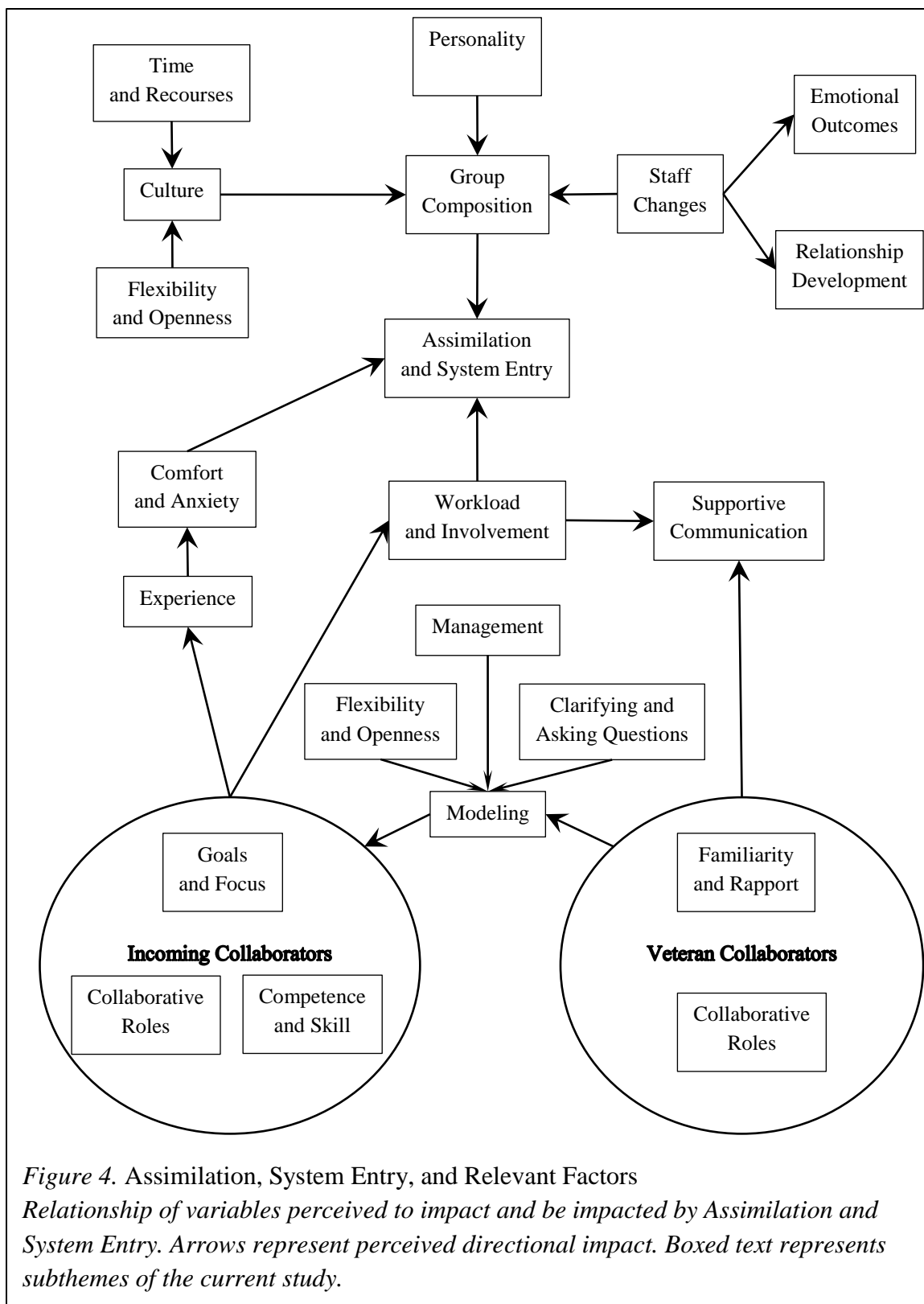
The diversity of the goals of each organization limited the alignment of goals during joint efforts. University personnel conveyed the perspective that at times, it seemed to fall to the university students to attempt to manage the different needs and goals in order to produce a product that was acceptable to all parties. Because the goals were more often additive as opposed to conflicting, the university students had the most difficulty meeting all goals when the required workload exceeded the time and resources available to the students.

When the workload involved in addressing all goals exceeded the manpower available, the collaborators were required to prioritize the goals and postpone their attention to one or more endeavors. The state agency and school system administrators were generally supportive of the university's goal of research; however, the university staff was often over-extended and could not address both the professional learning and research goals in the time available. At these times, the university goal of research was usually postponed in favor of developing high quality professional learning, a decision that was influenced by the goal of establishing long-term relationships with the other organizations. It is possible that this decision was also influenced by the prioritization of short-term contingencies over long-term contingencies. For example, collaborators were frequently faced with short-term responsibilities such as developing a training to be presented the following week. In contrast, research related tasks were typically extended over long periods of time, allowing for the frequent delay of those tasks in favor of more immediate professional learning related needs. Over time, this became a source of significant stress and frustration, as the students' primary purpose for joining the collaboration was to engage in research.

Neither state agency nor school system representatives addressed the issue of goal misalignment. It is possible that the university personnel's efforts to prioritize the goals of the collaborating organizations prevented those organizations from becoming aware of goal conflicts or neglect.

#### **Assimilation and system entry.**

A visual representation of Assimilation and System Entry and relevant factors is presented in Figure 4. The process of entering the collaboration involved the



development of relationships; collaborative roles; and personal, organizational, and joint goals. This process was repeated to some degree with the entry of each collaborator or organization. The experience of entering the collaboration, as well as the experience of accepting new collaborators or organizations, was complex and somewhat challenging for nearly every collaborator involved. For incoming collaborators, concerns were often centered on personal or organizational goals, establishing collaborative roles, and feelings of competence regarding collaborative endeavors. For existing collaborators, concerns were often centered on changing relationships and redefining collaborative roles. The assimilation process was impacted by several factors which changed over time, resulting in differing experiences of assimilation for the collaborators who joined the partnership at different points in time.

*Staff changes and personality.*

One factor that seemed to have significant impact on the experience of assimilation and system entry was the recurrent change in staff at the state agency during the initial phases of the collaboration. Both administrators and consultants changed multiple times, requiring state agency and university personnel to begin the process of assimilation again with each change in staff. The addition and resignation of university students over the course of the collaboration also resulted in repeated assimilation experiences, both for incoming and existing collaborators. Changes in university representatives impacted state agency, university, and school system personnel. While sometimes stressful, the addition of new staff often eventually led to feelings of increased involvement and excitement.



***Experience and anxiety.***

Regarding individuals who were new to the collaboration, previous experiences both with collaboration in general and the content of specific professional learning projects in particular impacted their sense of comfort or anxiety regarding joining the collaboration. Specifically, individuals with more experience in either collaborative endeavors or professional learning topics felt less anxiety upon joining the collaboration than individuals with less experience. Several collaborators from the university and school systems discussed entering the collaboration with insufficient knowledge regarding *how* to collaborate.

***Group composition and culture.***

The composition of the collaborative group impacted the process of assimilation for new collaborators due to the differences in backgrounds and personalities of the different collaborators. Yearly staff changes within the state agency and university personnel resulted in a frequently changing collaborative group. This factor added to the complexity of assimilation, especially regarding the process of building relationships. The different organizations, and in particular the different school systems, were also described as having unique personalities or cultures. As such, the process of assimilation varied depending on the school systems involved. School systems that were more hierarchical in nature generally required a longer process of system entry and assimilation. These organizations were characterized by less flexible decision-making, chain of command, and communication practices and structures. It seemed that the more political or hierarchical the school system, the more likely they were to have ongoing issues that impacted professional learning projects but that were unrelated to those

projects. In these situations, collaborators found it beneficial to employ patience and flexibility so as to best meet the needs of the systems while maintaining the collaborative relationship.

### ***Workload and modeling.***

At some points in the collaboration, the workload was sufficiently heavy to increase the difficulty of the assimilation process. Veteran collaborators attempted to minimize this challenge by taking on a greater share of the workload and reassuring new collaborators regarding reasonable expectations of skill and knowledge. Several collaborators described observing veteran collaborators during the process of assimilation, a factor which was perceived to lead to learning and decreased anxiety. Behaviors modeled by veteran collaborators included communication practices such as clarifying and listening, as well as management practices such as encouraging the participation of each collaborator and addressing disagreements with flexibility and openness. New collaborators were required to find a balance between observing veteran collaborators and attempting increased involvement over time.

### **Involvement in the collaboration.**

A visual representation of perceptions of involvement in the collaboration and relevant factors is presented in Figure 5. Feelings of involvement within the collaboration were linked to several other characteristics of the collaboration, including inter-group interaction and planning, attendance at planning meetings and trainings, the amount and distribution of the workload, goal alignment, personal contributions, the power differential between collaborators, and communication practices.

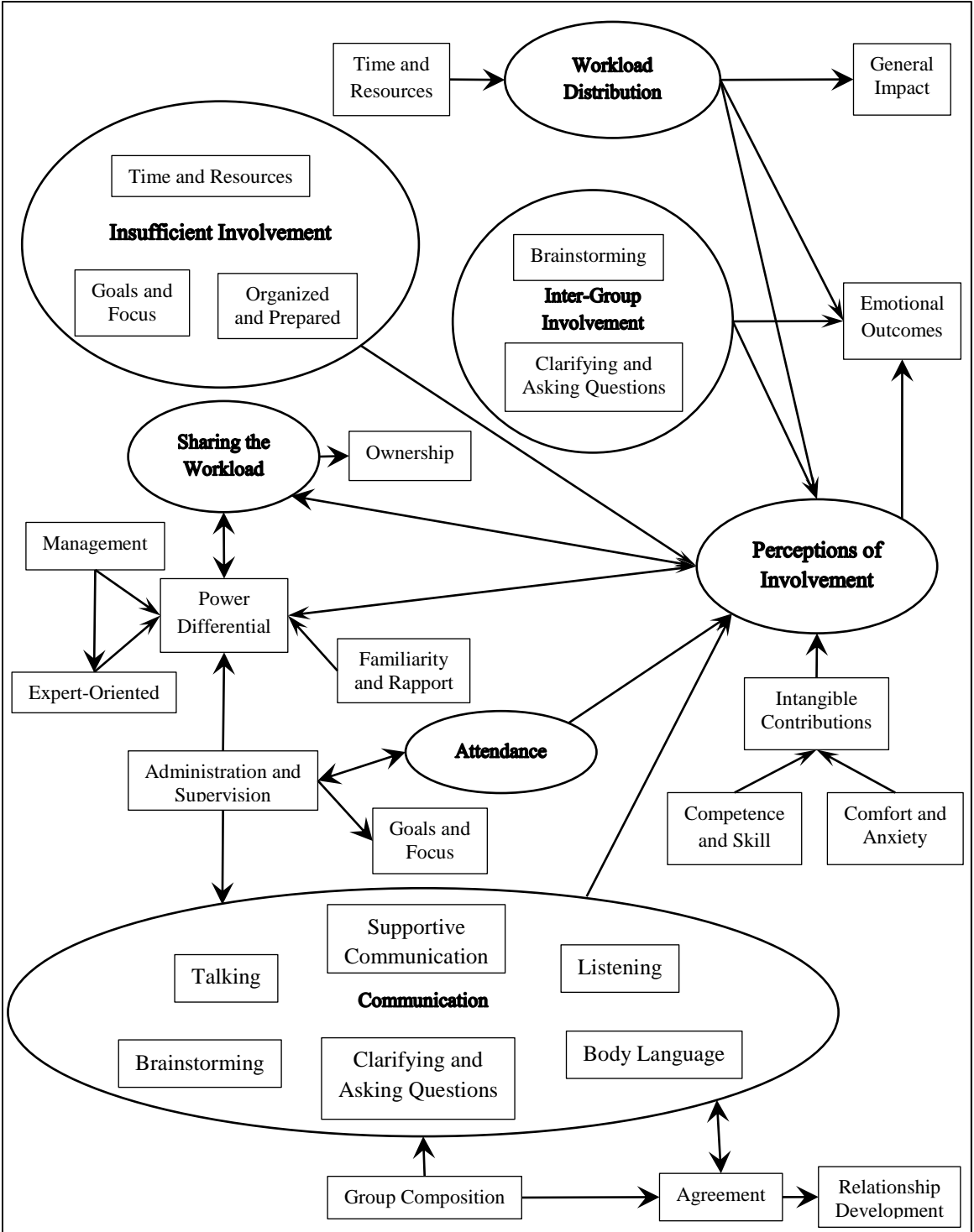


Figure 5. Perceptions of Involvement and Relevant Factors  
Relationship of variables perceived to impact and be impacted by Perceptions of Involvement. Arrows represent perceived directional impact. Boxed text represents subthemes of the current study.

***Inter-group involvement.***

Individual involvement within the collaboration and with other specific collaborators varied considerably during the course of the collaboration. Sometimes most or all of the collaborators involved at any given time would work together, and at other times collaborators would branch out to work on tasks individually or in smaller groups.

The level of involvement between the university and state agency personnel changed over the course of the collaboration, as well. While both state agency and university personnel perceived this change, only the university personnel articulated distinct phases of involvement. Initially, university students were primarily asked to provide manpower to established and ongoing state agency projects without being invited to assist with planning. During this phase, university students experienced worry regarding the perceived benefit of their assistance and frustration regarding the lack of relevance between the professional learning projects and their own research goals. Next, the university students were given several professional learning projects to design and run without state agency involvement. Over time, state agency involvement in the university projects increased, and state agency staff began asking for the opinions of university students regarding state agency projects. During this phase, the two groups worked primarily independently but consulted with one another regarding content and approach. Eventually, the groups began to work together again on projects, returning to joint manpower with the added component of joint planning. This additional interaction resulted in an increase in the workload placed on the university students. While seen as worthwhile and an indication of collaborative success, this increase in workload also generated significant stress. It is interesting to note that while the university personnel

expressed varying emotional outcomes when discussing this aspect of their experience, state agency personnel only conveyed general positive feelings regarding their ability to work with university personnel.

***Attendance.***

Most collaborators found attendance and perceptions of involvement to be correlated. Specifically, physically attending planning meetings and trainings led to greater feelings of involvement on the part of all collaborators. Collaborators who did not attend meetings consistently were perceived to be less involved than those with frequent attendance. Attendance and scheduling were often a challenge for several university and school system collaborators, however, due to competing demands unassociated with the collaboration.

***Time and resources.***

Collaborators across organizations perceived the workload involved in the collaboration as large and challenging. In particular, the university students found the large workload to be a consistent source of stress because the workload demands often exceeded the resources available to the students. The university students perceived that there was a slight imbalance in terms of the workload placed on them compared to the workload placed on other collaborators, a factor which might have negatively impacted the collaboration. Over time, the state agency recognized the heavy workload placed on the university students and reduced some of their responsibilities.

***Teamwork and trust development.***

Collaborators across organizations discussed the importance of sharing the workload. The construct of sharing the workload was complex and included the need for

each collaborator to pull their own weight, assist collaborators who had become overwhelmed, and refuse to take on the responsibilities of individuals who were not perceived as needing assistance. Collaborators engaged in these behaviors in order to fulfill responsibilities, become involved in the collaboration, and decrease or prevent feelings of frustration or resentment in their fellow collaborators. The process of sharing the workload often contributed to the development of trust between collaborators and a sense of ownership in the final product.

***Insufficient involvement.***

Some collaborators were perceived to not contribute satisfactorily to the planning and execution of collaborative endeavors. Three hypotheses were proposed to explain this phenomenon. Specifically, one collaborator suggested that the goals between all of the individual collaborators were not in alignment, causing the collaborators whose goals were not being addressed to decrease their involvement. It should be noted that most collaborators responded to issues of goal misalignment by becoming more involved in an attempt to address all goals.

Another collaborator suggested that some collaborators were too prepared upon entering planning sessions, preventing other collaborators from contributing fully in the decision-making process. Again, it should be noted that most collaborators across organizations perceived organization to be a positive characteristic. Furthermore, several collaborators who were commended for their organization were also commended for their ability to actively involve other collaborators during planning sessions.

A third collaborator suggested that some collaborators were unable to engage fully in the collaboration due to systemic organizational issues unrelated to the

collaboration. Collaborators across organizations described experiencing personal and professional obligations that were in conflict with collaboration demands. It is possible that some collaborators were unable to find a balance between these responsibilities.

In general, collaborators responded to the unsatisfactory involvement of others by attempting to fill the perceived gap left by the uninvolved collaborators.

***Personal contributions.***

The degree of individual involvement was also impacted by the extent to which individuals felt that they could personally contribute to the collaboration. Individuals who felt competent or comfortable to perform a specific task were more likely to volunteer for that task. Within some group compositions, this became an important factor in determining the distribution of the workload. The tendency of some collaborators to take on tasks that made other collaborators anxious was seen as a strength of the collaboration.

***Communication.***

Communication practices within the collaborative group were also reported to impact feelings of involvement. Several collaborators felt that the size and complexity of the collaborative group could have led to confusion and disorganization; as such, they cited the necessity of clear and consistent communication in maintaining effectiveness. The state agency consultants often served as a liaison between school systems and the state agency director. The university students also served as a liaison between the university faculty member, the state agency administrator, and the different school systems.

*Brainstorming.*

A large portion of the workload involved the planning of future projects. This planning was conducted through face-to-face meetings and via e-mail. Both venues were perceived as effective means of communication. The act of planning required a great deal of discussion, which was facilitated by the communicative behaviors of speaking, listening, and asking questions. This process also took a great deal of time, and decisions were not made quickly. One collaborator likened the planning process to a wave, and several collaborators described it as a back and forth process.

