

ABSTRACT

Title of Document: CULTIVATING COLLABORATIVE
RELATIONSHIPS: A CASE STUDY OF
TEACHER COLLABORATION AND
PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT
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Students often receive instruction from specialists, professionals other than their general educators, such as special educators, reading specialists, and ESOL (English Speakers of Other Languages) teachers. The purpose of this study was to examine how general educators and specialists develop collaborative relationships over time within the context of receiving professional development. While collaboration is considered essential to increasing student achievement, improving teachers' practice, and creating comprehensive school reform, collaborative partnerships take time to develop and require multiple sources of support. Additionally, both practitioners and researchers often conflate collaboration with structural reforms such as co-teaching. This study used a retrospective single case study with a grounded theory approach to analysis. Data were collected through semi-structured interviews with thirteen teachers and an administrator after three workshops were conducted throughout the school year. The theory, *Cultivating Interprofessional Collaboration*, describes how interprofessional relationships grow as teachers engage in a cycle of learning, constructing partnership, and reflecting. As relationships deepen some partners experience a seamless dimension to their work. A variety of intrapersonal, interpersonal, and external factors work in concert to promote this growth, which is strengthened through professional development. In this theory, professional development provides a common ground for strengthening relationships, knowledge about the collaborative process, and a reflective space to create new collaborative practices. Effective collaborative practice can lead to aligned instruction and teachers' own professional growth. This study has implications for school interventions, professional development, and future research on collaboration in schools.

CULTIVATING COLLABORATIVE RELATIONSHIPS: A CASE STUDY OF
TEACHER COLLABORATION AND PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

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Dissertation submitted to the Faculty of the Graduate School of the
University of Maryland, College Park, in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the degree of
Doctor of Philosophy
2016

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Dedication

This dissertation is dedicated to the loving memory of my father, Gary Jorisch.

Adventurer.
Seeker of knowledge.
Wordsmith.
Brave soul.
Generous heart.

Acknowledgements

It has been a privilege to conduct this research. Many people have guided me through this journey by providing support of great value. I'd like to first thank my mentor Sylvia Rosenfield for her steadfast belief in me. She has facilitated my growth as a researcher and practitioner. I'd also like to thank Bill Strein and the other members of my committee for helping me to think critically about this project and for pushing me to finish. This study would not have been possible without a variety of key people. Thank you to the members of my research team, who are integral to my growth as a school psychologist. When people ask about our work, my team and I often explain, "We had to collaborate in order to study collaboration." Reflecting on the years it has taken to get to this point, these words ring truer than ever. I would also like to thank the participants of this study who made this project possible and who were so willing to engage in this process with us. Through this project I have experienced the transformative power of listening and reflecting.

My family and friends have served as my support network for seven years. When I have been tired and overwhelmed by this daunting process they have lifted my spirits helped me to keep going. Mom, thank you for your empathic ear and teacher's wisdom. Ben, thank you for always believing in me.

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Chapter 1: Introduction

Changes in educational policies and reform, along with shifts in student populations, have restructured schools. The “egg-crate” model, where “each teacher is assigned specific areas of responsibility and expected to teach students the stipulated knowledge and skills without assistance from others” (Lortie, 1975, p.15), no longer reflects most educators’ and students’ experiences. The reality is that more than one school professional is often responsible for instructing the same student (Valli, Croninger, & Walters, 2007). Students who require instructional support may work with staff such as special educators, English as a Second Language (ESOL) teachers, and reading specialists. Instructional alignment (Niebling, Roach, & Rahn-Blakeslee, 2008) between these teachers and general educators would ensure that students receive optimally coordinated services. Collaborative interactions between teachers may be the key to effective instructional alignment. However, often teachers do not receive training on how to work effectively with colleagues, especially those who have different professional roles.

The Current Educational Landscape

The U.S. public school system represents a diverse population of students with multiple instructional needs. As increasing numbers of students receive instruction from more than one teacher, the issue of alignment becomes more critical. According to recent data, students with disabilities are a significantly large population. In the school year 2009-2010, 6.5 million students ages 3 to 21 years old were served in federally supported programs for the disabled (U.S. Department of Education, 2012). Students in special

education are not a monolithic population, and they represent individuals with a vast array of strengths and needs. However, many of these students work with both a special education and general education teacher. English Language Learners (ELL), students who require varying levels of language assistance, are another large population that often works with more than one teacher. In 2010-2011, almost 10 percent of public school students were identified as English language learners (U.S. Department of Education, 2013). ESOL teachers support ELL communication, reading, and writing, and often these students are also learning in general education classrooms. Finally, many low achieving readers within general education are assigned to work with professionals such as reading specialists. In some school districts, these services are guaranteed under the No Child Left Behind Act's (2001) Title 1, which focuses on low-income students.

As the U.S. student population continues to change and grow, recent federal legislation has had an impact on how teachers work together. The No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 (NCLB), the reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act, expanded previous state assessment requirements (the most recent reauthorization, Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA), was passed after this study was conducted). Making "Adequate Yearly Progress" (AYP) toward state test proficiency goals became a large focus for many schools afraid of losing resources. Populations such as students with disabilities and English Language Learners are also included in these high-stakes tests. Thus, teachers are required to balance individual learning needs with test preparation. More recently, a number of states have also been awarded Race to the Top grants from the federal government. Eligibility criteria for these grants, such as using new teacher evaluation systems linked to student achievement and replacing state curriculums with

the Common Core, have added to schools' high-pressure climates. Collecting data, conducting assessments, meeting with school teams, and aligning curriculum content to state tests all takes a great deal of time and effort.

When students receive instruction from more than one teacher further issues arise. For example, what roles and tasks are different colleagues responsible for in this age of high-stakes accountability? All together, these policy changes have led teachers' roles to increase, expand, and intensify (Valli & Buese, 2007). In particular, teachers' roles are expanding as they are asked to collaborate more with colleagues outside of the classroom.

The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (Public Law 94-142, 1975) and its subsequent reauthorizations (IDEA, 1990; IDEIA, 2004) is another key piece of federal legislation that affects teachers working with students in at-risk groups. The original law paved the way for special education students to enter the general education classroom. The most recent reauthorization (IDEIA, 2004) explicitly states the expectation that general educators play a significant role in the education of students with disabilities:

Education of students with disabilities can be made more effective by having high expectations for such children and ensuring their *access to the general education curriculum in the regular classroom*, to the maximum extent possible. (20 U.S.C. § 1400(c)(5)(A) (2004))

These words highlight the legislation's stance that the least restrictive environment (LRE) should include access to the general education curriculum and setting. IDEIA also includes requirements about individualized education program (IEP) team membership and decision-making, along with expectations for parent participation. Along with

NCLB and Race to the Top, this legislation requires general and special educators to work in tandem for the benefit of students.

Many schools uphold IDEA's least restrictive environment (LRE) clause by offering varying degrees of student support. A common service delivery model is the resource room, where students learn in a general education classroom and receive targeted and scheduled instruction from a specialist in another setting (Wiederholt & Chamberlain, 1989). Reading specialists and ESOL teachers also often use this model. Advocates claim that students benefit from "pullout" instruction because they receive instruction tailored to their learning needs.

The inclusion movement, however, argues that all services for struggling students are best provided within the general education setting (Idol, 1997). Inclusion is on the rise. According to the US Department of Education (2010), "Today, 57 percent of students with disabilities are in general education classrooms for 80 percent or more of their school day" (p. 11). Reading specialists and ESOL teachers are also working more within the general education classroom. Under the umbrella of inclusionary practices, co-teaching has especially gained traction in recent years. While this model is often associated with special education, ESOL teachers and reading specialists have also begun to co-teach with general educators (Dole, 2004; Dove & Honigsfeld, 2010; McClure & Cahnman-Taylor, 2010; Shaw, Smith, Chester, & Romeo, 2005; York-Barr, Ghere, & Sommerness, 2007).

The current educational landscape no longer reflects the historically isolated practice of teaching (Rosenholtz, 1989), especially for teachers who work with at-risk groups of students. While pullout instruction is still a common service delivery model,

teachers are increasingly being asked to co-teach and engage in other types of “pull-in” instruction. Regardless of which service delivery model is being used, all teachers are being asked to closer together in order to uphold legislative mandates and best serve students needs.

Collaboration

Collaboration may be the conduit through which colleagues co-create optimal learning environments for students. While there is still currently a gap in research, some studies have found a link between teacher collaboration and student achievement (Goddard, Goddard, & Tschannen-Moran, 2007; Little, 1987; Rea, McLaughlin, & Walther-Thomas, 2002). It is possible that this link is due to instructional alignment. Colleagues who share instruction of the same student are tasked with not only aligning instruction to state standards, but also with aligning instruction between each other.

Instructional alignment refers to matched and complementary practices that benefit student learning (Niebling, Roach, & Rahn-Blakeslee, 2008). Silva, Hook, and Sheppard (2005) observed two ELL students receiving instruction from multiple teachers and identified a number of research-based principles were violated as a result of students working with more than one teacher: instructional level (Gravois & Gickling, 2002; Rosenfield, 1987), working memory limits (Siegler & Alibali, 2005; Smith, 1978; Templeton, 1995), data-based decision making (Ysseldyke & Christenson, 1993), and academic engaged time (Ysseldyke & Christenson, 1993). For example, teachers may not honor a student’s working memory limits if instructional content in a pullout class is unrelated to content taught in the general education classroom.

Collaboration may also indirectly benefit students through its transformative

effects on teachers. According to Garmston (1997), “adults learn more when they collaborate, work harder, support one another emotionally, and commit to cumulative efforts and effects” (p. 44-45). When teachers have the opportunity to develop supportive relationships, they may experience increased efficacy (Ashton & Webb, 1986) and instructional risk-taking (Little, 1987). Research that specifically focuses on professional learning communities and professional development also finds that teachers’ professional practice expands through sharing expertise and discussing teaching (Gusky, 2002; Hindin, Morocco, Mott, & Aguilar, 2007).

The impact of interprofessional collaboration on teachers is particularly relevant in current school settings. General educators are increasingly asked to instruct students with intensive needs, yet they often receive limited exposure to working with these students (Fender & Fiedler, 1990; Harvey, Yssel, Bauserman, & Merbler, 2010). Reading specialists, ESOL teachers, and special educators who collaborate with general educators can share their expertise about areas such as reading and English language development. Alternately, general educators who work effectively with specialists are able to share their familiarity with classroom management and curriculum. By working together, these different professionals expand their knowledge about students and teaching.

The school system that serves as this study’s research setting recognized that different types of school professionals must often work together to best serve students needs. Working with central office staff, I investigated how general educators and instructional support teachers (ESOL teachers and reading specialists) who share instruction of the same students collaborate (Jorisch, 2013). Findings from focus groups

and an interview study suggest that teachers experience professional growth and students receive more aligned instruction when relationships become more collaborative. The findings also suggest that teachers face many of the same issues that arise in the interprofessional relationships discussed in the literature, such as role flexibility (Bronstein, 2003; D'Amour, Ferrada-Videla, Rodriguez, & Beaulieu, 2005; Davison, 2006; Montiel-Overall, 2005).

Although educators and administrators use the word collaboration ubiquitously, Friend (2000) succinctly writes, “let's quit implicitly defining the word *collaboration* as any activity involving more than one person, and reserve it for situations in which it is appropriate.” (p.131). Friend and Cook (2009) posit that collaboration is a *style of interaction* between professionals with defining characteristics: mutual goals, equality, shared responsibility for participation and key decisions, shared accountability for outcomes, and shared resources (time, expertise, space, equipment). Using this definition, collaboration is an emergent and developmental process rather than a product (Arthaud, 2007; Davison, 2006). However, there is still a paucity of empirical research on the development of interprofessional collaboration between teachers in K-12 settings (Sawyer & Rimm-Kaufman, 2007).

Professional Development

Fullan and Hargreaves (1991) emphasize that principals can nurture a collaborative climate through a variety of practices. School-based professional development is one tangible way that teachers with different roles and training can develop collaborative relationships. Rinke and Valli (2010) define professional development as, “opportunities for teachers to learn about and improve their teaching and

student learning.” (p. 646). According to Darling-Hammond, Wei, Andree, Richardson, and Orphanos (2009), professional development is most effective when it 1) is intensive, ongoing, and connected to practice; 2) builds strong relationships among teachers, and 3) aligns with school improvement priorities and goals.

While professional development around subject matter content and pedagogical practices is essential, opportunities that focus on collaboration may be just as important. Friend (2000) discusses the myth in education that collaboration “comes naturally,” and calls for focused professional development:

Interacting effectively with students requires the same skills as interacting well with adults. Just as professionals receive initial and then ongoing preparation in their discipline-specific areas of expertise, so they should be prepared for collaboration. Although some professionals have intuitive collaboration skills, it is an error to assume that the skills should be naturally present; they must be carefully taught and nurtured. (p.132)

This quote highlights the paradox of teaching; in order to best serve students, teachers must also work effectively with adults. It also emphasizes the idea that collaboration is an interactive style that can be taught (Friend & Cook, 2009). Rather than hoping teachers establish positive working relationships, administrators can craft professional development that introduces and increases collaboration skills.

Statement of Problem and Research Questions

Despite recent shifts in service delivery, student demographics, and mandates for teachers to expand their roles, effective collaboration among educators still faces many barriers. Pragmatic issues such as time and scheduling preclude many teachers from

having time to meet (Friend & Cook, 2009). Additionally, long-held norms such as non-interference and autonomy (Ashton & Webb, 1986) directly challenge collaborative relationships characterized by interdependence. Interprofessional collaboration may be particularly challenging for teachers who have different training. Teachers participating in an interview study expressed salient issues such as difficulty navigating various roles and struggling to establish an equitable relationship (Jorisch, 2013). Fields outside of education, such as healthcare and social work, also highlight salient concerns such as power dynamics and flexibility in roles (Bronstein, 2003; D'Amour, Ferrada-Videla, Rodriguez, & Beaulieu, 2005). Finally, many educators have not had any formal training on how to effectively collaborate, especially with colleagues trained in different fields. Professional development that focuses on collaboration may mitigate this lack of training at the preservice level and buffer teachers against barriers embedded in their schools. Instructional alignment may occur most optimally when colleagues work within collaborative relationships. While the term “collaboration” is a buzzword for many structures in education, there is still a paucity of empirical research on models of interprofessional collaboration in school. Nor is there research on models of intervention to support interprofessional collaboration in schools.

The purpose of this study was to explore the development of collaborative relationships between general educators and specialists sharing instructional responsibilities (reading specialists, special educators, and ESOL teachers) who have experienced professional development around this topic. A deeper understanding of this type of collaboration may help schools better foster collaborative climates and develop training that increases colleagues' skills.

Two main research questions guided this study: 1) How does interprofessional collaboration between teachers and specialists develop over time? and 2) Does professional development that focuses on interprofessional collaboration have an impact on this development? The first research question is divided into three questions that reflect factors identified as having an effect on how teachers interact (Friend & Cook, 2009; Jorisch, 2013):

- 1) What role do administrators play in promoting interprofessional collaboration and what structures best support this type of collaboration?
- 2) How do teachers navigate their roles with one another?
- 3) How do teachers handle relational and intrapersonal issues that arise from interprofessional work?

The second research question, which focuses on professional development, may also be further divided by drawing from four of Guskey's (2002) levels of professional development evaluation:

- 1) How does staff perceive professional development and what was learned?
- 2) Do teachers experience a change in relationships, roles, and instructional practice as result of professional development on collaboration?
- 3) Does professional development have an impact on school-level change and administrative support?

Definition of Terms

ESOL teacher. English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) teachers instruct students whose language backgrounds are not English. These students are often identified as English Language Learners (ELL). Each state has different certification and training requirements, but most teachers have specialized training in language development, linguistics, cultural issues pertaining to students, and ELL evaluation. ESOL teachers may work solely within self-contained classrooms, part-time within a general education classroom, or full-time within a general education classroom. They also may work part-time or full-time within a school, and this decision is often made by determining the number of ELLs who require services.

Reading specialist. Reading specialists provide specialized reading and literacy support to students. Historically, they were often funded through Title 1 of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (1965). Educational requirements for reading specialists vary by state, but most require a degree in reading and literacy. According to the International Reading Association (IRA), reading specialists engage in instruction, assessment, and leadership activities that allow them to provide direct student services and to serve as resources to other school staff and parents (IRA, 2000). Reading specialists may work within a variety of different instructional designs, such as co-teaching with general education teachers or within their own self-contained classrooms.

Special education teacher. Special education teachers work with students who have a wide range of physical, learning, emotional, and behavioral disabilities. They individually design instruction and related services to meet the unique needs of a child with a disability. Special educators provide modifications and accommodations for

students for the purpose of accessing the general education curriculum. Additionally, they teach basic skills, such as communication techniques, to students with severe disabilities. Special educators work in a wide range of settings and use a variety of service delivery models to instruct students and support general educators. Special educators are required to work under a license and must adhere to federal legislation, such as IDEA (2004), that applies to students with disabilities.

General education teacher. For the purposes of this study, general education teachers are school professionals who provide instruction to grade level classrooms of students. They are trained to instruct students using the general education curriculum, and may teach students with disabilities. Their instruction covers subjects such as reading, mathematics, science, and social studies.

Alignment. Alignment is a term used in education to describe how curricular, instructional, and assessment practices are matched and complementary to one another in order to facilitate student learning (Niebling, Roach, & Rahn-Blakeslee, 2008).

Alignment can occur between these three activities within one teacher. For the purposes of this study, the term refers to how general education teachers and specialists align their services. Alignment may refer to matched content, cognitive demand, and performance expectations across teachers (Gamoran, Porter, Smithson, & White, 1997).

Collaboration. Friend and Cook (2009) write: “what the term collaboration conveys is how the activity is occurring, that is, the nature of the interpersonal relationship occurring during the interaction and the ways in which individuals communicate with one another” (p.6). They identify a number of defining characteristics: voluntary, based on equality, mutual goals, shared responsibility for participation and key

decisions, shared accountability for outcomes, and shared resources (time, expertise, space, equipment). Collaboration is an emergent process (Arthaud, 2007) that must develop over time in order for colleagues to also believe in this style of communication, trust, and respect.

Professional Development. Professional development encompasses “opportunities for teachers to learn about and improve their teaching and student learning” (Rinke & Valli, 2010, p. 646). Activities may function to improve skills, knowledge, and expertise related to teaching and working as a teacher. Professional development is an umbrella term that includes activities ranging from peer mentoring and coaching to one-day workshops.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

In this chapter I will review literature on collaboration and professional development. First I will explain my conceptual framework for this study. I will then review collaboration literature across various disciplines, and subsequently focus on theory and research about collaboration within education. This section will explore the construct of collaboration and consider the myriad ways in which teacher collaboration is conceptualized. While there is considerable discussion about the benefits of collaboration, I will explore the difficulty in defining the construct and finding empirically based models. I will also discuss different factors that promote or impede collaboration between general educators and specialists. Finally, I will review the role that professional development plays in school settings and consider its impact on collaboration.

Method

The portion of this literature review that focuses on collaboration draws from EBSCO and ERIC searches on books, chapters and articles that use the following broad terms: alignment, collaboration, teacher collaboration, teacher roles, and school culture. I also searched more specifically using terms such as “reading specialist collaboration” and “general and special education coordination.” Articles and books that were significantly cited in empirical research are also used. For the second section of the literature review I have combined the former key terms with other terms such as professional development and communities of practice.

Conceptual Framework

This study uses a socio-constructivist perspective to understand teaching and learning. Vygotsky (1978) was interested in how learning occurs through the social construction of knowledge and meaning. Through his work with children, Vygotsky saw how peers interacted to solve problems by working together and using each individual's varied experience and expertise. In more recent years, Vygotsky's social constructivist approach frames how adults develop relationships where they can learn and innovate in ways that are not possible through individual effort (John-Steiner & Mahn, 1996; John-Steiner, Weber, & Minnis, 1998). Tudge and Hogan (1997) draw from Vygotsky's (1978) work to describe how collaboration involves the coordination of intrapersonal, interpersonal, and socio-cultural factors. Thus, models of collaboration must be context-specific and address each of these factors.

In education, Rosenholtz's work reflects a socio-constructivist perspective on the organizational conditions of teaching. The seminal 1989 book, *Teachers' Workplace: The Social Organization of Schools*, discusses interview and questionnaire research that explore how workplace conditions have an impact on teachers' ability to effectively instruct. Social interactions between staff, along with perceptions about a school's environment, lead teachers to craft unique understandings of what it means to be a teacher and colleague. Attitudes, beliefs, and subsequent behaviors are therefore molded by these factors. For example, schools that seem to support isolated teaching experiences and that have low levels of social interaction between colleagues are more likely to have teachers who uphold norms of self-reliance. Rosenholtz (1989) writes:

While uncertainty is endemic to teaching, even under the best of circumstances,

norms of self-reliance in isolated schools leave teachers even more uncertain about a technical culture and instructional practice. Ironically, as teachers contemplate the enormous challenges before them and how or whether they should confront them, perhaps the best weapon they could wield against uncertainty lies in colleagues, particularly teacher leaders, within their own schools. (p. 69)

This quote highlights how essential collaborative relationships are for all teachers, as the profession itself forces them to grapple with intense demands on a daily basis.

Collaboration in education is also informed by the work of theorists Jean Lave and Etienne Wenger (1991; 1998). Together, they developed a model of *situated learning* that describes how social participation provides the context for situation specific learning. The now popular term *communities of practice* refers to how groups with a shared passion or concern around a set of practices (e.g., teaching) work together and interact regularly in order to learn how to improve their practice. In education, new teachers get “inducted” into communities that have implicit expectations about how to act, speak, and relate. According to Lave and Wenger (1991; 1998), *communities of practice* contain three required components: commitment to a shared domain, community, and practicing together. These components may be applied to school settings. The craft of teaching and commitment to student development is a shared domain that brings colleagues together.

Schools develop community by crafting activities and discussions that lead to support and sharing information. Hence, the relationships that develop between staff are what allow professional learning to occur. While preservice training gives teachers the building blocks of procedural knowledge about pedagogy and instruction, the

professional practice of teaching develops as colleagues create a “repertoire of resources” that include stories, experiences, and approaches to solving problems. While teams and structures such as teacher learning communities are one way that schools can nurture communities of practice, I conceptualize the individual collaborative relationships as a vehicle through which teachers can also engage in situated learning and improve their practice. I also consider professional development that brings colleagues into reflective dialogue as another way for schools to enhance communities of practice.

Definitions and Models of Collaboration

The simplest definition of the word collaboration is derived from its Latin roots *com* and *laborare*, which means “to work together.” However, John-Steiner, Weber, and Minnis (1998) write that “the disciplinary diversity of researchers addressing collaboration and the varied sources for theoretical analyses of the process make writing any article on the subject daunting” (p.774). Keeping this quote in mind, I will use this section to compare various collaboration models and research from disciplines that range from healthcare to organizational psychology. While collaboration will look different across various fields, John-Steiner et al. (1998) stress that scholarship should work to identify common features and activities. Hence, this section will provide a context for understanding collaboration in elementary education by exploring other professions.

Mattessich and Monsey (1992) conducted perhaps the only literature review that primarily focuses on the construct of collaboration across varied fields. Their goal was to create an overarching definition and disseminate “what works” in collaboration.

Mattessich and Monsey (1992) included 133 studies on collaboration in health, social science, education, and public affairs. Eighteen studies remained after eligibility criteria

were applied, which speaks to the challenge of finding a rigorous body of literature on collaboration. Reviewing both empirical and theoretical literature, the authors crafted their own definition of collaboration:

A mutually beneficial and well-defined relationship entered into by two or more organizations to achieve common goals. The relationship includes a commitment to: a definition of mutual relationships and goals; a jointly developed structure and shared responsibility; mutual authority and accountability for success; and sharing of resources and rewards. (p.11)

Key concepts in this definition include common goals, commitment, mutuality, sharing, and established guidelines for interacting. Mattessich and Monsey’s (1992) literature review identified 19 factors that have an impact on collaboration, which may be grouped into six categories: environment, membership, process/structure, communications, purpose, and resources. The following table describes each factor. (Mattessich and Monsey, 1992, p. 15)

Table 1. Factors That Have an Impact on Collaboration (Mattessich & Monsey, 1992)

Environment	History of collaboration or cooperation in a community
	Collaborative group seen as a leader in the community
	Political/social climate favorable
Membership characteristics	Mutual respect, understanding, and trust
	Appropriate cross-section of members
	Members see collaboration as in their self interest
	Ability to compromise
Process/Structure	Share stake in both process and outcome
	Multiple layers of decision-making
	Flexibility
	Development of clear roles and policy guidelines
	Adaptability
Communication	Open and frequent communication
	Established informal and formal communication links

Purpose	Concrete, attainable goals and objectives
	Shared vision
	Unique purpose
Resources	Sufficient funds
	Skilled convener (facilitator of a group)

What is striking about these factors is that some are only supported by a few studies, while others are present in the majority of the 18 studies reviewed. The following factors were found in at least half of the studies: 1) Open and frequent communication, 2) Mutual respect, understand and trust, and 3) Appropriate cross-section of members. This last factor is more applicable for collaboration that takes place in groups or between organizations. Other factors found in at least one third of the studies included: 1) History of collaboration or cooperation, 2) Members see collaboration as in their self-interest, 3) Members share a stake in both process and outcome, 4) Multiple layers of decision-making (various stakeholders and participants take part in decision-making), 5) Sufficient funds, and 6) Skilled convener. It appears from this literature review that the relational and communication components of collaboration are possibly the most universal ingredients that have a positive impact on collaboration. This is not to say that other factors are less important. Additionally, it is possible that the studies had a bias towards focusing on the former factors. However, this literature review does imply that environmental and structural factors alone cannot lead individuals and groups to engage in effective collaboration.

Collaboration in Organizations

According to Murawski (2009), Fortune 500 companies look for skills such as teamwork, problem solving, and good communication in potential employees. Companies and employees want to be seen as “collaborative” because they know this term, while

often referred to vaguely, is highly valued in work settings.

Organizational research (Gray, 1985; Gray, 1989; Gray & Wood, 1991; Huxham, 1996; Huxham & Vangen, 2000; Wood & Gray, 1991) has long attempted to understand collaboration between large groups. Gray's (1985; 1989) early definition and model of collaboration is cited in many disciplines, but it is important to clarify it was theoretically derived through a review of "organization theory, policy analysis, and organization development" (Gray, 1985, p. 911). Gray (1989) defines collaboration as, "a process through which parties who see different aspects of a problem can constructively explore their differences and search for solutions that go beyond their own limited vision of what is possible" (p. 5). This process involves *problem setting*, *direction setting*, and *structuring*. Stakeholders must commit to working together and create a joint understanding of a problem before they can go about engaging in activities such as setting ground rules, seeking information, and agreeing on any actions. Finally, these partners must agree on how to implement a plan and consider what progress monitoring will be established. This model of collaboration has parallels with consultation literature that stresses the importance of engaging in a problem-solving process with fidelity (Rosenfield, 2008).

Wood and Gray (1991) explored whether a comprehensive theory of collaboration would emerge from a literature review on empirical studies and previous theoretical work. After finding nine case studies, they developed the following definition: "Collaboration occurs when a group of autonomous stakeholders of a problem domain engage in an interactive process, using shared rules, norms, and structures, to act or decide on issues related to that domain" (Wood & Gray, 1991, p. 146). This updated definition takes

factors such as cultural norms into account, which is more reflective of a socio-constructivist framework. However, it does not take a strong stance on how stakeholders should interact or describe what norms and structures benefit collaboration.

Drawing from cases studies and her theoretical model, Gray (1996) describes four types of collaboration that appear to reflect increasing levels of joint work. *Dialogues* refer to organizations speaking about an identified problem, while *appreciative planning* also establishes common ground between partners. Subsequently, *negotiated settlements* occur when stakeholders decide how to resolve a dispute. *Collective strategies* are the only type that requires joint action. Gray (2000) and Huxham (1996) stress that each type of collaboration requires stakeholders to continually negotiate with one another.

More recently, Thomson, Perry, and Miller (2007) revisited Wood and Gray (1991) to develop a more detailed definition of collaboration:

A process in which autonomous or semi-autonomous actors interact through formal and informal negotiation, jointly creating rules and structures governing their relationships and ways to act or decide on the issues that brought them together; it is a process involving shared norms and mutually beneficial interactions. (p.25)

This definition indicates five dimensions: 1) Governance refers to the shared nature of rules and decision-making; 2) Administration is how partners act with one another, such as information dissemination, implementing interventions, monitoring others' activities, or clarifying roles; 3) Mutuality refers to stakeholders' dependence on each other; 4) Norms include reciprocity and trust; and 5) Organizational autonomy refers to the independence that organizations experience within their interdependent partnerships.

Recognizing the paucity of empirical research on collaboration models, Thomson et al. (2007) also tested its validity with a questionnaire. Over 1,300 directors of organizations were recruited to answer 56 Likert-scale items based on this five-dimension model of collaboration. A higher order confirmatory factor analysis supported this five dimensional model of collaboration. While Thomson et al.'s (2007) study adds to the literature by providing an empirically validated model of collaboration, it is important to consider its participants and focus. First, only organization directors were surveyed. Thus, it is unclear how individuals tasked with the day-to-day work of collaborating would have answered the questions. Additionally, interorganizational relationships may rely more heavily on governance, for example, than teachers who informally engage with each other.

Collaboration in Healthcare

The parallels between education and healthcare are strong. Patient well-being and care are important outcomes of health workers' collaboration (Baggs & Schmitt, 1999; Zwarenstein, Reeves, & Perrier, 2005), just as student achievement and development is considered the ultimate goal for educator collaboration. Within hospitals and clinics, the term interprofessional usually refers to work between different types of health professionals, such as nurses and physicians.

A number of case studies conducted in Canada have unpacked the collaboration between healthcare professionals. D'Amour, Sicotte, and Levy's (1999) case study of three health center teams used interviews, observations, and document analysis to discover dimensions of collaboration through a grounded theory approach. They found four dimensions: 1) *Sense of belonging* (mutual acquaintanceship, trust), 2) *Delegation of*

authority (centrality, leadership, expertise, connectivity), 3) *Formalization* (agreements/rules, information infrastructure), and 4) *Finalization* (allegiances, goals/objectives).

In another case study, D'Amour, Goulet, Pineault, and Labadie (2004) focused on professionals from different health organizations working together to improve perinatal care. Parallel to organizational literature's conceptualization of collaboration (Gray, 1985; 1989; Thomson, Perry, & Miller, 2007; Wood & Gray, 1991), D'Amour et al. (2004) also envision collaboration as a developmental process. The authors identified three stages: 1) in inertia, 2) under construction, and 3) in action. Each increasing stage requires colleagues more consensus about both practice and principles around patient care. Referring back to Tudge and Hogan's (1997) collaboration framework, one drawback of this stage model is that it is unclear how interpersonal and intrapersonal factors transform as colleagues deepen their interactions.

San Martin Rodriguez, D'Amour, Ferrada-Videla, and Beaulieu (2005) conducted a literature review on interprofessional collaboration to find a common theoretical framework for interprofessional collaboration. Drawing from a systematic research strategy (Alderson, Green, & Higgins, 2004), the authors used keywords related to collaboration in the health field and employed a screening grid for 80 articles with information such as research setting, methodology, and conceptual framework. Twenty-seven articles fit eligibility criteria, which included reliance on empirical data and theory, and a strategy for reviewing literature. A combination of empirical and theoretical scholarship elucidated four common concepts: sharing, partnership, interdependency, and power. Additionally, the authors found that literature across this topic stressed

collaboration as an emerging process.

A more recent study (Suter, Arndt, Arthur, Parboosingh, Taylor, & Deutschlander, 2009) explored health professionals' perceptions of competencies essential for collaborative practice. The authors conducted both individual and group interviews of health professionals and administrators across seven settings. Inductive content analysis led to two core competencies: 1) understanding and appreciating professional roles and responsibilities, and 2) communicating effectively. The authors refer to previous literature (Orchard, Curran & Kabene, 2005; Henneman, Lee & Cohen, 1995) that stresses how colleagues must first recognize other professionals' value in providing patient care. When many professionals must work together and are invested in patients' well-being, "role blurring" can potentially cause conflict and burnout (Hall, 2005). Suter et al. (2009) found that "defining clear boundaries and demarcating individual contributions" (p. 44) may mitigate such "role blurring." In this study, good communication is considered essential not only for delegating work, but also for overcoming differences of opinion and resolving conflicts, which are inevitable when people work together. The authors concluded that willingness to collaborate and a positive attitude were prerequisites for developing partnerships, rather than core competencies.

Collaboration in Social Work and Related Mental Health Services

Interprofessional work also characterizes many social workers' daily experiences as they navigate complex organizations such as schools and hospitals. Bronstein (2003) developed a theoretical model of interdisciplinary collaboration for social workers by reviewing the literature on ecological systems theory, role theory, and services

integration. Her definition of collaboration speaks to the necessity of the process: “an effective interpersonal process that facilitates the achievement of goals that cannot be reached when individual professionals act on their own” (p.299). When different types of professionals come together to achieve a specified goal, they must first agree on structures that will enable such work. For example, systems often create teams for this purpose. Within these structures, colleagues must balance collective ownership of goals with the responsibility of completing individual tasks. Bronstein (2003) focuses heavily on interpersonal struggles. She stresses that colleagues must first understand each other’s roles in order to truly become interdependent. This model also identifies flexibility and sharing power as essential components of interdisciplinary collaboration, which can be particularly challenging when professionals have such varied training.

Compared to other models of collaboration, Bronstein’s (2003) offers a unique addition by including reflection on the process. This means that colleagues must think and talk about the process of working together so that collaboration continues to deepen and conflicts can be resolved. Bronstein drew from her theoretical model to develop an instrument, The Index of Interdisciplinary Collaboration (2002). Factor analysis and Cronbach’s alpha suggested moderate support for the IIC’s five-factor model (newly created professional activities, interdependence, flexibility, collective ownership of goals, and reflection on process).

Bronstein and colleagues (Ellin et al., 2010) revised the IIC (2002) for the purpose of assessing school mental health collaboration. In recent years, many schools have focused on partnerships with families and communities to best provide expanded mental health services (ESMH) through teams. Ellin et al. (2010) surveyed 436 school

team members in order to conduct an exploratory factor analysis of their revised scale (IIC-ESMH). Their results support a four-factor model: (a) Reflection on Process, (b) Professional Flexibility, (c) Newly Created Professional Activities, and (d) Role Interdependence. While the professionals represented included social workers and other mental health professionals, they also included teachers.

These findings are relevant for the current study because of the focus on interprofessional collaboration in school settings. A particularly salient suggestion from the data is that professionals may “be more open to new ideas and ways of working if they value and respect their collaborators” (p.521). However, it is important to consider that this instrument and model focuses on the collaboration of teams, which may function differently than the varied collaborative relationships between individuals.

Summary

Literature across varied professions highlights how collaboration is a multidimensional construct that operates at individual, group, and organizational levels. An assumption behind all of the models reviewed is that interdependent work between partners can result in improved outcomes, such as patient well-being. Each model of collaboration addresses both structural and process facets that inform how people work together, and much of the literature speaks to how such relationships develop over time.

