Accompaniment Moments–Phase III Report

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Executive Summary

The overall objective of this phase of the project (Phase III- Accompaniment Moments) was to gain insight into educators' current and past experiences within the landscape of professional learning and development. We sought to better understand the structures and conditions that support or hinder educator flourishing. Given that a close analysis of educators' narratives can lead to insights (Curwood, 2014; Sugrue, 2012), we established a process that would draw out their stories. As Gabriel (2015) explains, "stories and narratives open valuable windows into a wide range of organizational phenomena, including culture, politics, knowledge management, group dynamics" (p. 276). Further, narratives can provide insight into the ways that cultural and institutional norms are socially constructed through the language we use (Soutu-Manning, 2014).

Drawing on the relationships with the school boards that had been previously established during Phase II of the Accompaniment Project, a team of researchers from Bishop's University, Concordia University, and McGill University carried out interviews with educators who had noted on the Social Network Analysis questionnaire (see Chestnutt et al., 2022) an interest in participating in this last of the research.

Phase III Process

The main research activities for Phase III were:

- Establish driving research questions with members of DELT (Spring, 2021)
- Secure Research Ethics Boards' approval from Bishop's, McGill, and Concordia (Summer, 2021)
- Develop interview protocol (February, 2022)
- Conduct interviews (March–April, 2022)
- Carry out analysis (April– June, 2022)
- Report Initial findings to Design Committee (June, 2022)
- Complete final analysis and submit report (June, 2022)

Phase III

Accompaniment Moments Semi-Structured Interviews

To understand how educators in the English education community interpret their experience with accompaniment & collaborative-based professional development.
Semi-Structured Interviews: Fall 2022
Expected n = [9−12] Participants
Collected n = 8
Analyzed n = 5 Teachers + 3 Administrators
Years of Experience >1 and <30

Summary of Findings

Phase III of the project '**Accompaniment Moments**' provides insight into the experiences of professional learning and development (PLD), and incidences of accompaniment for and by educators through the analysis of eight semi-structured interviews.

From the research findings, there are many opportunities or moments where accompaniment takes root. Specifically, key features of accompaniment such as dialogue, reciprocal learning, co-construction, and increasing self-awareness appear to be cultivated organically, especially when teachers self-initiate and/or choose their collaborative learning experiences. However, these important self-directed teacher initiatives and accomplishments may be unsupported or unrecognized in their school. The study shows that it is primarily principals who are responsible for managing, organizing and structuring potential accompaniment processes. Notably, these are the contexts where fostering an accompaniment culture might contribute to building collective efficacy. However, contexts where PLD is organized and structured are also where points of tension are most evident. Thus, principal participants can find themselves trying to navigate landscapes where teachers may resist efforts or initiatives, such as convergence around goal setting.

Questions Moving Forward

1. How will opportunities for reciprocal learning–through meaningful joint work–be more systematically supported and encouraged?

2. What conditions would create intersections between formal professional development and teacher-driven learning initiatives?

3. When new proposals are implemented, how will the forces of convergence and divergence be negotiated?

4. What forms of professional learning and development for leaders will foster the emergence of cultures of accompaniment (co-construction of shared goals, reciprocal learning, discussions of professional lives, self-awareness, and attention to teachers' needs as learners)?

1. Method

1.1. Driving Research Questions

1. What accompaniment moments (positive and/or negative) have shaped educators' individual and collective efficacy?
2. What conditions have supported these accompaniment moments?
3. What conditions have hindered these accompaniment moments?

1.2. Research Methodology

We drew on discourse analysis (DA) to study how teachers and administrators construct and reconstruct their social identities as they position themselves and others within their institutional discourses (De Fina, 2011; Silverstein, 1976; Stokoe, 2012). Our focus was on how the participants negotiated institutional life, with a granular examination of systematic asymmetries of access to decision-making processes between teachers and administrators. We also examined how power asymmetries can influence teachers' participation in PLD and, at a more fundamental level, reveal who plays a role in the design and nature of the PLD opportunities available in schools.

