

COMMUNICATION, COLLABORATION, AND CONCERN BETWEEN
ELEMENTARY SCHOOL TEACHERS: UNLOCKING
THE POSITIVE POTENTIAL OF CONFLICT

by

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THESIS ABSTRACT

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Collaboration is touted as a solution to modern challenges in education, but the difficulties of establishing truly collaborative communities are many. From a conflict-resolution lens, collaboration requires both assertiveness and cooperation (high preference for both completing tasks and maintaining relationships). This study uses surveys and interviews to explore the ways that teachers balance task and relationship orientations in resolving conflict between themselves and the impact that teachers' behaviors while in conflict have on collaboration. Specifically, this study examines the role that trust, relationships, and process norms play in encouraging collaborative behaviors. Results suggest that teachers' perceived ineffectiveness with conflict resolution and the fear of damaging relationships discourage open communication. Consequently, focusing on trust and relationship building does little to promote authentically collaborative exchanges. Instead, the perception of available time and a familiar process for raising concerns with colleagues are more likely to promote open communication and more authentic collaboration.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Businesses and organizations increasingly rely on teams and collaborative structures to meet the modern world's complex challenges. The benefits of integrated approaches are many and management approaches have sprung up across diverse fields to support collaborative efforts (Appelbaum, Abdallah, & Shapiro, 1999; Hargreaves, 1994; Senge, 2006). Teachers, too, are increasingly expected to work collaboratively to best meet their students' needs. Through collaboration, educators help one another make sense of their realities, create new solutions to difficult problems (Halverson, 2010; Rust, 1999; Spillane, Reiser, & Reimer, 2014) and create supportive environments of "team learning" (Senge, 2006). Collaborative teams leverage individual skills for collective gain. In addition, through collaboration, teachers experience increased efficacy and improved satisfaction emerging from personal dignity (Louis et al., 1995). Increasingly, "Collaboration is now widely proposed as an organizational solution to the problems of contemporary schooling.... Collaborative decision-making and problem solving is a cornerstone of postmodern organizations" (Hargreaves, 1994 p. 17).

Indeed, increased social capital, professional connections and rich sharing between teachers, benefits student learning (Fullan & Hargreaves, 2012; Leana, 2011; Stoll, Bolam, McMahon, Wallace, & Thomas, 2006), but achieving this degree of fruitful collaboration is fraught with difficulties. In many cases, the realities fall far short of the promises and many "professional learning communities" are really collaborative in name only. In some cases, teachers experience only "contrived collegiality" where professional conversations are superficial at best (Barth, 2013; Hargreaves, 1994). In others, collaboration happens with a sense of compliance (Anderson, 1998; Coburn, 2005; Goldspink, 2007). In these cases, teacher collaboration lacks depth does little to change the status quo.

In the growing field of conflict resolution, the word "collaboration" often refers to a style of problem solving in which parties act assertively to maximize their agenda while still acting cooperatively and maintaining strong relationships with the other party (Kraybill, 2005a; Thomas & Kilmann, 2012). In many ways, this matches with the ideals

of teacher collaboration in which teachers seek to maximize learning (both for students and for themselves) while maintaining positive relationships with their colleagues, students, and families. Like collaboration in an educational sense, collaborative approaches to conflict resolution require a task-oriented open exchange of information AND careful attention to relationship needs and emotional support. In spite of these parallel ideals, scant attention has been paid to the role of conflict resolution in teacher collaboration.

How, then, do teachers actually find this balance between task and relationships? What are the ways teachers currently manage disagreements between themselves? How do they experience conflict and conflict resolution? What factors influence their choices and what implications do their norms for conflict resolution have on their professional experiences? Do they assertively and openly explore their practice with one another with a high commitment to their task? Are they cooperative? Do teachers actually show concern for one another and for maintaining positive relationships? How do teachers balance these two demands of both improving their practice and maintaining relationships? How do outside elements (time, structure, school leadership) support or discourage one of these over the other? This study will explore these questions.

CHAPTER II

LITERATURE REVIEW

By nature, framing this study requires an interdisciplinary lens. Accordingly it will draw on literature from education, educational leadership, conflict resolution, and business/organizational management. The following literature review explores the characteristics and challenges of collaborative communities, facets of workplace conflict and conflict management, individual conflict styles and the group norms that may impact individual behavior, and finally, the role that leaders play in educational settings in supporting both collaboration and conflict resolution between staff members.

Collaboration in Education Settings

Across schools, collaboration between teachers takes many forms. “Critical Friends,” (Baskerville & Goldblatt, 2009), “Professional Learning Communities,” (Dufour & Eaker, 1998), coaching and peer mentoring, (Rhodes & Beneicke, 2010), social capital (Leana, 2011), and “professional capital” (Fullan & Hargreaves, 2012) all claim to leverage professional connections between teachers to benefit of student learning. Imprecise language has clouded both the literature and the application of these lofty ideals (Barth, 2006; Westheimer, 1998) but should not stop us from exploring the themes broadly.

The critical components of collaboration (from an educational perspective) and professional communities vary by author and conceptual framework but share some commonalities. Louis & Kruse (1995) identify five critical components of successful professional learning communities. These include: shared values, a focus on student learning, reflective dialogue, the deprivation of practice, and a focus on collaboration. With these elements, professional growth depends, not just on new ways of teaching but rather on opportunities to practice, be observed/critiqued, dialogue, and reflect (Elmore & Burney, 1997; Kruse, Louis, & Bryk, 1994; Lieberman & Pointer Mace, 2008). Varied structures and processes to guide increasingly collaborative work have been developed up to support this type of growth and maximize learning (Baskerville & Goldblatt, 2009; Dufour & Eaker, 1998; Lieberman, Darling-Hammond, & Zuckerman, 1991).

In a concrete sense, having time and space to work together are important for collaborative efforts. “Actuation spaces” for professional learning (Halverson, 2010; Kruse et al., 1994; Lieberman et al., 1991) require insulation from other professional demands and structure. In many schools these spaces are difficult to create and support (Cochran-Smit & Lytle, 1999). In addition to having dedicated time and space for collaborative work, leaning communities need communication structure and processes to guide hem in their work. Lieberman, Darling-Hammond, & Zuckerman argue that, "The process a team uses in going about its work is as important as the content of the educational changes it attempts" (1991, p. x). Many educators, however talented, lack the time and skills to attend to the finer points of process facilitation that rigerous learning communities demand. Ongoing training and support for collaborative decision making, conflict resolution, group dynamics, and facilitation of meetings are often missing, even in schools that claim to place a high priority on teacher collaboration (Lieberman et al., 1991).

In addition to adequate time and process supports, learning communities need less-tangible, social and emotional components. Kruse et al (1994) find that human resources, including professional regard for one another is more critical for fruitful conversations than the structural conditions (designated time and spaces). Across studies, trust and openness are cited as critically important human resources for collaboration (Campbell, Fullan, & Glaze, 2006; Cosner, 2009; Lieberman et al., 1991; Louis & Kruse, 1995; Spillane & Thompson, 1997; Theobald, 2006). Without this trust, heightened vulnerabilities, emotions, and professional identities complicate teachers’ willingness change, to take professional risks - be they in the classroom or in conversation with colleagues (Day, 2002; Kelchtermans, 2005; Lasky, 2005; Louis et al., 1995; Reio, 2005).

McLaughlin and Talbert (2006) identify three types of teacher communities, typical (weak), strong “traditional” communities, and full learning communities. Despite decades of investment in developing collaborative cultures, fully collaborative learning communities are rare. Some “collaborative” schools tout evidence of teachers sharing resources, team lesson planning, and enjoying designated time for collaborative work, while largely ignoring deeper critical reflection (Hord & Sommers, 2008; Westheimer,

1998). In many schools, ongoing norms of deference and autonomy limit the range and depth of issues that teachers feel comfortable in raising with one another (Little, 1982; Lortie, 1975). Finally, teachers' perceived risk of damaging relationships and a prioritization of collegial harmony over staff learning may stall critical examination of practice (Achinstein, 2002a). In some schools, professional communities are spaces where traditional practices and attitudes feed static or decreasing expectations, motivations, and commitment (McLaughlin & Talbert, 1993).

Conflict in Schools

To understand the overlap of collaboration from an educational lens and from a conflict resolution lens, it is helpful to get a clear understanding of conflict itself and its expression in schools. Conflict “may be said to exist when there are real or perceived differences that arise in specific organizational circumstances and that engender emotion as a consequence” (Kolb & Putnam, 1992, p. 312). For teachers, “differences” can take on various forms including explicit and implicit conflicts. These may range from small annoyances, for example, a teacher not cleaning up after herself in the staff lounge, or showing up late to recess duty, to larger disagreements over teaching assignments, resource allocation, and classroom discipline procedures. Johns, McGrath, & Mathur (2006) wrote an entire book-full of collegial challenges that new teachers face. The very existence of this book and its detailed suggestions to gracefully sidestep these interpersonal conflicts speaks to the challenges schools face in creating collaborative communities. In many cases, these authors prioritize autonomy and selective alliances as a means to insulate one's self from problems.

Equally important, but often more difficult to identify, are implicit conflicts including day-to-day instructional decisions and pedagogy. Some of these conflicts reflect the dynamic purpose of schooling in a modern era while others are a natural byproduct of increased teacher collaboration. As schools evolve to keep pace with modern demands, Hargreaves suggests:

old missions and purposes begin to crumble but there are few obvious substitutes to take their places...the methods and strategies that teachers use, along with the knowledge base which justifies them, are strongly

criticized - even among educators themselves - as scientific certainties lose their credibility... (1994, p. 4).

Fluidity of mission and diverse methods to achieve the mission demands ongoing, dynamic decision-making and negotiation. Differing ideas on curriculum, assessment, technology, school choice, funding, increased racial integration, administration, school size, and more, give myriad of options but no one clear path forward. Thus, democratizing efforts in schools are likely to surface long-embedded conflicts.