Definitions and Models of Collaboration in Education

A review of educational literature reveals that the word *collaboration* has its roots in consultation scholarship. Consultation began to be seen as a way for teachers to best provide instruction as schools were struggling to provide less restrictive environments for students with disabilities. In 1979, Brown, Wyne, Blackburn, and Powell described the

ideal school consultant as a person who helped solve problems by engaging in equal relationships based on trust, pooled resources, and shared responsibility for implementation and evaluation. Idol, Paolucci-Whitcomb, and Nevin (2000) crafted the term *collaborative consultation* to describe a type of special education service delivery characterized by sharing expertise and to solve mutually defined problems. Overviews of the collaborative consultation model, West and Idol (1990) found that mutuality and reciprocity were the key ingredients to the process. Cook and Friend (2009) explain that over time, the more general term, collaboration, has been used to encompass any partnership between professionals working with students.

Various definitions of collaboration that are informed by the consultation literature have also evolved over time. Hord (1986) offered a simple definition by calling it a sharing process. West (1990) envisioned collaboration as “interactive planning or problem solving process involving two or more team members” (p.29). He cited the following characteristics: “mutual respect, trust, open communication; consideration of each issue or problem from an ecological perspective; consensual decision-making; pooling of personal resources and expertise; and joint ownership of the issue or problem being addressed” (West, 1990, p.29). Another definition from Welch and Sheridan (1995) include similar themes:

A dynamic framework for efforts which endorses interdependence and parity during interactive exchange of resources between at least two partners who work together in a decision making process that is influenced by cultural and systemic factors to achieve common goals. (p.11)

These definitions reflect many of the themes found in previously discussed collaboration

literature, such as interdependence and respect. They are also broad enough to include any kind of structure through which collaboration may occur. Hence, these definitions are not necessarily tied to a particular service delivery model, such as co-teaching.

Friend and Cook (2009; 2004; 1995; 1991; 1990) have written extensively about teacher collaboration and their work is cited extensively in educational literature. They offer a unique contribution to scholarship on this topic because they view collaboration as a *style of interacting*. Reviewing both theoretical and empirical literature, they stress that collaboration is more of a process than a product:

What the term collaboration conveys is how the activity is occurring, that is, the nature of the interpersonal relationship occurring during the interaction and the ways in which individuals communicate with one another. (2009, p.6)

As such, a collaborative *style* of interaction contains the following characteristics:

voluntary, based on equality, mutual goals, shared responsibility for participation and key decisions, shared accountability for outcomes, and shared resources such as time, expertise, space, and equipment (Friend & Cook, 2009). Over time, collaboration is also marked by belief in communication, trust, and respect. Friend and Cook (2009) use an ecological systems framework to understand how collaboration develops within multiple contexts. They describe five collaboration components: personal commitment, communication skills, interaction processes, programs or services, and context or overall environment. This approach recognizes that multiple factors work together to provide the setting for collaborative relationships to develop. It also reflects a Vygotskian framework for collaboration (Tudge & Hogan, 1997; Vygotsky, 1978) that includes socio-cultural, interpersonal, and intrapersonal factors.

Whereas Friend and Cook focus on how teachers interact collaboratively, Little (1987; 1990) is often cited for her work on what teachers' interactions look like. When Little (1990) approached the topic of teacher collaboration she soon realized that much “that passes for collaboration does not add up to much” (p. 508). Many researchers and educators draw from her research and literature review that classifies teacher interactions into four different forms. The first type of interaction, *Storytelling*, involves collegial talking about experiences and providing information, but it does not require teachers to step outside of their instructional spheres. *Aid and Assistance* requires more interdependence, but it establishes a dynamic where asking for help or advice places teachers in a less “competent” role compared to the “expert” who is helping. *Sharing* ideas or resources is the third type of interaction, which establishes a more equal relationship. Finally, joint work represents “encounters among teachers that rest on shared responsibility for the work of teaching (interdependence), collective conceptions of autonomy, support for teachers’ initiative and leadership with regard to professional practice, and group affiliations grounded in professional work” (Little 1990, p. 519). Little (1990) recognizes that while joint work can have a positive impact on both teachers and students, norms such as self-reliance and noninterference pose significant challenges. While Little’s work (1982; 1990) offers a useful heuristic for classifying the day-to-day activities of teachers, it focuses primarily on general educator collaboration. Thus, models that focus on interprofessional relationships must also be examined.

Collaboration Between General Educators and Specialists

Models of collaboration that focus on interprofessional relationships (Bronstein, 2003; D’Amour et al., 2004; D’Amour et al., 1999) parallel the unique interactions

between general educators and specialists and bring up hard questions. How do professional roles and power hierarchies fit into a model of collaboration? Additionally, how do colleagues navigate shared responsibility and accountability for student outcomes (Valli et al., 2007)? The following section will explore models of collaboration between general educators and librarians, reading specialists, and ESOL teachers. While there is empirical research on general and special education collaboration, in my review of the literature I found no distinct model for collaboration between special and general educators. Rather, models such as the one developed by Friend and Cook (2009) are usually referenced.

General Education and Instructional Support Collaboration. A number of students in general education receive instruction from professionals who are not their “classroom” teacher. ESOL teachers and reading specialists have unique positions in schools. They are neither general educators nor special educators. Hence, there is no formal system that indicates how these professionals should work together. For my master’s thesis I conducted an interview study (four general educators, two reading specialists, and two ESOL teachers) that aimed to understand how general educators and instructional support teachers collaborate in order to align their instruction (Jorisch, 2013). In light of the various definitions of collaboration found in the literature, grounded theory was used to develop a nascent model of collaboration for these particular types of professionals.

In this model, *Levels of Teacher Interactions* was the core category around which all other data revolved. Five types of factors that affected these interactions that emerged from the interviews reflected themes in collaboration literature, and they matched most

accurately with the collaboration components described by Friend and Cook (2009). Each category comprised barriers and supports to collaborative work. Additionally, the participants also highlighted nuances of teacher communication. The theme of *Communication Continuum* describes how teachers engage in a continuum of communication around medium (email vs. in person), planning and formality (informal vs. formal), and content (student vs. teaching focused). Overall, teachers engage in deeper collaborative work when communication occurs in person, is planned, and also focuses on teaching topics (e.g., instructional strategies.). Finally, teachers indicated that working with colleagues had effects on both teachers and students. Relationships that reflected a collaborative style of interaction were associated with aligned instruction that led to improved student outcomes. Teachers' own growth and learning from these relationships also helped them improve their practices.

Four types of interactions emerged that parallel Little's (1987; 1990) work: 1) *Informing*, 2) *Assistance*, 3) *Sharing*, and 4) *Fused Work*. A key difference in this model, however, was the recognition that all four types of interactions are part of the collaborative process. That is, colleagues engaged in collaborative relationships determine which interactions are appropriate for different contexts and issues that arise. When teachers do not share the same classroom, for example, disseminating information about curricular materials (*Informing*) is a prerequisite for further discussion about how to align instruction. Similar to themes in other interprofessional collaboration research, instructional support teachers also struggled with having more marginalized roles and interactions such as *Assistance* often consisted of one-sided requests from general educators. Throughout the rest of this chapter I will embed more information about this

study's findings as I discuss factors that affect how teachers interact collaboratively and how collaboration can have an effect on both students and teachers.

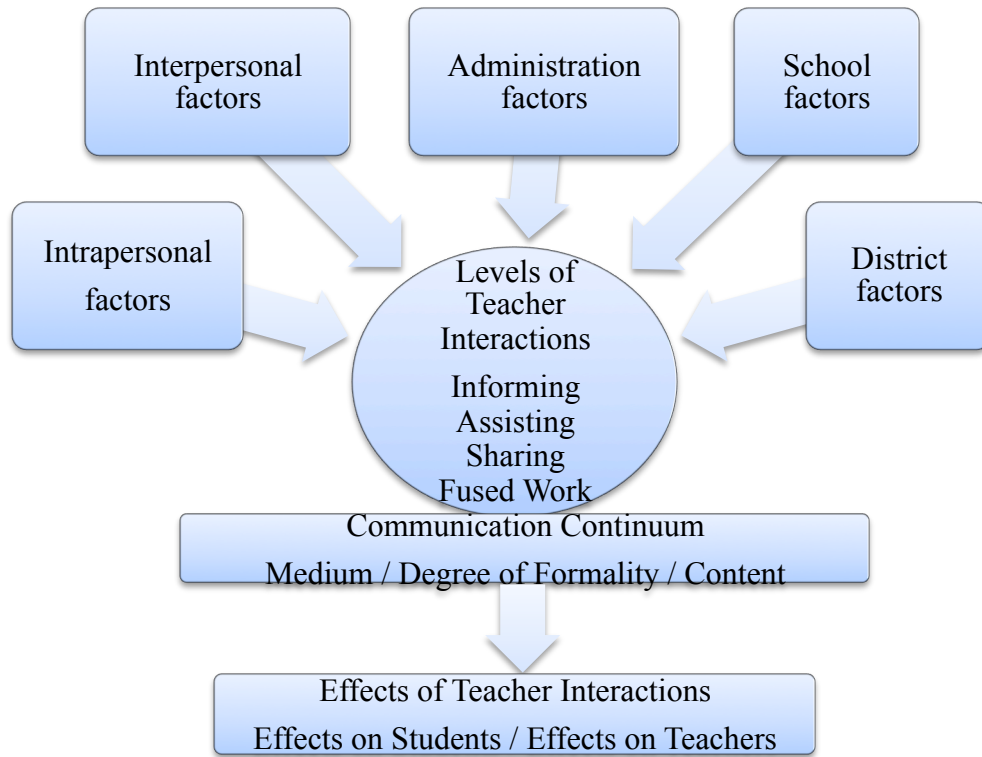


Figure 1. Model of General Education and Instructional Support Teacher Collaboration

General Educator and Librarian Collaboration. While librarians are not the focus of this study, how they collaborate with general educators may parallel the relationships that develop between general educators and specialists (special educators, reading specialists, and ESOL teachers). Montiel-Overall (2005) developed a theoretical model that recognizes collaboration as an emerging process with the potential to undergo four levels of development. The model, based on Loertscher's taxonomy (1982, 1988, 2000) and collaboration literature, identifies four levels of collaboration. The first level, *Coordination*, involves the coordination of activities and events in a superficial manner. The second level, *Cooperation*, comprised individual activities divided among

participants in order to achieve a goal. *Integrated Instruction* is a more intensive model of practice, characterized by planning, implementation, and evaluation that merges library and content curriculum. Finally, *Integrated Curriculum* reflects Integrated Instruction practiced across a school or district. The latter two levels require the most amount of equality and cannot exist without administrative support. It is unclear whether such a model transcends different types of school partnerships. However, Montiel-Overall's (2005) focus on interprofessional relationships and educational context adds a nuanced addition to collaboration literature.

Recognizing the need for more empirical research, Montiel-Overall conducted a qualitative study (2008) to explore how librarians and teachers collaborate effectively. Data included in-school observations, semi-structured interviews, and document analysis with 18 teachers and librarians. Montiel-Overall (2008) found that teachers and librarians did in fact engage in four different ways as specified by the model. She also discovered five "essential" elements of effective collaboration: school culture, positive attributes of collaborators, communication, management, and motivation. These elements are very similar to Friend and Cook's (2009) theoretical description of five collaboration components, which illustrates the similarities between a broad model of teacher collaboration with an interprofessional model.

General Educator and Reading Specialist Collaboration. The diverse needs of students and the demand for high levels of literacy require teachers who can competently teach reading and writing (National Commission on Teaching and America's Future, 1996). While reading specialists have worked in schools in different capacities for decades, there is a paucity of research or models that directly address general educator

and reading specialist collaboration. Reviewing the literature, Walp and Walmsley's (1989) *congruence* model most parallels literature on collaboration by including three increasing levels of partnership. The authors define congruence as the coordination between reading specialists and general educators for the purpose of helping students achieve optimal success. This definition falls in line with literature that focuses on instructional alignment.

The first level, *procedural congruence*, refers to “mechanical” issues such as coordinating scheduling, and sounds similar to Montiel-Overall's (2005) description of *Coordination*. *Instructional congruence* occurs when reading specialists and general educators refers to how reading specialists and general educators interact around content, instruction, and coordination of teaching activities. The last level, *philosophical congruence*, refers to the degree to which colleagues' approach to students, teaching, and learning are in line with one another.

Walp and Walmsley's (1989) model has both limitations and a unique perspective on interprofessional work. Compared to other models of collaboration, Walp and Walmsley (1989) lump various teacher interactions together. For example, is talking about the materials planned to use for a lesson qualitatively the same as making joint decisions about instructional strategies? The model also does not specify how colleagues develop *congruence* and whether one type of congruence can occur before another develops.

Philosophical congruence is a unique addition to the literature on interprofessional relationships. According to Murphy (2003), lack of philosophical congruence reflects competing theories of reading and often results in different instructional goals.

Colleagues with different professional roles who address pedagogical differences may be more likely to engage in work that challenges their ideas about learning and teaching.

General Educator and ESOL Teacher Collaboration. Research and theory about general education and ESOL teacher collaboration is an emerging topic (Arkoudis, 2006). However, two studies offer a framework for what these relationships look like when colleagues interact collaboratively. Arkoudis (2006) conducted a case study of the relationship between an ESOL teacher and general educator assigned to co-teach. Through careful coding of the participants' conversations and reviewing literature on positioning theory (Harré & van Langenhove, 1999) and appraisal theory (Martin, 2000), Arkoudis (2006) concluded that a key component of collaboration is the continual repositioning of power. ESOL teachers and general educators are "experts" in their domains and, therefore, must take turns being in positions of power in order to effectively develop a working relationship. Ideally, a constant repositioning allows the two types of professionals to become interdependent. Arkoudis' (2006) work highlights that collaboration between different types of teachers requires an added layer of communication and negotiation.

Davison's (2006) ethnographic case study that explores how general educators and ESL (English as a Second Language) teachers work together provides a useful framework for the current study. Davison and colleagues worked extensively on an initiative to help integrate English language and content-area teaching in a number of international schools in Asia. One of the schools in Taiwan approached asked for support in evaluating its efforts to increase co-teaching and co-planning between ESL and general educators. The school had not only undergone instructional design changes, but had also

provided intensive professional development to staff. At the end of the school year, Davison (2006) conducted semi-structured interviews, observations, and an open-ended questionnaire. The participants included twelve general educators and five ESL teachers. Davison concluded that a grounded theory approach was an appropriate methodology. Drawing from the theoretical work of Lave and Wenger (1991), he used Halliday's (1985) work on language to analyze participants' conversations.

Triangulating the data, Davison (2006) created a developmental model of collaboration, which includes five stages: 1) *Pseudocompliance* (passive resistance), 2) *Compliance*, 3) *Accommodation*, 4) *Convergence*, and 5) *Creative Co-construction*. In this model, each stage reflects greater commitment to collaboration in the following arenas: attitudes, effort, perceived outcomes, and expectations of support. This model of collaboration is unique because it is empirically developed from the direct experiences of ESL teachers and general educators. It is also relevant to consider Davison's role as a researcher. By embedding himself in this school a school for an entire year, he had the opportunity to develop trust among participants and examine his own biases with member checks of codes.

Factors That Have an Impact on Interprofessional Partnerships

Tudge and Hogan (1997) conceptualized collaboration as a coordination of intrapersonal, interpersonal, and socio-cultural factors. Friend and Cook (2009) also theorize that a number of collaboration components have an impact on teachers, which is supported by Jorisch (2013). The five factors (intrapersonal, interpersonal, administrative, school, and district) that emerged from Jorisch (2013) speak to John-Steiner, Weber, and Minnis' (1998) contention that the construct of collaboration is

context sensitive. Within each factor are conditions that have the potential to inhibit or promote interprofessional collaboration.

Friend and Cook (2009) offer a useful framework for identifying barriers to effective school collaboration: school structure, professional socialization, and pragmatics. School structures, such as how classrooms are set-up and placed, have the ability to keep staff isolated. Professional socialization refers to the norms that teachers learn even before they step into a school setting. At the pre-training level, students often learn to work independently. In early teaching experiences, teachers are implicitly and explicitly socialized by school cultures that influence how they identify as professionals and engage with colleagues. Finally, pragmatic barriers include issues such as time, scheduling, and coordinating services. This last barrier is particularly salient for interprofessional collaboration. For example, in my thesis the participants expressed frustration that their uncoordinated schedules reduced their ability to set up planning meetings.

Norms and Beliefs. While Lortie's (1975) "egg crate" school no longer reflects many educators' current experience, certain norms still persist. Teaching is often considered a lonely and isolated profession (Fullan & Hargreaves, 1991; Lortie, 1975; Rosenholtz, 1989). The egalitarian norm, whereby every person has equal status, may not allow different professionals to effectively negotiate taking turns being in a greater position of power (Little, 1990). Autonomy and noninterference (Ashton & Webb, 1986; Little, 1990) are related norms that stress teachers should work independently. Teachers may also experience unease about collaboration if they equate it with a loss of instructional control (Smylie, 1992). A combination of these norms and fears may lead to

staff relationships that do not reflect a collaborative style of interacting. Britzman (2003) speaks to how norms influence teachers' ability to work together and open up to new learning: "The construct of the teacher as expert also tends to produce the image of the teacher as an autonomous and unitary individual and as the source of knowledge. From this standpoint, teachers seem to have learned everything and consequently have nothing to learn" (p. 229).

Alternately, some beliefs may mitigate strong norms that challenge collaboration. In the field of healthcare, Suter et al. (2009) found that willingness to collaborate and a positive attitude were prerequisites for developing partnerships, rather than core competencies. In Jorisch (2013), most of the teachers expressed a belief in collaboration, which was tied to hope that they could improve their communication skills and develop more collaborative relationships with colleagues.

School Culture. Norms do not develop within a vacuum. They emerge over time in schools, which are complex organizations that develop unique cultures. Schein's (1992) model of organizational culture explains how cognitive, emotional, and behavioral patterns are shared and enforced over time. Fullan and Hargreaves have written extensively about the role that school culture plays in education. They define school culture as "the guiding beliefs and expectations evident in the way a schools operates, particularly in reference to how people relate (or fail to related) to each other" (1991, p.37).

Over time, schools fit into a "predominant" type of culture. Six types of culture that have been identified are (1) Toxic, (2) Fragmented, (3) Balkanized, (4) Contrived Collegiality, (5) Comfortable Collaboration, and (6) Collaborative (Deal & Peterson,

1999; Fullan & Hargreaves, 1991, 1996). Before delving further into these classifications, it is important for the purpose of this study to consider that while a school may fall primarily into one type of culture, educators' individual experiences must also be taken into account. For example, ESOL teachers and reading specialists did not experience the same level of collaboration that general educators described (Jorisch, 2013). This finding highlights the importance of gathering information from a variety of sources in order to gain an accurate picture of a school's culture.

Toxic, fragmented, and balkanized school cultures reflect Lortie's (1975) and Rosenholtz's (1989) writing about the isolated and lonely experience of many teachers. Balkanization is destructive because it describes the process of colleagues dividing into (often exclusionary) subgroups. Comfortable Collaboration occurs frequently in schools, and it reflects superficial and collegial interactions that do not challenge colleagues to discuss issues such as pedagogical beliefs. A particularly misleading type of school culture is contrived collegiality because it may initially look collaborative. This type of culture is characterized by mandated structures that may not reflect voluntary participation or deep commitment to shared goals (Hargreaves, 1994).

What, then, does a school with a collaborative culture look like? Rosenholtz (1989) offers some key elements: opportunities for improvement and long-term learning. Collaborative cultures are also characterized by norms of trust, openness, sharing, and collective responsibility for student achievement (Deal & Peterson, 1990; Fullan & Hargreaves, 1991; Newman & Wehlage, 1995). These norms are reflected through clear goals, high expectations, and flexible leadership (Deal & Peterson, 1990). Fullan (1998) states:

Student achievement increases substantially in schools with collaborative work cultures that foster a professional learning community among teachers and others, focus continuously on improving instructional practice in light of student performance data, and link to standards and staff development support. (p.8)

A collaborative culture recognizes that both students and teachers benefit when staff focus on ways to improve relationships and instructional practice. Schools that embody a collaborative culture may implement a variety of different instructional designs and school reform efforts. A school that requires co-teaching, for example, may not necessarily be collaborative. Friend and Cooks' (1992) definition of teacher collaboration may be scaled up to describe collaborative cultures. What they stress is the *style* of teachers' interactions, rather than structures of interactions.

Administrative Support

Collaborative cultures reflect the words and actions of administrators committed to creating professional learning communities. One way that administrators nurture collaborative schools is by creating a norm of open communication and dialogue under the guidance of flexible leadership (Deal & Peterson, 1990; Hines, 2008; Rice, 2006; Riehl, 2008). A national study of high performing middle schools found when principals viewed themselves as collaborative professionals in the areas of curriculum, instruction and assessment, teachers also had similar self concepts (Valentine, Clark, Hackman, & Petzko, 2002).

Hines (2008) outlines specific actions for administrators that promote collaborative practices: 1) providing positive opportunities for sharing; 2) scheduling time for planning; 3) asking teachers to document their collaborative work; 4) visiting

other school settings; 5) providing resources and 6) celebrating successes. All together, these activities promote, support, and reward collaborative relationships. These activities are described in further detail by Walther-Thomas, Korinek, & McLaughlin (1999). For example, administrators can schedule weekly planning time into the school schedule and craft professional development activities that target collaborative skills. Tangible resources such as funding for substitutes (which enables teachers to meet) and curriculum materials also have a collective impact on how staff can deepen their collaborative practices (Jorisch, 2013; Friend & Cook, 2009). York-Barr et al.'s (2007) case study offers a look into what works in terms of administrative support. Teachers involved in a school-wide effort to increase ESOL and general educator co-teaching indicated that their success was partially due to administrators' ability to carve out time for planning and to provide extra staffing so that teachers could meet.

When so many different types of professionals work in a school, administrators must also make an effort to clarify, understand, and respect roles (Fullan, 2007; Fullan & Hargreaves, 1991). Administrators set the tone for how staff interacts. For example, when administrators train staff to view specialists as both direct and indirect service providers, general educators are more likely to work closely with these colleagues (Al Otaiba, Hosp, Smartt, & Dole, 2008). Alternately, when reading specialists have administrators who “(do) not know best how to use them or who had a limited understanding of literacy instruction,” and offer little logistical support, then they are less likely to work effectively with general educators (Jones, Barksdale, Triplett, Potts, Lalik, & Smith, 2011, p.13). McClure and Cahnmann-Taylor (2010) conducted performance-based focus groups to explore the challenges of ESOL and general educator co-teaching.

One significant finding was that ESOL teachers felt principals did not respect their contribution as experts in English language learning and development. These studies highlight that lack of administrative support has an effect on how staff treat one another.

Service Delivery Models

Collaborative relationships and interactions can occur within a variety of service delivery models, ranging from pullout programs to full inclusion. There is considerable debate over which models best meet the diverse needs of students in at-risk groups, and it is possible that some may promote collaboration more than others. While many schools offer a continuum of services for different groups of students, often teachers and administrators have strong views about which models fit their philosophies about teaching and learning.

Kavale and Forness' (1999) meta-analysis of special education service delivery models discovered equivocal findings about which model leads to higher student achievement. It is possible, however, that an unmeasured and confounding variable among these studies was the variance of collaboration between teachers. The work of Meyers, Gelzheizer, and colleagues has qualitatively explored the effects of service delivery models, which offers nuanced insight into this topic. In their first study, they interviewed teachers (classroom, remedial reading, and special education) about the advantages and disadvantages of pullout programs (Meyers, Gelzheizer, Yelich, & Gallagher, 1990). While the pullout model was viewed positively as a way to provide intensive and individualized instruction, teachers also recognized that students missed classroom time. Additionally, they expressed frustration over incongruent curriculum and lack of time to coordinate instruction. The participants suggested that in addition to

improving schedules, teachers could also improve their collaboration with one another. This study, however, did not explore what participants meant by “collaboration.”

Meyers, Gelzheiser, and Yelich (1991) also compared pullout and plug-in special education programs. Overall, teachers using plug-in reported more communication about instruction, learning about instructional techniques, and increased meetings. Rather than simply coordinating schedules and disseminating information, they had the opportunity to deepen their practice with one another. Gelzheiser and Meyers (1996) subsequently conducted another study that explored the link between service delivery model and teacher beliefs. Teachers using pullout models were more likely to attribute achievement to student factors, while those using pull-in models also recognized the effects of teacher quality and joint planning. Overall, these three studies highlight how service delivery model may have an effect on both teacher beliefs and practices.

Reading specialists also provide services on a continuum similar to special educators. Bean, Trovato, and Hamilton (1992) interviewed reading specialists, general educators, and principals about the benefits and challenges of a pullout service model. Participants responded that pullout is useful for individualizing instruction and helping students feel supported, but it can also have a negative impact on students’ classroom achievement and teachers’ ability to cooperatively plan. One possible reason for lower than expected achievement is that students experience disconnected materials and content. In another study, reading specialists reported that they often used materials that were unrelated to the general education curriculum (Bean, Cooley, Eichelberger, Lazar, & Zigmond, 1991). While there was no specific focus on the communication between teachers, the disconnected materials signify a possible lack of co-planning. This study

highlights the importance of instructional alignment between teachers.

Over time, the continuum of plug-in services and other indirect service delivery roles has become more common among reading specialists (Quatroche, Bean, & Hamilton, 2001). However, a national survey of over 1,500 U.S. reading specialists found that many of these professionals still provided pull-out instruction only (Bean, Cassidy, Grumet, Shelton, & Wallis, 2002). While there isn't more current data that parallels this survey, there is a trend of reading specialists engaging in more activities such as coaching, consulting, and co-teaching. Galloway and Lesaux (2014) recently conducted a literature review that identified empirical studies published from 2000 to the present that focused on reading specialist roles and activities. Overall, reading specialists are spending more time in general education classrooms, drawing from inclusion models of special education (Jones et al., 2011). Bean (2009) stresses the importance of developing collaboration skills as reading specialists are being asked to take on more indirect service roles and engage in more inclusionary practices with general educators.

English Language Learners are a diverse population. As such, a variety of instructional designs cater to different student needs. For the purpose of this study and its research setting, English as a Second Language (ESOL) is the overarching program model that will be explored. Within this model, however, there are further divisions. Pullout programs are very common, but there is a push to instruct ELLs in their general education classrooms (Honigsfeld & Dove, 2010). Similar to worries voiced about low achieving readers and students with disabilities, there are concerns that ELLs in pullout programs receive disjointed instruction and miss out on the social benefits embedded into the general education classroom (Wertheimer & Honigsfeld, 2000).

Peercy and Martin-Beltran (2012) maintain that while literature on the effects of inclusionary practices on ELL students is increasing, there is still a paucity of research on its effects on teachers. The authors conducted three case studies of teachers using different service delivery models. All teachers recognized that pullout models overall led to less communication between teachers. However, a surprising finding was that a pair of teachers assigned to co-teach exhibited less collaboration and more conflicts than a pair of teachers using a pull-out model. The latter pair were had voluntarily committed to working together, whereas the other pair was mandated to co-teach. This study speaks to Friend and Cook's (2009) assertion that collaboration is a "style" of interacting, rather than a type of service delivery model.

Co-teaching. As schools have explored different ways to embrace inclusionary practices, co-teaching has become an increasingly popular service delivery model. Bauwens, Hourcade, and Friend (1989) used the term *cooperative teaching* to describe special educators working in general education settings. Over time the term has been shortened to co-teaching, and the most basic definition of "two or more professionals delivering substantive instruction to a diverse or blended group of students in a single physical space" (Cook & Friend, 1995, p.2), is broad enough to include a number of different iterations. Friend and Cook (2009) identify five types of co-teaching: 1) One Teaching, One Assisting, 2) Station Teaching, 3) Parallel Teaching, 4) Alternative Teaching, and 5) Team Teaching. Each successive type indicates more planning and shared instruction between teachers, with what also appears to be more parity. Hence, models such as team teaching appear to fit more in line with definitions of collaborative relationships. Ideally, co-teaching includes coplanning, co-instruction, and co-assessment

(Murawski & Lochner, 2011). Although co-teaching was historically associated with special education, ESOL teachers and reading specialists have also adopted this model (Dole, 2004; Dove & Honigsfeld, 2010; McClure & Cahnman-Taylor, 2010; Peercy & Martin-Beltran, 2012; Shaw, Smith, Chester, & Romeo, 2005; York-Barr, Ghere, & Sommerness, 2007).

Currently, the support for and practice of co-teaching has surpassed empirical research investigating its effects on students and teachers. Many schools have started to use co-teaching because it is associated with improved student outcomes, but it is also viewed as a way to increase collaborative practices. For example, this model may increase shared accountability and responsibility, morale, and overall professional growth (Friend et al., 2009; Murawski & Lochner, 2011; Nichols & Sheffield, 2014; Scruggs, 2007). In Jorisch (2013), all of the participants expressed a desire to engage in more co-teaching or learn more about this model. They recognized challenges such as time it takes to plan lessons together, but also were positive about the more collaborative nature of their interactions. For example, participants expressed that they became more equal, interdependent, and learned more about teaching in co-teaching relationships.

Teacher Roles

Inclusion beliefs, new instructional designs such as co-teaching, and the development of teams and professional learning communities are examples of ways that teachers are being asked to work in deeper partnerships. Combined with federal legislation mandates and changes in the U.S. student population, these school reform efforts are leading teachers' roles to increase, expand, and intensify (Valli & Buese, 2007). Federal legislation, such as the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB, 2001) and the

more recent Race to the Top state grants, along with the new Common Core State Standards, have all forced teachers to work within high-stakes climates that require data-based decision making. While taking on new tasks and sharing roles with colleagues may align with school reform goals, it is also important to consider how these changes have the potential to serve as barriers to collaborative relationships.

Drawing from a mixed-methods, longitudinal study of fourth- and fifth-grade teachers, Valli and Buese (2007), offer a useful framework for classifying the myriad roles of teachers in the 21st century. The researchers interviewed staff including principals, teachers, and specialists.

Table 2. Teacher Roles (Adapted from Valli & Buese, 2007)

Instructional	Directly working with students around academics and learning
Institutional	Working on uniformity of practice (e.g., national curriculum standards)
Learning	Developing new knowledge and skills in order to improve functioning in other roles
Collaborative	Working in groups, teams, or individually with staff; May be mandated (e.g., membership on problem-solving team, co-teaching) or voluntary (e.g., planning lessons together for students with disabilities)
Relational	Interacting with students, staff, and parents in a way that builds relationships

This table highlights the multitude of demands and tasks that teachers must balance. Instruction is just one of the many tasks and roles that fill a teacher’s school day, and these other roles are also essential in addition to best practices in instruction. Within each broad role there may be overlap between different types of teachers. For example, a general educator and special educator may both be responsible for instructing the same student. Who is responsible, however, for tracking this student’s progress and making

decisions about what reading materials are most appropriate?

The concept of “role blurring,” discussed earlier in the section on healthcare collaboration, also relates to educational settings. Burnout and conflict are potential outcomes when colleagues experience role blurring (Hall, 2005). Suter et al. (2009) stresses that defining boundaries and roles is essential in these kinds of environments. The rest of this section will explore the challenges for different types of teachers.

General Educators. General educators are being asked to take more instructional responsibility for students who previously received the majority of their education from other teachers. The push for more inclusive schools have led general educators to often feel unprepared to work effectively with diverse groups such as students with disabilities (Sharma, Forlin, Loreman, & Earle, 2006). Working with ELLs, for example, requires integration of content and language instruction (Arkoudis, 2006; Reeves, 2006), which is not usually taught in general education teacher preparation programs. In Jorisch (2013), the four general educators all expressed that they felt overwhelmed by trying to provide differentiated instruction and work effectively with specialists. They also faced pressure to keep up with the general education curriculum, which Valli and Buese (2007) also found was salient for teachers.

While students in at-risk groups may receive instruction from more than one teacher, the general educator is usually the “teacher of record.” This means that the general educator is not only responsible for providing grades on report cards, but is also accountable for student achievement on district benchmarks and state tests (Valli et al., 2007). This pressure can potentially cause tension between teachers who have different levels of accountability.

Special Educators. Historically, the primary role of a special educator was to provide specialized instruction to students with disabilities, which also involved behavioral intervention and assessment (Council for Exceptional Children, 2009). In order to provide optimal services for their students, special educators must balance a variety of tasks throughout the school day. Drawing from 378 randomly selected high schools, Wasburn-Moses (2005) found that special education teachers divided their time between four activities: working with students, teaching, collaborating, and completing paperwork. The activity of “collaboration” was an umbrella term for any interaction with staff members, but did not draw from any of the more nuanced definitions of collaboration discussed earlier in this chapter. Special educators must balance the tasks of complying with special education laws, modifying curriculum for students with disabilities, developing Individualized Education Plans (IEPs), and using assistive technology (Billingsley, 2004). Considering their specialized training and specific tasks, sometimes special educators are viewed quite separately from the daily organization of the general education curriculum and programming (Miller, Brownell, & Smith, 1999).

Edmonson and Thompson (2001) conducted a meta-analysis of studies from eight databases to explore challenges around special educator roles. They discovered five role constructs related to teacher “burnout:” role ambiguity, role conflict, role expectations conflict, role overload, and role self-concept. A common thread throughout the literature is that special educators struggle with balancing their commitment to students with tasks that fall into the collaborative category (Valli & Buese, 2007). Considering the similarities between the various specialists in elementary schools, it is possible that Edmonson and Thompson’s (2001) findings also describe the experiences of reading

specialists and ESOL teachers.

Reading Specialists. Expectations about reading specialists' roles have oscillated over many decades. Originally envisioned as literacy coaches, these professionals began providing more direct instruction to students through Title 1 programs (Bean, 2009). However, research began to find that interventions mainly consisting of pullout instruction did not lead to improved expected student achievement (Allington & McGill-Franzen, 1989). In recent years, the International Reading Association's position statement determined three reading specialist roles: assessment, leadership, and instruction (IRA, 2003). Reading specialists now not only provide remedial instruction to individual students, but are also expected to take a role in preventing low reading achievement, maximizing all students' literacy, and providing support to general educators (Bean, 2009; Galloway & Lesaux, 2014; Rainville & Jones, 2008). In their review of literature on reading specialists, Galloway and Lesaux (2014) identify four main roles for reading specialists: student-oriented, teacher-oriented, data-oriented, and managerial. These roles reflect Valli and Buese's (2007) model, indicating that these specialists must balance a multitude of roles.

Ambiguity about reading specialist roles is not new. Bean, Trovato, and Hamilton (1995) conducted focus groups of reading specialists, general educators, and principals. While all participants agreed that general educators were the "primary" instructors, reading specialists were unclear whether their role encompassed both direct service and consultation to teachers. The general educators expressed a need for reading specialists' expertise in literacy, but did not see their colleagues as experts in areas such as behavior. More recently, Bean, Cassidy, Grumet, Shelton, and Wallis (2002) developed a survey to

find out how reading specialists divided their time, and the results speak to confusion about roles. The majority of respondents reported that they were being asked to serve more as resources to teachers and co-plan, and 84% indicated that they served as resources to teachers. However, only 5% indicated that they reinforced or re-taught classroom instruction, and 9% indicated that they based their instruction on general educator requests. This finding reflects possible role confusion. Jones, Barksdale, Triplett, Potts, Lalik, and Smith (2010) conducted a phenomenological study to examine 12 reading specialists' working challenges. Many of these professionals felt that general educators expected them to independently solve students' problems. This did not match the roles they envisioned for themselves, which was to also be a source of support for general educators.

