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Exploring Systemic Collaboration across Organizational Strata within Public Schools' Improvement Systems

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This is to certify that the doctoral dissertation by

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has been found to be complete and satisfactory in all respects,
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Abstract

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by

Lori L. Foltz-Rea

EdS, Walden University, 2017

MS, Western Governors University, 2009

BA, University of Findlay, 1992

Proposal Submitted in Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree of

Doctor of Philosophy in Education

Organizational Research, Assessment and Evaluation

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Abstract

Despite government policies and reform efforts, the adoption of improvement systems that include collaborative practices has failed to increase student achievement as measured on Ohio's state report cards for public school districts that have implemented the Ohio Improvement Process. Systemic, collaborative practices hold promise, but a gap existed in understanding how members engaged in collaborative practices across the organization. The study's purpose was to qualitatively explore principals', teachers', and district-level administrative members' behaviors, perceptions, and practices across one Ohio school district's three organizational strata associated with teaching and learning to discover how collaborative practices influence continuous improvement. Gronn's leadership distribution theory and Senge's organizational learning theory served as the foundation for the conceptual framework that involved concepts such as systems thinking, shared vision, and team learning. A mini-ethnographic case study design was used to understand how organizational members participated in collaborative practices and how they perceived their organization's vision, collective reflection, and systems thinking. Collected data included personal interviews, observations, and artifacts from one Ohio traditional, suburban, public school district that implemented the Ohio Improvement Process. Inductive and deductive narrative analyses were used to identify literature-identified and emergent themes. Findings included the habits, habitats, and habitudes that support authentic collaboration and social change to advance K-12 continuous improvement efforts.

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Dedication

My passion for family, friends, work, and scholarship are attributed in great measure, to my paternal grandmother, Selma, who taught me, through her deeds, about three types of people who exist in our world – those who are evil, those who are virtuous, and the morally impoverished. Evil persons cause immense harm both intentionally and unintentionally; the morally impoverished lack courage, commitment, or passion - they are fearful, often failing to stand for anything or anyone; and the Virtuous, who, with a moral imperative for justice demonstrate love, commitment, innovation, disruption, and resistance and bring about social change, resolving to make a significant difference and to serve a greater good. Grandma, while timid and sweet with a "just a high school diploma", was the latter. She instilled in me a desire to shape the world, my community, and to establish a legacy for my children, my grandchildren, and the children in the schools in which I work. My academic studies are inspired by her for them – and the world moves forward.

I dedicate this composition and the perseverance imbued to my husband, Steve and our children, Nathan, Curtis, Trevor, Nikki, Samantha, and Megan. My commitment to the pursuit of knowledge was their sacrifice. Specifically, and especially, Steve. My love you have sacrificed a great deal, but I hope that this is a new beginning. Thank you to each one of you for all you have given up for me.

For my grandchildren Lexie, Lilly, Cadence, Vivian, Noland, Orion, Olivia, and Aubree, I implore you to become change agents. Be radical! Resist! Stand for the great good! Our world is in need of new visionaries. I dedicate my voice to all your current and

future causes and charge you to change your world. Never settle and continually strive to make this world - your world - better for you, your family, your community, and coming generations. Always be virtuous - never join the morally impoverished and forego evil actions. You are the future, and I am immensely proud.

every single day." I did not precisely follow your advice, but I have crossed the finish line.

A special thank you to Dr. Douglas Reeves for his philanthropic work supporting doctoral students. His goal to see more candidates finish has been achieved here. Thank you for your wisdom and guidance. Dr. Reeves was one of many on my bucket list. I am thankful for the research of the others that occupy a spot on that list including Drs. Senge, Gronn, Fullan, A. Hargreaves, D. H. Hargreaves, Harris, Hord, Leithwood, and Seashore Louis.

Like a fire, I too needed a spark, fuel, and a strong supply of oxygen for this fire to ignite, grow, and thrive. My spark was Judy Ennis, who in my first economics course in community college, sparked my personal self-efficacy through her confidence and faith in my abilities. I was fueled by excellent teachers who cared deeply as I moved into my undergrad years and as I weathered a difficult period in my life. A special thank you to Dr. Baughman for making a point of intentionality. The oxygen that fed my love for collaboration and my dedication to team learning and collective efficacy, one topic of this study, came from the many people who fanned the flames. Memorable among them were the Honorable Marcy Kaptur, my Critical Friends Group that included Kara, Katie, Misael, Mills, UtterBug, and Anita, and notably my early role in the Ohio Improvement Process while at Toledo Public Schools. The team at MHE, notably among them was Carrie Davisson and Steve (the 2nd Steve) Thank you all.

"Without continual growth and progress, such words as improvement, achievement, and success have no meaning." *Benjamin Franklin*

Table of Contents

iv

List of Tables

List of Figures

Chapter 1: Introduction to the Study

Students in public schools throughout the United States have continued to fail to meet achievement expectations spelled out in Elementary and Secondary Education Act (1964) regardless of ongoing reform efforts. Historical reform efforts that have attempted to address reading and mathematics deficiencies have included No Child Left Behind (NCLB), Race to the Top (RttT), and most recently, the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA). All acronyms used throughout this report are included in Appendix A. These legislative acts focused almost exclusively on individual schools' performance and not on systemic reform, such as district-wide performance, as Barr (2012) acknowledged. State education agencies and local education agencies have responded to federal reform initiatives by developing and implementing processes and frameworks with a goal to increase achievement for all students. Improvement process, school reform, and school improvement are umbrella terms used in education to describe frameworks, structures, protocols, resources, and other tools. State education agencies and local school districts use improvement processes to analyze and solve complex problems in a systematic manner to address whole systems, such as all the related components associated with addressing low student achievement scores on state standardized assessments.

Continuous improvement has been described as an iterative, recursive, constant, and consistent process used to achieve incremental progress within any system. Several factors across various industries have been associated with continuous improvement frameworks and processes; however, three characteristics are present regardless of the chosen framework. First, efforts of the organization's members toward improvement

remain persistent and occur at regular intervals; second, continuous improvement efforts must be infused into all functions of the organization by all members in all work practices and tasks; finally, members must be of a mindset that problems persist within systems and collective knowledge, skills, and actions are the means to solve those problems (Bryk, 2018; Cohen-Vogel et al., 2015; Fullan, 2007b; Park, Hironaka, Carver, & Nordstrum, 2013; Telfer, 2011). All three characteristics must be present in improvement systems to produce continuous growth that results in a healthy organization focused on a culture of learning for all members (Bryk, 2018; Cohen-Vogel et al., 2015; Fullan, 2007b; Park et al., 2013; Raya & Panneerselvam, 2013; and Telfer, 2011). Therefore, continuous improvement necessitates a communal effort by all members across each organizational stratum, working collectively to solve problems of the system. Members understand that they constantly strive for but will never obtain perfection. Synergistic influences of collective efforts mean that not only do individuals learn and grow, but also teams, and the organization learns and grows (Boer, Berger, Chapman, & Gertsen, 2017; Fiol & Lyles, 1985; Honig, Venkateswaran, & McNeil, 2017; Marsick & Watkins, 2003; Senge, Dow, & Neath, 2006; Senge & Fulmer, 1993).

In many K-12 public school districts, educators are present in three primary strata or levels of the organization that include district, building, and classroom. Understanding members at each level and how each level collaborates both within and across the stratum provides insights into continuous improvement efforts. Educators who learn collaboratively within a system that has been developed to pursue continuous improvement positively affect student achievement (Choi Fung Tam, 2015; DuFour,

DuFour, & Eaker, 2010; Harris & Jones, 2010; Hord, 1997; Owen, 2014). For example, Leithwood and Strauss (2008) identified leadership's influence on student learning through shared and collaborative practices while Anrig (2015) cited Cincinnati Public Schools' district leadership and the teacher union's collaborative approach to reform as beneficial to improvement efforts. Similarly, Honig, et al. (2017) posited that executive leaders empower all members when they collaboratively learn alongside other members' to implement improvement research findings. Furthermore, there is evidence that when public school districts implement a continuous improvement system focused on developing structures, conditions, and behaviors through communal efforts, organizations realize an increase in student achievement, improved adult engagement, and increased job satisfaction (Armstrong, 2015; Fullan, 2008; Harris & Jones, 2017a; Hopkins, Stringfield, Harris, Stoll, & Mackay, 2014; Muijs, 2015; Senge, 2008; Senge, Hamilton, & Kania, 2015; Telfer, 2011; Wenger, 2010). Therefore, when members at each stratum of an organization participate in collective activities, including co-constructing and owning a shared vision, demonstrating awareness of the district as a system, and performing tasks and duties associated with their respective roles within the system, they are focused on individual and team learning continuous improvement that results in increased student achievement.

The federal government defined the lowest performing 5% of public schools as comprehensive support and improvement (CSI). More than 1 million students in 2,800 schools throughout the United States are required to implement an improvement strategy to improve student achievement (National Center for Education Statistics [NCES], 2017).

Collaboration, as part of an improvement system, has been shown to improve student achievement, yet schools continue to fail (Muijs, 2015). Understanding systemic improvement structures and district members' collaborative practices provides information to guide future systemic improvement efforts for schools, districts, and state and federal agencies.

To understand systemic improvement, Chapter 1 includes a synthesis of current research on school improvement, improvement systems, and collaboration. Further, the chapter includes the problem statement and purpose of the study, as well as a discussion of Senge's organizational learning theory, leadership distribution theory (LDT), and improvement systems. Chapter 1 includes a justification of the nature of study, definitions of relevant terms, contextual assumptions, and the scope. In this chapter, I also describe limitations and delimitations and implications for social change.

Background

The focus of this study was one public school district in the state of Ohio that had implemented the Ohio Improvement Process (OIP) to explore members' behaviors and perceptions regarding collaboration across three organizational strata identified in the OIP. Improvement efforts in education have long been initiated based on society's views and the ideology of the party holding political power, while disregarding the voices of marginalized stakeholder groups and stakeholders at the building and teacher/classroom strata (Tyack & Cuban, 1995). Studying improvements efforts as a major component of organizational development, Senge (1991) proposed five basic tenets of organizational learning theory (OLT), which was described as the ongoing development of individuals,

teams, and organizations' attempts to eliminate wasteful efforts as complex problems were met with simplistic reactions. In Hopkin's et al. (2014) historical perspective of school reform efforts, described as phases. The timeline of school improvement, presented in phases, ranged from understanding organizational culture, then moving toward participation in action research at the building level, followed by a comprehensive approach to school reform, placing a high importance on leadership and student capacity and eventually moving towards systemic improvement. While Hopkins et al. described the phases as linear, each distinct phase further encircles a widening understanding of improvement in an expanding group of stakeholders. The phases described by Hopkins et al aligned with Senge's OLT with emphasis on systems thinking.

The OIP was developed collaboratively by ODE and Ohio Leadership Advisory Council (OLAC) and was rolled out to school districts in early 2008 as a "statewide system of support for improving student outcomes (Lloyd, McNulty, & Telfer, 2009, p. 1). The OIP focused on engaging districts in the structures, tools, and resources provided by the state system of supports (SSoS). The OIP was developed for all districts and schools but was required for individual schools that had been identified as high or medium based on the number of indicators met on the report card. As one of six states identified by USDOE for a differentiated accountability pilot, Ohio was unique in identifying schools based on indicators instead of labeling based on progress over time as the remaining five pilot states. Ohio report card included both participation in testing and applied a point system based on levels of student achievement (Scott, 2009). Ohio was unique in a second aspect of identifying and supporting districts instead of schools. While

guidelines from USDOE identified schools for not meeting criteria, USDOE and the remaining five states specified support for identified schools. Barr (2012, as cited in Scott, 2009, p. 10) stated, "Let's assume the impact of building to building and district to building is a reality and build a system around it."

Ohio's plan to support all district through the OIP has not resulted in an improvement for all districts and schools as the number of schools identified has increased from 115 identified schools in 2010 to 238 identified in 2018 (ODE, 2010; 2018). It was noted by VanHorn (personal communication June 17, 2018) that the formula used by the state to identify priority schools has changed. The result, however, is a significantly higher number of schools that require a higher level of support from the SSoS. To meet the expanding needs of Ohio school districts, the OIP provides opportunities to build capacity. Barr (2012) proposed that "systems thinking is not one thing, but rather a set of habits or practices within a framework" (p. 2). Educational systems must constantly "evolve toward more functional systems" (Barr, p. 2).

School improvement has been the subject of many research studies since Tyack and Cuban's 1995 publication of *Tinkering Toward Utopia*. For example, Gold's (1999) theory of "punctuated legitimacy" described a challenge to longitudinal school improvement efforts. Gold posited that the interrupted path resulted in short periods of important and valuable change and the theory aligns with Senge's (1991) concepts of complex and messy problems within a system. Another obstacle is the repetitive introduction of new programs and processes and ensuing abandonment of those programs before their influence or effect can be determined. These challenges represent barriers

faced by members, leaders, and organizations as attempts at improvement are carried out.

Fullan (2015) said:

> The more that teachers or others have had negative experiences with
>
> previous implementation attempts in the district or elsewhere, the more
>
> cynical or apathetic they will be about the next change presented
>
> regardless of the merit of the new idea or program. (p. 74)

Fullan's understanding of teachers' roles in in successful implementation of large-scale

and systemic school reform efforts was essential, including his ideas of developing a

shared widely held vision, cultures that embrace collective capacity, and collaborative

practices. These principles, Fullan noted, gained traction, and resulted in measurably

increased student achievement.

Gold's longitudinal study of school improvement and change identified the

various actors and triggers of existing cultures that inform and were informed by the

organization's core values. Gold's longitudinal research provided a unique long-range

view of one school's attempts at reform over 23 years. His findings, in part, revealed the

frequency of changes in leadership and factors that disrupted adoption and

institutionalization of new programs, curricula, and processes, noting the frequency of

failure, which occurred regularly every 2 years (Gold, 1999). Similarly, Hargreaves and

Goodson's (2006) qualitative study found that reform waves, shifting student

demographics, and leadership turnover make school change efforts difficult for all

schools, but significantly more so for innovative schools that initially seem to break free

of stereotypical organizations, only to be pulled back toward traditional institutional practices.

A collaborative culture is an element of an organization's overall culture (Peterson & Beard, 2004). Honig (2008) suggested that in school settings, district-level administrators support collaboration through actions of governance, communication, and by creating opportunities for district members to engage with one another. Ahmed et al. (2016) posited that when structures are provided, such as facilitation and protocols, teams shared knowledge, exhibited innovation, and were more creative. Dagen and Bean (2014) described collaborative cultures as a way to increase classroom teachers' knowledge and skills. Johnson and Chrispeels (2010) suggested that trustful relationships between central office administrators and other members such as principals and teachers are necessary for collaboration. Kohm and Nance (2009) described collaborative culture as one where leaders create conditions for organization members to establish and achieve goals. In sum, a collaborative culture is one where members are provided structures, tools, and resources to construct knowledge, take risks, innovate, and learn together. This type of learning occurs at all levels of an organization including district-level administrators.

Honig (2008) described the central office staff as essential in supporting the district. District, or central-office administrators, role is to link learning theories, including organizational learning theory, to principals' and teachers' practice. Honig (2008) identified district-level administrators' roles as one that bridged practice and policy to improve collaborative culture. Sales, Moliner, and Francisco Amat (2017)

suggested that when leaders did not actively support shared leadership, the collaborative culture was harmed.

Sharing leadership and power is an essential concept to school improvement. Collaboratively developing systems, structures, and processes to support classroom instruction levels for improved student achievement is a primary function of leadership (Fullan, 2016; Hargreaves & Fullan, 2012; Harris & Jones, 2017b; Honig, 2008; Hord, 1986; Leithwood & Jantzi, 2008; Telfer, 2011). Further, Datnow and Stringfield (2000), Park and Datnow (2009), and Telfer (2011) suggested that data can be used to inform decisions and identify effective practices. Robinson (2011) added that data should be used to strategically allocate resources to support teaching and learning. This aligned with Hattie's (2017) research, who reported that classroom teachers have the most immediate and significant impact on student learning. Park and Datnow's (2009) findings from their qualitative study suggested further research is needed to explore district and building processes for collaborative decision-making.

As described by Tyack and Cuban (1995), school improvement efforts have been the focus of public-school systems in the United States since 1920. School improvement processes have gone through an evolution that began with awareness of culture to understanding and implementing systems thinking. School improvement efforts have experienced and continue to experience many challenges. Reform efforts that include collaboration positively influence student achievement (Fullan, 2015). There has been a great deal of research on collaborative practices in the classroom. Hopkins et al (2014) and Muijs (2015) reported that building leadership capacity and collaboration has been

seen to have a positive influence on student achievement. It is important to explore how collaboration at each stratum in a public school organization, examine which conditions and factors influence collaboration at each stratum, and explore members' attitudes about the factors, conditions, and perceptions of other members from other strata. Hopkins et al. (2014) indicated that improvement efforts have evolved towards a view that systemic approaches are necessary to understand how collaboration functions within an organization that constantly seeks to improve. Telfer (2011) and Fullan (2015) identified collaborative practices as essential elements that support systemic school improvement.

Problem Statement

Problems persist in some educational organizations that have implemented improvement systems with structures to support collaborative culture, including one public school district in the state of Ohio that had implemented the OIP that included resources, supports, and structures for collaboration within and across organizational strata. Educational organizations have implemented improvement systems that included resources, supports, and structures for collaboration but have not achieved the district's student achievement and graduation goals. The problem is exacerbated because little is known about how organizational members participate in collaborative practices with members in different strata within those districts that have implemented improvement systems. Furthermore, a gap exists in research regarding how structures are used to frame members' collaborative practices when interacting with members in other strata. Fullan, Rincón-Gallardo, and Hargreaves (2015) posited that understanding how members at each stratum engage in collaborative practices, as well as across organizational strata, can

clarify the shared vision, increase communication within the organization, and support team learning for continuous improvement.

DuFour (2004), DuFour and DuFour (2013), and Hattie (2015) each posited that continuous improvement processes focused on developing systemic collaboration among teachers and resulted in increased student achievement. Collaborative cultures strengthen professional reflection, bolster personal and group accountability, and create stronger and more effective educational environments for internal stakeholders (Hargreaves & Fullan, 2012). Furthermore, examination of organizational culture by members within the organization, results in a shared moral purpose that both motivates and sustains continuous improvement at each level of the school district (Fullan, 2014; Hord, 1986). Research conducted by Lloyd et al. (2009) and Howley and Telfer (2018) has suggested that systemic implementation of collaborative practice wherein members articulate that their voices were heard and acted upon, demonstrate sustained increases in student achievement.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this mini-ethnographic case study was to qualitatively explore the cultural and organizational context of one Ohio school district that had implemented the OIP that included resources, supports, and structures for collaboration within and across organizational strata. District members' behaviors and practices were observed across organizational strata to discover how systems that include collaborative practices can influence continuous improvement. Understanding characteristics, practices, and behaviors of people associated with collaborative practices across organizational strata of

the Ohio research site will provide insight for future school reform implementation attempts.