In addition to these broad challenges, collaboration itself is likely to expose differences and spark conflict between teachers. Within a single school, individual teachers have different ideas of what good teaching and learning looks like. In collaboration, teachers come to recognize differences of belief or action and begin to explore, understand, exacerbate, or reconcile these difference (Achinstein, 2002b). Teachers working in collaborative teams continually “rub up against” their differences and negotiate solutions. McLaughlin and Talbert argue that:

“...conflict and anxiety are an inevitable by-product of faculty pluralism and diversity- especially as a teacher learning community forms...principals’ ability to manage conflict significantly determines whether the community is able to see differences as opportunities for learning and exploration rather than as hurtful, divisive discord...” (2006, p. 81)

Increasing accountability and expectations add pressure to the mix making negotiation of practice all the more difficult (Cuban, 1990). Given this, teachers and administrators alike need to be prepared to elicit, manage, and resolve conflicts (Lieberman et al., 1991, p. ix).

The ways educators manage conflict (openly, furtively, or by suppressing it) impacts learning throughout the school systems. One study found that conflict-suppressing schools speak glowingly about their colleagues, feel positive about their work, and have low staff turnover. However, in these schools, dissenting voices are ignored or teams are shuffled to minimize disagreements. In contrast, teachers at schools where conflict is openly addressed experience higher stress and higher staff turnover, but they identify a strong, authentically shared commitment to doing what’s best for kids. In these cases, teachers critically and publicly examine one another’s practice, constantly

checking their actions against shared values and beliefs (Achinstein, 2002a). When managed well, conflict serves schools as a resource but it is still not without its challenges. In another study, norms of autonomy at one school trumped ideals of community and created a fractured system. While this deference to colleagues' individual professionalism minimized conflict, it also precluded teachers from many opportunities to learn from one another. In contrast, schools where teachers vigorously advocate for their views and then build creative solutions to satisfy them, saw both increased conflict and increased learning (Westheimer, 1998). Both of these investigations suggest that rosy and un-conflicted relationships gloss over the real, and sometimes messy work of authentic collaboration (de Lima, 2001). In spite of all this, scant attention has been paid to conflict between educators. How then do teachers experience and manage conflict in their work together? What lessons from the fields of conflict resolution and management might inform the discussion?

Faces, Costs, and Benefits of Workplace Conflict

Across industries, dynamic expectations, fluid teams, increasingly diverse workplaces, and an absence of rigid process make conflict inevitable (Kolb & Putnam, 1992) but its impacts can vary widely. Conflict can be both destructive/degenerative or constructive/generative (Appelbaum et al., 1999). The negative aspects of conflict are generally well understood but the less obvious beneficial aspects are worth highlighting here. Open communication and "conflict stimulation" can increase group functioning through increased mutual understanding, shared decision making and improved relationships (Putnam, 1994). Rigorous exploration of differences helps parties sharpen their own insights and can jointly and creatively integrate seemingly opposing ideas (R. J. Fisher, 1997). Through open exploration of differences, stakeholders are more able to identify, explore, and authentically address problems. Conversely, conflict avoidance or suppression can actually damage interpersonal relationships, encourage group-think, and limit productivity (Carsten K.W. De Dreu, 1997; Lieberman et al., 1991). Given this, conflict is a necessary part of positive change.

Distinguishing cognitive from affective conflict helps explain the varied effects of conflict. Cognitive conflicts focus on substantive, issue-related differences while

affective conflicts are personal and individually focused (Amason, Thompson, Harrison, & Hochwarter, 1995). Predictably, cognitive conflict elevates the level of performance in teams while affective conflict decreases it (Amason et al., 1995; Amason, 1996; Appelbaum et al., 1999; Carsten K.W. De Dreu, 1997). While cognitive conflict creates space to resolve a technical challenge, affective conflict is likely to spark a strong emotional response. Affective conflicts are likely to elicit strong emotions, which may escalate a conflict to a point where logical resolution seems difficult, if not impossible. Affective conflict is tied to decreased commitment and higher turnover (Henkin & Holliman, 2009). Thus, the challenge to professionals working in teams, is to maximize cognitive conflicts while minimizing affective ones or, “separate the people from the problem” (R. Fisher & Ury, 1991).

Unfortunately, whether a problem is regarded as cognitive or affective may be highly open to personal interpretation. A person wishing to raise an issue may frame the problem cognitively but the “offending” colleague may infer an affective message and respond in challenging ways (Rosenberg, 2003). When the stakes are higher or the conflict more pressing, distinctions between cognitive and affective conflict will be all the more critical to understand. Indeed, a meta-analysis of conflict shows mixed results for the purported benefits of task focused conflict (Carsten K W De Dreu & Weingart, 2003). However well intentioned our raising of concerns:

...people get angry, depressed, fearful, hostile, frustrated, and offended. They have egos that are easily threatened. They see the world from their own personal vantage point, and they frequently confuse their perceptions with reality. Routinely, they fail to interpret what you say in the way you intended and do not mean what you understood them to say...failing to deal with others sensitively as human beings prone to human reactions can be disastrous.... (R. Fisher & Ury, 1991, p. 19).

Clearly, the difficulty (and the importance) of separating the people from the problems cannot be understated.

Workplace Conflict Management

Existing research on workplace conflict illuminates the ways in which both formal and informal practices work to manage conflict and possible opportunities to positively influence outcomes. Structurally, companies and organizations have three ways of managing conflict between members: rights based (using a third party, formal process with codified procedures, grievances, etc.), interest based (using a third party neutral but parties themselves resolve the problem), and negotiated processes (parties work out a disagreement on their own). Organizations do best when all three components exist and compliment one another. The components and relative strengths of each of them can shape parties' perception of conflict and subsequent responses to it (Bendersky, 2013). Although teachers may use all three types of conflict resolution components, this paper will focus on the "negotiated processes" that teachers use to manage everyday disputes between themselves.

Across organizations, the vast majority of conflicts are managed (negotiated) informally and out of any public view (Kolb & Putnam, 1992; Kunda, 2006). These negotiated processes are generally the least expensive and most efficient approach. In addition, with effective conflict negotiation, differences can be resolved efficiently and even spark meaningful innovation. Further, opportunities to influence decisions and participate in group processes produces higher satisfaction and fulfillment in employees resulting in even greater cooperation and productivity (Bendersky, 2013) and improved organizational commitment (Henkin & Holliman, 2009). It is important to remember that such negotiations are only successful when the communication is seen as authentically task-focused (Amason, 1996); teams must "be able to manage that conflict and how they do so brings out the best or the worst of employee involvement." (Amason, Thompson, Harrison, & Hochwarter, 1995, p. 20). Accordingly, to maximize full participation and positive outcomes, teams need structures, norms, and agreements that decrease the perceived costs of raising issues, and increase the perceived benefits both for the individual and the team. To that end, many organizations hope and expect that most individuals will solve problems directly without third party intervention and provide training for conflict resolution skills (Costantino & Merchant, 1996; Slaikeu & Hasson, 1998; Thompson, 2000; Ury et al., 1989; Wall & Callister, 1995 cited in Bendersky,

2013). Schools, like other organizations, are likely to need skilled outside facilitation, ongoing training, and retreats to master these challenges (Lieberman et al., 1991).

Individual Choices and Styles for Conflict Management

Regardless of the type of conflict or system in which the people work, individuals have myriad ways to recognize and respond to differences. Kraybill (2005) and Thomas and Kilmann (2012) suggest five styles for managing conflict. These styles are organized along intersecting continuums of assertiveness (task focus) and cooperativeness (relationship focus) (Figure 1).

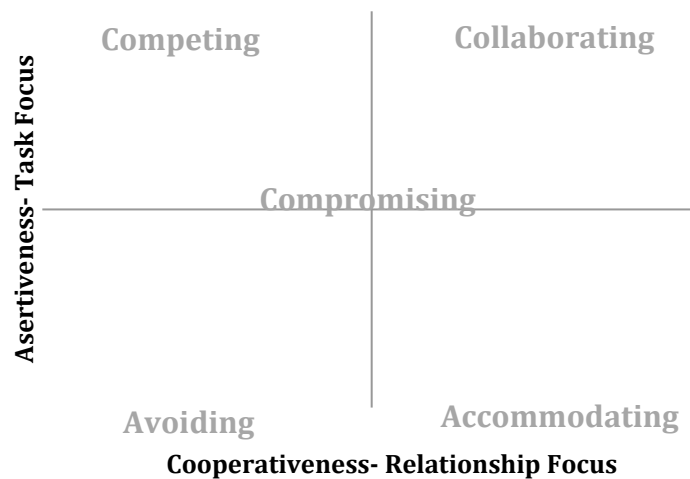


Figure 1: Conflict Styles- Adapted from Kraybill (2005) and Thomas & Kilmann (2012)

In addition to individuals' natural styles, group norms and situational context also impact individual decisions. Operating in informal systems of conflict negotiation, individuals continually analyze the potential costs and benefits to different courses of action. When the perceived costs of confronting a conflict outweighs the perceived benefits, people are likely to avoid raising the issue (Appelbaum et al., 1999). At times, conflict avoidance may well serve the both the individual and the team. Other times, however, team success in decision-making and performance depends on a rigorous, even contentious examination of a situation.

Beyond to these five orientations, Achinstein (2002a) draws special attention to the practice of externalizing conflict, blaming a perceived difference on another party. According to the framework in Figure 1, this would be an avoidance strategy. With

externalization, individuals deflect frustrations with privileged parties to maintain harmony and with some, while damaging relationships with others. In schools, this could play out in teachers “sticking together” with colleagues while blaming school leadership, parents, or the community for students’ performance. While this strategy maintains harmony within the teachers’ professional community, it may mask other contributors to low performance (including teacher competency). Further, it erodes trust in the broader school community, alienates crucial allies, and may negatively affect student outcomes (Achinstein, 2002a; Bryk & Schneider, 1996, 2002). Interests in maintaining relationships with colleagues *and* increasing student learning may, at times, feel at odds leaving teachers feeling like they have to choose one over the other.