ESOL Teachers. ESOL (and ESL) teachers are particularly unique school professionals. General educators often have no formal training to work with ELLs (Utley, Delquadri, Obiakor, & Mims, 2000). Hence, ESOL teachers often have specific expertise about students' language development, learning, and culture. Like other specialists, the tides of school reform and legislation have also forced ESOL teachers to redefine their professional roles. Previously, there was a clear distinction between the roles ESOL teachers and other school professionals when ELLs received separate curriculum and instruction. However, ESOL teachers are being asked to work in ways that make their identities less distinguished from colleagues such as general educators. For example, ESOL teachers report that they are co-teaching more with general educators (Dove & Honigsfeld, 2010).

Roache, Shore, Gouleta, and de Obaldia Butkevich (2003) conducted a survey of

125 school professionals working with culturally and linguistically diverse (CLD) students to explore collaborative practices. A surprisingly high number of respondents (62.4%) indicated they were unclear about colleagues' roles and did not have training to communicate with these other professionals (82.4%). Even if participants are trained to work together, lack of clearly defined roles and expectations can sabotage collaborative effort.

Teacher Relationships

Collaboration necessitates that colleagues interact and develop relationships. When different types of teachers share instruction of the same students, interpersonal dynamics have the potential to either impede or support collaborative work. Welch and Tulbert (2000) identify interpersonal skill capability as a core component of effective collaboration. Hargreaves (2000) argues that teaching is inextricably linked to educators' relationships with each other and with students, and defines *emotional geographies* as “the spatial and experiential patterns of closeness and/or distance in human interactions and relationships that help create, configure and color the feelings and emotions we experience about ourselves, our world and each other” (p. 1061). Asking teachers to engage in collaborative relationships poses challenges around communication and practices that supports power hierarchies and imbalances.

Drawing from Hargreaves (2000) and positioning theory (Harre & Van Langeove, 1999), Hunt and Handsfield (2013) conducted a qualitative interview study to explore how first-year literacy coaches negotiated professional identity, power, and positioning with colleagues. While teachers stressed the importance of being supportive to general educators, they also felt pressure to assert their expertise and experienced resistance to

collaboration. These teachers dealt with difficulties around their relationships with colleagues by feeling frustrated and defeated, which was also present in some of the responses found in Jorisch's (2013) interviews of ESOL teachers and reading specialists. In this study, salient issues such as imbalanced power dynamics and feeling left out/underutilized could sabotage relationships.

Jones, Barksdale, Triplett, Potts, Lalik, and Smith's (2010) phenomenological study of 12 reading specialists discovered the theme of resistance. Most of the participants indicated general educator expectations that they independently "solve" student's reading difficulties. Thus, they did not experience shared commitment in regard to accountability, problem solving, and instruction. Other participants reported that some general educators resisted working with them in any capacity. Reading specialists reported that they reacted to resistance by trying to be accommodating and agree with colleagues, which highlights an imbalance of relational power.

Studies that focus on ESOL teacher and general educator relationships illuminate imbalanced relational dynamics (Creese, 2002). Arkoudis' (2006) case study found that conversations between an ESOL teacher and special educator engaged in a co-teaching relationship were characterized by an imbalance of power. Specifically, the ESOL teacher was consistently held in a lower position due to her lack of expertise in the grade level content. Although the ESOL teacher attempted to reposition herself in the relationship by sharing her expertise in language development, she was perpetually subservient to the general educator. Arkoudis (2006) argues that working to continually reposition the "expert" role is essential for a collaborative relationship to flourish. In Britain, Creese (2006) conducted a case study of general educators and English as an

Additional Language Teachers (EALT). Creese (2006) slowly amassed data from teachers' daily interactions by following each of the 12 EALTs for two weeks and conducting interviews. She found that general educators were more highly valued in conversation and that a power hierarchy existed as a function of colleagues' perceived roles. General educators are under pressure to instruct all students and using the curriculum. Alternately, EALTs must focus on individual students' learning and development. Although it is possible to merge these goals, Creese (2006) explains that this can only happen through negotiation. Bronstein's (2003) interdisciplinary model of collaboration echoes this sentiment by stressing the flexibility of roles.

Effects of Collaboration on Students and Teachers

Collaboration and Student Achievement

While there is a strong belief among many researchers and educators in the power of collaboration to increase student achievement, a strong empirical link has not yet been established. However, some studies demonstrate promising results.

Recognizing the pressure around high-stakes testing, Goddard, Goddard, and Tschannen-Moran (2007) conducted a quantitative study that explored collaboration's role in student achievement. They surveyed over 400 teachers to explore whether school level teacher collaboration predicted fourth grade achievement scores on mathematics and reading state tests. Using hierarchical linear modeling (HLM) across 47 elementary schools, Goddard et al. (2007) discovered that even when controlling for a variety of factors, teacher collaboration was a significant predictor. These findings support literature that theoretically connects achievement and collaboration, and the authors hypothesize that collaborative works by improving instructional practice. It is important

to consider, however, that this study surveyed teachers with five broad questions. The authors focused on school-wide collaboration rather than daily interactions that comprise collaborative relationships. Additionally, they did not specifically focus on the nuances of interprofessional partnerships.

Murawski and Swanson (2001) conducted a quantitative meta-analysis of the effects of special and general education co-teaching. Data included achievement scores and grades, in addition to attitudinal and social outcomes. Only six of the 89 articles reviewed presented data that could be calculated into an effect size, and the effect sizes ranged from low (0.24) to high (0.95). The average total effect size was 0.40, which indicates that co-teaching is moderately effective. The small amount of data and large range of effect sizes, however, also suggests that more research is needed. For example, another analysis could tease out the difference in implementation of small and large effect size studies, which could be further validated with more research.

Scruggs, Mastropieri, and McDuffie (2007) also conducted a meta-analysis of special education co-teaching, but used 32 qualitative studies. While co-teaching is generally supported, teachers identified needs such as planning time, training about student needs, and administrative support. Teachers across the 32 studies also indicated that students with disabilities benefited from increased attention and positive peer models. However, teachers also voiced concerns about the appropriateness of the general classroom setting for certain students. As more educators are being asked to engage in co-teaching, the nascent research suggests that administrators and teachers must carefully consider whether this model will best serve students' needs.

York-Barr, Ghre, and Sommerness (2007) focused specifically on

interprofessional co-teaching, and their results found a link between collaborative ELL instruction and student achievement. The authors conducted a three-year case study and embedded themselves into an elementary school by helping staff develop co-teaching instructional models. Compared to Goddard et al. (2007), which compared schools, this study compared student cohorts in different instructional models. Students assigned the collaborative instructional models exhibited significantly more academic growth on both reading and mathematics sections of the Metropolitan Achievement Test (MAT-7).

Van Garderen, Stormont, and Goal (2012) conducted a review of literature on how general and special educator collaboration has an impact on students with disabilities. The authors recognized that collaboration can take various forms, and included studies on co-teaching, team teaching, problem solving, collaborative consultation, and other informal partnerships. From an initial pool of 221 studies, 19 met Van Garderen et al.'s (2012) criteria. Of these studies, the majority took place in elementary school settings and used quantitative methods. While seven studies were supportive of a collaborative model, a number had equivocal findings about students' academic and social development. These studies found that a collaborative model offered no additional benefit to students as compared to more traditional models, such as resource room. Additionally, a major limitation of this review is that the term collaboration is often conflated with instructional models, such as co-teaching. Considering the previous discussion of collaboration as a *style* of interaction, this review of the literature does not specify whether teachers in these studies demonstrated collaborative interactions. The authors conclude that educators should examine how they can improve collaboration between general and special educators, but also stress that more research needs to be conducted. For example, is the

quality of teacher-teacher relationships a factor that moderates how well different service delivery models have an impact on student achievement?

Alignment. The link between student achievement and collaboration may be explained by improved instructional alignment. In the current era of high-stakes accountability, many educators associate the term *alignment* with how school-level curriculum and instruction is matched to state assessments (Martone & Sireci, 2009; Polikoff, 2012). However, the broadest definition of the term is how curricular, instructional, and assessment practices are matched and complementary to one another in order to facilitate student learning (Niebling, Roach, & Rahn-Blakeslee, 2008). Reaching further back into the literature, Tyler (1949) first defined the term as the match between a teacher's objectives, instruction, and assessments. Alignment has also been used to refer to matched content, cognitive demand, cognitive complexity, instructional practice, or performance expectations between teachers (Gamoran, Porter, Smithson, & White 1997; Kratchwohl, 2002; Porter, 2002). Niebling, Roach, and Rahn-Blakeslee (2008) stress the difference between instructional content and practice; the first refers to what teachers actually teach while the later refers to how such content is delivered. Teachers who share instruction of the same student must consider whether they are aligning instruction. This can be a particularly challenging task for teachers who have different professional roles.

Alignment helps to ensure optimal learning environments for students who work with more than one teacher. When teachers align their instruction, they are better able to follow best practices. Silva, Hook, and Sheppard (2005) observed two second-grade students receiving instructional support for ESOL services and reading. The students did not make expected academic gains, and Silva et al. (2005) identified a number of

research-based principles of best instructional practices that were not honored.

Table 3: Research-based principles of best instructional practices (Silva, Hook, & Sheppard, 2005; p. 5)

General Principles	Definition
Instructional level (Rosenfield, 1987; Gravois & Gickling, 2002)	A student is defined as being at instructional level when he or she has the prerequisite skills needed to complete the task given and benefit maximally from instruction.
Working memory limits (e.g., Siegler & Alibali, 2005; Smith, 1978; Templeton, 1995)	The developmentally based ability of a student to retain information at any given moment. All new learning first appears in working memory, and working memory capacity increases with age (O’Neil, 1996; Siegler & Alibali, 2005).
Data-based decision making/systematic assessment (e.g., Ysseldyke & Christenson, 1993)	Data-based decision making, or progress evaluation, refers to using frequent systematic student assessments (the “data”) to monitor student progress in order to make instructional decisions.
Academic engaged time (e.g., Ysseldyke & Christenson, 1993)	The amount of time the students are actually engaged in academic learning, as opposed to “clean-up” time or transitioning between settings.

Compared to their peers, ELL students have additional needs in regard to alignment.

Teachers must consider whether academic and English-Language development is being optimally merged (Gersten & Baker, 2000) and whether students are given enough opportunities for practice via redundancy in activities (August & Hakuta, 1997). It is already a challenge for individual teachers to honor these best practices, but when two or more adults instruct the same student it is especially important to consider whether a student is receiving optimal instruction. When a student is not making expected academic progress, teachers may first consider whether they are honoring best practices

through alignment. For example, a student's working memory may be overloaded if separate vocabulary words are taught in one day. This example illustrates a lack of content alignment.

Collaboration and Teacher Change

Collaboration between teachers may not only lead to instructional alignment that benefits students, but also to professional growth. The construct of collaboration is associated with instructional risk taking (Little, 1987), trust (Tschannen-Moran, 2001), increased teacher efficacy (Ashton & Webb, 1986; Shachar & Shmuelewitz, 1997), and positive attitudes about teaching (Brownell, Yeager, Rennells, & Riley, 1997). Interprofessional collaboration is linked to professional growth in reflection, creativity, and even energy (Davison, 2006; York-Barr et al., 2007). Teacher learning groups are not the focus of this study, but research on their effects highlights how collaboration can transform teacher practice importance. Hindin, Morocco, Mott, and Aguilar (2007) facilitated a group of language-arts teachers, reading specialists, and special educators. While the group experienced a variety of struggles, teachers shared expertise, supported one another's learning, and reflected on instructional practice.

While participants my master's thesis study (Jorisch, 2013) reported a belief in collaboration due to its benefits for students, they also explained that collaboration allowed them to grow as professionals. First, collaborative dialogues gave them insight into students in unique ways; they were able to see these students more holistically through another colleague's eyes. They also spoke of interactions that gave them the opportunity to learn specific strategies, new information, accommodations, and modifications. When relationships were established with mutual respect, open sharing of

expertise went both ways.

Summary

Empirical and theoretical literature suggests that teacher collaboration is an essential component of school reform by improving both teacher practices and student achievement. Although varied models of collaboration across disciplines share common elements, John-Steiner, Weber, and Minnis (1998) write that the construct is context sensitive. Interprofessional models in other fields suggest how general educators and specialists might collaborate, but do not address contextual issues such as instructional alignment or perceptions about teacher roles. Although research on ESOL teacher collaboration is nuanced and draws from rich qualitative studies, it has largely been conducted overseas (Arkoudis, 2006; Creese, 2006; Davison, 2006). The literature on how reading specialists and special educators collaborate with general educators, while prodigious, does not offer a developmental model of such relationships. A major limitation of the literature on teacher collaboration is that studies often conflate the construct with structural reforms, such as co-teaching (Cook & Friend, 2010). However, Friend and Cook's (2009) conceptualization of collaboration as a style of interaction recognizes that these partnerships can happen in a variety of settings. Teacher collaboration literature illustrates that the individual relationships between colleagues are nested within complex school cultures that affect the level of collaborative practice.

Professional Development

The first section of this literature review offers both a hopeful and daunting outlook on collaboration between different types of school professionals. While

collaboration has the potential to transform schools, relationships take time to develop and collaboration is a process that faces multiple barriers. Just as collaboration may be the vehicle through which teachers can provide optimal learning environments, professional development may be the key to nurturing the collaborative process.

School Change

Professional development and school improvement are symbiotically related (Hawley & Valli, 2007). Drawing from previous literature and their own work with schools, Waldron and McCleskey (2010) outline how Comprehensive School Reform can change student outcomes and teacher practices. They conclude that professional development is a key component of school change, but that it faces barriers such as a non-collaborative school culture. Rinke and Valli (2010) identify school leadership, culture, and resources as three salient factors that predict professional development outcomes. Hence, factors that have an impact on teachers' ability to align instruction and individually collaborate are also linked to effective professional development.

Defining Professional Development

The term professional development, just like collaboration, can take on many different meanings in the literature and in schools. Rinke and Valli (2010) broadly define professional development as, "opportunities for teachers to learn about and improve their teaching and student learning." (p. 646). This definition allows professional development to take on a variety of forms, from ongoing peer coaching to one-stop workshops. Historically, professional development has been based on a short-term and passive participant model (Guskey, 2003; Lang & Fox, 2003; Richardson, 2003). However, teachers often do not implement new practices with this type of professional development

(Joyce & Showers, 2002; Waldron & McLeskey, 2010).

Best Practices

Literature on professional development highlights best practices that benefit both students and staff. According to Darling-Hammond, Wei, Andree, Richardson, and Orphanos (2009), research shows that professional development is most effective when it 1) is intensive, ongoing, and connected to practice; 2) builds strong relationships among teachers, and 3) aligns with school improvement priorities and goals. Hawley and Valli (2007) also reviewed research and discovered similar findings. Their recommendations for teachers' experiences also include involving teachers in identifying needs, engaging staff in a theoretical understanding of what is to be learned, and organizing professional development around collaborative problem-solving.

Effective professional development works to take the previous recommendations into consideration. First, it takes into account the time needed to provide training (Guskey, 2000; Garret, Porter, Andrew, & Desimone, 2001). Newmann, King, and Youngs (2000) explored differences across schools engaged in creating teacher learning communities and found that episodic activities were less effective than long-term, sustained professional development. However, teachers usually prefer activities that do not require them to extend commitment beyond the school day or year (Garet et al., 2001). New models of professional development also require teachers to be active participants (Waldron & McCleskey, 2010). One way to do this is to create experiential professional development that allows teachers to try out new skills and reflect together (Hawley & Valli, 2007). While literature suggests that researchers work with schools to create

professional development, many professional development initiatives have been created entirely by researchers from outside the school who use an “expert” approach to conducting activities and focus on describing research-based practices (Guskey, 2003; Richardson, 2003). Approaching professional development in such a way that teachers co-create knowledge together is one way to challenge this traditional model. When professional development includes teachers in the generation of content, for example, the process is more meaningful (King & Newmann, 2000). Subsequently, these approaches may lead to greater teacher change.

The American Psychological Association (1997) states that professional development optimally enhances learning when participants interact with each other. In my conceptual framework, I explain my socio-constructivist approach (Lave & Wenger, 1991, 1998; Rosenholtz, 1989; Vygotsky, 1978) to teacher collaboration. Schools that reflect communities of practice recognize that learning takes place within the context of relationships. Lang and Fox (2003) write that collaborative professional development relies “heavily on peer-to-peer support and promotes reflection, dialogue, and collaboration about teaching practices” (p. 21). Professional development characterized by a collaborative atmosphere provides “the social, emotional, and intellectual engagement with colleagues needed to change practice.” This approach may initially be met with resistance, as Britzman (2003) writes that teachers are pressured to uphold the role of being an “expert” who has all of the answers. Professional development that requires teachers to co-construct meaning of new information together is one way to break down the historically isolated identity that many teachers take on in order to be perceived as an “expert” in his or her field.

Crafting effective professional development is a balancing act. It should match teachers' reported goals and needs (Waldron & McCleskey, 2010), but also align with larger goals and reform initiatives that exist on the school, district, and even federal level (Birman, Desimone, Garet, Porter, & Yoon, 2002; Darling-Hammond, Wei, Andree, Richardson, & Orphanos, 2009; Guskey, 2003). For example, training educators to co-teach aligns with the current push for more inclusionary practices in schools. In the current era of high-stakes accountability, tying professional development to student performance is also essential for many schools that must provide data on reform efforts' effects (Guskey, 2003; Rinke & Valli, 2010). This is especially salient for schools that need to apply for funding and resources to conduct professional development initiatives.

Professional Development and Teacher Collaboration

The National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE, 2007) provides standards for teacher preparation programs. One such standard states:

They have a thorough understanding of the school, family, and community contexts in which they work, and they collaborate with the professional community to create meaningful learning experiences for all students (NCATE, Standard 1c).

While schools may encourage staff to engage in a variety of collaborative practices, teacher preparation programs provide insufficient training in collaboration skills (Billingsley, 2004; Cook & Friend, 1995; Friend, 2000; Keefe & Moore, 2004; Laframboise, Epanchin, Colucci, & Hocutt, 2004; McKenzie, 2009; Otis-Wilborn, Winn, Griffin & Kilgore, 2005). In fact, many programs have not included any courses related to collaboration (Welch & Brownell, 2002). Teachers often feel unprepared and

inexperienced working with other staff members, and this issue is further complicated when interprofessional work requires role clarification and sharing.

Many educators' experience with professional development revolves around subject matter content and instructional practice. McKenzie (2009) claims that when in-service workshops do focus on collaboration, they tend to rely heavily on areas such as instructional methods and changes in legislation, but do not offer the necessary application of new information (McLesky & Waldron, 2004). Friend (2000) claims that while many teachers have "intuitive collaboration skills, it is an error to assume that the skills should be naturally present." In addition to assumptions that teachers naturally "know" how to develop collaborative relationships, administrators may not understand the need for such professional development (Firestone, Mangin, Martinez, & Polovsky, 2005), and worries exist around the time commitment to such efforts (Lang & Fox, 2003).

Evaluation

Considering the time constraints and pressures present in schools, evaluating professional development often is not prioritized. However, it is an essential component of the process. Furthermore, evaluation should be both formative and summative. In the case of initiatives that take time to expand and develop, formative evaluations can guide improvements and changes (Guskey, 2002). Guskey (2000, 2002) identifies five levels of professional development evaluation that serve as a framework both for researchers and administrators. Each level is more complex and requires more resources such as time and money.

The first level, *Participants' Reactions*, is the most popular and easiest kind of evaluation to conduct. Questions focus on how participants perceive the professional

development. For example, did they find it meaningful and useful? The second level, *Participants' Learning*, aims to assess what participants gained from the professional development. While questionnaires are often used, sometimes schools have the ability to conduct activities such as simulations around the topic. The third level of evaluation, *Organization Support and Change*, recognizes the broader context in which professional development exists. This level aims to discover whether organizational factors promote or impede application of new skills and practices. *Participants' Use of New Knowledge and Skills* is the fourth level of evaluation, and asks whether professional development has an effect on teachers' practices. Evaluating professional development at this level requires time for participants to apply new knowledge and figure out how to incorporate it into their practice. The fifth and last level of professional development evaluation is *Student Learning Outcomes*. The ultimate goal of professional development is to improve teacher practice in such a way that students benefit. Guskey (2002) suggests that schools consider what types of student outcomes will most accurately measure a professional development's intended purpose. For example, teachers may want to include classroom behavior in addition to achievement scores.

Schools engaged in professional development activities must consider what levels of evaluation they plan to use, what they will do for each level, and the feasibility of their plans. Research recommends ongoing and sustained professional development. Therefore, formative evaluations are essential for professional development that is in its nascent stages.

Summary

Schools committed to becoming “communities of practice” (Lave & Wenger,

1991) recognize that professional development is essential. Even if teacher-training programs began to commit more to preparing teachers for collaborative practices, much of teachers' expertise and professional identity occurs in the workplace. As teachers are being asked to work more intensely with colleagues, one way to nurture collaborative relationships is to provide school-based professional development.

Conclusion

This literature review has served as a guide for my study. Interprofessional collaboration is a developmental process that is affected by a number of factors. Some factors promote collaborative relationships and others serve as barriers. While many studies focus on teacher collaboration and professional development, I hope to contribute to the literature by examining the development of collaborative relationships within the context of participating in professional development that aims to foster these relationships. In the following chapter I will describe the methodology that was used to answer my research questions.

Chapter 3: Method

In this chapter I will describe my rationale for conducting a retrospective case study that explored interprofessional collaboration in an elementary school. I will first explain my methodology and the background of this study, including information about prior research. I will then describe the current research setting, data collection and analysis methods. In this chapter I will also discuss limitations and my efforts to conduct a study that matches standards for trustworthiness and ethics.

Research Questions

Two main research questions guided this study: 1) How does interprofessional collaboration between teachers and specialists develop over time? 2) Does professional development that focuses on interprofessional collaboration have an impact on this development? The first question specifically asks how these relationships have changed over time. Much of the literature on collaboration focuses on categorizing key components. However, some studies focus on its emergent nature. For example, Davison's (2006) grounded theory case study of ESOL teachers and general educators developed a five-stage model of deepening collaborative practice. The first question may be further subdivided by drawing on research that demonstrates collaborative relationships are nested within school cultures that affect their development. Thus, 1) What role do administrators play in promoting interprofessional collaboration and what structures best support this type of collaboration? 2) How do teachers navigate their roles with one another? 3) How do teachers handle issues that arise from interprofessional work?

The second research question, which focuses on professional development, may also be further divided by drawing from four of Guskey's (2002) levels of professional development evaluation:

- 1) How does staff perceive professional development and what was learned?
- 2) Do teachers experience a change in relationships, roles, and instructional practice as a result of professional development on collaboration?
- 3) Does professional development have an impact on school-level and administrative support and change?

These questions reflect literature that stresses the importance of evaluating professional development and recognizing that administration plays an integral role to its effectiveness.

Selection of Methodology

Qualitative research generates distinctive data that offer rich descriptions of complex phenomena and that can contribute to theory development. For the purposes of this study, I combined a retrospective case study approach to data collection with a grounded theory approach to analysis.

Case studies have been used extensively in education research (Merriam, 1998). Case studies are suited to ask "how" or "why" questions and for exploring phenomena that are process-oriented (Merriam, 1998; Yin, 2003, 2009). Thus, this approach matched my goal to investigate the process of collaboration. In the previous chapter, I discussed a number of studies that used a case study approach (Arkoudis, 2003; Creese, 2006; D'Amour et al., 1999; D'Amour et al., 2004; Davison, 2006; York-Barr et al., 2007). These researchers generated "thick" descriptions (Stake, 1995) of professionals' practices,

relationships, and attitudes around collaboration, which is what I aim to do with this study. This method is most appropriate because I was interested in exploring a “contemporary phenomenon within its real-life context, especially when the boundaries between the phenomenon and context are not clearly evident” (Yin, 2003, p. 13). In my review of the literature, for example, I found that the boundaries between school culture and individual teacher relationships are not clearly defined. Additionally, the conflation between collaborative relationships and reform efforts such as inclusion and co-teaching has made it difficult to extract a model of interprofessional teacher collaboration. Stake (1995, 2006) suggests that case studies seek out multiple perspectives of those involved in a case, which I aimed to do in this study by gathering information from both an administrator and teachers.

Within case studies and grounded theory, researchers have to consider where they stand ontologically. Case studies have been approached with both positivist/post-positivist (Yin, 2003, 2009) and constructivist (Stake, 1995; 2000; 2005; 2006) lenses. Yin (1994) writes that “theory development prior to the collection of any case study data is an essential step in doing case studies” (p. 28). While this statement is applicable for many case studies, it does not fit with my constructivist approach to this case study. The latter best fits my ontological belief as a researcher that reality is socially constructed and located in context (Lincoln & Guba, 2000). Although I have reviewed various theories of collaboration to help create my research questions and study, I wanted to use an inductive approach to data.

Within case study research, grounded theory (Charmaz, 2000, 2006; Glaser & Strauss, 1967; Strauss & Corbin, 1998) has been used to analyze data (Strauss, 1987).

Grounded theory (GT) was developed for the purpose of generating theory that is based, or grounded, in data. Hence, this is a primarily inductive approach (Charmaz, 2006). I explored the range of GT, from post-positivist “classic” grounded theory (Glaser & Strauss, 1967; Strauss & Corbin, 1998) to constructivist grounded theory (Charmaz, 2000; 2006). Just as I approach case studies from a constructivist paradigm, I find that Charmaz’s (2000; 2006) work fits best with my research goals. A constructivist approach to GT recognizes that researchers “construct our grounded theories through our past and present involvements and interactions with people, perspectives and the research practices” (Charmaz, 2006, p.10). This statement is especially salient for me, as I recognize how my past experiences with teaching and current relationships with staff at the research setting work together to affect the way in which I view the topic at hand and interpret data. For the purposes of this study, I also subscribe to Charmaz’s (2000) data analysis approach, which recommends that researchers “use GT methods as flexible, heuristic strategies rather than as formulaic procedures” (p. 510).

Background

The section of this chapter will describe this study’s background. It is essential to include this information because the context provides insight into methodological choices, limitations, and my own bias. This study is embedded in the work of the Learning Disabilities/Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (LD/ADHD) Design Team, a long-term initiative developed by a school system’s central office staff in a Mid-Atlantic public school system. Through the combined efforts of its various committees, its mission is to support general educators in the delivery of best practices in instruction and behavioral intervention for students with learning and/or behavioral needs.

The school district consistently ranks among the top systems in the state based on student performance on state assessments (State Department of Education, 2014). Schools across the district vary widely in SES, racial demographics, and type of community (rural, suburban, urban). Of the 3,858 teachers, 69.5% hold a master's degree or above and the average level of experience is 13 years. The district has approximately 51,000 students. In the school district, the breakdown of race is as follows: American Indian/Alaskan (0.2%), Asian (18.4%), Black/African American (21.6%), Hawaiian/Pacific Islander (0.1%), Hispanic/Latino (9.1%), White (44.4%), and Two or more races (6.3%). Five percent of students are identified as Limited English Proficient, 8.6% receive Special Education services, and 18.9% receive Free/Reduced Lunch (NCES, 2011-2012).

Membership of Research Committee. The Research Committee is one of the groups developed by the LD/ADHD Design Team. In early 2010, I was invited to join this committee as a graduate student member by the faculty member who was participating. At this time, the other members of this committee included: Coordinator of School Psychology and Instructional Intervention, Instructional Facilitator, Coordinator of the ESOL Program, Coordinator of Assessment, and Communications Facilitator (Speech and Language Services). The committee came together recognizing that its varied training reflected a belief in interprofessional collaboration.

Charge of Research Committee. We were initially called the Alignment Committee due to our initial goal to examining how support services outside of special education are aligned between teachers and specialists responsible for instructing the same students. We first narrowed our inquiry to only reading specialists and ESOL

teachers because these professionals have the greatest instructional responsibilities for students at risk except for general educators. As we discussed ways to gain the information and perspectives we desired, we realized that it would be imperative to conduct our own research. Subsequently, we changed our name to the Research Committee.

Focus Groups. The Research Committee's first project was to gather initial data on instructional alignment between general educators and instructional support teachers. Working with school district staff, we conducted four focus groups in Spring 2010, two consisting of elementary general educators and two comprised of other service providers (ESOL teachers and reading specialists). While participants in the focus groups openly talked about the benefits and challenges of working together, analysis of the responses demonstrated that the term "alignment" was not clear. After discussing the participants' responses and referring back to the literature, the committee decided that it wanted to understand how different professionals collaborate about the same students. The Research Committee determined that an individual interview study could best address specific questions about the nature of interprofessional collaboration.

Interview Study. Approval of the interview study was obtained at both the school district and university levels. The University of Maryland IRB application was approved on April 5, 2011 and I collected data that spring. The data were the basis for my master's thesis. The participants in the interview study were four general education and four instructional support teachers (two reading specialists and two ESOL teachers) from two suburban public elementary schools in the same mid-Atlantic district. These two schools were chosen as convenience samples. Although convenience sampling has limitations

(Patton, 2002), this selection gave the Research Committee access to participants. Members of the committee were familiar with the principals at these schools, who were approached to participate in the interview study. Additionally, I had worked in both schools as a school psychology practicum student. The principals were asked to nominate two general educators who teach one or more students receiving services from either the ESOL teacher or reading specialist. There was only one reading specialist and one ESOL teacher in each school. Every teacher recruited for the study volunteered to participate.

Working with the Research Committee, I developed a semi-standardized protocol that asked teachers about school-wide and individual collaboration with colleagues who shared instruction of the same students. I first conducted two pilot interviews to edit questions and to practice interviewing skills. The eight participants in the study were all interviewed individually at their schools. Each interview was digitally recorded and transcribed. I followed Charmaz's (2006) recommendations for GT data analysis by using open, focused, axial, and selective coding. Additionally, I memoed throughout the process and sought reliability checks with the Research Committee.

Four main themes emerged from the data: *Levels of Teacher Interactions*, *Communication Continuum*, *Factors that Affect Teacher Interactions*, and *Effects of Teacher Interactions*. *Levels of Interactions* functioned as the core theme that connected the other three themes to one another. This theme describes what teachers do together in order to align instruction. Data from this interview study illustrated teachers' struggle to collaborate with colleagues. I discovered that collaboration is a dynamic process that develops over time, and that a variety of factors affect teachers' interactions. In addition to pragmatic barriers such as coordinating time to meet, the participants also indicated

that collaboration poses interpersonal and intrapersonal challenges. A salient finding from this study was that all teachers expressed a desire to collaborate more, and some stated that they would benefit from more professional development around this topic. Considering this last finding, the Research Committee decided that a subsequent step would be to explore how professional development could benefit schools.

Research Setting and Context

During the 2012-2013 school year the Research Committee members met to discuss how schools from the district could benefit from its work. The Coordinator of Accountability, a member of the Research Committee, informed principals that the committee was interested in working with schools around the topic of collaboration. The principal at Wood Hills Elementary School (pseudonym) expressed interest in providing professional development for her staff.

Wood Hills Elementary School is a suburban public school serving students from kindergarten through fifth grade. It is a racially and ethnically diverse school: 39.4% Black/African American, 24.5% White, 17% Asian/Pacific Islander, 11.4% Hispanic/Latino, and 7.7% Two or More Races (NCES, 2011-2012). Almost 24% of students are eligible for free/reduced lunch. Wood Hills employs three ESOL teachers and two ESOL paraeducators to serve students who are English Language Learners (ELL). The school also has two reading specialists and three special educators. In this school's case, its diverse population and increasing number of ELLs require staff to work closely around support services.

In the summer of 2013, three administrators (principal, vice principal, and administrative intern) met with the Research Committee members to discuss the potential

for creating a professional development initiative in the 2013-2014 year. The principal and vice principal shared information with their Building Leadership Team to get feedback and gain buy-in. Independent of working with the Research Committee, the school's theme in 2012-2013 was "Collaboration." The staff agreed that they would continue with "Going Deeper with Collaboration" in 2013-2014 and pair with the Research Committee to create workshops for staff. During the summer, both groups met to discuss professional development goals, research on collaboration, and plans for the first workshop. Throughout the rest of the school year, the Research Committee and administrators met to debrief and plan the rest of the workshops. The following table details the chronology of this project, including the former studies that informed our current work. In the following sections I will provide more detail about these activities.

Table 4. Chronology of Research Activities

Spring 2010	Focus groups
Spring 2011	Interview study (master's thesis)
Fall 2012-Spring 2013	Research Committee meets to review data and plan next project
Summer 2013	Initial development of professional development workshops with Wood Hills administration
Fall 2013- Spring 2014	Workshops (10/17/13, 2/6/14, 4/30/14) conducted
April 2014	Teacher participants informed about opportunity to volunteer for interview study
May 2014	Dissertation Proposal and District Approval of Interview Study
June 2014	Teacher Interviews

Professional Development. Wood Hills provided three professional development workshops that each lasted three hours. These workshops occurred on the following dates: October 17th, 2013, February 6th, 2014, and April 30th, 2014. The workshops were framed around the findings of my master's thesis (Jorisch, 2013) and relevant research on teacher collaboration. Teachers participated in activities, were given resources to use

outside of the workshops, and were also given planning time with colleagues at the end of each workshop.

Workshop Participants. The participants in this study included both teachers and the principal, which provides data triangulation. Whereas the teachers provided perspectives as educators and participants in the workshops, the principal provided perspective as an administrator and creator of the workshops. The three administrators who created this year's professional development with the Research Committee included the principal, assistant principal, and administrative intern. When the Research Committee and administrators first began planning in August 2013 there was discussion about conducting a study at the school to evaluate the effect on the collaboration of the staff. Creating the professional development was not contingent upon agreeing to participate. However, each one of the administrators verbally expressed interest in participating.

At the beginning of the school year, the principal asked all of the aforementioned specialists and a number of general educators to voluntarily participate in this professional development. The selection of general educators was based on shared instruction of students with at least one of the specialists. These teachers engaged in a variety of service delivery models with specialists, such as co-teaching and pullout programs. Sixteen teachers participated in the workshops (seven general educators, three ESOL teachers, two reading specialists, and four special educators). At the end of the last workshop (April 30, 2014), the teachers were informed that they would be recruited to participate in an interview study towards the end of the school year.

Procedure and Data Collection

For this study I collected data through interviews. I engaged in a number of activities to ensure that this study reflects the ethical practice of research. I worked with school district staff to obtain approval for conducting interviews for my dissertation research. In communication with staff, I developed an informed consent letter that met their standards for conducting research in their school system. I made changes to my original IRB application for my master's thesis, which was originally approved in April 2011. In order to gain trust and ensure open communication, I recruited participants formally through a detailed informed consent letter that details the activities and parameters of the study.