1.3. Research Methods

Study participants included eight teachers and administrators from urban, rural, and remote schools with two to 30 years of experience. Each participant participated in one audio-recorded individual semi-structured interview conducted via zoom (Appendix). Interviews were from 45 to 75 minutes long. The focus of the interviews was to gain insights into participants' teaching beliefs, tensions and concerns related to professional development and learning. Interview questions were developed to elicit events, incidents, and narratives around working with others and developing professional teacher/administrator identities. In total, 450 minutes of recorded interviews were transcribed and analyzed. The analysis focused on how educators in the English educational community interpreted their experiences regarding accompaniment and collaborative-based PLD. The use of DA provided a useful analytic lens to explore the positioning of the participants in their narratives. Based on the assumption that human language relies on "listener's knowledge of the context in which communication occurs" to balance speed and clarity, we looked at was was said and unsaid, to generate a deep understanding of the context where accompaniment and collaborative-based PLD takes place (Gee, 2011, p. 6).

2. Findings

2.1. Sources/Contexts for Teacher Learning

Through the participants' narratives we were able to learn about sources of and/or contexts for professional learning and development. Large and small in scale, they were sorted into three sets. Table 1 provides an overview of the three sets: individual experiences (SOLO), those that arise spontaneously and/or happen through exchanges with colleagues (IN RELATIONSHIP), and those that involve various forms of collaborative work (COLLABORATIVE).

Table 1
Sources/Contexts for Teacher Learning

	SOLO	IN RELATIONSHIP	COLLABORATIVE
Self-initiated or chosen	SOLO	IN RELATIONSHIP	COLLABORATIVE
Structured or organized by an authority (school, board, union, ministry) [differing degrees of teacher autonomy]	SOLO	IN RELATIONSHIP	COLLABORATIVE

(Icons made by winnievinzence from www.flatiron.com)

In the process of carrying out the analysis, it became evident that there would be merit in further organizing the sources and contexts into two categories. As the top row on Table 1 shows, the first category includes contexts and sources that are self-initiated or chosen. The second category, found in the bottom row, refers to those that are structured or organized by an authority. The contexts and sources of the second category may be managed within the school/centre setting, or outside of it; that is, this category includes initiatives of a school board, the LCEEQ, the Ministry and/or the teachers' union. While teacher autonomy would be central to the examples in the first category (self-initiated or chosen), differing degrees of autonomy would result when the contexts and sources for teacher learning are organized or structured. Note that while Professional Development and Innovation Grant (PDIG) submissions are designed by teachers (self-initiated), since funding is contingent on a selection process, PDIG projects were included in the second category (see also Table 2).

Participants described experiences of individual satisfaction and mastery. They commented on seeing students succeed, successfully adapting practices, innovating and learning from their attempts, and collaboratively planning with others in interdisciplinary ways. They commented on learning that was initiated by spontaneous conversations or when exchanging with peers who innovated or were doing similar work to the participants. They spoke of the models and informal mentors who had shaped their practice. Their examples and narratives fell largely in the first category, that is, when the participants initiated or chose the experience.

2.1.1. Accompaniment Possibilities

Detailed examples of the sources of and/or contexts for professional learning and development are presented in Table 2. Green framing is used to highlight the many opportunities when and where accompaniment might take root. In short, these are the situations where at least one person is joining another for formal or informal professional learning and development.

Table 2
Accompaniment Possibilities

	SOLO	IN RELATIONSHIP	COLLABORATIVE
Self-Initiated or Chosen	• Observing models, mentors & colleagues • Reading • Experimentation • Exploration & Adaptation • Webinars • Researching • Courses	• Being in a Self-Initiated Mentoring Relationship (as Mentor or Mentee)	• Co-Planning • Interdisciplinary Planning • Extra-Curricular/Courses blending

Structured or Organized by an Authority (school, Board, Union, Ministry) NB: Differing degrees of teacher autonomy.	• PIC Fund Requests	• Participating in a mentoring program
		• Committee work:
		  ○ Provincial Committee
		  ○ Validation Teams
		• Conversations with colleagues (Workshops/Events)
		• QPAT
		• LCEEQ Conferences
			• PDIG Projects
			• School PD Plans
			• PLCs
			• Disciplinary/Cycle-Team Planning
			• Assigned Co-Planning
			• School-Wide/Board-Wide Training/Workshops
			• Educational Projects
			• PICs Funding (Shared Interests)