Organizational change via improvement processes that include structures for collaboration produce several benefits, which include individual and collective efficacy, organizational adaptability, and increased student achievement (Hopkins et al., 2014). Within academic environments, there is still much to explore regarding the influence of collaborative culture across a system's strata (Ramirez-Heller, Berger, & Brodbeck, 2014). VanHorn (2017) identified the need for additional research on collaborative practices within improvement processes. Butler, Schnellert, and MacNeil (2015) noted, little is known about organizational characteristics that support collegial practices and collaborative behaviors across and between organizational strata.

Research Questions

The following research questions were developed to explore the topic:

RQ1: How do organizational members within and across organizational strata in a selected Ohio school district engage in collaborative practices within the context of a public K-12 educational setting that has implemented an improvement process?

RQ2: How do organizational members in a selected Ohio school district individually perceive the organization's vision, team learning, and systems thinking as a result of collaborative practice within an improvement system?

Conceptual Framework

Green (2014) said that it is necessary to understand and delineate both theoretical and conceptual frameworks and understand how each informs the study. Grant and

Osanloo (2014) said that a conceptual framework provides the structure for a case study. Underpinning such a case study structure, Honig (2008) described a process of dissecting theories into specific, relevant strands to allow a unique lens to frame the study by building a conceptual framework from multiple theories. The theoretical constructs that are combined to form the foundation for this study are introduced below.

Merging OLT with leadership distribution theory (LDT) provides a distinct and balanced perspective to explore collaboration across organizational strata in educational settings. Identification of similar concepts from each of the theories provided a common lens to explore organizational collaboration. Developing a comprehensive understanding of each theory provided access to the common concepts and allowed for a construct of the two to emerge.

Senge (1991) posited that for organizations to thrive and survive, they need to become learning organizations in which individuals and teams significantly contribute to the success and endurance of the organization through intentional and purposeful learning activities and interactions. Senge further posited that learning is continuous, problems are inherent in the system, and individuals must be aware of the system of which they are a part. Senge's understanding of OLT evolved from his earlier work on systems and organizational change. Senge (1991) defined OLT as the synergy of five disciplines: individual mastery, team learning, mental models, shared vision, and systems thinking. Senge, Cambron-McCabe, Lucas, Smith, and Dutton (2012) delineated the five disciplines into three categories: (a) articulating aspirations, (b) reflection and

communication, and (c) systems thinking. Of the categories, systems thinking remains a central focus for this study.

Senge et al. (2012) described the first category of disciplines, articulated aspirations, as the capacity of individuals to envision their futures and the capability of the organizational members to articulate, envision, and implement a co-created purpose and set of values. Furthermore, Senge et al. described the second set of disciplines, reflection and communication, as the capacity of members to reflect and inquire on only skills, attitudes, and perceptions. The ability of individuals to consider other members' perceptions and attitudes is included in the second category.

Senge (1991) described team learning as communication skills that facilitate openness and transparency with an outcome of collective learning. Single loop learning can be described as setting a goal and working to achieve the goal. If the goal is not met, a cause-effect analysis is completed, and the next goal is adapted based on the cause-effect analysis (Argyris & Schön, 1978). Single-loop learning is a process used by organizational members to detect and correct problems that occur within the organization by following established rules and operating norms. Senge et al. (2012) described double-loop learning as a cycle whereby organizational members move beyond cause-effect relationships, rules, and organizational norms to solve problems within a system. Such "double loop learning" (Argyris, 1977, p. 117) is described as learning from reflective feedback and using that feedback to make a correction or enhancement to actions normally observed in single-loop learning (Argyris, 1977; Greenwood, 1998; Senge et al., 2012). Argyris and Schön's (1991) description of theories-in-action, which aligns

with Senge's (1991) mental models, "deeply ingrained assumptions, generalizations …

that influence how we understand the world and how we take action" (p. 8) was

considered a potential barrier to personal and team reflection.

Gronn (2000) described distributed leadership as an analysis of distributed

properties of leaders "on the cusp of fundamental rethink" (p. 317). The literature

specifically emphasizes shared and distributed leadership as a fundamental component of

systemic processes (Hornstrup, Madsen, Johansen, & Vinther Jensen, 2012). Distributed

leadership, like many educational reform initiatives or ideas, quickly gained momentum;

unlike others, it has remained an important part of school improvement discussions and

formal leadership preparation programs (Harris & DeFlaminis, 2016; Leithwood, Harris,

& Hopkins, 2008; Walker, 2017). Distributed leadership has been described in a variety

of ways depending on the study or the specific arm of educational research.

To guide my study and clarify the relationships between the two theories, I

created a visual model, Figure 1, that depicts the relationships between LDT, OLT, and

the conceptualized components described by Senge, et al. (2012). The conceptual

framework for this study allowed me to explore: (a) organizational cross-strata

collaboration involving how members interact with members in strata different from their

own, (b) levels of awareness of the system, (c) how they experience cocreation of vision,

purpose, and values, (d) how they interact in a team environment, and (e) how they

describe their responsibilities, accountability, and power opportunities.
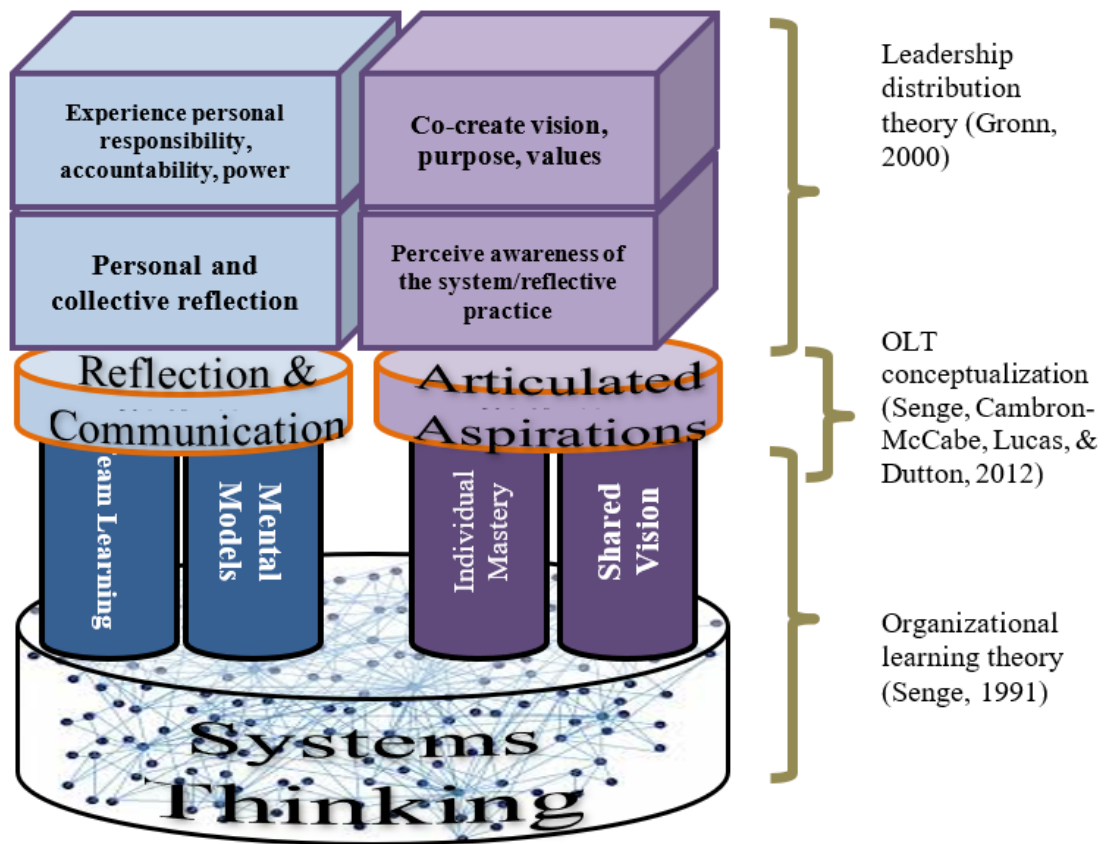
Figure 1: Concepts derived from distributed leadership research (Gronn, 2000) compared to OLT disciplines described by Senge (1991) and categories conceptualized by Senge et al. (2012).

shows the concepts from OLT, LDT, and concepts identified by Senge's et al. (2012) that

expand upon the disciplines from OLT. The bottom layer characterizes Senge's (1991)

OLT alongside his concepts of reflection and communication with articulated aspirations.

These are underpinned by four disciplines (Team Learning, Mental Models, Individual

Mastery, and Shared Vision) emerging from and supported by systems thinking. Systems

thinking is represented as a web of nodes, interconnected components, and the

interactions within the system. The remaining four disciplines are shown emerging from and supporting systems thinking. The four disciplines are grouped according to the two concepts described by Senge, et al. (2012) and aligned with four factors of LDT. The colors signify alignment: blue represents team learning and mental models' disciplines alignment with LDT's personal responsibility, accountability, power, personal and collective reflection factors. The OLT disciplines individual mastery and shared vision are aligned with LDT's cocreation of a vision, purpose, and values and an awareness of the system factors. In this study, I focused on shared and cocreated vision, an awareness of the system, and power to make and carry out decisions that are realized through personal responsibility and accountability. Chapter 2 details the conceptual framework as it relates to the research questions.

Nature of the Study

According to Fusch and Ness (2015), qualitative research is useful to observe cultural experiences and study individuals' perspectives, and organizational problems. Qualitative research designs available to researchers include grounded theory, narrative inquiry, phenomenological study, ethnographic study, and case study. Each design offers opportunities to explore phenomena from different perspectives and at varying levels of immersion. To explore the organizational culture of the selected Ohio school district, specifically the experiences of members as they participate in collaborative actions and develop perceptions of their actions associated with the OIP improvement processes, a combined study design adapting ethnography and case study was used.

A comprehensive ethnographic study design was not chosen for this study as it was beyond capital and time resources available to me (see Fusch, Fusch, & Ness, 2017). While a mini-ethnographic study enhanced my efforts to learned about the culture, there was a possibility of not clearly delineating the boundaries for the study. This might have been especially true with a real-world district using an expansive improvement process. Case study designs are most often used to explore real-life and bounded phenomena. Merriam (2009) described case studies "an in-depth description and analysis of a bounded system" (p. 40). Yin (2012b) described case study to explore, describe and explain, or evaluate a case in its real-world context. Yin further described case studies as nonexperimental, distinguishing the case study from other study designs. Yin (2007) said case studies are formulated to provide insight into comprehensive reform initiatives such as school improvement which "are aimed at changing whole systems rather than engaging in piecemeal, isolated, and sometimes conflicting initiatives" (p. 76). As a result, the mini-ethnographic case study design was the appropriate selection for organizing and conducting this study.

Examples of the hybrid design include a doctoral study by Amaechi (2016), who used a hybrid design that explored barriers that women entrepreneurs faced in Nigeria. Similarly, Storesund and McMurray (2009) successfully used the hybrid design to explore quality of practice in intensive care units. Furthermore, combining the two designs may mitigate limitations of both (see Fusch, et al., 2017) as demonstrated in mini-ethnographic case studies conducted by Stjernborg (2017) of seniors in Swedish urban neighborhoods and Chase and Rousseau's (2018) ethnographic case study of

refugee's mental health interventions. Finally, Fusch, et al. (2017) identify mini-ethnographic case study as a design that supports exploration of both and event and a culture. In this study, I explored a bounded phenomenon, specifically an entire school district's implementation of an improvement system as well as the culture, including interactions between and behaviors of members as they collaborate within the district and application of the improvement system. Combining the two methods provided an opportunity to explore how collaboration occurs within a system that has implemented an improvement process while developing a deep understanding of the people participating in collaborative activities and how they experience K-12 public educational systems.

Additionally, the hybrid design supported my goal to reveal opportunities to improve collaborative practice throughout the school district. The research questions identified in this chapter focus on aspects of the district's culture and explore members', teachers, principals, and district-level employees', experiences. Further, this design allowed me to observe how members behave and interact with one another across organizational strata. The case study design also provides an opportunity for me to explore the complexities of cross-strata collaborative practices within a system that has implemented an improvement process. Finally, a case study design was well suited for the scale of this study because it allowed exploration, provided opportunities to generate new concepts, illustrated the identified theories, and demonstrated the interconnectivity of the concepts emphasized.

According to Hammersley (2006), ethnography "refers to a form of social and educational research that emphasizes the importance of studying at first hand [sic] what

people do and say" (p. 4). Both designs rely on firsthand accounts to gather data. To provide firsthand experiences, focus groups were planned with members of each of the three strata. A fourth focus group was planned with combined members of all three strata to observe interactions, behaviors, and dialogue among members of differing strata. Focus groups provide participants an opportunity to express thoughts that might not have occurred to them in individual interviews, build upon other participants' expressed views, and share dissenting perspectives (Smithson, 2000). During the analysis phase of the study, interactions can explain the organization's culture and power dynamics.

Interviews were conducted with members throughout the Ohio school district, focusing on conditions and practices associated with collaboration and structures associated with the adopted improvement process, in this case, the OIP, that purportedly supports collaboration within stratum and across the organization. Observations of meetings were conducted to observe members' behaviors in an authentic setting in an effort to become immersed in the culture of the organization's improvement system.

Qualitative interview transcripts were formatted and then imported into NVivo 10 to assist in data management, coding, and analysis procedures. Journal transcripts and observation notes were imported as well. Using this software, I performed both a deductive and inductive thematic analysis. Qualitative researchers can use both analysis methods to categorize and describe data to answer research questions. Inductive coding is often associated with qualitative research and allows themes not necessarily related to previously identified categories to emerge during analysis. Deductive coding allowed data to be organized according to themes outlined in Chapter 2.

Definitions

Co-construction: Co-construction is a process where members of a public school district at the district, building, and classroom levels within a school system, create or construct new understandings of educational processes through interactions and reflections that uniquely meet the needs of the collaborative (Butler, Lauscher, Jarvis-Selinger, & Beckingham, 2004).

Collaborative structures: Structures for collaboration include processes, protocols, and practices (Ohio Education Research Center, 2017) that are put into place to support collaboration, usually allocated or created through policies at executive leadership levels (Ohio Leadership Advisory Council, 2014).

Comprehensive support and improvement schools: According to the U. S. Department of Education (2016), these are the lowest performing 5% of schools in the United States identified according to Ohio's student achievement assessments.

Distributed leadership: The Ohio Leadership Advisory Council (2014) defined distributed leadership as a model of leadership that empowers members of an organization at all levels to share in leadership that is focused on moving the organization toward change and improvement. According to Spillane (2012), "leadership is not simply something that is done to followers; followers in interaction with leaders and the situation contribute to defining leadership practice" (p. 17). Distributed leadership is (a) focused on interactions between organizational members (Harris & Jones, 2017b; Hord, 1997; Spillane, Halverson, & Diamond, 2004); (b) equally recognizes both formal and informal leaders regardless of assigned positions or roles (Harris & Jones, 2017b; Park & Datnow,

2009); and (c) supports the distribution of accountability, responsibility, and power across the organization and membership (Harris & Jones, 2017b; Hord, 1997; Park & Datnow, 2009).

Implementation: Fullan (1994) described implementation as a process that generates reliance on and between members of an organizations. Implementation is a process of executing a plan or decision to engage organizational members in a common goal, strategy, and actions.

Learning cycle: Kolb (1984) described a learning cycle includes concrete learning, reflection, abstract conceptualization, and active experimentation. Argyris and Schön (1978) posited that learning takes place only when new knowledge is translated into new and replicable behavior. Knowles (1984) emphasized that adult learning occurs through active participation and problem-solving within specific situations. Adult learning, therefore, is a cycle that provides opportunities for instruction within social interactions that can be practiced and replicated, reflected on, and lead to critical thinking in an authentic context.

Learning organization: According to Senge (1991), a learning organization is an institution that continually promotes learning through member capacity development and in doing so continuously improves inputs, outputs, and outcomes of the organization so that it meets the needs of all stakeholders. In school districts, the customer is interpreted to include students, the community, and society as a whole (Kornblum, 2011; Tyack & Cuban, 1995).

Learning structures: Like collaborative structures, learning structures are guides to learning processes within organizations. March and Olsen (1976) reported that structures such as routines, standard operating procedures, protocols, and processes, could, by the nature of the restriction of the structure, inhibit critical thinking and creativity and restrict organizational adaptability.

Priority schools: Ohio's name for Comprehensive Support and Improvement Schools, which are the lowest performing 5% of schools throughout the state (U.S. Department of Education, 2020).

Professional learning community (PLC): According to DuFour (2004), PLCs are groups of educators and stakeholders who meet regularly with a goal to ensure all students learn.

Power: Power has various meanings. Eisler (2015) described power as the belief that members are empowered to make decisions regarding their daily work tasks and then act on those decisions.

Shared vision: According to Senge (1991), a shared vision is a detailed description of the current state and meticulous presentation of a desired future state.

Strata: The term stratum are used to refer to organizational levels, in this case, district, building, and classroom levels as described in the OIP. McNulty and Besser (2011) delineated these three levels as necessary for the recursive, iterative continuous improvement process and as a structure for collaborative practices to support those efforts. These three levels are clearly delineated in the OIP.

System improvement process: According to Telfer (2011), system improvement processes are cyclical and are employed by organizations to increase effectiveness of education for all students. Telfer indicated that systems improvement processes include establishing a culture based on collaborative practices and identifying stakeholder needs. Additionally, system improvement relies on creating strategic plans that act on a limited number of prioritized goals, clearly articulating a shared vision and establishing roles and responsibilities needed to carry out the vision, creating effective data routines, and communicating with stakeholders at each stage of implementation.

Assumptions

Individuals' paradigms, constructed through years of experience and learning, shape how those people work, play, and engage in future learning. Their experiences shape how they interact with others, react to change, and how they reflect on their own and other members' experiences. Creswell (2013b) described these phenomena as social constructs where "individuals seek understanding of the world in which they live and work" (p. 16). Therefore, for this study I assumed the following:

I assumed that organizations and their members were capable of learning and growth. As educators, this is a natural assumption, but one that is necessary as I sought to understand how organizations and members had learned and grown as a result of participation in an improvement process and through collaborations. While it is possible that negative outputs and outcomes have resulted from collaboration, growth and learning were the positive outcomes that I assumed of collaboration. Finally, I assumed that participants were candid and honest in all interviews and activities. This assumption was

necessary for me to use the data generated during interviews and from observations to generate useful findings.

Scope and Delimitations

The focus of this study was one public school district in the state of Ohio that had implemented the OIP to explore members' behaviors and perceptions regarding collaboration across three organizational strata identified in the OIP. A collaboratively developed vision results in increased feelings of belonging, develops a collective and individual ownership, and increases knowledge and skills of participants (Sheppard, Brown, & Dibbon, 2009; Waters, Marzano, & McNulty, 2003; Yarbrough, Shulha, Hopson, & Caruthers 2011). Furthermore, a shared vision is reliant on individuals and teams within the system to strengthen individual's trust that they are an essential component of the system and serves as a catalyst for strong organizational learning and collaborative practices (Belchetz & Leithwood, 2007; Berson, Da'as, & Waldman, 2015; Williamson, Sturt, Archibald, & McGregor, 2010). It could thereby be inferred that a shared vision and trust among all organizational members is essential for collaboration.