Role of Leaders Pivotal for Both Collaboration and Conflict Resolution

School leaders have a vested interest in supporting collaborative communities and play a critical role in establishing both the structural and cultural supports for the work (Dufour, DuFour, Eaker, & Many, 2006; Hord & Sommers, 2008). Specifically, school principals play a key role in setting the tone and establishing trust (Cosner, 2009). By modeling behaviors that support learning, teachers can follow a principal’s cues and carry those skills into their own everyday interactions (Barth, 2013).

In addition to this role of supporting collaborative working environments, principals are frequently called upon to resolve conflict (Eberts & Stone, 1988; Kardos, Johnson, Peske, Kauffman, & Liu, 2001; McLaughlin & Talbert, 2006; Quong, 2006). Unfortunately, managers in general tend to be poor mediators of conflict (Kolb & Putnam, 1992). Misalignment of efforts and poorly managed conflicts can undermine even the most enthusiastic collaborators. Bryk & Schneider (2002) highlight the case of Dr. Numan, a well-liked principal whose value of relationships (between staff, students, and families) ultimately eroded his leadership effectiveness. This conciliatory principal listened to concerns, but then did not follow up on them. In doing so, Dr. Newman tolerated poor performance causing a gradual decline in the teachers’ enthusiasm for their work and willingness to work together (Bryk and Schneider 2002 cited in Fullan, 2003).

In light of this influence, understanding a principal's orientation to conflict may be just as important as the ways the principal supports conflict resolution between employees, students, and families.

CHAPTER III

METHODS

To explore teachers' experiences with conflict, communication, and professional community this study uses an explanatory sequential mixed method design (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2011). This included a combination of surveys and interviews. Four schools participated in the study. Schools were selected based on existing relationships between the researcher and school principals. Previous rapport with principals or a friendly introduction from another colleague was key to gaining the principal's willingness to participate in the study. Once the principals agreed to participate, teachers were informed about the study and invited to participate in an online survey (see Appendix) lasting ten to twenty minutes.

These data were analyzed using linear regression models (R Core Team, 2014) In these analyses, I looked for correlations between the an active response to hypothetical scenarios and the frequency of confrontation or avoidance according to each of the following predictor variables: time at the school, time in the profession, perception of their schools' norms of avoidance, task orientation, openness, relationship orientation, process norms, perception of collaboration in the school, overall trust in their colleagues, and perception of their colleagues' competency. The goal of this analysis was to better understand possible drivers of the behavioral patterns and communication preferences reported.

At the end of the survey, teachers were invited to participate in follow-up interviews (Bernard, 2011) at a time and location of their choosing. In the interviews, teachers were shown aggregated results from the survey and asked to respond to three main questions:

1. Do the results seemed accurate? Do they resonate with your own impressions?
2. What stands out? What do you notice as you view the results?
3. What do the data mean to you? How do you see these feelings and perspectives play out in your day-to-day experience?

These interviews lasted approximately one hour. With the participants' permission, the audio from the interviews was recorded for transcription. Transcribed

interviews were analyzed to triangulate the survey results, identify common themes and find illustrative/representative quotes. In addition to interviewing teachers, the principal from three of the four schools were interviewed using the same format and focus questions as the teachers. One principal was not available to interview. To protect the privacy of all participants, pseudonyms are used in place of real names and individual schools are not identified.

CHAPTER IV

RESULTS

In these results I find that although teachers claim high levels of trust and collaboration with their colleagues, few teachers are actually open with their colleagues. Rather, the teachers show a strong preference for externalizing or avoiding potential conflicts. Specifically, many teachers turned to the principal in cases of hypothetical conflict. Trust and perceived openness were not predictive of open communication between teachers. Instead, process norms (having time and a familiar process to raise concerns with colleagues) positively correlated with open and proactive communication. A more detailed exploration of these results follows here.

Demographics of Participants

In all, fifty-three teachers from four different elementary schools responded to the survey. In addition, eleven individuals (including principals from three of the schools) were interviewed. The majority (74%) of survey respondents are female, which generally matches the proportion of females on staff at each school. Most of survey respondents had worked at their schools between two and five or between six and ten years. Most respondents had worked in education for between eleven and twenty or over twenty-one years.

Teachers View Schools as Collaborative Via an Educational Lens

Using an educational lens of “collaboration,” teachers at all of the participating schools described their school staff cultures as collaborative (Figure 2).

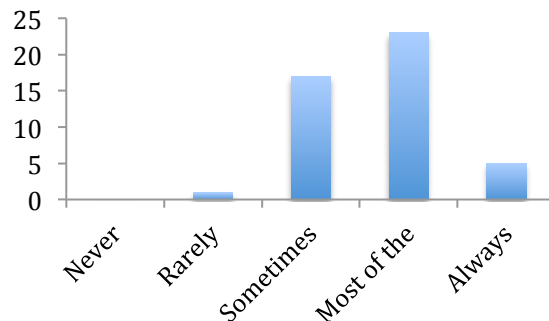


Figure 2: Survey Results-Teacher estimation of frequency of collaboration

At one school, a teacher commented that since their principal had started at their school, the expectation had been, “team, team, team!” Their principal confirmed this perception saying:

Most grade levels have a working lunch every day. A lot of adjustment happens then. Then we have data teams each week with one grade so the other grades have time to work together. They're starting to see the value, more and more of working as a group rather than just closing their doors.

A principal from a different school noted the expectation for collaboration at his school saying, “...you can't vote yourself off of this island. You're a part of this team. This is the plan. This what we're doing...”

The ways in which respondents collaborate with colleagues varied but all included some combination of asking for and giving advice, sharing resources, planning lessons together, shared analysis of student data, coordinated responses to students’ needs, and more. Collaborative analysis of and response to student assessment data were seen as major components of teachers’ work together (Figure 3).

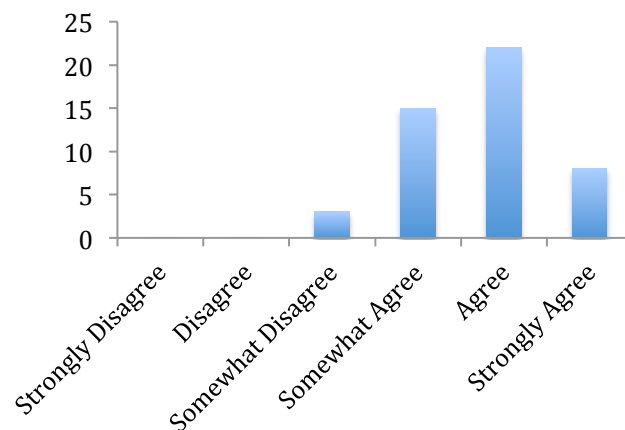


Figure 3: Survey Results- "Teams of teachers make ongoing small and large adjustments to instruction based on data"

In the face of this spirited collaboration, there were also limits to the types of collaborative activities that teachers engaged with. For example, at several schools teachers were able to observe a colleague teach but few actually participated in this opportunity. In fact, several teachers expressed anxiety about the thought of a colleague

watching him/her teach and felt like it would be uncomfortable for both the observer and the teacher being observed. Of this opportunity one teacher said:

I don't think any of our teachers would want someone in their classroom and observing them as a colleague...I think it's a great idea if you want to learn from another staff member and their teaching style, that's awesome...I think that constructive criticism could be good as well but I don't see teachers doing that at all.

Teachers View Schools as Collaborative Via Conflict Resolution Lens

Teachers' perceptions of their schools' norms for conflict resolution (focus on task and focus on relationships) varied but generally fall in the "collaborative" realm of conflict styles (Figure 4).

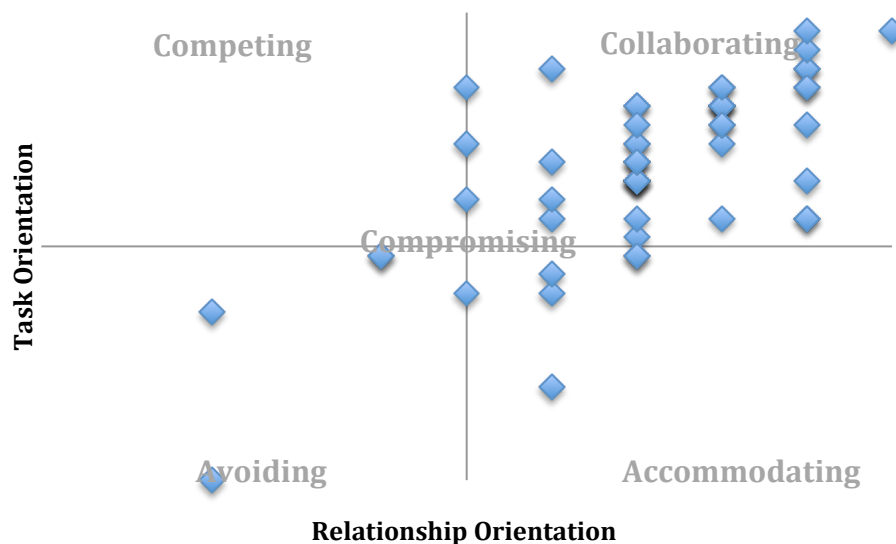


Figure 4: Survey Results- Teachers' views of staff task and relationship orientations Adapted from Kraybill (2005) and Thomas & Kilmann (2012)

Generally, teachers reported high task orientation and high relationship orientation. Task orientation norms included a focus on getting things done, suggesting solutions assertively, etc. Relationship norms included taking time to listen to all staff and satisfy as many interests as possible, valuing diverse opinions, and focusing on maintaining positive relationships. Interviews confirmed these findings. Across schools, the teachers agreed that getting things done and maintaining positive relationships were important in

their schools. One teacher shared, “We do get things done. Our principal is really good about setting direction and saying, OK, now we're going to tackle this...and then he moves it along which I like.” This school uses a leadership team to for shared decision-making to balance the principal’s control with ample teacher leadership. In another interview, a teacher framed the focus on relationship saying:

I think, in general, teachers try to make people happy. That's kind of the personality type that we have...we like people to be happy and content. I think everyone likes that and wants that.... As a staff, I think we value each other's opinions. For the most part, we listen to each other and take what they say and use that information.