Interviews. According to Charmaz (2006), an open-ended interview protocol is useful because it keeps interviews consistent between interviewees, but allows the interviewer to pursue questions. For my master's thesis I conducted two pilot interviews and subsequently interviewed eight teachers. This experience has given me the opportunity to practice my own interviewing skills. For this study, I shared a semi-standardized protocol draft with members of the Research Committee and administrators to receive feedback on the questions. I then created a protocol that addressed my research questions, while also giving myself the opportunity to ask follow up questions. The interviews asked teachers how their collaboration with colleagues has developed over time, including questions about issues such as administrative support and navigating professional roles. They also were asked about this year's professional development activities. Additionally, the principal was interviewed about her perceptions of collaboration in the school and their own evaluation of the professional development

(Appendix A).

In May 2014 I recruited the 16 teachers who participated in the workshops (seven general educators, three ESOL teachers, two reading specialists, and four special educators) and two administrators (principal and assistant principal) for a total of 18 participants. Of the people recruited, 14 volunteered to participate (the assistant principal, one ESOL teacher, and two general educators did not participate). The interviews were conducted over the course of two weeks at the end of the school year in June 2014. They were individually conducted in classrooms and recorded with a digital recorder. All interviews were transcribed verbatim, and identifying information was deleted or permuted so that no one could be identified. For example, information such as participants' and other staff members' names was changed.

The evaluative aspect of this study draws from Guskey's (2002) recommendations. I evaluated the professional development on the first four levels: 1) Participant Reactions; 2) Participant Knowledge, 3) Organization Support and Change, and 4) Participants' Use of New Knowledge and Skills. The fifth, student outcomes, are inaccessible data. For this project, the school district has restricted student data from being released.

Confidentiality. The voluntary nature of this study was stressed, and teachers were told that negative consequences would not occur with administrators as a result of declining to participate. The teachers and principal had the opportunity to speak about the project and ask questions before agreeing to participate. The school system secured funding for workshop wages (at the district's usual rate), which are funds assigned for professional development activities. Participants were debriefed about the importance of keeping what they say in this study confidential and were told that only I would have

access to information that links their names to given pseudonyms. They were also made aware that any analysis provided to administrators would be given in aggregate and de-identified form to ensure that they feel comfortable speaking openly and honestly.

The only people who have access to data are members of the Research Committee. Audio files from a digital recorder were immediately transferred to a password-protected computer and to a password protected online hard drive software program. I also stored a hard copy of data in a locked file cabinet at home. I will shred hard-copy data and erase computer-based data five years after this study has concluded.

Data Analysis. In this study I aimed to understand how collaborative relationships develop over time, and recognized that a number of factors alter how such collaboration is experienced. For example, literature suggests that different types of service delivery models may have an impact on teacher collaboration. Therefore, I first analyzed embedded cases (e.g., two co-teachers) and then created a cross-case analysis (Yin, 2009).

I used a GT data analysis approach outlined by Charmaz (2006) by engaging in a systematic coding process. The initial step, line-by-line open coding, forces the reader to consider individual concepts present in each line of text. Through this approach I reduced the possibility of imposing my own preconceived notions about the participants' experience. This is especially salient for this study because of my own participation in the topic. Charmaz (2006) suggests that researchers engage in "focused" coding, which is "using the most significant and/or frequent earlier codes to sift through large amounts of data" (p.57). Through constant comparison of interview transcripts I started to develop conceptual labels and categories.

The next step of analysis is axial coding, identified as fleshing out the properties and dimensions of categories. Strauss and Corbin (1998) specify an organizing scheme for axial coding that focuses on: conditions that form the central phenomenon of interest; interest; participants' actions and interactions with regard to the phenomenon; and the consequences or outcomes of participants' actions. Although Charmaz (2006) warns that axial coding can impose an inappropriate scheme to the data, I recognize my nascent experience with qualitative research. Hence, I considered a flexible form of axial coding to help me organize themes. As categories emerged, I searched for core categories that all other categories revolved around. The ultimate goal for this higher level of coding, selective coding, was to create the "story" about the development of interprofessional collaboration.

Memoing is an essential component of the analysis process. Charmaz (2006) explains, "memos catch your thoughts, capture the comparisons and connections you make, and crystallize questions and directions for you to consider" (p.72). In addition to using memos to record my thought processes around coding, I also used them to reflect on the related literature and to consider my own personal experiences, biases, and thoughts.

Data Management. In order to organize data, I used NVivo software to enter transcribed interviews, notes, and memos. St. John and Johnson (2000) warn that researchers using qualitative analysis software can run the risk of focusing too minutely on deconstruction of data. During data analysis I also used a white board and hand drawings, tools I have previously used, to have more freedom in making connections.

Trustworthiness

A primary goal of qualitative research is to attain trustworthiness, or be “*worth paying attention to, worth taking account of*” (Lincoln & Guba, 1985, p.290). I engaged in data triangulation (Denzin, 1978) by recruiting both the principal and teachers as participants. Coming from a socio-constructivist approach to this research, I aimed to make my personal and professional investment transparent throughout the process. Patton (2002) argues that no study is free from researcher bias, and I worked to embed this aspect of the research by documenting myself through memoing. This process helped me reflect and address on my own biases about the case. Memoing and keeping detailed data analysis records also helped me maintain an audit trail (Merriam, 1998; Yin, 2009).

Chapter 4: Professional Development Workshops

In this chapter I will review and analyze the process of planning and conducting the workshops that took place over the course of the 2013-2014 academic school year at Wood Hills Elementary. I will first review the preconditions and relationships that led to us working with staff and describe how we developed a framework for the workshops. I will then describe in detail the content of our workshops and analyze our work by considering best practices in the literature.

Starting the Process and Enlisting Key Players

When the Research Committee and I started to envision ways to support schools in the area of interprofessional collaboration, we soon realized that more people needed to be involved. Although I had the research background, my fellow committee members had deep ties to a number of staff in the school district, both central and school-based. We drew on their knowledge of staff to figure out who might want to participate in a yearlong professional development initiative. One of my committee members spoke at a meeting for principals in the summer of 2013 about our project, and the principal at Wood Hills approached my colleague about getting involved.

The principal and assistant principal then shared information about our work in early August with their Building Leadership Team to gain buy-in. Serendipitously, their theme in the year before was "Collaboration." The team agreed that this would be a worthy endeavor to pursue and named the 2013-2014 year's theme, "Going Deeper with Collaboration." As the staff at Wood Hills spoke with us, we all began to wonder whether special educators should also be involved. In the first two phases of our work we focused on ESOL teachers and reading specialists because the overarching LD/ADHD

design team that we were attached to was not aligned with special education. However, the newly formed group (Wood Hills staff and Research Committee) made the decision that we wanted to involve all three of these specialties that provided instruction to students. During the summer, both groups met to discuss professional development goals, research on collaboration, and plans for the first workshop. Throughout the rest of the school year, the Research Committee and administrators met to debrief and plan the rest of the workshops.

It is relevant to explain this background because collaboration is context sensitive (John-Steiner et al., 1998). School culture has an effect on how professional development is planned. Various school cultures develop over time, and collaborative schools are characterized by norms of trust, openness, and sharing (Fullan & Hargreaves, 1991). These schools simultaneously value individual and group work. Fullan and Hargreaves (1991) stress principals' power to set a collaborative tone in their schools by promoting shared leadership, decision-making, and professional development opportunities. In this case, Wood Hills already demonstrated some overarching collaborative characteristics. For example, the administrators met with other staff to decide what they were looking for in professional development on collaboration. Additionally, attendance at these workshops was voluntary.

Wood Hills' demographics are relevant for how we framed the first workshop. It is a suburban public school serving students in K-5. Twenty-one percent of students are eligible for free or reduced-price lunch program. The student population is ethnically diverse: 38% African American, 25% Caucasian, 17% Asian, 12% Latino, and 7% Two or more races (NCES, 2010-2011). Wood Hills also had three ESOL teachers and two

ESOL paraeducators to serve students who are English Language Learners (ELL). In this school’s case, its diverse population and increasing number of ELLs requires staff to work closer around support services.

Overarching Workshop Outline

The Research Committee, drawing from collaboration literature and Jorisch’s (2013) interview study, decided that the professional development workshops would encompass three overarching themes: structure, role clarity, and relationships.

Table 5. Outline of Workshops

Date	Focus	Materials
10/17/2013	Introducing Interprofessional Collaboration: Structure, Roles, Relationships	Powerpoint Article Roles “Placemat” Forging Collaborative Relationship Tool
2/6/2014	Reviewing School Data, Focusing on Relationships	Powerpoint Google Doc of Students and SLOs Video and Worksheet Intrapersonal and Interpersonal Interviews
4/30/2014	Coming back to Roles and Relationships, Intentional and Flexible Collaborative Interactions	Powerpoint Levels of Teacher Interactions Spiderweb Activity

Structure

Structure refers to district, school, and administrative factors (Jorisch, 2013) that affect how teachers communicate, interact, and form relationships for the benefit of students. School district policies about funding for substitutes, for example, have an effect on whether teachers can take time to meet during the school day. Schools may differ in the material resources their districts have that allow teachers to best align instruction (Jorisch, 2013). Administrators have the ability to set a collaborative tone. They have the ability to include teachers in making decisions about collaborative efforts or can mandate a specific service delivery model (Fullan & Hargreaves, 1991). In our workshop we primarily focused on school-level structures.

Table 6. Structural Components of Collaboration

Time	Setting aside time to meet is a continual challenge for all teachers (Leonard & Leonard, 2003; West, 1990). Colleagues and administrators often have to be creative in considering when they can carve out non-instructional time to meet.
Scheduling	Teachers usually have very busy schedules, which has an impact on their ability to collaborate effectively (Friend & Cook, 2009). Also, instructional support teachers often have different schedules than general educators. Therefore, administrators may have to consider where there can be an overlap in common planning time.
Consolidating Students	Instructional support teachers can become overwhelmed when their students are widely spread across classrooms (Jorisch, 2013). Schools may consider how they group students in grades for services such as special education, reading support, and ESOL. Schools usually have a plethora of teams and groups dedicated to specific purposes.
Service-Delivery Model	There is a connection between plug-in instruction and increased communication around teacher-focused topics that leads to more congruent instruction (Meyers, Gelzheiser, Yelich, & Gallagher, 1990; Meyers, Gelzheiser, & Yelich, 1991). Although certain instructional services are most appropriate in pull-out settings, schools may consider when plug-in services may be appropriate. Co-teaching is associated with improved student achievement, lower special education referrals, discipline problems, and paperwork (Villa, Thousand, & Nevin, 2008). Teachers who share instruction of multiple students may work with administrators to

consider whether a type of co-teaching model (Friend & Cook, 2009) may best serve students' needs.

Professional Development Most teachers have not had extensive training in working together. Professional development around inclusion practices, co-teaching, and collaboration can support staff that instructs the same student (Ryan, 2010).

Role Clarity

The “egg-crate” model of teaching (Lortie, 1975) is no longer a reality for many teachers. Changes in service delivery models, school reform policies, and shifts in student populations require general educators to work closely with instructional support staff for the benefit of students (Valli & Buese, 2007). The roles of reading specialists, for example, have also changed over time. The International Reading Association’s position statement determined that three reading specialists’ roles are assessment, leadership, and instruction (IRA, 2003). In addition to direct work with students, the organization also promotes coaching and indirect service delivery as an important component of reading specialists’ profession. Finally, more ESOL teachers are being asked to move into general education classrooms to provide individualized services or to co-teach (Dove & Honigsfeld, 2010). As Janney and Snell (2000) explain “[n]o longer is one teacher responsible for planning, teaching, and evaluating instruction for the entire class” (p. 16). Rather, teachers must draw from their respective areas of expertise to collaborate. Valli and Buese (2007) identify the multitude of demands and tasks that teachers must balance. Instruction is one of the many tasks and roles that fill a teacher’s school day, and often the other roles are essential to best practices in instruction.

Within each broad role there may be overlap between different types of teachers. For example, a general educator and reading specialist may both be responsible for

instructing the same student. Who is responsible, however, for tracking this student's progress and making decisions about what reading materials are most appropriate? Professional roles are particularly relevant when colleagues with different training work together (Bronstein, 2003).

Unfortunately, research in education finds that role ambiguity is common. For example, Roache, Shore, Gouleta, and de Obaldia Butkevich (2003) found that colleagues who served culturally and linguistically diverse students were often unclear about each other's roles and had no training to work together. Role confusion is also common for reading specialists (Al Otaiba, Hosp, Smartt, & Dole, 2008; Bean, Cassidy, Grumet, Shelton, & Wallis, 2002; Jones, Barksdale, Triplett, Potts, Lalik, & Smith, 2010). Administrators can set the tone for collaborative environments (Fullan & Hargreaves, 1991). Teachers who sense that administrators do not respect their roles have a harder time advocating for themselves with other colleagues (McClure & Cahnmann-Taylor, 2010).

Relationships

School staff that focus on structure and role clarity may still observe that teachers struggle to collaborate. This may be because the third component of collaboration, relationships, has not been adequately addressed. While many teachers might value collaborative interactions in theory, relationships take time and effort to develop (Davison, 2006). Additionally, norms of autonomy and non-interference (Ashton & Webb, 1986) may act as barriers against truly collaborative relationships, especially when teachers hold different professional roles.

Interprofessional relationships can potentially bring up issues around power

hierarchies. Often general educators are at the “center” of schools’ cultures, which can leave specialists feeling marginalized (Creese, 2002). As Valli and Buese (2007) found, relationship building is an integral component of teaching. Collaborative working relationships reflect trust (Tschannen-Moran, 2001), respect (West, 1990) parity (Friend & Cook, 2009), and sharing authority (Nichols & Sheffield, 2014). Some teachers may be naturally drawn to one another on a personal level, but the task of schools is to ensure that colleagues can develop these relationship characteristics together. Communication skills and professional development around building such relationships is therefore essential. Teachers must have the opportunity to explore how intrapersonal (e.g., beliefs about teaching) and interpersonal factors (e.g., ability to communicate frustrations) play a role in their professional relationships (Jorisch, 2013).

First Workshop

The first workshop was held on October 17th, 2013. This section outlines our PowerPoint and activities.

The Power of Stories and Quotes

The ESOL Coordinator started the workshop with a story about her own experience as an ESOL teacher (Silva, Hook, & Sheppard, 2005). Working with a school psychology practicum student and other teachers, she discovered that a number of best practices in instruction were not honored. We used this story to outline alignment concerns around instructional best practices. While each individual teacher worked hard to support these students, the lack of coordinated ELL reading instruction contributed to academic progress lower than expected. During the workshop we then asked teachers to reflect in pairs on how this story related to their own experiences and to consider how it

fit with the school's theme of "Going Deeper With Collaboration." One way we got staff emotionally invested was to start with a relatable story. Research is more compelling when it is directly related to teachers' actual practice (Darling-Hammond et al., 2009). Using stories from another school also normalized collaboration and alignment challenges. We discovered that colleagues were more willing to speak openly about their experiences if they knew that others also struggle with collaboration and alignment.

Defining the School Context

Working alongside the administrators, we came up with three structural reasons why collaboration is currently so important for Wood Hills: 1) Change in school population (more ELL and Special Education students), 2) New Common Core curriculum, and 3) New teacher evaluation system. We also used data from the school to give staff perspective on how many students receive instruction from more than one teacher. Additionally, we showed pictures of Wood Hills students to remind teachers that we recognized their commitment to children's learning and development. Before jumping into content, we showed teachers why collaboration was relevant to their everyday experiences (Darling-Hammond et al., 2009). During our initial planning sessions we focused on figuring out what factors made interprofessional collaboration particularly important for this school and enlisted the administration to use school-based data. At planning meetings the administration (principal, assistant principal, and administrative intern) demonstrated a keen awareness of the high expectations and pressures that staff experience. Thus, they wanted these teachers to recognize that this professional development was built to support them working in such a high-stakes context.

Introducing Principles of Collaboration

In 2008, Consumer Reports published an article entitled “Too much treatment? Aggressive medical care can lead to more pain with no gain.” This article focused on the needs of chronically ill people who may receive care from multiple professionals that does more harm than good. In the workshop we divided the teachers into groups and had them read the article. We then asked each group to read one of the six tips for patients and share how this article could translate for school settings. For example, the teachers developed themes such as coordinating instruction, keeping up to date with student data, and managing busy schedules. See link:

<http://www.consumerreports.org/cro/2012/04/too-much-treatment/index.htm>

This activity gave teachers a chance to see how collaboration and coordination among professionals is a challenge in all work settings. Instead of passively receiving information, this activity forced them to be actively engaged in coming up with themes. Other articles might have also been appropriate, but the planning committee felt that this one effectively addressed key issues around coordinating services.

Identifying with Others’ Voices

After teachers had the opportunity to see how collaboration in the medical field has parallels to educational settings, we then introduced them to quotes from our own focus groups and interview study done within the school district. Each teacher was asked to find one quote that resonated the most and find other colleagues who chose the same quote. They had a few minutes to discuss what resonated with them and then share with the group. Drawing from these quotes and the article, participants then had the chance to figure out three “Key Components” of collaboration. As mentioned before, using other

teachers' experiences is one way to introduce issues that may initially be hard to talk about with each other and with administrators. This activity also used the workshop as a space to make deeper connections with colleagues (Darling-Hammond et al., 2009).

Key Components of Collaboration

While it may have initially made sense to jump into a PowerPoint presentation, we thought that the teachers needed context and reflection before content. We drew upon the previous activities to break down and discuss the three key components of collaboration: structure, role clarity, and relationships (first workshop primarily focused on the first two components). Teachers had a chance to reflect and talk with each other about these components.

The administrators spoke with staff about different structures that could facilitate more collaboration between different types of teachers. The teachers discussed the importance of consolidating students in groups, which could also lead to more common planning time if specialists are not spread as thinly across general education classrooms. The administrators discussed structures already in place that support collaboration (e.g., having a "Home Team"), and introduced a new meeting, a "Quarterly Intervention Team Meeting." Teachers had the opportunity to share what they would be doing with individual colleagues (e.g., setting up a weekly check-in meeting) and express what other kinds of structural supports they wanted. It was important for the schools to first consider what they were already doing "right" because sometimes teachers and administrators are unaware of what their colleagues are doing to work more collaboratively. Finally, administrators used this section of the workshop to include teachers in developing ideas for how the school could increase planning time, disseminate student information more

effectively, share expertise, etc.

Teachers engaged in a role defining activity. Teachers with the same job positions were asked to come up with how they ideally envisioned their role in working with students, staff, and parents. They were asked to include skills that are specific to their roles and training and to add how they could be a source of support to colleagues. Speaking with others gave teachers the chance to possibly expand what they initially thought of as their roles. Teachers then completed a placemat activity where they listed skills they “bring to the table” in terms of their “specialty role,” and came up with five commonalities found among the group. Finally, each group shared their “placemats” with the larger group. This last part of the activity gave teachers practice in advocating their roles and unique expertise. This activity gave teachers space to recognize their unique contributions, which they often do not have time to consider. It focused on creating an “ideal vision” so that teachers could possibly reconfigure what their roles would look like over time.

Exit Ticket – Homework

At the end of the workshop we gave teachers the opportunity to break into pairs and work on a document together entitled *Forging Collaborative Relationships* (See Appendix B). This document was meant to facilitate communication and help teachers make decisions on how they would work together for the school year. One way we wanted to make this workshop “stick” was to offer a small tool that takes up little space and could be used flexibly. “Forging Collaborative Relationships” can be used at any time during the school year. It also could be used for future partnerships.

Second Workshop

The second workshop took place on February 6th, 2014. During this second workshop we revisited October's topics, reviewed school data, and introduced new material about relationships.

Spiraling Back

The workshop began with a review of material from the first session. The principal reviewed the three components of collaboration and led a discussion about what Wood Hills staff had been doing since meeting in October. Topics included time, schedules, teams, data discussions, and Wood Hills' school culture. Teachers then had the opportunity to revisit *Forging Collaborative Relationships* (Appendix B) and revisit this conversation with partners. Next they had the opportunity to share “Ahas and HmmHmms” with the larger group that they discovered using this tool. Finally, the group revisited the “placemat” activity about role clarity (each “placemat” had been stored) and were asked to talk about why it is important to understand your role when collaborating.

Reviewing School Data

Reviewing student data is an essential component of teaching, especially in the current context of high stakes accountability and new national curriculum standards (Valli & Buese, 2007). Teachers who share the same students should regularly assess whether 1) students are progressing as expected, 2) instruction is adequately aligned and 3) if changes or modifications need to be made. At Wood Hills teachers used Google Doc to compile and share student data. In this activity paired teachers (general educator and specialist) were introduced to two new “columns” on a document that already had student data. They first had to decide together whether students were making progress on

their SLO (Student Learning Objective) (1=already met, 2=adequate progress, 3=not adequate progress). They then had to consider whether their instruction was aligned with one another (1=fully aligned, 2 =partially aligned, 3 = not aligned). The goal of this activity was to have participants make the connection between intraprofessional collaboration and student outcomes. This activity led to a lively discussion on student achievement, communication, and what alignment actually meant for teachers. The discussion also focused on whether alignment could occur regardless of what type of service delivery was employed (i.e., pullout vs. plug-in). Data needs to be reviewed and shared in order to be useful. This activity modeled how teachers could use informal data (the columns were based on self-report) to make decisions about students and instruction. It was also introduced as a possible progress-monitoring tool for colleagues to use together during quarterly data discussion meetings.

Watching a Marriage Work

Teachers watched a short clip that highlighted a special education and general education teacher who engage in successful collaboration. Teachers were asked to first watch closely and then watch the video again with a sheet (Appendix C) that asked them to write down signs of the three collaboration components: structure, roles, and relationships. The teachers in the video used the metaphors of dating, courtship, and marriage to describe how their relationships have grown over time. Participants then had the opportunity to reflect on this video and asked, “What were the keys to their success?” Finally, teachers were asked to volunteer the formula they have/had in a current/past successful relationship. The discussion during this activity led participants to reflect on the importance of developing relationships over time.

Interviewing Colleagues

The final activity of this workshop was for partner dyads. Drawing from research on collaborative relationships, this “interview” asked colleagues to discuss issues that come up in teacher relationships (Appendix D). Teachers had already worked on *Forging Collaborative Relationships*, and this activity allowed them to further explore relational issues. For example, teachers asked each other about feeling left out. We wanted to devote time to showing teachers how to communicate in ways that promote positive professional relationships.

Third Workshop

The third workshop took place on April 30th, 2014. For this last workshop we spiraled back to themes discussed in previous sessions and introduced Levels of Teacher Interactions (Jorisch, 2013), which describes the varied activities that encompass interprofessional collaboration. We took time to first review how the year had progressed for the participants and gave them time to review and then share what they discussed from the “interview” we introduced at the last workshop. We then introduced my master’s thesis *Level of Teacher Interactions* (Jorisch, 2013), which describes the multiple ways that colleagues interact and align with one another. Similar to Little’s (1982, 1990) description of how general educators interact, each level describes a type of interaction that increases in regard to time and commitment. The message given during this portion of the workshop was that all four levels of interactions are essential for instructional alignment, and that colleagues must consider which interactions are necessary for this purpose.

After learning and discussing about the different Levels of Teacher Interactions,

the teachers participated in a sorting activity. Broken up into various groups, they were tasked with correctly labeling different examples of teacher interactions (Appendix E). The purpose of this activity was to help participants understand what these different levels might look like in their everyday work. This activity led to a discussion about how different colleagues engage in these types of interactions, sharing what's worked for them (e.g., having a system for planning meetings), and expressing barriers to engaging in deeper levels of collaboration.

Weaving the Web of Understanding

Towards the end of the workshop we asked teachers to consider what they had learned in the workshops and what they wanted to transmit to other colleagues through an activity entitled “Weaving the Web of Understanding.”

Summary

The three workshops that took place over the course of one year drew from literature on collaboration, but were also tailored for Wood Hills. The Research Committee and the administration focused on three overarching themes in “Going Deeper with Collaboration:” structure, role clarity, and relationships. Knowing that time is often a barrier to collaboration, we ensured that teachers had time at the end of each workshop to co-plan. Many of our choices in regard to content and activities were influenced by Darling-Hammond et al.’s (2009) recommendations for best practices in professional development. We focused on directly tying the workshops to teachers’ daily instructional practice, encouraged relationship building, and demonstrated how this work aligns with school improvement goals.

Chapter 5: Wood Hills' Story

In this chapter I will tell the story of Wood Hills. First, I will introduce the participants. Then, I will provide participant answers to the questions I posed in the semi-standardized interviews. These questions touch upon both individual experience and systemic changes at the school level. As a retrospective case study that also uses grounded theory methodology, describing cases is essential to representing each participant's individual experience. By starting here, with participants' own stories, I am providing a context for the theory of inter-professional collaboration development, which can be a highly unique process for individual teachers. In the next chapter I will zoom out and present an aggregated and integrated write-up of the themes that emerged.

Participants

The interview participants in this study are all female educators who work full-time at Wood Hills. A number of details about teachers will be taken out of the discussion in order to protect confidentiality. At this time there were a total of 39 teachers (not including paraeducators or related arts staff). A total of 18 teachers participated in the 2013-2014 workshops. Sixteen teachers were invited, and one teacher individually requested to be part of the professional development after the first workshop. However, I only recruited the 16 invited teachers for the interviews. Of these recruited teachers, 14 participated. I was unable to schedule a time with the assistant principal and one general educator, and two other teachers declined to participate. I also interviewed the principal. Overall, I interviewed 33% of the teachers (general educators, special educators, reading specialists, and ESOL teachers) who provided instruction at Wood Hills during 2013-

2014.

Connecting the dots. The administrators asked each specialist to pick a general educator they were already assigned to work with as a “partner” for the workshops. One of the most surprising findings from this study was the web of connections; many general educators had more than one specialist instructing their students. The following table shows: 1) the specialist-general educator pairs for the workshops, 2) additional specialist-general relationships for 2013-2014, and 3) general educators mentioned in interviews who were not workshop participants. The following is not an exhaustive list, but it includes the collaborative relationships mentioned by participants in their interviews:

Table 7. Interprofessional Connections for 2013-2014

Specialty	Specialist	General Educator Paired for Workshops	Additional 2013-2014 Relationships	General Educators Not in Workshop* (mentioned in interviews)
Special Educator	Carmela	Anjali* 1 st grade		Faith 1 st grade
	Brandy	Cynthia 3 rd grade		
	Hillary	Jane 3 rd grade		Megan 3 rd grade
	Maryann	Daphne 5 th grade	Nina** 5 th grade	
Reading Specialist	Kendra	Daphne 5 th grade	Shawna	Second grade team
	Jasmine	Cynthia 3 rd grade	Danielle	Fourth grade team
ESOL Teacher	Frances	Autumn* 1 st grade		
	Eve	Danielle 3 rd grade	Cynthia	
	Amy*	Shawna Kindergarten		

*Did not participate in interviews.

**Did not participate in interviews and requested to join after 1st workshop.

Participant Profiles

In the next section I will provide a short description of the participants who participated in the interview study. In addition to teachers, I also interviewed Adele, the principal. She has been the principal for less than five years. The following are short snapshots of participants, rather than exhaustive profiles.

Table 8. General Educator Profiles

Cynthia (third grade)	Cynthia is the third grade team leader. She previously taught at another school (same district) and has been at Wood Hills for nine. Over the years she has worked with multiple specialists who instruct her students, and usually has more than one specialist providing instructional support in her class.
Jane (third grade)	Teaching is Jane’s second career. She worked in another field and then received her masters in education. Last year she became a long-term substitute at Wood Hills. This year Jane was assigned to teach a number of students with significant disabilities who are on the certificate track, but she is not a special education teacher.
Danielle (third grade)	Danielle is new to Wood Hills, but she taught for a few years at another school in the same district. She experienced minimal collaboration with colleagues at her previous assignment.
Daphne (fifth grade)	Daphne has taught for over five years at Wood Hills, working with students from second through fifth grade. She is passionate about professional development and will take on an additional role next year to support new and non-tenured teachers.
Shawna (kindergarten)	Shawna has been teaching kindergarten for three years at Wood Hills. In past years she has had students receiving ESOL services and reading support.

Table 9. Specialist Profiles

Special Educator	Carmela	Carmela is the special education chair. In addition to this role she is also assigned a student caseload. Carmela previously worked in another career. She also previously worked in a school district with fewer resources and less support staff.
	Maryann	Maryann taught in another school district and has taught at Wood Hills for over a decade. She has experience as both a general educator and special educator.
	Hillary	Hillary has taught for three years at Wood Hills. During her first two years teaching special education students Hillary was spread thinly across multiple grades.
	Brandy	Brandy just completed her first year of teaching. She completed her internship in another school district and had minimal contact with general educators.

Reading Specialist	Kendra	Kendra taught in another school district, took time off, and has been at Wood Hills for a few years. Kendra was frustrated with the degree of contact with general educators during her first year at Wood Hills and proactively sought out more collaborative work.
	Jasmine	Jasmine taught at another school in the district as a general educator, obtained her degree in reading, and then began at Wood Hills. After teaching for one year became the second reading specialist and has been in this position for two years.
ESOL Teacher	Frances	Frances is the ESOL department chair and has been teaching for over two decades. She transitioned to ESOL after teaching foreign languages. Although she has worked at a number of schools, since starting in this school district, she has been at Wood Hills.
	Eve	Teaching is Eve's second career. She started working in schools almost a decade ago as a paraeducator and then became certified as a reading specialist and ESOL teacher. Eve found that she was most passionate about ESOL education.

Semi-Standardized Interviews

In the following sections I will provide a snapshot of participant responses to the semi-standardized interview protocol. I asked participants about: (a) collaboration prior to the 2013-2014 school year, (b) collaboration during the 2013-2014 year, and (c) hopes for future collaborative work. Drawing from my literature review, I asked about teachers' beliefs, administrative support, and the development of relationships over time. I also asked the teachers to reflect on the workshops, how this professional development had an impact on their teaching and relationships, and what types of additional training they desired. When I interviewed Adele, Wood Hills' principal, I asked her to provide a unique perspective as the leader of the school. Thus, the following section comprises both teacher and administrator perspectives.

Collaboration Prior to the 2013-2014 School Year

I asked participants to describe collaboration prior to the 2013-2014 school year, specifically addressing systemic changes already in place, beliefs, administrative support,

and prior experiences with colleagues. Wood Hills, like most public schools, has changed over time in how it provides instructional support to students.

Systemic Changes Prior to 2013-2014

Adele (principal) reflected that collaboration was mostly focused around grade level teams prior to her arrival at Wood Hills. However, I discovered that in the year prior to our professional development, the administration had already made changes that increased inter-professional communication. Adele began to assign specialists fewer grade levels in order to increase their ability to work with their assigned general educators. She also built in long-range planning between general educators and specialists based on these grade-team “assignments.” The school was also introduced to monthly student data discussions. In regard to resources, the reading specialists amassed funds in order to create a school “book closet.” Jasmine (reading specialist) explained, “everyone knows what resources we have, it makes it easy to collaborate because you know what's available.” This new resource increased teachers’ ability to align.

The teachers also discussed how specialist roles have changed over time. The ESOL program used to be more isolated; the teachers usually communicated minimally with general educators. An increase in the ELL population, however, changed staffing and teaching needs. Eve saw a new “emphasis on making sure we align with what's happening in the classroom.” Reading specialists also used to only provide pullout services to below grade level readers. When Kendra first arrived at Wood Hills she engaged very little with general educators: “I pulled students and I did my thing and the teacher did her thing.” In 2012-2013 Jasmine joined Kendra as the other reading specialist. At this time both engaged in more plug-in service delivery than years past. The

special educators described more variation in their roles. Maryann succinctly explained, “I have seen very collaborative relationships and then I’ve seen very – the opposite.” Carmela, another Wood Hills veteran, also described collaboration with general educators as different “depend(ing) on whom we are working with.” In regard to service delivery models, the special educators described an increase in plug-in support.

Despite these changes, Adele still observed that the specialties were operating as “silos,” and that only some general educators and specialists were engaging in what she now would consider highly aligned practices. Some staff had received co-teaching training previously, which she thought increased their ability to independently seek out collaborative relationships. However, she felt overwhelmed trying to figure out how to help the school become more aligned in shared instruction of students. Simultaneously, she was hopeful that her staff had the ability to change because she already saw that the grade level and specialist teams worked well internally.

Prior Beliefs and Experience with Collaboration

I asked each teacher to describe her individual beliefs about collaboration prior to the 2013-2014 school year and about individual experiences with collaborative relationships. Whereas some teachers had already established deep collaborative practices with colleagues, others had had very little experience with these kinds of relationships.

General Educators. Out of the five general educators, three (Shawna, Jane, and Danielle) explained that they hadn’t thought much about inter-professional collaboration due to lack of experience working intensively with specialists and/or training that didn’t focus on inter-professional collaboration. Cynthia and Daphne, however, spoke more extensively about previous beliefs. Both of these teachers believe that inclusionary

models, such as co-teaching, were beneficial for both teachers and students. Cynthia and Daphne felt that the grade level teams operated well, but that inter-professional collaboration was more inconsistent and not prioritized in regard to planning time. Both had a few positive co-teaching experiences that convinced them of this model's benefits. Cynthia learned to "set the tone" for collaborative practice by letting go of some control in order to make interventionists feel welcomed. Daphne expressed that she "love(s) co-teaching because I love being able to bounce ideas off of other people." She specifically cited how her close working and personal relationships with Maryann and Kendra shaped these beliefs.

Special Educators. The special educators expressed mixed beliefs and experiences. Brandy, new to teaching, expressed ideals about working closely with general educators that were based on her graduate school training. Hillary previously felt "like there was a big wall between general educators and special educators." Carmela, Hillary and Maryann all described some experience of discomfort in approaching general educators, especially if these colleagues appeared inflexible or uncomfortable working with special education students. They also cited the difficulty of being spread across multiple grades. Carmela coped by picking one or two teachers to work with more intensively. Alternately, Carmela and Maryann expressed positivity about inclusion models and cited specific relationships. For example, Maryann's experiences with Daphne led her to believe that close personal and professional relationships were possible. Carmela found that forging friendship was not necessary for creating a positive working relationship, but she set the expectation as department chair that special educators should try to co-plan with general educators. Carmela and Maryann became

confident over time in communicating with general educators about their own goals and beliefs as each school year began.

ESOL Teachers. Frances and Eve admitted that they came into the school year ambivalent about inter-professional collaboration. They initially believed pullout instruction was the most important component of their roles, because they could “target whatever that instruction is needed, give them explicit instruction” (Eve). Thus, both were wary about the effectiveness and efficiency of other models. While Frances was happy to support students in general education classrooms, she was often frustrated by colleagues’ one-sided requests and saw inter-professional collaboration as something that involved a great deal of planning and frustration for everyone. Eve believed that general educators could be “territorial” and was unclear on how welcome she would be in classrooms. Both teachers’ experience working with general educators was mostly minimal prior to 2013-2014. They often resorted to accessing student information indirectly to make instructional decisions. However, Frances and Eve cited a few positive relationships that led them to desire more active communication and planning with general educators.