The findings suggest that some characteristics of accompaniment arose organically for participants when the learning was self-initiated or chosen (Category 1). An example from the study would be self or peer initiated co-planning, where back and forward interaction and peer feedback resulted in learning and decision making. Such processes are illustrative of reciprocal learning, which was associated with enjoyment and collegial respect. The key to naming that as an example of accompaniment is the way it represents collaborators who are moving forward at the same time, each neither too far ahead nor behind the other(s). A reciprocal learning journey is captured, wherein people work together respectfully as equals, drawing on what they bring to the situation (Cushing-Leubner, 2017; Delobre, 2012; Lafortune, 2009; Lafortune & Daudelin, 2001; Uwamariya & Mukamurera, 2005).

Importantly, despite the potential for accompaniment to take root in contexts of organized and structured learning, it wasn't evident in the narratives of participants. An exception would be the mention of a Professional Development and Innovation Grants (PDIG) project; however, as mentioned above, since approval is required, the experience was contingent on outside intervention.

2.2.2. Possible Points of Tension

Through the course of the analysis, **points of tension** became evident; they signal that learning and professional development may be hindered. In Table 3, red framing is used to highlight the points of tension. Notably, they occur in the lower section of the table. That is, they are evident in relation to experiences of PLD that are structured or organized, directed or managed, to some degree.

Table 3
Possible Points of Tension

	SOLO	IN RELATIONSHIP	COLLABORATIVE
Self-Initiated or Chosen	• Observing models, mentors & colleagues • Reading • Experimentation • Exploration & Adaptation • Webinars • Researching • Courses	• Being in a Self-Initiated Mentoring Relationship (as Mentor or Mentee)	• Co-Planning • Interdisciplinary Planning • Extra-Curricular/Courses blending

Structured or Organized by an Authority (school, Board, Union, Ministry) NB: Differing degrees of teacher autonomy.	• PIC Fund Requests	• Participating in a mentoring program
		• Committee work:
		  ○ Provincial Committee
		  ○ Validation Teams
		• Conversations with colleagues (Workshops/Events)
		• QPAT
		• LCEEQ Conferences
			• PDIG Projects
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			• Educational Projects
			• PICs Funding (Shared Interests)

This implies acts of leadership, oversight or process management of these types of experiences, many of which in the table fall under the purview of the school principal, as defined in the Education Act (Quebec, 2020, 96.21). Examples include school-wide professional development goals and processes, Professional Learning Communities (PLC), assigned co-planning, disciplinary or cycle team planning, and the Educational Project.

2.2. A Lens to Consider the Findings

In a recent conceptual analysis and review of the literature on collective efficacy, Hoogsteen (2020) describes the significance of school processes and the essential role of the principal in fostering conditions for effective collaboration. Given the contexts within which points of tension arose, and given the essential role of the principal in these contexts, the findings are presented through a lens that considers conditions for leadership for collective efficacy (Donohoo, et al., 2020).

Five requisite conditions for leadership of collective efficacy comprise the model (see Figure 1) that Donohoo and her colleagues (Donohoo et al., 2020) propose. These first-order enabling conditions to cultivate collective teacher efficacy are: goal consensus, empowered teachers, cohesive teacher knowledge, embedded reflective practice and supportive leadership.

Figure 1
(Donohoo, 2021)

In what follows, each of the five enabling conditions is considered in relation to explicit examples from the study, including supports and/or hindrances associated with professional learning and development. Each of the five sections begins with a summary of what is meant by the condition.

2.2.1. Goal Consensus

Goal consensus, as a condition, refers to a process for "goal setting and gaining consensus on goals" (Donohoo, et al. (2020, p. 15). The significance of goal setting to school improvement has been well established over the last two decades. However, as Hoogsteen (2020) cautions, "setting goals is not enough, the impact of goals is created by procuring acceptance of and commitment to the goal" (p. 4). Donohoo et al. explain that lack of clarity about decisions and outcomes has an impact on teachers' willingness to persevere in the face of challenges, which is why goal convergence is important.