Power refers specifically to the perception of members that they can make decisions and act on those decisions without concern for repercussions (Leithwood et al., 2008). Furthermore, power is not necessarily granted but is distributed to other members and is reliant on trusting relationship, a common understanding of the vision, goals, and strategies of the organization (Gronn, 2000; Spillane, Halverson, & Diamond, 2001). The two components when viewed together can provide an in-depth view of the culture of the organization and its members.

The bounded system for this study included one Ohio public school district that had voluntarily adopted and used the OIP. The bounded system also included each of the individual schools within the district, district-level administrators, building principals, and teachers. The bounded system for the study also included a limited amount of time to collect data. The district was chosen from those that had adopted the OIP, including the structures, which support collaboration as described in Chapter 2. I excluded districts that had not adopted the OIP because in Ohio, the OIP is the process with embedded collaborative practices at each of the three strata. Further, I did not explore individual personality traits that may influence team or individual learning in this study.

Fusch et al. (2017) said that mini-ethnographic case studies can limit transferability due to the narrow focus. Such is the occurrence with the current study, which has taken more of a case study focus by attending more readily to observable rational aspects of the learning organization than attempting to decipher the deeper cultural nuances associated with a more ethnographic perspective. However, findings from this study have the potential to help school districts close achievement gaps can be valuable. Further, the topic of improvement systems and collaboration is broad and by focusing on shared vision and distribution of power, this may provide valuable data to schools to support decision-making with regard to improvement efforts involving collaboration, instructional practices, and learning outcomes.

Limitations

Limitations are potential weaknesses of the study design or methodology that a researcher can control but may not have experience or knowledge of (Leedy & Ormrod,

2013). In this study, I explored collaborative structures, conditions, and practices within one public school district in Ohio. As this mini-ethnographic case study was designed and conducted, extensive care was applied to decrease limitations. Fusch, et al. (2017) reported three main limitations associated with this design. The first limitation is described as a truncated opportunity to become fully immersed in the culture. I reduced this limitation by collecting data over five months. Second, the mini nature had the potential to reduce the number of participants and thereby the richness of the study might be abridged. I reduced this limitation by inviting more than 500 district employees to participate in the study. Finally, Fusch, et al. caution that due to the narrowed focus, transferability could also be narrowed. Access to participants was restricted to some extent based on the timing of the study during the summer and early part of the school year when some members were not on duty. This may have affected the collection of interview and observation data. Finally, due to my extensive experience with the OIP and with collaborative structures, conditions, and practices, the potential to introduce bias existed and was addressed through reflective journaling and reporting relationships with participants. Efforts were taken to examine my personal biases as I completed the design phase, collected data, and interacted with participants. One method to identify biases was reflective journaling. I began reflective journaling during the proposal stage and continued the practice throughout the study to reduce the likelihood of my bias influencing and thereby limiting the study. Finally, as an educator I have experience working with system improvement and collaboration but lacked experience with

organizational systems. This lack of knowledge and experience had the potential to

influence my paradigm of the study, thereby limiting how I report it.

Significance

Bush's NCLB Act, Obama's RttT competitive grants, and the ESSA each placed

significant emphasis on increasing student achievement for all students, in part by

implementing improvement systems for individual schools identified as low-performing

(Saultz, White, McEachin, Fusarelli, & Fusarelli, 2018). More than 2,800 schools that

have implemented improvement systems serve more than 1 million students in the United

States (United States Department of Education, 2016). In response to federal

requirements such as teacher evaluations, collaboration, or leadership development that

are outlined in these legislative acts, organizations implemented improvement processes,

particularly in low-performing schools within each district that also met criteria for

priority schools. This was an important distinction in the legislation, as the federal

government focused requirements on individual schools, and not in most cases, on entire

districts that would support systemic improvement.

The state of Ohio developed and implemented the OIP, an improvement system

that included collaborative practices and identified specific levels of expected

collaboration at the district, building, and classroom levels. Since its inception in 2007,

the OIP has been required for low-performing school buildings and their staff, and gains

in student achievement have not been realized. This study explored collaborative

practices across an entire district.

Public, private, and charter schools can use findings to examine their own practices and identify interventions to improvement practice such as those identified in the OIP, in Senge's OLT approach to organizational learning, and in distributed leadership concepts. Walden defines positive social change as "a deliberate process of creating and applying ideas, strategies, and actions to promote the worth, dignity, and development of individuals, communities, organizations, institutions, cultures, and societies" (Walden University, 2020, p.18).

To contribute to the body of positive social change by Walden University students, my goal with this research will be to educate leaders in K-12 educational organizations on topics such as collaboration within an organization that has adopted the OIP. This research also provides insight into federal policies that involve system improvements and isolated reform efforts. For organizations that have implemented an improvement system, this research will explain how members experience collaborative practices . When all voices are heard, opportunities for personal mastery, team learning, reflection on individual and members mental models, and an awareness of the entire system will increase. Finally, this research may increase opportunities for organizations to empower all of its members to act in the best interest of their own, their team's, and the organization's learning capacity and take ownership of a vision towards improving learning outcomes for students. Harris and Jones (2017a) posited that when organizations learn, student achievement will increase.

Summary

When collaborative structures are put in place by executive leadership, teachers perceive that collaboration is valued and that it benefits their teaching and student learning (Honig, 2008; Vescio, Ross, & Adams, 2008; Wells & Feun, 2013). Similarly, DeMatthews, (2014) described the effectiveness of distributed leadership practices that include collaboration, as effective in cultivating a culture of trust that supports organizational change efforts. Research on district level personnel consistently demonstrated that leaders have a significant impact on student achievement in terms of improvement systems that include collaborative practices (Honig & Coburn, 2008; Leithwood, Leonard, & Sharratt, 1998). Therefore, if teachers, principals, and district-level leaders' collaborative practices support learning across the organization, that results in increased student achievement, and it is essential to understand how members experience collaboration across the organization's strata.

Teacher collaboration has been a focus of researchers for the past 25 years. The abundance of research is appropriate since teaching is central to student learning, but other organizational members also influence student achievement by modeling core values and supporting teaching through effective structures and positive conditions. Research on distributed and shared leadership by building level administrators has increased over the past 10 years. Research on central office personnel including superintendents is limited as is research on collaborative practices within and across organizations. This study addressed that gap by exploring how district members experience collaborative practices within an Ohio public school district that has

implemented the OIP. This study supports public school districts, school buildings, and teachers in future improvement efforts by providing insight into members' behaviors and practices. Insight into collaborative experiences and actions can provide valuable input into the continuous learning process by reflecting on practice. Chapter 2 reviews leadership distribution and organizational learning theories and the conceptual framework based on the theories. Further, key concepts associated with collaborative qualities were explored in the literature.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

Introduction

The research problem is that many educational organizations that have

implemented an improvement system and incorporated structures to support collaboration

have not realized increased student achievement that is anticipated in collaborative

cultures within an improvement system, including one public school district in the state

of Ohio that had implemented the OIP that included resources, supports, and structures

for collaboration within and across organizational strata. Implementation of continuous

improvement processes focused on systemic collaboration within the classroom and at

the building level can have a positive influence on student achievement (DuFour, 2004;

DuFour & DuFour, 2013; Hattie, 2015; Muijs, 2015; Telfer, 2011). Additionally, Honig

et al. (2017) reported that collaboration at the school district level also positively

influenced student achievement. Collaborative cultures strengthen professional reflection,

bolster efficacy and accountability, and create stronger and more effective educational

environments for internal stakeholders (Hargreaves & Fullan, 2012). Some school

districts and school buildings have realized gains, but widespread and significant changes

that should increase student achievement remain isolated as evidenced by student

achievement data provided by the U.S. Department of Education (2018) and the National

Center for Education Statistics (2015a, 2015b, 2017). The purpose of this mini-

ethnographic case study was to qualitatively explore Ohio public district, organization,

adult members' behaviors and cross-strata organizational practices to learn how

improvement systems, in this case the OIP, which include collaborative practices, can

influence continuous improvement of the district's programs and processes that can lead to improved student academic achievement.

Heller, Berger, Brodbeck, and Esperanza (2014) suggested that a great deal remains to be learned regarding collaboration in educational settings. Hopkins et al. (2014) recommended additional research is needed to understand the components of collaborative structures to guide schools and districts to obtain measurable improvements. Butler et al., (2015) suggested that previous research has focused on collaboration within stratum, but little is known about collegial practices and collaborative behaviors across strata.

The purpose of this literature review was to explore and analyze prior research to frame the problem. Further, the literature review describes characteristics, components, and factors involving relationships between distributed leadership, improvement systems, and organizational learning associated with cross-strata collaboration. Chapter 2 includes a description of the theoretical foundation and conceptual framework associated with systemic collaborative practices within improvement systems. Concepts associated with this study are described and include school improvement, systems, and organizational learning, the OIP, collaboration, and distributed leadership.

Literature Search Strategies

For this literature review, an iterative process was used for the search strategy. The process used in this literature review provided opportunities to identify key studies, beginning broadly and narrowing the focus. The narrowing resulted in a continuous filtering process to identify the most relevant topics and themes via a comprehensive

examination of the literature. Search engines and databases explored included education, psychology, sociology, and business-specific databases. Databases included ERIC, Education Research Complete, EBSCOHost, and Business Research Complete. Search engines included Google Scholar, RefSeek, SAGE Journals, iSeek, and Thoreau. The literature review involved using Walden University, Columbus City Library, and University of Cincinnati's online and physical libraries.

The following key terms were used in the literature review search: *collaboration*, *systems*, *school improvement*, *school reform*, *improvement processes*, *professional learning communities*, *superintendent collaboration*, *principal collaboration*, *leadership*, *organizational learning*, *educational system improvement*, *interviewing techniques*, *narrative analysis*, *focus groups techniques*, *ethnographic studies*, *case studies*, *qualitative research in educational settings*, *NCLB*, *Elementary and Secondary Education Act*, *RttT*, *ESSA*, *NAEP scores*, *Common Core State Standards*, *PARCC*, *AIR tests*, *Ohio Improvement Process*, *continuous improvement processes*, *school culture*, *culture of inquiry*, *collaborative culture*, *conditions for collaboration*, *learning theories*, *situated learning*, and *organizational learning*.

Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework that was used for this study was developed from two theories. The first is the OLT, which was developed by Senge. The second is the LDT. Together, the two theories provide a conceptual lens to explore staff members' experiences and perceptions of cross-strata collaboration within an organization focused on learning. Figure 1 shows the relationships between the LDT and OLT. The conceptual

framework has been developed based on the common concepts that were associated with both theories, specifically, co-creation of a vision, team learning, and systems thinking.

According to Senge (1991), healthy and successful organizations need to become learning organizations in which individuals and teams intentionally and purposefully contribute to the organization. Senge suggested that to optimize OLT, organizational members must be both aware of the system and their role within it, as well as cognizant that learning is a constant and continuous process to correct problems that persist within a system, or in this case, a school district.

Senge (1991) said:

- District and school leadership often focus on simplistic frameworks to solve complex problems inherent within the district or school.

- Before organizational members can work to solve the inherent complex problems, they must recognize the dynamics of the district or school.

- Once organizational members are aware of a problem's complexity, appropriate actions can occur to solve it.

Senge (1991) described five disciplines: personal mastery, team learning, mental models, shared vision, and systems thinking. OLT describes how learning occurs at individual, team, and organizational levels and how that learning strengthens organizations through continuous growth processes. Argyris and Schön (1978) placed the individual at the center of organizational learning. "Argyris/Schön see the individual member of an organization as the initiator and central actor of organizational learning" (Göhlich, 2016,

p. 13). The individual staff member, moving towards personal mastery, provides benefit to oneself, the team, and the school organization thereby strengthening each.

Trust and power are two of many complicating components associated with team learning. The two components play a role in how organizational members both perceive their teammates and how they are perceived. Further complicating team learning, Senge (1991) described (a) the ability of individuals within a group to think critically in terms of complex problems, (b) the ability to coordinate innovative actions to solve complex problems, and (c) network development that allow teams to replicate the actions of another team. As members participate in either team meetings, personally demonstrating accountability to teammates would likely build trust. However, holding teammates accountable, if not done with finesse, might deter or break team trust. Mental models also play a role in both the ability to coordinate innovative actions and sharing outside

Mental models as described by Senge (1991) include the assumptions that guide personal decisions and actions. These paradigms that district members have developed over time through their personal and shared experiences have a significant influence on their behaviors and attitudes regarding both school improvement processes and collaboration. Mental models explain differences between two members' perceptions regarding communication processes, development of team and cross-strata trust, reflection, professional discourse, and how members identify problems then work to solve problems.

The fourth discipline, shared vision, is described as a common mental image of the purpose, values, and preferred outcomes of the school district that are co-created and

owned by all district members (see Senge, 1991, 2014). Members in a school district that have a common shared vision, an embodiment of a congruent conceptualization of the organization's purpose by the organizational members (Senge, et al., 1999) might be more likely to embrace continual improvement of adult actions, such as collaboration, to improve student achievement. Within the conceptual framework, a shared vision is: first understood by members; next observable in goals, plans, and actions; and finally, aligned with progress monitoring and annual evaluation of goals.

The final discipline is systems thinking, described as the glue that holds the first four disciplines together (Senge, 1991). School district are complex organizations. Within districts where systems thinking is practiced and understood, district members are aware of their own and other members' roles within a system, including peers and members in other strata. Systems thinking denotes that members participate in both identifying problems and then working collaboratively to solve those problems.

In the categories identified, systems thinking remains a central focus. Figure 1 showed the relationship between the five disciplines and their three categories. Senge et al. (2012) described articulated aspirations as the capacity of individuals to envision their futures and the capability of the collective to articulate, envision, and implement a co-created purpose and values. Furthermore, Senge et al. (2012) grouped mental models and team learning into one category that described reflective exercises and robust and rigorous communication practices. Mental models, they stated, are "focused around developing awareness of attitudes and perceptions" (Senge, et al., 2012, p. 7) for inward personal reflection and an awareness of others' perceptions and attitudes. Reflection and

communication are also embedded within team learning that Senge described as specific communication skills that serve to facilitate openness and transparency with a goal of aiding collective learning (Senge, 1991). Much of Senge's (1991) work was influenced by Argyris and Schön's (1978) research on single and double loop learning, the of knowledge and skills that members participate in and then share with other members as they attempt to address organization problems. Senge, et al. (2012) described learning as a cycle whereby learners move between action and reflection. Double loop learning acts on reflection and feedback and then applying learning from reflective activity to make corrections or enhancements to the original action (Argyris, 1977; Argyris & Schön, 1978; Greenwood, 1998; Senge, et al., 2012). Furthermore, Argyris and Schön's description of theories-in-action aligns with Senge's (1991) mental models, those "deeply ingrained assumptions, generalizations…that influence how we understand the world and how we take action" (p. 8). Senge's OLT aligns with Gronn's LDT.

Gronn (2000) introduced distributed properties of leadership that focused, in part, on sharing responsibilities across an organization or department, by the formal leader with informal leaders. Harris (2003) specified three conditions of LDT. Harris indicated that to distribute leadership in school settings that formal leaders must yield power, specifically, decision-making at another stratum. A second barrier identified by Harris includes the traditional hierarchical structures where power is maintained. This may be interpreted as the teams described in the OIP or customary teams such as executive leadership or cabinet. Harris stated a third and major challenge "of *how* to distribute development responsibility and authority and more importantly *who* distributes

responsibility and authority" (p. 20). Leaders, as described in distributed leadership literature, focused on situations and interactions and not a specific role (Gronn, 2000). For example, in school districts teachers may fit the description of a leader while a formal leader, such as a principal exists. The literature specifically emphasized shared and distributed leadership as a fundamental component of systemic processes (Hornstrup, et al., 2012). For this study, distributed leadership is a system: (a) focuses on interactions between members of an organization (Harris & Jones, 2017b; Hord, 1997; Spillane, et al., 2004); (b) recognizes both formal and informal leaders regardless of assigned position or role (Harris & Jones, 2017b; Park & Datnow, 2009); and (c) supports the distribution of accountability, responsibility, and power (Harris & Jones, 2017a; Hord, 1997; Park & Datnow). Further, because power can have varying degrees of meaning and intensity, power refers to the belief that a member is allowed to make decisions and how she perceives exercising that power is viewed by her peers, superiors, and subordinates. Much of Gronn (2001) work was founded on Gibb's (1954) research on groups and their interactions with leaders.

Gibb (1954) described leaders as those who influence others in a group of two or more and who are perceived as the leader based on possession of an attribute that is relevant to a given situation. Spillane, et al. (2001) in their theory of distributing leadership, focused on leadership actions, not a defined role such as those often found in hierarchical organizations such as school districts. Gronn (2000) described distributed leadership as the heathier attributes of transformational and managerial leadership styles that drew on the individualism of the former and structural supports of the later.

Therefore, according to Gronn's idea of distributed leadership, cross-strata collaboration can be led by any member of the organization as long as the focus of the work remains on continuous growth and learning, with a clear understanding of how and why the collaboration exists within the system. In this case, a system can be viewed as a society, the federal government, a state government, or as in this study, a school district.

Distributed leadership encompasses four characteristics: (a) individuals feel personal responsibility and accountability and believe that they have the power to act, (b) members participate in co-creation of knowledge including the vision and values of the organization, (c) members and groups of members can reflect on their own learning and intentionally change practice based on that learning, and (d) members are aware of the greater system in which they reside and understand their role. Finally, any member within an organization can serve as a leader if the factors are met. Furthermore, more than one member may lead at any given time dependent on the needs of the organization. While LDT and OLT provide a lens to explore the interactions and culture associated with collaboration and improvement processes within a system, understanding of the specifics of a specific improvement system can provide a magnification to view the phenomenon.

Considering the properties of distributed leadership and Senge's (1991) disciplines described earlier in the chapter, the conceptual framework for this study will provide me an opportunity to explore organizational cross-strata collaboration to understand how members interact with other members in strata different than their own; members' levels of awareness of the system, how members experience co-creation of vision, purpose, and values; how members interact in a team environments; and how

members describe their responsibilities, personal and team accountability, and power opportunities.

A major consideration for this study is exploring collaboration within a district that has adopted and implemented an improvement system. The OIP was based, in part, on the research of a broad group of scholars who had focused their research on student learning, teacher learning, leadership development, effective strategies, student achievement linked to instruction and leadership, organizational learning theory, change theory, and school improvement. Since the OIP is based, in part, on the theories that inform this study and because it is the improvement process that is available to all Ohio public districts, and because the study site was chosen based on the adoption and implementation of OIP, it was valuable to examine the literature and guiding documents associated with the OIP as an additional lens to explore collaboration.