In describing juggling both task and relationship needs one principal explained, “... we have a lot of micro-conversations...there are a million of those every day that are effective for moving the ball down the field. Those are the key; they are little stream release valves that let the pressure off...”

In addition to this enthusiasm for both getting things done and maintaining relationships, some teachers identified difficulties in balancing the two. One teacher explained:

I have a concern for relationships. I want people to like me... but I'm going to do what I have to do to do my job... if it comes down between you liking me/us working well together or me doing the job the way I know it needs to be done, I'm going to do the job the way I know it needs to be done. Sorry. And I think a lot of other people would much rather make people happy. But I'm not willing to compromise that.

Teachers Express Desire for Peer-to-Peer Communication

In interviews, teachers reported an interest in having colleagues address concerns directly with them but also reported tension with actually giving and receiving feedback. One teacher stated, “Maybe it’s hard sometimes...but if someone has an issue with me I would want them to come to me first, before they go over my head, because I may not even know that I'm having a conflict and that someone has an issue with me.” Another said, “If someone had an idea or suggestion, I'd want them to come to me...I like

feedback for my classroom. Having someone say, 'why don't you try it this way?' would be helpful." A third explained:

If Sarah came to me with something, it's not going to damage my relationship with her because I respect her and know she's coming to me with a concern. More than likely she wants to help me. If I'm having issues in my classroom or doing something that doesn't look good to other people, I would want her to come and talk to me about it and I wouldn't be looking at her like she's just being mean or controlling or bossy.

One of the principals echoed this idea saying:

I would want the feedback from a peer! To me, if I'm a 3rd grade teacher and we're swapping kids for reading or math, you have to have a level of trust. If you're not willing to talk to one another about a concern and you do nothing...that's not helping anyone!

In contrast to these wishes, teachers had experienced the opposite, colleagues taking a far less direct approach to raising issues. In one case, a small group of teachers went all the way to the superintendent's office (skipping over talking to the principal) about a concern with a colleague. In another, a teacher only learned about her colleague's frustrations through a substitute teacher months after the fact. She explained:

I was totally in the dark for the entire year that someone was upset with me for something and I had no idea until June. It was super simple and easy and could have been taken care of...I asked [my colleague], "Why didn't you tell me?" and she said, "Well, I just didn't..." I feel like that's her problem, but it ended up making a mess for me. I'd rather she had just come tell me, but people don't.

Teachers Avoid Confrontation in Response to Hypothetical Scenarios

Although teachers reported to be very collaborative (from both an educational and a conflict resolution lens) many teachers showed a preference for avoiding or externalizing conflicts. In response to hypothetical scenarios, approximately one quarter of teachers reported that they would talk to a colleague directly about a problem. These hypothetical scenarios included low level conflicts/concerns (a colleague being

perpetually late), medium level conflicts/concerns (a colleague showing questionable teaching practices), and high level conflicts/concerns (a colleague with questionable socializing with students outside of school). Teachers' reported responses to these scenarios are in Figure 5.

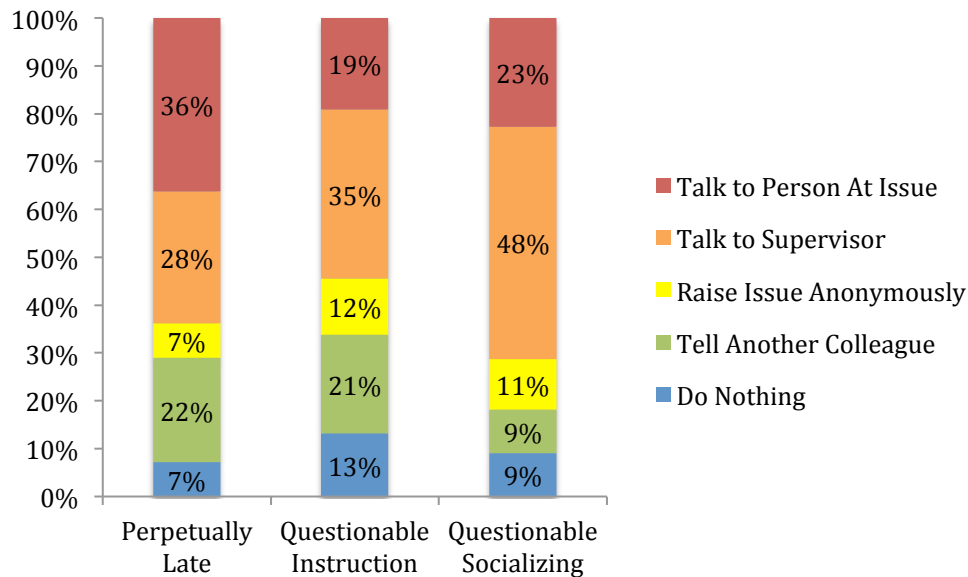


Figure 5: Survey Results- Teacher reaction to hypothetical scenarios

One teacher spoke for those with a passive response (do nothing, tell another colleague, or raise the issue anonymously) saying:

I know for me I probably try to avoid conflict as much as I can. So if I'm having some kind of trouble...I don't feel comfortable with saying, "I'm really having a problem with..." I feel discomfort with confrontation.

That's not my style. I'm not sure always how those things get resolved so I just figure out how to work within the system or make it work the best it can for myself and not really raise the conflict with the person."

Another teacher echoed this tendency towards avoidance saying, "I would like to know who goes directly to their partners. One of our grade-level-teams might be able to do that within themselves but for the rest, there would be daggers and lasers and swords and stones." One of the principals described his staff saying:

...we're pretty divided about how we solve problems here. Some people use me to solve the problems rather than going directly to each other.

When they go directly, sometimes it works and sometimes I have to get involved because it didn't work.... People will openly identify problems with me and ask me to go and talk to that person but a lot of times they don't feel comfortable having conversation themselves.

Through all of these examples, discomfort with directly addressing issues was common.

Teachers' perceptions of roles and status also seemed to influence their responses to these hypotheticals. One teacher explained the difficulty of addressing a concern directly saying, "I wouldn't discuss it with the other teacher. I would feel like that's not my place...I don't feel like I should be in that position to judge and tell them what to do or not to do... we're colleagues, we're not bosses..." Another teacher elaborated, explaining why a teacher would/wouldn't give feedback to colleagues in different positions (classified, certified, or administrators) saying:

As teachers with classified staff, we're in a supervisory role and feel comfortable in telling them directly what to do. With the teachers, we maybe feel more comfortable just talking to our neighbor about it, but as far as confronting one another, probably not. And then, the boss is the boss.... He's not like a dictator or anything but he's the boss. So there's a hierarchy..."

In this case, status, a vertical hierarchy, and a sense of group identity with peers dictated the teacher's expectation of who can/should give feedback to whom.

To better understand the roots of these different responses, I ran a linear regression model (R Core Team, 2014) with predictor variables and outcomes as described in the methods section. Teachers' responses to the hypothetical scenarios were coded from 0-5 with 0 being the most inactive response (do nothing) to 5 being the most active (talk to the person directly). In the low level scenario (a teacher arriving late), no variables predicted an active response but perceived openness had a marginally significant *negative* correlations ($t_{1,35}=1.654$, $P=0.107$). On the medium level concern (a teacher with questionable instructional practices), perceived trust, openness, and relationship orientation did not positively correlate with active response. Rather, available time to raise issues and the perception of a familiar process increased the likelihood that a teacher would raise concerns with colleagues (see details on following pages). Finally, in

the high level concerns (questionable socializing with students, a situation when a child’s safety is involved), no contextual variables impacted decision-making. Instead, procedures or community expectations to report concerns for a child’s safety may have trumped other communication and decision making norms. Relevant results from the medium level concern will be discussed here.

Perceived Trust and Openness Does Not Promote Open Communication

Although teachers reported that they trusted one another, this espoused trust, and even openness specifically, did not encourage active responses to hypothetical conflicts. There was no correlation found between trust and teachers taking an active response to the hypothetical scenarios. In fact, there is a marginally significant negative impact of perceived openness of the staff and an active response ($t_{1,35}=-1.813, P=0.0784$). Teachers who report being open and trusting of one another are not any more likely to be proactive in addressing concerns with one another’s’ instruction (Figure 6).

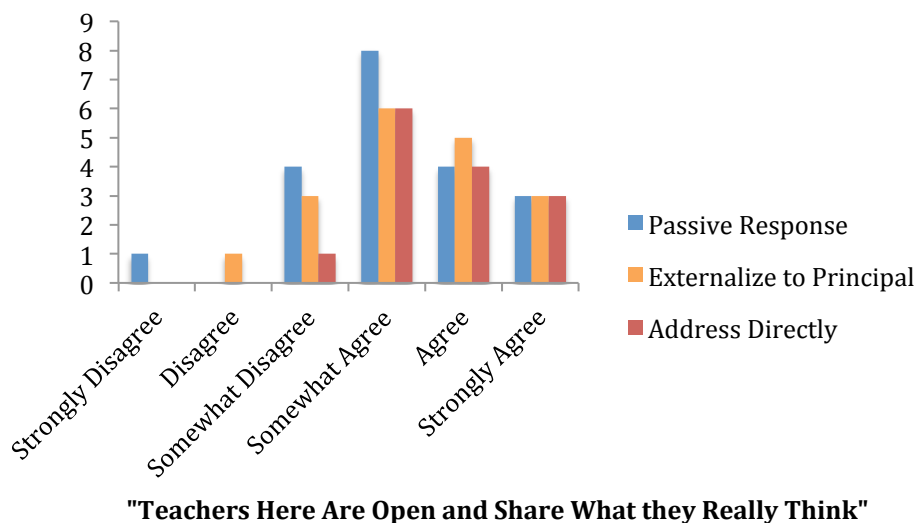


Figure 6: Survey Response- Teachers’ perception of staff openness does not impact response to hypothetical scenario

The individuals who perceive their fellow staff members as “open” with one another are no more or less likely to actually choose to be open in the face of a hypothetical conflict. Rather, teachers who perceive a high level of openness are equally likely to address a problem directly as they are to request the principal’s involvement or take a passive response. One teacher alluded to the limited *actual* openness of staff saying:

In staff meetings...everyone is generally very agreeable and I don't know if it's because everyone actually does agree or if they are too nervous to say anything in front of everyone. I'm not a soft-spoken person and I don't really keep my opinion to myself, but...I really like it when people like me...If there's something I really want to say, I'll still say it. But I don't like it when people get mad. I don't want to be on somebody's bad side.”