Concern for seeking and securing consensus was evident in the language of the principals who participated in the study. It was identified in expressions related to people being on the "same page," or moving in the "same direction" or having a "shared vision". The processes for achieving consensus can be understood as a point of tension, given that efforts to "get/have" everyone "on the same page" can lean toward seeking and ensuring "compliance."

This is, as mentioned above, a principal role; however it emerged as something principals are grappling with. Explanations included, "Not everybody wants to be 100% better," "some people are, you know, content with and feel that they're doing a good job." As one explained, "[there are] moments where there needs to be some sort of influence one way or another," or when **"finding ways to make them understand"** is a focus. "Sometimes, you know, we have to do that, you know, it's just the nature of what we need to do, like our educational project." However problems arise, "When collaboration goes wrong, sometimes they don't see the value in what you're asking them to collaborate on." "Walls" are put up, and it is "difficult to get past those walls."

Consensus seeking only came up indirectly in the participating teachers' narratives, when recounting peer's acts of resistance in the face of professional learning and development. These included dropping out of initiatives, disengagement, speaking openly and disparagingly about forms of PD, or about colleagues who are interested or engaged. Significantly, the examples that were evident in teachers' narratives, emerged as observations about how their own aspirations or experiences may be impacted by resistant peers.
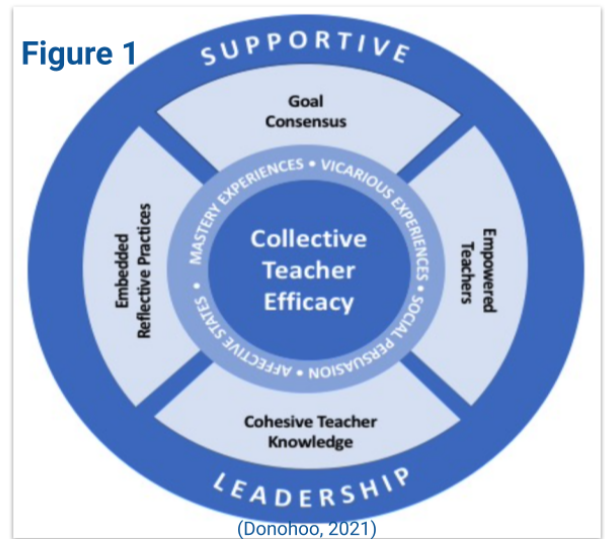
2.2.2. Empowered Teachers

Donohoo et al. (2020) suggest that when "Teachers are provided authentic leadership opportunities … and have a voice in matters related to school improvement," their professional capital and efficacy is enhanced (p. 15).

We examined the transcripts to understand how teachers were empowered in their institutions, and whether teachers' expertise was considered when making decisions that impacted the school culture. First, we thought that it was significant that two principals talked about authentic collaboration which they valued over forced or top-down inauthentic collaboration. However, when we analyzed the administrators' discourses, we noted a striking tension - administrators tended to encourage community learning or convergence. This focus on convergence did not effectively empower teachers. Instead, administrators drew on their positions of power to move teachers towards PLD in the guise of authentic collaboration. Administration discourses included the terms "authenticity", "authentic collaboration" and "authentic voice" which they linked to what was "meaningful" to teachers and sought by principals. Administrators expressed that "forced collaboration" is inauthentic, however, they used their position of power to manage "moments where there needs to be some sort of influence one way or another, sometimes, you know, we have to do that, you know, it's just the nature of what we need to do."

There were instances where administrators empowered individual teachers, which elevated the status of those teachers. Teachers' change in status or authority was conveyed by the principal, where teachers were anointed or appointed to a position of elevated status. These changes did not happen organically. Additionally, we did not see examples where teachers were collectively empowered and entrusted with important decision-making opportunities.

2.2.3. Cohesive Teacher Knowledge

Cohesive teacher knowledge focuses on teachers' pedagogical knowledge and the degree to which teachers engage with consensus building about what constitutes sound pedagogy within the school community. Donohoo et al. (2020) suggest that "teachers need opportunities to learn more about each other's work through peer observation," (p. 15) creating a more cohesive staff.