Improvement Process Supporting Conceptual Framework

In 2007, Ohio's Department of Education (ODE) and the Buckeye Association of School Administrators partnered to create the Ohio Leadership Advisory Council. The Council, a group of researchers and stakeholders, provided guidance on a systemic approach to school improvement for the State of Ohio. From the partnership, the OIP was created. The council identified the works of Fullan (2008), Reeves (2006), Hord and Thurber (1982), McNulty and Besser (2011), Hattie (2003), Senge, et al. (1999) as seminal research to guide the development of the OIP framework for systemic school improvement efforts in Ohio (Ohio Leadership Advisory Council, 2014). According to the Ohio Advisory Council (2014), the OIP focused on organizational learning for each

of three identified district strata including the District Leadership Team (DLT), Building

Leadership Teams (BLTs), and Teacher Based Teams (TBTs). Furthermore, the OIP

provided specific implementation and monitoring guidelines for each stratum and

provided resources, protocols, governance, and leadership supports necessary for

organizational learning that had the potential to influence systemic improvement (see

Goddard, Goddard, Sook Kim, & Miller, 2015; Senge, 1991). Exploring collaboration

through the OIP will serve as a third lens to explore members' experiences that

incorporates attributes of both OLT and LDT. Furthermore, the OIP will provide insight

into the intended expectations for development, implementation, and monitoring of

improvement processes and provide language appropriate to explore collaborative

behaviors. The conceptual framework draws on each theory's concepts embedded within

the OIP to help me understand how collaborative behaviors, practices, processes, and

structures manifest at each level of an organization and how members collaborate within

and across the levels.

Literature Review Related to Key Variable and Concepts

History of school improvement systems

School improvement efforts have been ongoing for more than 100 years. Hopkins

et al. (2014) outlined five stages of school improvement efforts over the past 80 years.

The phases described by Hopkins, et al. are illustrated in Figure 2, which presents the

evolution of school improvement efforts in a linear model moving from an awareness of

cultural impact (Phase 1) to an awareness of cultural impact (Phase 1) to an awareness of

and acting upon systems improvement (Phase 5). Phase 5 is not likely the last in the

evolutionary journey of school improvement. It will be important to understand each of the first five phases to understand where the journey will go next (Hopkins, et al., 2014).
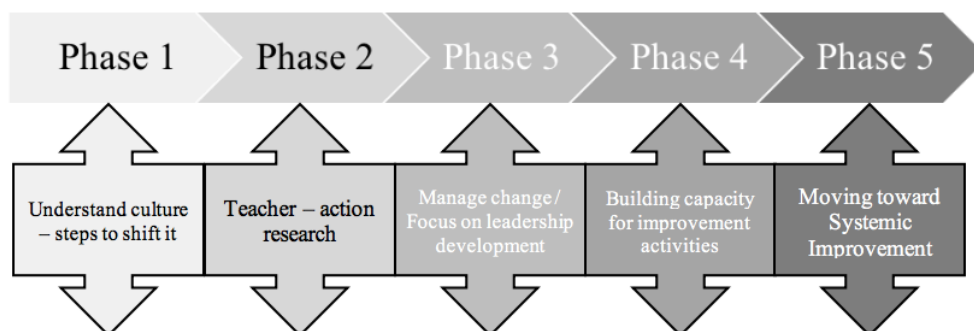
Figure 2. Evolution of school improvement.

Hopkins et al. (2014) further clarify that system means "the entirety of the educational support systems for schools" (p. 270). The five phases resemble an organization's representation of Maslow's (1943) self-actualization, where the organization becomes the best possible version of itself. Some early improvement efforts grasped the significance of a systems approach. Some of the initial adoptions often resulted in member alienation, oppressive and complex mandated implementations, and unsustainable successes (Hopkins, et al., 2014). Each district and school in the state of Ohio that has implemented the OIP is likely at a different point on the school improvement continuum described by Figure 2. It is assumed that for a district to realize full impact of implementation of the OIP, including collaborative structures and processes, it should be moving toward system improvement on the continuum. Collecting data regarding the study site's adoption of processes and structures associated with school improvement phases could provide insight on collaborative practices within and across

strata for future school improvement work. Further, exploring the study site's progress as it relates to the history of school improvement efforts within the OIP will provide valuable information on collaborative characteristics observed between organizational strata and provide information to support implementation the OIP in relation to the qualities described in Tables 1 and 2.

Supporting Organizational Learning Through Ohio's System

The study site was chosen from Ohio public school districts that have previously been identified as an *Intensive support school* district and had implemented the OIP study. In 2007, ODE's response to NCLB legislation was to develop a statewide system of support for all districts regardless of improvement status outlined in the law (ODE, 2012). The effort fulfilled the federal government's requirements to support identified low-performing schools and was systems-theory-based. Ohio was unique in its approach to meeting the requirements of NCLB legislation as it did not limit support, the improvement process was available to each of the 611 public and 362 chartered community schools, regardless of improvement status (ODE, 2017; Telfer, 2011). Barr, a founding member of the process, described the OIP as a process that would address all components of the system.

In this study, I explored collaboration across and within organizational strata. Ohio's SSoS and the Ohio Leadership Advisory Council each were instrumental in the development of the OIP. Both also continue to provide support for implementation through a repository of training resources and by providing access to a network of experts and consultants located in 16 regions across the State of Ohio. The SSoS consultants and

experts provided training, coaching services, guidance for federal and state programming, and facilitation of implementation of the OIP framework. The SSoS offered services in three tiers. Tier 3 was reserved for the highest need schools, identified in Ohio as Intensive Support Schools. Tier 2 was available to moderate need schools, previously identified in Ohio as *Focus Schools* and now identified as *Moderate Support Schools* and *Watch Schools*. All remaining schools were identified as Tier 1 schools. According to ODE, there are 3,151 public schools in Ohio's 611 districts (ODE, 2018). For the 2018-19 school year, 459 districts with 129 buildings were identified as Tier 3 with an additional 1,184 buildings identified as Tier 2. The remaining 152 districts and their 1,838 buildings were eligible for Tier 1 services. Schools identified as *Priority* or *Focus* were required to participate in the OIP to varying extents with support from their specific regional consultants (ODE, 2018). Federal policy identified school buildings as the unit to receive fiscal support and SSoS services. ODE, through the OIP, sought to improve the entire district, defining the district as the unit to receive SSoS services (D. Telfer, personal communication, March 14, 2018). The difference between the federal and state governments' descriptions of units of service may explain why there have not been significant gains in student achievement in the past 11 years (Hargreaves & O'Connor, 2018). The study site was chosen that had previously implemented OIP at the district and multiple school sites to align with a systems approach.

Many Ohio school buildings were identified to receive support services and attempted to implement the OIP, including the framework's focus on collaborative structures, processes, and practices, but have not realized expected gains (ODE, 2018).

Increases in student achievement can be attributed to shallow implementation of OIP and change weariness (Ohio Education Research Center [OERC], 2017). A small number of districts throughout the state have achieved significant increases in student achievement across the entire district. Case studies were completed for some of these successful turnaround schools to understand why some succeeded while many did not (e.g., citation). According to OERC (2017), successful districts identified a consistent focus on systemic implementation of the OIP that included adoption of the core components. Further, research by Telfer (2011) and Howley, Howley, Yan, and VanHorn (2019) indicated that six practices embedded within the OIP support system implementation of improvement processes resulted in increases in student achievement. The six practices included focused and limited set of goals; data-driven decision-making practices; collaboratively chosen evidence-based instructional strategies; a culture that supports inquiry and organizational learning; monitoring and evaluation of implementation at all stages; and implement deeply, consistently, and at scale (Howley et al., 2019; Telfer, 2011).

School Improvement Influences on Systems and Collaboration

Three primary groups have influenced school improvement efforts in the United States for more than 100 years. The first group, comprised of government entities, politicians, and bureaucrats, creates laws, rules, and policies that govern public education at the federal, state, and local levels. According to Ingle, Willis, and Fritz (2015), educator licensure requirements, certified staff evaluations, oversight of standardized

tests and testing schedules, and oversight of individual rights and protections afforded all students are examples of policies that have been created and administered nationwide.

Philanthropists and foundations comprise a second group of influential stakeholders who often provide funding streams aligned with their interests. Examples include the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation that has focused on education and health initiatives for urban youth, the Michael and Susan Dell Foundation that has focused on grants for urban education, and Irwin Jacobs who has provided funding to schools and organizations for educational pursuits (Callahan, 2017). The third group is comprised of practitioners, including teachers, principals, superintendents, researchers, universities, and researcher centers. Au and Lubienski (2016) posited that these groups have opportunities to influence education systems through their practice or research, if afforded the opportunity.

Governmental influences systems and collaboration. Governmental influences directly affect this study in two important ways. First, governments enact laws, regulations, and policies that result in mandates that districts are required to implement. Secondly, the publication of President Ronald Reagan's National Commission on Excellence in Education's report, *A Nation at Risk: The Imperative for Educational Reform* (Gardner, Larsen, Baker, Campbell, & Crosby, 1983) established accountability expectations without defined consequences (Bryk, 2018; Good, 2010). The report recommended an increase to the number of core courses required for graduation, development of academic standards, a longer school day and year, minimum teaching competence requirements, increased salaries for educators, and, initialized local, state,

and federal government supports. Since the report's publication, the federal government, expanding on the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 (ESEA), implemented NCLB, RttT competitive grants, and ESSA (ESSA, 2015; NCLB, 2002; U.S. Department of Education, 2009). ESEA, part of President Johnson's war on poverty, established high expectations, provided grants to strengthen state education agencies and monies for locally controlled districts, focused on educational research, and included the first national requirement for annual testing. In 2001, the NCLB, a reauthorization of ESEA, provided a focus on groups of students that were not performing at grade level, greater accountability for districts and schools, sought to strengthen academic standards, and included Title I provisions for disadvantaged students. Achievement gaps became a primary focus of improvement efforts during this period. When students with disabilities participated in Tier 1 education, they were more successful on standardized assessments (Balu, et al., 2015). Tier 1 education is defined as core classroom instruction delivered by a teacher certified in the subject area (Fusch & Ness, 2015). NCLB outlined requirements for students with disabilities to have greater access to general education classrooms, Tier 1 instruction. This requirement spurred a need for more collaboration between general and special education teachers (Darling-Hammond, 2015). However, without structures, resources, and leaders who supported collaboration, gains expected by this policy also fell short of expectations (Darling-Hammond, 2015; Levenson & Cleveland, 2016). The laws enacted have gone through a process of continuous improvement as well, resulting in new policies to address the gaps of NCLB.

As part of the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009, RttT competitive state grants were initiated. RttT's primarily focused on improving teaching, articulating state department of educations' reform strategies, development or adoption of rigorous learning standards, provided funds for the lowest achieving schools, and development of data systems to support instructional practices (U.S. Department of Education, 2009). The Common Core State Standards (CCSS) aligned assessments to CCSS, and new teacher and principal evaluation systems resulted from RttT. Turnaround models, as a method of school improvement, were also a focus of RttT and impacted future improvement efforts (McGuinn, 2016).

Obama's ESSA required states to submit plans for federal approval, identify accountability measures, specifically defined a graduate and graduation rate criteria, and required measures to determine English language learners progress (ESSA, 2015; Klein, 2016). Whereas RttT focused on teacher development and data analysis by teacher teams, ESSA's focus was on state and local educational agency collaboration that shifted control from the federal government back to states and districts (Loeb & Hough, 2016; Loftus, et al., 2016). The federal government's laws and policies required state educational agencies to develop plans to address achievement gaps in through improvement efforts. Ohio's response was to develop the OIP.

The OIP framework was designed to include an extensive set of resources for use by district personnel and employees of the SSoS who serve as state sponsored consultants. Resources included facilitation guides, implementation rubrics, information on each of five stages of implementation, training, and evidence/reporting templates

(ODE, 2012). A comprehensive list of resources available for OIP implementation is presented in Appendix B.

The stated vision for ODE's (2012) OIP is:

All students start ready for kindergarten, actively engage in learning, and graduate ready for college and careers, regardless of race, gender, ethnicity, socioeconomic status, limited English proficiency, disability, gift, or talent. Each district or community school and building is working toward that end, as well as toward ensuring equitable access to high-quality instruction for all student groups in keeping with federal and state laws. Continuous improvement planning is the core process for improving instructional practice, leading to higher achievement for all students. The following seven principles summarize the essential characteristics of the OIP. (p. v)

The *OIP Facilitator's Guide* (ODE, 2012) described seven principles that outlined the fundamental aspects of the framework. First, the OIP recommended that all work should be aligned with the vision, mission and values of the organization. Secondly, Ohio's Department of Education seeks to demonstrate behaviors that mimic expectations of others by modeling the recursive processes associated with continuous improvement. Third, data are used to identify needs, to inform strategic planning, to monitor, and evaluate progress at each level of the organization. Fourth, the process must be grounded in collaborative processes with all stakeholders at all strata. Fifth, collaborators must develop strong communication plans that include all audiences at each stage of the

process. Furthermore, processes for feedback should be incorporated into the communication plans. Sixth, the development of one focused plan that consolidates and aligns all components and interactions of the organization. At a minimum, plans must include strategies, actions, tasks, timelines, resources, monitoring processes, and roles and responsibilities of members to ensure proper execution. Finally, the organization must identify the current culture and state of the organization, establish clear and concise expectations for addressing the gap between baseline and the vision, including identification of the adult behaviors that directly influence improved student performance. These principals are illustrative of Ohio's response to federal regulations and policies. The OIP was developed in response to federal law but compliance alone is not sufficient. The Ohio Leadership Advisory Council (2014) indicated that the OIP was designed to support both compliance and performance.

Cocreation of a Shared Vision

Sheppard et al. (2009) described a shared vision as a set of descriptive images that detail the preferred practices that will drive a learning organization toward a culture where every member becomes a learner. Senge (1991) suggested that to be able to create a shared vision, leaders first need to convey awareness of the current state and provide a description of what is desired. Sheppard et al. (2009) contended that prior to development of a shared vision, leadership must, with stakeholders, develop a decision matrix that clearly articulates the rights and powers of all members. Then the collaborative can begin the process of developing a shared vision (Sheppard et al., 2009). For this study, it was

important to explore members' perceptions of their involvement in creating a vision for the organization and to what degree they own that vision.

Senge (1991) posited that leaders should identify and articulate their vision. Huffman (2003) described guiding questions to help leaders develop a shared vision: (1) Why do schools develop a vision? (2) What is the purpose of the vision? (3) Who is responsible for developing the vision? And (4) How will the school develop the vision? (p. 9).

The first three questions support Senge's (1991) suggestion that organizational members need to understand the why of a vision and be included in the development of the vision. The fourth question considers the development and operationalization of a shared vision. For example, well-developed and fully-adopted visions should be communicated with staff on the what, the why and the who during regularly scheduled meetings or sessions conducted by the formal leader in conjunction with opinion leaders with a set schedule for completion (Huffman, 2003). Sheppard et al. (2009) indicated that development of a collaboratively developed vision can take up to 2 years. Waters et al. (2003) reported that vision development should wait until phase two after formal leaders have cultivated cooperation, cohesion and sense of community and sense of individual comfort for all staff members. Fullan (1994) warned that a comprehensive vision is often beyond the capacity of most education organizations. The Joint Committee on Standards for Educational Evaluation (Yarbrough et al., 2011) suggests orientation to and inclusion of stakeholders in program processes. The concept can be applied to developing a shared vision which will build community, ownership, and increase knowledge and skills of

participants (Yarbrough et al.). Both rely on inputs from the system so that individuals believe that they are an integral part of something bigger than themselves and allow them to develop self-efficacy and contribute to the collaborative. A system that supports individual, team, and organizational learning and growth in turn supports collaborative practices and continuous improvement of the organization.

Research findings from a study by Williamson et al. (2010) indicated that a shared vision serves as the catalyst to strong collaboration in school settings. Berson, et al. (2015) cautioned that while a shared vision may be necessary for organizational learning, it could also act as a deterrent by silencing voices within the organization or stifling innovation and growth. A vision should, like the organization and system, continue to grow and morph over time by encouraging dissenting voices, monitoring alignment of the vision with the work, and examining outcomes to ensure they align with the vision (Berson et al., 2015). Another factor to consider is frustrations that some members may experience if all members do not embrace the vision and it is perceived that not all members are working to realize it (Belchetz & Leithwood, 2007; Ryan & Flinspach, 1991). Reframing members' differences as theoretical disagreements and inclusion of all members in the process of developing a shared vision can minimize challenges and increase engagement by opening members to learning activities (Hopkins & Spillane, 2015; Spillane, Reiser, & Reimer, 2002). Creating a culture where all members embrace learning can then create a culture of continuous improvement through inquiry.

Individual Learning for Collaboration

A collaborative, much like a public-school district, is comprised of diverse individuals. Ronfeldt, Farmer, McQueen, and Grissom (2015) indicated that it is important that gaps of individuals' knowledge, skills, capacities, and capabilities be identified, and resources applied to address those gaps. To support the system's outcomes, the processes of addressing individual gaps should align with the organization's goals, strategic plan, and agree with the team members' knowledge, skills, capacities, and capabilities to form a strong, balanced team (Huxham, Vangen, Huxham & Eden, 2000). One challenge organizations and teams encounter was how to accurately ascertain and address knowledge and skill levels of individuals (Fullan, 2012; Hord, 1997; Leonard & Leonard, 2001). Collaborative teams at all levels of an organization benefit from engaging with others who share a common purpose (Wenger, McDermott, & Snyder, 2002). LDT specifies that leaders are not defined by a position or role and can be found throughout an organization (Gronn, 1996). OLT is dependent on individual and team learning throughout the organization (Senge, 1991). Taken together, collaborative teams at all levels and across strata would strengthen an organization.

As components of a learning system, members need to continually build their professional capacity aligned to their personal goals and to the organization's values, goals, and strategic plan to contribute to the district and the learning of the collective (Alagaraja & Shuck, 2015; Anrig, 2015; Camps, Oltra, Aldás-Manzano, Buenaventura-Vera, Torres-Carballo, 2016; Senge, 1991). Individuals need time to practice and

multiple attempts to demonstrate success. The recursive process of learning in a social setting builds skills, knowledge, and belief in one's self (Bandura, 1978).

One factor that impacts collaboration is the beliefs an individual hold about one's own abilities to positively affect the organization's goals, strategies, and actions and support peers in professional practices. A member's self-efficacy effects how they think, behave, and regulate intrinsic motivation (Bandura, 1993; Goddard & Kim, 2018). According to Goddard et al. (2015), negative mental models that a member holds can impact self-efficacy, collective efficacy, and prevent high-functioning collaboration within an organization.

Mental Models' Impact on Collaborative Processes and Improvement Systems

Senge (1991; see also, Senge et al., 2006) described mental models as hidden, unconscious assumptions that continuously evolve and influence behaviors. The mental models are collected from each person's experiences, knowledge, and observations. These latent assumptions are unique and influence individual actions and reactions. Senge et al. (2006) posited that for organizational learning to occur, members must admit and explore their own mental models to support learning and performance. If mental models remained oblique, organizational learning could not happen or would be severely impaired (Senge et al., 2006). Santos, Uitdewilligen, and Passos (2015) indicated a strong correlation between the shared mental models and team performance. Jimerson and McGhee (2013) indicated that when teachers' definitions were consistent with formal leaders (district and building), they exhibited a higher use of data to inform decisions that supported the shared vision. von Thiele Schwarz and Hasson indicated that team members needed to

identify assumptions and assume ownership of their own learning and that of their team to improve learning capacity. Chrispeels, Burke, Johnson, and Daly (2008) suggested that individuals can never possess the capacity to be effective in an education setting. When collaboration occurs, shared mental models are formed (Chrispeels et al., 2008). When teams jointly reflect, and discuss their mental models, they begin to create a collective mental model (Senge, 2008). The collective mental model, Senge described, supports the work and organizational learning.