*Talking and Listening.*

Each collaborator discussed the importance of talking and *not* talking at appropriate times. Voicing opinions, suggestions, and feedback were considered an important part of the collaborative process, especially during planning efforts. Several collaborators also discussed the need to avoid talking at times in order to give others the opportunity to speak. They described coming to the realization over the course of their involvement that they did not have to speak in order to say that they collaborated. The act of not talking was described differently from the act of listening. Listening was also a factor that several collaborators cited as important to communication in general and decision-making in particular. Some collaborators reported that individuals listened to other collaborators during disagreements as well as times of consensus.

*Questions, body language, and support.*

Other aspects of communication included clarifying meaning, paraphrasing, and asking for information or feedback. These behaviors were described as particularly important when establishing goals and encouraging the participation of other individuals.



The practice of paraphrasing was described as effective in calming individuals who were perceived as aggressive. Some individuals hypothesized that paraphrasing provided a second voice to a suggestion or opinion, increasing the comfort of the individual who initially voiced the opinion. Some collaborators experienced anxiety regarding asking questions because they initially felt the need to have all the answers. They reported that it was necessary to give up an expert role in order to ask questions, which they felt ultimately contributed to the development of a higher quality product. Some collaborators mentioned that they might have unintentionally conveyed frustration or a lack of patience through body language. Finally, collaborators engaged in supportive communications such as encouragement of others in order to increase feelings of involvement.

*Agreement.*

At times, the collaborators disagreed on goals or courses of action. During these times, the ease with which the collaborative group obtained consensus was perceived to be determined by the group composition. Some groups reached consensus more easily than other groups. The collaborators attributed this difference to feelings of stress brought on by the heavy workload and to variations in the diversity of background experiences within the collaborative group, with greater diversity leading to increased disagreement. Occurrences of disagreement were not viewed as a negative feature of the collaboration, although they did cause some temporary discomfort. Instead, several collaborators described disagreements as opportunities for growth and reported that they resulted in a better product. Several factors were described as helpful in addressing disagreements or challenges. Specifically, collaborators reported the importance of understanding the

perspective of other collaborators in addressing disagreements. This was perceived by some collaborators to be difficult for collaborators who were very close to a situation.

When collaborators became upset during disagreements, other collaborators generally responded by listening, showing concern, and paraphrasing to demonstrate understanding. Several collaborators also described approaching some challenges or disagreements with an attitude of acceptance, which was characterized by refraining from disagreeing or becoming frustrated. This behavior was seen as positive by some collaborators and negative by others. Conversely, some collaborators reported approaching disagreements with persistence, a behavior that was generally perceived as effective in obtaining desired results. A few collaborators also reported feeling that disagreements and challenges should not be taken personally. While the disagreement between collaborators sometimes resulted in discomfort, it seemed as if the group and the project grew more as a result.

*Communication with administrators and supervisors.*

For the university students, the process of communication was perceived to be complicated by the need to report to two administrators: the state agency director and the university faculty member. These individuals were often not present during planning and work meetings, requiring that communication be conducted primarily via e-mail or phone. When either or both of the administrative individuals were difficult to reach, the collaborative group's ability to make decisions and accomplish tasks was hindered. This aspect of the collaboration led to feelings of frustration and confusion for some collaborators. The university faculty member addressed the issue of communication as

well, reporting that the general effectiveness of the collaboration seemed improved when communication was consistent between the university and state agency administrators.

*Power differential.*

Finally, the sense of equity or power differential within the group was related to feelings of involvement. Specifically, the relationship between feelings of involvement and the power differential within the collaborative group appeared to be bidirectional, because either factor could impact perceptions of the other factor. On one hand, the degree to which each individual felt involved in the group and contributed to the workload impacted their sense of equity within the group, both as it related to decision-making practices and as it related to a sense of personal importance within the group. Conversely, the degree to which each individual felt that the relationship between collaborators was equitable impacted their willingness to share the workload and their feelings of involvement within the collaboration. Generally, the collaborators treated each other as equals, and each collaborator contributed to decision-making practices.

*Management and expert-oriented collaborators.*

Several factors impacted the sense of equity within the collaborative group. One of these factors was related to efforts to manage or guide the collaborative group during decision-making practices. This practice was perceived to increase equity when the individual managing the group made an attempt to encourage participation from each collaborator and to inhibit equity when they were perceived to not encourage participation. Some individuals were perceived as unable to give up an expert role within the collaboration. These individuals were perceived to implement a power differential between collaborators by asserting their expertise and minimizing the contributions of

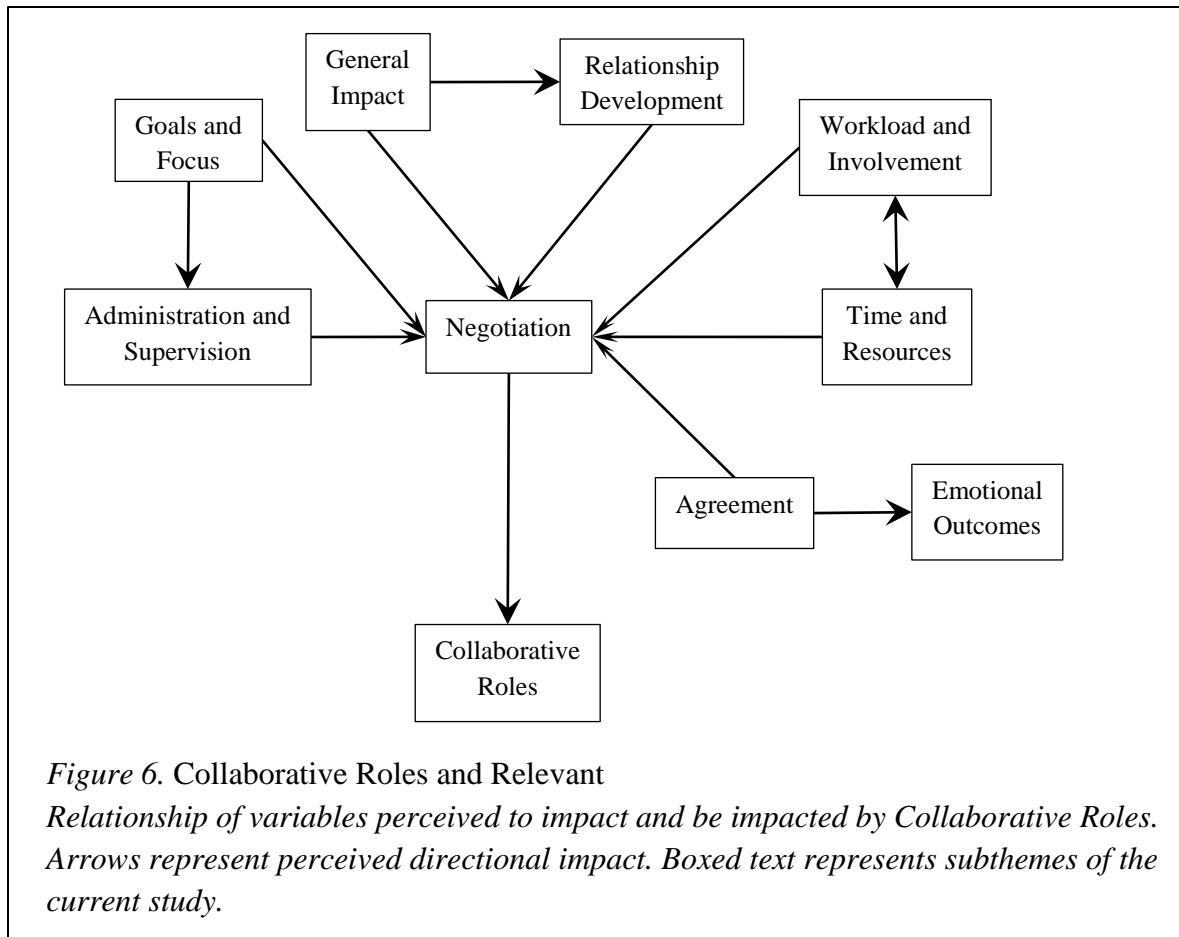
other collaborators. Other collaborators sometimes attempted to manage the behavior of expert-oriented collaborators by deferring to their expertise on unimportant issues. This practice was perceived to increase equity by minimizing expert-oriented collaborators' negative reactions to the contributions of others.

*Familiarity, administration, and goal alignment.*

Other factors that were proposed as possible hindrances to equitable decision-making practices and communication included the popularity of some collaborators and the supervisory role of other collaborators. Specifically, one individual felt that some collaborators were uncomfortable disagreeing with individuals who were perceived as popular within the group or with individuals who held a position of professional power outside of the collaborative setting. There was also a complex interaction between school system needs and equity in the collaboration. Administrative support at the school system level increased the freedom of design enjoyed by the collaborators. In contrast, school system needs that were not open for debate reduced collaborator freedom in designing the professional learning projects and in providing choice to professional learning participants.

**Collaborative roles.**

A visual representation of collaborative roles and relevant factors is presented in Figure 6. The establishment of collaborative roles was an important and continuously evolving task. It was a necessary part of system entry and assimilation, and it impacted feelings of involvement within the collaboration. Some collaborators expressed surprise at the consistent need to define and redefine collaborative roles. Collaborators described



taking on several different roles within the collaboration, including facilitative, communicative, and supportive roles.

*Negotiation, goals, and trust.*

The process of establishing roles required frequent negotiation, which involved administrators and other collaborators. Several factors were perceived to impact the negotiation of and decisions regarding collaborative roles, including goals, the establishment of trust, differing expectations, workload, and resources. During the initial phases of the collaboration, negotiations regarding collaborative roles required consideration of the goals each administrator had regarding responsibilities of the collaborators and supervision of those collaborators who were also university students. These negotiations took some time to conduct but were not contentious in nature. When establishing collaborative roles with different school systems, goals regarding the content and amount of training requested impacted the roles taken on by each collaborator. Throughout the course of the collaboration, the amount of work required and the presence of competing demands also impacted the roles of each collaborator. Furthermore, changes in workload, time available, and competing demands required frequent renegotiation of roles.

*Differing expectations.*

There were some differences in opinion regarding the roles appropriate for some collaborators. In particular, one collaborator who was not in an administrative role frequently attempted to engage in a supervisory role over university students despite the fact that neither the students nor administrators found this behavior acceptable. Administrators across organizations perceived this behavior to complicate the process of

establishing collaborative roles. Furthermore, the behavior resulted in considerable frustration for the university students and consideration of leaving the collaboration. This issue was not resolved, and the individual who disagreed regarding the roles of the university students eventually significantly decreased her involvement in the collaborative process while maintaining her position within her organization.

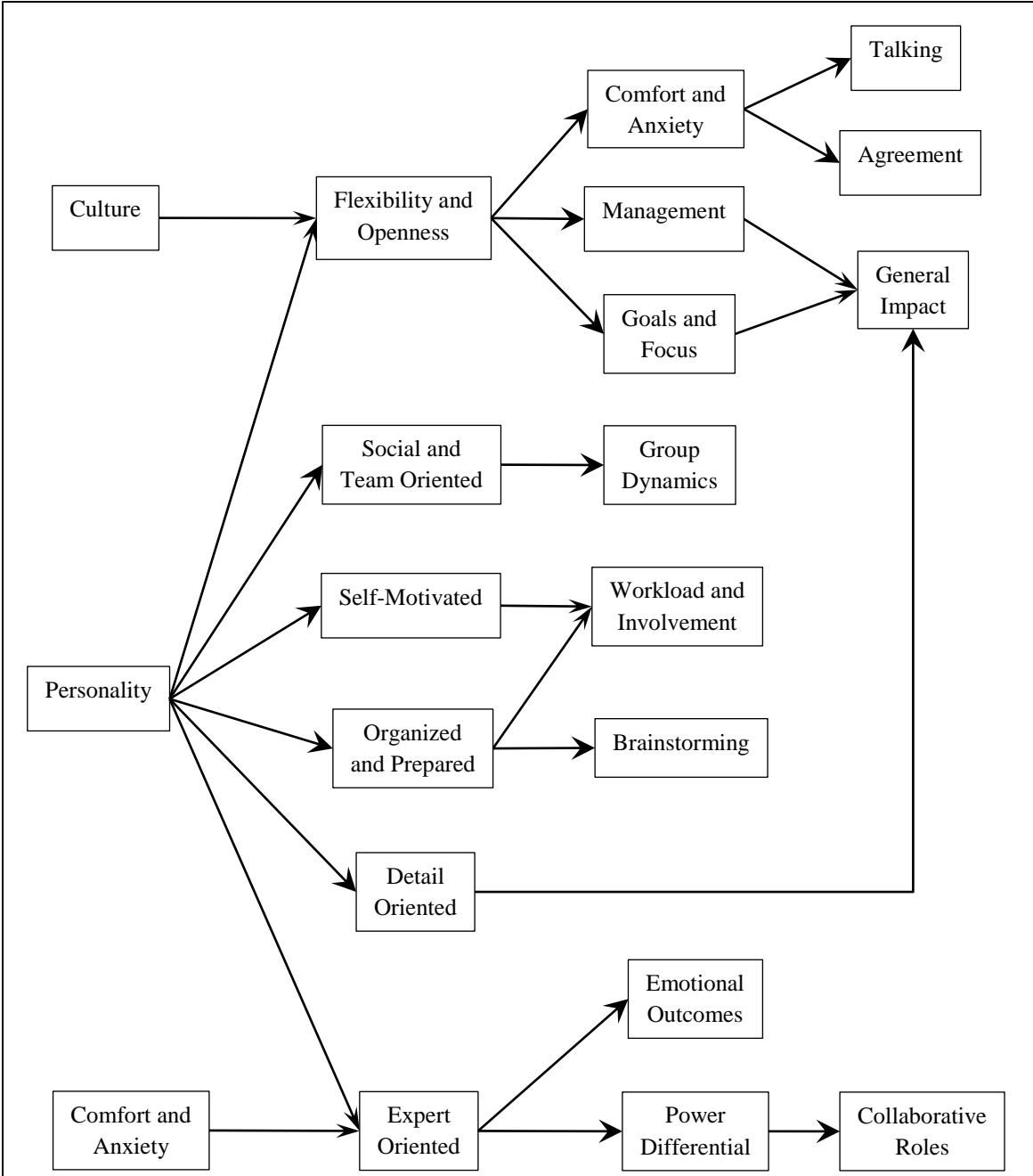
At times, university personnel were not satisfied with the roles expected of them by the state agency. At these times, the university personnel attempted to expand their collaborative roles by effectively fulfilling their initial responsibilities. In this way, they deliberately established trust within the state agency regarding their competence and follow through. They perceived this effort to be effective in securing expanded collaborative roles; however, the state agency staff did not discuss experiencing changes in expectations regarding the roles of university personnel.

### **Personality.**

A visual representation of personality and relevant factors is presented in Figure 7. Personality was perceived by many collaborators to be influential in negotiation roles, planning, addressing disagreements, and making decisions. Many personality characteristics were described as if on a continuum, with one end of the continuum perceived as helpful and the other end perceived as harmful to the collaboration. Some collaborators reported that the collaboration itself was strong enough to work around difficult individuals in order to keep the collaboration going.

### ***Flexibility and openness.***

One personality characteristic that was perceived as important to collaborative success was flexibility. This was characterized by openness to feedback, willingness to



*Figure 7. Personality and Relevant Factors*  
*Relationship of variables perceived to impact and be impacted by Personality. Arrows represent perceived directional impact. Boxed text represents subthemes of the current study.*



make changes to products that were perceived as in progress or finished, willingness to use suggestions perceived as unlikely to work, and flexibility with personal and professional time. Some collaborators felt that approaching discussions with flexibility increased the comfort of other collaborators to voice opinions and disagreements. The task of frequently changing products was sometimes perceived as draining. Individuals who were perceived as inflexible were described as difficult to work with and frustrating. When working with inflexible individuals, other collaborators increased their own flexibility in response. This practice was perceived to minimize the negative reactions of inflexible collaborators and improve the general effectiveness of the collaboration.

Collaborators across organizations also attributed the characteristic of inflexibility to some school systems. System inflexibility was characterized as an unwillingness to compromise or adjust goals despite compelling reasons for adjustment, such as when research refuted the effectiveness of the system's original goal or when the original goal was not achievable with the given resources.

***Self-motivated and team-oriented.***

The characteristic of self-motivation was described as positive and desirable in collaborators. It was attributed to the behaviors of taking on responsibility and accomplishing tasks. Some collaborators discussed the importance of being oriented toward social or team activities. This was also referred to as being a team player. This was seen as a necessary characteristic for working well with others. Some individuals perceived the characteristic of organization as beneficial in assisting with planning efforts and division of the workload.

***Expert-oriented and detail-oriented.***

Collaborators who were perceived as expert-oriented were also described as difficult to work with and, occasionally, insulting. These collaborators were perceived to inhibit efforts to establish equitable collaborative roles. Some collaborators hypothesized that expert-oriented collaborators focused on their expertise in response to feelings of insecurity. A few individuals described themselves as being detail-oriented, a characteristic they perceived to have the potential to inhibit collaborative efforts; however, this characteristic was not mentioned by other collaborators.

***Outcomes.***

A visual representation of perceived outcome frequency and sufficiency is presented in Figure 8. The collaborators described several outcomes of the collaboration, including the general success regarding collaborative goals, learning, evolution, relationship development, and the sustainability and generalization of collaborative efforts.