Our findings suggest that teachers value opportunities to collaborate with others and that these collaborative moments are effective ways to develop professionally. The following three excerpts capture this belief in the participants' words:

- "[If] everyone's doing something different, nobody has anybody to bounce ideas off. But [if] we're all doing a few of the same things, we can learn from one another …So there's more of a chance of it getting ingrained into what we do as a staff."
- Classroom instruction is most effective when teachers "connect as a team to meet students' needs, like five players on the court. If you're all like Michael Jordan, very good at doing things, but you don't pass the ball, you're not going to be a good team. But if you pass the ball and share, then the students will benefit."
- "It's important to have as much [sic] strategies as we can to impact students in a better way."

It is noteworthy that teachers tended to frame their discussions around developing their professional practice in ways that would benefit students, as seen above. In contrast, the participants who were administrators spoke about the importance of the staff coalescing around identified pedagogical goals. However, throughout the transcripts, there is minimal connection between instructional approaches and classroom instruction. A noted tension is that administrators exercised their positions of authority to determine the PLD foci, and at times, they acted as gatekeepers regarding who could access or enact specific PLD opportunities. Lastly, when administrators spoke about students, the context centred on relationship building, not instructional approaches.

2.2.4. Embedded Reflective Practice

Embedded reflective practice refers to the "processes by which teams work together to examine sources of student evidence to help inform their work (Donohoo et al. 2020, p. 16). Informed by student learning data, embedded reflection "helps to uncover cause–and–effect relationships" as "teachers come to realize the positive results of their own efforts, other's efforts, and their combined efforts"(Donohoo et al. 2020, p. 17) .

The analysis of the narratives indicated that the interest in gathering student learning data came mainly from participants in administration positions. The teachers, on the other hand, were more interested in anecdotal accounts of their own efficiency. The process of collecting evidence to inform reflective practice was absent in the narratives of the teachers. The observation and data gathering from principals was met with the apprehension of being perceived as "vigilance" or "checking in". This is an important point of tension because it raises the question of what purposes and for whom the data is gathered, and who holds the rights to observe and who evaluates whom in this context, which creates an unbalanced power dynamic.

Furthermore, it seemed that teacher's innovations were motivated by learning of/observing someone else's success and the attempt to obtain the same results in one's own practice. Clearly, when talking about change, a trial-and-error approach was the mindset for teachers. There was ample space given to attempts, the trying of new things, even when a less than successful outcome was possible: "And there's no guarantee, right, when you try something new, that it's going to be successful or as successful, but you learn something out of it." In the narratives analyzed, the absence of a need for fail-proof attempts was noticeable. The acceptance of error as one possible outcome in the trial-and-error approach was palpable in this context. There was no systematic approach by teachers for the gathering of evidence, the analysis and evaluation of student learning data, constructive feedback to inform variation and successful implementation in an informed iterative fashion. This is another point of tension that sparks the question of how embedded reflective practice can be incorporated in a context when the attempt to find cause-effect or correlative relationships between the aspects of the implementation and student success are absent in the descriptions of the mental landscape of teachers.

Another point of tension observed was about the nature of change in itself. A prevalent concern between maintaining the status-quo, "set in stone mindset" and implementing changes or "embracing change mindset" was noticeable in the narratives of the participants. The tension between what is worth changing and what needs to remain unchanged was present in most of the narratives. An uneven distribution of power regarding who makes the decision towards change was palpable. Change was not driven by embedded practice, but by the two forces mentioned: administration personnel's desire to push teachers to implement changes or by teachers wanting to emulate someone's success. For teachers, professional development initiatives were seen as transactional, that is, opportunities to get something positive to bring it to one's practice and improve it.

2.2.5. Supportive Leadership

> *Supportive leadership is conceptualized as "buffering teachers from distractions and the recognition of individual and team accomplishments'' (Donohoo et al. 2020, p. 16). It includes showing concern about the well-being of the teachers and offering support to carry out their teaching duties. In addition, school leaders establish the normative expectations and processes and procedures that help to empower teachers and ensure they reflect regularly by engaging with the gathered evidence on student learning. "They create the conditions to foster collaboration, increase teachers' knowledge of each other's work, and build greater cohesion among their staff" (Donohoo et al. 2020, p. 16).*

