

European Methodological Framework for Facilitating Collaborative Learning for Teachers (EFFeCT) project

Guidance on the Research Phase (WP2)

This Guidance is based on the ‘Discussion Document on Project Research and Analysis (WP2)’, prepared by the University of Hertfordshire team and presented at the first meeting of the EFFeCT partners in Budapest, 9-10 December 2015. A draft of the Guidance was circulated to partners after that meeting. This final version takes into account comments received in response to the draft. Partners may find it helpful to refer to the ‘Discussion Document’ for further discussion and references.

Introduction

The EFFeCT project is an EU-funded project on teachers’ collaborative learning, being undertaken from 2015 to 2018 by six partners: Tempus Public Foundation (Hungary) (co-ordinating organisation); University of Jyväskylä (Finland); National Centre for Education (Latvia); National Institute for Continuous Professional Development (Czech Republic); University of Hertfordshire (UK); Mary Immaculate College (Ireland). Its purpose is to improve the policy and practice of collaborative learning for teachers and distributed leadership where it facilitates teachers’ learning through collaboration, and to enhance opportunities for networking and professional collaboration between teachers, teacher educators, researchers and other educational stakeholders.

The main product of the project will be a ‘methodological framework’ (MF), offering ideas on developing innovative policy measures and other initiatives at regional, local and institutional levels for facilitating and enhancing collaborative learning for teachers. The MF will be a resource to facilitate professional collaboration, incorporating a range of user-friendly resources (including case studies, models, programmes and digital tools) “to inspire and inform policy-makers and teachers”.

The **research phase** of the project takes place between November 2015 and June 2016. Its aims are to:

1. identify, study and assess cases of good practice in collaborative learning, and distributed leadership where it facilitates collaborative learning, between teachers and between teachers and other stakeholders
2. write up each case of good practice to share with project partners.

It is helpful to draw an analytical distinction between individual teacher learning and collaborative teacher learning (the focus of this research). Collaborative teacher learning involves working together with one or more others through purposeful processes of interaction intended to advance teachers’ learning¹. The learning it generates may be conceived as shared and emergent from the group as well as being something that is experienced by the individual. The learning that is generated is not necessarily limited to what may have been planned at the outset by the group working together. The process of collaborative teacher learning can include related individual action which takes place between joint interactions.

Individual teacher learning is action to advance a teacher’s learning that does not involve purposeful working with one or more others to this end.

Good practice

Cases of good practice should to some degree show evidence of **participative professionalism, collaborative enquiry, advancement of equity, and impact on learning (particularly deep learning)**. Research into cases of good practice will examine the degree to which these features are apparent in the practice, and investigate facilitating and hindering factors and the context of each case.

The evaluation criteria and other factors for study are summarised in Table 1.

Cases will not necessarily meet all of these criteria, and in some contexts finding cases that meet the criteria may be especially difficult. This can be explained in the reports of cases presented: the significance of the positive aspects that are found will be enhanced by understanding the challenges of their context.

| evaluation criteria | |
|---|--|
| <i>process:</i> | |
| participative professionalism | reflects a participatory or democratic model of professionalism involving co-leadership by teachers and other stakeholders, mobilisation of their knowledge and expertise, and interpretation of policy |
| deep level collaboration | displays characteristics such as a cohesive culture, high team identity, etc. and features that may include supporting one another emotionally or working creatively to provide new holistic ways to support learning, children and families |
| <i>impact (on students, teachers, school, beyond school):</i> | |
| equity | advances developmental, participative, cultural and distributive justice; enhancing equity may be a feature of the way the case operates (its process) and, where appropriate, its outcomes |
| deep learning | promotes learning broadly conceived, encompassing for example - in Biesta's terms - the 'qualification', 'socialisation' and 'subjectification' functions. (See Appendix for Biesta's definitions.) Not every case would be expected to include all aspects. |
| additional factors for study | |
| facilitating factors | personal, structural, group, organisational and process characteristics, and other support; plus, where applicable, how these came to be developed |
| barriers | personal, structural, group, organisational and process characteristics, and other problems; plus, where applicable, how these were overcome |
| context | institutional history, culture, policy context, etc. |

Table 1: Evaluation criteria and other factors for study of good practice

Good practice will be sought from all levels of the education system, including at the school (across a school or within parts of a school), local (e.g. between teachers from different local schools), regional (e.g. involving teachers, schools and/or agencies facilitating collaborative teacher learning across a region), national and international levels. Cases of good practice may include collaboration between teachers and other stakeholders concerned with education, such as local authorities, central government and non-teachers (students, parents, etc.).

Partners will aim to identify and study at least one case of good practice from each of the levels in Table 2. Nevertheless, it is not expected that every partner will necessarily find cases at each level as selection of good practice will be guided the local and national circumstances in each country.

| | Tempus Public Foundation (Hungary) | University of Jyväskylä (Finland) | National Centre for Education (Latvia) | National Institute for CPD (Czech Rep.) | University of Hertfordshire (UK) | Mary Immaculate College (Ireland) |
|---|------------------------------------|-----------------------------------|--|---|----------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| school level , including professional collaboration & school stakeholder collaboration | | | | | | |
| local level , including communities of practice, local school/professional development networks, collaboration with community stakeholders | | | | | | |
| regional level , including regional school/professional development networks | | | | | | |
| national level , including national school/professional development networks | | | | | | |

Table 2: Range of cases

Methods, analysis and writing up

The methods of research will be guided by the principles of participatory research, so that the study and assessment of cases will involve participatory and multifaceted evaluation. This means using multiple sources of data appropriate to each case to evaluate practices, including the knowledge and experience of participants from different viewpoints in the practice and explicit consideration of the equity value of practices.