Reading Specialists. Both reading specialists cited their belief in providing services that promoted instructional alignment, and “being on the same page and focus on the same objective and working together” (Jasmine). Kendra also showed Jasmine how to approach general educators slowly so that colleagues did not feel pressured or uncomfortable with unfamiliar collaborative practices. Compared to the two ESOL teachers interviewed, both had more positive memories of working closely with general educators. Kendra gradually shifted to more collaborative partnerships, which included

intentionally asking colleagues about their strategies. She approached Daphne last year to co-teach and the two quickly developed a close bond. Jasmine reflected that being able to use a specific reading intervention with general educators usually predicted their level of closeness, because this intervention requires both teachers to use the same instructional content. Jasmine worked with Cynthia (third grade) last year. However, “it took a year for us to really build that relationship and be on the same page about things and see growth.” Hence, both reading specialists outlined the time it took to build effective relationships with general educators.

Administrative Support

I also explored to what degree teachers felt supported by administration before 2013-2014. What was already established at this school? There was a general consensus that the administration was already supportive of collaborative practices. The participants in the workshops new to Wood Hills or to teaching could only reference administrative support from student teaching or other schools. Brandy (special educator), Jane (third grade), and Danielle (third grade) all described a lack of administrative support from these other placements. Danielle stated, “At my old school the administration didn't really foster the relationship between you and whoever was collaborating with you.”

The other participants reflected on what administrative support at Wood Hills was like before Adele became principal. Participants described the prior administration as less open to teacher input, less likely to know what was happening in the classrooms, and “less flexible” about possible changes in service delivery. Alternately, the teachers explained that Adele had developed a track record of encouraging staff to collaborate. Daphne (fifth grade) stated:

She was always big on teachers talking to each other and collaborating and wanting to be together and being a part of that.

Teachers referenced Adele's effort to provide planning time for teachers and described her as "on page with the whole team" (Shawna, kindergarten). They also referred to professional development opportunities and scheduled planning and data meetings.

Whereas most participants were generally positive about administrative support, Frances (ESOL) offered another perspective. She felt that administration was supportive of inter-professional collaboration "because it'll just be one less thorn in their side. They don't have to look for another teaching space." She was frustrated that ESOL teachers lost their own spaces and were placed in a trailer. Hence, it made it harder for her to have pullout groups. However, the general consensus among participants was that administration was generally supportive of inter-professional collaboration, and that this was not always the norm for other schools.

Summary

Wood Hills was already going through changes prior to the 2013-2014 school year. Specialists were all expected to engage in more plug-in services. The principal at Wood Hills had also enacted systemic changes, such as data meetings and assigning specialists to grade level teams, which created more coordination between different types of teachers. Teachers provided a generally positive perception of Adele's leadership and ability. Alternately, many teachers spoke about other administrators less committed to collaboration or, more generally, to teacher input about instruction. The teacher participants in this study described a variety of experiences and beliefs that they. Overall, those who had taught for longer appeared to have more solidified beliefs about

interprofessional collaboration. Out of the three specialist groups, the ESOL teachers appeared to have the least experience engaging in plug-in services with general educators.

Collaboration During the 2013-2014 School Year

In this section I will describe teachers' experience of the 2013-2014 school year. I asked them a number of questions that targeted current administrative support, the impact of the professional development workshops, and the progression of inter-professional relationships during the school year.

Administrative Support

The teachers were generally positive about administrative support during the 2013-2014 year. The most salient change in support that the teachers reported on was the creation of the professional development workshops. Eve (ESOL) explained:

They support us in this and they're not just throwing us out there to the wolves.

They're providing some professional development, you know what I'm saying?

Some resources, encouragement so that we can do this.

In addition to the time reserved for the workshops, the administration ensured that professional days and extra time was given throughout the 2013-2014 school year for teachers to use for planning time. One way they were able to secure this time was by finding the funding for substitute coverage.

During the school year teachers described other tangible ways that the administration supported collaboration. As a first year teacher, Brandy (special education) felt that they were "always kind of checking in" and provided direct support when she was struggling to work with a colleague. More veteran teachers appreciated

how the administration observed both individual and co-teaching. Additionally, during 2013-2014 Adele and Rose (Assistant Principal) asked some teachers to present to the whole school on what they were doing as co-teachers. The administration also allowed teachers a certain level of autonomy in making instructional choices. For example, after reviewing data, Jasmine (reading specialist) was allowed to become the reading teacher of record for a certain group of students.

A new structural piece that emerged by April was the creation of a “Master Schedule” for the next school year. The administration first identified which students received instruction from staff other than general educators. They then asked the specialists to give input about student placement and groupings, and attempted to consolidate and stagger groups of students so that specialists would not be spread too thinly across one grade. Adele explained:

It was a big puzzle. So then we did that, and that preceded the grade level – typically the team leaders of the general education make the classes. So then they, they know ahead of time these kids – this is the template of the kids that need special services, how it needs to be.

Adele realized through our workshops how much work it takes for general educators to have multiple interventionists assigned to their students. Therefore, she also became more intentional about offering general educators a “break” from being assigned multiple students with intervention supports.

The Impact of Professional Development on Learning and Beliefs

During the interviews I asked participants to consider what they learned or found useful in the workshops, and whether their beliefs changed. Not surprisingly, the main

areas that the teachers spoke about revolved around the workshops' three themes: structure, roles, and relationships. All of the participants reported that they learned more about structuring communication and planning time, and that the professional development helped the staff consider some system level changes around schedules. Every participant also stressed how they learned that instructional alignment, rather than a specific service delivery model, was what benefited students and teachers. When it came to roles, most of the participants referenced learning about their colleagues through the workshops or having a better understanding of their colleagues' demands and roles. Finally, all of the teachers referenced the importance of building inter-professional relationships, and many explained that the workshops gave them time to deepen their relationships. Throughout the interviews many of the participants referred to the materials we used in the workshops. The most cited tools were the *Forging Collaborative Relationships* list of questions and the video that showcased two co-teachers. Overall, all of the teachers reported that dedicating time to come together as an inter-professional group of colleagues was important.

General Educators. The three general educators (Jane, Danielle, and Shawna) with the least amount of teaching experience and the least developed beliefs about collaboration expressed the greatest impact in regard to the workshops. Jane was relieved to learn that collaboration can be “whatever fits for these two individuals,” that co-planning is essential, and how she could develop a “meshed situation” with a specialist willing to share roles. She now believes mutual support is the driving force for making service delivery decisions. Shawna now feels strongly about working closely with specialists, and she values “having that other expert just around to work with the students.”

She appreciated learning about various ways to communicate (e.g., the Forging Collaborative Relationships tool) and plan with a specialist. She and Amy used the workshops to reflect on their relationship and develop some instructional goals for the year. Danielle felt that she got to know her colleagues better in these workshops and focused on learning how other colleagues' relationships develop. She explained her new beliefs about collaboration:

The most important thing is to be open to trying different things, and to kind of taking a step back from your own vision and taking the vision of the other person.

Danielle stressed that “flexibility” was a key word in how she now approaches inter-professional relationships.

Cynthia and Daphne, the veteran teachers, focused most on what they learned about service delivery and instructional alignment. They realized that ensuring that students are receiving appropriate services is more important than where they are receiving instruction or with whom. Cynthia was empowered to learn she could work with colleagues to create student schedules that had less “shifting adult to adult to adult.” Daphne spoke about how bringing different types of teachers together in one room allowed her to gain a better understanding of her students since she was able to gain perspective from a variety of specialists.

Special Educators. The group of special educators is similar to the general educators in that they are split in level of experience. Brandy, new to teaching, took advantage of the workshops to get to know Cynthia, her partner. She thought that she learned how to communicate more effectively with general educators, gained confidence in advocating for her role as a special educator, and learned more about other colleagues'

roles and demands. She now believes it's important to communicate early about establishing goals for alignment and collaborative practices. Like Brandy, Hillary used the workshops to better understand general educators' roles. She learned that it was not solely her responsibility to ensure that instruction is effectively delivered to special education students:

Hearing you guys talk about all the different pieces that have to blend together and mesh together in order to have those successful co-teaching experiences, it was helpful for me to reflect on.

She previously thought that inter-professional collaboration was unrealistic, but realized that it could be done when the "stars align" in regard to personality compatibility, organization, and planning.

Carmela and Maryann are more veteran than their special educator colleagues. They explained that their beliefs had not necessarily changed, and that the workshops were validation for how they were approaching collaborative relationships. For example, Carmela continued to believe that openly communicating with colleagues was key. Throughout her interview Maryann continually referenced her strong belief in inclusion and inter-professional communication. Carmela gained the perspective that she has more to learn about students from fellow teachers. She also appreciated the workshops' suggestion for a communication system about content and objectives.

ESOL Teachers. Frances and Eve found different aspects of the workshops most salient and expressed a shift in their beliefs. They now understand the importance of aligning instruction: "It's targeted instruction that's supporting what's happening in the classroom, because that's been the goal of ESOL teachers anyway is that our students are

prepared” (Eve). Frances learned that neither pullout services nor co-teaching were the most ideal, but rather that their goal was to ensure students’ “needs were being attended to one way or the other.” Frances, previously resistant around most co-teaching or plug-in supports, expressed that the workshops and experiences with Autumn “changed my mind about going in.” In regard to the workshops, Eve focused more on the relationships. She learned that relationships take time to develop and that they need to be nurtured through open communication. She appreciated activities like watching the video about the co-teachers and the discussions that followed.

Reading Specialists. Kendra and Jasmine also had different perspectives on what they learned and what parts of the workshops were salient. Kendra succinctly stated that this past year of professional development “just affirmed what I thought and I think that it helped me to be able to see different views.” However, she was put at ease to learn that developing a collaborative relationship could result in “growing pains” and that informal modes of communication (e.g. hallway talk) could still be an integral part of a collaborative relationship. As a teacher with high expectations for herself, these workshops gave her perspective. Jasmine learned that focusing on developing relationships was key to true alignment for students. She referred to using the different levels of interactions we reviewed (Jorisch, 2013) as a framework for communicating with colleagues. She was also empowered to draw on student data to plan and “ensure that we’re on the same page about students’ instructional level.”

The Development of Interprofessional Relationships

In my interviews I asked the participants to describe the development of their relationships during the 2013-2014 school year and to reflect on whether they engaged in

any changes as compared to past year(s) as a result of the workshops. Each of the following subsections is organized by a specialist participant and her matched general educators.

Frances (ESOL) and Autumn (first grade). Frances and Autumn were paired together for the collaboration project but given choice in how to work together. Frances perceived that her partner was confident enough in her own teaching to share classroom instruction. Both decided to co-teach using a three-station model; however, they flexibly assigned instructional duties and Frances worked with all students. The two did not engage in official planning, but Frances felt that this was possible due to Autumn's organization. Over time, their roles became more blurred (e.g., Frances graded quizzes) as Autumn developed trust and Frances developed more buy-in about co-teaching through attending the workshops. She also felt welcome in the classroom and appreciated. By the end of the year Frances became more interested in learning first grade math and learned about Common Core from Autumn.

Eve (ESOL) paired with Danielle (third grade), Cynthia (third grade), and Daphne (fifth grade). As an ESOL teacher Eve works with a number of general educators, but for the workshops she was specifically paired with Danielle (third grade). This year she felt she "built something" with all three and that their relationships became more reciprocal: "I feel like I can go up to them and ask them a question. I feel like I can give my opinion on something if needed."

Eve and Danielle quickly formed a positive working relationship. However, during the workshops they were able to learn more about each other's experiences, discuss concerns, learn instructional strategies from other colleagues, and figure out how

to meet weekly. Eve worked to align her pullout groups with classroom objectives, and the two also created a math rotation co-teaching model. Both stressed mutual learning; while Danielle helped Eve become more comfortable teaching the new Common Core math, Eve showed Danielle how to effectively teach ELL students. Both stressed how Eve was welcomed into the classroom: “She sees the value in what I’m bringing and appreciates it.”

Eve also worked with Cynthia. At the beginning of the year she offered to plug-in for writing in addition to her targeted pullout support. Eve played more of a supportive role with Cynthia and worked to align ESOL writing instruction with the science curriculum. Rather than meeting individually each week, Eve attended grade meetings and used the Google Doc to stay informed. Both teachers expressed that they did not prioritize this relationship, as they spent more time with their “workshop partners.” Through the workshops they were able to learn more about each other’s roles and had the opportunity to make decisions about how Eve could most effectively provide support.

Eve also worked with Daphne’s (fifth grade) class. The two initially agreed that they would co-teach once a week, but this plan never came to fruition. This change was mainly due to scheduling issues and previous commitments to other colleagues. Eve attended grade team meetings, however, and Daphne made all online documents available to Eve. Daphne appreciated that despite their scheduling difficulty, Eve was “really good with coming down and checking in with me.” Daphne reflected that speaking “on the spot” and being flexible was what allowed them to serve the ELL students. As the year progressed the two began to meet weekly to make instructional decisions for a new student.

Shawna (kindergarten) and Amy (ESOL). I was only able to interview Shawna, Amy's workshop partner. At the beginning of the year the two made a tentative schedule and discussed how Amy might flexibly change her instruction based on need. They drew from the first workshop to meet each week to discuss student progress, develop lessons, and figure out how to best instruct the ELL students. In addition to providing pullout instruction, Amy joined Shawna in the classroom with a rotation model. Shawna felt the two "clicked" quickly, but that this year they were "figuring out how to work together, you know, and realizing what works for us and what doesn't." The workshops made Shawna see the importance of planning and she wished they could have been more focused during these meetings. However, she also recognized that Amy was just getting comfortable with the kindergarten curriculum by the end of the year. An advantage of co-teaching was mutual learning; they could demonstrate new instructional strategies. Shawna reflected that her communication with Amy felt natural from the beginning of the year, but that the communication strategies introduced in the workshops helped them deepen their relationship.

Carmela (special education) and Anjali (first grade). This year Carmela talked about working with two first grade teachers, Anjali and Faith. Carmela committed to weekly planning time, which allowed them to share student progress, brainstorm ways to meet student needs, develop lessons, and make sure that she was providing aligned content. Carmela prefers a two or three group model so she can share the load and reach all students. Carmela and Faith had already built a strong relationship in the previous year: "Sometimes (we) can look at each other and know what to do and how to do it." This was the first year that Carmela worked with Anjali (she did not interview). Carmela

described their relationship as one of growth in regard to familiarity, understanding, and flexibility of roles. As the year progressed they met more often and the lessons they co-taught became “smoother.” They advocated for funding that allowed them to engage in long-range planning and drew from the workshops to use a Google Doc to mutually share content. Carmela also took time to get to know Anjali on a more personal level as a result of the workshop. At the beginning of the school year she felt like a guest in Anjali’s classroom. However, by the end of the year she did not feel that way: “I understand this is her classroom but I feel very comfortable in her classroom.”

Maryann (special education) paired with Daphne (fifth grade) and Nina (fifth grade). Maryann and Daphne’s relationship has changed and progressed over a number of years. They used to both teach fourth grade together and became friends outside of school. This year Maryann and Daphne planned weekly as inter-professional colleagues. They were both responsible for gathering materials and shared teaching responsibilities in the classroom. Over time, Daphne learned to rely on Maryann’s special education expertise to ensure that her students receive appropriate instruction. Daphne openly committed to making Maryann feel welcome in the classroom: “I don’t like working with someone and not being a joint partnership. We share students.” For this pair, the workshops were more of an affirmation of their work: “It kind of gave us some strength in the fact that we’re doing pretty good here” (Maryann).

Maryann also worked with Nina (fifth grade), who asked to join the workshops after the first one was conducted. Maryann admits that this relationship has been challenging. Nina struggled with consistent planning time and providing data for IEP purposes. Maryann felt that she struggled with aligning content, scheduling pullout

during the appropriate times, and feeling that her suggestions were respected. One of the workshops “spurred” a co-taught lesson and Maryann perceived that Nina was “more open to hearing my suggestions.” However, it was hard to build momentum in the middle of the year and Maryann felt that Nina had a hard time giving up a certain level of control.

Hillary (special educator) and Jane (third grade). This year, Hillary’s caseload led to working with two third grade teachers, Jane and Megan. Before the first workshop, lesson planning was time-consuming. However, Hillary started to use what she learned to develop a template for planning time that increased efficiency. She and Jane also used the end of each workshop to try out newly learned communication tools. Hillary observed that both Jane and Megan were open to Hillary’s suggestions. Although Hillary sees herself in a support role for teachers and students, she began to take more of a lead in co-planning lessons and in Megan’s class they developed a group rotation schedule.

Jane had little confidence at the beginning of the year, but she became more comfortable as Hillary provided positive feedback, communicated clearly, and admitted her own mistakes. In the workshops the two used time to reflect on their progress and consider what else they might be able to accomplish. As this process unfolded they began to switch roles and “bounce off each other in the classroom on an on-the-fly kinda way.” Jane saw herself and Hillary “more like as a team.” She also trusted Hillary’s expertise to determine “what was time best spent” for her students with significant needs. Hillary reflected that new teachers might be more open to collaborative relationships.

Brandy (special education) paired with Cynthia (third grade) and Rachel (second grade). Brandy is the only participant in her first year of teaching and she was

paired with veteran teachers. She was excited to work with them but apprehensive to directly communicate her collaborative plans:

It's totally the analogy of like dating and being married. I don't want to seem too forward, but then I don't want to seem like I'm not interested.

After attending the first workshop she became emboldened to communicate her intentions. Brandy and Cynthia used the workshop alignment activity to discuss their students. Brandy experienced “a new kind of respect” for Cynthia when she realized how many specialists her colleague had to juggle. The workshops helped to create “dual recognition” of each other’s demands and roles, and they began to co-teach with Jasmine (reading specialist), which gave Cynthia more schedule flexibility. Cynthia was impressed that Brady was “willing to try anything” and two started to plan informally throughout the week. They began to use more aligned materials, as well, which allowed Brandy to develop assignments for students.

Brandy also spoke about a challenging relationship with Rachel, a second grade teacher. Brandy explained that this colleague was less open to working collaboratively:

I was more so a resource teacher providing in-class support...As opposed to a special education collaboration co-teacher in the class.

Brandy soon realized that her colleague was “kind of on edge” about structure and student behavior, and struggled with how her colleague expected her to “fix” perceived problems. Brandy felt less comfortable advocating for herself or her student in this relationship. However, through the workshops she became more vocal about her boundaries and role as a special educator.

Kendra (reading specialist) paired with Daphne (fifth grade) and Second Grade teachers. Kendra continued to work with Daphne this year and the two came into the first workshop with a solid foundation. Kendra stated, “we were more comfortable with each other, so it was easier.” This year they were able to plan less extensively because they had a better sense of each other’s styles and could pick up where someone else left off. They also used a specific approach to reading instruction that allowed them to use similar materials and strategies. The two used a combination of pullout and co-teaching, and continued to meet weekly. By the middle of the year Kendra pulled back on making many decisions, and Daphne was more comfortable making suggestions about instruction and content.

Since Kendra and Daphne had already developed a strong bond, Kendra committed to making a connection with the second grade team. She drew on her past experiences to slowly introduce a new approach to reading instruction. Although she encountered resistance from one teacher, she felt that the other colleagues warmed up to the newer methods and she was very excited about students’ progress.

Jasmine (reading specialist) paired with Cynthia (third grade), Danielle (third grade), and Fourth Grade teachers. Jasmine was officially paired with Cynthia for the workshops, but also worked with Danielle. Cynthia and Jasmine shared students last year, but it wasn’t until the end of the year that they worked more consistently. By September 2013 the two already knew each other’s expertise and teaching styles. They committed this year to co-teaching. Additionally, they engaged in more joint work, such as co-grading. Both appreciated their colleague’s commitment to students, ability to plan ahead, and expertise. Due to their trust in each other, for example, Cynthia decided to

pilot a spelling program with the support of Jasmine. Cynthia also was able to lean on Jasmine for learning new strategies as they taught the fairly new Common Core. Jasmine also used the workshops to approach the fourth-grade team about a reading intervention.

Principal's Perspective. Adele also offered her perspective as an administrator. She observed that the special educators and ESOL teachers were providing plug-in services more than she had seen before. While she recognized that pullout was also important, she wanted staff to provide more instruction within the general education classroom. Adele also explained that staff was more “willing to share the resources” and that a shift occurred in many relationships:

But the passion was there, but I saw – you know, sometimes when you see there's passion, it's like, "Well, he's mine." This was different. This passion was there, but they – you know, the understanding that, "Hey, we gotta work this together."

Adele also witnessed that when multiple teachers taught a student, they were more likely to have discussions in and out of the workshops to ensure services were more streamlined. Finally, she also observed that a number of specialists were starting to use planning templates to communicate more effectively with general educators.

Summary. Each of these narratives is a snapshot of relationships *in process*. Whereas some teachers had already established strong bonds with one another, others were working together for the first time. Those who were working together for the first time reported the most changes in their instruction and communication. Overall, teachers reported more intentional co-planning, increased plug-in or co-teaching practices, and increased alignment of strategies and content. The workshops gave pairs of colleagues a

chance to get to know one another both personally and professionally. Some of the pairs drew more heavily on the workshops' communication tools.

Future Collaboration

As this was a pilot year for a new collaboration project in the school district, I was also interested in what participants looked forward to in the upcoming year. Specifically, I asked, "How do you envision your collaboration with colleagues next year?" I also asked the teachers two follow-up questions: 1) How they would like to further develop their collaborative skills and relationships and 2) What additional training/support they desired.

Envisioning the Future

When I asked teachers about how they would like to further develop their relationships and collaborative skills, they spoke broadly about hopes for the future, but they also referenced individual relationships.

General educators. Each general educator demonstrated a desire to deepen their relationships with specialists. Two pairs (Kendra and Daphne, and Eve and Danielle) from the workshops already knew they would work together again, which was due to their request to administration. When general educators were unsure with whom they might work with the following year, they expressed positive hopes: "I'm really looking forward to hopefully doing that again next year, even with somebody different" (Shawna). The general educators who usually have more than one specialist serving students also planned to meet with colleagues at the beginning of the year to schedule, plan, and develop trust. The newer teachers referenced plans to use communication strategies and tools from the workshops.

Special Educators. All of the special educators expressed a desire to use the beginning of the next year to “almost set the ground rules first” (Carmela). They referenced advocating for their roles, taking time to understand general educators, and engaging in intentional discussions about students’ needs. Hillary and Carmela focused on improving their ability to co-plan and use tools (e.g., planning rubric, Google Doc) to align instruction. Brandy was especially focused on building her communication skills so that she could “deal” more effectively with conflicts. Hillary also hoped to make more of an effort to build friendships; she envisioned that interpersonal comfort would lead to “bouncing ideas off one another.”

ESOL Teachers. Both ESOL teachers expressed a desire to engage in more plug-in or co-teaching work with future colleagues. Eve was excited to work with Danielle again, and had already reached out to another teacher about co-teaching. Frances was “looking forward to the possibility” of providing more in-class support, like she did with Autumn. However, she was also worried about being pushed to only provide support within general education classrooms and that her role might switch to that of a “mother’s helper” over time. In regard to skills, Frances hoped to learn more math curriculum and Eve wanted to further develop her instructional and interpersonal skills so that “when you walk into that classroom, you cannot tell who the general education teacher is or the ESOL teacher is.”

Reading Specialists. The reading specialists approached this interview question differently because Jasmine was just hired as a reading support teacher at another school. Her goal at the new school was to develop relationships first. She envisioned herself facilitating group discussions about instruction and going into classrooms to model new

strategies. That is, she was hoping to make joint decisions rather than offer “unsolicited advice.” Jasmine was also interested in learning “how to collaborate with a disengaged teacher...and doesn't really want any help.” Kendra already felt confident in her collaborative skillset, but wanted to build close relationships with general educators she had not worked with before. Additionally, she also hoped to build stronger relationships with the special educators and ESOL teachers to ensure that students benefited from greater instructional alignment.

Future Support and Training

The participants in the study were also asked what additional support and training they desired, as well as what aspects of the workshops they would have changed. Just as with the previous question, some answers were broad in focus while others identified specific goals. The critiques of the workshops focused mainly on time. All of the participants expressed the desire for more time during the workshops to co-plan with their matched colleagues. Additionally, many wished that they had more workshops during the year or more follow up between the workshops.

A number of teachers expressed a desire for the administration to continue the workshop dialogues at the school level so more staff could get on board. When I interviewed Adele at the beginning of 2014-2015 year, I learned that she was hoping to create an online “Toolkit” for the whole school that would provide the communication tools we used in the workshops. Many expressed a desire for more intensive supports. For example, a number wondered whether observations or videos of teachers working together could be beneficial to watch and then discuss. They also requested more discussion of what teachers are doing well together in regard to planning, using aligned

materials, and co-teaching. Some hoped to find out what teachers were doing in other schools. Others expressed a desire to have more consistent support around resources. For example, Maryann stated that it was often hard to align instruction for special education students because she scrambled to find appropriate materials.

Barriers to Collaboration

One of the reasons the Research Committee and I embarked on this line of research was because we had all experienced in one way or another how hard it is to collaborate in a busy school. I asked participants the following question: Other than time, what would you say are significant barriers engaging in collaboration well? In this section I include explicit answers to this specific question and also spontaneous answers that came up in other parts of the interviews. Through my personal experience and literature review, I knew that time has always been a consistent barrier, and I wanted to explore other topics.

Across all interviews teachers referenced relationship barriers more than any other factor that inhibited effective collaboration. Some teachers specifically referenced lack of teachers' personality compatibility. Jane (third grade) explained, "They rub each other the wrong way for whatever reason." Every participant also referenced lack of openness and flexibility. Eve (ESOL) explained, "teachers that are kinda set in their ways that are not open to co-teaching and collaborating." Other participants focused on teachers' need for control and difficulty "giving up the limelight." Jasmine (reading specialist) succinctly explained:

I guess it's losing that control, and we're all teachers so we like some level of control. Managing different teaching styles.

Frances (ESOL) described the power imbalance she experienced. She sometimes felt that she was expected to support general educators without having a say in how they would work together. Brandy stated that “if respect for each other’s roles is not reciprocated” then it is harder to work inter-professionally. All specialists described either feeling uncomfortable or unwelcome by general educators at some point in their careers. For some, these experiences made them less inclined to communicate or make overtures to engage in models such as co-teaching. Adele explained that often colleagues do not adequately know or understand others’ roles, which can lead to conflict.

Participants also discussed a variety of barriers that were more structural in nature. Some teachers spoke of the difficulty finding or making appropriate content for students requiring accommodations or specialized instruction. Many also noted that specialists were often spread thinly across multiple grades and felt that if they could cover less general education classrooms “they could just make their job so much more meaningful and deeper” (Danielle, third grade). There was also ambivalence about how specialists move up with their students. While this approach promotes close teacher-student relationships, it also prevents many colleagues from working together two years in a row. Maryann (special education) pointed out that moving from grade to grade can be hard because “as a specialists we don’t always know that curriculum.” There are also many external rules and protocols that can interfere with a seamless process for working together. For example, special educators often have to adhere to IEPs that may not allow for a mixed group of students in and out of special education. Adele recognized that different specialties have varied instructional priorities that can make it hard to coordinate. Tied to this is a general urgency in the school to get through the curriculum,

especially in regard to the new Common Core.

Summary

This chapter has led the reader through Wood Hills' story. The school was already heading towards a more integrated vision of service delivery when we approached the administration, which has been described as highly supportive of interprofessional collaboration. The participants all reported varied levels of experience with collaborative practices before embarking on this year of professional development. During 2013-2014 they drew from these previous experiences, beliefs, and the workshops to develop and deepen relationships with colleagues. The participants were empowered through the workshops to change their instructional practices, such as planning more regularly or engaging in more co-teaching. The most internal and behavioral changes appeared to occur for partners who were new to working together, whereas some of the more established partners (e.g., Daphne and Kendra) were more likely to use the workshops as affirmation for the work they were already engaging in together. During the 2013-2014 year the most significant school-wide structural changes reported were the Master Schedule (which focuses on consolidating intervention groups) and the use of Google Docs to share materials. At the beginning of the 2014-2015 school year, Adele was hoping to create an online "Toolkit" to share the workshops' communication tools with all staff. Despite the positive changes that occurred, the participants also described a variety of structural and relational barriers. In the following chapter I will discuss how themes emerged from the interviews and specifically address the research questions.

Chapter 6: Theoretical Findings

In this chapter I will discuss the themes that emerged from this study. These themes focus on how interprofessional collaboration develops within the context of professional development. Throughout this project I worked closely with administrators and was aware of my own positive bias towards them, along with a personal belief in the power of professional development and collaboration. This initiative and subsequent dissertation would not be possible without the school's involvement. Hence, I was wary about seeing this school year and staff through rose-colored glasses. One benefit of using a grounded theory approach to data is that I was able to mitigate my bias by focusing on themes that emerged from the interview transcripts. I have organized this chapter by first giving an overview of the theory that emerged from the data and then providing a detailed description of the main themes.

A Grounded Theory of Interprofessional Collaboration

The central theme that emerged from this study is *Cultivating the Relationship*. The Merriam-Webster's Online Dictionary (2012) defines cultivate as "to foster the growth of" and to improve by "labor, care, or study." When I created the title of my dissertation proposal I used the word cultivate without giving it much thought. However, when I began to engage in the long and challenging work of coding, this word came to have a deeper meaning for me. Cultivated land is earth that has been plowed, sown, and used for raising crops. It takes time and work to cultivate, and there are a variety of conditions that make some land more arable than other land. Finally, all of this hard work is done for the purpose of optimizing crops. In this study I wanted to understand how collaborative relationships blossomed over time and what factors promoted such growth.

In particular, I wanted to understand how professional development plays a role in fostering such relationships. An underlying assumption of this study is that collaborative interprofessional relationships have an impact on instructional alignment and a positive impact on both students and teachers. Hence, I am titling the theory that emerged from these data *Cultivating Interprofessional Collaboration* (Figure 1). The theory describes an iterative process that occurs at both a systemic and personal level. Using the axial coding framework of grounded theory, I discovered that a number of factors work in concert to promote or inhibit the development of these types of collaborative relationships.

Through my coding a story about collaboration began to emerge. Although each participants and dyad described varied experiences, I began to discover common themes that explain how general educators and specialists tasked with instructing the same students develop relationships over time. A picture representing the core story of this process is illustrated in Figure 2. This theory illustrates how interprofessional collaboration is a nonlinear process of growth that depends on the bidirectional relationship between professional development, external factors, interpersonal factors, and intrapersonal factors. In the diagram the tree represents *Growth*, the central facet of a collaborative relationship. Before a relationship grows, however, it must first be initiated, which is represented by *Planting Seeds*. I found that the nature of requests, expectations, and feelings, along with how teachers negotiate service delivery, set in motion a particular growth trajectory. *Growth* refers to a nonlinear process whereby teachers continually discover about one another, engage in ever increasing shared activities, and reflect on their instruction and relationships. As colleagues experience these different

aspects of growth they engage in increasing levels of alignment. In this theory, alignment can refer both to aligned content and instruction. Teachers who achieve high levels of alignment discover a dimension of seamlessness to their partnerships, which speaks to a more interdependent approach to teaching.

In the diagram, *Propagating Collaboration* represents seeds from the tree (*Growth*) being sown. Teachers are able to draw from their positive *Growth* experiences in order to increase their collaboration with other colleagues. This increased interprofessional collaboration can vary in scope. For example, two teachers may decide to further deepen their relationship or one specialist may decide to invite a general educator to co-teach. All together, *Cultivating the Relationship* is the core theme that describes how relationships begin (*Planting Seeds*), develop (*Growth*), and expand (*Propagating Collaboration*).

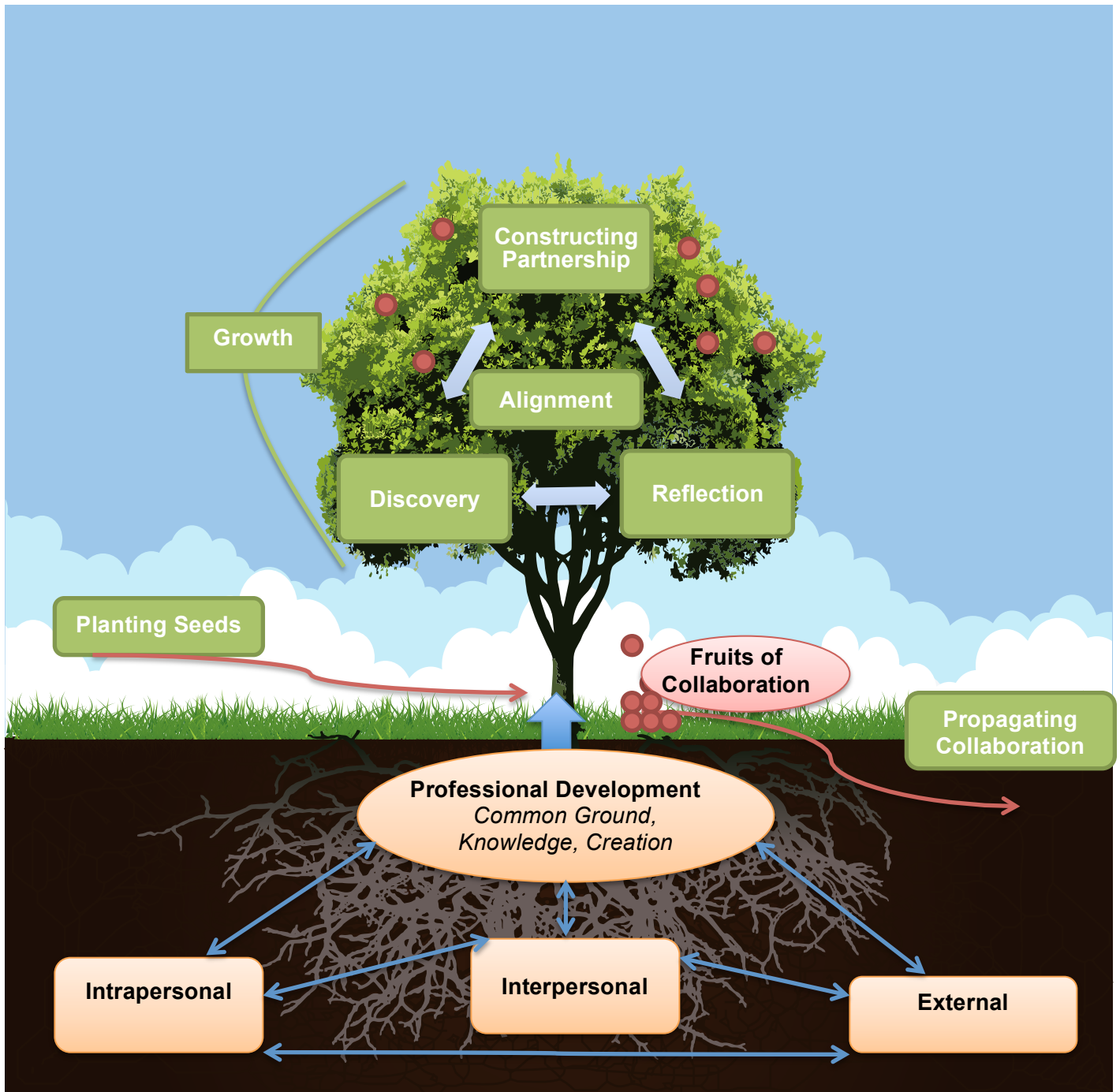
As Figure 2 shows, relationships cannot grow without necessary nutrients. Four main themes that correspond to *Cultivating the Relationship* emerged: *External Conditions*, *Interpersonal Conditions and Strategies*, *Intrapersonal Conditions*, and *Professional Development*. These themes are the metaphorical “soil” in which relationships grow. The bidirectional lines in this diagram demonstrate that these factors all have an impact on one another. For example, teachers who have adequate resources (*External Conditions*) may be more likely to engage in *Sharing the Load* (*Interpersonal Strategies*). As discussed in the earlier sections of this chapter, these factors can either inhibit or promote partnerships. Arrested growth in a relationship may be understood by exploring barriers that may exist “beneath the ground,” so to speak. In this study I discovered that rigidity and control (*Interpersonal Strategies*), for example, can limit

colleagues' communication and ability to construct their partnerships.