Our findings suggest that teachers felt supported by administration personnel mainly in the area of emotional support. The struggles due to the COVID-19 pandemic made emotional support an essential element in the relationships between participants. The narratives from participants showed there was a clear attempt from administration to support early career teachers, either by setting up mentoring relationships or keeping a closer look at them. However, as evidenced in the research literature (Kutsyuruba, et al., 2019) and reported in this study's Needs Assessment (Phase I), teachers new to a school are given the most challenging workloads and classes upon arrival. In a profession that is often considered flat, experienced and skilled teachers may not have a lot of options for career advancement. Therefore, selecting groups has been shown to be one of the perks for seasoned teachers. As a result, novice teachers are often assigned to the groups and subjects that remain. This 'selection' practice as well as the lack of advancement opportunities for teachers were both reported in the Phase I Needs Assessment, which raises interesting questions. Since ascribing difficult groups to those new in the profession seems to be a taken-for-granted practice in the teaching profession "that eats its young" and in which the first years of a novice teacher's experience is similar to a "sink or swim" or "trial/baptism by fire" experience (Kutsyuruba et al., 2004, p. 3), we ask: *How can a supportive leader balance the respect for seniority and established school practices on the one hand, while integrating and accompanying new members in a meaningful way?*

Another element of supportive leadership that emerged from Phase III was related to the administrator's role in facilitating teacher-driven initiatives and/or collaborative learning experiences. In the narratives analyzed, participants described administrators who selected which school initiatives received funding and support in an almost haphazard way. This is consistent with Phase I data, whereby respondents noted a lack of transparency when it came to funding allocation in schools and across the system. Teachers from that study also reported a need for more agency, relevance and continuity in school-based initiatives. In Phase II, administrators were found to be positioned as key actors to broker knowledge with the potential to either positively contribute to the network or act more like gatekeepers who filter, distribute and even possibly "hoard resources" (Daly & Finnigan, 2011, p. 47). As such, supportive leaders will need to reconsider how to include teachers in the decision-making processes and foster opportunities for them to spearhead initiatives, while also balancing their own priorities for the school.

The last element of supportive leadership is the acknowledgement of accomplishments. In this context, we observed an alarming absence of the acknowledgement of accomplishments. This might be due to an aspect of the contextual mental framework marked by the preference to not stand out. Standing out in relation to others, being somehow better than others is not viewed as a desirable aspect in this context. Therefore, the following question is asked: How *can the acknowledgement of accomplishment take place in a context that emphasizes that no one is better than the others?*

3. Discussion

The analysis of the narratives presented some possible points of tension. Firstly, there is a preference towards convergence and not standing out. Secondly, change, managed through the tension of maintaining the status-quo and the desire to embrace change is driven by anecdotal data and the opportunities for professional inquiry and reflective practice occur in a trial-and-error context, with ample acceptance for error, perceived as a necessary route to learning. In light of these observations, what support and leadership would look like in a context that prioritizes egalitarian relationships?

The tensions presented in this analysis raise questions regarding the conditions that would create intersections between formal PLD initiatives and teacher initiatives. These may include: *What conditions would enable reflective practice and the gathering of evidence to inform decision-making that is initiated and driven by teachers, and not administration personnel? When new proposals are implemented how will the forces of convergence and divergence be negotiated? How will the tensions between egalitarian vs. authoritarian forces be managed?*

Considerations for Accompaniment as a Strategy for Collective Efficacy

Given the findings of the study, we turn to what would need to be considered, if building a culture of accompaniment were to be explored as a strategy for promoting collective efficacy.

Table 4
Accompaniment as a *strategy* for collective efficacy?

[Cushing-Leubner, 2017; Delobre, 2012; Lafortune, 2009; Lafortune & Daudelin, 2001; Uwamariya & Mukamurera, 2005]

Table 4 presents two questions, the first of which is related to the potential of small-scale collaborative learning contexts and experiences to become a springboard for building a school culture of accompaniment. As a reminder these are contexts where reciprocal learning and co-construction may arise naturally. Systemic small scale work can be connected to larger improvement efforts. In the case of this study, while experiences that the participants named did not suggest continuous systemic collaborative inquiry–of the kind associated with collaborative professionalism (Hargreaves & O'Connor, 2018)– it is possible to say that there is potential for it to happen.