Cases will be at different stages and this will affect the nature of the data available. Some, for example, may be cases of practice that have ended; others may be cases of practice that are in process and have not yet completed all of their planned activities and outcomes.

The principal purpose of the data collection is to obtain in-depth data concerning the evaluation criteria of good practice in collaborative teacher learning practice, together with facilitating and hindering factors and the context relevant to understanding the practice. Partners will design the methodology for data collection that is appropriate to each case. A brief account of the methodology will be given in the case study report (Table 3).

Analyses of the data for each case will be undertaken so as to provide descriptive and interpretative accounts under the report headings in Table 3, which reflect the criteria and factors in Table 1. We should be open to noting any negative aspects or consequences of collaborative teacher learning practice that are revealed through the case study data, and these should be reported where partners deem these to be significant.

Analysis will provide the basis for writing up each case in two parts. The first will be a **portrait** of the case, including both textual data (such as selected interviews quotes and vignettes) and visual data (such as photographs and drawings). A principal purpose of creating the portrait will be to capture and convey the lived experience of collaborative

teacher learning and the energy, inspiration and feelings involved. The methodology of portraiture (Cope et al 2015, Lawrence-Lightfoot and Hoffman Davis 1997²) may be useful to inform the creation and use of portraits.

The second part will be a **report** in which analysis of data is reported under standardised headings. The data in the report will be both qualitative and quantitative, as appropriate to the case and its specific data collection design, and may make reference to the portrait.

Reports should be a maximum of **5,500 words** (not including appendices), with detailed supporting information and analyses (such as tables of data) included as appendices. Reports should address the headings in Table 3 (taking into account the guidance on maximum word length for each section) and include any negative aspects or consequences of collaborative teacher learning practice.

| Report headings | Purpose | Maximum words |
|-----------------|--|---------------|
| CONTEXT | to provide information which helps in understanding the development and nature of the practice; this can include the history and culture of the institution(s) where the practice takes place, the local and national policy contexts, etc. | 500 |
| METHODOLOGY | to provide an account of the methods used in generating and/or identifying data about the practice | 500 |
| PRACTICE | to provide an account of the good practice in collaborative learning for teachers that constitutes the case | 700 |
| PARTICIPATION | to describe and indicate evidence of ways in which the practice shows a participatory or democratic model of professionalism, co-leadership by teachers and other stakeholders, mobilisation of their knowledge and expertise, and any interpretation of local or national policies relevant to the practice | 700 |
| DEPTH | to provide an insight into the depth of collaboration, by describing and indicating evidence of the extent to which the practice displays a cohesive culture, high team/group identity, mutual (e.g. emotional) support, creative ways of working together, etc. | |
| EQUITY | to describe and indicate evidence of how the practice advances equity in the ways it operates and/or its outcomes | 700 |
| LEARNING | to describe and indicate evidence of ways in which the practice promotes teachers' learning (broadly conceived) and, where applicable, students' and other stakeholders' learning | 700 |
| FACILITATORS | to explain the factors facilitating and helping to support the practice, which may include personal, structural, group, organisational and process characteristics | 500 |
| BARRIERS | to explain the factors hindering or holding back the practice, which may include personal, structural, group, organisational and process characteristics | 500 |

Table 3: Report headings

Partners should upload the portrait and report of each case study **by the end of April 2016**.

Appendix

Biesta distinguishes between three types of learning. which may provide a useful framework for thinking about what constitutes deep learning. These can be applied to professional learning as well as students' learning in schools. The types of learning are:

- the *qualification* function - concerned "with the knowledge, skills and understanding and often also with the dispositions and forms of judgement that allow [the person] to 'do something' – a 'doing' which can range from the very specific (such as in the case of training for a particular job or profession, or training for a particular skill or technique) to the much more general (such as in the case of the introduction to modern culture or Western civilisation, the teaching of life skills, etcetera)"
- the *socialisation* function, which is about becoming "members of and part of particular social, cultural and political 'orders' " (This could apply to developing as a member of the teaching profession.)
- the *subjectification* function, which is about developing as an individual with some independence of the communities into which the person is socialised, about "ways of being in which the individual is not simply a 'specimen' of a more encompassing order". (This is relevant to the development of teachers as both critical thinkers and as participatory or democratic professionals with a sense of belonging with fellow teachers and other stakeholders.)

See Biesta, G. (2009) Good education in an age of measurement: on the need to reconnect with the question of purpose in education, *Educational Assessment, Evaluation and Accountability*, 21(1): 33-46.

Endnotes

¹ Some definitions of terms in the field of teacher collaboration are offered in Vangriegen, K., Dochy, F., Raes, E., and Kyndt, K. (2015) Teacher collaboration: A systematic review, *Educational Research Review* 15: 17–40, and may be useful to refer to without taking them as authoritative.

² Cope, V., Jones, B. & Hendricks, J. (2015) Portraiture: a methodology through which success and positivity can be explored and reflected. *Nurse Researcher*, 22, 6-12; Lawrence-Lightfoot, S. & Hoffman Davis, J. (1997) *The art and science of portraiture*, San Fransisco, Jossey Bass.