***General impact.***

Regarding the general impact of the collaboration, many collaborators perceived the experience to be beneficial to all parties involved and found their participation to be a positive experience. The state agency received manpower, the university personnel obtained research and unique experiences, and the school systems received high quality professional learning projects. Some collaborators expressed uncertainty regarding the effectiveness of the professional learning projects in changing teaching practices; however, other collaborators reported viewing increased teacher engagement in professional learning activities when provided through the collaboration. The university

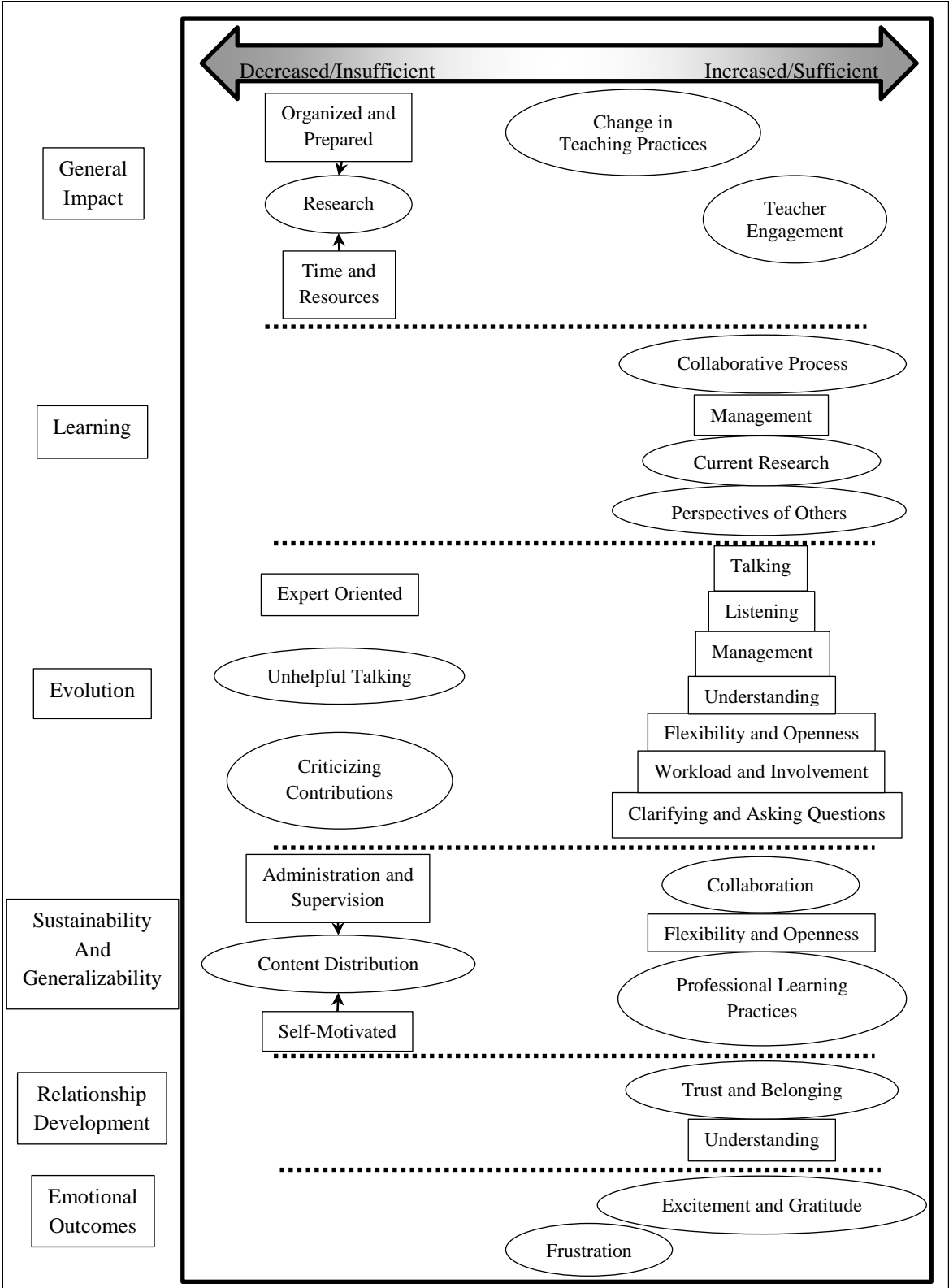


Figure 8. Perceived Outcomes of the Collaboration  
Frequency or sufficiency of collaborative outcomes as perceived by participants.  
Boxed text represents subthemes of the current study.

personnel felt that the research obtained was limited throughout the course of the collaboration due primarily to time constraints and insufficient preparation.

***Learning and evolution.***

Most of the collaborators reported learning something from the experience. Specifically, individuals learned about the process of consulting and collaborating with others, working with difficult individuals in a tactful way, current research regarding professional learning topics, and the perspectives of other groups regarding specific educational issues. Each collaborator also reported changes in either personal beliefs or behaviors. Regarding changes in beliefs, several collaborators described realizing the acceptability of not having all the answers. Regarding changing behaviors, collaborators reported increases in the behaviors of relying on others, listening to others, asking for information, asking for feedback, responding with flexibility, voicing opinions, attempting to understand the perspective of others, encouraging the participation of others, and seeking out collaboration in other settings. They reported decreases in the behaviors of talking for the sake of talking and criticizing the contributions of others.

***Sustainability and generalizability.***

Several collaborators reported the sustainability and generalization of various aspects of the collaboration. For example, the act of collaboration itself was perceived to have increased in one school system. Individuals within that school system have also begun to expect different practices from professional learning endeavors. Additionally, several of the professional learning practices utilized by the university personnel were adopted or adapted by state agency personnel for use in other non-collaborative endeavors. One collaborator reported that her school system appeared to be increasing its

flexibility regarding goals and decision-making. The representatives of one school system reported that the practices addressed in their collaborative professional learning project had not become system-wide, an outcome which was a source of frustration. The lack of generalization of the professional learning content was attributed to insufficient administrative support and teacher initiative.

***Relationship development.***

Some collaborators described the development of a relationship between collaborators. This was sometimes stated as an increase in trust or sense of belonging within the group. It was also described as an increased understanding of the roles of the collaborators. Most collaborators also described several emotional impacts of the collaboration, including frustration, excitement, and gratitude.

## CHAPTER 5

### DISCUSSION

#### **Purpose of the Current Study**

The current study sought to address identified gaps in the literature by exploring the collaborative processes involved in a professional learning focused university-community-school collaboration. The following research question guided the inquiry:

- *What are the university, community, and school representatives' perceptions of the collaborative process involved in a professional learning focused university-community-school collaboration?*

This study was conducted to address content-specific gaps in the literature and methodological limitations of the current literature base. Specifically, the literature on inter-organizational collaboration in education is predominantly focused on collaborative outcomes as opposed to the processes that contributed to those outcomes. In a review of relevant literature, no article was identified that studied a professional learning focused university-community-school collaboration. Furthermore, many articles identified that studied collaborative process employed vague or limited sampling procedures, resulting in data that might not have been representative of all collaborators involved (e.g. Buys & Bursnall, 2007; Frankham & Howes, 2006). Some studies also exhibited vague or constricted methods of data analysis, decreasing the trustworthiness or generalizability of results (e.g. Baker & Martin, 2008; Deslandes, 2006). In response to the limitations of the current literature base, authors have called for more information regarding the process of establishing and maintaining effective inter-organizational collaborations with a

professional learning focus (Stokols, 2006) and the different types of collaborative practices employed in effective collaborations (Goddard et al., 2007).

The collaboration under study was an on-going collaboration between an urban university in the southeast United States, a state-funded educational support agency, an urban school district, and a peri-urban school district. The collaboration was created to design and facilitate standards-based professional learning programs to K-12 educators. The collaboration, spanning five years, involved collaborators with a variety of educational backgrounds, years of experience in education and with collaboration, and roles within the current collaboration. The collaborators involved had experienced the collaboration at different phases in partnership development, from initiation to current practice. Furthermore, the collaboration itself resulted in the development and facilitation of 13 professional learning programs designed to meet the needs of personnel from 6 local school districts.

Participants in the current study included representatives of each organization involved in the collaboration. Participant involvement spanned the course and scope of the collaboration, resulting in a holistic and representative sample of the collaboration. The data were collected and analyzed using Moustakas' (1994) transcendental phenomenology methodology, a qualitative methodology that facilitates a holistic approach to data collection and interpretation. Both individual and group interviews were collected to obtain participant perceptions of the collaborative processes involved in the collaboration. The results were presented according to Moustakas' recommendations, including themes and subthemes discussed by the study participants as well as a synopsis of participant perceptions regarding the connections between themes and subthemes.

## **Contributions to the Literature**

This study makes several important contributions to the literature. First, it is the only study identified by this author to examine the collaborative processes involved in a professional learning-focused collaboration between a university, a state agency, and several local school systems. Second, the rigorous methodology and holistic sampling used in this study provide thick, rich descriptions of the collaborator's experiences from multiple points of view. Third, the trustworthy results of the study provide support for assertions in the literature regarding the importance of shared goals and communication practices. Finally, the study provides several findings which have not yet been discussed in the literature. These include factors impacting feelings of involvement within the collaboration; the importance of assimilating to the project, individuals, and cultures of the organizations involved; and the impact of personality on collaborative interaction. Furthermore, the myriad and complex relationships between the different variables that are perceived to impact collaborative success were explored.

### **Goal alignment in collaborative endeavors.**

Participants described various aspects of the collaborative structure as important to their experiences. Most notably, several participants commented on the complex challenges associated with the various goals ascribed by the different organizations. Participants across organizations found it difficult to accomplish all goals. They also found goals to be incompatible at times. For example, the goal of the state agency to devote the manpower provided by the university students toward professional learning projects was not compatible with the university's goal to devote student time towards research endeavors. This was consistent with Stokols' (2006) observation that



collaborators encounter progressively more diverse goals as the number of organizations involved increases. Stokols went on to assert that the level of difficulty in meeting goals increased with the diversity of those goals. Other inter-organizational collaborations in education have conveyed similar findings. For example, Baker and Martin (2008), Buys and Bursnall (2007), and Miller and Hafner (2008) found that participants attributed collaborative success in part to shared goals. In contrast, Platteel et al. (2010) and Rice (2002) found that participants attributed some of their collaborative difficulties to competing or conflicting goals between organizations.

Alignment of goals might have been facilitated by persistent efforts to clarify the collaborative goals of all parties, an act that Buys and Bursnall (2007) and Platteel et al. (2010) found important to collaborative success. Several factors complicated the act of goal clarification during the current collaboration. For example, the frequent changes in state agency administration required that collaborative goals be clarified with each new administrator. The three individuals who served as state agency administrator during the course of the collaboration had dissimilar backgrounds in the area of research, which might have resulted in differing opinions regarding the value of and need for research endeavors. The third agency administrator, who held the position for four of the five and one half years under study, appeared to prioritize applied practice over research. The limited communication between the agency and university administrators impeded their ability to resolve the issue of their competing priorities. The high workload placed on all parties likely complicated this effort further by reducing the amount of time left to devote to communication and goal clarification.

**Collaborative communication.**

Findings regarding the importance of communicative behaviors were also consistent with the literature. Current results support previous studies regarding the value of listening (Robertson, 2007; Miller & Hafner, 2008; Coronel et al., 2003; Clark et al., 1996), asking questions (Frankham & Howes, 2006; Platteel et al., 2010; Robertson, 2007; Miller & Hafner, 2008), and providing support (Frankham & Howes, 2006; Rice, 2002). Collaborators in the current study found these behaviors to promote equity within the collaborative group, ensure joint understanding of goals, and increase feelings of involvement within the collaboration.

Participants of this study also found it necessary to voice opinions and provide feedback, a behavior viewed as important in previous collaborations (Frankham & Howes, 2006; Coronel et al., 2003; Robertson, 2007; Miller & Hafner, 2008; Grundy et al., 2001; Clark et al., 1996). It is interesting to note that some participants also found value in withholding comments at times, a viewpoint that was not expressed in previous studies. Specifically, participants described initially entering the collaboration with the belief that they must comment on each suggestion in order to feel that they were making an adequate contribution. They reported learning over the course of their involvement that this was not always the best course of action; instead, if they agreed with a suggestion or comment, there was no need to expand upon that comment unless they were providing support. Participants also reported withholding expressions of disagreement at times in an effort to move discussions forward, a phenomenon which has not been discussed in the literature. According to participants, letting small disagreements go allowed the collaborative group to remain focused on larger goals and facilitated flexibility and compromise during decision making.

Finally, the current results suggest that the act of planning or brainstorming was integral to the present collaboration. The practice of joint planning was suggested by Hord's (1986) model of inter-organizational collaboration; however, a review of qualitative studies describing collaborative process revealed limited support for the guideline. Specifically, only Rice (2002) observed the importance of joint planning in a meta-analysis of qualitative studies assessing collaborative processes involved in professional development schools. It is possible that the professional learning focused nature of this collaboration required more intensive planning than is needed in service-oriented collaborations, because the collaborators were preparing to teach skills to others instead of applying those skills themselves. As such, in addition to coordinating actions and resources, current collaborators were required develop presentations and materials that would sufficiently convey the joint knowledge of the collaborative group. Furthermore, high quality professional learning endeavors require multiple training sessions, a comprehensive knowledge of research-based practices, and a rigorous analysis of participant learning and practice (NSDC, 2001; Ryan & Deci, 2000; Lewis & Hayward, 2003). In order to meet the unique needs of this collaboration, the group needed to pool resources repeatedly through joint planning. Additionally, the process of planning professional learning endeavors was iterative, as reported by several collaborators, requiring the group to reconvene often while planning each professional learning endeavor. The repeated and iterative nature of this process might have contributed to participant perceptions regarding the importance of joint planning.

**Perceptions of involvement.**

Perceptions of the involvement of others appeared to be impacted by factors such as attendance and workload contributions, a phenomenon that is consistent with the literature on inter-organizational educational collaboration (Grundy et al., 2001; Deslandes, 2006; Robertson, 2007; Grundy et al., 2001). Generally, collaborators who frequently missed meetings or did not contribute to the workload were perceived by other collaborators to have limited involvement. In many cases, this led to feelings of frustration or disappointment. Participants perceived unequal involvement to negatively impact collaborative outcomes, as the knowledge and manpower applied to the collaboration were diminished by decreased involvement. Several collaborators attempted to address this issue by increasing their own involvement, attempting to fill gaps left by missing collaborators, and attempting to help collaborators who appeared to be overwhelmed by the workload.

Only one study in this area of the literature was found to address perceptions of the involvement of self. Specifically, Grundy et al. (2001) briefly mentioned a university representative's perception that teachers felt less involved in collaborations when they were not included in the decision making process. The results of the current study not only supported this supposition but expanded upon the concept. Collaborators reported that the degree to which they felt involved in the group and contributed to the workload impacted their sense of equity within the group, both as it related to decision-making practices and as it related to a sense of personal importance within the group. They also perceived the relationship between these variables to be bi-directional. Specifically, the degree to which collaborators felt that the relationship within the group was equitable

impacted their willingness to share the workload and their feelings of involvement within the collaboration.

### **System entry and assimilation.**

The process of system entry and assimilation was complex and challenging throughout the course of the collaboration, a factor which has not been described in detail in previous studies assessing inter-organizational collaboration in education. For the collaborators in this study, assimilating to the collaboration produced feelings of anxiety regarding both professional tasks and interpersonal interactions. The recurrent process of assimilation required the frequent establishment and reestablishment of collaborative roles, a factor found to be important to collaborative success (Buys & Bursnall, 2007; Brandon et al., 2008; Jaipal & Figg, 2011). Furthermore, the ability of novice collaborators to contribute to workload and decision-making tasks was hindered by their limited knowledge of, experience with, and comfort with both collaborative and project-oriented endeavors. As such, each change in staff delayed or hindered the collaborators' abilities to accomplish collaborative goals.

Collaborators attempted to minimize the negative impact of assimilation both on the new collaborators and on collaborative outcomes. Several participants described the effort of other collaborators to ease new members into the process of joint work. This led to feelings of appreciation, increased comfort, and involvement for assimilating collaborators. Veteran collaborators also attempted to take on more of the workload during the process of assimilation, both to minimize feelings of discomfort for new collaborators and to ensure the completion of necessary tasks.

The recurrent nature of the assimilation experience was attributed to the frequent changes in both state agency and university staff. Collaborators across all organizations perceived the impact of staff changes, especially with regard to changes in university students. While changes in general staff have not been discussed previously in the literature, Weinstein et al. (1991) reported changes in administrative staff during their university-school collaboration. Although they did not discuss administrator turnover within the context of assimilation to the collaboration, they did attribute their difficulty implementing systemic change at least in part to changes in administration. Staff turnover, or teacher mobility, is not limited to educators involved in inter-organizational collaborations. The NCES reported that teacher attrition increased in rate from 5.6% in 1987 to 8.0% in 2009 (NCES, 2011). Furthermore, in between 2007-08 to 2008-09, 7.6% of teachers changed schools. This resulted in mobility of 15.6% of public school teachers between the 2007-08 and the 2008-09 school years. The impact of staff changes on collaborative endeavors suggests that individuals involved in education-related collaboratives should consider the potential impact of turnover on goal establishment and completion.

### **Personality and collaborative interaction.**

Participants also frequently discussed the perception that the personalities of the various collaborators greatly impacted a variety of factors associated with group dynamics, especially with regard to power differential, assimilation, collaborative roles, and management. It is possible that the changing nature of the group composition and the subsequent recurring assimilation needs brought the impact of personal characteristics to light. Specifically, the frequent changes in staff allowed the collaborators to experience

the same or similar tasks with collaborators sporting a variety of personality traits, highlighting the impact of those characteristics on both group dynamics and the accomplishment of goals.