One consideration for this study is how organizational members perceive how the district implemented the improvement process. If the ODE mandated the OIP, then there is a high probability that members view it and the tools provided as merely one more thing to complete and may not have implemented deeply. For example, the OIP process included the use of tools to identify critical needs, set goals, strategies, and actions. Additional tools were meant to help monitor progress. Due to the nature of the required use of the tools and resources districts, schools and members often reported that there was little value and they often reported that they were *just checking boxes* (OERC 2017).

Team Learning as Collaboration

Santos et al. (2015) described team learning as reflective behaviors, adherence to processes, focuses on outcomes, participation in discourse, prioritization of issues and tasks, exploration of varied perspectives, embrace risk-taking, analyze tasks, and develop collective understanding. When individuals suspend their assumptions, and enter into systems thinking through interactive discourse, those individuals learn as a team (Senge, 1991; Senge, et al., 2006). Tanyaovalaksna and Li (2013) found a significant correlation

between perceived individual and team learning and correlations between individual and organizational and team and organization. Results from their research of 109 healthcare supervisors indicated that most individuals rated the need for continuous personal growth high.

Stelmaszczyk (2016) reported that team learning served as a mediator between individual learning and organizational learning with a significant positive correlation between the two. Clarity of purpose described as common mental model, and leadership commitment to team learning were highly rated attributes of team learning (Stelmaszczyk, 2016). Bresman and Zellmer-Bruhn (2013) reported that psychological safety and task autonomy mediated the impact of team and organizational structures on team learning. When team members trusted one another, the need for team and organizational processes was reduced. Similarly, when organizations promoted task autonomy, team's performance increased (Bresman & Zellmer-Bruhn, 2013). Santos et al. (2015) reported that conflict and tension could arise because team learning required high levels of resources and was easily influenced by formed social structures.

Foundation for Tying it All Together

The crucial fifth discipline of OLT is systems thinking (Senge, 1991). Senge et al. (2006) stated, "A discipline (from the Latin discipline, to learn) is a development path for acquiring certain skills or knowledge" (p. 10). The fifth discipline, "integrates the first four disciplines, fusing them into a coherent body of theory and practice. It keeps them from being a separate gimmick or the latest organization change fads" (Senge, et al., 2006, p. 12). While systems thinking is a component of organizational learning, there are

five key concepts that form the systems thinking discipline. The concepts included (a) all systems have interconnected components, (b) a system's structure determines its behavior, (c) the system is complex and emerging, (d) feedback loops control the system's behaviors, and (e) complex systems demonstrate counterintuitive behaviors.

Once members understand systems thinking, even a surface awareness, their way of thinking about the world expands. Once a team understands systems thinking and develops a shared vision, reflects, and discusses their mental models, and creates strategies for individual learning to support team learning, there is an opportunity for significant and sustainable change. Therefore, systems thinking is the foundation for sustainable improvement. However, if individual members and teams do not understand systems thinking, they often attempt to create simple solutions to events – not solutions for the system, where the problem resides. Not understanding systems promotes frustration and results in resignation that problems are too complex to be solved; understanding systems feeds optimism and fuels systemic improvement (Schildkamp, Poortman, & Handelzalts, 2016; Senge, 1991; Senge et al., 2006). Therefore, an awareness of systems can support an organization's mission to continuously improve.

Ohio's Frameworks for System Improvement

According to Kerins, Perlman, and Redding, (2009), the State of Ohio's Department of Education (ODE) restructured in 2005 and while "in the process of defining the Center's [Center for School Improvement] work and giving it direction, ODE identified six areas of focus: data analysis; research-based practices; focused planning; monitoring and implementation; resource management; and delivery of high-

quality professional development" (p. 58). The first Ohio School Improvement

Leadership Conference was held that same year. In 2008, ODE introduced the

improvement process, that was partially in response to the requirements of NCLB. The

OIP was based, in part, on Demming's (1993) Plan, Do, Study, Act model (see Lloyd et

al., 2009). The OIP was developed as part of a coordinated effort in conjunction with the

OLAC to utilize the SSoS to communicate, train, support, and monitor districts' OIP

associated practices. The OLAC role was to develop and maintain training modules,

webinars, podcasts, and research, which was focused on shared, instructional leadership

and collaboration to strengthen instructional practices. The of the SSoS role was to

provide training and support to district leaders. The three organizations (ODE-OLAC-

SSoS) worked collectively to support systemic change for all traditional and chartered

public schools throughout the state, with emphasis (as required by NCLB) on federally

identified low-achieving schools. Each supported continuous improvement efforts,

collaborative processes, and structures. Hopkins et al. (2014) proposed that as

organizations grow because of members' learning, the organization progresses through

five phases, presented as Figure 2. As organizations moves through each of the five

phases, continuous school improvement efforts should become more successful.

Organizations do not necessarily need to move through each phase but can learn from

other organizations. Hopkins et al. (2014) indicated that the five phases of improvement

efforts begin as members come to understand a current state of their culture. It concludes

at stage five as members move towards an awareness of the system and act for systemic

change.

The OIP was originally designed for district leaders to plan for systemic changes using OIP-associated processes by training and supporting members at the building and classroom stratum (B. McNulty, personal communication, June 30, 2020). McNulty stated that the OIP designers intentional created an improvement process that would focus learning across the entire organization through distributed leadership practices. According to ODE (2009) presentation materials, the OIP designers' theory of action posited, that participation in SSoS training and guidance would result in highly skilled leaders who in turn would provide training and support building level teams and then building level teams would train and support classroom level teams.

DLTs. Waters et al. (2003) described the purpose of the DLT is to improve instructional practice and performance by ensuring each BLT's work was aligned with the district's goals, coordinated resource decisions to increase efficiency, establish routines, protocols, processes, procedures, and trained to maximize collaborative outputs. Honig's (2008) research on central administrative personnel's leadership of and participation in collaborative practices was framed within a conceptual framework developed from sociocultural and organizational learning theories. Honig (2008) described that the focus of research has been on PLCs for classroom or building personnel and communities of practice (CoP) for district level personnel; while the approaches might be considered parallel, they are not coordinated in a meaningful way. Furthermore, Honig posited that participation in a CoP resulted in learning through practice while participation in PLCs result in learning through knowledge acquisition. Daly and Finnigan (2016) reported that district personnel in systems that were identified

as low achieving exhibited diminished focus at the district level on relationships and processes that support authentic collaboration specifically, trust support and respect. Telfer (2011) posited that the goal of the OIP was to develop structures that developed trust and created reciprocal communication processes that support strong relationships across the entire organization.

The DLT ensures coherence and consistency across the entire district by setting priorities and expectations of adult behaviors and actions as part of a community of practitioners working to improve practice through the collaborative process (OLAC, 2014). The functions of a DLT include conducting needs analyses, development and implementation of a district strategic plan with a narrowed list of goals, identifying strategies to achieve the goals, measuring performance against the goals, identify and communicate processes to support collaborative work, developing a learning culture, establishing a culture that uses data to make informed decisions, nurture a collaborative culture at all levels of the organization, and align resources to achieve the above actions and behaviors.

ODE (2012) recommended that DLTs include the superintendent or designee, central office personnel with authority to make decisions, building administration representatives, and teaching representatives. The collaborative nature of the DLT shifts the work of central office personnel from managerial to one that collaboratively makes informed and purposeful decisions, acts, and reflects on the actions and roles. Rosenberg (2013) indicated that the purpose of a team is not to get better as a team but to build collective efficacy.

BLTs. According to Telfer (2011), Ohio's TBTs were based, in part, on PLC with supplemental compliance features designed to meet reporting requirements under federal law. The BLT's purpose was described as "to learn collaboratively and improve student outcomes through shared accountability" (B. McNulty, personal communication, June 4, 2018). High functioning BLTs usually include an administrator and the building's opinion leaders, which are the people in the building that others follow (McNulty, 2018). BLTs support teacher teams by taking ownership of their own, their peers, and all students' learning by nurturing a culture of inquiry and embracing continuous improvement efforts. Fullan (2014) and Karlgaard and Malone (2015) reported that collaborative teams solve more problems, are happier and more engaged at work, are willing to try new instructional strategies, problem solve more effectively, and influence change in performance and practice resulting in increased student achievement.

High-functioning BLTs use data to make instructional decisions, provide social/emotional supports for students, create schedules that provide time for teams to meet, communicate processes and protocols to guide the work, and celebrate successes. BLTs also continually measure effectiveness of TBTs to identify gaps in adult capabilities, capacities, knowledge, and skills and then arrange for resources to address gaps. Furthermore, BLTs learn from interactions with TBTs and demonstrate and measure their own personal and team growth. In Ohio, rubrics are provided for all collaborative groups including BLTs so that the team can assess and monitor their own growth and the growth of their building's TBTs by examining evidence and artifacts (ODE, 2012). Furthermore, BLTs collaboratively establish school goals, strategies, action

steps and tasks and distribute the work across the team based on skills and availability. DLTs and BLTs primary purpose is to support TBTs by developing processes, protocols, structures, resources, and providing access to training or other needs identified by the TBT and communicated to the BLT. Therefore, the BLT is responsible to the DLT. Recursive processes that support CoP and learning organizations necessitate transparent communication processes to effectively serve as the middle layer in OIP.

   TBTs. DuFour and Eaker (2009) posited that adult learning occurs only as teams take ownership of their own work with a goal to improve their practice, their processes, and structures in an ongoing, iterative process with the goal of shifting practice so that children learn. Senge (1991) described collaboration behaviors as looking inward at oneself and seeing the self as part of the problem. After reflection, members of collaboratives work tenaciously and engage in constructive conversations. Members of collaborative build trust, solve problems, and repeat the process. Evidence from a broad community of researchers suggested that the part of the organization with the most important opportunity to impact students are classroom teachers. The Ohio's teacher teams' concept was developed around Senge's system thinking and DuFour's professional learning communities. Creating an improvement process based on evidence-based research offered credibility to the Ohio districts and their members who choose to use the OIP.

   TBTs are defined as teams comprised of classroom educators who follow a process that supports collaborative work with a goal to improve student achievement by examining adult performance. TBTs were developed to concentrate on a shared vision,

collective responsibility, reflective practices, and focus on student outcomes through

adult continuous improvement of processes for improved student learning (Coburn, &

Stein, 2006; DuFour, 2004; DuFour & DuFour, 2013; DuFour & Eaker, 1998, 2009;

DuFour, Eaker, & Karhanek, 2004). Jackson and Temperley (2007) identified distributed

leadership as a fifth concept to ensure collaboration is effective. ODE (2012) defined

TBTs as:

> Teams composed of teachers working together to improve instructional
>
> practice and student learning through shared work. As part of the OIP use
>
> of collaborative structures, TBTs follow a common set of guidelines
>
> described in a five-step process connected directly to the focused goals,
>
> strategies, and actions described in the school improvement plan. (p. 58)

In Ohio, the collaborative processes occur at all levels of an organization and were

designed to be embedded in every aspect of OIP. The collaborative processes were fully

outlined in Ohio's *OIP Facilitator Guide,* which described roles, responsibilities, and

descriptions of the DLT, BLT, and TBTs. OIP was mandated for schools and districts

that had been identified as low achieving according to guidelines set in NCLB. The goal

of the mandate was, in part, to shift teaching culture from individual teachers, siloed in

their classrooms, to teams of teachers working to solve instructional dilemmas (Lloyd et

al., 2009). OIP assumed that TBT work would be supported through dedicated time,

processes, protocols, and training for teachers. Furthermore, OIP outlined the roles and

responsibilities of team members including rotating roles, configuration of teams,

guidance on data review, and requirements for evidence and artifact collection and

archiving. ODE (2012) indicated that the focus of TBTs was to analyze student data,

discuss challenges and successes, and use the 5-step process. Figure 3 illustrates a

common configuration of teams in a school district.
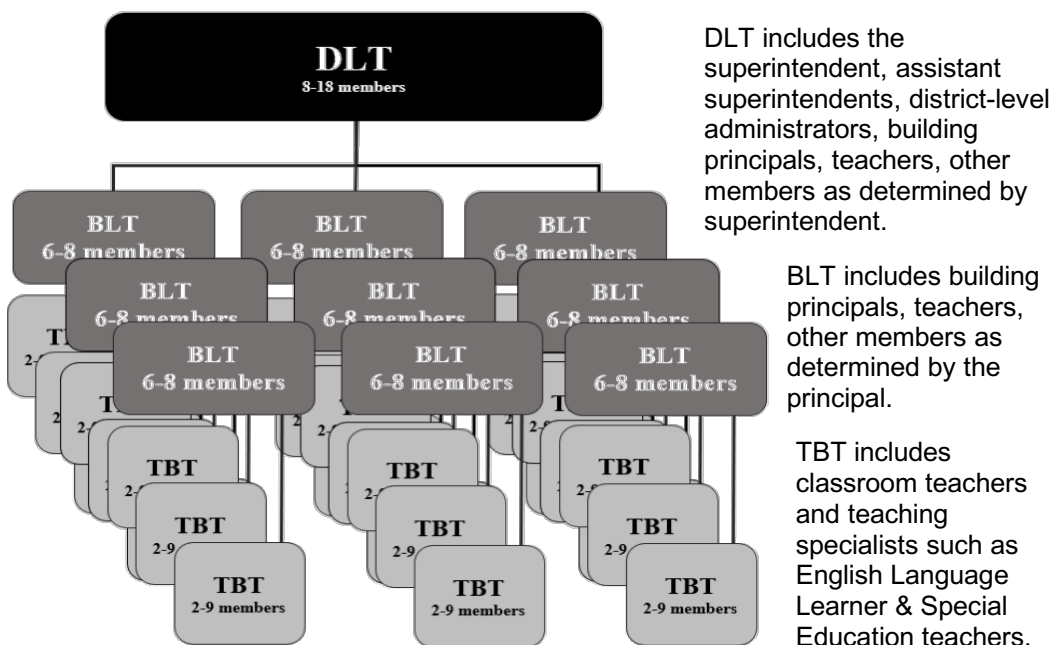
Figure 3. Common OIP team configuration.

Ohio's OIP 5-Step Process to Support Collaboration

The study site was selected based on adoption and implementation of the OIP.

Therefore, exploration of how well members have adopted and implemented the data

analysis process will provide insight into collaborative processes at and across

organizational strata. The 5-step process is the center piece of OIP. It is recursive,

continuous, and was intended for use by all organizational members, but is most often

associated with TBTs. The focus of the process provided a structure for teams to examine

data in a collaborative approach. The state modeled the recursive and continuous efforts

to improve OIP by monitoring implementation and collecting data from districts and their

members (ODE, 2012). In 2017, ODE began a reboot of OIP in conjunction with State

Support Team (SST) directors and with partners (A. Faulkner, personal communication,

January 3, 2019). By examining original documents and comparing them to updated

versions, the modifications are evident. The original 5-step process, presented as Figure

4, has morphed over time, to the present to address issues reported through the

monitoring and evaluating processes (ODE, 2012). Figure 5 addressed deficiencies that

led to widespread miscommunication and incomplete implementation. The intent was for

members to analyze data that examined adult actions in relation to student performance.

Doubek (2018) clarified the process in an online seminar presented to Ohio

principals and teacher leaders. The intent of the revised Step 1 examined *cause data,* the

input data in the teaching learning cycle (Doubek, 2018). Examples of cause data

provided by Doubek (2018) include:

- a percentage of assessments scored during collaborative time,

- the number of high-quality feedback provided to students in one week of
  instruction,

- artifacts identified such as student work or teacher lesson plans,

- rubrics from reading program that include implementation scores,

- the percentage of members participating in formal professional learning,

- the number of observations completed by principals or central office staff.

Figure 4: Ohio's 5-Step Process, 2012.

Figure 5: Ohio's 5-Step Process Rebooted, 2018.

Qualities of Collaboration

D'Amour, Ferrada-Videla, San Martin Rodriguez, and Beaulieu (2005) identified

factors necessary for effective collaboration and classified the factors under two

categories, organizational and interactional. Organizational factors included organizational structure, organizational philosophy, administrative supports and coordination, and communication mechanisms (D'Amour et al., 2005). They further delineated interactional factors that included willingness of participants, trust, discourse, and mutual respect. According to the *OIP Facilitator's Guide*, conditions embedded within the improvement process that support collaboration include: (a) norms of practice, (b) adoption of practices that support implementation, (c) training and professional development activities to build individual and team capacity, (d) resources including dedicated time and space for collaboration, (e) communication plans and expectations, (f) awareness of systems, and (g) procedures to document, monitor, record, and evaluate the collaboration within the improvement process (ODE, 2012). Table 1 represented how the conditions outlined by D'Amour et al. align with the OIP conditions that form five qualities of collaboration that include: (a) structures/systems, (b) culture, (c) governance, (d) processes, and (e) communication. The qualities described in Table 1 provide a schema to explore the topic of collaboration across organizational strata and the key concepts. Hargreaves and O'Connor (2018) made a simple yet important distinction between professional collaboration and collaborative professionalism. Professional collaboration described the collaborative processes of professionals. Sharratt and Planche (2016) posited that district leaders must exhibit and model a commitment to continuous improvement and learn alongside teachers and principals.

Collaborative professionalism is focused on how professionals collaborate in more intentional ways to achieve greater impact (Hargreaves and O'Connor, 2018, p. 3).

Table 1

Qualities of Collaboration

Quality	Structures /Systems	Culture	Governance	Processes	Communication
Organizational Determinants	Organizational Structure	Organizational Philosophy	Admin Support	Coordination Mechanisms	Communication Mechanisms
Interactional Determinants		Willingness of Participants	Mutual Respect		Communication
		Trust			
OIP Conditions	Aware of systems by member	Norms	Shared leadership	Adoption of practices	Communication Plans
			Compliance procedures	Protocols	

When a district seeks to exist as a learning organization with a focus on continuous improvement with a focus on implementing the OIP to achieve continuous growth and with tremendous effort placed on collaboration across the organization, the goal is not to remain stagnant or to put forth effort without benefit. Hargreaves and O'Connor rightly place emphasis on the ideal that the effort should be valuable to the individual, the team, and the organization.

Table 2 represents how the qualities outlined in Table 1 align with the key concepts associated with OLT and LDT described in the conceptual framework. Columns 4 and 5 in Table 1, which include processes and communication mechanisms, align closely with the ideas, processes, and structures associated with the OIP. The qualities associated with collaboration provide themes that were used, in part, during the data collection phase of the study.

Organizational Strata, Members, and Learning within a System

Most public-school districts are complex organizational systems with magnitudes of components and, therefore, solving inequities or dysfunction within the system for continuous improvement may also be complex. Dysfunction often is present because of the failure of organizational members to realize the systemic nature of the organization, often implementing interventions for singular components of the system without addressing the systemic nature of the problem. OLT's foundational concept, awareness and implementation of systems thinking, has the capacity to shift culture. Functioning organizations work strategically to achieve goals (Fullan, 2016; Fullan & Quinn, 2015; Senge et al., 1999). Systems thinking provides members a means to address

many of the qualities associated with collaboration within a system such as trust, mutual respect, development of positive norms, leadership supports, and mechanisms for communication. The complexity of the system begets the need for a systems approach to improvement and provides a framework for collaborative practices across strata. Simply put, fixing one part will not fix the system. For organizations to thrive through learning, there should be an awareness of the whole system and an approach that addresses the entire system. Collaboration as a teacher/classroom level may have an impact on student achievement. But it will not have a lasting and significant impact on student achievement.