With this in mind, the first question is: **How are/will opportunities for reciprocal learning–through meaningful joint work – be systematically supported and encouraged?** Note that with this question, we pick up a recommendation from Phase II of this research regarding meaningful joint work.

If accompaniment is to be viewed as a process that elicits collective engagement in changing practices or fosters collective efficacy in a school, then the development of a culture of accompaniment will need to be a goal (Lafortune, 2009c). Lafortune makes the point that leaders who are appointed to carry out accompaniment are often assumed "to have the professional competencies they need for the task" (2009c, p. 133). She goes on to say, "yet in actual fact, experience has shown that there is significant variation in the level of competency development" (Lafortune, 2009c, p. 133). Thus, we ask: **What forms of professional learning and development for leaders will foster the emergence of cultures of accompaniment, which includes routine co-construction of shared goals, reciprocal learning, discussions of professional lives, self-awareness, and attention to teachers' needs as learners?**

In answering this question it will be important to consider where the points of tension exist and *overlap* with the possibilities of accompaniment (refer to Tables 2 & 3 on pp. 6–7). As a reminder, these are the contexts in which PLD is structured or organized. In such contexts, it is likely that consensus and cohesive teacher knowledge would be sought. Given that effectively managing conditions for consensus and cohesive knowledge is fundamental to aspirations for collective efficacy (Hoogsteen, 2020), the processes for such management need to be considered and addressed.

Some direction may be drawn from the work of Lafortune (2009a, 2009b, 2009c), whose six-year collaborative study in Quebec (2002–2008) looked directly at the conditions through which cultures of accompaniment arise in relation to school-wide changes in practices. The project involved 1000 educators from both English and French boards and institutions. One of the many outcomes was a framework of "accompaniment leadership" competencies essential to the process of supporting change. Lafortune describes such leadership:

> becoming able to influence through a form of leadership to spur action consistent with the change; ensure cohesion, coherence, and shared comprehension of the change; develop a workplace culture associated with that of the change; aim to forge partnerships; and encourage the forming of learning and practice communities or networks. (2009a, p. 136).

The above quote provides a complementary angle to Donohoo's et al.'s (2020) perspective on what it means to optimize the capacity of a learning community. Notably, Lafortune's (2009a) competency framework intersects in interesting ways with specific conditions proposed by Donohoo and colleagues. For example, while they point to the importance of "embedded reflective practice," (p. 16), Lafortune (2009a) proposes a required leadership competency: "model reflective practice." Thus, she explores what might be entailed in the process of taking leadership to foster embedded reflective practice (2009 b,c).
It is worth returning to the words of the principals in the study, who spoke of the challenges they face in seeking convergence around school-wide goals and collaborative professional learning. "You always hope that you can turn people around and get them to, you know, come on board to like, to a certain degree." Beyond hope, their efforts involve "finding ways to make them understand;" however, the "ways" of doing so are less clear. For one, the response is more discussion: "If I have asked them, then they and they don't feel, they don't see the value, then we have to sit down and talk about it again." For one of the participants, the perception is that with "a positive and respectful and open environment, collaboration will only follow." This final example points to the significance of what some of the participants referred to as "school culture", or "culture within the building," which is one more another dimension that Lafortune (2009a) might illuminate.

It is clear that continued exploration of the interplay of different understandings of the context will contribute to ensuring the validity and the efficacy of proposals for professional learning and development for teachers. Without a deep understanding of their lived experiences and context, and without a consideration of the roles of all those involved–and their respective professional learning needs–any attempt to produce change might not be successful and may therefore be a misuse of social, human, and economic resources.