The construct of personality has received little to no focus in other studies assessing inter-organizational collaborations in education. For example, one quoted participant in Buys and Bursnall's (2007) study commented on a balance between the personalities of different collaborators, but the authors characterized this quote as a reference to skill sets (p. 79). Clark et al. (1996) discussed the importance of personality to the acceptability of educational practices, but participants did not link personality and collaborative group dynamics. Of the studies reviewed in this paper, only Miller and Hafner (2008) recognized the importance of personality to collaborative efforts. Specifically, they discussed the perception that one collaborator's "humble" personality was conducive to listening (p. 86) and briefly mentioned the occurrence of personality conflicts within the collaboration (p. 100). The authors did not explore these constructs in detail, however, as they were deemed beyond the scope of the investigation.

The frequent and widespread references to personality within the current study suggest the need for consideration of personal characteristics when developing collaborative groups. The participants of this study consistently identified certain personality characteristics as conducive to collaborative success, including flexibility, social or team orientation, self-motivation, patience, and understanding. They also identified other characteristics, such as expert and detail orientation, as possible hindrances. It is unlikely that this list of influential characteristics is exhaustive. Perhaps equally unlikely is the possibility that an optimal group composition would consist only

of individuals who boast each of the identified positive characteristics. Instead, the nature and interplay of personality within collaborative endeavors is likely more varied and complex than the current study has identified.

### **Features of Successful Inter-Organizational Collaborations**

The current study offers three distinct and increasingly comprehensive models of inter-organizational collaboration: (1) the original Hord (1986) model of inter-organizational collaboration, (2) a synthesis of Hord's model of inter-organizational collaboration with the literature on the topic, and (3) the Hord-Psimas model of inter-organizational collaboration. The original Hord model of inter-organizational collaboration, which is compared to the literature in Table 2, offered several collaborative guidelines organized into five distinct categories: Beginning Process, Communication, Resources/Ownership, Leadership/Control, and Requirements/Characteristics.

The second model proposed in this study is the Synthesis Model of collaboration, which resulted from an in-depth examination of the literature on inter-organizational collaboration in education in which several additional guidelines were identified. The Synthesis Model expanded upon the original Hord (1986) model of inter-organizational collaboration by adding the organizing category of Relationship/Rapport, as well as adding guidelines to following original categories: Beginning Process, Communication, Resources/Ownership, and Leadership/Control. The Synthesis Model is summarized in Tables 19 and 20.

The final and most comprehensive model proposed in this study is the Hord-Psimas model of inter-organizational collaboration, which combines the original guidelines proposed by Hord (1986), the additional guidelines identified in the literature,



and several guidelines identified by the results of the current study. Specifically, participants in the current study identified several factors important to collaborative success that have not been identified previously in the literature. The themes and subthemes identified in the current study are used to support and expand the Synthesis Model of inter-organizational collaboration, resulting in the research-based Hord-Psimas model of inter-organizational collaboration. The guidelines of the Hord-Psimas model are defined in Table 36. The themes and subthemes from the current study that provide support for the Hord-Psimas model are summarized in Table 37. The subthemes related to the outcomes of the collaboration are not included in this comparison, as they are not indicative of behaviors or characteristics of collaborative process.

**The Hord-Psimas model of inter-organizational collaboration.**

The Hord-Psimas model of inter-organizational collaboration is supported by the literature on inter-organizational collaboration in education, as well as by the findings of the current study. Support for the Hord-Psimas model is as follows.

***Beginning process.***

The *beginning process* category of the Hord-Psimas model of inter-organizational collaboration includes the guidelines of *exchanging services*, *joint planning*, *shared goals*, *relevant goals*, *clarifying focus*, and *securing commitment from collaborators and supervisors*. The current study provided support for each of the guidelines within the category of *beginning process*. Furthermore, the results of the current study suggest that the category of Beginning Process could be expanded to include the guideline of *choice*.

The guideline of *exchanging services* was defined as follows: organizations should agree upon an exchange of products or services, and each organization should

Table 36.

*The Hord-Psimas Model of Inter-Organizational Collaboration: Guidelines and Definitions*

Category/Guideline	Definition
<b>Beginning Process</b>	
Exchanging services	Organizations should agree upon an exchange of products or services. Each organization should offer the other a product or service.
Joint planning	Organizations should join forces to plan and execute the design of a shared project. Personnel from each organization should be involved in developing the nature of the collaboration.
Shared goals	Collaborators should develop shared goals for the collaboration. Organizations should agree on projected results, outcomes, products, and services.
Relevant goals	Collaborators should develop goals that are relevant to each organization. This expands the guideline of shared goals as simple agreement upon goals does not ensure relevant goals. Accounts for the following additional factors: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Relevance of collaboration to school needs (SC1)</li> <li>Encouraging relevant goals (ISPL1)</li> </ul>
Clarifying focus	Collaborators should take time to clarify the focus of the collaboration. Care should be taken to ensure the understanding of each collaborator regarding the goals and purpose of the collaboration.
Securing commitment from collaborators and supervisors	Commitment should be expressly secured from both the collaborators and the collaborators' supervisors within their given organizations. Securing commitment from organizational supervisors should decrease the competing demands on collaborators.

Choice	Participation in the collaboration in general, and in specific collaborative tasks in particular, should be voluntary.
Communication	
Communication roles and channels	Collaborators should establish defined roles and channels for communication to facilitate clear and accurate conveyance of information.
Listening	Collaborators should listen to the opinions and suggestions of other collaborators to ensure accurate understanding of their views.
Asking questions	Collaborators should ask questions of each other. They should seek the opinions and advice of other collaborators to facilitate open communication.
Voicing opinions	Collaborators should voice opinions regarding possible goals, suggestions, actions, and decisions. Care should be taken to use clear language and avoid jargon.
Structure for expressing and resolving conflict	A communication structure for expressing and resolving conflicts should be established. Emphasis should be placed on approaching disagreements with openness and acceptance.
Resources/Ownership	
Shared workload	Each organization should contribute staff time, resources, and capabilities. Contributions from each organization should be defined during the planning process.
Mutual funding	Organizations should work together to obtain funding, possibly from an outside source, for the express purpose of supporting the collaboration.
Shared ownership	Shared ownership of the collaboration should develop over time.
Providing assistance	Collaborators should provide assistance to one another when engaging in collaborative tasks. This can be differentiated from the guideline of shared workload in that the emphasis is

not on an equitable distribution of work between organizations but on individual collaborators providing assistance within and across organizations. This can be differentiated from delegated responsibility, as well, in that the individuals are not assuming responsibility for tasks that will be accomplished independently.

#### Leadership/Control

Dispersed leadership	Collaborative leadership should be dispersed among the organizations.
Delegated responsibility	Responsibility for collaborative tasks should be delegated among the collaborators. Individuals should take initiative in assuming responsibility.
Shared control	Collaborators should assume shared, mutual control of the collaboration to facilitate congruent effort in accomplishing collaborative tasks.
Strong and supportive leadership	The identified leaders within the collaboration should provide support for collaborators by demonstrating effective collaborative techniques, negotiating with organizational supervisors for time and resources, providing order and structure for collaborative tasks, and encouraging equitable collaborator participation in discussions and decision making.
Equitable value	Each collaborator enjoys equitable value within the collaboration. As such, each collaborator is treated as an equal, and suggestions and opinions contributed by each collaborator are given equal weight.

#### Requirements/Characteristics

Expenditure of time & energy	Each organization should devote time and energy to the collaboration.
Action and risks	Each organization should take action and risks within the collaboration.

Frequent meetings	Frequent large and small meetings between collaborators should be arranged.
Compromise	Compromise is a necessity. Various trade-offs must be made by each organization.
Combined staff	A combined staff, in which representatives from each organization are present, should be developed. A staff trade or loan may be made to accomplish this goal.
Contributions of expertise	Each organization should contribute different kinds of expertise, as this is a primary motivator for collaborating.
Personality	Consideration should be given to the various personality characteristics attributed to potential collaborators and the degree to which the personalities of different collaborators will facilitate or hinder efforts to work together.
Relationship/Rapport	
Establishing rapport	Care should be taken to establish rapport among collaborators. Time should be spent prior to engaging in planning or collaborative tasks becoming acquainted with other collaborators.
Requesting and providing reassurance	Collaborators should request reassurance from other collaborators in times of uncertainty regarding the collaboration. Collaborators should also provide reassurance during times of uncertainty.
Social engagements	Collaborators should arrange and attend social engagements with other collaborators from within and across organizations to facilitate interactions removed from the potential stressors affiliated with the collaborative tasks.
Addressing negative history if applicable	Collaborators should address the possible harmful effects of previous negative experiences with collaboration. Experiences should be addressed regarding previous collaborations with different partners as well as previous

	collaborations with current partners. Any mistrust of organizational representatives should be addressed.
Attempting to understand the experience of fellow collaborators	Collaborators should attempt to understand the perspective of other collaborators. Care should be taken to understand experiences and concerns specific to working within the culture of different organizations. Collaborators should recognize and accept similarities and differences between themselves and other collaborators.
Formality	The formality of group interactions should be adjusted according to the activities and needs of the group.
Culture	The culture of included and affected organizations should be carefully considered at all phases of the collaborative endeavor. Adjustments to the cultural needs of various organizations should be made to accommodate varying cultural needs and priorities.

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Table 37.

*Participant Support for the Hord-Psimas Model of Inter-Organizational Collaboration*

Category/Guideline	Supporting Themes and Subthemes
<b>Beginning Process</b>	
Exchanging services	<p><i>Subtheme: Goals and Focus</i></p> <p>Administrators involved in the initiation of the collaboration reported the goal of exchanging services as a motivating factor in participating in the collaboration.</p>
Joint planning	<p><i>Subtheme: Brainstorming</i></p> <p>Participants reported that joint planning activities led to increased feelings of collaboration and involvement.</p>
Shared goals	<p><i>Subtheme: Goals and Focus</i></p> <p>Competing goals were perceived to negatively impact collaborative success. Goals that were shared were most likely to be attended to and accomplished.</p>
Relevant goals	<p><i>Subtheme: Goals and Focus</i></p> <p>Goals that were perceived to be irrelevant to some collaborators presented a source of stress and frustration to those collaborators.</p>
Clarifying focus	<p><i>Subtheme: Goals and Focus</i></p> <p>The collaboration might have benefited from efforts to clarify goals as administrative staff changed.</p>
Securing commitment from collaborators and supervisors	<p><i>Subtheme: Time and Resources</i></p> <p>Participants frequently cited competing demands as a source of stress and a hindrance to attendance and workload contributions.</p>
Choice	<p><i>Subtheme: Choice</i></p> <p>Participants found the voluntary nature of their participation to be a strength of the current collaboration.</p>

## Communication

Communication roles  
and channels

*Subtheme: Collaborative Roles*

*Subtheme: Talking*

Several participants reported serving as a liaison between the organizations involved. Collaborators found both communicating in person and via e-mail to be effective modes of communication.

Listening

*Subtheme: Listening*

Participants described the act of listening as very important to collaborative success.

Asking questions

*Subtheme: Clarifying and Asking Questions*

Clarifying meaning and asking questions facilitated effective discussions, brought participants up to speed, and conveyed understanding to frustrated individuals.

Voicing opinions

*Subtheme: Talking*

Participants expressed opinions, offered feedback, and provided suggestions during planning sessions. Failure to voice opinions was seen as harmful to collaborative efforts.

Structure for  
expressing and  
resolving conflict

*Subtheme: Agreement*

*Subtheme: Negotiation*

*Subtheme: Taking Personally*

Collaborators reported that disagreement and negotiation were conducive to growth when handled appropriately. Some participants suggested that not taking disagreements personally was an important factor in discussions.

## Resources/Ownership

Shared workload

*Subtheme: Workload and Involvement*

The act of sharing the workload contributed to feelings of involvement and equity between group members.

Mutual funding

*Subtheme: Time and Resources*

Some collaborators reported that additional outside sources



	of funding might have provided much needed support for goals that were not shared by all collaborators.
Shared ownership	<p><i>Subtheme: Ownership</i></p> <p>Many individuals perceived a sense of ownership over the collaboration to be positive and motivating.</p>
Providing assistance	<p><i>Subtheme: Workload and Involvement</i></p> <p>Some individuals reported assisting collaborators who seemed overwhelmed, a behavior that decreased the stress of collaborators who received help.</p>
Leadership/Control	
Dispersed leadership	<p><i>Subtheme: Administration and Supervision</i></p> <p>Each organization within the collaboration included an administrator who provided leadership.</p>
Delegated responsibility	<p><i>Subtheme: Collaborative Roles</i></p> <p>The establishment of collaborative roles allowed individuals to feel helpful and important within the collaboration. Difficulty establishing those roles contributed to feelings of stress and frustration.</p>
Shared control	<p><i>Subtheme: Power Differential</i></p> <p>Shared control or equitable decision-making practices were viewed by many collaborators as essential to feelings of involvement and value.</p>
Strong and supportive leadership	<p><i>Subtheme: Administration and Supervision</i></p> <p><i>Subtheme: Management</i></p> <p><i>Subtheme: Modeling</i></p> <p>Several collaborators expressed the desire for increased involvement of organizational administrators. Participants also found the act of organizing the efforts of their peers and modeling appropriate collaborative behaviors to be helpful.</p>
Equitable value	<p><i>Subtheme: Power Differential</i></p> <p>Participants desired a sense of equity within the collaborative</p>

group. Feelings of equitable value led to increases in feelings of ownership and rapport.

#### Requirements/Characteristics

Expenditure of time & energy	<p><i>Subtheme: Workload and Involvement</i></p> <p><i>Subtheme: Time and Resources</i></p> <p>The collaboration required a great deal of time and effort from all parties.</p>
Action and risks	Not Discussed
Frequent meetings	<p><i>Subtheme: Time and Resources</i></p> <p><i>Subtheme: Workload and Involvement</i></p> <p>Several individuals conveyed the importance of meeting in person whenever possible. The construct of attendance, which was included under the subtheme of Workload and Involvement, was perceived to indicate involvement in the collaboration.</p>
Compromise	<p><i>Subtheme: Flexibility and Openness</i></p> <p>Participants consistently indicated the value of flexibility within the collaboration. Compromise was cited as helpful in prioritizing goals during times of high workload. Flexibility was also seen as helpful during planning efforts.</p>
Combined staff	<p><i>Subtheme: Group Composition</i></p> <p><i>Subtheme: Staff Changes</i></p> <p>The collaboration consisted of staff from each organization. Projects in which the representatives of one organization were perceived to be uninvolved were characterized as frustrating and less successful. Frequent changes in staff were perceived to impact the outcomes of collaborative endeavors.</p>
Contributions of expertise	<p><i>Subtheme: Intangible Contributions</i></p> <p><i>Subtheme: Experience</i></p> <p><i>Subtheme: Competence and Skill</i></p> <p>Participants perceived the contributions of others to be a</p>

strength of the current collaboration. Individuals described making personal contributions in their areas experience, competence, and skill.

Personality

*Subtheme: Attitudes, Priorities, and Beliefs*

*Subtheme: Flexibility and Openness*

*Subtheme: Passivity or Aggressiveness*

*Subtheme: Organized and Prepared*

*Subtheme: Expert-Oriented*

*Subtheme: Self-Motivated*

*Subtheme: Social and Team Oriented*

*Subtheme: Detail-Oriented*

*Subtheme: Humor*

Participants in the current study repeatedly discussed personality as important to group dynamics, communication practices, and outcomes of the collaboration.

Relationship/Rapport (Organizing Category)

Establishing rapport

*Subtheme: Familiarity and Rapport*

*Subtheme: Assimilation*

Participants found familiarity and rapport between collaborators to impact decision-making and communication practices. The recurrent process of assimilation impacted the sense of familiarity and rapport within the collaborative group.

Requesting and  
providing reassurance

*Subtheme: Supportive Communication*

*Subtheme: Comfort and Anxiety*

Some collaborators described providing supportive comments to individuals who were perceived to be hesitant to participate, under stress, or uncomfortable with a task.

Social engagements

Not Discussed

Addressing negative  
history if applicable

Not Discussed

Attempting to understand the experience of fellow collaborators	<p><i>Subtheme: Understanding</i></p> <p>The act of attempting to understand the perspective of others was perceived to impact the ability of collaborators to avoid taking conflicts personally and to assist frustrated or angry collaborators to calm down.</p>
Formality	<p><i>Subtheme: Formality</i></p> <p>Participants found decreased formality to facilitate feelings of equity between collaborators.</p>
Culture	<p><i>Subtheme: Culture</i></p> <p>Each organization within the collaboration was seen to have its own culture. Consideration of cultural differences was perceived to be helpful in developing shared goals, working together effectively, and increasing involvement across organizations.</p>

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offer the other a product or service. In a review of the literature on inter-organizational collaboration in education, support for the guideline of *exchanging services* was provided by the findings of Marlow et al. (2005). The results of the current study also provided support for the guideline of *exchanging services*. Specifically, within the current study's subtheme *Goals and Focus* (Theme: Collaborative Structure), participants involved in the initiation of the collaboration cited the potential benefit of an exchange of services as a motivating factor in their decision to engage in collaborative efforts.

The *joint planning* guideline stated that organizations should join forces to plan and execute the design of a shared project. Furthermore, personnel from each organization should be involved in developing the nature of the collaboration. This suggestion was supported by Rice (2002). This guideline also received support from the

current study's subtheme of *Brainstorming* (Theme: Communication). Participants in the current study reported that joint planning activities led to increased feelings of collaboration and involvement.

