



Collaboration: An Essential Ingredient for Teachers' Professional Development

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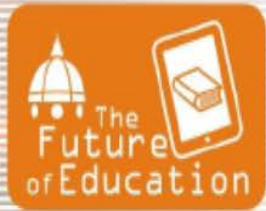
« Teachers learn well just as students do – by studying, doing, and reflecting; by collaborating with other teachers; by looking closely at students and their work; and by sharing what they see »

Darling-Hammond, 1999, p.12



Context of the study:

- Three schools of a French network in Lebanon.
The Agency for French Teaching Abroad (a national public agency administered by the French Ministry of Foreign affairs. It assures a follow up as regards the quality of teaching the French curriculum in French schools outside France. The AEFÉ has a got a 480 schools in its worldwide network).
- The school network in Lebanon is the biggest in the world: **43 schools.**



What is collaboration ?

“a process that enables groups of people with diverse expertise to combine their resources to generate solutions to problems over a period of time” (Idol et al., 1994).



What are the benefits of collaboration?

- **Fosters professional learning and growth (OECD, 2005; UNESCO, 2012, Day, 1999; Howden and Kopiec, 2002; Stoll and Louis, 2007);**
- **Enables them to critically reflect on their teaching practices (Henry et al., 1999);**
- **Helps them self-regulate their own learning and teaching (Huberman, 1989).**



The Problem

Teachers:

Collaborative culture is important

Fact about daily practice:

Collaborative culture is NOT established as a tool which enhances school effectiveness and growth.

Existing practice:

- Department weekly meetings;

Other possible types collaboration:

- Interdisciplinary meetings;
- Networking culture within and among schools of the French network;



Studied sample

- **Three schools were selected.**
- **Survey: 111 out of 166 teachers**
- **67%**



Statement	% reflecting teachers' perception as regards :		
	Usefulness	Ease	Frequency
Sharing pedagogical experiences with colleagues who teach in other departments	91	77	84.5
Working with colleagues who teach in the same department	91	83	94.5
Working in consultation with all colleagues to integrate change in the school	88	74	85.5



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Statement	% reflecting teachers' perception as regards :		
	Usefulness	Ease	Frequency
Working in consultation with colleagues who teach in other department	84.5	50	53.5
Sharing NON pedagogical experiences with other colleagues	74.5	68.5	66
Working together on school improvement project	72.5	55	67



Statement	% reflecting teachers' perception as regards :		
	Usefulness	Ease	Frequency
Working with colleagues from schools of the same network	79.5	47	44
Working with different partners from outside the school	72	28.5	29

What does this collaborative practice consist in?

Teachers' answers :

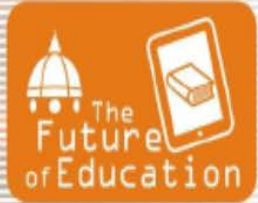
« We share things », « We relate different experiences » etc.

= It's a form of collegiality



Forms of collegiality:

- 1) storytelling;
- 2) help and assistance;
- 3) sharing.



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Are these forms of collegiality effective?

NO : “weak forms of collegiality”

Therefore,

They hamper school improvement (Fullan and Hargreaves, 1992).



Then, what is the effective practice?

“Joint work”, however, is the strongest form of collaboration since it is based on shared responsibility and interdependence (Little, 1990).



Stephen Downes' metaphor of « walled gardens » which describes the traditional way of thinking in silos (in Elhers,2013,p.43).

= What is really needed is a shift from collaboration to networked learning.

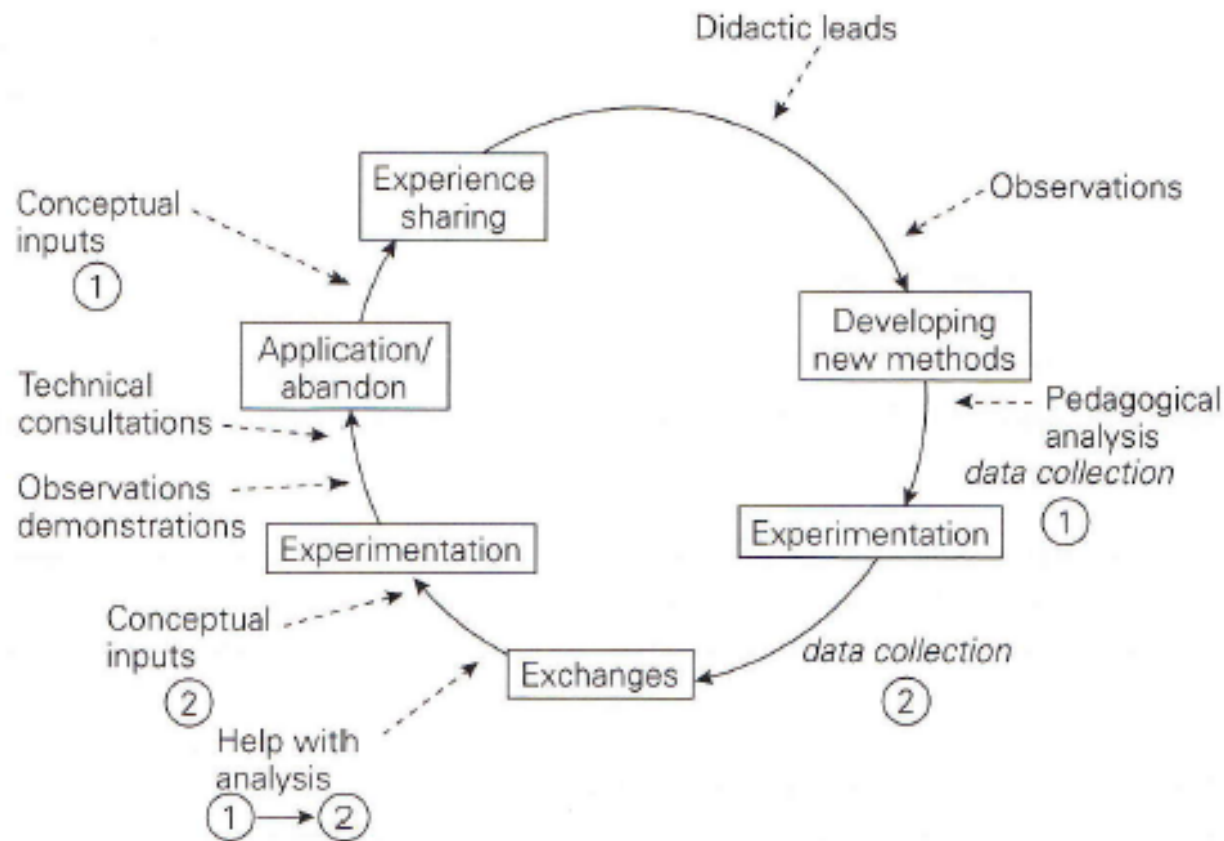


Figure 9.1 Open collective cycle (Huberman, 1995a)



Research questions:

- ❖ How can we envision school networking culture?
- ❖ Which strategies would help establish networking culture?
- ❖ Can school principals and teacher trainers be identified as key people in this process?



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Thank You For Your Attention

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