Furthermore, systems thinking provides a framework for developing solutions to complicated problems within a school district by its members to improve the system for its members and stakeholders (Fullan & Quinn, 2015; Harris & Jones, 2017a; Senge, 1991). According to Senge (1991) a system is comprised of components, interrelationships between the components, and feedback loops. Hammond (2005) posited that for a school system to improve, the leaders must understand the holistic nature of the system by understanding how each part interacts with the other parts. In school improvement, the interactions of components and feedback loops are the primary drivers for collaboration to occur throughout the system. For school systems to improve, all members, not only formal leaders, must fully participate in activities, and all members must believe that they are owners of the system and significantly contribute to the organization's vision.

Senge (1991) described five disciplines of organizational learning that include: (a) shared vision, (b) personal mastery, (c) mental models, (d) team learning, and (e) systems

Table 2

Conceptual Framework Alignment with Qualities of Collaboration

Quality	Structures /Systems	Culture	Governance	Processes	Communication
Concepts Associated with Organizational Learning Factors	System Thinking Shared Vision	Team Learning Mental Models	Leadership provided supports		
Concepts Associated with Leadership Distribution Factors	Perceived Awareness of the System Shared Vision	Distributed accountability, responsibility, power Mutual Respect and Trust	Individual and Collective Reflection		
OIP		Norms		Adoption of practices OIP Protocols	Communication Plans

thinking. The goal of system thinking is for members to create a living, learning

organization that encompasses and supports the first four disciplines (Senge, 1991;

Senge, et al., 2015). Hord's (2015) research on school systems described a shared vision

and values as essential for the system and should communicate "what the school should

be about" (p. 39).

Challenges for the OIP

The State of Ohio reported in 2007 that 139 districts had been rated as excellent,

347 districts were rated as Effective, 113 districts were classified as Continuous

Improvement, and 11 districts were rated as Academic Watch. Of the 11 Academic

Watch districts, all were urban districts. The state rating has evolved with new

assessments and new policies. In 2017 the state reported that six districts received an A,

118 received a B, 327 received a C, 149 received a D. And eight districts received an F

(ODE, 2018). Resources, supports, and processes were made available to all public-

school districts.

<div align="center">

Summary and Conclusions

</div>

Schools exist to not only support learners but also to develop citizens and society

(Dewey, 1907; Tyack & Cuban, 1995). As with any organization, schools must

continually improve to maintain relevancy and serve their students and the community

(Senge, 1991). However, public schools have not significantly improved at improving

over the past 100 years (Hopkins, et al., 2014; Tyack & Cuban, 1995). When school

districts focus on systemic improvement efforts students realize gains in achievement and

schools reduce achievement gaps (Darling-Hammond, 2015; Fullan, 2007b; Harris &

Jones, 2017a). Organizations can maintain and sustaining growth when they focus on a shared, co-created vision, challenge mental models, provide opportunities for individual and team learning, and are aware of systems thinking (Akinci & Sadler-Smith, 2018).

Collaborative processes have been shown to significantly support organizational learning and growth at all levels of the organization (Anrig, 2015; Azorín & Muijs, 2017; Butler et al., 2015). Distributing leadership is valuable for collaboration as well. The OIP provides for collaboration at three distinct stratum and includes processes to support recursive communication between strata (Lloyd et al., 2009). Ideally, collaboration and organizational learning would support school improvement efforts when it occurs across all strata. Understanding how collaboration occurs across strata and how organizational members perceive collaborative efforts, specifically how they perceive co-creation of a shared vision and how they perceive systems thinking would provide insight into future improvement efforts.

Several studies presented in this chapter focused on systems thinking while focusing on organizational learning for growth (Akinci & Sadler-Smith, 2018; Hargreaves & O'Connor, 2018; Schildkamp et al., 2016; Senge, 1991; Senge et al., 2006). Others have focused on collaboration at one level or between two levels. However, there is little research that explored collaborative practices across an entire organization. In this study, I will seek to understand collaborative practices across an entire district by exploring members' perceptions at three distinct strata identified in the OIP. To understand district members' perceptions and beliefs regarding systemic improvement processes and collaborative practices it is valuable to explore where the

district and its members fall on the improvement continuum, members' mental models of the implementation of the OIP, perceptions of their participation and ownership in a shared vision, their commitment to individual and team learning, and how leaders are defined and have been distributed across the organization

The study design will provide opportunities to explore the implementation of the improvement system and the culture by observing the interactions of organizational members. The qualities of collaboration outlined in Tables 1 and 2 will provide a starting point with themes identified in the literature to use when conducting data collection and for coding during analysis while allowing opportunities for open coding to allow themes to emerge.

Chapter 3: Research Design

Introduction

The purpose of this mini-ethnographic case study was to explore district

members' behaviors and practices across organizational strata to discover how systems

that include collaborative practices may influence continuous improvement efforts. The

qualitative method allowed me to learn about the culture of one public school district that

has implemented the OIP through exploration of how members collaborate within and

across the organization's strata. Chapter 3 includes descriptions of the research design

and my rationale for choosing it. I also define and explain my role as an observer-

researcher, professional and personal relationships, potential biases, and possible

conflicts of interest. The methodology for this study is discussed, along with the study

population, sampling strategy, planned participant recruitment procedures, data collection

sources, and instrumentation. The data analysis plan involving coding procedures for

narrative data, is also discussed. The chapter concludes with a discussion of ethical issues

and trustworthiness, credibility, dependability, and transferability.

Research Design and Rationale

Qualitative research has many methodological approaches and design options that

are appropriate for exploring behaviors, perceptions, and beliefs of school district

members participating in this study. An ethnographic research design can be used when a

researcher seeks to understand a groups' shared practice within a culture, including

"shared patterns of behavior, beliefs, and language" (Creswell, 2013a, p. 462). Further,

Creswell posited that an ethnographic study design might provide insight into group

patterns and behaviors. Creswell described the ethnographic study approach as a design that provides a researcher with an opportunity to become immersed in and explore a culture from within. Ethnographic research is often associated with a prolonged timeframe, often years, during which the researcher observes people within the context of their normal activities (Hammersley & Atkinson, 2007). Furthermore, the researcher collects as much data as they can using formal and informal interviews, focus groups, artifacts, and observations in an unstructured manner that provides flexibility during the design and analysis phases of the study. Ethnographic design fits this study that seeks to explore the culture of the school district that has implemented an improvement process.

Qualitative research is a result of researchers seeking to understand the world around them. One research design often used by those seeking to understand their world is a case study. Yin (2012b) indicated that case studies provide intricate views of a case using interviews, focus groups, and observations to develop understandings. Creswell, Hanson, Clark Plano, and Morales (2007) described case study as a research design in which "the investigator explores a bounded system (a case) or multiple bounded systems (cases) over time through detailed, in-depth data collection involving multiple sources of information" (p. 245). In this study, the focus is the culture of a school district, specifically, exploration of the culture of that district when an improvement process with embedded collaborative practices has previously been implemented. Yet a case study design does not typically provide insights into culture.

Combining the designs was completed to mitigate weaknesses of both. Therefore, this study involved combining an ethnographic design with a case study design as a

hybrid. To adapt for the longitudinal nature of ethnography, I chose to implement the mini-ethnographic case study design described by Fusch, Fusch, and Ness (2017). The hybrid design provided me an opportunity to qualitatively study district members' behaviors and practices involving a bounded system to discover how public school systems that include collaborative practices may influence the district's culture, attitudes, and actions in terms of continuous improvement.

The research questions involved exploring how organizational members engaged in collaborative practices within an improvement system and how they perceived the development of a shared vision, team learning, and systems thinking as a result of those practices. Ethnography components of this study provide an opportunity to genuinely explore the culture in the natural setting. The case study component served to bound the exploration and allow a deeper understanding of how an organization improves outcomes through collaborative practices. The hybrid design allowed for intentional analysis of the research questions.

Research Designs Not Chosen

Many research designs were considered and not chosen. Grounded theory is often used to examine a problem or event with a goal to use collected and analyzed data to form a theory and describe the phenomenon or identify intervening factors (Belgrave & Seide, 2018; Birks & Mills, 2015). Study findings or conclusions may serve as recommended interventions for future research, and because the goal of this study is to use existing theories and concepts to explore the experiences of organizational members regarding collaborative practices, grounded theory was not the design used.

According to Lewis (2015), a phenomenological research design is used when a researcher seeks to understand how people experience a specific situation or phenomenon that is centered on members' experiences, with no regard for cultural influences. A phenomenological research design was not chosen for this study because I wanted to explore organizational culture, specifically how improvement system implementation may influence the culture of an organization and the interactions between members at different strata with a goal to understand members' experiences within the culture.

The research questions identified in the next section focus on characteristics of the organization's culture through exploration of members' experiences. Additionally, the mini-ethnographic case study design allows me to observe how members behave and interact with one another across organizational strata. The case study design also provided an opportunity for me to explore the complexities of cross-strata collaborative practices within a system that has implemented an improvement process. Finally, the case study design was appropriate for the scale of this study because it allowed to explore the entire organization and all strata including DLT, BLT, and TBT including how each interacts with the others.

Role of the Researcher

Creswell (2013b) described qualitative research as a "situated activity that locates the observer in the world" (p. 36). The role of a qualitative researcher lies at neither end of the participant-observer continuum, but somewhere along that line (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). The observer-participant is an internal observer who, besides collecting data through observations, engages in the work to some degree (Merriam & Tisdell,

2016). There are advantages and disadvantages that qualitative researchers must be aware of that include the potential for reduced objectivity, the potential for increased bias in data interpretation, the increased chance to overlook themes or issues due to familiarity, and the potential for introduction of group think into data collection and analysis.

While a pure observer is rare in qualitative research, my goal was inclined toward a more objective position by acting more as an observer than a participant. This role also has both advantages and disadvantages. Advantages included a higher level of objectivity because of neutrality, high levels of cooperation and respect, and freedom from the pitfalls of groupthink, such as collective rationalism (Carson, Gilmore, Perry, & Gronhaug, 2001). Disadvantages included increased subjectivity due to lack of organizational knowledge, inadequate data from reduced interaction time, inauthentic behaviors by participants as they seek to role play, and an increased inconvenience to participants to meet my availability.

As a central figure in data collection and analysis, it is important to explore all facets the researcher brings to the study. Reflexivity is a holistic self-evaluation of the researcher's identity, positionality, and subjectivity to understand herself and her role as the researcher (Creswell, 2013a). Beliefs that I brought to the study include assumptions regarding members' professional growth attributed to reflection. I personally believe that professionals should reflect, learn, and grow. However, my experiences are that many educators have not demonstrated reflective practice, struggle with collaboration, and often are stagnate.

A researcher's connections to a study, including one's beliefs about the topic, and relevant work experiences combine to create a unique lens influencing how a researcher frames the study. My identity developed and evolved because of my experiences as a project manager, volunteer, and educator. Each of the roles reinforced my passion for collaborative teams and the synergistic power that I observed and experienced as a member of high-functioning teams. This identity led me to study collaborative teams in educational settings.

Subjectivity related to interpersonal interactions was influenced by my experiences in the classroom and from working with peers, teachers, community members, and district administrators. I served in an urban district as a teacher, a peer coach, a principal, and a district-level leader. I have also served as a curriculum and assessment director in a rural district. In the urban district, one of my primary responsibilities was to support employees of intensive support schools to implement the OIP. Furthermore, I have worked with state and regional teams in continuous improvement processes to reevaluate the OIP and support the development of new training modules. My experiences and skills mean that I am considered an expert in education improvement efforts, specifically, the OIP. Because of these experiences, I must constantly be aware of if and how I might superimpose my views on the work that I am observing. For example, it would be easy for me to provide expert advice to participants instead of listening to their unique and respective positions. Positionality is the way that researchers' identities and subjectivity influence how they position themselves and others in the study and during data analysis (Ravitch & Carl, 2015;

Saldaña, 2016). It is therefore important to reflect formally and informally to expand on the researcher's thinking and understanding of the research process and study topic (Creswell, 2013a; Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). In other words, it is important to constantly ask myself: What expectations do I have of others or they of me that may influence the findings and conclusions of this study?

In my current professional role with the University of Cincinnati in the College of Education, Criminal Justice, and Human Services, I oversee training programs for educational leaders throughout the state of Ohio serving more than 400 leaders in 78 districts. While I did not have personal relationships with members of these districts, I did have a professional relationship with district and building leaders. These professional relationships had the potential to both boost my credibility and introduce bias into data collection and interpretation. The use of reflective journaling is one way that can help identify potential biases (Noble & Smith, 2015). I used reflective journaling during each data collection event including interviews and observation field notes. I also journaled during data analysis activities.

Methodology

The goal of empirical research is to draw conclusions so that findings might be applied to similar populations. In this study, I used a qualitative approach and used a mini-ethnographic case study design to explore members' behaviors, interactions, practices, and perceptions of collaborative practices within an improvement system, specifically their perceptions of the organization's vision, team learning, and systems

thinking. Understanding members' collaborative practices will provide information to guide future systemic improvement efforts for schools, districts, and state agencies.

A variety of sampling designs can be used in qualitative research. The population for this study included all public-school districts in the State of Ohio that have implemented the OIP. According to Patton (2015), conducting research on an entire population might be cumbersome, expensive, and time consuming for doctoral students. Researchers deliberately use sampling techniques to reduce these challenges and yield reliable results. Patton posited that one central way that qualitative research differs from quantitative is the sampling strategies employed by a researcher to ensure acceptable representation. Schreier (2018) suggested that qualitative researchers, to advance generalizability, should be purposeful and intentional when choosing a sampling strategy.

Ilker, Sulaiman, and Rukayya (2016) described purposive sampling as a deliberate selection of a setting or a group of people that is clearly aligned to the research questions. Criterion sampling was used to identify the study site. Then, stratified purposive sampling was used to identify members at each stratum of the organization to participate in individual interviews.

All schools in Ohio that have implemented the OIP were potential study sites. However, the exact number of school districts that have implemented the OIP was not known. ODE only required low-performing districts to use of the process. Three groups comprised that population in Ohio. The first and second groups included those schools and districts that have previously been identified as priority or focus and were required to implement the OIP. These schools work closely with SSTs and reported OIP-related

activities to ODE and included traditional public and chartered public schools. The third group included districts that were not required to implement the OIP but choose to implement the process anyway.

This study focused on cross-strata collaboration within the OIP. Therefore, any potential study sites included a hierarchy having a DLT, BLT, and TBT. Chartered public schools do not always have this hierarchy in place. Therefore, the criteria for this study included traditional public-school districts, organizations that have implemented the OIP at all levels for at least one year, one DLT, at least two school buildings each with a BLT, and multiple TBTs in each building. Recommendations were sought from SST directors, who provide support to all districts, regardless of federal improvement status. The SST directors confirmed whether potential study sites met the selection criteria based on publicly available information. All members of the district were invited to participate in individual interviews or focus groups. A typical DLT may have between six and 18 members. The size of the DLT was a qualifying factor, as my goal was to have members participate only once to increase the unique participants. Individual participants' criteria were verified during initial response for self-selection, during confirmation communication, at the interview, and using publicly available data from the ODE's database of certified teachers and administrators.

Marshall, Cardon, Poddar, and Fontenot (2013) conducted a quantitative analysis of qualitative studies that relied on interviews and reported the average number of interviews completed in those studies. They reported that in single-case, single-researcher case studies the average number of interviews conducted was four. For this study, I

planned to conduct a minimum of two individual interviews at each stratum, for a total of six interviews. One homogeneous focus group for each stratum and a fourth heterogeneous focus groups made up of members from all three was planned after individual interviews were completed. The original goal was to identify volunteer members who would participate in either individual interviews or focus groups, but not both, to expand the number of unique participants. Due to the low number of respondents, focus groups were not completed. Table 3 represents a sample distribution of members that might have participated in personal interviews and focus groups if enough volunteers were obtained. Table 4 represents the original criteria for participants for interviews and focus groups. These criteria were used to guide selection of volunteers for interviews.

Marshall et al. (2013) posited that qualitative researchers do not often agree on the concept of saturation since it is influenced by many factors including the quality of the interviews, the nature and scope of the research, and the researcher's biases. Theoretical saturation describes a point when no new data are being uncovered (Marshall, et al., 2013). Fusch, et al. (2017) indicated that data saturation is considered "somewhat relative with an ethnographic design depending on the length of the study" (p. 926) and that mini-ethnographic case studies reach "data saturation far sooner because the study is bounded in space and time by the case study design" (p. 926). I used interview protocols, open-ended questions, and quick descriptions to achieve saturation.

Table 3

Sample Distribution of Interview and Focus Group Participants

Unit	District	School 1	School 2	School 3	School 4	School 5	Total
Personal Interview	2	1 Teacher	1 Principal	1 Principal	0	1Teacher	6
DLT/District Focus groups	2	2 Teachers	1 Principal 1 Teacher	1 Teacher	1 Teacher	0	8
BLT/Building Focus groups	0	1 Principal	1 Teacher	1 Principal 1 Teacher	2 Teachers	1 Principal 1 Teacher	8
TBT/ Classroom Focus groups	0	2 Teachers	1 Teacher	1 Teacher	1 Teachers	1 Teacher	6
Combined Focus groups	2	0	1 Principal 1 Teacher	1 Principal 1 Teacher	1 Teacher	1 Principal	8
Total	6	6	7	7	5	5	36

Due to the nature of the study, selection strategies are needed to identify not only the district study site but also participants for individual interviews. Four focus groups were planned with members in each of the three identified strata: DLT, BLT, and TBTs. Due to the nested nature of the strata identified in the OIP, a stratified sampling procedure were used to identify participants in each stratum. For example, all teachers participate in at least one TBT and may also serve on the BLT, the DLT, or both. Table 4 presents the criteria.

Instrumentation

Three main forms of data collection were planned for this study. Originally, this included personal interviews, focus groups, and researcher observations. Semi-structured personal interviews were conducted with four DLT, three BLT, and five TBT members. Two of the BLT members also serve on the DLT and one of the TBT members also served on a BLT. This is a common configuration of teams within an OIP district. Focus groups were planned with members of each of the three strata. A fourth focus groups was planned with member representation from all three strata. None of the focus groups were completed due to lower than anticipated invitation return-rates. Additional information is presented in Chapter 4 in the data collection section. Observations were planned for a minimum of three of DLT, BLT, and TBT meetings; one observed at each level. Field observations were conducted for 16 team meetings.