The guideline of *shared goals* stated that collaborators should develop shared goals for the collaboration. Organizations should also agree on projected results, outcomes, products, and services. The findings of Baker and Martin (2008), Buys and Bursnall (2007), Miller and Hafner (2008), Platteel et al. (2010), and Rice (2002) support this suggestion. The results of the current study are in line with the literature on this topic. Specifically, the guideline of *shared goals* was supported by the current study's subtheme *Goals and Focus* (Theme: Collaborative Structure), in that competing goals were perceived to negatively impact the success of the current collaborative. Furthermore, goals that were shared were the goals most likely to be attended to and accomplished.

The guideline of *relevant goals* is defined as follows: collaborators should develop goals that are relevant to each organization. This guideline received support in the literature from the findings of Deslandes (2006) and Grundy et al. (2001). Furthermore, participants in the current study reported that goals perceived to be irrelevant to some collaborators presented a source of stress and frustration to those collaborators, as identified in the subtheme of *Goals and Focus* (Theme: Collaborative Structure).

The guideline of *clarifying focus* suggests that collaborators should take time to clarify the focus of the collaboration and ensure the understand of each collaborator regarding the goals and purpose of the collaboration (Brandon et al., 2008; Buys & Bursnall, 2007; Deslandes, 2006; Frankham & Howes, 2006; Miller & Hafner, 2008; and

Platteel et al., 2010). This guideline was also supported by the current subtheme of *Goals and Focus*. Specifically, participants felt that the current collaboration might have benefitted from efforts to clarify goals as administrative staff changed.

Finally, the guideline of *securing commitment from collaborators and supervisors* was supported by the subtheme of *Time and Resources* (Theme: Collaborative Structure). This guideline suggests that commitment should be expressly secured from both the collaborators and the collaborators' supervisors within their given organizations in order to decrease the competing demands placed on collaborators (Buys & Bursnall, 2007; Clark et al., 1996; Deslandes, 2006; Rice, 2002). Current participants frequently cited competing demands as a source of stress. They also found competing demands to be a hindrance to attendance and workload contributions. It is possible that securing commitment to the collaboration from organizational administrators might have alleviated some of those competing demands.

A new guideline of *choice* is proposed here under the category of *beginning process*. The guideline of *choice* is proposed as follows. Participation in the collaboration in general, and in various collaborative tasks in particular, should be voluntary. The proposed guideline of *choice* is supported by the current study's subtheme *Choice* (Theme: Collaborative Structure). Participants in the current study found the voluntary nature of their participation to be highly valuable, especially with regard to school system representatives. Individuals who were perceived to have diminished choice within the current collaboration found their lack of choice to be frustrating.

### ***Communication.***

The Communication category of the Hord-Psimas model of inter-organizational collaboration includes the guidelines of *communication roles and channels*, *listening*, *asking questions*, *voicing opinions*, and *structure for expressing and resolving conflict*. The category of *communication* also received substantial support from the current study.

The guideline of *communication roles and channels* was defined as follows: collaborators should establish defined roles and channels for communication to facilitate clear and accurate conveyance of information. Support for the guideline of *communication roles and channels* was found in Brandon et al. (2008), Coronel et al. (2003), Jaipal and Figg (2011), Rice (2002), Robertson (2007), and Weinstein et al. (1991). This guideline was supported by the current subthemes of *Collaborative Roles* (Theme: Group Dynamics) and *Talking* (Theme: Communication). Specifically, several participants reported serving as a liaison between the organizations involved, an act they perceived to be a part of their role within the collaboration. Collaborators also found both communicating in person and via e-mail to be effective modes of communication, suggestions that establishing communication channels was helpful to the current collaboration.

According to the guideline of *listening*, collaborators should listen to the opinions and suggestions of other collaborators to ensure accurate understanding of their views. This guideline is supported by the findings of Clark et al. (1996), Coronel et al. (2003), Miller and Hafner (2008), and Robertson (2007). The guideline of *listening* was also supported by the current subtheme of *Listening* (Theme: Communication). Participants described the act of listening as very important to collaborative success. In particular,

they reported that listening to others promoted feelings of involvement and equity, decreased feelings of frustration, and facilitated effective communication between collaborators.

The guideline of *asking questions* suggests that collaborators should seek opinions and advice of other collaborators to facilitate open communication (Frankham & Howes, 2006; Shank, 2005; Miller & Hafner, 2008; Robertson, 2007; Plattell et al., 2010). This guideline was supported by the current subtheme of *Clarifying and Asking Questions* (Theme: Communication). Participants reported that clarifying meaning and asking questions facilitated effective discussions, brought participants up to speed on current topics of discussion, and conveyed understanding to frustrated individuals.

According to the guideline of *voicing opinions*, collaborators should voice opinions regarding possible goals, suggestions, actions, and decisions while using clear language and avoiding jargon (Coronel et al., 2003; Frankham & Howes, 2006; Grundy et al., 2001; Marlow et al., 2005; Miller & Hafner, 2008; Platteel et al., 2010; Robertson, 2007; Weinstein et al., 1991). This guideline was also supported by the current study's subtheme of *Talking* (Theme: Communication). Participants in the current study found the acts of expressing opinions, offering feedback, and providing suggestions during planning sessions to be highly valuable. Furthermore, failure to voice opinions was seen as harmful to collaborative efforts.

Finally, the guideline of *structure for expressing and resolving conflict* is defined as follows. A communication structure for expressing and resolving conflicts should be established. Emphasis should be placed on approaching disagreements with openness and acceptance. This guideline is supported by the findings of Clark et al. (1996), Deslandes



(2006), Franham and Howes (2006), Grundy et al. (2001), Platteel et al. (2010), and Weinstein et al. (1991). Within the current study, the guideline of *structure for expressing and resolving conflict* was supported by the subthemes of *Agreement* (Theme: Group Dynamics), *Negotiation* (Theme: Communication), and *Taking Personally* (Theme: Characteristics). Specifically, collaborators reported that, when handled correctly, both disagreement and negotiation were conducive to growth of the group and more positive outcomes. Some participants suggested that it was important to refrain from taking disagreements personally during discussions.

### ***Resources/Ownership.***

The Hord-Psimas model of inter-organizational collaboration includes the category of Resources/Ownership, which consists of the guidelines of *shared workload*, *mutual funding*, *shared ownership*, and *providing assistance*. This category also received substantial support from the results of the current study.

Under the guideline of *shared workload*, Hord (1986) stressed the importance that each organization contributes staff time, resources, and capabilities. Contributions from each organization should be defined during the planning process, according to this guideline. This guideline was supported by the findings of Baker and Martin (2008), Brandon et al. (2008), Clark et al. (1996), Deslandes (2006), Grundy et al. (2001), Jaipal and Figg (2011), Marlow et al. (2005), and Robertson (2007). The Hord-Psimas model guideline of *shared workload* is also supported by the current results through the subtheme of *Workload and Involvement* (Theme: Group Dynamics). Participants in the current study reported that the act of sharing the workload with other collaborators contributed to feelings of involvement and equity between group members.

The guideline of *mutual funding* stated that organizations should work together to obtain funding, possibly from an outside source, for the express purpose of supporting the collaboration. This guideline is supported by the findings of Baker and Martin (2008), Deslandes (2006), and Rice (2002). Within the current study, the guideline *mutual funding* was supported by the current subtheme of *Time and Resources* (Theme: Collaborative Structure). Some collaborators reported that additional outside sources of funding might have provided much needed support for goals that were not shared by all collaborators. As the inability to adequately address non-shared goals was a source of stress and frustration, it is likely that increasing the ability of collaborators to address all goals through additional funding would have been helpful.

The guideline of *shared ownership* stated that shared ownership of the collaboration should develop over time and is supported by the findings of Jaipal and Figg (2011). Current findings also provided support of *shared ownership* through the subtheme of *Ownership* (Theme: Group Dynamics). Current participants perceived a sense of ownership over the collaboration as their feelings of involvement grew. They found this sense of ownership to be positive and motivating.

Finally, the guideline of *providing assistance* is defined as follows. Collaborators should provide assistance to one another when engaging in collaborative tasks. This can be differentiated from the guideline of *shared workload* in that the emphasis is not on an equitable distribution of work between organizations but on individual collaborators providing assistance within and across organizations. This can be differentiated from *delegated responsibility*, as well, in that the individuals are not assuming responsibility for tasks that will be accomplished independently. The guideline of *providing assistance*

is supported by the findings of Clark et al. (1996), Coronel et al. (2003), Grundy et al. (2001), Jaipal and Figg (2011), and Marlow et al. (2005). Within the current study, the guideline of *providing assistance* received support from the subtheme of *Workload and Involvement* (Theme: Group Dynamics). Some individuals reported assisting collaborators who seemed overwhelmed by their workload. This behavior decreased the stress of collaborators who received help and increased feelings of camaraderie within the collaborative group.

### ***Leadership/Control.***

The Hord-Psimas model of inter-organizational collaboration includes the category of Leadership/Control, which consists of the guidelines of *dispersed leadership*, *delegated responsibility*, *shared control*, *strong and supportive leadership*, and *equitable value*. The results of the current study provided substantial support for the category of *leadership/control*.

According to the guideline of *dispersed leadership*, collaborative leadership should be dispersed among the organizations. This suggestion is supported by the findings of Miller and Hafner (2008), Jaipal and Figg (2011), and Weinstein et al. (1991). The current study also provided support for this guideline through the subtheme of *Administration and Supervision* (Theme: Collaborative Structure). Each organization in the current collaboration included an administrator who provided leadership within the collaboration itself. It is important to note that this feature of the current collaboration was seen as most positive when the organizational administrators were in frequent communication with one another. In contrast, when communication between administrators was infrequent or ineffective, participants reported difficulty making

decisions and feelings of frustration related to the dispersed leadership within the collaboration.

The guideline of *delegated responsibility* stated that responsibility for collaborative tasks should be delegated among the collaborators, and individuals should take initiative in assuming responsibility. The construct of *delegated responsibility* is supported by the findings of Buys and Bursnall (2007), Clark et al. (1996), Jaipal and Figg (2011), and Platteel et al. (2010), as well as the current subtheme of *Collaborative Roles* (Theme: Group Dynamics). Within the current collaboration, the establishment of collaborative roles allowed individuals to feel helpful and important. Difficulty establishing those roles contributed to feelings of stress and frustration.

The guideline for *shared control* stated that collaborators should assume shared, mutual control of the collaboration to facilitate congruent effort in accomplishing collaborative tasks. This guideline received support from the findings of Brandon et al. (2008), Coronel et al. (2003), Grundy et al. (2001), Miller and Hafner (2008), Rice (2002), Robertson (2007), and Weinstein et al. (1991). Within the current study, the guideline of *shared control* was supported by the subtheme *Power Differential* (Theme: Group Dynamics). Participants reported that shared control and equitable decision-making practices were essential to feelings of involvement and value. Given the importance of goal alignment noted by the participants of this study, it is possible that shared control might contribute to collaborative success by assisting with the development of goals that are shared and relevant to each organization.

*Strong and supportive leadership* is defined as follows. The identified leaders within the collaboration should provide support for collaborators by demonstrating

effective collaborative techniques, negotiating with organizational supervisors for time and resources, providing order and structure for collaborative tasks, and encouraging equitable collaborator participation in discussions and decision making (Buys & Bursnall, 2007; Grundy et al., 2001; Jaipal & Figg, 2011; Platteel et al., 2010; Rice, 2002). The guideline of *strong and supportive leadership* was supported by the subthemes of *Administration and Supervision* (Theme: Collaborative Structure), *Management* (Theme: Group Dynamics), and *Modeling* (Theme: Group Dynamics). Specifically, several collaborators within the current study expressed the desire for increased involvement of organizational administrators. Participants found the act of organizing the efforts of their peers to be helpful in moving the group forward and assisting with the development of a satisfactory product. They also reported modeling appropriate collaborative behaviors to be helpful in assisting incoming collaborators to determine appropriate modes of interaction when engaging in unfamiliar collaborative activities.

The final guideline within the category of Leadership/Control is the guideline of *equitable value*. According to the guideline of *equitable value*, each collaborator should be treated as an equal. Furthermore, the suggestions and opinions contributed by each collaborator should be given equal weight. This guideline is supported by the findings of Coronel et al. (2003), Deslandes (2006), Frankham and Howes (2006), Grundy et al. (2001), Marlow et al. (2005), Miller and Hafner (2008), Platteel et al. (2010), Rice (2002), and Robertson (2007). Within the current study, the guideline of *equitable value* was supported by the subtheme of *Power Differential* (Theme: Group Dynamics). Participants desired a sense of equity within the collaborative group. Furthermore,

feelings of equitable value led to increases in feelings of ownership and rapport, whereas feelings of inequitable value led to feelings of frustration and insult.

***Requirements/characteristics.***

The category of Requirements/Characteristics includes the guidelines of *expenditure of time and energy, action and risks, frequent meetings, compromise, combined staff, and contributions of expertise*. The guideline of *action and risks*, while supported by previous literature on collaboration in education, was not discussed in the current study. However, the majority of the guidelines in this category received support from the results of the current study. Furthermore, the results of the current study suggest that the category of *requirements/characteristics* could be expanded to include the guideline of *personality*.

The guideline of *expenditure of time and energy* stated that each organization should devote time and energy to the collaboration and is supported by the findings of Jaipal and Figg (2011), Platteel et al. (2010), and Rice (2002). This guideline also received support from the current subthemes of *Workload and Involvement* (Theme: Group Dynamics) and *Time and Resources* (Theme: Collaborative Structure). Participants reported that the collaboration required a great deal of time and effort from all parties. Furthermore, participants perceived the decreased time and energy expended by some participants to negatively impact collaborative efforts.

According to the guideline of *action and risks*, each organization should take action and risks within the collaboration, a suggestion supported by the findings of Jaipal and Figg (2011) and Platteel et al. (2010). The participants within the current study did not address issues of action and risk.

The guideline of *frequent meetings* stated that frequent large and small meetings between collaborators should be arranged, which was supported by the findings of Buys and Bursnall (2007), Clark et al. (1996), Coronel et al. (2003), Deslandes (2006), Miller and Hafner (2008), Jaipal and Figg (2011), and Platteel et al. (2010). Within the current study, support for the guideline of *frequent meetings* was provided by the subthemes of *Time and Resources* (Theme: Collaborative Structure) and *Workload and Involvement* (Theme: Group Dynamics). Specifically, several individuals conveyed the importance of meeting frequently and in person. The construct of attendance at both planning meetings and trainings was perceived to indicate involvement in the collaboration.

The guideline of *compromise* stated that compromise is a necessity and that various trade-offs must be made by each organization. The construct of *compromise* is supported by the findings of Baker and Martin (2008) and Robertson (2007), as well as the current subtheme of *Flexibility and Openness* (Theme: Characteristics). Participants in the current collaboration consistently indicated the value of flexibility within the collaboration. Compromise was cited as helpful in prioritizing goals during times of high workload. Flexibility was also seen as helpful during planning efforts. Specifically, participants reported approaching decision-making efforts with flexibility by adjusting their own viewpoints and contributions as needed to accommodate other collaborators. These behaviors were perceived to facilitate effective communication and result in a better end product.

The guideline of *combined staff* stated that a combined staff, in which representatives from each organization are present, should be developed. According to Hord, a staff trade or loan may be made to accomplish this goal. This guideline has not

been addressed thus far in the literature; however, the construct of *combined staff* received considerable support from the current study. Specifically this guideline was supported by the subthemes of *Group Composition* (Theme: Group Dynamics) and *Staff Changes* (Theme: Collaborative Structure). The current collaboration consisted of staff from each organization, a factor which was seen as a strength by many collaborators. Participants found the contributions of staff from each organization to be valuable to both the planning process and the end product. Furthermore, projects in which the representatives of one organization were perceived to be uninvolved were characterized as frustrating and less successful. Frequent changes in staff, which impacted the composition of the combined staff, were perceived to impact the outcomes of collaborative endeavors.

Finally, the guideline of *contributions of expertise* stated that each organization should contribute different kinds of expertise, as this is a primary motivator for collaborating. This guideline received support from the findings of Brandon et al. (2008), Grundy et al. (2001), Jaipal and Figg (2011), Platteel et al. (2010), and Robertson (2007), as well as the current subthemes of *Intangible Contributions* (Theme: Group Dynamics), *Experience* (Theme: Characteristics), and *Competence and Skill* (Theme: Characteristics). Participants perceived the contributions of others to be a strength of the current collaboration. Individuals described making personal contributions in their areas of experience, competence, and skill.

A new guideline of *personality* is proposed here under the category of Requirements/Characteristics. The guideline of *personality* is proposed as follows. Consideration should be given to the various personality characteristics attributed to



potential collaborators and the degree to which the personalities of different collaborators will facilitate or hinder efforts to work together. The proposed guideline of *personality* is supported by the current subthemes of *Attitudes, Priorities, and Beliefs* (Theme: Characteristics), *Flexibility and Openness* (Theme: Characteristics), *Personality* (Theme: Characteristics), *Passivity or Aggressiveness* (Theme: Characteristics), *Organized and Prepared* (Theme: Characteristics), *Expert-Oriented* (Theme: Characteristics), *Self-Motivated* (Theme: Characteristics), *Social and Team Oriented* (Theme: Characteristics), *Detail-Oriented* (Theme: Characteristics), and *Humor* (Theme: Characteristics).

Participants in the current study repeatedly discussed personality as important to group dynamics, communication practices, and outcomes of the collaboration. Specific personality characteristics perceived to be helpful to the collaboration included feelings of excitement upon entering the collaboration, approaching decision-making with flexibility, persisting to assert goals perceived to be important, accepting situations which could not be changed, approaching the collaboration with organization and preparation, and approaching difficult situations with a sense of humor. Participants who were perceived as self-motivated and social or team oriented were perceived to be well suited to participate in the current collaboration. In contrast, participants who were perceived as expert-oriented were found to be insulting, inflexible, and detrimental to collaborative efforts. Furthermore, some participants identified the attribute of detail-orientation to be potentially detrimental to planning efforts, as a focus on details sometimes unnecessarily slowed down planning efforts.