Another teacher echoed:

When I first started working here there were a few people that ruled the roost...and now it's changed kind of but...if you got 'bit' before, you're not going to do it again. You're like Oh...maybe I won't say that again, I'll just keep it to myself...

Process Norms Positively Influence Active Response to Conflict

When analyzed, teachers' perception of process norms (established time and a familiar process for addressing concerns with colleagues) was positively correlated with teachers responding actively (telling the principal or discussing the issue directly) ($t_{1,35}=2.422, P=0.0207$). This was true across the low and mid level concerns. The data in Figure 7 reflect responses to the mid-level scenario (a teacher who is concerned about a colleague's instruction).

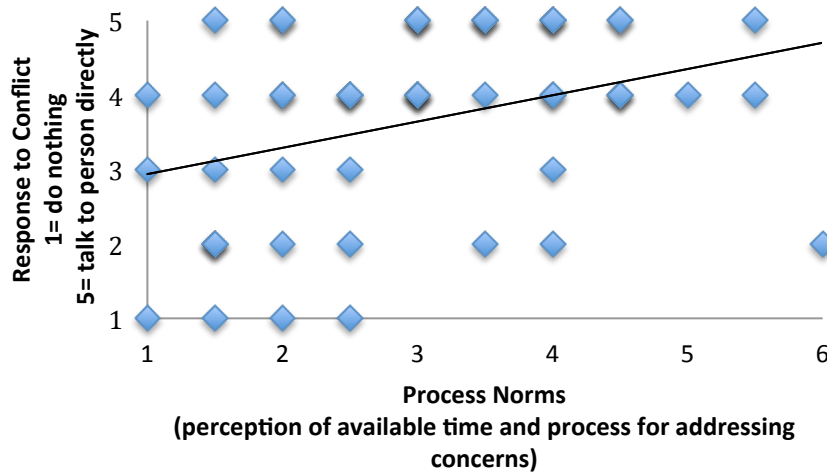


Figure 7: Survey Results- Teachers' response to hypothetical scenarios according to perception of process norms

When teachers perceived time and a familiar process for dealing with concerns, they were more likely to take a proactive approach to solving it. Further, teachers who did not perceive process norms were more likely to choose an inactive response to hypothetical scenarios (Figure 8).

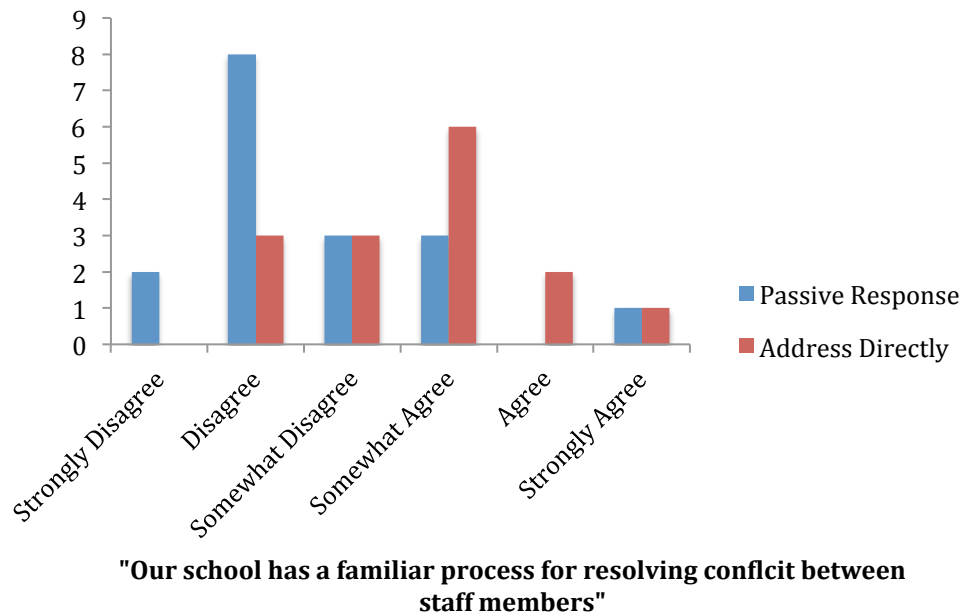


Figure 8: Survey Results- Process norms positively impact active response to hypothetical scenario while perceived absence of process norms promotes inactive response

One principal noted his school's familiar process for other tasks but their absence of process norms for resolving conflict between staff members. He stated:

I don't really know that we have a process for resolving conflict ... We talk about rigor, relationships, and relevance all the time but we don't talk about the adult relationships and how to interact... As a child we talk about you having tools so you can not keep doing the same things and getting the same results but we aren't doing that with adults.... every building stresses PLCs but there isn't a lot of work that I've seen on how do you work as a functional successful team.

Efficacy in Problem Solving and the Costs of Addressing Concerns Directly

As a final effort to understand teachers' choices in responding to the hypothetical scenarios, I examined teachers' sense of efficacy in resolving conflict and their predictions about the impact that addressing concerns might have on their professional relationships. In the survey, teachers reported a low sense of efficacy for resolving conflict with colleagues (they were not confident that raising a concern would make any difference in improving the situation) (Figure 9) and they predicted that raising concerns may damage their relationship with the colleague in question.

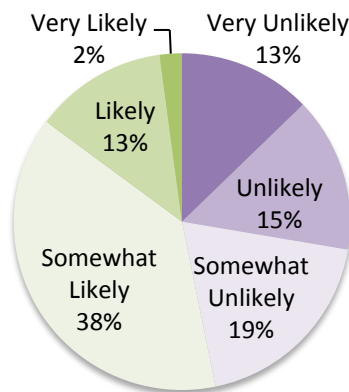


Figure 9: Survey Results- Teacher perception of likelihood that addressing a concern would positively affect the problem

To illustrate, one teacher described an issue that had been raised in a recent staff meeting. She vented her frustrations about the unproductive discussion saying:

In reality out there [place where this problem started], not everyone is doing his or her job. There isn't active participation or supervision. But we don't say that, we just kind of dance around the edges... There's no resolution so it will have to come back up again. And you know, there are a lot of issues there! There are a lot of things going on.

In spite of spending a considerable portion of a staff meeting trying to resolve this problem, neither this teacher (nor the principal) felt like they were any closer to having a real solution. In this situation, the staff continued to have the same problem and felt like their "problem solving" conversation was seen as a waste of time.

In addition to relatively low efficacy, teachers reported doubts that addressing a concern directly with a colleague would improve their relationship (Figure 10). Instead, many teachers felt it was likely that addressing a concern would be likely to damage the relationship (Figure 11).

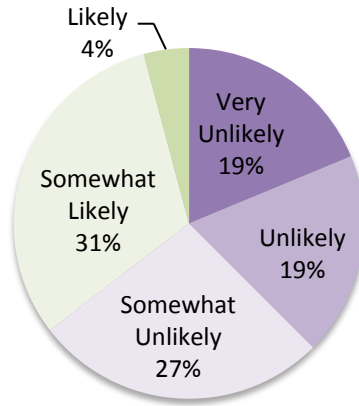


Figure 10: Survey Results- Teacher prediction that addressing concern would improve relationship with colleague

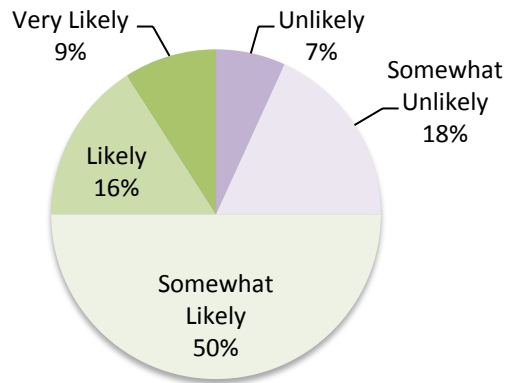


Figure 11: Survey Results- Teacher prediction that addressing concern would damage relationship with colleague

One teacher explained, “Anytime you put somebody on the spot...it's hard not to get on the defensive. I can imagine the conversation and how it would play out with a few people and no matter what you say, they are automatically going to be defensive.” A principal described the combined effect of low efficacy with relationship risk saying, “I

have someone with a lot of experience who won't mutter a word if it might ruffle feathers ...they don't know how to have those difficult conversations with each other..." A different principal added, "They [the teachers] don't have any training. Teacher training programs don't talk about this stuff... Staff may not feel like they're skilled enough. They might have good intentions but how do you actually navigate through that without damaging relationships?" A third principal added:

People can't take the feedback...in education, people take things SO personally...When there's a problem, it should be addressed and people should move on and just do their jobs.... Instead, we're in a career or a profession that really allows a lot of personal feelings to get in the way...there needs to be a separation....It's just a job...It's about the goal and the outcomes.