TL; DR

The power of accompaniment moments offers possibilities to:

- Recognize and expand contexts & experiences of meaningful collaborative learning
- Acknowledge and leverage educator expertise within a school
- Consider the conditions that create intersections between formal PLD initiatives and teacher-led initiatives
- Develop collaborative professionalism for school improvement
- Elicit collective engagement in changing practices and foster collective efficacy
- Design PLD for leaders focused on ways to support co-construction of shared goals, reciprocal learning, discussions of professional lives, self-awareness, and attention to teachers' needs as learners
- Foster embedded collective reflective practice across the system

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5. Appendix–Semi-Structured Interview Prompts

Phase III–Accompaniment Moments

RECRUITMENT EMAIL

Project Title: **Accompaniment: Practice & Research**
Mission Statement: ***Accompaniment for and by educators to foster collaborative professionalism.***
Project Manager: **Dr. Trista Hollweck, LCEEQ**
Subject: **LCEEQ Accompaniment Project: Interview invitation**
Email: **trista@lceeq.ca**

Dear colleagues,

I hope this email finds you well.

First, thank you for participating in the LCEEQ Accompaniment project. I know this has been another challenging year for English educators in Quebec and your engagement in this research study is much appreciated. The purpose of the study is to examine educator professional networks and experiences to better understand the structures and conditions that support educator flourishing. Specifically, we are interested in how accompaniment for and by educators fosters collaborative professionalism.

The Accompaniment research teams are in the process of completing the social network analysis (SNA) of the school questionnaires that you and your colleagues completed earlier this year (Phase II). We are now moving into the interview phase (Phase III). You had indicated on your SNA questionnaire that you would be willing to participate in a 30-45 minute online (zoom) interview. Please see the informed consent letter attached to this email for more information on the interview process.

If you consent to being part of this next phase, please respond to this email by completing the statement that follows. I will then connect you to a member from our research team to arrange a date and time that best suits your schedule.

I, _____(your name), have read and understand the terms of the present consent form. I have made this decision based on the information I have received about it, and I accept its stipulations. I hereby accept to participate in this study with the terms of participation.

Date: _____

Thank you again for your engagement in this project! Please do not hesitate to reach out should you have any further questions, comments and/or concerns.

Trista

Trista Hollweck, PhD
Project Manager, LCEEQ
Accompaniment Project: Research and Practice
@tristateach

Unceded Algonquin Anishinaabeg territory

Driving Research Question: *"What accompaniment moments (positive and/or negative) have shaped educators' individual & collective efficacy?"*

Principal Investigator: Dr. Trista Hollweck, LCEEQ
Co-Researcher: Dr. Teresa Hernandez Gonzalez, Concordia University
*   Dr. Avril Aitken, Bishop's University*
*   Dr. Heather McPherson, McGill University*
Critical Friend: Dr. Hannah Chestnutt, McGill University

Process: Qualitative semi-structured interviews with participants (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009)

1) When you think about the five last years, can you think of some key moments that you believe have marked where you are today professionally?
2) Since you started your professional career, can you think of key experiences that have marked you as a teacher/helped you to become the professional that you are today?
3) Can you think of a time where you collaborated and made a difference? Please walk me through how this unfolded in detail
4) And again, thinking about these past years, can you think of a moment or event when you felt being part of a group, a community, where you mattered to the others in the group?

Interview Probes & Prompts:

With each question, follow-up questions should include exploration of the actors and an attempt to cause/effect relationships and other associations in the events (Why? Who? For whom? How?)

Where possible, use questions to prompt participants [please tell me more... Can you elaborate?]

Probes can be nonverbal and involve the use of gestures, facial expressions, nods, body posture, and silence.

Verbal probes like, "uh-huh," "Yes," "okay," "Go on," "Can you give me an example," or "That's interesting, could you tell me more," can also facilitate detailed descriptions and exploration (Rubin & Rubin, 2012, p. 118). These types of probes are simple requests for additional information or detail (Kinsey, et al., 1948; Shaffer & Elkins, 2005). Probes can also be used;

a) To steer the interviewee back on track, "You were saying that…" or "Could you go back and tell me about…,"
b) To summarize and reflect to ensure understanding, "You said that…,"
c) To ask for clarification, "I didn't quite understand," "Can you explain this to me in more detail," or "Are you saying that…,"
d) To check for understanding, confirmation, or to facilitate communication,
e) As open requests to elaborate, "Sounds like…," or "That sounds…," and
f) As a check for credibility, "How exactly did that occur," "What happened that made it so," "What words were used when…," or "What exactly was going on at that time" (Rubin & Rubin, 2012).
g) "Now that you know what the research is about, is there anything that I should have asked but didn't?"