***Relationship/rapport.***

The category of Relationship/Rapport is proposed here as an additional category not originally suggested by Hord (1986). This category includes the guidelines of *establishing rapport, requesting and providing reassurance, social engagements, addressing negative history if applicable, and attempting to understand the experience of fellow collaborators*. The guidelines of *social engagements* and *addressing negative history if applicable* were not discussed in the current study. However, the remaining guidelines in this category received support from the results of the current study. Furthermore, the results of the current study suggest that the category of Relationship/Rapport could be expanded to include the guidelines of *formality* and *culture*.

The guideline of *establishing rapport* states that care should be taken to establish rapport among collaborators. Time should be spent prior to engaging in planning or collaborative tasks becoming acquainted with other collaborators. This guideline is supported by the findings of Baker and Martin (2008), Brandon et al. (2008), Buys and Bursnall (2007), Clark et al. (1996), Coronel et al. (2003), Deslandes (2006), Grundy et al. (2001), Jaipal and Figg (2011), Marlow et al. (2005), Rice (2002), and Weinstein et al. (1991). This guideline received support from the current subthemes of *Familiarity and Rapport* (Theme: Group Dynamics) and *Assimilation* (Theme: Group Dynamics). Participants in the current collaboration found familiarity and rapport between collaborators to impact decision-making and communication practices. While some comments conveyed the perspective that too much familiarity between collaborators might have led to some undesirable influence during decision-making efforts, the

majority of comments in this area attributed more successful communication and decision-making in part to familiarity and rapport between group members. The recurrent process of assimilation impacted the sense of familiarity and rapport within the collaborative group, a factor which was seen as a weakness of the collaboration by some collaborators.

*Requesting and providing reassurance* states that collaborators should request reassurance from and provide reassurance to other collaborators during times of uncertainty regarding the collaboration (Frankham & Howes, 2006; Rice, 2002). The guideline of *requesting and providing reassurance* received support from the current subthemes of *Supportive Communication* (Theme: Communication) and *Comfort and Anxiety* (Theme: Characteristics). Some collaborators in the current study described providing supportive comments to individuals who were perceived to be hesitant to participate, under stress, or uncomfortable with a task. Participants reported that requesting and receiving assistance was helpful during periods of assimilation to the collaboration.

The guideline of *social engagements* states that collaborators should arrange and attend social engagements with other collaborators from within and across organizations to facilitate interactions removed from the potential stressors affiliated with the collaborative tasks (Jaipal & Figg, 2011; Rice, 2002). While not mentioned by collaborators in the current study, it should be noted that participants in the current collaboration attended several social gatherings with one another, including a birthday party, going away lunches for exiting collaborators, holiday lunches, and social dinners.

According to the guideline of *addressing negative history if applicable*, collaborators should address the possible harmful effects of previous negative experiences with collaboration, including but not limited to mistrust of organizational representatives (Clark et al., 1996; Rice, 2002). This guideline was also not addressed in the current study, suggesting a lack of negative history between the current organizations.

The guideline of *attempting to understand the experience of fellow collaborators* is defined as follows. Collaborators should attempt to understand the perspective of other collaborators. Care should be taken to understand experiences and concerns specific to working within the culture of different organizations. Collaborators should recognize and accept similarities and differences between themselves and other collaborators. This guideline is supported by the findings of Buys and Bursnall (2007), Clark et al. (1996), Grundy et al. (2001), and Marlow et al. (2005). The current study provides support for this guideline through the subtheme of *Understanding* (Theme: Characteristics). The act of attempting to understand the perspective of others was perceived by study participants to impact the ability of collaborators to avoid taking conflicts personally. It also assisted frustrated or angry collaborators to calm down.

A new guideline of *formality* is proposed here under the category of Relationship/Rapport. The guideline of *formality* is proposed as follows. The formality of group interactions should be adjusted according to the activities and needs of the group. The guideline of *formality* is supported by the current subtheme of *Formality* (Theme: Group Dynamics). Participants in the current study found the decreased level of formality during planning sessions to increase feelings of equity within the collaborative group. As increased feelings of equity led to increased participation in collaborative activities,

factors that might contribute to this feature are considered a valuable aspect of collaborative process.

Finally, a new guideline of *culture* is also proposed here under the category of Relationship/Rapport. The guideline of *culture* is proposed as follows. The culture of included and affected organizations should be carefully considered at all phases of the collaborative endeavor. Adjustments to the cultural needs of various organizations should be made to accommodate varying cultural needs and priorities. The proposed guideline of *culture* is supported by the current study's subtheme of *Culture* (Theme: Characteristics). Participants in the current study ascribed different cultures to the organizations involved in the collaboration. They reported the importance of adapting to the different organizational cultures and found that such adaptations assisted in developing shared goals, working effectively within different organizational settings, and developing satisfactory involvement across organizational groups.

### **Strengths and Limitations**

The current study has several strengths. First, the study employed a rigorous methodology with a holistic sampling technique, increasing the trustworthiness of the results. Participants were recruited from each organization involved in the collaboration and represented a range of collaborative roles, years of experience, and levels of involvement within the collaboration. Data were collected in both group and individual formats to encourage dialogue between participants while maintaining opportunities for confidential discourse.

The roles of the primary researcher and peer coder as participant-observers in the current collaboration provide both strengths and limitations to the current study.

Regarding strengths, the participant-observer role guided the researchers in developing an informed research question, asking informed questions during the interview process, and allowing for consideration of contextual factors during data analysis. This role does pose the possibility of limitations, however, as the process of data analysis and interpretation might have been limited or influenced by the researchers' previous experiences with the phenomenon. Nevertheless, it should be noted that the researchers engaged in the process of epoch per Moustakas' (1994) recommendations in an effort to reduce the impact of researcher bias.

Other potential limitations were observed in the current study, as well. First, the study employed a small sample from a single collaboration. Second, the collaboration under study was characterized by several unique variables, including the group composition and the focus of the collaborative efforts. As such, the generalizability of the findings might be limited. However, the findings of the current study are consistent with the literature on inter-organizational collaboration in education, suggesting higher generalizability than might otherwise occur with the given sample size and setting characteristics. Furthermore, the study was in-depth and carefully constructed, resulting in an accurate portrayal of the described setting through thick, rich descriptions of collaborative experience.

The third limitation involves the time of data collection. Because data were collected several years after the initiation of the collaboration, participants were interviewed about experiences that had occurred between one and four years prior to data collection. One participant was interviewed three years after leaving the collaboration. These time delays might have impacted the ability of the participants to recall salient

details. However, participants were deeply engaged in the collaboration during their times of involvement, and as such keenly focused on collaborative process. Their participation, therefore, extended beyond casual involvement and allowed the participants to engage in astute and penetrating explorations of their collaborative experiences.

Finally, a fourth limitation is noted regarding the sample employed in the current study. Specifically, although care was taken to obtain representatives from each organization involved in the development and delivery of the professional learning projects, the voices of training recipients were not obtained regarding observed collaborative processes. Training recipients might have offered valuable information regarding the effectiveness of perceived collaborative processes from the perspective of those who were meant to benefit from the collaboration; however, obtaining perceptions from these individuals was beyond the scope of the current study.

### **Implications for Practice**

The current study offers several implications for practice. The high demand for collaboration in education suggests the need for informed, research-based practices in educational collaboration. The Hord-Psimas model of inter-organizational collaboration presented in this paper provides guidelines for multiple aspects of collaboration which are operationally defined and supported by research. Furthermore, the results of the current research offer insight into aspects of educational collaboration involving goal alignment, communication, perceptions of involvement, assimilation, and personal characteristics.

#### **Hord-Psimas model of inter-organizational collaboration.**

The Hord-Psimas model of inter-organizational collaboration presented here offers guidelines that address beginning aspects of collaboration, communication

practices, leadership and control, collaborative relationships, and specific practices and characteristics of successful collaborations. Future collaborators are encouraged to refer to this model of collaboration to guide the composition of collaborative teams, the generation of goals and responsibilities, the development of supportive infrastructure, and the facilitation of effective within- and between-group interactions.

### **Goal alignment.**

The results of the current study suggest the need for goal alignment within inter-organizational collaborations. Goals that were shared by all organizations in the current collaboration tended to be prioritized over goals that were not shared. Furthermore, goals that were not prioritized were often not met to the satisfaction of collaborators, leading to feelings of frustration. Such results suggest that care should be taken to clarify and confirm the importance of all collaborative goals both during the initiation of collaboration and upon entry of any new collaborators. As different organizations often enter into collaboration with varying and sometimes competing goals (Stokols, 2006), collaborators should take time as needed to clearly delineate all pertinent goals. It might also be helpful for collaborators to identify explicit plans for addressing each goal, as well as designate tasks associated with goal accomplishment. Such suggestions are in line with the Hord-Psimas model guidelines of *joint planning*, *shared goals*, *relevant goals*, *clarifying focus*, and *delegated responsibility*.

### **Communication.**

Collaborators found communication practices to impact the establishment of goals, the development of high quality products, and the facilitation of feelings of involvement and equity between collaborators. Participants also found frequent



communication between organizational administrators to be highly impactful during planning and decision-making efforts. Such findings suggest that future collaborators take care to engage in clear and frequent communication regarding collaborative plans, needs, goals, practices, and results. The establishment of consistent and reliable means for communication and communicative roles might assist with this endeavor.

Practitioners are encouraged to voice opinions during planning sessions to ensure that their needs are adequately conveyed. They are also encouraged to listen to the suggestions of others in order to facilitate feelings of involvement and equity. Clarifying and asking questions of others will assist collaborators in developing plans and products that are satisfactory to all collaborators. These suggestions are in line with the Hord-Psimas model guidelines of *communication roles and channels*, *listening*, *asking questions*, and *voicing opinions*.

#### **Perceptions of involvement.**

Participants in the current collaboration reported feelings of involvement to be positively impacted by equitable decision-making and contributions to the workload. While the complex relationship between these three variables likely requires further research for full understanding, these results do suggest that collaborators should attend to the power differential and workload distribution present in collaborative teams. Practitioners should take care to seek the opinions of all collaborators during decision-making, as this practice was felt to increase equity between members. This suggestion is in line with the Hord-Psimas model guidelines of *shared control* and *equitable value*. Practitioners should also encourage a fair and acceptable distribution of the workload among collaborators, as recommended in the Hord-Psimas model guideline of *delegated*

*responsibility*. This endeavor should be done with sensitivity to the experience and comfort level of fellow collaborators, as participants in the current study reported feeling more comfortable attending to tasks that were within their area of competence or expertise. This will allow participants to offer relevant contributions, as suggested in the Hord-Psimas model guideline of *contributions of expertise*. The results of the current study suggest that promoting *shared control*, *equitable value*, and *delegated responsibility* among collaborators will increase feelings of personal involvement within the collaboration, which in turn will encourage collaborators to continue to contribute to decision-making and task completion.

#### **System entry and assimilation.**

Participants also discussed several complex and interrelated issues that were perceived to stem in part from repeated experiences of assimilation within the collaborative group. Specifically, repeated efforts to assimilate to the collaboration and to new collaborators resulted in feelings of anxiety regarding professional tasks and interpersonal interactions. Novice collaborators also had difficulty contributing to the workload and to decision-making efforts, delaying the accomplishment of collaborative goals.

In order to counter the potentially negative impact of staff changes among collaborative teams, strides should be taken to decrease the amount of time needed for assimilation. Veteran collaborators should attempt to ease new collaborators into the collaborative environment by offering assistance and taking on more of the workload during the assimilation process. As several participants in the current study described entering the collaboration with insufficient knowledge regarding effective collaborative

practices, veteran collaborators are advised to model desired collaborative behaviors. Care should be taken to establish a desired level of formality within the collaborative group, as participants felt that decreased formality led to increased feelings of equity and involvement. Furthermore, collaborators should consider important aspects of the culture of the existing collaborative group, as well as the culture ascribed by the new collaborators. Participants in the current collaboration reported that consideration of cultural differences was important in facilitating effective modes of inter-organizational and interpersonal interaction. These suggestions are in line with the Hord-Psimas model guidelines of *requesting and providing reassurance, formality, culture, strong and supportive leadership, providing assistance, and establishing rapport*.

#### **Personal characteristics.**

Finally, the current study offers implications for practice in the area of personal characteristics. Participants in the current study identified several characteristics believed to contribute to successful communication, positive group dynamics, and quality outcomes. In particular, participants expressed the belief that flexibility and openness were desirable characteristics in fellow collaborators. They also found self-motivation and the ability to give up an expert role to be valuable characteristics. These results suggest that collaborators should attempt to approach collaborations with the willingness to adapt to the needs of others. They should be open to suggestions that are not in line with their own beliefs and willing to discuss disagreements amicably. Collaborators in the current study who displayed these characteristics assisted the collaborative group in arriving at plans and conclusions which were satisfactory to the whole group as opposed to one or two collaborators. These suggestions are in line with the Hord-Psimas model

guidelines of *compromise, listening, shared control, equitable value, and structure for expressing and resolving conflict.*

Collaborators should also exhibit self-motivation when assuming responsibility for collaborative tasks, a suggestion that is in line with the Hord-Psimas model guideline of *delegated responsibility*. While not suggested in the current study, it is likely that communication practices should go hand in hand with personally assumed responsibilities to avoid the duplication of tasks.

Finally, participants found the act of relinquishing an expert role to be highly valuable in the current collaborative. They also expressed the belief that individuals unable to give up an expert role hindered communication efforts and feelings of equity within the group. Future collaborators should attempt to relinquish the expert role when possible by deferring to the expertise of others, considering all suggestions equally, and avoiding voicing opinions just for the sake of voicing opinions. These suggestions are in line with the Hord-Psimas model guidelines of *contributions of expertise, shared control, equitable value, and voicing opinions.*

### **Implications for Research**

Additional research in several areas would provide a valuable contribution to the literature. For example, participants in the current study engaged in an extended and thoughtful examination of their feelings of involvement within the current collaboration. They suggested that their perceptions of personal involvement, contributions to the workload, and feelings of equity within the collaborative group influenced one another in a bi-directional manner. More research is needed to determine the extent to which these

variables are linked, as well as the means by which collaborators might deliberately influence one variable by influencing others.

Furthermore, the current study highlighted the importance of personality to collaborative efforts, a factor which has not been addressed in depth in previous research. More information is needed regarding the perceived importance of personality within other types of collaborations, as well as the behaviors associated with different personality types. Such information might assist future collaborators in establishing optimal compositions of collaborative groups.

Many of the studies identified that discussed collaborative processes involved in inter-organizational collaborations in education examined the processes involved in short-term collaborations developed for highly specific purposes. Further study is needed to determine the extent to which the characteristics in these collaborations are perceived to be important by individuals with different collaborative experiences. Furthermore, these studies were generally qualitative in nature. While they provided thick, rich descriptions of the experience of collaborating with representatives from different organizations, the methodologies used generally limited the ability of the authors to make causal inferences between variables. Large scale research that includes the examination of both collaborative processes and outcomes might provide further insight into the behaviors and characteristics associated with effective, long-lasting inter-organizational collaborations in education. The results of the current study suggest that a model of inter-organizational collaboration such as the Hord-Psimas model proposed here could guide such inquiry by providing a rich array of variables to examine.

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## APPENDIXES

## APPENDIX A

## Semi-Structured Individual Interview

Introductory Statement: For the past few years, [the university] has been involved in a partnership with [the state agency] and several local school systems. I'm going to ask you some questions about your experiences in this collaboration. You may have more to say about some questions than others. That is fine.

1. First I'd like to ask you what word you would use to describe this relationship. I've used the words "partnership" and "collaboration". Do either of these words seem appropriate to you? Is there another word that you think provides a more accurate description of the relationship? Which word do you prefer?
2. How would you describe the partnership/collaboration/other to others?
  - a. Probes:
    - i. How would you describe the strengths of the partnership/collaboration/ other?
    - ii. How would you describe the weaknesses of the relationship?
3. Now I'd like to talk about your involvement in the relationship. How would you describe that?
  - a. Probes:
    - i. How long have you been involved?
    - ii. When do you think you really started to get involved?
    - iii. Tell me about a session that you were involved in when you first joined the collaboration. How would you have described your opinion of collaboration in general at that time?
    - iv. Now tell me about a session that you were involved in when you felt like you were first starting to really get involved. What did you think about collaboration then?
    - v. Now tell me about a more recent session, or one of your last sessions. How did you feel about collaboration then?
    - vi. Ideally, what would you like for your involvement to be like, or to have been like? How is that different from the way it actually was, or is?

4. You've talked about a lot of different experiences with the collaboration.
  - a. What do you think you, personally, brought to the collaboration?
  - b. What do you think you get out of it?
  
5. You've had to work with a lot of different people during your involvement. Tell me what that has been like.
  - a. Did you ever try to adjust your behavior to accommodate the people you were working with?
  
6. Tell me about a time when you successfully changed your own actions in order to work better with someone else.
  - a. Probes:
    - i. Why did you choose that behavior change?
    - ii. How did the others react?
  
7. How about a time when you tried to adjust to someone else and it didn't seem to work?
  - a. Probes:
    - i. Why did you choose that behavior change?
    - ii. How did the others react?
    - iii. What could you have done differently?
  
8. Tell me about a time that you think the people you were working with changed their actions to better suit you and others involved.
  - a. Probes:
    - i. Why do you think they did that?
    - ii. How did you react?
    - iii. How did others react?
    - iv. What could they have done differently?
  