Alice and Wendy's story further illustrates the difficulties teachers experience with actual confrontation. In this situation, Alice felt Wendy was taking advantage of her and not sharing equally in the workload of planning for their grade's instruction. Rather than let her frustrations build, she found a time to talk to Wendy and share her annoyance. Following their conversation Alice felt like Wendy was not responsive to her feedback and behavior did not change. However, Alice reported that she felt better about the situation having "gotten it off of her chest" and let her feelings be known. She did not feel like the conversation had impacted their relationship. Wendy tells a very different story about this situation. In their conversation, Wendy heard that Alice wanted to her to spend more time at school planning. What Alice viewed as a problem of low contribution to the team, Wendy understood as a question of time spent in the building. Wendy resented Alice micromanaging her and felt that their relationship had been damaged in this situation. She explained, "It affects me! I'm overly sensitive and overly emotional. It makes me feel weird. I don't go to her to collaborate ...because she doesn't make me feel good as a person!" Not surprisingly, Wendy was not interested in changing her behavior to address Alice's concerns. In this case, the problem was not resolved but the relationship (in Wendy's view) was indeed damaged.

Role of Principals in Teacher Collaboration and Conflict

As previously mentioned, school leaders play a significant role in supporting collaboration and managing conflict within their buildings. Principals were not included in the survey but their interview responses help illuminate challenges from a leader's perspective.

Principals Support Collaborative Ideals and Balance Participation

As instructional leaders, principals play a critical role in creating and reinforcing collaborative norms in the teachers' teams. In some cases, this includes reminding teachers to think as a team, not just as individuals. To that end, one principal shared:

There is definitely a pecking order in the building amongst teachers...I've been purposeful about trying to break that down...if you have a great idea, bring it forward and let's hear what you have to say about it. But I know that certain people still don't speak up...On the other hand there are some new newbies that want to go task at all costs that are not bringing the relationships along with them. They are going to be on an island pretty soon. I've had to correct some of those conversations... reminding them that we can't do our best work alone and have to find ways to bring people along.

Another principal echoed the difficulty of creating safety to ensure balanced participation and active involvement in decision-making saying:

There are three or four people who try to dominate every staff meeting. We've tried all kinds of protocols to balance participation. On the flip side, though, I think that if you have an opinion, share it! I don't want to hear about it after the meeting. Don't come tell me you disagree after a decision has already been reached if you didn't raise the concern when the staff discussed it. Share it then! A lot of people said they don't feel comfortable or safe sharing in a staff meeting. With the history of our school, "that one time in 1994, I said something and it got shot down..."so people just clam up...but this passive-aggressive stuff can go on for decades!

Principals Act as Enforcers and Ultimate Deciders

Beyond being ambassadors of collaborative culture, principals also play an enforcement role in explicitly demanding certain behaviors or making final decisions. One principal shared...

There are some in the group who are OK as long as the rule doesn't apply to them or mess with their world. As long as it doesn't mess with them, they jump on the bandwagon and are generally OK. But if it's something that goes against the way they like to do things, then we struggle.... I have to be the bad guy and tell people how it's going to be... Other times, there are two different sets of agendas on the table and there are resources being pulled in two directions, so then from where I sit, I try to see both sides all the time... My frustration as a principal is that people don't recognize that concept of seeing the greater good. They worry about their island and don't worry about who else has needs.

Another echoed the need for enforcement of team expectations saying:

We had a person who didn't show up for two staff meetings and was just working in her room. I had to call her out on it... there is a push-pull for what's best of the school, what's best for my grade level, and what's best for me as an individual... Ultimately, there are some times when I just have to make a decision and not everyone is going to be happy with it but that's what we're doing.... Identifying we're all part of a team and not just little fiefdoms.

Principals Mediate Conflict

In addition to these roles, principals themselves were often called on to help staff members resolve conflicts. Principals shared willingness to serve in this mediator role but also alluded to the difficulties of the work. One shared:

It's me and OPP Enterprises [Other People's Problems]. I'm always putting out fires and holding hands... It is what I do. I don't want to be that guy that shuts the door and says, "You deal with it. It's your problem." That's my strength for me, taking care of the whole person etc. The flip

side of that is that I'm working OPP all the time! ... but I don't know if this is sustainable. I've hung onto that thought and I worry about it...it has to be sustainable.

Another shared dismay about staff members' difficulties in managing their own conflicts:

Some staff members try to resolve a conflict by winning and proving a point and that's worse, you're just throwing gas on the fire... there are winners and losers. It would be fine if you didn't need to interact with that person, but we do! So as a cohesive whole, how do we come through those conflicts, how do we come through and talk with each other and not dislike or pretend the other person doesn't exist?

In thinking about what supports might be helpful to address these difficulties one principal shared:

I'd be interested to see if someone has a way, a process for resolving conflict, that people will use. I'd love to know what that is and be able to talk to staff. I'd love to listen and say, "I'm hearing from both of you that you're unhappy with the other one but you won't talk to each other or you do and you yell and it just makes it worse..." You have to be able to come through the disagreement on the other side and still be able to work together because you can win the battle but lose the war.

Principals Remain Struggle with Conflict Management Themselves

Like the teachers, principals themselves had their own challenges with managing conflict. At times, they felt out of the loop and wished they had been able to be more active in helping staff find resolution. In other cases, they wished they weren't in the difficult position of confronting teachers at all. One shared:

I had a new teacher that I hired last year and I thought she walked on water. She was phenomenal...By the end of the year, she went running and screaming from the building because the veterans whooped her because she came in with new ideas and new plans...I was the last to know about the majority of it. By the time I could react to what was going on, she had already accepted another job. That was frustrating.

Another explained, "It's hard. My stomach gets in knots if I have to talk about something unpleasant with a staff member. No one likes it, I don't think. I still hate it. That's my least favorite thing." Across these diverse roles, principals clearly play a pivotal role in shaping their schools' cultures both around collaboration and conflict resolution.

CHAPTER V

DISCUSSION

These findings illustrate the difficulties of establishing truly collaborative communities and a disconnect between the ideal of collaboration in teacher communities and the presence of collaborative problem solving norms within schools. While strong relationships and trust are believed to be critical components of successful collaborative communities, they appear to be inconsequential in actually supporting open communication and exploration of differences. This corroborates de Lima's idea that a focus on trust and relationships are not all they're cracked up to be. Across the schools, teachers felt like raising a concern wouldn't make a difference and feared damaging relationships. Given these perceptions, teachers rarely addressed concerns directly with those involved. Instead, teachers externalized problems (and their resolution) to an administrator, gossiped with other colleagues, or avoided the problem entirely. Process norms and time to discuss concerns were critical components in encouraging more open communication and a more a proactive response to concerns. These factors may alleviate some of these fears and increase the likelihood that teachers can openly address frustrations with one another. These findings challenge beliefs about best practices for establishing collaborative cultures but resonate others. Mainly, focus on trust and relationships may be less important than developing familiar processes for the work. Finally, while principals are critically important for supporting collaboration and problem solving, these tasks themselves are extremely challenging. The discussion below will explore the disconnect between teacher's perceptions of collaboration, their actual behaviors, and the factors that impact these distinct realities.

Teachers See Themselves as Collaborative and Want Collegial Feedback

The espoused promise of collaboration resonated with many of the teachers in this study. Collegial relationships were intentionally developed, protected, and valued, and teachers reported openness to feedback from their peers. These beliefs affirm the spirit of collaborative communities and the perceived benefits of them. In reality, however, ongoing norms of deference and autonomy continued to pervade many of the schools in

the study affirming the difficulty of actually creating collaborative cultures (McLaughlin & Talbert, 2006).

Roles Identification and Administrator's Role in Conflict Resolution

Role identification and the corresponding expectations for those roles helps explain teachers' responses to conflict. Teachers felt strongly that principals are responsible for correcting teacher behavior, confirming the role of principal as problem-solver (Eberts & Stone, 1988; Kardos et al., 2001; Quong, 2006) even as teachers affirmed that they would want a colleague to talk with them directly with concerns. Providing feedback to help support and develop one another's practice was not understood to be expected behavior within these communities. Rather, this type of feedback was expected from the administrator. Sadly, many teachers noted that their principals may not be aware of many problems within in each school, much less able to thoughtfully address them, confirming the belief that managers tend to be poor mediators of conflict (Kolb & Putnam, 1992). Further, the principals themselves felt taxed with this responsibility. This deference to role-based expectations may limit teacher professional development and the spirit of professional learning communities.

Collegial deference and the persistent value of teacher autonomy confirm previous findings regarding the intersection of teachers' openness and their professional identity (Day, 2002; Kelchtermans, 2005; Lasky, 2005; Louis et al., 1995; Reio, 2005). Most interviewees, even those with significant experience, expressed discomfort with the idea of peer observation, saying that they would feel embarrassed about a colleague watching them teach. This confirms an ongoing "persistence of privacy" (Little, 1982, 1990) despite years of effort towards opening up teacher practice and promoting teacher to teacher support systems. It seems improbable that teachers can refine their practice, or serve as role models in support of colleagues trying to do the same, if they are not, even on a basic level, open to peer observation. As Pugach and Johnson state, "collaboration implies...what goes on behind the classroom door is, in fact, the responsibility of every adult in the school..." (1995, p. 7). This was not the type of collaboration that the teachers in this study experienced.

Trust and Relationships Do Not Positively Impact Open Communication

In spite of teachers' views that their workplaces are collaborative (from both an educational and a conflict resolution lens), teachers were not open with one another. This illustrates ongoing norms of privacy and autonomy, a contradiction of collaborative norms (Louis et al., 1995). It also reflects a low task orientation and a contradiction to collaborative approaches to conflict resolution (Kraybill, 2005b; Thomas & Kilmann, 2012). This confirms Achinstein (2002), de Lima (2001) and Westheimer's (1998) findings that strong relationships do not necessarily support, and may in fact hinder, rich collaboration. A preference for harmony and discomfort with confrontation led many teachers to avoid or externalize conflicts.

The role of trust and professional regard as a component of successful collaboration is, in fact, more nuanced than it has been presented in previous studies (Cosner, 2009; Kruse et al., 1994; Spillane & Thompson, 1997; Theobald, 2006). Logically, it makes sense that individuals need to trust one another in order to be open to giving and receiving feedback. In this study, however, espoused trust did not produce active and open communication when colleagues experience conflict with one another. Perhaps when trust is built on kindness (congeniality) rather than honesty (more collaborative), it is less useful for creating opportunities to enrich teachers' practice. In most cases, doing nothing, raising the issue anonymously, talking with other colleagues about the situation, or telling the principal were more common and comfortable responses. These behaviors seem like they would erode, rather than reinforce trust in colleagues yet in many cases, teachers did not necessarily identify these behaviors as being at odds with their collaborative ideals. Perhaps, these are strategies that allow teachers to deal with frustrations and still maintain an image of friendly confidence in one another.