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Table 4

Participant Criteria

	Participate in only one data collection event	Served on DLT for ≥ 1 year (non-district level)	District Level Employee	Principal	Teacher	Varying Grade-band or role	Varying Content Area
DLT Personal Interviews	X	X (a)	X	X	X		
BLT Personal Interviews	X			X (b)	X	X	X (c)
TBT Personal Interviews	X				X	X	X (c)
DLT Focus groups	X	X (a)	X	X	X		
BLT Focus groups	X			X (b)	X	X	X (c)
TBT Focus groups	X				X	X	X (c)
Combined Focus groups	X	X (a)	X	X	X	X	X (c)

Jacob and Ferguson (2012) and the University of Michigan (2018) suggested that protocol sets guide data collection. I developed protocol sets for each data collection methods. In addition to semi-structured, open-ended questions, the protocols (see Appendices C and D) include opening and closing scripts, introduction, purpose, processes for participants to validate responses, researcher contact information, follow-up timeline, and verbal audio recording permission language

Personal semi-structured interviews. According to Ravitch and Carl (2015), a researcher must be cognizant of and plan for alignment to increase the rigor and validity of the study. This alignment includes problem and purpose statements, research questions, and data collection questions. Brinkmann (2014) described semi-structured interviews as a method that is widely used in qualitative research to gather data from participants, who can respond freely. The method permits a researcher to proactively develop interview questions aligned with the research questions. Patton (2001) identified six categories of questions that a researcher should consider as they develop an interview guide. The six categories included: demographics/background, behaviors, opinion/values, knowledge, and feelings. Jacob and Ferguson (2012) suggested that interviews should open with a brief description of the purpose, ask demographic type questions, then progress toward more complex topics using open-ended questions. The interview questions presented in Table 5 were designed to begin with demographic data such as grade level, subject areas taught (if applicable), years' experience, and then continue to more complex topics related to the research questions. This included asking about

participants' knowledge, experiences, and behaviors associated with collaborative practices. One major theme that emerged from the literature was systems thinking.

Moore, Dolansky, Singh, and Palmieri (2010), developed a system thinking scale for the health care industry generated with expert input. The systems thinking scale was validated using both field and psychometric testing. Factors identified in the report included system interdependencies, personal effort, and reliance on authority. Permission to use the scale for both interview and focus groups questions was obtained (M. Dolansky, personal communication February 14, 2019). The interdependencies items associated with systems guided the construction of two items to gauge members' awareness of systems thinking (items I19 and I20 on personal interview protocol set and F2 and F13 focus groups protocol set.

Additional items explore how members perceive the organization's vision and shared leadership because of collaborative behaviors. Table 5 presents the 20 interview questions, probes, and potential follow-up questions aligned to the research questions and conceptual framework presented in Chapter 2. The interview protocol set, based on Jacob and Ferguson (2012) guidelines, is presented in Appendix C. Participants were debriefed at the end of the interview. Debriefing procedures are included in the protocol set in Appendix C.

Table 5

Personal Interview Questions

Research Question	Interview question	Data Type / Conceptual Framework Alignment
How do organizational members within and across organizational strata engage in collaborative practices within the context of a public K-12 educational setting that has implemented an improvement process?	*See script in protocol set.*	Demographic
	[Classroom Teachers] IT1. What grade/subject do you teach? IT2. How long have you taught that grade/subject? IT3. How long have you been teaching in the district? IT4. Overall, how long have you been teaching?	Background information on the improvement process
	[Administrators] IA1. What is your role in the district? IA2. How long have you been in that role? IA3. What was your role prior? IA4. How long were you in that role?	

	I5. What does the OIP mean to you?
	  Probes:
	  When did [District] first begin the OIP?
	  How was the OIP implemented?
	I6. Please describe the purpose of your [Insert TBT/BLT/DLT]
	I7. Tell me about the activities that occur in your [Insert TBT/BLT/DLT] meetings?
	I8. Please describe your definition of collaboration.
	I9. Describe how your definition aligns, or does not, with your team's work?
		Mental models of collaboration

	I10. What are some of the activities involved in collaboration?
	  Probes:
	  When and where does collaboration take place?
	  Who is involved?
		Activities/ Engagement
		
		Table Continues

	In what roles/capacity? I11. Who initiates collaboration? I12. What supports/structures are provided for you and your team to collaborate?	
How do individuals perceive the organization's vision, team learning, and system thinking because of collaborative practice within an improvement system?	I13. Describe your district's vision I14. Tell me about your role in accomplishing the vision? *Probes*: Did you participate in creating the vision? If yes - Can you describe that experience?	Co-created/shared vision
	I15. Please share an experience when you and your team members learned something together? *Probe*: How did you feel when that happened?	Team learning
	I16. Please tell me about how you interact with [insert other stratum classroom, building, district]? I17. Describe your team's decision-making process? (instructional practice; building policy; district policy). I18. Describe the next steps after your team has decided.	Beliefs regarding cross-strata interaction Accountability Power
	I19. Please describe a recent change you have experienced. *Probe*: How did that recent change effect [insert appropriate group: teachers; principals in other buildings; the superintendent; the community] I20. What, if anything, would you do differently? *Probe:* Why?	Systems thinking awareness

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Focus groups interviews. According to Morgan (2012), a primary benefit of conducting focus groups is the ability for the researcher to observe group interactions, specifically the ability to watch as participants share and compare; and as they agree and disagree. Morgan described sharing as the discourse that provided insight into the groups' commonalities including their feelings, behaviors, and experiences. Two focus groups protocol sets were developed. The first was intended for homogeneous groups (the DLT, BLT, and TBT). The second was intended for the heterogeneous group of members from different organizational strata. The purpose of the second was to observe group interactions and provide a deeper look at the culture from those differing strata. Guidelines from Morgan (2012) and Fusch and Ness (2015) influenced the development of the focus groups items, presented in Table 6 and Table 7. The table includes items alignment to the research questions and the conceptual framework that was presented in Chapter 2. Morgan (2012) suggested that to improve consistency and increase validity, the researcher should develop, use, and report protocols used to conduct focus groups. Appendix D contains the focus groups protocols developed for this study. It includes opening and closing scripts, questions, debriefing information, and researcher reflections.

Table 6

Homogeneous Focus Group Questions

Research Question	Focus groups Question	Conceptual Framework Alignment
	See script in protocol set.	
	F1-1 Let's begin by learning about each of you. Could you please tell us your first name, your role in the district, which building or office your work in, and how many years' experience you have in education?	Demographic background data
How do organizational members within and across organizational strata engage in collaborative practices within the context of a public K-12 educational setting that has implemented an improvement process?	F1-2. Your district uses the OIP which has a focus on collaborative practices. Describe the character of (DISTRICT) since you have implemented the OIP.	Background/Systems Thinking
	F1-3. Considering how you described the character of the district, please share how the entire system has adapted since the OIP was implemented.	RQ2 (Systems thinking)
	F1-4. What is the purpose of the collaboration in your (district, building, classroom)?	Purpose/engagement
	F1-5. What structures or processes are in place that support your team's collaborative work? F1-6. Please share your experiences with collaboration across the organization such as TBT to BLT or BLT to DLT. F1-7. Please describe your team's decision-making processes.	Power/Structure/Governance
	F1-8. What happens after the team makes a decision?	

Table Continues

How do individuals perceive the organization's vision, team learning, and system thinking as a result of collaborative practice within an improvement system?	F1-9. Describe the purpose or vision of (District).	
	F1-10. How do you see your team's role in achieving that vision?	
		Vision
	F1-11. Tell us, who do you feel is responsible for the success of the district?	Distributed/shared leadership
	F1-12. Describe adult learning in [DISTRICT]?	Team learning
		System awareness
	#3 is aligned with RQ2 (see RQ1)	
	F1-13. Earlier you shared your thoughts on how the OIP was implemented. Based on those thoughts, would you share ideas on how you might have improved the rollout?	

Table 7

Heterogeneous Focus Group Questions

Research Question	Focus groups Question	Conceptual Framework Alignment
	See script in protocol set.	
	F2-1. Let's begin by learning about each of you. Could you please tell us your first name, your role in the district, which building or office your work in, how many years' experience you have in education and how many of those years are here in [ADD DISTRICT].	Demographic / background data
How do organizational members within and across organizational strata engage in collaborative practices within the context of a public K-12 educational setting that has implemented an improvement process?	F2-2. Your district uses the OIP which has a focus on collaborative practices. Let's first discuss school improvement. What does school improvement mean to you?	Improvement (system) common definition
	F2-3. Based on [RESTATE COMMON THEMES IDENTIFIED IN F2-2] what conditions, structures, or processes are necessary for school improvement to occur here?	Structure / Governance
	F2-4. Ok, you have defined school improvement and have identified conditions, structures, and processes. Based on those discussions, share an experience that might indicate that school improvement is happening here .	Indicators of systemic implementation of improvement
	F2-5. Describe any experiences that might indicate school improvement is not working.	Indicators of systemic implementation of improvement
	F2-6. In my first statement the word *collaboration* was mentioned. Please share what collaboration means to you.	Collaborative practice-common understanding
		Collaborative experiences

Table Continues

	F2-7. Based on [RESTATE COMMON THEMES FG2 IDENTIFIED IN F2-6] share an experience when you participated in collaboration.?	Vision
	F2-8. Most organizations create a vision or purpose. Share with us your perception of the district's core purpose or vision.	
How do individuals perceive the organization's vision, team learning, and system thinking as a result of collaborative practice within an improvement system?	F2-9. Great, what I heard was [recap responses]. Did I miss anything important? Ok considering your description, tell us how you/your team or both, feel about your role in accomplishing that vision/purpose. *If the descriptions or purpose were negative*: Describe what you believe the purpose/vision of the district should be.	
	F2-10. How do you see your team's role in achieving that vision?	
	F2-11. Tell us, who do you feel is responsible for the success of the district?	Distributed /shared leadership Team learning
	F2-12. Please share an experience when you learned something new as part of a team. Follow-up: a. Describe how you think the other team members felt? b. Why do you think they felt that way?	
	F2-13. Part 2 focuses on systems thinking, which is defined as the ability of members to participate in solving organizational problems. Thinking about that definition, share an experience, including any processes you used when you were involved in solving a problem within this district.	System awareness/ Systems thinking

Researcher observations. The instrument used to collect data was a researcher generated observation field note form. I attended 16 meetings across all three strata. Pyrczak and Randall (2002) described basic guidelines for conducting observations to ensure that the researcher collects and maintains appropriate field notes. Pyrczak and Randall maintained that notetaking is highly personal, and that each researcher should take field notes during observations in a manner that is consistent with one's own style and that aligns with the focus of the study. Notes, they recommended, should consist of two sections, a descriptive and a reflective section to collect relevant information (Pyrczak & Randall, 2002). Descriptive information consisted of dates, time, settings, activities, behaviors, and observed dialogue. Reflective information consisted of ideas, questions, and thoughts. Furthermore, Pyrczak and Randall suggested that the observer be accurate, organized, descriptive, and focused on behaviors and actions related to the research questions. Merriam (2009) suggested that as data are collected and analyzed, the information should guide future data collection events. For example, personal interview data might have provided new information and as a result, new questions might be formulated to address emerging themes. Observation field notes were completed using the form developed for this process and presented in Appendix E. The template included information such as date, time, place, participant names and roles, and provided space for my thoughts and reflections as I observed meetings.

Reflective journaling. Reflective journaling can include personal impressions, thoughts, feelings, or environment diagrams and can serve multiple purposes in research (Pucher, Candel, Krumeich, Boot & DeVries, 2015). Reflective journals can help a

researcher explore a culture (Marshall & Rossman, 2014), identify potential biases,

provide insight during analysis and interpretation, and triangulate data (Onwuegbuzie,

Dickinson, Leech, & Zoran, 2009). For this study, reflective journaling was added to each

instrument to capture my thoughts in addition to notes immediately following interviews.

Procedures for Recruitment, Participation, and Data Collection

Potential study sites were identified and contacted via email. One school district

expressed interest in participating and asked for a face-to-face meeting. I provided the

district superintendent with an overview of the study, provided a drafted letter of

cooperation, and asked if the district required additional steps to proceed. No additional

requirements were stated. I also checked my employer's records to determine if the site

had previously worked with the center. The study site is not now, nor has it previously

been a client of University of Cincinnati's System Development and Improvement Center

(UCSDIC). The significance of the study and data collection procedures were also

shared. Furthermore, I asked that the superintendent not contact district employees so that

members would not feel coerced. All district staff members' names, roles, buildings, and

email were available on the district's website. I used publicly available lists to contact all

potential participants. Concurrently, I worked with the district to schedule dates and times

and secure, private, and appropriate space to conduct interviews.

After Walden University Internal Review Board (IRB) approval (06-04-19-

0447557), I emailed all certified staff as potential participants. The IRB approved

recruitment email included a copy of the consent form, purpose, and significance of the

study, and provided a Google form link so that members could provide information and

indicate their willingness to participation. The form included teams on which the member served, grand band, and subject area, if applicable. I used the publicly available data to ensure varied participation and team experience. A consent form adapted from the Walden University template was used. All participants were provided a copy of the consent form in email communications and the signed copy was collected prior to commencement of interviews. The frequency of district-scheduled meetings determined the number of DLT, BLT, and TBT meetings that I attended for observation, with a plan to observe a minimum of one meeting at the DLT and BLT levels and two TBT meetings. Sixteen meetings were observed. The distribution of the three strata meetings were designed to provide a broad data set for a more holistic view of collaborative practices and perceptions in the district.

Debriefing procedures were followed during each data collection event concluded, as outlined in the protocol set. Interview transcripts were made available to participants via email to allow for member-checking. This step required consideration of timelines. I used NVivo Transcription® services to transcribe all interview digital audio files within 2 weeks and provided a digital copy of the transcribed data to each interviewee. None were returned with corrections although three participants replied with approval.

Data Analysis Plan

In this study I simultaneously collected, organized, and analyzed data from all data sources. According to Ravitch and Carl (2015) data analysis is the "intentional, systemic scrutiny of data at various stages" (p. 217). The sequence of data collection was

intentionally planned to provide data and, therefore, insight into individual understandings (personal interviews) through their accounting of their practices, behaviors, and perceptions. Initial demographic data are not included in data analysis as my goal is to explore the culture and the perceptions of organizational members. Demographic data were used to ensure a diverse sample.

I used the qualitative analysis software NVivo® to conduct an in-depth analysis of the collected data. This tool allowed me to organize, categorize, and classify the rich data sets generated from participants' responses to interview questions. One benefit of using NVivo is that the program can maintain a list of codes. According to Saldaña (2016), using software to generate code lists periodically can provide a means for a researcher to explore the evolution of codes providing another tier of analysis. This was helpful as codes and categories that surface from personal interviews were reviewed and compared to themes that emerged from the literature. This initial coding phase and review of emerging patterns also guided subsequent data collection events. The software supported both a deductive and inductive thematic analysis (Saldaña, 2016). Qualitative researchers can use both analysis methods to categorize and describe data to answer the research questions. The literature presented several themes such as vision, team learning, and systems thinking. It is equally important to be open to emerging themes. Together, the two forms of analysis provided rich data.

Much like writing, analysis is an iterative process (Ravitch & Carl, 2015). One important aspect of qualitative research is the lens that a researcher uses to view the data. I precoded data during and immediately following my observations. According to

Saldaña (2016), precoding using highlighting, circling, or underlining of key phrases can provide "descriptive, narrative passages" (p. 20). The passages that emerged were input into NVivo for further analysis. Additionally, activities identified in observation notes included non-verbal components such as body language or tones of voice. The codes generated from notes were combined with other software generated codes to identify emerging patterns and themes.

After all data have been collected and initially coded, I conducted concept coding. Saldaña (2016) indicated that conceptual coding helps to see the "big picture" beyond the "tangible and apparent" (p. 119). Concept coding supported my goal to explore my observations of teams and individuals as I analyzed collaboration within the district and the culture within an improvement process.

Connelly and Clandinin (1990) stated that humans are "storytelling organisms," therefore, narrative inquiry in educational research is an opportunity to retell the rich stories encountered during an educational study (p. 2). Watson (2008) described ethnography as "a written account of the cultural life of a social group, organization or community which may focus on a particular aspect of life in that setting" (as cited in Humphreys & Watson, 2009, p. 40). Narrative analysis commands a specific set of procedures to ensure the story is retold with coherence and integrity and "looking at the whole…that attempts to dissolve the connecting threads and fibres that hold the social phenomena together" (Thomas, 2015, p. 187). Saldaña (2016) stated "synthesis combines different things in order to form a new whole" (p. 9).

A mini-ethnographic case study design was chosen to explore an organization's culture after an improvement process has been implemented through members experiences of collaborative practices and perceptions regarding the organization's vision, team learning, and systems. Ravitch and Carl (2015) reminded researchers that qualitative studies are non-linear that one does not collect all data and then begin analysis. In this study, as each data collection event occurred, I either transcribed the audio recording and then conducted initial analysis or began coding immediately after collecting data. In the case of meeting observations, I quickly learned to detail the number of members present and their locations in the room. I noted if they were actively engaged, appeared to feign involvement, or were disengaged. These details of member engagement could impact the study as it unfolded and was valuable information during each phase of data collection and analysis phases.

Analysis included identifying codes and categories by pre-coding as a first step and iterative coding that occurred after each data collection event. Next, themes and the relationships of concepts and themes were analyzed for concepts that occurred across data sets. Conceptual analysis aids as the researcher attempts to determine data that is present while relational analysis provides a path for researchers to make meaning of the data. Data were analyzed to determine the relationships between and among themes and patterns. Relational analysis served as the basis for narrative analysis, to tell a story of school improvement in Ohio. As humans, we not only seek to share our stories, but to listen and learn from them. For this study, using a narrative analytical approach will help

to distribute the participant interview data so that others, in similar roles with similar responsibilities, might learn from, and make improvements, to their own stories.

Data were transcribed using NVivo transcription services. I verified all transcribed data by listening and correcting after initial transcriptions were completed. Member checking was completed by emailing interview transcriptions to the interviewees inviting them to make corrections, provide clarification, or provide confirmation that transcription was accurate. If participants did not respond within 5 business days, I emailed them and requested a response within one week so that I could include corrections and clarifications in the analysis. I began initial coding analysis after transcriptions are complete. No corrections or clarifications were received from participants.

Issues of Trustworthiness

Trustworthiness is the all-encompassing term used to describe in qualitative research what validity and reliability describe in quantitative research (Yin, 2012a). In qualitative research, trustworthiness refers to credibility, transferability, confirmability, and dependability; each is described below. Researchers can anticipate and plan to address these four issues during the design phase (Yin, 2012b).

This study design was built on three triangulation methods to strengthen its credibility, dependability, and confirmability. Each researcher brings biases to her/his/their research. Methodological triangulation, the collection of varied data using different methods, can help to reduce bias or make it more visible (Mayer, 2015). According to Hoque, Covaleski, and Gooneratne (2015) and Mayer (2015), triangulation

provides a multidimensional view of the case and phenomenon. Similarly, theoretical triangulation involves the analysis of data through varying theoretical lenses, which enabled me to explore anticipated distinct layers of meaning and members' perceptions within the various organizational strata (Hoque et al., 2015; Mayer, 2015).