9. Has your involvement impacted the way you approach collaboration with others?
  
10. If someone asked you if they should get involved in collaboration, what would your response be?
  
11. Is there anything I should know that I didn't think to ask?



## APPENDIX B

## Group Interview Questionnaire

For the past few years, [the university] has been involved in a partnership with [the state agency] and several local school systems. The questions here are referring to your experiences with that collaboration. You might have more to say about some of the questions than others. That is fine.

1. In the preceding paragraph, the words “partnership” and “collaboration” were used to describe this relationship. Which word do you prefer? If there is another word that you think provides a more accurate description of the relationship, please write that one.
- 

2. List three strengths of this collaboration.

- a.

- b.

- c.

3. List three weaknesses of this collaboration.

- a.

- b.

- c.

4. How long have you been involved in the collaboration? \_\_\_\_\_

5. Are you currently involved? \_\_\_\_\_

6. When did you first feel like you were really involved?

7. List three things that happened then that made you feel like you were really involved.
  - a.
  - b.
  - c.
  
8. You've had to work with a lot of different people during your involvement. List three changes that you've made to your behavior in order to work better with the other people involved in the collaboration.
  - a.
  - b.
  - c.
  
9. List three ways that your involvement has impacted the way you approach collaboration with others.
  - a.
  - b.
  - c.
  
10. Would you recommend collaboration to others? List three reasons why or why not.
  - a.
  - b.
  - c.

## APPENDIX C

## Coding Manual

**Instructions**

- Each meaning unit that is coded should be coded at the lowest category level possible
- Category levels are as follows:
  - **LEVEL 1**
    - **Level 2**
- If a meaning unit seems to encompass two or more codes, assign each code that is relevant
- A category might include the presence or lack of a particular phenomenon (for example, the code of flexibility should be applied to comments expressing flexibility or the lack thereof)
- Codes should only be applied if the participant explicitly describes the appropriate phenomenon. Codes that are perceived to be implied or indicated due to previous comments should not be applied

### At-A-Glance Summary

<b>Collaborative Structure</b>	factors related to the general nature of the collaboration or administration of the collaboration by organizational administrators
<b>Time/Resources</b>	factors related to time, scheduling, funding, manpower, or competing demands
<b>Administration/ Supervision</b>	factors related to administration of the collaboration or organizations, including supervision or guidance of subordinates, multiple bosses, or administrative support or perceived administrative perspective
<b>Choice</b>	voluntary or involuntary participation
<b>Goals/Focus</b>	purpose of collaboration, organizational priorities, goal alignment, organizational goals, clarity of goals
<b>Staff Changes</b>	changes in staff, staff turnover
<b>Communication</b>	communicative behaviors
<b>Talking</b>	Voicing or withholding ideas, opinions, feedback; discussion; general references to communication
<b>Listening</b>	Listening or not listening
<b>Negotiation</b>	ebb & flow, give & take, back & forth, negotiating
<b>Clarifying/ Questions</b>	asking or not asking questions, clarifying meaning, paraphrasing; asking for feedback
<b>Brainstorming</b>	Brainstorming; planning sessions, problem solving
<b>Supportive Comm.</b>	Making supportive statements, comments, or gestures; not making supportive statements or comments; validating or not validating comments of others
<b>Body Language</b>	comments related to facial expressions, body language, or “reading” people
<b>Characteristics</b>	Qualities, attributes, or characteristics of individuals or organizations
<b>Attitudes/Priorities...</b>	Attitude toward collaboration; sense of enthusiasm or excitement regarding collaboration or project
<b>Personality</b>	Comments regarding personality styles and characteristics that are unspecific or do not fit another characteristic
<b>Experience</b>	Previous experiences; background; factors related to new or unfamiliar experiences
<b>Flexibility/openness</b>	Flexibility or rigidity of individuals or groups; adjusting or not adjusting to situations; openness to feedback
<b>Taking Personally</b>	Taking or not taking the experiences personally; resentment or lack thereof

<b>Persistence/Acceptance</b>	Referring to matters of patience with or acceptance of a situation, individual, or group; letting things go; aggressive behaviors or comments; persistence or pushing an issue
<b>Humor</b>	Mentioning humor or comedy; lack of humor
<b>Comfort/Anxiety</b>	Feelings of anxiety or comfort; going beyond comfort zone; confidence or lack thereof
<b>Competence/Skill</b>	Perceived competence or lack thereof regarding collaboration or project demands
<b>Expert-oriented</b>	need to be expert in a situation; desire for expert role; ability to give up expert role
<b>Self-motivated</b>	self-initiation; self-motivation; lack of self-motivation
<b>Social/team-oriented</b>	social personality; non-social personality; team player
<b>Detail-oriented</b>	Oriented or not oriented towards details
<b>Understanding</b>	Understanding or not understanding the perspective of others
<b>Organized/Prepared</b>	organization and preparation (or lack thereof) of collaborators or groups; foresight or lack of foresight; specific to a characteristic as opposed to an action
<b>Culture</b>	qualities attributed to organizational culture, politics, or “personality” (vs. individual personality)
<b>Group Dynamics</b>	Factors relating to the interpersonal interactions and relationships between group members
<b>Intangible Contributions</b>	Contributions of collaborators that do not involve time, effort, or attendance (i.e. perspective, skill, expertise); general need for each other (vs. workload); lack of contributions or need for each other
<b>Power Differential</b>	Power distributions within the collaborative group; decision making as it relates to power differential (i.e. equal say in decisions); equity or lack of equity btwn members; equal or unequal “voice”
<b>Formality</b>	The level of formality within the group or setting
<b>Familiarity/Rapport</b>	Familiarity/unfamiliarity, trust/distrust, rapport, and relationship between group members (not outcome); popularity/unpopularity; respect or lack of respect
<b>Workload/Involvement</b>	Factors related to workload, effort; sharing or not sharing workload; assisting or not assisting; attendance; degree or type of involvement within collaboration or with other collaborators; distribution of workload
<b>Agreement</b>	Referring to agreement or disagreement between collaborators

<b>Management</b>	Managing or not managing the behavior of others; focusing collaborative efforts; facilitating; manipulating; employing or lacking tactfulness	11
<b>Collaborative Roles</b>	Defining roles, role confusion, perceptions of roles (i.e. my role was...; her role was...)	12
<b>Modeling</b>	Modeling and demonstrating or lack of demonstration	12
<b>Ownership</b>	A sense or lack of ownership, investment, or commitment in the project	12
<b>Group composition</b>	The construction and composition of the collaborative groups; inter-disciplinarity or lack thereof	12
<b>Assimilation</b>	process of entering the group or collaboration; being eased or thrown into the collaboration; references to system entry issues; individual or group level	13
<b>Outcomes</b>	Outcomes of the collaboration itself or the impact of participation on the collaborators	13
<b>Emotional Outcomes</b>	Feelings of frustration, stress, anger, or burnout; calming down from frustration; excitement, enjoyment, or happiness; gratitude	13
<b>Sustain/Generalize</b>	Efforts or failure to sustain or generalize collaboration, research, or PL; seeking or not seeking collaboration	13
<b>Learning</b>	Learning from the collaborative experience; increase in knowledge; lack of learning	13
<b>General Impact</b>	General impact or lack of impact of the collaboration on organizations or individuals; perceived success/benefits or detriments of the collaboration that cannot be attributed to other outcome categories; general recommendations	14
<b>Relationship Devel.</b>	Development or lack thereof of a relationship between collaborators (stated as outcome)	14
<b>Evolution</b>	general growth, development, change, phases, or evolution of the collaboration or individuals over time, excluding learning	14

## Full Coding Manual

<p><b>COLLABORATIVE STRUCTURE</b>          (Collaborative Structure) (Communication) (Characteristics) (Group Dynamics)          (Outcomes) (At-A-Glance)</p>
<p>Definition: factors related to the general nature of the collaboration or administration of the collaboration by organizational administrators</p>
<p><b>Time/Resources</b></p>
<p>Definition: factors related to time, scheduling, funding, manpower, or competing demands</p>
<p>Exemplars:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• It's something that takes time.</li> <li>• We had so much going on, we definitely didn't have the time maybe to sit down and do a couple of things</li> <li>• Trying to get the two schedules to come together.</li> <li>• Because what the collaborative is doing is more expensive – a more expensive way of providing professional learning than to have somebody to come a do a one day presentation.</li> <li>• I don't know if it's because of conflicting um initiatives or what.</li> <li>• I felt like we did a nice job of recognizing the fact that we were moving too quickly.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Administration/Supervision</b></p>
<p>Definition: factors related to administration of the collaboration or organizations, including supervision or guidance of subordinates, multiple bosses, or administrative support or perceived perspective</p>
<p>Exemplars:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• And we're like, a group, within the group, within the group, so it's like okay, like who do we really talk to about this. And who...where do we go for that?</li> <li>• There needs to be more um, what's that word, encouragement from the...from your administrators on your site.</li> <li>• We're able to, you know, do what we do, with minimal supervision.</li> <li>• But I don't necessarily feel like [Sean] was really a part of that all that much because he was out of town.</li> <li>• And in many ways this dissertation feels independent study,</li> <li>• two lines of reporting</li> </ul>

<b>Choice</b> (Collaborative Structure) (Communication) (Characteristics) (Group Dynamics) (Outcomes) (At-A-Glance)
Definition: voluntary or involuntary participation
Exemplars: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• No one was there that didn't want to be there.</li> <li>• <i>Okay, so when did you feel like really started to get involved?</i> P: I didn't have a choice.</li> </ul>
<b>Goals/Focus</b>
Definition: purpose of collaboration, goal alignment, organizational goals, clarity of goals
Exemplars: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• I don't think we all had the end product in mind. We didn't have what we were expecting.</li> <li>• We weren't all on the same page. We didn't have clear focus on what we were to come up with.</li> <li>• The university piece of it is to research and so that has got to come in there and figuring out how to balance that...</li> <li>• Kind of the goal of the collaboration, one of the goals would be to change the way all staff development is done.</li> <li>• We are trying to embrace positive behavioral support. That's why we engaged in this partnership in the first place.</li> <li>• And I thought that with project I'd be able to change that, help support that change.</li> <li>• [The state agency] is very much like that in terms of "okay, we have to look for opportunities to build capacity."</li> <li>• What the school system wants to a certain extent drives what you are doing.</li> </ul>
<b>Staff Changes</b>
Definition: changes in staff, staff turnover
Exemplars: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• I wish we could have kept all the same people, because I really think um, there was some nice momentum building.</li> <li>• If we had only started it this year, where you know, we're not going to have this, you know, staff turn-over and stuff, maybe it would have been better.</li> <li>• We lost some key people.</li> <li>• We lost [state agency] people that we had become comfortable with</li> <li>• Then [Tanya] left and got a new, another director.</li> </ul>



<p><b>COMMUNICATION</b>  (Collaborative Structure) (Communication) (Characteristics) (Group Dynamics)  (Outcomes) (At-A-Glance)</p>
<p>Definition: communicative behaviors</p>
<p><b>Talking</b></p>
<p>Definition: voicing or withholding ideas, opinions, feedback; discussions; general references to communication</p>
<p>Exemplars:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• just offering like feedback</li> <li>• But we would put the ideas out on the table.</li> <li>• At times he would say, oh I didn't think about that or that's a good idea or you know. So it just made it even more powerful</li> <li>• But I don't um, know that I've given the feedback necessary to take us necessarily to the next level with this.</li> <li>• I felt a, um, there were times that I wanted to push [the peri-urban district] to speak up a little bit more</li> <li>• Some people do not want to be heard out of the, uh, have a voice.</li> <li>• Sometimes it's just good to be quiet.</li> <li>• If someone comes up with a great idea, then what's the point in chopping it up and redoing it? It's a great idea. Acknowledge it, let them know it's a good idea, and use it!</li> <li>• We don't need to pick this apart just to say we collaborated on it.</li> <li>• And they come in and they do kind of rip it apart,</li> <li>• For the most part we really try to keep one another abreast of what's going on.</li> <li>• We had productive discussion.</li> <li>• So that good old communication.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Listening</b></p>
<p>Definition: listening or not listening</p>
<p>Exemplars:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• So one of the things that I did do, like as far as change my behavior was just to start listening more.</li> <li>• You know if one of us felt strongly about something we would listen.</li> <li>• You know, I'm more conscious of um, listening.</li> </ul>

<b>Negotiation</b> (Collaborative Structure) (Communication) (Characteristics) (Group Dynamics) (Outcomes) (At-A-Glance)
Definition: ebb & flow, give & take, back & forth, negotiating
Exemplars: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sometimes there has to be a back and forth, kind of give and take process.</li> <li>• Really collaboration is kind of this like process, like almost like “the wave”. It takes time to build, and then it kind of ebbs down, rather than making an appointment, and making all the decisions right then and there</li> <li>• We had to do some negotiating with the State, the [Department of Education].</li> <li>• There’s some renegotiate... some of that happens anyway,</li> </ul>
<b>Clarifying/Asking Questions</b>
Definition: asking or not asking questions, clarifying meaning, paraphrasing; asking for feedback
Exemplars: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Just asking kind of more open-ended questions.</li> <li>• Not afraid to ask more questions for clarification</li> <li>• Speaking less about me not being happy about the situation, and just speaking more about me not understanding the situation.</li> <li>• Paraphrasing a lot</li> </ul>
<b>Brainstorming</b>
Definition: Brainstorming; planning sessions, problem solving
Exemplars: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Just the interactions among ourselves. The brainstorming sessions, I think have been very powerful.</li> <li>• Generally, when we came together at the end to try and to decide what was going to happen next for the next year.</li> <li>• A lot of trouble shooting, you know, just talking about what was going on. Us bouncing ideas off of each other. You all kind of venting and about the frustrations.</li> <li>• delayed/lack of communication</li> </ul>
<b>Supportive Communication</b>
Definition: Making supportive statements, comments, or gestures; not making supportive statements or comments; validating or not validating comments of others
Exemplars: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• I tried to be more encouraging.</li> <li>• It is a team, and so we all have to kind of get along and understand one another and be there for one another.</li> <li>• Making a statement that’s almost supportive.</li> <li>• I think sometimes you just have to show that you are concerned.</li> </ul>

**Body Language**

(Collaborative Structure) (Communication) (Characteristics) (Group Dynamics)  
(Outcomes) (At-A-Glance)

Definition: comments related to facial expressions, body language, or “reading” people

Exemplars:

- Even though the words may have been okay, maybe the facial expressions or the body language wasn't.
- So, yeah, to get a read on them, I can see that too.

<b>CHARACTERISTICS</b> (Collaborative Structure) (Communication) (Characteristics) (Group Dynamics) (Outcomes) (At-A-Glance)
Definition: qualities, attributes, or characteristics of individuals
<b>Attitudes/Priorities/Beliefs</b>
Definition: attitude toward collaboration; sense or lack of enthusiasm or excitement regarding collaboration or project(s)
Exemplars: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• I came to it enthusiastically.</li> <li>• I always preach it. I mean, I'm a supporter of it.</li> <li>• If I'm going to work this hard on something it needs to be something that I enjoy.</li> <li>• But I do believe that, um, that there was a level of commitment from all of the participants.</li> <li>• <i>Um, if somebody asked you if they should get involved in collaboration what would your response be?</i> P: Well, first off I would say oh it's great.</li> </ul>
<b>Personality</b>
Definition: comments regarding personality styles and characteristics that are unspecific or do not fit another characteristic
Exemplars: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• There were certain personality types that were a little strong to me.</li> <li>• To do this, it requires like some characteristics of the individual.</li> <li>• I think there are some individuals out there that you just need to let them work by themselves.</li> <li>• And she realized that they had two different personalities. One was more straightforward. One was more laidback, you know.</li> <li>• And if you're not a social individual then that may pose a problem.</li> <li>• Some people need to be heard first.</li> <li>• One staff member almost impossible to work with.</li> </ul>
<b>Experience</b>
Definition: previous experiences, background, factors related to new or unfamiliar experiences
Exemplars: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• I feel like the individuals coming, who've never been in schools, no experience whatsoever kind of struggle in this... in this setting.</li> <li>• I think the fact that, you know, I have been a teacher definitely helped.</li> <li>• I've had lots of experience in the classroom.</li> <li>• having a special education background</li> </ul>

<b>Flexibility</b> (Collaborative Structure) (Communication) (Characteristics) (Group Dynamics) (Outcomes) (At-A-Glance)
Definition: flexibility or rigidity of individuals or groups, adjusting or not adjusting to situations, willingness or unwillingness to change
Exemplars: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• You also have to kind of be flexible.</li> <li>• We were flexible in that system too, understanding “okay this is how it kind of goes, and how can we work within their culture?”</li> <li>• Basically, you’re on their turf. So you have to tailor it so you are successful.</li> <li>• I was picking my battles.</li> <li>• No matter how I tried to talk with them about it differently or tried to change the way I was.... It was, “No were doing it this way and this is, this is, this, and here it is scripted out and this is the way it’s gonna be.”</li> <li>• And yet I found that [the university], or [the state agency] were willing to come over here.</li> <li>• And we bumped some things as a result from agenda items to the following trainings where we could make that happen.</li> </ul>
<b>Taking Personally</b>
Definition: taking or not taking the experiences personally; resentment or lack thereof
Exemplars: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• But I think at the end of the day we decided that you can’t take it personally.</li> <li>• Because when you think of collaboration, I think so much...I don’t know how to articulate this, but it’s not kind of about you.</li> <li>• I just kind of had to tell myself that particular situation probably wasn’t really about [the state agency].</li> <li>• Knowing that there was more to what was going then us, you know.</li> </ul>
<b>Persistence/Acceptance</b>
Definition: Referring to matters of patience with or acceptance of a situation, individual, or group; letting things go; aggressive behaviors or comments; persistence or pushing an issue
Exemplars: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• being more patient</li> <li>• And so, I tried to be patient.</li> <li>• You have to be a lot more patient with some than others.</li> <li>• It’s just a part of the game.</li> <li>• It is what it is.</li> <li>• And we are where we are.</li> <li>• She was basically considered by some as aggressive in how she would, how they were come across.</li> <li>• When I continued to be very persistent, eventually she got on the phone and said here’s a person.</li> <li>• I basically just had to put my foot down and say, in a nice, professional way of</li> </ul>