Professional Development operates much like a fertilizer by facilitating the growth of relationships by encouraging the positive external, interpersonal, and interpersonal factors that deepen interprofessional partnerships. The knowledge and common ground that professional development provides helps colleagues practice their interpersonal strategies, reflect how their intrapersonal issues affect collaborative work, and consider ways to improve external conditions such as scheduling. Additionally, professional development is more effective when administration supports such an initiative (*External Conditions*), when colleagues are open to learning new ways to work together (*Interpersonal Strategies*), and when colleagues believe that deepening interprofessional collaboration is a worthwhile endeavor (*Intrapersonal Conditions*).

In the diagram, the *Fruits of Collaboration* represent the benefits of interprofessional collaboration that teachers and students experience. It can take time for these benefits to come to fruition, as it takes time for colleagues to develop aligned practices. When teachers are able to reflect on how interprofessional relationships can impact student achievement and their own professional growth, they are more likely to engage in practices that expand their collaborative work (*Propagating Collaboration*).

Figure 2. Cultivating Interprofessional Collaboration



Intrapersonal Conditions

Intrapersonal Conditions describes how teachers “come to the table” with partners, and include experience, beliefs, and self-concept. The participants were able to not only identify their own internal conditions that affect their collaborative practices, but also demonstrated reflection about their colleagues.

Experience

Teachers’ level and type of experience influence their relationships. In this study the participants reflected on experience as it related to following: years teaching, familiarity with the school, previous co-teaching and collaborative relationships, and having more than one professional role.

Experience with teaching. One dimension of experience is number of years teaching and working at the same school. Being new to the profession can be both a barrier and a boon to collaborative practice. Many teachers reflected that being new could make it hard to approach other staff. For example, Brandy (special educator) was excited to plug into classrooms, but apprehensive about seeming too pushy. Others reflected on how they were unsure how to approach colleagues when they first began teaching. Jane (third grade) often felt unprepared and overwhelmed as a new teacher both as a collaborator and in her role as a general educator. Alternately, some teachers expressed that newer teachers might experience more openness around collaboration. Frances (ESOL) reflected on Amanda:

I think this is her second year. So I think she appreciated the help. Now, someone who's been doing "Very well, thank you," for ten years...

As someone new to Wood Hills Danielle (third grade) intentionally let colleagues know

that she was open to collaborating. She explained that she wanted “people to know off the bat that I'm open to whatever ideas that they have.”

Experience with Collaborative Practices. Participants were specifically asked about past experiences with co-teaching or other interprofessional relationships. All together, having a positive or negative experience with other colleagues did not necessarily translate into how a teacher approaches a new relationship. For example, Daphne (fifth grade) referenced past experiences that were “terrible,” but explained she was still willing to try co-teaching again with another colleague. Experience with collaborative service models was a greater influence than actual individual relationships. For example, the majority of teachers who had already engaged in some form of co-teaching or plug-in service delivery were positive about its impact on both teachers and students.

Experience with Multiple Roles. Another dimension of experience is time spent in another professional role. In this project Kendra and Jasmine (reading specialists), along with Maryann, had general education teaching experience. All three described how these past teaching roles granted them greater understanding of partners’ struggles and demands. Jasmine stated, “In the beginning, I took it pretty slow– having experienced that teachers may not want the help or may not – may be easily overwhelmed.” Maryann reflected a similar sentiment: “The classroom is hard. I mean, you have to be in the classroom with the kids; you’re “on” all the time.” In this study’s small sample, previous general education teaching was one way that specialists were able to better understand their colleagues.

Beliefs

As teachers gain experience they also develop a set of beliefs about students, inclusion, and teaching, which shape how teachers approach relationships and engage in collaborative practices. For some teachers, it was not until this year that they had the opportunity to reflect and consider these types of beliefs.

Collaboration beliefs. Perhaps one of the most significant beliefs expressed was that interprofessional collaboration is worthwhile for both students and staff. Some teachers, like Kendra (reading specialist), “knew that it was the right thing to do,” but had not figured out what effective collaboration between teachers could or should look like. Many saw it as a general construct. For example, Cynthia (third grade) expressed that developing a collaborative relationship allows teachers to more easily “get the job done,” referring to student success. Collaboration beliefs may also center around feasibility. For example Hillary (special educator) previously believed that while developing collaborative relationships was a great idea, it was “an unrealistic expectation.”

Service delivery beliefs. Teachers also develop beliefs about service delivery. Many described an overarching belief that more inclusive models, including co-teaching, are preferable. Maryann (special educator) had the conviction that working inside general education classrooms was preferable because she could support “all the kids, not just the kids with special needs.” Some participants specifically cited how college training shaped a belief in inclusion. Other teachers, such as Frances and Eve (ESOL), expressed a belief that pullout instruction is still preferable in a number of cases. The main reason cited for pullout instruction was that it could target students’ specific needs.

Self-Concept

In addition to experience and beliefs, relationships are also influenced by teachers' self-concept. This subtheme describes how teachers feel and think about themselves within the context of teaching and collaborating. Many of the participants exuded confidence in their teaching abilities or comfort in working with other colleagues. However, a number of participants described themselves or others as less confident about their teaching skills or ability to work with students with specific needs. Kendra (reading specialist) reflected that "a lot of time people feel inadequate" and this could impede their ability to trust other colleagues. Frances (ESOL) surmised that stronger teachers are more confident and can better handle collaborating, or "willing to give up some of the limelight" with another colleague.

Teachers may also blame themselves when a relationship or specific initiative does not go as smoothly as hoped. For example, when Jane (third grade) reflected on her planning time with Hillary (special education), she stated, "In all honesty I probably didn't follow-up and do the steps that I really needed to do for that." Brandy (special educator) also blamed herself for not being more explicit about establishing her role early on with general educators. These examples illustrate how some teachers may focus on their own perceived faults without also taking into account colleagues' role in a difficult relationship or dynamic.

Interpersonal Conditions and Strategies

Just as teachers come into relationships with a range of experiences and internal beliefs, certain interpersonal strategies and resulting conditions have an effect on the development of a relationship.

Interpersonal Strategies

The relational strategies that colleagues employ are empathy, flexibility, honesty, and sharing the load. These strategies help colleagues build their relationships, which can be negatively affected if one or more colleagues struggle with using these strategies.

Empathy. Being able to understand others' feelings and perspectives is particularly salient for colleagues who do not share the same professional role. Both the general educators and specialists continually referenced how they strove to understand their colleagues' demands and perspectives. For example, Hillary (special education) realized that "general educators have so much on their plates," which led her to help find materials for special education students. Alternately, Danielle (third grade) recognized that specialists are "going to multiple classrooms. I'm at one classroom. So I really try to accommodate them." Teachers may also employ empathy when there is a struggle to work together or connect. For example, Frances (ESOL) sensed that some general educators were reluctant to co-teach because they were uncomfortable with an "extra assignment." When teachers employ this strategy and it is not reciprocated, a relationship can suffer. Brandy (special education) explained:

You don't want to like put forth the effort to kind of work with someone and understand where they're coming from and do the best that you can do to make their life easier if you don't feel like they're willing to do the same for you.

This quote reflects how a relationship can stall in its development if only one partner is making the effort to understand another's perspective.

Flexibility. Some teachers naturally appear to have a flexible approach to teaching; that is, they are willing to change or compromise with others. This flexibility

stems from openness. Teachers come into relationships with a certain level of receptiveness to new ideas, instruction, and feedback from others. Some teachers, such as Danielle (third grade), appear to have a generally “open” approach to working with colleagues. Other participants become more open as they get to know a colleague. Daphne (fifth grade) explained that while colleagues are “two different people,” it is important to “take each other's ideas and either you have to be...you have to be open minded about it.” Many participants from this study reflected that some level of mutual flexibility is a prerequisite for developing an interprofessional relationship. Carmela felt that “to collaborate is to work together...and be flexible.” Flexibility can also be a strategy that you use and that grows over time with practice. Kendra (reading specialist) described how one of her partners worked to become more flexible about a certain type of reading intervention as the year progressed.

Control is the antithesis of flexibility in teacher relationships. Most participants reflected about their own or other colleague’s need for control. Jasmine (reading specialist) described a colleague who “really likes to do things her own way. And doesn't particularly like change.” She also reflected that sometimes she’s a “control freak” and is working to become more flexible. Understanding one’s own need for control can be a useful strategy. When teachers have difficulty “letting go” of control (Maryann, special education), their partners can feel unwelcomed and frustrated. Control is particularly salient for interprofessional relationships because of the power imbalance that often exists between general educators and specialists, which I will elaborate on in the following sections.

All of the specialist participants in my interviews mentioned at least one relationship where a general educator was unwilling to give up a certain level of control in the relationship. This control can take the tangible form of territoriality about space and scheduling. However, it can also take the form of being unwilling to try a new teaching strategy, a different way to assess students, or even a change in approaching a student with a disability.

Honesty. Honesty refers to open communication strategies that teachers use with one another. Asking for input helps to strengthen bonds and improve instruction. As Jane (third grade) stated, “You’ve got to be able to ask for what you need.” Cynthia (third grade) uses the beginning of the year to ask specialists whether they think students would benefit from pullout instruction, and she expects them to honestly communicate their opinions. This strategy is directly tied to comfort. All of the teachers described being able to engage in more honest communication as they became more comfortable with their partners. Eve (ESOL) found that as she became more confident in her abilities she was more likely to make a suggestion or ask for clarification about new content. Colleagues are not always going to agree with one another. Providing constructive criticism is another component of honest communication. It can initially feel like one is “shooting someone’s ideas down” right at the outset of a relationship, but over time teachers use this strategy to have more meaningful discussions about instruction.

Addressing frustrations openly was described as one way to get through conflicts, which are inevitable in any relationship. They can range from small disagreements about a lesson plan to a bigger conflict around how students are being treated. Confident teachers like Carmela (special education) explained, “I’m gonna tell ya...I try, I want to

address it.” This approach to directly addressing conflicts may be harder for other teachers.

Sharing the Load. Making efforts to support and help one another is another strategy that brings colleagues together. One way that teachers share the load is by explicitly asking what kind of support they can provide. Specialists make overtures, for example, by asking general educators if they can help out by providing resources or if a general educator needs a particular skill to be taught. Amy (ESOL) often would look through her materials to see if she could bring anything to the classroom that would add to a lesson, and Shawna (kindergarten) appreciated this help with materials. Over time, Brandy (special education) began approaching teachers more readily and asking them how she could support classroom objectives in her pullout groups. Cynthia (third grade) described the significance of sharing the classroom:

Your willingness to have them come in and have them teach your kids, and do a read aloud or something like that, and let your kids see them as a teacher in your room makes a big difference.

These examples illustrate how interprofessional colleagues share the load when they share materials, plan together, teach together, and coordinate their instruction. All of the participants in this study described how positive interprofessional relationships involves the sense that both partners share their students and are mutually responsible for them.

However, sharing the load can be difficult for interprofessional relationships because of the support role that specialists play in schools. Eve (ESOL) explained how in past relationships she felt expected to solely be of service to general educators, which made her feel unwelcome as an equal. Alternately, general educators did not express

feeling as though support was one-sided. Frances (ESOL) surmised that some general educators find it hard to share the load because this can also mean sharing the “spotlight.” The other specialists also expressed that territoriality in general education classrooms can impede mutual support.

Interpersonal Conditions

Interpersonal conditions begin to coalesce as teachers use relational strategies and get to know one another. These conditions include respect, trust, and compatibility.

Respect. When colleagues use interpersonal strategies to build a relationship they begin to develop respect. This can take the form of respecting a colleague’s expertise, role, or even teaching style. Brandy explained that if teachers employ empathy “there might be a little more respect for each other’s job and time.” Respect is also related to flexibility. Teachers often gave examples of themselves or partners giving feedback about a lesson or content material. When the other person is willing to consider a change or a new idea, then the other colleague feels that her opinion is respected. For interprofessional colleagues, specialists may pay particular attention to respecting a general educators’ classroom space and decision-making. As Kendra stated, “the bottom line is I feel like it’s their classroom.”

Respect has to go both ways, however, if a relationship is to flourish. Colleagues can sense when they are not respected. Frances (ESOL) described feeling like a “little helper” with certain general educators:

If the teacher does not respect you as having a valuable role because you don't have a classroom, you don't have a planning time, you don't have a common lunch because you don't have all the things that general educators have, you are sort of

an adjunct.

Maryann (special education) described how when she was a general educator she had a confrontational dynamic with a colleague because the other person “didn’t respect my position.” Thus, lack of respect operates as a barrier to closeness between colleagues.

Trust. Trust also develops as teachers engage in effective interpersonal strategies. Carmela succinctly described what trust looks like for her: “You know how to do your job and so do I.” Tangibly, this means that partners who trust one another might not need to micro-manage each other’s work. Danielle (third grade) didn’t feel as though she needed to a “play-by-play of every single thing,” Eve (ESOL) did with her pullout group because she trusted her. In plug-in models of service delivery, this trust can manifest itself in teachers agreeing to station teaching where they’re not constantly checking what the other person is doing. Specialists particularly feel trusted when they have the opportunity to work with students who are not on their caseloads. The participants in this study described how they were able to “develop a trust for each other’s teaching strategies and techniques that we use” (Hillary, special education). When this trust is lacking colleagues can feel unwelcomed or undervalued.

Compatibility. The word compatibility has been defined as “a state in which two things are able to exist or occur together without problems or conflict” (Oxford English Dictionary) Colleagues can be compatible in regard to teaching styles, beliefs, and personality. The teachers in this study focused on how inflexible teachers with rigid teaching styles were the most incompatible partners. This unwillingness was often tied to discomfort around co-teaching, as well. In this study the participants were not as focused on other potential markers of compatibility, such as level of experience or other

personality traits. A number of the partners in this study found that they were compatible as friends. For example, Kendra (reading specialist) and Daphne (fifth grade) have committed to weekly pizza nights to co-plan and hang out. While being compatible as friends can deepen a relationship, it is not a prerequisite for developing a positive professional relationship. Carmela (special education) was adamant that it's possible without becoming "best friends" if partners are mutually committed to students and professional growth.

External Conditions

While intrapersonal and interpersonal factors play a significant role in collaboration, teacher relationships always develop within a larger context. *External Conditions* refers to school-level systems and supports that directly influence interprofessional relationships. *School-level Structures* describes how the school environment provides expectations, structures, and opportunities that interact to promote and inhibit interprofessional partnerships. *Administrative Support* describes how school administration plays an integral role in facilitating these relationships.

School-Level Structures

Wood Hills, similar to many elementary schools, runs on a tight schedule and is bombarded with various demands. A number of structures built into the school's daily rhythm have an impact on teachers' interprofessional relationships.

Schedules. Teachers' schedules often seem like a game of Tetris, one in which time and space is often in short supply. In order for general educators to develop and maintain relationships with other school professionals, well-coordinated schedules are one structural piece of the puzzle. Every participant spoke about their schedules and

planning time, and many carved out common planning time on a weekly or bi-weekly basis. The level of formality of this planning, however, is up to colleagues to decide. Scheduling obstacles often arise and specialists can struggle to pull groups if a general educator changes instructional times. When colleagues do not have coordinated planning periods they have to become creative or meet before/after school. General educators who have more than two specialists working with their students struggle the most with scheduling planning time. Specialists also struggle with “finding balance” since they are usually assigned more than one grade. Jasmine (reading specialist) often found she “neglected one grade more than I wanted to than the other grades.” How students are grouped for instruction within a grade is also relevant. Specialists assigned a grade level are spread thin when their caseload of students is placed in multiple general education classrooms. Hence, depth of collaboration is tied to specialists’ spread within and across grades.

School Culture. School culture can be a nebulous term. While coding I began to discover that participants brought up common “unwritten rules” in their school. The codes that fall under the theme of school culture are non-exhaustive and drawn only from participants’ perspectives. It is important to consider that expectations and “unwritten rules” are not set in stone; a school’s culture can and usually does change over time. First, there are overarching messages that teachers receive about collaboration and service delivery models. At Wood Hills there is a palpable expectation that teachers should work to align their content and objectives, and that they should co-teach when feasible.

Danielle (third grade) compared her two schools:

They didn't really kind of encourage you to build that relationship, whereas at

Wood Hills it's kind of expected of you to build this relationship with your collaborators as – same thing with your team.”

School culture also has an impact on roles. Specialists have a supportive role in relation to general education, even though they also have their own goals and instruction. Tied to this expectation are role hierarchies, another aspect of Wood Hills’ culture. Grade teams are often a strong organizational force at school; they meet regularly and function as semi-autonomous in a number of instructional decisions. Specialists who become members of a grade level team can receive valuable resources and information.

Tied to grade teams’ strength is the role of general educators. According to Frances (ESOL), “General educators rule in our school. They are the queens.” Adele, the principal, explained the power that general educators hold: “Sometimes general education is kind of considered the dominant culture in the school.” If one type of educator in a school is granted more power, a power hierarchy emerges. In the case of Wood Hills some tangible examples are that specialists may not have priority for space or may feel uncomfortable speaking up in interprofessional relationships. This discomfort will be further explored under the theme Interpersonal Conditions and Strategies.

Resources. Accessing appropriate instructional materials is key to instructional alignment. The teachers at Wood Hills had a variety of approaches to ensuring that they have the appropriate and right amount of resources. Many pairs used the same or matched materials. At Wood Hills the new “book closet” helps because “everyone knows what resources we have, it makes it easy to collaborate because you know what's available” (Jasmine, reading specialist). A guided reading program was also introduced to teachers.

Conversely, a lack of resources can act as a barrier to effective collaboration. The

other specialists, both special educators and ESOL teachers, did not report on having the same breadth of materials they could share with general educators. Sometimes this was due to the great difference in students' learning needs. Time was also a factor; it can take a lot of time planning and developing an individualized homework assignment. Time that could have been spent on instructional delivery discussions or lesson planning was sometimes taken up by simply trying to amass the right materials.

Instructional Pressures. Teachers also face a variety of instructional pressures that they must balance when collaborating. This year most schools rolled out their first year using Common Core standards. Staff had to quickly learn new approaches to instruction and assessment. General educators are on the line for ensuring that new material and strategies are covered within enough time. This quick pace can conflict with specialists' goals to make sure students are mastering new concepts. Specialists must balance Common Core instruction with goals unique to their students. While "it's not necessarily a separate curriculum" (Adele), ELL students need to master skills that are not overtly part of the general education curriculum. Hence, ESOL teachers must ensure they target a student's goals while also aligning instruction to the classroom. Cynthia reflected, "I know they kind of have their curriculum and we have ours, and it doesn't always align with what the kids need for their ESL instruction." Special educators have unique legally binding demands that relate to students' IEPs. For example, instruction must target specified goals, service delivery may be required to occur outside of general education, and specific student data must be collected. This can be hard to manage. Jane and Hillary, for example, worked to better match students' IEP goals with classroom

content. When any general educator and a specialist share a student, they must consider each other's different instructional pressures.

Service Delivery. As previously mentioned in the section on school culture, all teachers perceived an expectation for more plug-in and co-teaching. Service delivery choices had an impact on teachers' relationships. When specialists provide pullout services, there is a greater need for colleagues to keep each other informed about what's happening with their respective instruction. They also have to keep each other informed about students' progress and behavior. In regard to decision-making, it was common for specialists to make more unilateral instructional decisions. Pullout was used for a number of reasons. It can reduce distractions for students and target specific skills that may not be feasible to focus on in a classroom environment. It also allows students to receive a "double dose" of content or a new strategy. However, pullout groups can also create confusion in students when instruction is not aligned. Jasmine (reading specialist) explained that with one second grade teacher "I knew there was a disconnect. She's telling the kids one thing and I'm telling them something else."

Colleagues face different issues when specialists come into the general education classroom. Teachers tended to spend more time in formalized planning sessions talking about content, lesson plans, and instructional strategies. Cynthia (third grade) explained, "And you actually have to, you have to work together to collaborate because you're all in one room." Teachers who specifically co-teach will usually plan in order to create lessons and decide instructional responsibilities. Others may take a more laissez-faire approach, and determine how they'll teach on the spot.

Administrative Support

School leadership plays an integral role in fostering a collaborative school culture. The following subthemes arose under Administrative Support: Commitment, Communication, Power, Resources, and Restructuring. These subthemes describe the varied ways that administration facilitates teacher collaboration. These themes emerged by integrating coding from both the teachers' interviews and the principal's interview.

Commitment. Commitment refers to administration's dedication to professional collaboration. Adele (Principal), explained:

If you're talking about students, you're at one level – I mean, the bottom line is student achievement, but you're also talking about teacher growth. You're talking about teacher relationships.

This quote highlights Adele's belief that interprofessional collaboration benefits both students and teachers. Teacher participants also perceived this commitment: "I think they have embraced the whole collaborative spirit at all levels, which is important. It's not just for instruction" (Kendra, reading specialist). Adele's beliefs began to coalesce before she began working at Wood Hills and I found that this commitment grew over the course of the school year as Adele participated in the workshops, actively reflected, and saw positive changes.

One dimension of this commitment is valuing staff. Throughout her interview Adele expressed appreciation: "I feel we have it within the staff. It's just kind of cultivating that." One way administration can specifically promote interprofessional collaboration is to embrace specialties outside of general education. In this case study, Adele, a former general educator, recognized the unique roles of specialists: "I see the

value of each one of them.” These types of explicit statements can set the tone for a school, letting staff know that they are all valued.

The other side of commitment is its shadow, hesitation. Adele remarked, “I was really trepidatious at the beginning.” She elaborated on some of her fears:

It's overwhelming to think about how to bring this to the whole staff in a way that it becomes a little bit more embedded in the culture, because we have a big staff. Adele pushed through this initial hesitation and was willing to work with us for a year in developing these workshops. Reflecting on the past year, she stated, “Darn, it was hard to make that happen, but it was worth it.”

Trust. The theme of trust illustrates how commitment to interprofessional collaboration is manifested. One way that administrators can demonstrate their trust of staff is through their decision-making styles. School leaders have a choice in how they wield their own power and how they establish power dynamics among staff. Adele often expressed a desire for colleagues to make autonomous decisions about relationships and instruction, but said she also wanted to have a certain level of influence and input. She explained, “there's always a balance for me” and that what she really wanted to provide was “guidance.” Adele and the assistant principal encouraged teachers to come to them with ideas or solutions. Maryann reflected that trust was a key component of how decision-making works:

They trust us to do and make the right decisions and work with the kids in however we need to.

Adele also stated that she works to both “trust and guide” her staff.

Openness to new ways of working with staff and students is one way that administration demonstrates this trust. Cynthia (third grade) explained, “The current administration seems to be willing to support anything that you think would be a benefit to the kids.” Adele learned over the course of the year that commitment to alignment and student progress, rather than a specific service delivery model, was key. This openness is directly related to the freedom that many teachers perceived in making instructional decisions throughout the year. Adele’s main concern was whether colleagues were best serving students’ needs.

Administrators can also establish power hierarchies between teachers. In our project Adele provided professional development that required specialists to invite general educators to the workshops. Both teachers and Adele explained that general educators often “rule the school,” and so this administrative decision switched up some of the entrenched power hierarchy. Adele explicitly stated that she made this decision for the workshops on purpose to address this issue of power.

Communication. Administrators cannot make informed decisions and provide appropriate resources without engaging in constant communication with staff. Both the principal and staff indicated that “being in the loop” about instruction and surrounding issues was a mark of knowledgeable administrator. Staff gave examples of administrators from other schools, for example, who were not interested or involved at the ground level of instructional practices and colleague dynamics. On the other hand, the administration at Wood Hills was often described as being “aware.” One way that Adele and the assistant principal stay in the loop is by attending meetings, such as certain grade level or special education team meetings.

Adele indicated that she often asked questions and made a point to listen to staff. Carmela (special education) explained that when conflicts have arisen between staff, “They wanna know, like, what have you done. I mean, you’re adults.” She went on to explain that the administrators at Wood Hills encourage teachers to problem-solve and were willing to listen first. When Kendra (reading specialist) and Daphne (fifth grade) chose another approach to supporting below grade level readers, Adele replied, “Do you think it’s a good thing? What are you doing? Talk to me about why.” Kendra explained:

I feel free to just zip in to (Adele) and be like, "Hey, you got a minute?" "Yes, come on in." That's how it is here. That's not how it is in all schools.

This quote highlights how many teachers feel comfortable communicating openly with the principal.

Another component of communication is explicit verbal support. Adele described how informal observations are part of her routine: “When you’re doing walkthroughs, you’re letting teachers know when you see good.” Every teacher participant indicated that they were verbally encouraged by administration to engage in interprofessional collaboration.

Resources. While administrators’ commitment and communication helps to mold school culture, these types of support fall short without the provision of tangible resources. At Wood Hills the school year is filled with multiple projects, activities, and other initiatives that all take up time and energy. When administrators ensure that common planning time between general educators and specialists is built into the schedule, teachers receive the message that this time is valued. In every interview each teacher mentioned how time for planning was a measure of administrative support.

Additionally, administration provided funding for substitutes so that planning and data meetings could take place during the school day. Danielle (third grade) stated, “They'll find something and give us a sub so we have time to meet, so I think that's amazing.” Another way that administration promotes alignment and collaborative practices is by providing the funding for materials. For example, Adele helped secure funding for a new reading kit that helped the reading specialists work more closely with general educators. Professional development is also a resource that can have long-lasting effects. Outside of this project, Wood Hills continually provides professional development in a variety of areas. Brandy (special educator) explained that professional development activities often involve “teachers who are co-teaching together.” This quote illustrates how administrators’ choices in professional development sends yet another signal to staff about their collaboration beliefs.

Restructuring. Before the 2013-2014 school year, administration had already enacted some school wide changes that related to the theme of collaboration. Adele explained that making grade-level teams as “bases” meant that a special educator, reading specialist, and an ESOL teacher are always connected to at least one grade-level team. As part of these teams they may attend the weekly grade level meetings, but they also engage in long-range planning with the general educators. Coupled with this structure, Adele also found that staff was on board with monthly student data meetings that she developed. The section on professional development will more fully describe changes that occurred as a result of the workshops. However, it is important to note that changes, such a new process for creating a Master Schedule, had to be created and supported by the administrators.

Overall, Adele and the assistant principal demonstrated not only a deepening commitment to interprofessional collaboration, but also reflected leadership styles that promote a collaborative spirit. Finally, they provided time, resources, and structural changes that worked together to create a more collaborative environment.

Cultivating the Relationship

In the previous sections I described how intrapersonal, interpersonal, and external conditions and strategies work in concert to create arable or unfertile “soil” for interprofessional relationships. In this next section I unpack *Cultivating the Relationship*, the core category that emerged from the interviews. This theme encompasses the process of interprofessional colleagues initiating (Planting the Seeds), growing (Discovery, Constructing Partnership, Reflection, Alignment), and deepening (Propagating) their collaborative practices.

Planting the Seeds

Each new interprofessional partnership has its own beginning, which I have entitled *Planting the Seeds*. Partnerships are initiated through requests, expectations, and negotiating service delivery. Embarking on a new relationship elicits different thoughts and feelings. I initially conceived of this theme as a “one-time” process. However, it became clear that even teachers who have shared students before can still engage in this process. For example, Maryann (special education) and Daphne (fifth grade) transitioned from being fellow general educators to being inter-professional colleagues. These examples speak to teachers’ changing assignments over time (i.e. changing grades, changing specialties).

Requests and Expectations. The majority of interprofessional relationships begin through an administrative request. At Wood Hills the administration is often “looking at personalities of people working together” so “that there is a teacher match and a colleague match for the benefit of those – of the students” (Adele). Other teachers may specifically request to work together. Although the administration does not overtly mandate *how* specialists and general educators work together, administration can create expectations. In this case study the administration expects that co-teaching at least be considered. Some teachers may resent co-teaching expectations: “It's kind of artificial. There may not be the need” (Frances, ESOL). The teachers in this school explained that a co-teaching relationship has to be “intentional” and based on what students need.

Negotiating service delivery. While all specialists are naturally matched with their assigned students' general educators, a number of teachers have sought out co-teaching or other types of service delivery that require a more collaborative partnership. Usually teachers speak at the beginning of the year to figure out their general plan for working together. For example, Kendra (reading specialist) approached Daphne (fifth grade): "Let's co-teach in the beginning of the year and then let's just kind of go from there." Specialists may “sell” plug-in services as a way to not only support students, but to also support general educators. For other partnerships, general educators may take the lead in establishing what the year will look like. For example, Hillary (special educator) experienced a new type of relationship with Jane, who extended the offer to co-teach. Due to changing schedules and student needs, co-teaching attempts might not come to fruition or teachers might start later in the year. Hence, there often is not a specific demarcation of how or when teachers begin to embark on a more intensive partnership.

Feelings. Participants described a number of emotions related to starting a new partnership with a colleague. Some participants described excitement whereas other participants also admitted hesitation and worry. Jasmine (reading) approached the fourth grade about co-teaching but admitted, “I had never done it before and had apprehensions.” A number of specialists perceived that general educators are reluctant to work with students with higher needs “because they aren’t really given a choice in the matter” and therefore feel, “I’m doing it because I have to because it’s going to look bad if I don’t” (Brandy, special educator).

Growth

The subthemes within Growth interact in a cyclical manner and are not necessarily linear. *Discovery* describes the experience of getting to know a colleague and instructional content. *Constructing Partnership* refers to the communication, teaching, and other activities that teachers engage in together. Colleagues also *Reflect* on what does and does not work for the purpose of improving relationships and instructional practices. A fourth subtheme, *Alignment*, describes the point at which two teachers have achieved a seamless dimension to their relationship. Partners may come in and out of this state as relationships shift and school needs change.

Discovery. Teachers who share instruction of the same students go through the process of Discovery, which refers to learning about colleagues and the curriculum. Effective partners continue to discover throughout the year.

Learning About Colleagues. Learning colleagues’ “style” is an essential component of Discovery. At the outset of a relationship it is important that colleagues “feel each other out, that way to make sure that was something we would be able to do”

(Jasmine, reading specialist). “Feeling each other out” may refer to teaching styles, comfort with particular students and content, and overall experience with teaching. This information helps colleagues determine what level of support their partner may need. New specialists are tasked with a great deal of learning because they have to “realize different teaching styles among all the general educators” (Hillary, special educator). There are also more administrative aspects of getting to know a colleague, such as email versus in-person communication preferences. As teachers get to know each other, this learning is part of the shift in relationships. According to Frances, as the school year progressed she became “in tune with knowing how (Amanda) teaches.” Teachers such as Carmela (special educator) who are clear and confident about their own agenda are more likely to initiate a discussion. While many teachers start out at the beginning of the year discussing goals and objectives, they also get to know each other through informally observing their peers. Hence, co-teaching and other plug-in models allow colleagues a more in-depth understanding of the other person’s “style.” When colleagues do not take the time to get to know one another it can hinder the relationship. Maryann (special educator) explained:

Maybe someone who didn’t really know me or my beliefs, or (how) I like to work it in the classroom, I found it challenging to...I very much felt like I had my kids. Whenever I was in there it was like, “You work with them.”

This quote also speaks to learning about roles, another dimension to *Discovery*. Jane (third grade) explained that it was important to “clarify what our roles were, what I am gonna cover, what are you gonna cover, and just clarify what things are gonna look like.”

Clarification is a way to mitigate potential conflicts. Inter-professional colleagues may have to revisit their initial negotiation of service delivery as the year proceeds.

In addition to getting to know a colleague as a professional, colleagues also learn about their partners' personalities. A number of participants explained that getting to know colleagues outside of their teacher roles was beneficial to the relationship. For example, Danielle (third grade) was initially intimidated by Jasmine (reading specialist). Once they hung out a few times outside of school, Danielle felt that it was "easier for me to give her my ideas and collaborate more on a deeper level."

Learning Content. Another component of *Discovery* is learning content. This year, Common Core was on most teachers' minds during their interviews. Jasmine (reading specialist) succinctly explained that this year was "a learning curve for us." In addition to learning Common Core content and instructional techniques, specialists also referred to learning grade level curriculum. Amy (ESOL teacher) told Shawna (kindergarten) at the end of the year, "I'm just starting to understand the kindergarten curriculum." Learning grade level content is essential for specialists, because "we don't always know that curriculum and that can be really challenging because you're depending on the general educator to give you that information and you can't really do your job the best you can without it" (Maryann, special educator). General educators do not undergo a parallel process as compared with specialists. However, partnerships appear stronger when general educators take the time to discover unique aspects of their colleagues' work. For example, Danielle (third grade) took the time to learn more about the areas of learning ESOL teachers are tasked with instructing.

Constructing Partnership. Perhaps the most visible component of Cultivating Collaboration is Constructing Partnership, which refers to activities that teachers engage in together. It is a broad theme in that it encompasses varied service delivery models. For example, teachers construct their partnerships through both co-teaching and coordination of pullout services.

Regardless of service delivery, every partner referred to disseminating information about instruction, materials, and students. This can take place in person through planning periods or “on the fly.” It can also take place through online communication (e.g., Google Docs). General educators provide information about classroom objectives, content, and materials. This information is essential for specialists to know so that they can effectively plan, especially if they are going to provide pullout instruction. Alternately, specialists fill general educators in on what materials and objectives they’re working on with students. All types of teachers disseminate information about student progress, which can be in the form of informal data (e.g., how a student fared with a lesson) or assessment data. Disseminating information allows colleagues to develop a shared vision of instruction and student progress.

Teachers further construct, or build, their partnerships through varied types of sharing. The most basic form of sharing that involves the least amount of interpersonal strategies is exchanging materials. For example, Shawna (kindergarten) would offer to let Amy use one of her games she thought the ELL students would like. While sharing materials may seem small, it can be very helpful when teachers are struggling to find appropriate resources for students. Sharing one’s expertise is a significant way for interprofessional colleagues to construct their partnerships. This type of sharing is more

about strategies and pedagogy. When Eve (ESOL) plugged in for Danielle's (third grade) math class, she realized, "She has her expertise, but then I can bring in the ESOL piece." When partners share their expertise their relationships improve. Eve explained that she felt welcomed: "She sees the value in what I'm bringing and appreciates it." Kendra (reading specialist) found that general educators have ideas about lessons that she would not have created on her own:

Just strategies and ideas that I just would not have done, I'm doing, and I love it.

It's pushed me into a realm that I love.

In the case of interprofessional collaboration, sharing is often motivated by the desire to create instruction that is appropriate for students. For example, Hillary (special education) showed Jane (third grade) how to make modifications to lesson plans so that they were at instructional level for her students. Sometimes this sharing takes place during planning time; Jasmine (reading specialist) taught Cynthia (third grade) a variety of reading instruction strategies during their co-planning. At other times teachers may more informally share their expertise by modeling on the spot, such as when Frances (ESOL) would model how to make a lesson less frustrating for the ELL students.