Perceived Relationship Risk and Low Efficacy Curtail Communication

Full openness and vulnerability were seen as risky for many teachers. Perhaps then, "trust" is too fragile for real openness. This fragility may relate to the difficulty of keeping affective and cognitive conflict separated (Carsten K.W. De Dreu, 1997) . Without a clear separation of the types of conflict, teachers may see all conflicts as

personal (affective). If this is the case, avoiding raising the concerns is indeed a logical choice (Appelbaum et al., 1999). Teachers' value of interpersonal relationships with colleagues and a fear that confrontation would be likely to damage relationships confirms this difficulty and the discomfort that teachers reported regarding addressing concerns directly with colleagues.

In addition to the fear of damaging relationships, a low sense of efficacy probably discourages teachers from raising concerns. In the same ways that young people who don't feel good at math avoid doing their math homework, so too do adults who feel insecure about a particular skill avoid tasks that require those abilities. Teacher preparation programs explicitly teach skills for dealing with difficult students and parents but little (if any) instruction teaches future teachers how to deal with conflict with colleagues. Once teachers get hired and begin working in schools, time dedicated to learning these skills becomes even more scarce. Given the shortage of time for teachers to meet at all, priority is often placed on substance (the work itself) over supporting the process by which teachers engage with that work. Perhaps then, it is not surprising that teachers don't feel confident about engaging in difficult conversations with colleagues and, consequently, politely avoid them. If this is the case, gossip and deferral of problem solving responsibility to the principal are likely consequences. Realistically, people can generally only avoid a conflict for so long. Talking about issues with uninvolved parties or making the problem someone else's to solve helps ease teachers' frustrations but may do little to actually resolve the problems.

Process Norms Encourage Open Communication

The degree to which process norms (time and a familiar process to raise concerns) correlate so positively with increasingly rigorous and open communication, confirms the critical role of process norms and time for fruitful collaboration (Halverson, 2010; Kruse et al., 1994; Lieberman et al., 1991). While three of the four schools in this study have designated "PLC time" the processes to support the work appear to be inadequate to support rigorous and open communication about teacher practice. Existing structures support discussion of student data and coordination of interventions but does not appear to encourage reflective dialogue, feedback, or otherwise impact the teachers' practices.

This affirms Corrie's (1995) findings that schools must attend to both structure and culture to produce fruitful results of collaboration.

A familiar and tested set of process norms may help individuals distinguish types of conflict and keep a separation between cognitive and affective conflicts. With clear process guidelines, teachers may be more confident in their ability to collectively problem solve (cognitively) without fear that the discussion will become personal (affective). With structure to guide the conversation, the discussion itself may feel less risky and more productive. Perhaps real trust depends on a process that helps teachers succeed in tackling increasingly difficult challenges without straying into affective conflict and damaging relationships. If teachers can mutually agree to and trust in process, interpersonal trust between the peers may not matter. Trust then, rather than a prerequisite for professional conversation, may be a byproduct of them.

Given these findings supporting processes for conflict resolution can increase the effectiveness of teacher collaboration. Rather than denying conflict's existence, avoiding it, or calling in the principal to help, perhaps teachers simply need to learn and apply basic conflict resolution skills to their collegial relationships. Pugach & Johnson, (1995) acknowledge the need for collaborators to roll up their sleeves and get (respectfully) messy in professional discussions. Further, they advocate that resolving conflict in open and supportive manners strengthens commitment and group cohesion (p. 124). Pugach and Johnson recommend arbitration and mediation but perhaps, with basic training, teachers could, themselves, mediate their own conflicts. In other fields, this type of training is common (Costantino & Merchant, 1996; Slaikeu & Hasson, 1998; Thompson, 2000; Ury et al., 1989; Wall & Callister, 1995 cited in Bendersky, 2013) but it appears largely absent in education.

At three of the four schools, there was time in each week set aside for collaborative work but no school consistently identified a familiar process for raising concerns. Interestingly, one school principal felt that his school had a familiar process for resolving conflict. When pressed, it sounded like this was a more general (and isolated) understanding than a shared, documented process. Based on interviews with two other staff members, there was neither firm nor fully agreed-upon process. Teachers at the other schools, who reported having a familiar process, may have been thinking of

their unions' formal grievance procedures or, like the principal, "felt" like they had a familiar process, whether or not said process was actually documented and/or shared amongst all staff. What seemed to matter, in the results, was simply a perception of having a process, regardless of its quantifiable existence.

As a final note about process, perceived process norms were positively correlated with student outcomes; the two schools in the study with the highest perceived process norms were the same schools with the highest performance on state reading tests. The evidence cannot support a causal link between conflict resolution process norms, effective collaboration, and student achievement but further investigation, particularly of schools with robust shared processes for managing conflict might be valuable.

Alignment With Other Systems

The workplace conflict resolution literature affirms the importance of aligned systems of conflict resolution. In schools, rights based and interest based processes necessitate the outside involvement of school administration and/or union representation/lawyers (Bendersky, 2013). These practices for resolving disputes may feel largely adversarial and, if nothing else, are likely to be seen as a "big deal" for those involved. Perhaps it isn't surprising then that even directly negotiated solutions (those worked out directly between teachers) carry a degree of adversarial "big-deal-feel," whether they are or not. If all of these systems evolved to become more collaborative and less adversarial, direct negotiations may be more successful in being truly collaborative as well. Further, in the same ways that schools have a multitude of processes to help students manage disagreements, so too might they consider adopting processes to support their staff in doing the same.

Limitations

While the results in this study were rich, the study itself is not without its limitations. First, findings are not necessarily generalizable. The selection of schools and sampling within each school was limited. The results themselves may have been biased simply based on who participated (and didn't participate) in the study. It is possible that those who were willing to dedicate time to this topic are not typical of all teachers. We still do not know how the teachers who didn't respond experience collaboration and

conflict. Perhaps this silence, this non-participation in itself, speaks to one reality of the complications of rigorous teacher collaboration. The reasons that individuals may have chosen not to participate are many. Insufficient time, inadequate or limited trust, lack of buy-in for the value of the activity, etc. are all likely reasons a teacher may have chosen not to respond. These same explanations may also explain the difficulties of engaging in open communication with colleagues, insufficient time, trust, or buy-in that the investment and potential risks are worthwhile.

Second, surveys and interviews both depended on teachers' self-reporting rather than more objective measures. Although teachers shared candidly (both in survey and in interviews) survey bias is likely still present. Specifically, there were a number of teachers reporting the presence of a familiar process for resolving conflict at their schools but most of the teachers interviewed were not familiar with any shared processes. Given this, it is difficult to draw strong conclusions about the connection between process norms and rich collaboration or hypothetically active responses to conflict. While the *perception* of process norms (and the time to engage in professional conversations) positively impacts teachers' reported assertiveness with one another, more study with schools that broadly agree having and using shared process norms for conflict resolution are necessary. More precise selection of schools (including those with existing process norms for conflict resolution) or an experimental design in which a staff learns and applies shared process norms (compared with a control school with no such intervention), would yield more reliable results. Further, more direct observation of teachers in conflict/collaboration would allow for greater triangulation of results.

Third, the survey questions around collaboration were not specific enough to deeply explore the range of ways in which teachers may work together. The questions posed in the survey did little to illustrate nuances of different types and depths of collaboration. Accordingly, interviews were critical to flush out what teachers meant when they described collegial interactions that they labeled as "collaborative" or "PLC" related. Further, more attention should have been paid to the teachers' experiences with collaboration itself, the degree to which it impacted their practice and how they felt about both the process and the results. As noted, "collaboration" itself means different things to different people and a lack of shared understanding or more precise language in the survey

has obfuscated more meaningful findings in that regard. Direct observation of teachers in “collaboration” would have yielded more objective and calibrated measures of the ways in which teachers actually interact when they work in teams.

Lastly, my own experience as an educator has undoubtedly biased my lens throughout this study. While I was surprised at some of the findings here (mainly that close relationships and trust are not necessarily conducive to rich collaboration), other findings deeply resonate with my own experience as a teacher and Dean of Students. I myself have stories of not saying something when I was concerned about a colleague’s professional behavior. My own silence was largely motivated by uncertainty that addressing the issue would produce results, fear of damaging a relationship, and insecurity about it not being “my place” to raise concerns with colleagues. I too deferred to already over-taxed principals to address many problems or simply avoided them entirely. Students in these teachers classroom, and the teachers themselves, were not served by my silence. In this, my own insider view on these questions of conflict and collaboration may serve to both enrich and distort the findings here.

CHAPTER VI

CONCLUSION

If collaborative structures really are the way the groups will tackle the increasing demands of our world, it is critically important that to get collaboration right. Teachers in this study had a strong sense that they were working in collaborative communities but their well-intentioned behaviors did not match truly collaborative ideals (from both an educational and a conflict resolution lens). Teachers report that they would want their colleagues to raise concerns with them (not talk to the principal or gossip) yet these are more common responses in many cases. In reality, a majority of teachers are reluctant to raise concerns directly with colleagues. Even in schools that claim to be highly collaborative and report high levels of trust, teachers report they don't feel like it's their place to raise concerns, they don't feel confident that their intervention would solve the problem, and they feel that confrontation is likely to damage relationships with colleagues. Sadly, attention and resources paid to developing trust and relationships may do little to encourage vigorous and honest communication. In fact, fear of damaging these prized relationships seems to stifle real feedback and precludes opportunities for learning.