<p>course, we need a system level person from your end to support our efforts, okay.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• But it doesn't always work out the way you wanted it to, and yet, you know, we have to try it again.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Humor</b></p> <p>(Collaborative Structure) (Communication) (Characteristics) (Group Dynamics) (Outcomes) (At-A-Glance)</p>
<p>Definition: mentioning humor or comedy; lack of humor</p>
<p>Exemplars:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• They just try to kind of use a little humor to try to get through like difficult situations.</li> <li>• I think sometimes I do just kind of like bring in some comedy to the situation.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Comfort/Anxiety</b></p>
<p>Definition: feelings of anxiety or comfort; going beyond comfort zone; confidence or lack thereof</p>
<p>Exemplars:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• trust my own ability</li> <li>• This was new to me, so there was some anxiety.</li> <li>• And then it was no big deal, like "I'm going to do slides one through nine". And, it was really no big deal.</li> <li>• It is a little bit overwhelming being on this, [graduate research assistantship] in general.</li> <li>• I'm trying to figure out something that is beyond my scope. And I don't know how far I can stretch my skill set to get there.</li> <li>• We were very nervous about putting general education and special education teachers together.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Competence/Skill</b></p>
<p>Definition: perceived competence or lack thereof regarding collaboration or project demands</p>
<p>Exemplars:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Teachers need to be trained how to collaborate.</li> <li>• But I just think you need some training.</li> <li>• The hard part came afterwards when we actually started to do it because we didn't know how.</li> <li>• <i>When you say they didn't know how to do it, do you mean they didn't know how to negotiate the collaboration itself?</i> P: We didn't know how to make the collaboration work.</li> </ul>

<b>Expert-oriented</b> (Collaborative Structure) (Communication) (Characteristics) (Group Dynamics) (Outcomes) (At-A-Glance)
Definition: need to be expert in a situation; desire for expert role; ability to give up expert role
Exemplars: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• I remember working with one person who really it was important for that person to feel like the expert.</li> <li>• When you get people who are a little less secure. Then it is very hard for them to give up that expert role.</li> <li>• When people have been unable for whatever reason to give up that expert role in order to go with the collaboration, I think that's been a weakness.</li> <li>• Um, [she] works from an expert model. And she is very committed to that expert model.</li> </ul>
<b>Self-motivated</b>
Definition: self-initiation; self-motivation; lack of self-motivation
Exemplars: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• You have to be able to kind of be a self-initiated.</li> <li>• I guess I'm used to where I was expecting more of the, the self-starter, the initiative to be, you know, if I have to send out a reminder of "oh yes, here it is", as opposed to the "well, I can't really do that" and here's why this is tricky.</li> <li>• The people don't seem to be self-motivated towards it.</li> </ul>
<b>Social</b>
Definition: social personality; non-social personality; team player
Exemplars: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• And if you're not a social individual then that may pose a problem.</li> <li>• You had to, um, be more of a team player.</li> </ul>
<b>Detail-oriented</b>
Definition: oriented or not oriented towards details
Exemplars: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• I tend to be a very detailed person.</li> <li>• I think when I would get too detailed.</li> <li>• And I may be a little detail oriented.</li> </ul>
<b>Understanding</b>
Definition: understanding or not understanding the perspective of others
Exemplars: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• But I understood.</li> <li>• I was frustrated but I could still understand why [she] was acting the way she was acting.</li> <li>• I totally understand how you all were feeling. Okay, but I still had to say, okay, maybe this is why she is doing this.</li> <li>• You can be too close to a situation.</li> </ul>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>You can just be too close to it and it's hard to see why, decipher what you all are doing, versus the other, how, how, what may be going on with the other side.</li> <li>I don't think she quite understands what's required of that from our standpoint.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Organized/Prepared</b>  (Collaborative Structure) (Communication) (Characteristics) (Group Dynamics)  (Outcomes) (At-A-Glance)</p>
<p>Definition: organization and preparation (or lack thereof) of collaborators or groups; foresight or lack of foresight; specific to a characteristic as opposed to an action</p>
<p>Exemplars:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>You were very well prepared.</li> <li>I said that it made me much more organized when I'm collaborating and working with other people. Um, it could be mass chaos working with multiple people. I don't ever feel like it's that way, because I feel like it's always kind of structured and a bit of a pyramid to where you've got a contact, or you've um got such a clear game plan that you don't have to worry about feeling like your fragmented by talking to different people.</li> <li>Also having a "plan B"</li> <li>I think an agenda is always a good thing. I think moves meetings ahead much more quickly.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Culture</b></p>
<p>Definition: qualities attributed to organizational culture, politics, or "personality" (vs. individual personality)</p>
<p>Exemplars:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Various systems have their own personalities.</li> <li><i>Okay, well you said, some systems are more political than others. Can you tell me a little bit more about that?</i> P: Yes, the hierarchy.</li> <li><i>So it sounds like you think the collaboration looks different, in the different personalities the systems that you are working in?</i> P: It does</li> <li>It's not always gonna be smooth in every system that we go into.</li> <li>Maybe it's just that others don't want that change here in the system.</li> <li>And it's just a very different approach than ours.</li> </ul>



<p><b>GROUP DYNAMICS</b>  (Collaborative Structure) (Communication) (Characteristics) (Group Dynamics)  (Outcomes) (At-A-Glance)</p>
<p>Definition: factors relating to the interpersonal interactions and relationships between group members</p>
<p><b>Intangible Contributions</b></p>
<p>Definition: Contributions of collaborators that do not involve time, effort, or attendance (i.e. perspective, skill, expertise); general need for each other (vs. workload); lack of contributions or need for each other</p>
<p>Exemplars:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• There was a skill-set that you brought to the table that we didn't have yet. So I think we partnered more so because we needed what you had, and you needed what we had.</li> <li>• He was pretty much to the table to help with the trouble shooting because see we all brought different perspectives.</li> <li>• You all have your strengths, um. We have ours.</li> <li>• I think each of those groups bring something unique.</li> <li>• I think, the strength has been when the people who are coming to work together recognize that everybody brings their own area of expertise.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Power Differential</b></p>
<p>Definition: power distributions within the collaborative group; decision making as it relates to power differential (i.e. equal say in decisions); equity or lack of equity btwn members</p>
<p>Exemplars:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• I felt that was very equal.</li> <li>• There was parity involved.</li> <li>• For the most part of my experience of the collaborative we all tend to treat each other as equals.</li> <li>• And the thing that I had to do was let go of it and let her, defer to her in some ways.</li> <li>• By time that training happened [she] was controlling a lot of the power point slides.</li> <li>• We didn't want to tell them what to do.</li> <li>• I thought like wow "this is really going to happen, and we really get to pick".</li> <li>• If I forced this decision on them, then they're not probably going to be okay with it.</li> <li>• We don't necessarily have a say in what school systems we necessarily work with.</li> </ul>

<b>Formality</b> (Collaborative Structure) (Communication) (Characteristics) (Group Dynamics) (Outcomes) (At-A-Glance)
Definition: the level of formality within the group or setting
Exemplars: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• I think you would tie in a positive feeling with collaboration if you had it in a more relaxed atmosphere.</li> <li>• I think it was a little bit more informal.</li> <li>• So I kind of felt that there was a very easy atmosphere in there as opposed to, bringing your homework and presenting it to the teacher.</li> <li>• Collaboration also involves like a good level of like just social interaction.</li> <li>• You don't have to be so on pins and needles.</li> </ul>
<b>Familiarity/Rapport</b>
Definition: familiarity/unfamiliarity, trust/distrust, rapport, and relationship between group members that is not stated as an outcome of the collaboration; popularity/unpopularity; respect or lack of respect
Exemplars: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• So that was kind of a level of familiarity that she could just tell them to hush up.</li> <li>• I mean it just, we were familiar with each other's strengths.</li> <li>• Um, and then you and [Mia] joined us so there were four of us and um, that was scary at first because we were getting two more...</li> <li>• In the collaboration piece, a relationship had started to develop.</li> <li>• It was just matter of the team not working together at first.</li> <li>• So I guess I felt trust with um, [the state agency] and [the university].</li> </ul>
<b>Workload/Involvement</b>
Definition: factors related to workload, effort; sharing or not sharing workload; assisting or not assisting; attendance; degree or type of involvement within the collaboration or with other collaborators; distribution of workload
Exemplars: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• And, and then at one point I think you said like "okay, here's the layout, who's doing what?" And I realized like we can't, you're not going to do it for us.</li> <li>• I think the way we had set it up where everyone kind of took a turn, um, I felt that was the fairest way</li> <li>• One thing I didn't do was pick up the ball and run with it for them.</li> <li>• We all have a similar work ethic. Everybody does their share, and are willing to do more than their share, if that's what...to take up the slack anywhere.</li> <li>• <i>Okay, alright, um, so I'd like to talk about your involvement, your personal involvement in the relationship, how would you describe that?</i> P: Um, waning.</li> <li>• Um, I think that the first year I attended probably at least every other training.</li> <li>• Well, I'm thinking there was a year in between there where the [the state agency] people were, you were involved in several different, um, school systems and none of them were the school systems that I was really in.</li> </ul>

<b>Agreement</b> (Collaborative Structure) (Communication) (Characteristics) (Group Dynamics) (Outcomes) (At-A-Glance)
Definition: referring to agreement or disagreement between collaborators
Exemplars: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What I considered invalid may not be what they consider invalid.</li> <li>• I think [Sean] and I and [Debbie] felt like we were always on the same page.</li> <li>• Sometimes difficult to come to consensus or make decisions.</li> <li>• I don't feel like we ever disagreed.</li> <li>• Agreeing that we can disagree is important, in a collaboration of anything. So you won't just have a bunch of people going along and getting along.</li> </ul>
<b>Management</b>
Definition: managing or not managing the behavior of others; focusing collaborative efforts; facilitating; manipulating; employing or lacking tactfulness
Exemplars: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• I felt like I was minimizing her negative reaction so that we could begin to move forward.</li> <li>• I'll say I was managing [her] through my behavior,</li> <li>• Sometimes I feel like it is manipulative. And it is. But on the other hand, anytime you are working with, anytime you have a difficult relationship somebody has got to be willing to be flexible or you are not going to get anywhere.</li> <li>• There was sometimes when I had to redirect the group in my opinion, and pull more of what I had, my initial end goal was.</li> <li>• When you have a collaboration you are going to have to have a person that facilitates.</li> </ul>
<b>Collaborative Roles</b>
Definition: defining roles, role confusion, perceptions of roles
Exemplars: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• But it was just kind of we had to define what people's roles were,</li> <li>• [Debbie] and I always saw that, um, you weren't interns that had to be supervised in a sense because you had experience; you were consultants that came in. Um, [Sean] and I talked about that, and everybody was on that page.</li> <li>• And [she] came from a very different view of: they're considered interns and that they have, I have to meet with them once a week and supervise them as interns would in a school district.</li> <li>• Focused on the type of group I am working with and what my role with that group is.</li> <li>• Roles and responsibilities are not always clear.</li> <li>• <i>How would describe your role in the collaboration?</i> P: (long pause) I think you could say facilitator. You could call my role the owner of the project, initial project in pulling it together. And initiating it.</li> </ul>

<p><b>Modeling</b>  (Collaborative Structure) (Communication) (Characteristics) (Group Dynamics)  (Outcomes) (At-A-Glance)</p>
<p>Definition: modeling and demonstrating or lack thereof</p>
<p>Exemplars:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Uh, and also I think you guys were great models for kind of how, when you move into another level of education, or in research, this is how to present yourself.</li> <li>• It's almost like some of that you can model how to collaborate but you can't wave a magic wand and make it happen.</li> <li>• And so one of the hardest things about the collaboration part is to model that and get people to come into it.</li> <li>• So I really felt like we were modeling the "what if's and how about's", and you know um.</li> <li>• We needed to demonstrate things that we did.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Ownership</b></p>
<p>Definition: a sense or lack of ownership, investment, or commitment in the project</p>
<p>Exemplars:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• I felt like then we really had more ownership of it.</li> <li>• We're pretty vested in what we want to do and for that to not happen I think that would be pretty devastating.</li> <li>• I also think this year, in a way it went better, because we had the school psychologist kind of more invested in it, it seemed.</li> <li>• I felt like I was on my own turf.</li> <li>• I thought that we'd be left with more ownership at the teacher level.</li> <li>• Cause ultimately we were responsible for the outcomes of the project.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Group composition</b></p>
<p>Definition: the construction and composition of the collaborative groups</p>
<p>Exemplars:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• We work closely with teachers and other school professionals.</li> <li>• Mix of special education teachers, regular education teachers, school psychologists and aides.</li> <li>• Since everyone was so different.</li> <li>• We're all groups of professionals.</li> <li>• I think my role was kind of unique, because I was the only regular Ed this year.</li> </ul>

**Assimilation**

(Collaborative Structure) (Communication) (Characteristics) (Group Dynamics)  
(Outcomes) (At-A-Glance)

Definition: the process of entering the group or collaboration; being eased or thrown into the collaboration; references to system entry issues; individual or group level

Exemplars:

- It was a little bit difficult in the beginning just trying to find your way, because its so much going on.
- Because when you come on, you have to kind of learn [the state agency], and then you have to understand the projects, and then understand the research that we're trying to do within the projects.
- Having some kind of assimilation process for like, when a new person comes.
- I felt like ya'll didn't want to overwhelm us.
- So there are some things that could have been done. I was new to it and just didn't.

<b>OUTCOMES</b> (Collaborative Structure) (Communication) (Characteristics) (Group Dynamics) (Outcomes) (At-A-Glance)
Definition: outcomes of the collaboration itself or the impact of participation on the collaborators
<b>Emotional Outcome</b>
Definition: feelings of frustration, stress, anger, or burnout; calming down from frustration; excitement or happiness; gratitude
Exemplars: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• So um, and that could be a little bit frustrating, cause you're like "really"?</li> <li>• They probably knew that [<i>laughter</i>] I was like over it.</li> <li>• I feel like every time we talk to her, it's like pulling teeth.</li> <li>• After a while it can kind of wear on you.</li> <li>• They calmed down.</li> <li>• I really felt like we weren't accomplishing anything</li> <li>• Once in a while when you ran into someone who was obviously burned out or negative.</li> </ul>
<b>Sustain/Generalize</b>
Definition: efforts to sustain or generalize collaboration, research, PL content, or PL structure; seeking out or not seeking collaboration; failure to sustain or generalize
Exemplars: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• I'm just trying to...extend, you know, opening up another collaborative opportunity.</li> <li>• Try to see what other kinds of generalizations from this partnership or collaboration that we've built could we grow based on new initiatives.</li> <li>• If it can't happen in this ideal circumstance I don't know where I'm going to get another try.</li> <li>• Because it didn't take on a life of its own.</li> <li>• I do know that it is generalizing some.</li> <li>• Look for opportunities for collaboration in other situations.</li> <li>• The way that training was provided was so very different from the way that [the state agency] traditionally provided training, that it made a difference that they were approaching.</li> </ul>
<b>Learning</b>
Definition: learning from the collaborative experience; increase in knowledge; lack of learning
Exemplars: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• It's nice to gain some other skills, because if you stick with what you really do well, and that's it, then that's all you have.</li> <li>• I learn a lot from the different people that who are involved.</li> <li>• Think about what can you learn from this mistake, so, that's what I kind of what I took away from that.</li> </ul>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• And also just having learned from you all, where you are talking about the professional learning model that you've done.</li> </ul>
<b>General Impact</b> (Collaborative Structure) (Communication) (Characteristics) (Group Dynamics) (Outcomes) (At-A-Glance)
Definition: general impact or lack of impact of the collaboration on organizations or individuals; perceived success/benefits or detriments of the collaboration that cannot be attributed to other outcome categories; general recommendations
Exemplars: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• I think the overall collaboration around professional learning is working well.</li> <li>• I think the collaboration around research is not working so well.</li> <li>• The collaboration piece I don't – with school systems and with [the state agency] – I don't know that I would change a whole lot. I think that went really well.</li> <li>• And um, it ended up being a very positive thing for the teachers professionally, and individuals as well I think for the um, process.</li> <li>• It's been good.</li> <li>• I'm not sure that we were – that we totally met the participants' needs.</li> <li>• So I feel like each member of this collaborative was able to benefit from it in a different and specific way that met their needs.</li> <li>• It's great for students in terms of the experiences they get.</li> <li>• The potential for collecting data.</li> </ul>
<b>Relationship Development</b>
Definition: development or lack thereof of a relationship between collaborators
Exemplars: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• I think she learned to respect.</li> <li>• I enjoyed getting to know y'all.</li> </ul>
<b>Evolution</b>
Definition: general growth, development, change, phases, or evolution of the collaboration over time, excluding learning
Exemplars: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• I think it's definitely evolved since like I joined the team.</li> <li>• Then when you and [Mia] joined us it just seemed to continue to build.</li> <li>• There's a lot of great things that he is going to end up building that we didn't benefit from.</li> <li>• But then again, I felt like there was movement.</li> <li>• It really was a collaborative process kind of building what it was going to be.</li> </ul>