As teachers share their expertise they begin to enter a space where roles become more flexible. Sharing instruction is a significant way for colleagues to construct a stronger relationship. Every participant in this study, for example, described how specialists took on more teaching responsibilities for students who were not even explicitly on their caseload. This is particularly true for teachers who chose a co-teaching model. For those teachers who co-taught it was often a rotation-teaching model. For

example, Shawna (kindergarten) would teach a new math concept while Amy (ESOL) would review the previous lesson. Relationship growth is tied to role fluidity:

The lines were blurred, and it wasn't clear which one of us was the general educator or the special educator (Hillary, special education).

Teachers also construct their partnerships through role sharing activities that are not co-teaching. For example, some partners described how they both would grade certain assessments or both provide input to create report cards. This issue is particularly relevant because it can be hard to determine a grade for a student who receives instruction from more than one teacher. In this case study I also discovered that the reading specialists became the official teacher of record for a few students who were struggling significantly with reading. This type of role switch is not common, but the example represents a very flexible approach to instruction.

Spending time together outside of the classroom is another activity that some teachers engage in to further build their relationship. Danielle (third grade) and Jasmine (reading specialist), for example, found that they had more in common as peers:

Because of that open window it's so much easier for us in school to kind of click more. And I swear to God, those happy hours were like the changing moment.

While some teachers found that developing a friendship outside of their work benefited their relationship, just as many in this study either did not engage in these kinds of activities or find them necessary for building their partnerships. As was previously discussed, compatibility around teaching styles (e.g. flexibility) is more important than compatibility for friendship.

Reflection. As interprofessional colleagues work to develop a relationship and effectively instruct shared students, they go through a continual reflective process. Reflecting allows these colleagues to consider what more they need to learn (Discovery) and to improve their work (Constructing Partnership). Teachers committed to growth reflect not only on instruction and student progress, but also on their relationships.

One way that colleagues improve student outcomes is by reflecting on their instruction and making changes as needed. Common planning time is one avenue where colleagues can reflect on student progress in order to determine whether instruction is appropriate for students and what future instruction may look like. For example, Danielle (third grade) and Jasmine (reading specialist) collect data after a lesson and then “see who made the progress and who did not.” Reflection during co-planning helps these teachers make instructional decisions about pace, focus, or content modification. For example, some partners described how they realized that they needed to spend more time on a new concept after reflecting on a lesson. Reflection can also take place in the midst of teaching or informally during the school day. Daphne (fifth grade) expressed, “How do you actually teach and differentiate and change your instruction if you don't have those conversations on the spot like that?” She found that these informal conversations happen continually: “If we don't have those conversations with each other we'd be teaching something that the kids aren't ready for.” Colleagues also employ reflection to improve their relationships. For example, Jane (third grade) experienced low confidence about her teaching abilities. Hillary (special education) would periodically check-in with her partner and provide constructive, yet empowering feedback. In future sections of this

chapter I will explore how reflection about roles and relationships occurs during professional development.

Teachers' engagement in reflective work usually increased as the school year progressed, especially if this was the first year that two colleagues shared instruction of the same students. This is for two reasons. First, colleagues need time to see what is and is not working. Many participants explained that the first half of the year was more experimental in that they were figuring out what worked for them as professionals and what kind of instruction best served students. Secondly, colleagues appeared to reflect more as they became more comfortable with each other. Hence, for those colleagues who had already worked together before or who were friendly outside of the school, they were more likely to actively reflect at the outset of the school year.

Alignment. The fourth subtheme of *Growth* is *Alignment*. As I spoke with teachers and with the principal I discovered that they sometimes referred to a more “seamless” dimension to interprofessional work. Adele (Principal) referenced one pair of teachers by stating, “And you can see where one starts and one continued and how it's overlapping, and they're not in the same room.” This kind of seamlessness does not happen overnight. Maryann (special education) explained, “You know after you work with somebody for so long you just kind of get the flow of it.” Other teachers referenced being able to just look at a partner “know what to do and how to do it” (Carmela, special education).

These descriptions represent highly aligned work in regard to content, instruction, and beliefs. This is a space that teachers may take a long time to achieve; they may need to cycle through *Discovery*, *Constructing Partnership*, and *Reflection* a few times to

experience such “flow.” For example, Jane (third grade) and Hillary were beginning to “bounce off of each other” towards the end of their first year working together. The way that teachers described this dimension to relationships made it seem as though *Alignment* can have different levels of depth. For example, a pair might first achieve alignment of content materials, but then they might also start to align their objectives and instructional strategies more intentionally over time. Hence, *Alignment* is not necessarily an end point. Colleagues may start to experience this alignment of practices at different times in their relationship. External forces, such as even having the same materials, can push a relationship into this level of collaboration. Teachers who describe this dimension to their relationship describe their partnerships as having a high degree of respect, trust, and compatibility.

Propagating Collaboration

A collaborative school culture grows through the process of *Propagating Collaboration*, which refers to increased collaboration both individually and systemically. When colleagues experience success with each other they may want to deepen these relationships and also start working closely with other teachers. Some teachers, such as Danielle (third grade) and Eve (ESOL) have made an overt effort to work together again. Other teachers, such as Frances (ESOL) expressed positivity and hope about future co-teaching with general educators. The reading specialists both decided to approach entire grade levels about having a more aligned approach to reading instruction. These examples illustrate how relationships that were supported this year in the project have given the participants hope and the drive to continue or create new relationships.

Propagating Collaboration also encompasses how staff “spread the message” to other colleagues. According to Adele, teachers look to Kendra and Daphne. She stated, “They're kind of my model.” Daphne explained how Kendra took what they learned together and approached other colleagues, “I just feel that our, how we co-teach, and she's taken our model and used it with a lot of other teachers.” This year Adele was not able to involve all instructional staff in the collaboration project due to scheduling and funding (we needed to provide substitutes for general educators during each workshop). However, her hope is to “spread the wealth to everybody eventually.” The message, however, has already spread because “people wanted to be involved in it, too, because they – it almost became a coveted thing to do.” More systemic *Propagating* can also occur. In Wood Hills’ case, for example, the reading specialists and ESOL teachers began to meet at the end of the year for the first time and discuss how they could best coordinate their interventions.

Creating Fertile Ground: Professional Development

Professional development can create a more fertile ground for interprofessional relationships to grow. In the case of Wood Hills I discovered a school that was already open in a variety of ways to interprofessional collaboration. However, I found that the professional development worked to enhance what was already in place and empower teachers to engage in internal and behavioral changes. The subthemes that emerged from the main category of *Professional Development* include *Common Ground*, *Knowledge*, and *Creation*. Whereas the first two subthemes relate to changes that take place within a professional development experience, *Creation* encompasses the tangible changes that occur as a result of professional development.

Common Ground

In this project we brought together colleagues in different professional roles with various levels of experience. One major benefit they discovered was having time and space to establish common ground. In this case, the common ground was a commitment to student success *and* collaborative work. This was one of Adele's (Principal) goals coming into the project: "I believe that we can all - There's enough commonality for better collaboration." She observed that the teachers asked larger questions of themselves and each other, "How are we making a difference?" The teachers reflected on the workshops' overall benefit. Carmela (special education) explained that the first workshop "set the foundation for just my thought process" and Eve (ESOL) stated, "These workshops highlighted the importance of collaboration, that this is something that we're headed towards." Daphne (fifth grade) elaborated:

I think the biggest thing was getting all of us together. Having all of us be in the same room having these conversations and realizing that we're all sharing students. You know all, they're being pulled in 20 different directions and we're – the one thing we have in common is that we share that kid.

Participants reflected that the workshops afforded them time to look at the big picture of what they were doing school-wide to provide instruction to so many students. It is through this kind of reflection that teachers can reaffirm beliefs or generate new ideas about interprofessional collaboration. Additionally, Wood Hills is a busy school, and making these workshops fit into the year's schedule was a sign of administrative commitment.

Building Relationships. The participants established common ground through activities that focused on getting to know one another. The workshops offered participants an opportunity to learn about roles and colleagues in ways they might not have done otherwise. This was particularly true for dyads new to working together. For example, Danielle (third grade) and Eve (ESOL) actively used the workshops to build their connection. Danielle learned about the extra classes Eve was taking and the two discussed Eve’s fears about plugging in for mathematics. A number of teachers described how the workshops made them more open to collaborating with colleagues. For example, Frances (ESOL) explained that she felt more comfortable plugging into her partner’s classroom “because I had done this workshop. It was all fresh in my mind.”

Reflection is an important component of cultivating relationships. For teachers who already felt more confident about their collaborative work, the workshops provided them a space to reflect and affirm their work. Kendra (reading specialist) and Daphne (fifth grade) reflected with other participants in the workshops about what made their partnership work so well. Other teachers used the workshops as a space to be reflective of their emerging relationships. Shawna (Kindergarten) explained:

Afterwards we’re talking like, “Oh yeah, we definitely do that already,” or like, “Yeah we can start doing that, and if we work together next year, we could definitely start doing this.” So it gave us a lot of ideas with how we would work together.

I learned that the open-ended planning time we carved out for the end of each workshop was highly valued as a time for reflection. Colleagues not only reflected about instruction

and students, but also about their developing relationship. For example, teachers would take more time to use the communication tools we provided at each workshop.

Knowledge

Teachers also gained knowledge about communication techniques, professional roles, relationships, and models of collaboration and alignment. This new knowledge drove changes in beliefs and behaviors throughout the year. For some teachers it reified the work they were already doing and gave them confidence to expand or tweak their collaborative work.

Communication Techniques. Many participants referenced how the activities from the workshops provided a new way to approach communication. For example, Shawna (Kindergarten) explained: “I think it might be kind of taking some of those communication strategies maybe, I don’t want to say more formal, be more formal about it, but maybe being more intentional with it.” Maryann (special education) explained that having an outline of questions made it easier to communicate with general educators. Using materials from a workshop can be useful if it helps bridge what might have been a more awkward approach to beginning-of-the-year communication. Whereas some teachers referenced the aforementioned communication activities we introduced in the workshops, other teachers focused on the broader focus of regular communication. Nearly every participant referred to learning in the workshops how interprofessional collaboration is benefited by some kind of shared planning time. Jane (third grade) also learned that having some kind of agenda for a weekly planning meeting could make communication more efficient. Other teachers, such as Carmela (special education), felt

validated by their commitment to communicating about preferences early on in a relationship.

Relationships. All participants found learning about the importance and natural development of relationships highly salient. Jasmine (reading specialist) reflected that this year she felt that she finally learned how integral relationship building was for her professional role. Many found the marriage and dating metaphor from the second workshop especially useful for understanding how relationships take time to develop and evolve. As Brandy (special education) participated in the workshops, she began to realize that “everybody kind of has this stage where they’re a little, you know, maybe uneasy or don’t really know you know...like we’re kind of just dating.” Learning about this natural development made her more comfortable getting to know Cynthia (third grade) and less judgmental of herself as a first year teacher. Kendra (reading specialist) reflected that the workshops normalized the development of her relationships:

I think it was that we were normal.... That video was like, "Oh my Gosh, Okay, we're normal" because I wasn't sure whether – like the little growing pains and all those kinds of things was our deficit, that we just weren't very good at this.

Both veteran and new teachers found learning about relationships beneficial.

Roles. All participants referenced how the workshops framed their thoughts about professional roles. They spoke about learning about their other colleagues’ duties and responsibilities as instructors and staff members. While learning about colleagues’ unique demands and specific areas of expertise, they also learned how to clarify and advocate for their roles. Adele (Principal) observed that in the workshops teachers explored roles by “talking about what's important and, you know, making some agreements.” For example,

Carmela (special education) and Cynthia (third grade) realized how professional roles could be more fluid than they were previously accustomed. Brandy (special education), Cynthia's partner, focused on how understanding roles helped her better understand her colleagues:

I feel like I better understand their position...things that go on in the classroom and pullout, how that can be stressful. And all that was based off our collaboration meetings.

For many, this was the first time they had a chance to openly learn and speak about this topic.

Instructional Models. The other domain of knowledge that participants referred to was instructional models. Before the workshops, most teachers had a more limited sense of what interprofessional collaboration could and “should” look like. For example, many initially thought the administration expected co-teaching as the gold standard for interprofessional collaboration. However, we stressed in the workshops the importance of colleagues tailoring instruction that best served student and teacher needs. We also stressed that a range of activities can constitute collaborative practice (*Levels of Teacher Interactions*). Hence, a pullout model could still be considered highly collaborative if two teachers planned, communicated, and focused on instructional alignment. Adele (Principal) felt that this was a key turning point in her own understanding of interprofessional collaboration. Referring to Daphne (fifth grade) and Kendra's (reading specialist) current model, she stated: “But they've got it so aligned it doesn't matter where you are, even if you're on the roof, you know.” Some teachers came into the workshops with a strong belief in pullout models; Frances had many fears about plug-in instruction.

However, when we looked at student data in the second workshop and reflected on student learning objectives (SLOs), she, along with the other participants, realized that alignment (content and instructional practices) had more of an impact than whether services were pullout or plug-in.

Creation

Throughout the year teachers engaged in *Creation*, the application of their newfound *Knowledge* and *Common Ground*. I found that both school-wide and individual forms of *Creation* took root. First, every dyad in the workshop engaged in or attempted to engage in more regular co-planning. Some teachers, such as Jane (third grade) and Hillary (special education) took this one step further and developed their own template for their common planning period. Every participant also made more of an effort to increase instructional alignment, which occurred in a variety of ways: using the same or parallel resources and materials, increasing time and level of co-planning, and communicating more frequently about student progress and strategies. The participants all described an increase in co-teaching and/or plug-in services as the year progressed. Interpersonally, they also described deeper understanding of colleagues' roles, greater comfort sharing roles, and increases in interpersonal strategies, such as openness and flexibility. For example, Brandy (special education) was empowered to approach general educators about plugging in for instruction. Some of the dyads, such as Danielle (third grade) and Jasmine (reading) explained that they took more time to get to know one another personally. Cynthia (third grade) used the workshops to bring all the specialists working in her classroom together in order to discuss a more efficient way to schedule intervention groups.

School-wide forms of *Creation* also came to fruition over the course of the year. These changes focused on improving external and interpersonal conditions. The newly formed Master Schedule was developed so that both specialists and general educators can provide input about intervention groups for the following school year. It was created for a variety of reasons: ensuring better instructional alignment for students, facilitating greater consolidation of intervention groups within grades, reducing general educators feeling overwhelmed by too many specialists servicing their classes, and creating best relational matches between colleagues. The entire school also began to take more advantage of their Google Docs, which provides a better flow of information and materials between colleagues. Finally, by the end of the workshops the participants decided that they wanted to share what they learned this year and create a “Toolkit” of the materials from the workshop. For example, they wanted to be able to use the Forging Collaborative Relationships tool (Appendix B) and develop a common language around Levels of Teacher Interactions (Jorisch, 2013).

Fruits of Collaboration

As interprofessional colleagues develop their relationships with the support of administration and professional they find that collaboration bears “fruits” for both students and teachers. Alternately, when teachers do not communicate well or coordinate services, students and teachers alike miss out on key learning experiences.

Benefits to Students

It is important to first note that due to this study’s data collection limitation, the only information I have about students is from teacher reports. Some student data was informally shared with me, but I am not able to specifically refer to it. Throughout this

study we focused on instructional alignment as one of the main purposes for engaging in collaborative work. The consensus between participants was that aligned content and instruction (e.g., complementary strategies, similar objectives) is an important result of effective communication between colleagues. A word that came up in many interviews was “intentional.” Instead of just focusing on service delivery models, the teachers learned throughout this year that what was most important was making instructional decisions that fit students’ needs. Kendra (reading specialist) explained:

I think that students that need intensive intervention need that reading specialist time and that classroom time. They need both. It needs to be aligned and it needs to be together.

When alignment is the end goal, then teachers can flexibly decide what their instruction will look like. Teachers cited how collaborative work benefited students because they received additional review, new ways to learn a skill, and were less overwhelmed.

Carmela (special education) saw that in Anjali’s (first grade) class her students became more confident. All of the participants in this study mentioned how aligning materials greatly benefited students. Jasmine (reading specialist) explained that giving a below grade level reader two different texts to read “would make anyone’s head spin.”

Danielle (third grade) found that she was using different strategies and ideas that she learned from specialists, even with general education students who were not in any intervention groups. Thus, all students can benefit when teachers begin to share instructional duties. Co-teaching is not necessarily the “best” way to help students make progress. Kendra (reading specialist) and Daphne’s (fifth grade) highly aligned pullout group that required weekly planning made significant reading progress.

When teachers engage in open communication they can make important scheduling decisions that positively affect students. Cynthia (third grade) described one student who received speech, ESOL (from Eve), and special education services (from Brandy). Her flexible colleagues were willing to reconsider their own schedules in order to reduce the amount of times this student was pulled from the classroom. Other changes that these three colleagues worked on in their schedules made it so that “the kids then didn’t start feeling like they were having too much because they weren’t having this extra reading group two days a week.”

Benefits to teachers

Although student learning and growth was usually brought up as the goal of collaboration, effective collaboration also has an impact on their own growth as professionals. When teachers work on their relationships they have the opportunity to grow as professionals. Participants expressed appreciation for learning new ways to teach through their relationships. Danielle (third grade) stated:

I think that's really important as a teacher because that's how you get your ideas, is from other teachers. If I didn't have other teachers or I didn't hear their ideas, I would be a horrible teacher.

Even more veteran teachers explained how they appreciated learning from others.

Daphne (fifth grade) explained that she became good at teaching reading because Kendra (reading specialist) “helped me through it all.” This feeling of being supported goes the other way, as well. Specialists explained how they gained confidence about other aspects of instruction (e.g., learning common core). Some teachers, such as Frances (ESOL) and Danielle (third grade) were empowered to gain further training in math and ESOL,

respectively.

Summary

In this chapter I described how interprofessional relationships develop within the context of receiving professional development on collaboration. My central research questions asked 1) How does interprofessional collaboration between teachers and specialists develop over time? and 2) Does professional development that focuses on interprofessional collaboration have an impact on this development? To answer these questions I created an emerging theory grounded in data collected from a case study.

Cultivating Interprofessional Collaboration describes how collaborative interprofessional relationships develop over time through a cyclical growth process, and how targeted professional development facilitates this growth by encouraging reflection and space to practice skills that build partnership. Figure 2 represents the theory of how interprofessional collaboration develops based on the overall experiences of participants.

Chapter 7: Discussion

The previous analysis chapters described the story of Wood Hills' involvement in a professional development project that focused on interprofessional collaboration. By weaving together descriptive narratives with themes that emerged through a grounded theory methodology, I have created a retrospective case study that explores how these relationships develop over time within the context of professional development. In this chapter I will review the emerging theory, reflect on the research questions, and consider how Wood Hills' story and the themes that emerged compare with previously reviewed literature. This study's strengths and limitations will also be explored in light of similar research that studies collaboration qualitatively. Finally, I will discuss implications and avenues of future research.

The purpose of this case study was twofold. First, I wanted to investigate how collaboration between general educators and specialists develops over time, given the paucity of research on collaboration between these types of school professionals. Specifically, I also wanted to understand what factors promoted these interprofessional relationships, and how teachers navigate roles and handle issues that arise. Secondly, I wanted to explore how professional development can help improve the development of these relationships. I wanted to investigate how participants perceived our yearlong project, what they learned, and whether they engaged in change as a result of these workshops. Additionally, I wanted to find out whether any school wide and administrative changes took place. To answer my questions I developed a theory, *Cultivating Interprofessional Collaboration*, which is grounded in the data collected from individual interviews of teachers and the principal who participated in a yearlong

professional development initiative at an elementary school.

Research Questions: Relationship Development

My first research question asked how interprofessional collaboration between teachers and specialists develops over time. Within this question I asked three sub-questions that reflect factors identified as having an effect on how teachers interact:

- 1) What role do administrators play in promoting interprofessional collaboration and what structures best support this type of collaboration?
- 2) How do teachers navigate their roles with one another?
- 3) How do teachers handle relational and intrapersonal issues that arise from interprofessional work?

Cultivating Relationships

In my model, *Cultivating the Relationship* explains the core theme of how interprofessional relationships develop over time. This overarching category is comprised of *Planting the Seeds, Growth* (Discovery, Constructing Partnership, Reflection, and Alignment), and *Propagating Collaboration*. If a relationship is like a tree, then the factors that I just discussed serve as the soil. Whereas some factors can nurture a growing relationship, others appear to hinder a relationship from flourishing.

The subtheme *Planting the Seeds* describes how interprofessional relationships begin. Mandates and volunteering are the two main ways that general educators and specialists embark on working together. However, expectations and feelings color this process and influence how a relationship will develop. If a flexible administration does not specify how teachers should instruct their students together, then teachers must

negotiate how they are going to work together. This initial process may be influenced by previous experiences and beliefs. Thus, honesty (open communication) between partners at the outset can help set the tone for the rest of the year. In this case study I also discovered that teachers are not guaranteed to work together for consecutive years because specialists often follow their students. Thus, teachers who are on the verge of creating a closer relationship may not work together again for over a year. This set-up can have implications for a school's ability to help staff build momentum for building a collaborative culture.

The second subtheme, *Growth*, describes how teachers continually work on a partnership. Growth is comprised of *Discovery*, *Constructing Partnership*, *Reflecting*, and *Alignment*. These stages of a relationship interact in a cyclical manner and are not necessarily linear. *Discovery* describes the experience of getting to know a colleague and instructional content. *Constructing Partnership* refers to the communication, teaching, and other activities that teachers engage in together. Activities such as disseminating student information may not require as many interpersonal resources as activities such as co-teaching. However, all of these activities help teachers become closer. Both together and alone, colleagues also *Reflect* on what does and does not work for the purpose of improving relationships and instructional practices. Many teachers find that common planning time is an ideal space for reflection, even though sometimes they must flexibly reflect and make quick decisions within a classroom setting.

Alignment describes the point at which two teachers have achieved a seamless dimension to their relationship. Alignment does not just have to occur in a co-teaching relationship. Rather, it represents when teachers are sharing roles more fluidly in order to

align their content and practices. As teachers move through Discovery, Constructing Partnership, and Reflection they are able to engage in deeper Alignment. For example, teachers may initially engage in aligning their content materials, but may also start to engage in more class wide co-planning to ensure that they are meeting their respective goals. A high degree of alignment is marked by respect and trust. Partners may come in and out of this state as relationships shift and school needs change. This subtheme speaks to the dynamism of relationships and of teaching.

Teachers cycle through these processes throughout the year. As they keep cycling through these processes they experience more shared roles and responsibilities. Teachers who actively use *Interpersonal Strategies* are able to negotiate their roles throughout the year and better handle conflicts. Additionally, teachers who are confident in their own abilities may be more likely to open themselves up to constructive feedback. I also found that taking time to learn about a colleague helps teachers develop empathy.

Understanding others' demands and struggles, in turn, can help teachers become more flexible and consider ways they can support their partners. Respect and trust are the conditions that begin to emerge when colleagues move through *Growth* and feel mutually supported. Although many teachers used the word "personality" to describe relational barriers, it appeared that they really were referring to how open and flexible a partner is around interprofessional work. Relationships can stall in their growth when a colleague is inflexible, does not take others' perspectives, struggles to openly communicate, and has difficulty sharing. Although some teachers may not be compatible as friends, what seemed to matter more was whether they were compatible in their commitment to working together as professionals.

Finally, the subtheme *Propagating Collaboration* describes the ways in which interprofessional collaboration grows within a school both personally and systemically. Teachers may spread the message about what's working well to other colleagues. They may also seek out additional opportunities with other colleagues or try to ensure that they continue working with a colleague. Administrators have the ability to support staff by listening to suggestions and being open to teachers' requests. Finally, administrators also have the ability to embed collaboration into the school culture by creating schedules and regular meetings that promote interprofessional interactions.

The Role of Administration and School Structures

In my model, the theme *External Conditions* refers to both Administrative Support and School-Level structures. School leaders have the opportunity to play an integral role in setting the tone and providing resources that promote collaboration. My research team and I created the workshops with Wood Hills' administrators. Thus, I already held the bias that school leadership plays a large role in teacher collaboration. I discovered that Adele, the principal, was highly regarded as a supportive administrator committed to teachers' professional growth. Over the course of the year and through the interviews, though, I was able to tangibly see what effective administrative support looks like. While administration can offer resources and time, I found more subtle types of support in how administrators communicate and set a collaborative tone. Flexible and open-minded administrators who value all staff allow teachers to take risks, which may be necessary for navigating interprofessional partnerships. Administrators who trust staff to make instructional decisions and who show that they value all professionals working with students further promote a collaborative culture. I found that it is only through a

committed administration that certain school level structures can promote interprofessional collaboration. For example, administrators have the last word on intervention groups and how teachers' duties are spread across the school. Administrators willing to listen to teachers can help make decisions about schedules that include common planning time.

In this case study the teachers were primarily positive about Adele's leadership. Alternately, when they described difficulties with former administrators, teachers usually referenced principals with more authoritative and rigid leadership styles. I found these discussions an interesting parallel to how teachers described what they considered "difficult" colleagues. Teachers reported openness to new ideas and flexibility as essential strategies for engaging in interprofessional collaboration. Perhaps administrators who demonstrate these strategies as leaders may be implicitly modeling a more collaborative culture.

The structural elements that appeared to have the largest impact on collaboration revolve around intentional scheduling and grouping of intervention groups so that partners can meet regularly and have the opportunity to teach together. Regularly scheduled data meetings and systems for easily disseminating information (e.g., Google Docs) also promote interprofessional work. Service delivery models have an impact on relationships, but co-teaching is not necessarily better or feasible in all cases. This latter finding initially surprised me due to my positive bias coming about co-teaching. In this study the teachers described a plethora of different ways that specialists and general educators provided instruction to students. In some instances service delivery would change throughout the year even in one classroom. The overarching message that came

through in the data was that teachers could develop close relationships regardless of the instructional models they chose. When alignment is the end goal, then teachers are afforded a level of autonomy in determining what is best for students and for themselves.

One significant factor that appeared to negatively impact relationships was school culture. The dominant culture of general education can create an environment that makes it hard for interprofessional colleagues to work as equals. A factor that I didn't initially anticipate was the issue of disparate instructional pressures. Whereas general educators must push through the curriculum, specialists are focused more on their assigned students' individual goals. Each type of teacher has specific role demands, and it is possible that conflict may arise when teachers face different pressures. This is even more salient when general educators' instructional pressures may appear to "trump" their colleagues' demands due to their more elevated status in a school. Although general educators can and do struggle to collaborate with one another, interprofessional colleagues are charged with figuring out how to align instruction when they may have different goals for students. Hence, open communication about goals and roles is essential for these types of relationships.

Intrapersonal and Interpersonal Factors

The theme *Intrapersonal Conditions* includes the experience, beliefs, and self-concept that individuals bring to a relationship. Overall, experience teaching may not be a good predictor of whether a teacher feels excitement or hesitation to engage in collaborative work. Experience with more than one professional role can help colleagues develop some baseline empathy for their current colleagues. However, beliefs may in fact have more sway than individual experiences. Teachers with beliefs in the power of

collaboration and inclusionary service delivery models appear more willing to begin a new relationship with an interprofessional colleague. Finally, teachers who are confident in their own teaching abilities and skills may be more willing to engage in collaborative practices. For those who feel inadequate or unsure about their abilities, working with another professional can possibly feel threatening. Finally, I found that some teachers internally deal with conflicts by blaming themselves.

The theme *Interpersonal Conditions and Strategies* refers to how teachers approach working with colleagues. They engage in a number of strategies: empathy, flexibility, honesty, and sharing the load. Although some teachers appear to already use these strategies when they enter a new relationship, others develop these skills with partners and through professional development activities. For example, as colleagues become more comfortable with one another they may be more likely to ask for feedback (honesty). Teachers who do use these interpersonal strategies effectively start to develop respect and trust for one another, which can allow them to take on more shared roles and responsibilities. Due to the described imbalance of power between general educators and specialists, these strategies may be particularly salient for interprofessional relationships.

Alternately, teachers who do not engage in these strategies may be described as rigid, inflexible, or unwilling to collaborate. In this study I discovered that these interpersonal barriers might in fact be harder to counter than the more structural ones, such as scheduling. Although there is a current push for more collaborative work in school settings, teaching is historically a “lonely” profession. Many of the participants in this study openly admitted that they liked to be in control of their instruction and content. Giving up some level of control, or giving up some of the “spotlight” in a co-teaching

arrangement, can be very uncomfortable. There may be a variety of reasons that teachers demonstrate rigidity around collaborative work. For some, they might not feel comfortable if they are not confident about their teaching abilities in a certain domain. For others, they may worry that their own distinctive roles will disappear if they engage in activities such as co-teaching. Teachers may even be uncomfortable about the prospect of disagreeing about instructional choices with another colleague, and therefore shy away from collaborative partnerships that require this kind of communication. My perspective as both a researcher and educator is that when teachers can envision the future benefits of interprofessional work (*Fruits of Collaboration*) they are more willing to experience the initial discomfort that collaboration can activate.

Research Questions: Professional Development

My second research question asked whether professional development that focuses on interprofessional collaboration has an impact on this development. I asked the following sub-questions:

- 1) How does staff perceive professional development and what was learned?
- 2) Do teachers experience a change in relationships, roles, and instructional practice as result of professional development on collaboration?
- 3) Does professional development have an impact on school-level and administrative support and change?

In my semi-standardized interviews I framed my questions by asking about collaboration before and during the year of professional development. Drawing from collaboration literature and my master's thesis interview study (Jorisch, 2013), the professional development workshops encompassed three overarching themes: structure, role clarity,

and relationships. The grounded theory *Cultivating Interprofessional Collaboration* incorporates how Professional Development fosters more collaborative relationships. By helping teachers gain knowledge, find common ground, and create new ways to interact, professional development can enhance the strategies and conditions that already work to promote collaboration. For example, teachers learning about each other's roles in the workshops develop more empathy for their colleagues. This empathy can push colleagues to further support each other.

Learning Through Professional Development. The teachers in this study provided a generally positive perception of the three workshops and appreciated that planning time was built into each session. Each participant was able to clarify what she liked most and identified aspects of the workshops that were not as salient. However, trends did emerge. I found that participants specifically referenced the activities and co-teaching video, which were probably the most engaging aspects of the workshops. All had suggestions for future professional development, such as more frequent workshops and activities such as observing other teachers co-teach or plan. The participants expressed that they gained knowledge in the following areas: communication, roles, relationships, and instructional models. This new knowledge helped to change current beliefs or validate what teachers already believed.

The subtheme *Knowledge* describes how the participants learned about communication techniques, relationships, roles, and instructional models. I discovered that many participants were relieved to learn that expectations were not rigid. We encouraged partners to use tools to communicate openly, but did not prescribe whether to co-teach or exactly how to run a co-planning meeting. Reflecting now, I realize that our

own flexibility in the workshops mirrors what we were demonstrating to teachers about roles and relationships. Additionally, participants were relieved to find that it was “normal” for relationships to take time to develop. There is a certain level of autonomy that teachers appear to appreciate, which is related to administrative trust and respect.

Professional Development Facilitating Individual Change. When teachers have the ability to find common ground, build their relationships, and gain knowledge during professional development they can undergo changes in their current partnerships. In this study, I found that partners became more intentional and consistent with planning and coordinating instruction, increased co-teaching and plug-in services, and experienced more role flexibility. Professional development can amplify the use of interpersonal strategies that help teachers deepen relationships, and it also provides the opportunity to engage in reflection on how to improve relationships or instruction. For example, activities that focused on roles helped teachers experience greater empathy for their partners, and allowed colleagues to both identify and advocate for their roles. The subtheme *Common Ground* refers to how professional development can bring participants together for a common purpose. Within this theme I discovered that a group of teachers can benefit from taking time to reflect on their practice and consider the “larger picture” of their goals for themselves and students. Schools are so busy that it can seem like a luxury to have time to discuss and reflect. Further, I found that teacher dyads were able to establish common ground with one another in these workshops and have a chance to build their relationships. Looking at the core category of *Cultivating the Relationship*, these workshops gave participants time and space to move through the *Growth* process. Additionally, the workshops provided tools that helped the participants

practice their interpersonal strategies and gain perspective on what they bring to an interprofessional relationship.

The subtheme *Creation* represents the various changes that take place outside of a professional development activity. It is important to consider, however, that these changes are inextricable from the ones that occurred within the workshops. For example, each workshop afforded partners time to co-plan. A major change in practice that teachers reported was increased and more intentional co-planning during the year. The other significant change reported was increased forms of plug-in services. Even though we did not suggest that participants co-teach, many participants decided that both they and their students would benefit from this model. The principal, who was able to have what may be called a bird's eye view, observed that staff involved in the project was more willing to share resources and roles. More subtle changes that occurred were interpersonal in nature. Overall, the specialists became more comfortable coming into general education classrooms and offering their support or opinions. Additionally, the general educators in this study were open to suggestions and welcomed specialists to work alongside them

Professional Development Facilitating School Change. I also found that professional development fosters school-level change and administrative support. Towards the end of the school year the staff had developed a Master Schedule in order to streamline intervention services and allow specialists to take on a more active role in determining what the next year will look like for staff and students. The administration decided to continue providing school wide data meetings and committed to spending more time helping the various specialists get out of their "silos." The administration also

committed to helping staff develop a “Toolkit” for staff that would disseminate some of the knowledge gained in the workshops. Additionally, many of the teachers used the workshops to engage in more collaborative work with colleagues who were not participants this year. Other teachers committed to engaging in more collaborative work the following year by enlisting new colleagues or requesting to work again with the same partner. What surprised me most in this study were the larger changes that the school decided to create. These are the kinds of changes that fall into the theme *Propagating Collaboration* because they work to spread collaboration more broadly throughout the school.

Revisiting the Literature

When I embarked on my literature review I discovered that collaboration is a multidimensional construct studied across varied organizations, groups, and individuals. I also found that when in-service workshops focus on collaboration, they may concentrate on instructional methods and changes in legislation without offering the necessary application of new information (McKenzie, 2009; McLesky & Waldron, 2004). In this section I will consider how the findings that emerged from this study fit with previous research and theory.

The Construct of Collaboration

Using a constructivist lens (Stake, 1995; 2000; 2005; 2006), I consciously did not define collaboration for participants because I wanted to understand what that word meant to them. Friend and Cook (2009) explain that in school settings, staff often misconstrues structures for communication or teaching as collaboration. For example, co-teaching may not necessarily be a collaborative effort. Rather, collaboration is an

interactive style (Friend & Cook, 2009) that can encompass a number of activities. Perhaps some of the most significant learning that took place in this professional development initiative was that participants were able to frame collaboration as an interactive style, rather than a form of service delivery.

A common finding in the collaboration literature is how it is envisioned as a developmental process that takes place over time. My case study supports this consensus. While some models overlap well with this study's findings, others do not sufficiently reflect the experiences reported by general educators and specialists. However, all shed light on the nuances of collaboration that emerged in this study. Gray's (1985; 1989; 1996) theory takes a stage-based approach that includes problem setting, direction setting, and structuring. In the case of school collaboration teachers engage in a more recursive process. Many may independently engage in "problem setting" and "direction setting." I found, however, that the workshops served as a reflective space to talk about their shared responsibility teaching the same students and to agree on some ground rules for communication.