This study suggests that if schools wish to create truly collaborative communities for learning (both for teachers and for students), more attention should be paid to creating times and familiar, trusted processes for resolving conflict. Shared and trusted processes can promote open communication and rigorous collaboration by increasing teachers' efficacy at resolving issues and protecting the relationships that teachers treasure. In getting comfortable with conflict and with confronting one another, teachers may see fuller benefits to their collegial interactions. They may actually feel more supported in their challenging work and better equipped to succeed. While "labor" will inevitably continue to be ingrained in the very idea of collaboration (co-labor-ation), the benefits of engaging in the work can be vastly improved.

APPENDIX

SURVEY INSTRUMENT

1. Informed Consent for Participation as a Subject in Conflict Resolution in E...

Dear Prospective Participant,

My name is Carrie Bennett. I am a Master's student of Conflict Resolution at the University of Oregon School of Law. I am conducting an anonymous survey about communication, conflict, collaboration, and trust between elementary school teachers. The results of this research will be used for publication in an academic journal and/or presented at professional conferences and will help us to better understand how teachers manage conflict, communicate, and collaborate with one another.

Participation in this survey is voluntary. To participate, you must be 18 years or older. Your participation, or decision not to participate or withdraw from, this survey will not affect your relationship with your school, your district, or the University of Oregon. All questions are voluntary. You may skip questions.

The survey will take approximately 10-20 minutes. Please answer the questions to your comfort level. You might experience some social or emotional discomfort from answering questions about your past experience with conflict. You have the right to withdraw your consent at anytime and stop your participation in this study.

You may also find the survey helpful, in that it may spark new thinking about the way teachers at your school work together and communicate.

The results will be reported for the group of respondents as a whole, no individual responses or identifying information will be shared. Combined data from all the teachers in your school may be shared with staff at your school for feedback and reflection. At the end of the survey you will be invited to participate further (participating in a focus group or individual interview). If you wish to participate, please provide the contact information you would like me to use. Providing your home/personal contact information will allow for greater privacy than using a school email address or phone number. Please consider this if you choose to participate in the interview or a focus group. I cannot guarantee your privacy if you use a school phone number or email address as contact information for this study. All data collected is anonymous, responses will be stored on password-protected computer systems, and all data will be destroyed within one year of data collection.

If you have any questions or are interested in the results of the study, please contact me at 720-299-0746 or carriebennett@gmail.com. If you have a question about your rights as a research participant, you may contact the University of Oregon's Research Compliance Services at 541-346-2510. After completing the survey, if you believe you may have suffered a research related injury, contact Jennifer Reynolds JD, Director, Conflict and Dispute Resolution Master's Program at (541) 346-3691 or email jwr@uoregon.edu who will give you further instructions. A copy of this letter will be kept on file in your school's office. You have likely already received a paper copy of this release but please print and save this page for your records if you so wish. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Carrie Bennett
University of Oregon School of Law

*** 1. Investigator: Carrie Bennett Type of consent: Adult (Ages 18+)**

By marking "yes" below, I acknowledge that I have read (or have had read to me) the contents of this consent form and have been encouraged to ask questions. I acknowledge that I have received answers to my questions.

If I do not wish to give your consent to participate, I understand I may simply close my browser now.

By marking, "yes" below, I give consent to participate in this study.

Yes

2. Welcome and Demographics

This study seeks to better understand the role that communication, conflict, collaboration, and trust play in your school. Thank you for your willingness to participate and for your honest answers. Most importantly, thank you so much for your service to our world and your commitment to teaching and learning.

Individual survey responses are confidential. Results will only be discussed as aggregated data.

2. What school do you work at?

3. What is your gender?

4. How long have you worked at this school?

- 0-1 years
- 2-5 years
- 6-10 years
- 11-20 years
- 21+ years

5. How long have you worked in education?

- 0-1 years
- 2-5 years
- 6-10 years
- 11-20 years
- 21+ years

6. What is your role/position at your school?

Other (please specify)

7. For teachers only: Are you....

- Tenured
- Not Tenured

3. Communication and Conflict

Thinking about your current school, please mark how much you agree or disagree with each statement.

8. In our school staff we....

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Somewhat Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree
Look for ways to satisfy as many people as possible.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Gossip.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Focus on getting things done.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Can openly disagree.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Suggest solutions assertively.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Tell our principal when we notice a problem or have a concern.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Listen to all staff members' ideas and opinions.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Focus on maintaining positive relationships.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Avoid raising issues or talking about problems.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Have a familiar process for resolving conflict.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Defer to our principal for direction and decision making.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Feel safe in raising concerns with colleagues.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Tend to let a few people make decisions.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Have designated time to raise concerns with colleagues.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Feel like all staff members have a voice in decision-making.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Spend time discussing issues to arrive at consensus.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Solve problems directly with those involved.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Openly identify problems.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Value diverse ideas and opinions.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Comments:

4. Hypothetical Scenarios

For each hypothetical situation, mark how you would be most likely to respond. You may select TWO responses for each situation.

10. Lately you've noticed that a fellow staff person at your school is not being timely. Things aren't happening at the times you would expect them to or according to established schedules. This isn't just happening occasionally but with increasing frequency and it is affecting other staff and students. How would you respond if this was happening with...

	Do nothing	Talk to another colleague about it	Raise the issue anonymously	Talk to a supervisor	Discuss your concern with the person at issue
A classified staff member?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
A teacher?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
An administrator?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

11. It's mid way through the year and you've noticed a fellow staff person not teaching content in a way you'd expect. You notice lots of noise in his/her classroom and every time you pass by it just looks like students are playing instead of learning. You worry that students are missing the opportunity to learn valuable content knowledge and skills. How would you respond if this was happening with...

	Do nothing	Talk to another colleague about it	Raise the issue anonymously	Talk to a supervisor	Discuss your concern with the person at issue
A classified staff member?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
A teacher?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

12. You have a new staff person with whom you interact daily. Early on you notice that this person seems to interact a great deal with students outside of typical staff to student interactions (getting together outside of school etc.). You begin to notice pictures of the staff person and students on social media and students seem to know a great deal about this staff person's personal life. How would you respond if this was happening with...

	Do nothing	Talk to another colleague about it	Raise the issue anonymously	Talk to a supervisor	Discuss your concern with the person at issue
A classified staff member?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
A teacher?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
An administrator?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

13. Assume that the person you were concerned about (from the above scenarios) was a fellow teacher and that you decided to raise your concern with that individual. Off the top of your head, how do you imagine you would start the conversation?

14. How do you suspect the person might respond? Where do you imagine the conversation may go from there?

15. How likely do you think it would be that your conversation would...

	Very Unlikely	Unlikely	Somewhat Unlikely	Somewhat Likely	Likely	Very Likely
Affect the situation?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Resolve the problem?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Improve your relationship with that person?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Damage your relationship with that person?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Improve students' experience at your school?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

5. Recent Communication/Conflict Experience

16. Please select approximately how frequently you have...

	Daily	Weekly	Monthly	Yearly	Never
Avoided raising a concern with a colleague?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Experienced frustration with the choices or actions of a colleague?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Talked about a frustration with a colleague other than the one you were frustrated with?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Felt positive about the resolution of a previous frustration or problem.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Raised a concern to your supervisor/ administrator?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Raised an issue of concern/disagreement with a colleague?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Had a colleague raise a concern/ disagreement with you?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Felt negatively about the way a frustration or problem was resolved.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Comments:

6. Professional Collaboration and Trust

17. Do teachers at your school work collaboratively (on curriculum and instruction)?

Never
 Rarely
 Sometimes
 Most of the Time
 Always

18. Please select approximately how frequently you...

	Daily	Weekly	Monthly	Yearly	Never
Share ideas for teaching with a colleague?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Ask for advice from a colleague on how to solve a professional challenge?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Adjust your instruction based on formal assessment results?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Adjust your instruction based on informal assessment results?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Adjust your instruction based on a colleague's assessment data?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

19. To what degree do you agree with each of the statements below?

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Somewhat Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree
Teachers in this school believe in one another.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Teachers in this school are open with each other.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Teachers in this school look out for each other.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Teachers in this school have faith in the integrity of their colleagues.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Even in difficult situations, teachers in this school can depend on one another.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Teachers in this school are not competent in their teaching responsibility.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Comments:

20. To what degree do you agree with each of the statements below?

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Somewhat Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree
Teachers in this school do their jobs well.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Teachers in this school trust one another.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
When teachers in this school tell you something you can believe it.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Teachers in this school are suspicious of each other.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I would feel comfortable having my own child in any of our teachers' classes.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Teachers at this school don't share what they really think.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Comments:

21. How much do you agree with each of the following statements? At this school...

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Somewhat Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree
Teachers here are hungry for data about student performance.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Teams of teachers identify areas of concern and create shared strategies to improve.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
School-wide systems are in place to provide additional support to struggling students.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Administrators systematically review data.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Teachers teach, hope for the best, and move on to the next unit.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Teachers are encouraged to address strengths and weaknesses of their instruction.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Teams of teachers systematically analyze assessment results.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Individual teachers here systematically analyze assessment results.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Teams of teachers make ongoing small and large adjustments to instruction based on data.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Comments:

22. How much do you agree or disagree with the following statements?

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Somewhat Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree
Our teaching staff does what's best for students.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I am doing what's best for students.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
We are making good progress with students.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Our school is succeeding in meeting its goals for student achievement.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Comments:

23. Thinking about my relationship with my colleagues I feel...

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Somewhat Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree
Professionally challenged.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Professionally supported.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Comments:

24. What else would you like to share about your experience with communication conflict within your staff? What questions didn't we ask (but should have) and how would you respond to them?

25. Would you like to participate in a follow up interview or focus group? After exiting this survey, you will be directed to a separate website where you may provide contact information. If you are willing to participate further, please submit your contact information on that page. Your contact information will only be used for the purposes of setting up a focus group or interview. Focus groups or interviews will last less than one hour.

You may write "yes" or "no" below to indicate your interest in further participation. Please only supply your contact information on the FLOWING page (you will be directed there automatically when you submit your survey) if you agree to further participation.

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