The collaboration literature outside of the field of education is highly relevant to this study. D'Amour, Goulet, Pineault, and Labadie's (2004) model of collaboration in healthcare organizes the process into three developmental stages: (1) in inertia, (2) under construction, and (3) in action. This model underscores the importance of reaching a point of consensus about responsibility-sharing, which I found was particularly important for teachers who have different professional roles. Other work (Suter et al., 2009) discovered that understanding and appreciating professional roles and responsibilities, along with effective communication, serve as core collaboration competencies. This

finding overlaps well with the *Interpersonal Strategies* that emerged from the interviews. Bronstein (2003) also focused on roles, identifying flexibility and sharing power as essential components of interdisciplinary collaboration in social work. The Index of Interdisciplinary Collaboration (Ellin et al., 2010) represents a four-factor model: (a) Reflection on Process, (b) Professional Flexibility, (c) Newly Created Professional Activities, and (d) Role Interdependence. Although this model was created for mental health school teams, the themes match well with my findings about different types of teachers working together.

I also discovered models of collaboration in education. Davison's (2006) grounded theory model of general educator and ESOL teacher collaboration adds to the literature by focusing on "personal commitment to the process." In this model, colleagues' attitudes, effort, perceived outcomes, and expectations of support deepen as they work together. The five-stage model may also be a useful way to frame the different relationships that I learned about in this study. Whereas some teachers described what may be called "pseudocompliance (passive resistance)," others appeared to be heading more towards "creative co-construction." The latter stage appears to match well with how *Synergy* fits in my model. However, I found that this high level of collaboration is not necessarily an end point due to the changing nature of relationships and external demands. Montiel-Overall's (2005) interprofessional model of general educator and librarian collaboration also describes an emergent process. The stages (*Coordination, Cooperation, Integrated Instruction, and Integrated Curriculum*) reflect cycling that occurs during *Growth* as teachers share more responsibilities and activities. Whereas Davison (2006) does not include the more systemic factors that affect individual

relationships, Montiel-Overall's (2005) model recognizes the importance of administrative support. What both of these models do not offer, however, is a fuller explanation of how relationships begin (Planting the Seeds) and how they spread out over time (Propagating Collaboration).

This study's central theme, *Cultivating the Relationship*, reflects literature that specifically examines the activities that comprise teacher collaboration. Little (1990) found four types of interactions that general educators engage in together, which range from "storytelling" to "joint work." She acknowledged that the latter is hard to achieve due to pressures that work against collaborative practice in schools. However, her model looks at different interactions as purely hierarchical. In this study and in my master's thesis (Jorisch, 2013) I found that collaboration takes place when teachers can coordinate varied interactions, from disseminating information to co-teaching lessons together. Welch and Sheridan's (1995) stress that collaboration is a "dynamic framework" for activities and decision-making that reflect interdependence, parity, and exchange of resources. This definition matches well with how my core category describes the growth of interprofessional relationships.

Alignment. This study arose due to concerns and questions about aligning services for students who need additional academic and behavioral support. Niebling, Roach, and Rahn-Blakeslee (2008) define alignment as curricular, instructional, and assessment practices that are matched and complementary to one another in order to facilitate student learning. Alignment can also refer to matched cognitive demands and performance expectations (Gamoran, Porter, Smithson, & White, 1997). In this study, teachers' collaboration revolved around both curricular and instructional alignment. It

appeared that aligning content was easier because it involves less planning and communication. However, many partners in this study also strove to achieve instructional alignment by reflecting on objectives and teaching strategies. Those partners that worked more closely together were also able to delve into how they may differ with performance expectations or cognitive demands. This can be particularly salient for interprofessional colleagues because they must balance curricular pressures with teaching students' at their instructional level (Gravois & Gickling, 2002; Rosenfield, 1987).

In this study the participants described how students can become overwhelmed and confused when teachers are using different materials, instructional strategies, and learning objectives. Research on working memory (Siegler & Alibali, 2005) shows that students have a limited capacity for learning new information and that they need repetition of new information in order for it to be stored meaningfully long term. Instructional match is another area of concern for students taught by more than one teacher (Gravois & Gickling, 2002; Rosenfield, 1987). While a student may have the skills to complete an assignment in a pullout group, another task in the general education classroom may not be at this student's instructional level. Hence, progress in one setting may not correlate with another if teachers have not communicated and agreed upon what a student needs to benefit maximally from classroom instruction. Teachers also describe the pitfalls of less academic engaged time (Ysseldyke & Christenson, 1993). When students receive uncoordinated pullout services they might experience less instructional time and transitions that upset their ability to engage fully in class (Silva, Hook, & Sheppard, 2005). In this study the teachers who communicated regularly were able to consider how their students optimally learn.

Factors that Promote or Inhibit Collaboration. When the themes of *External Conditions, Interpersonal Conditions/Strategies, and Intrapersonal Conditions* emerged from the data, Tudge and Hogan's (1997) work came to mind. Collaboration in a school is truly a coordination of intrapersonal, interpersonal, and socio-cultural factors. Friend and Cook's (2009) collaboration components (personal commitment, communication skills, interaction processes, programs or services, and context or overall environment) and my master's thesis (Jorisch, 2013) also describe how teacher collaboration develops within a larger context.

Literature on school culture and administrative support provides a context for understanding how collaborative school cultures develop over time. This case study serves as a model for effective school leadership. The administration at Wood Hills encapsulated the norms of open communication and flexible leadership that I found in the literature (Deal & Peterson, 1990; Hines, 2008; Rice, 2006; Riehl, 2008; Valentine et al., 2002). In addition to carving out planning time and providing resources, a supportive administration also celebrates successes and provides opportunities for sharing (Hines, 2008). Interprofessional collaboration is particularly affected by how administrators clarify, understand, and respect roles (Fullan, 2007; Fullan & Hargreaves, 1991). In this study I found that the administrators, as former general educators, made efforts to learn about and spend time with the other specialties in their school. These efforts can help to mitigate specialists' feelings marginalization or misunderstanding (Al Otaiba, Hosp, Smartt, & Dole, 2008; Bean, Trovato, & Hamilton, 1992; Jones et al., 2010; McClure & Cahnmann-Taylor, 2010; Roach, Shore, Gouleta, & de Obaldia Butkevich, 2003).

“Contrived collegiality” (Fullan & Hargreaves, 1991; Hargreaves, 1994) in the

form of rigid mandates can actually impede collaborative relationships. Schools have long-held norms such as non-interference and autonomy (Ashton & Webb, 1986). In my study I found that the administration's flexible expectations were appreciated by staff. The trust that the administration demonstrated to staff, in turn, allowed them to also work on changing the culture of Wood Hills. I discovered that the administration was trying to create a more balanced power dynamic between general educators and other school staff through new approaches to scheduling and meetings.

In this case study the participants engaged in varied instructional set-ups to teach students. Although participants expressed positive views towards pull-out instruction when it was deemed appropriate, they also believed in the power of plug-in instruction, an umbrella term for instructional support provided within general education. There was a general consensus that co-teaching is highly valued in the school, and the literature shows that specialists are being expected to engage in more plug-in services (Galloway & Lesaux, 2014; Honigsfeld & Dove, 2010). Co-teaching has been touted as a model that may increase shared accountability and responsibility, morale, and overall professional growth (Friend et al., 2010; Murawski & Lochner, 2011; Nichols & Sheffield, 2014; Scruggs, 2007). This study illustrated for me that co-teaching, though, is simply not feasible for every partnership. Additionally, in this study one of the most collaborative relationships was between teachers who coupled co-teaching with pullout instruction. The push for instructional alignment, rather than co-teaching, may be a more flexible and realistic approach for schools.

The shift in how specialists and general educators are being asked to interact sheds light on the interpersonal and intrapersonal factors that affect collaboration.

Instruction is just one of the many roles that now fill a teacher's day. Valli and Buese (2007) identified other roles (institutional, learning, collaborative, and relational) that teachers are now expected to take on as professionals. These other roles can be hard to embody due to isolationist beliefs (Rosenholtz, 1989) about teaching and behaviors marked by autonomy and noninterference (Ashton & Webb, 1986). Additionally, teachers who do not actively believe in the value of collaboration may struggle with taking on anything but an instructional role. Teachers without confidence in their own abilities may also struggle to advocate for themselves or may shy away from work that highlights their own perceived deficits. In this study and in my master's thesis (Jorisch, 2013) I found that specialists can feel marginalized or left out. Research on interprofessional relationships (Bronstein, 2003; D'Amour, Goulet, Pineault, & Labadie, 2004; D'Amour, Sicotte, & Levy, 1999) is particularly relevant for exploring this phenomenon, especially literature that focuses on how colleagues negotiate their roles (Arkoudis, 2006; Creese, 2002, 2006; Hunt & Handsfield, 2013). Role confusion can occur when teachers do not advocate for themselves or work to gain clarity about their colleagues. In this study I found that when teachers employ strategies such as empathy and flexibility they are able to continually reposition the "expert" role (Arkoudis, 2006). Sharing the load, another strategy, is so valuable because it helps to create parity between individuals who otherwise might experience a power imbalance within their larger school setting.

The Role of Professional Development

Schools committed to becoming "communities of practice" (Lave & Wenger, 1991) recognize that professional development is essential. The encouraging findings of

this study show that professional development that focuses on collaboration can have an impact on teachers. Rinke and Valli (2010) broadly define professional development as, “opportunities for teachers to learn about and improve their teaching and student learning” (p. 646). Historically, teachers often struggle to implement new practices (Joyce & Showers, 2002; Waldron & McLeskey, 2010). Keeping this unfortunate reality in mind, we set out to create professional development that attempted to follow some best practices: 1) intensive, ongoing, and connected to practice; 2) builds strong relationships among teachers, and 3) aligns with school improvement priorities and goals (Darling-Hammond, Wei, Andree, Richardson, & Orphanos, 2009).

Friend (2000) claims that while many teachers have “intuitive collaboration skills, it is an error to assume that the skills should be naturally present.” We focused on creating workshops that allowed teachers to try out new skills and reflect together (Hawley & Valli, 2007). The subthemes that emerged from the data highlight how knowledge dissemination is only one component of nurturing interprofessional collaboration. The workshops also served as practice for teachers to reflect and interact in new ways, which helped them move into more collaborative practices in their daily interactions. By facilitating difficult conversations, we offered participants a safe space to voice concerns, establish connections, and advocate for themselves. Analyzing the data, I found that this kind of professional development may be especially salient for newer teachers and for specialists. The theme *Planting the Seeds* highlights how some teachers may feel hesitation to initiate a more collaborative relationship. Professional development can help to level the playing field in regard to role dynamics. In this study a relevant detail is that the specialists “asked” a general educator to join them. This purposeful

choice made by the administration sent the message that all staff are valued.

In this study we did not have the opportunity to provide ongoing support in between each workshop. However, at the end of the school year every participant cited ways in which they implemented knowledge gained from the workshops. Whereas some teachers developed their own rubrics for co-planning meetings, others cited more subtle changes in their interpersonal dynamics with partners. Additionally, the administration supported some school wide changes in scheduling. Part of this scaling up can be attributed to the fact that this professional development was co-created with school leadership (Guskey, 2003).

This study was framed within a socio-constructivist perspective (John-Steiner & Mahn, 1996; John-Steiner, Weber, & Minnis, 1998; Vygotsky, 1978) that incorporates Lave and Wenger's (1991; 1998) model of *situated learning*. Lave and Wenger (1991; 1998) detail three required components of communities of practice: commitment to a shared domain, community, and practicing together. In this study, the craft of teaching and commitment to student development is a shared domain that brought colleagues together. Whereas preservice training focuses on learning how to be a teacher in an instructional role, this study illustrates how professional development can facilitate growth as a collaborator and lifelong learner (Valli & Buese, 2010). This study also highlights how reflection is an essential ingredient for teachers' growth as professionals. Drawing on dual-process theory, Di Stefano, Gino, Pisano, and Staats (2014) hypothesize that "learning can be augmented by deliberately focusing on thinking about what one has been doing" (p. 4). Furthermore, reflection can help to increase self-efficacy. The workshops in this study offered a reflective space, which subsequently empowered

teachers to engage in change.

Limitations

The results of qualitative research, particularly case study methodology, are often criticized for their lack of generalizability to other populations (Yin, 2009). Flyvbjerg (2006) identifies a number of misunderstandings about case study research and writes:

The goal is not to make the case study be all things to all people. The goal is to allow the study to be different things to different people. I try to achieve this by describing the case with so many facets--like life itself--that different readers may be attracted, or repelled, by different things in the case (p. 23).

Another assumption about case studies is that they can only confirm researchers' biases and notions about the phenomena being studied. However, this methodology gives researchers the opportunity to report their attitudes and preconceived notions and, subsequently, reflect on the influence and validity of such assumptions as data emerges (Flyvbjerg, 2006).

Although I actively reflected throughout the research process, my personal bias must be acknowledged. I developed a positive bias towards teacher collaboration before I entered graduate school. Having worked as both an instructional support (academic resources teacher) and general education teacher, my experiences led me to believe that interprofessional collaboration is a benefit to both students and teachers. It is possible that in my interviews the participants purposefully or unknowingly provided positive feedback about the workshops due to my role. As I listened to the interview recordings, however, I also began to see this limitation in my objectivity as a potential strength. In these interviews I heard two people comfortably speaking. I do believe that both my

previous teaching experience and participation in the workshops allowed participants to trust me and speak openly.

For this study I operated as a “part-time” practitioner, which put me in a unique position. Practitioner inquiry refers to research conducted by practitioners in their own work settings that focuses on the work that they engage in as professionals (Cochran-Smith & Donnell, 2006). For the past year I worked closely with the administrators and the Research Committee members to create professional development workshops. Additionally, I attended and participated in all three workshops with teachers. My engagement with staff was both formal and informal. However, I am not an employee of the school nor am I an employee of the school district. I have worked in this district as a school psychology practicum student, but not at this school. Additionally, I have served on the Research Committee for over five years. Together, these experiences afforded me a dual identity as both an “insider” and “outsider.”

My insider status and role in creating professional development is a possible obstacle if it is not reflected on throughout the research process (Alvesson, 2003). While I wanted to have positive findings about this year’s professional development, I was open to finding data that suggests otherwise. One way that I addressed this issue was to find an auditor who is not an employee of this district to review my analyses. In this case, my committee chair served as my auditor. Another way that I addressed this issue was to create memos as I collected and analyze data (Charmaz, 2006). Alternately, as an “outsider” I have an advantage as a researcher in that I did not have an evaluative role with participants.

Methodologically, I did not employ grounded theory’s theoretical sampling

(Strauss & Corbin, 1985) due to the fact that this was a retrospective case study. I was limited to only interviewing staff that participated in the professional development workshops. Morrow (2005) suggests that researchers collect data until there is saturation or redundancy, which increases the trustworthiness of research. Due to school district limitations, I was not able to develop additional questions after the first round of interviews, collect different modes of data, or develop a pre and post intervention interview. It is possible that certain themes would be more nuanced or new ones would arise if I collected these data. Additionally, I had to limit my analysis to teachers' self-report of behavioral changes and student achievement. While I did share my coding with my team and auditor, I did not share my coding with the participants, which precluded a validity check with the participants as to whether my coding reflected their experiences. Since only one elementary school was sampled, it is hard to say what interprofessional collaboration looks like in different settings even within the same school district. For example, Wood Hills has many specialists serving a variety of students.

Implications for Practice and Research

Valli, Croninger, and Walters (2007) indicate that issues such as shared accountability arise when more than one teacher is tasked with instructing the same student. Thus, the findings from this study are relevant for school leaders and teachers charged with ensuring that staff effectively aligns instruction. This study specifically explored general educator and specialist collaboration because there often is no external structure that guides how these colleagues work together. This study's findings highlight ways that schools can begin the process of exploring and improving collaboration between these professionals.

Collaboration Interventions

A model of collaboration is particularly relevant in light of Response to Intervention's increasing influence in schools. In this study, instruction at the Tier 1, Tier 2, and Tier 3 levels were explored. Currently, there is an assumption that students who do not "respond" to Tier 1 and Tier 2 instruction require more intensive interventions. However, this study suggests that student learning is negatively affected when teachers have difficulty aligning their instruction. Taking an inventory of teachers' interactions may help colleagues decide whether a student requires more intensive intervention or improved collaboration between a general educator and a specialist. In this study, one of the workshops introduced a framework for comparing student progress with level of instructional alignment. Although this study did not provide student data, the participants reflected in their interviews that their students benefited when materials and instruction were aligned. Additionally, some participants worked together to rearrange student schedules in order to increase academic engaged time (Ysseldyke & Christenson, 1993).

Schools interested in facilitating greater teacher collaboration may consider how this study's model can operate as an assessment tool. Teachers and administrators may first want to explore the types of interactions and strategies that colleagues currently engage in to start a dialogue about collaboration. An inventory of barriers and supports to collaboration that exist both school-wide and within individual relationships may help administrators identify what supports are needed. In this study we discovered that myriad structural barriers to effective collaboration abound: uncoordinated schedules, little time built in the school day to meet, lack of team membership, lack of funding for substitutes,

and students with particular instructional needs spread across classrooms. Ameliorating some of these barriers may not be easy, but developing a needs assessment may point out which barriers teachers and administrators can address.

While removing external barriers to collaboration is an important step, navigating relationships and roles is just as important. At Woods Hills many of the teachers had already received some form of professional development on co-teaching. However, this was the first year that any of them participated in a project that specifically addressed interprofessional collaboration. Although schools encourage staff to engage in a variety of collaborative practices, teacher preparation programs usually provide insufficient training in collaboration skills (Billingsley, 2004; Cook & Friend, 1995; Friend, 2000; Keefe & Moore, 2004; Laframboise, Epanchin, Colucci, & Hocutt, 2004; McKenzie, 2009; Otis-Wilborn, Winn, Griffin & Kilgore, 2005). This was a pilot year; we had the funds to create three workshops with a limited amount of teachers. Perhaps the next step in collaboration training, therefore, would be ongoing coaching that helps two teachers cultivate effective collaboration.

Expanding Focus

In this study teachers spoke positively about professional development that was tailored to their school and that was tailored to interprofessional work between teachers and specialists. More generalized professional development in collaborative practice for all staff may help a school start the change process. As I coded interviews and began memoing I realized that many of the themes that focus on cultivating relationships may also apply to other staff that do not instruct. As a school psychologist, my ability to best serve students is integrally tied to my ability to work well with other school staff. For

example, when students are referred for an initial psychological assessment I have to explore how they function within their general education classroom. If I do not employ interpersonal strategies such as empathy I may have difficulty communicating effectively with teachers who may be very worried or frustrated. The teachers in this study found that the workshops helped them both advocate for their own roles and understand their colleagues' unique demands. One implication of this study is that teachers were more likely to share responsibilities and work collaboratively when they developed a fuller understanding of their colleagues' demands. A school wide initiative that focuses on roles and relational strategies may provide the kind of situated learning (Lave and Wenger, 1991; 1998) and reflection (Di Stefano et. al., 2014) that leads to professional growth.

Future Research

Future research should investigate collaborative practices through more triangulated data. Audio and video recordings of teachers working together (e.g., planning a lesson together, co-teaching) may help to clarify some of the themes that emerged from the data. For example, how do teachers take turns assuming the role of the "expert" in conversations and how do they use reflection to change their instruction? Future research may revisit this model of collaboration by focusing on specific themes, such as role sharing. Whereas this study used a qualitative approach, future quantitative research could use the themes that emerged from the data to track changes in relationships over time and within the context of receiving professional development.

Tying teacher collaboration to student achievement is an important area of future research. Some empirical research has found a correlation between achievement and collaboration, but it is scarce (Goddard, Goddard, & Tschannen-Moran, 2007; York-Barr,

Ghere, & Sommerness, 2007). This study raises the possibility that student achievement increases when teachers collaborate to align instruction. Open communication and coordination of services may reduce working memory demands on students (Siegler & Alibali, 2005), increase academic engaged time (Ysseldyke & Christenson, 1993), and improve instructional match (Gravois & Gickling, 2002). The teachers in this study reported increased student achievement when they closely aligned their content and instruction. Future research might work to develop more quantitative measures of interprofessional collaboration, which could then be measured against student achievement.

Conclusion

This study grew out of a school district initiative that aims to provide optimal learning experiences for students who struggle academically and behaviorally. Teachers often speak of dizzying school reform initiatives that make sweeping promises about student achievement. In the age of accountability, many school reform efforts fail to consider the effects that interprofessional relationships have on both students and teachers. When concerns about student learning arise, a reasonable question to first ask is whether staff has the tools to effectively collaborate. Although the egg-crate model of instruction (Lortie, 1975) is no longer a reality for many teachers, teachers are often expected to take on relational and collaborative roles for which they have little training. I discovered that teachers are empowered as professionals when they have the opportunity and support to cultivate interprofessional relationships. The findings of this study reflect literature in fields as varied as medicine and business, which suggests that we all strive and struggle to learn, connect, and grow through relationships.

Appendix A

Semi-Standardized Interview Protocol – Teachers

- 1) Prior to this year, how would you describe collaboration in your school?
 - a. What did you understand and believe about collaboration?
 - b. How did you experience working with colleagues?
 - c. Did the administration support collaboration between general educators and specialists?
 - d. How would you describe your collaboration with colleagues with whom you share instructional responsibilities for the same students? (ask about structure for working together, scheduling, navigating roles, interpersonal issues, and attitudes).
- 2) This year you participated in three professional development workshops on collaboration.
 - a. What was the most useful part of this staff development and what was the least useful part of this staff development?
 - b. What do you now understand and believe about collaboration?
 - c. Has the administration supported collaboration this year? What is different from last year?
 - d. What did you learn from these workshops? What do you currently believe about collaboration?
 - e. Have you implemented any changes around collaboration and alignment this year as a result of this professional development (ask about structure for working together, scheduling, navigating roles, interpersonal issues, and attitudes)?
 - f. How has your collaboration with colleagues developed over the course of this year?
 - g. Other than time, what would you say are significant barriers engaging in collaboration well?
- 3) How do you envision your collaboration with colleagues next year?
 - a. How would you like to further develop your collaborative skills and relationships?
 - b. What additional training/support do you need to do this?

Semi-Standardized Interview Protocol - Administrators

- 1) Prior to this year, how would you describe collaboration in your school?
 - a. What did you understand and believe about collaboration?
 - b. Did you support interprofessional partnerships this year?
- 2) This year you helped to create three professional development workshops on collaboration.
 - a. Describe the experience of planning and conducting these workshops.
 - b. What did you find to be the most useful part of this staff development and what was the least useful part of this staff development?
 - c. What do you now understand and believe about collaboration?
 - d. Have you supported interprofessional partnerships this year? What is different from last year?
 - e. How has your collaboration with colleagues developed over the course of this year?
 - f. Other than time, what would you say are significant barriers to engaging in collaboration well?
- 3) How do you envision what your school will look like next year in regard to interprofessional collaboration?
 - a. What additional training/support do you need to do this?

Appendix B

Forging Collaborative Relationships

Environmental Preferences

1. How do you prefer to organize your work space? Do you have specific preferences regarding placement of materials, whether people are welcome to pop into the classroom?

Communication and Scheduling Preferences

1. What are the modes of communication that you prefer to speak about a) students, and b) instruction/curriculum?
2. Do you prefer to meet on a weekly basis at a set time? Would you like to set an agenda beforehand?
3. Do you prefer to meet before school, after school, or find a common planning time?
4. What meetings are important for you to attend?

Instruction

1. What are your classroom rules and expectations?
2. How do you assess students and monitor their performance?
3. When a student is having difficulty academically or behaviorally, what are some strategies you generally use to figure out how to help him/her?

Getting to Know Each Other and Establishing Roles

1. Describe any experiences you have had collaborating with a general educator/instructional support teacher. What characterized a positive experience and what characterized a negative experience?
 - a. What are your hopes about working together this year?
 - b. What are your concerns about working together this year?
2. What do you value in working relationships? (i.e. punctuality, sharing materials, etc.)
3. What role(s) do you see yourself playing this year with (classroom/instructional support) teachers?
4. This is how I envision my role(s) working with you this year: _____.
 - a. Does this match your expectations? If not, how can we come to an agreement over what our goals are working together?
5. What shared responsibilities should we have together this year?
6. How would you like me to support you this year when a student is having academic or behavioral difficulty?

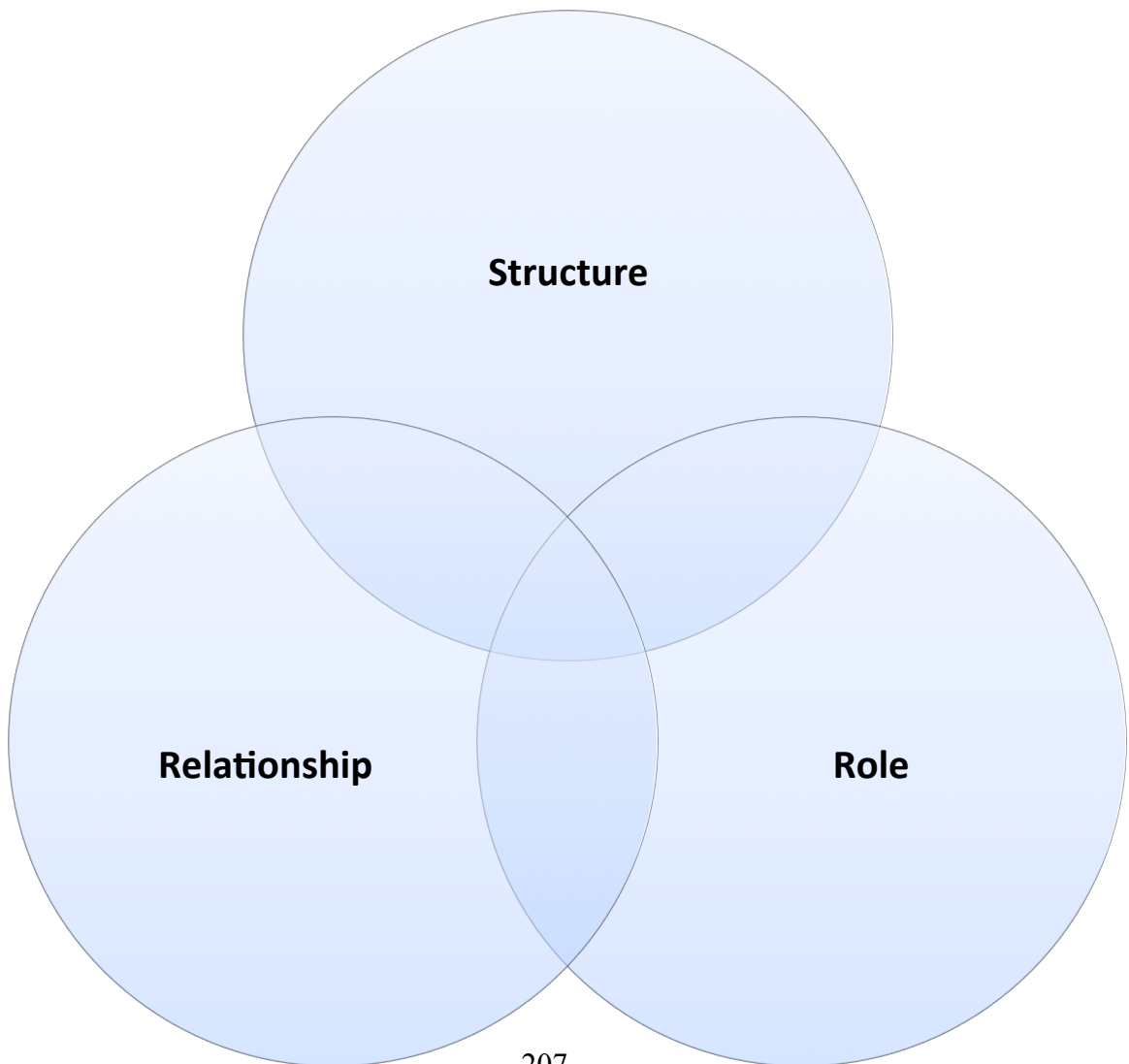
Examples: problem solving about student concerns, developing materials for students, coming up with individualized instructional strategies for students, learning about appropriate accommodations/modifications

Appendix C

Collaboration Video Worksheet

As you watch this video of an interview of two teachers talking about their collaborative experience

... Note signs of: Structure, Relationship, Role
Is there any overlap?



Appendix D

Partner Interviews

Within myself

Values/beliefs that guide my work at Wood Hills:

I bring these strengths to my job:

When I am stressed/overwhelmed at work, I cope by:

When I have a concern about a student, I usually approach it by:

These are the demands that I currently balance as a teacher:

Between me and others

These are the communication skills that I use well with colleagues:

Areas of communication that I'd like to work on:

When I am frustrated with a colleague, I deal with it by:

I feel left out /underutilized when:

Positive emotions that I experience working with colleagues:

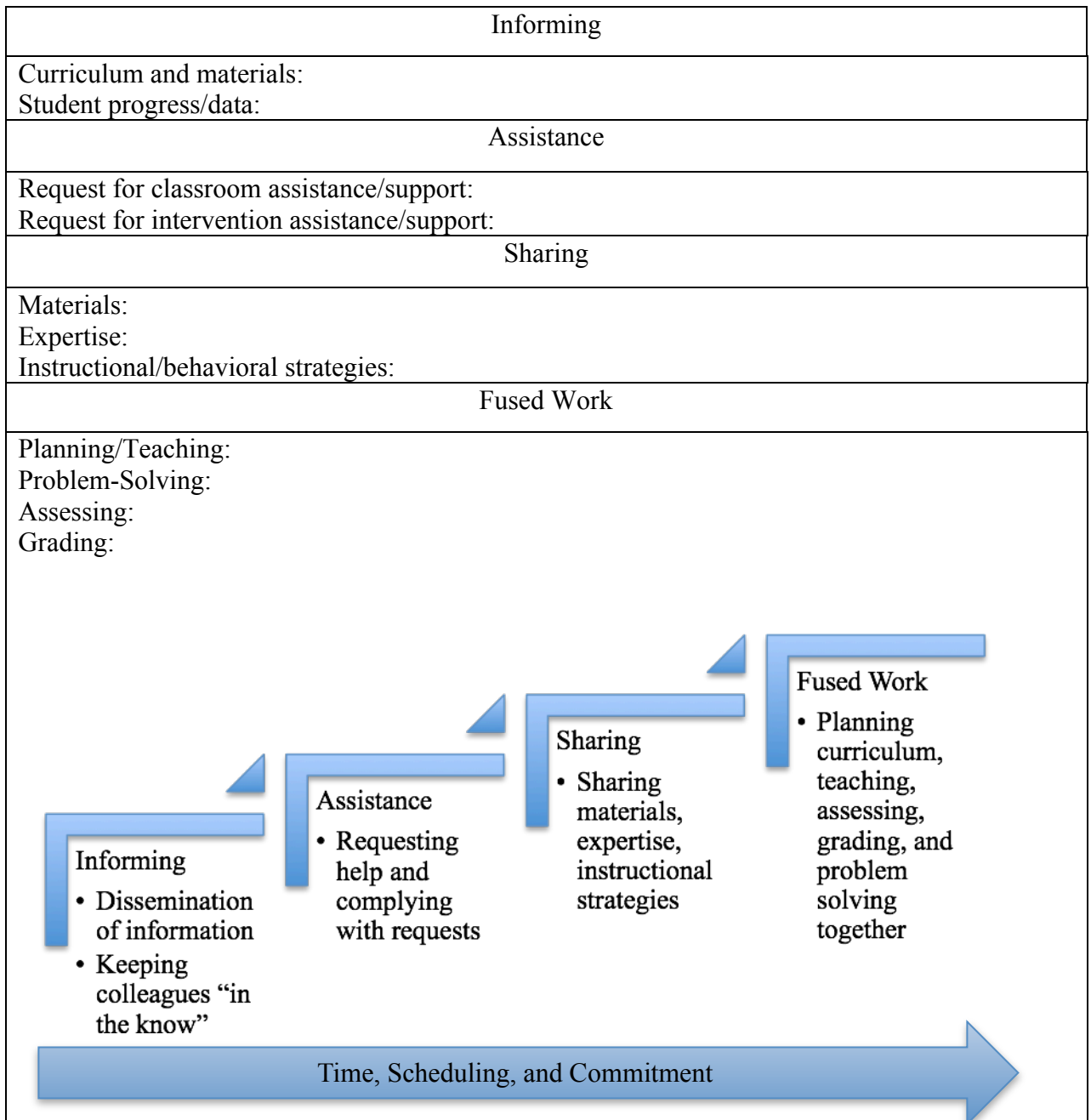
Negative emotions that I experience working with colleagues:

I let colleagues know I need support by:

Times I want to work alone/with colleagues are:

Appendix E
Levels of Teacher Interactions Activity

All four levels of teacher interactions are essential for instructional alignment. When you plan to communicate with a colleague, consider which interactions are necessary



Appendix F

Examples of Teacher Interactions

Informing
<p>Curriculum and materials: Every Friday, Mr. V (general educator) emails Ms. H (ESOL teacher) a list of topics and vocabulary words that the class will be working on.</p> <p>Student progress/data: Ms. K (special educator) runs into Ms. A (general educator) at lunch, and updates her on a student's progress in learning long division.</p>
Assistance
<p>Request for classroom assistance/support: Ms. J (general educator) asks Mr. S (ESOL teacher), to help students in the pullout class complete a report on volcanoes. Mr. S agrees to do this, but realizes that he will have to cut short his planned lesson.</p> <p>Request for intervention assistance/support: Mrs. L (reading specialist) asks Ms. B (general educator) to drill students with the vocabulary flash cards created in reading group.</p>
Sharing
<p>Materials: Ms. R (reading specialist) gives Ms. V (general educator) some new books she just received from the district that might be useful for Ms. V's upcoming unit on folktales.</p> <p>Expertise: Mr. T (general educator) expresses some concerns about an ELL student, and Ms. P (ESOL teacher) explains how this student would benefit from more nonlinguistic representations, such as pictures, when new curriculum content is introduced.</p> <p>Instructional/behavioral strategies: Ms. M (general educator) offers Ms. F (special educator) some strategies she uses with large groups of students when they are all talking at once.</p>
Fused Work
<p>Planning/Teaching: Ms. C (special educator) and Ms. (general educator) are co-teachers, and during a planning meeting they decide which instructional strategies will be most appropriate for different students as they prepare for an upcoming unit in math.</p> <p>Problem-Solving: Mr. W (ESOL teacher) and Ms. L (general educator) have decided to meet and discuss concerns they have about a student. They decide to collect some observational data to further explore whether these social concerns are related to the student's language skills.</p> <p>Assessing: Ms. C (reading specialist) and Ms. N (general educator) have concluded that they will conduct an instructional assessment together with a student so that it will be easier to jointly analyze the data afterwards.</p> <p>Grading: Ms. J (general educator) meets with Ms. P (special educator) and Ms. R (reading specialist) to figure out how students in reading intervention will be graded on their upcoming report cards.</p>

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