Credibility

According to Lincoln and Guba (1988), four criteria are often used to evaluate the quality of qualitative research designs. The four criteria included reliability, construct validity, internal validity, and external validity. Some researchers may assume these four criteria are most valuable only during the design phase of research. Lincoln and Guba's stressed the benefit of the criteria during each step of research. To achieve credibility, there are several tools and processes that researchers can use as they collect and analyze data to support logical alignment. Tools and resources include data and theoretical triangulation and member checking. To increase credibility, I collected data from multiple sources to accomplish data triangulation. This study was designed using two theories, OLT and LDT, to strengthen credibility. Member checking was conducted by returning interview transcripts to participants so that they could each individually verify the accuracy of transcripts and provide clarification, as necessary. Additionally, analysis will be completed using two analytical approaches. Three types of triangulation, theoretical, methodological, and analytical will result in a more credible study.

Transferability

Transferability in qualitative research encompasses details and rich descriptions to increase the probability that findings are valuable to other readers and can be transferred

to other situations based on the similarities and differences of the context. Besides providing detailed descriptions, another way to expand transferability is to ensure participants are also described in detail while protecting their identities.

Dependability

To increase dependability, I documented processes associated with data collection including interview procedures and data analysis processes. Audit logs were maintained and included: (a) raw data; (b) consent forms, field notes, journals, and reflections; (c) data reconstruction products as narrative analysis was conducted; (d) process notes; and, (e) copies of formal communications. Dependability is closely related to confirmability.

Confirmability

In qualitative research, each researcher brings a unique element to the study. Accounting for the uniqueness, confirmability denotes the ability of others to confirm the findings through similar methods with similar populations. It is important therefore for a researcher to take extreme care with data collection and analysis. One method to increase confirmability is openly disclose potential relationships and biases as outlined earlier in this chapter. Another way to increase confirmability is to complete reflective journaling and to maintain accurate records of methods and methodologies used. In this study, I maintained a reflective journal and used the observation field note template to capture descriptive as well as reflective notes.

Each of these areas and procedures that help to address trustworthiness also support ethical practices. Creswell (2013a) posited that ethical considerations should be carefully examined during the proposal phase of a research study. Anticipated ethical

considerations were outlined earlier in this chapter and in more detail in the following section.

Ethical Procedures

Historical injustices in the name of science and research prompted a need for oversight. Ravitch and Carl (2015) suggested that researchers plan for both anticipated and unexpected ethical dilemmas that may occur during the study. Marshall and Rossman (2014) posited that ethical consideration permeate all levels of a study and suggested that a detailed plan should be included in the research proposal to address potential challenges. One way to support ethical conduct is to complete and submit appropriate forms to the IRB, which serves to provide oversight and ensure that researchers maintain high ethical standards. Ethical considerations addressed in the IRB application include issues such as confidentiality, anonymity, voluntary participation, informed consent, and risk of harm to participants or other stakeholders associated with educational organizations. The IRB process also seeks to understand potential benefits for participants. Potential benefits could be interpreted as impact or influences of study findings that might benefit organizations in general. During member checking, participants described how participation in the study had affected their personal behaviors and thoughts surrounding the topic. As participants actively join in discourse during interviews, there was a possibility that they could question previously held knowledge, reflect on that practice, and allow new ideas to influence their thinking and actions. This benefit is not the focus of this study but was a possible benefit to participants.

To ensure members were protected during this study, I (a) sought only volunteers and communicated their freedom to exit the study at any time, (b) conveyed participants' roles in and the purpose of the study, (c) conducted member checking after interviews, (d) provided my contact information to all participants and study site management, (e) managed and secured data, (f) redacted any identifying information from all reports and used study codes, (g) ensured that I was the only person to have access to data, analyses, and study codes, (h) identified potential risks and benefits with participants, (i) shared link for report with participants via email, and (j) maintained data and informed consent forms per Walden University guidelines. Formal email communication and informed consent forms stated clearly that participants received no compensation for participation.

I worked with the study site to determine if there are additional requirements governing the research, such as Board of Education approval. To ensure consistency, protocol sets were developed, used, and are presented in Appendices A and B. Interview protocol sets included opening, closing, and debriefing scripts to ensure consistent communication across all data collection events. I communicated my intent to maintain confidential and anonymity to all participants and to the organization. To protect the identity of participants, I took the following steps to ensure participant anonymity and confidentiality:

- scanned informed consent forms and destroy paper copies
- used study codes for all organizational and individual data,
- encrypted all files with identifiable information,
- destroyed audio recordings after transcription is completed and verified,

- maintained data for 5 years as required by IRB and then properly destroy it,

- maintained files only on encrypted SD cards (primary and secondary) and ensured safety by keeping those in a secured location,

- created and maintained code book on dual SD cards,

- worked on a personal computer that is password protected, and

- redacted all identifying data.

Finally, there are ethical issues that are associated with narrative analysis, that is the deconstruction of data from multiple individuals to create a truth about the organization, that must be considered. To mitigate risks, it is recommended that the researcher develop a plan during the design phase (Clandinin, Pushor, & Orr, 2007). Care must be taken to accurately collect, transcribe, and interpret data to honor participants stories while honoring scholarship and "enhancing human experience" (Murray, 2018, p. 44). The low interest survey return rate for this study, discussed in detail in Chapter 4, coupled with the extreme caution expressed by some participants, may indicate a lack of trust or disengagement. Care was taken to shroud the participants through a communal narrative. Quotes were used only when the direct quote was deemed to add significant value and when the participant was masked completely by using pseudonyms and excluding demographic data. These recommendations were addressed in the data collection and analysis sections earlier in this chapter.

Summary

In this chapter, I outlined and described the qualitative research methodology that is most appropriate for this study. I provided a rationale for selection of a mini-ethnographic case study design, explained my role as the researcher, and described data collection instruments, protocols, and analysis procedures that was used. I outlined the criteria for study site selection and how participants were chosen from each of the three organizational strata. The chapter concluded by discussing the processes and procedures that I used to increase credibility, reliability, transferability, and dependability while increasing the validity and reliability. Further, I addressed ethical procedures including maintaining participant confidentiality and anonymity, contact with potential study sites, IRB processes, and ethical considerations associated with analysis procedures.

Chapter 4 includes descriptions of the setting, with care to protect the anonymity of the districts and participants. Additionally, demographics, data collection and analyses practices, and evidence of trustworthiness are presented. Changes to the proposed data collection, analysis, strategies for credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability that are described in Chapter 3 are presented. Discrepant cases are described as well as steps taken during data analysis, as well as details of the narrative analysis processes. The results are described according to themes that emerged during analysis.

Chapter 4: Results

This qualitative mini-ethnographic case study addressed district members'

behaviors and practices, specifically those associated with collaboration that occurs

within and across organizational strata when the organization has adopted an

improvement process. In this study, I explored how organizational members within and

across strata engaged in collaborative practices in traditional K-12 education settings that

had implemented the OIP. Furthermore, I wanted to understand how individuals

perceived the organization's vision, team learning, and systems thinking when the OIP

had been implemented. Chapter 4 includes a narrative involving collaboration and school

improvement in the context of the OLT and LDT for one suburban district that

implemented the OIP.

Chapter 4 includes descriptions of the district's vision, shared leadership

practices, team learning through collaboration, systems awareness, and systems thinking.

In this chapter, I describe how these practices result in incremental improvement

supported by the OIP. Factors associated with collaboration are illustrated. Chapter 4

includes details outlining my choices for data collection, analytical practices, and

evidence of trustworthiness.

Narrative analysis was used in a tiered approach. First, categorical content

perspective (CCP) was used to explore concepts associated with RQ1, and an holistic

content perspective (HCP) was used to address RQ2. Three themes were identified during

the CCP: (a) habits of collaborative professionalism, (b) cultural practices, and (c)

systems thinking and systemic practices.

Themes identified during HCP analysis that aligned with RQ2 included (a) habitats for organizational learning and (b) balanced habitudes. Each of the themes and supporting subthemes are detailed later in this chapter. Variations from data collection are discussed and data analysis, strategies for credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability are also explained.

Setting

The study site was an Ohio suburban school district, identified as North Pine Creek, a pseudonym. The district included two high schools, five middle/junior high schools, seven elementary buildings, and one alternative school. The district had not been mandated by the U.S. or ODE to adopt and implement the OIP. In December 2018, the ODE identified one building within the district as a focus school, described in Chapter 2, which meant the district qualified for Tier 2 supports from the SST. Similarly, the district, like all of Ohio's public-school districts, was and continues to be eligible for universal supports such as professional development. According to the SST regional director, R. Mae (a pseudonym), the district received only cursory support from SST consultants "over the past several years and only at the district level," (personal communication, August 8, 2019) with no support for individual schools. According to interview data collected during this study, the district began using the OIP at least 6 years ago (i.e., in 2014). Brandon, the superintendent for the district stated, "it's one thing to be required to do the OIP, but it's another thing to do it because we like it. It is best practice." It is important to reiterate that the OIP has been used in Ohio since 2010, and

during that time, many districts were required to implement the improvement process due to their status.

Districts that were required to implement the OIP had been identified as priority and focus schools and received considerable assistance from Ohio's system of support. Districts that choose to implement the OIP while not being required to do so are provided access to supports and training as a Tier 1 district but do not receive the same level of support as Tier 2 or 3 districts, due in part to the limited resources available to SST regions in Ohio.

District-level administrative staff members also participated in this study. Interviews began in June and concluded in October 2019. Meeting observations began in late August and continued through early October. Meetings included team meetings in each stratum in six unique buildings. As stated in Chapter 3, the study site was chosen in part because it had not previously been nor was then a client of the UCSDIC. However, the district decided to participate in one of the UCSDIC's programs. The program that principals participated in was the Ohio Leadership for Inclusion, Implementation, and Instructional Improvement (Oli[4]).

Demographics

Table 8 shows the number of OIP team members who participated in the study. The table also includes their roles and the teams on which they served. Interviewees included two men and 10 women. Interviews were distributed across grade levels, although more high school teachers participated. Participants' years of experience ranged from a first-year teacher to one district-level employee with 44 years of experience. All

strata were included, as well as members who served on multiple teams. For example, as Table 8 shows, OIP team members Mia, Susan, and Joan all serve on the district's DLT and on their respective buildings' BLTs.

Table 8

Participant Roles and Teams

Name	Role	TBT	BLT	DLT
Brandon	District Personnel			X
Brandy	Curriculum			X
Brenda	Teacher	X		
Camila	District Personnel			X
Catherine	Teacher	X		
Grace	Teacher	X		
Irene	Teacher	X	X	
Joan	Principal		X	X
Mia	Principal		X	X
Robin	Teacher	X		
Salvador	District Personnel			X
Susan	Teacher	X	X	

In the OIP, teachers generally serve on at least one TBT. All teachers who were interviewed served on only one TBT, although Camila indicated that teachers, such as high school teachers who teach more than one subject (example: Algebra I and Geometry), may serve on more than one TBT. In all cases, teachers represented many BLT members in addition to school counselors, assistant principals, principals, and instructional coaches. *The OIP Facilitator's Guide* suggested that DLTs include superintendents, principals, district personnel, teachers, and other members that districts deem important to decision making processes. The district's DLT included teachers on special assignment as instructional coaches, one counselor, board of education and

community members, the superintendent, two assistant superintendents, building principals, and district-level employees.

Data Collection

Data collection began with initial contact of potential participants in early June 2019, 2 weeks after North Pine Creek School District had concluded its academic year. Email survey invitations were initially sent to all teachers and principals in early June. I generated a list of classroom and intervention teachers, assistant principals, principals, and district staff from the district's directory that was available on their website. The list included OIP team members' names, roles, building assignment, and publicly available email addresses. Within the first month, 11 potential participants responded. As outlined in Chapter 3, criteria were developed to obtain an informed sample. The same criteria were used to select six initial participants. Each was emailed additional information, including interview slot choices, interview locations, and a copy of the informed consent form. The district arranged space to conduct interviews in one district building with summer access provided by maintenance staff to ensure anonymity.

Five of the six responded and chose an interview slot or requested a telephone interview. This routine was followed whenever a new response to an invitation-survey was received. A second follow up invitation email was forwarded to anyone who had not previously responded. The second email was sent in August 2019 once teachers had returned for the new school year. Additionally, the district designee asked principals to forward the invitation-survey to building staff as outlined in the Letter of Cooperation. A redacted copy of the letter is included in Appendix F.

Interviews were conducted over 5 months, beginning in mid-June. The invitation-survey remained open through October 1, 2019. Approximately 2% of teachers, administrators, and district-level employees responded to the two separate invitations. The survey-invitation, approved by Walden University's IRB, allowed me to identify if respondents met basic criteria, such as grade level, role, and teams (BLT, DLT, and TBT) on which individuals participated.

Table 9 presents the timeline of this study. The table presents the months that the study was active; the number of initial and follow-up survey-invitations sent; months when responses were received; the number of respondents that met sample criteria; those who chose to withdraw or did not meet criteria; respondents who were initially identified as a potential focus group participant and later removed from the study due to potential biases caused by their participation in the UCSDIC program; the number of respondents that eventually were interviewed, and the number of interviews conducted. The number of members who volunteered during team meeting observations is also included in the table. Table 9 further illustrates the relatively low number of responses and the pace that responses were received over 4 months that included the entire summer break and early fall, as school began.

In all, 12 interviews were completed. It should be noted that three principals were not interviewed because they were initially identified to participate in focus groups. This might be considered a lost opportunity to learn more. At that time, I had completed two principal interviews, as indicated in the original plan and had not yet made the determination to not complete focus groups. In all, eight interviews were completed from

Table 9

Timeline of Survey Invitation Return Rates, Number of Study Volunteers, and Number of Interviews Conducted

Month	Initial survey-invitations sent	Follow-up survey-invitations sent	Returned survey-invitations	Met sample criteria	Became participant	Did not meet criteria or decided to withdraw	Identified as Focus Group volunteer and later Disqualified due to UCSDIC participation	Interview conducted	Volunteer during meeting observation
June	500+	NA	11	8	5	3	3	5	NA[2]
July	NA	500+ [1]	3	3	2	0	0	0	NA
August	NA	NA	3	3	1	2	0	1	NA
September	NA	NA	None	None	4	0	NA	5	4
October	NA	NA	None	None	0	NA	NA	1	NA
Total	500+	500+	17	12	12	5	2	12	4

[1]Minus those who had previously responded
[2]NA means does not apply

the 17 survey-invitation responses and an additional four interviews were completed from members who volunteered as I conducted team meeting observations.

Remaining interviews were scheduled for and conducted in August, September, and October and were completed in the volunteers' assigned buildings or via telephone, based on each volunteer's request and schedule. After I had sent the survey-invitation twice and knowing that some principals had forwarded the survey-invitation at least one additional time, I decided to stop further contact via email with members as per the ethical considerations outlined in the IRB application No. 06-04-19-0447557.

Data Management

Prior to each interview, volunteers were sent a copy of the informed consent form and confirmation of location, date, and time scheduled for the interview. The interview protocol sets, presented in Appendix C, were used to guide introduction to the study and to seek permission to record. After each interview, the signed consent forms and notes were scanned onto a secure SD card. The notes from each interview were assigned a unique code for recordkeeping purposes. A spreadsheet was created to maintain a list of participants' demographic data. I also assigned random pseudonyms to the district, each building, and each participant and maintained those on the spreadsheet. The pseudonyms were used in this report. Audio recordings were uploaded to and transcribed by NVivo® Transcription Services. I confirmed the accuracy of the transcription files prior to member checking. Notes were added regarding participant's tone and inflection. Immediately following each interview and meeting observation, I also recorded my

personal reflections and those were transcribed. Digital documents were maintained on a pair of secure, password-protected SD cards, one primary and a secondary as backup.

Phased Approach for Data Collection

Data collection and ensuing analyses are iterative. I completed three phases. During the first phase I conducted interviews with volunteers. Phase 2 included observing meetings across all organizational strata. Phase 3 included review of documents and artifacts provided by the district related to the OIP. During Phases 1 through 3, I began pre-coding activities using literature-identified themes that were listed in Chapter 3, Table 5. Data were intentionally collected using a phased approach to allow for simultaneous analysis during each phase and to inform subsequent phases. Early analyses helped to guide later data collection events and subsequent analytical processes. I used a chronological iterative approach described by Ravitch and Carl (2015). The three phases described below should not be considered linear, as I revisited previously collected data each time the next phase began, building on codes, patterns, and themes and using reflective journaling to provide a deeper understanding of how I was approaching the study during each phase.

Phase 1: Interviews. Beginning in June 2019 through October 2019, interviews were conducted to explore the topic of collaboration across strata within the culture of an improvement system. Table 10 represents OIP team members' participation in personal interviews for this study. The table represents interviewee criteria described in Chapter 3 including number of interviews within each stratum, unique data events, associated teams, roles, grade band (if applicable), and content taught (if applicable). The semi-

structured personal interviews were scheduled for 60 minutes. On average, interviews lasted 50-60 minutes. In some instances, interviewees provided redacted artifacts, including copies of calendars, schedules, agendas, minutes, and continuous improvement plans for the district and many of the individual buildings. The interview timeline between June and October was represented in Table 9, presented earlier.

After the first five interviews were completed and other volunteers were scheduled for late August and September, meeting observations began. During meeting observations, I was introduced to team members by the principal or assistant principal. During or immediately after meetings, four teachers expressed interest in participating in the study. Three of the four followed through and set up appointments and were interviewed in September. As in previous interviews, the personal interview protocol set was used to guide questioning and data were collected using a digital recording device.

Access to additional participants from meetings was unexpected but welcomed. Increasing the number of interviews allowed me to further explore members' perceptions of collaboration and of the culture within the improvement system. Yet, I was aware of how volunteering immediately after a meeting might be perceived. Two of the three who participated in interviews provided insight during the interviews. One teacher indicated that after meeting me at her TBT, she wanted to share her views on TBT processes and her own professional learning journey. She further expressed that she had meant to reply to the interest survey, but she was busy in the summer and in early August as she prepared for the upcoming school year. Another participant, a first-year teacher, indicated that she became overwhelmed with all the emails she had received in the beginning of the

Table 10

Actual Interview Participants Presented by Strata with Unique Participant Criteria

Strata	Number	Participated in only one data collection event	Served on DLT for ≥ 1 year (non-district level)	District Level Employee	Principal	Teacher	Varying Grade-band or role	Varying Content Area
Actual DLT	5	5	4	3	1	1	NA	NA
Actual BLT	2	3	NA	NA	2	1	NA	NA
Actual TBT	5	5	NA	NA	NA	5	Elem JH HS	Electives English/ELA Math Science

year but decided to participate after seeing me in her meeting. Data from participants regarding their reasons for volunteering and perceived biases are addressed in the Data Analysis section. All interviewee participants scheduled and attended appointments, signed the consent forms, and participated in member checking of their individual interview transcriptions. was used to guide questioning and data were collected using a digital recording device.

Access to additional participants from meetings was unexpected but welcomed. Increasing the number of interviews allowed me to further explore members' perceptions of collaboration and of the culture within the improvement system. Yet, I was aware of how volunteering immediately after a meeting might be perceived. Two of the three who participated in interviews provided insight during the interviews. One teacher indicated that after meeting me at her TBT, she wanted to share her views on TBT processes and her own professional learning journey. She further expressed that she had meant to reply to the interest survey, but she was busy in the summer and in early August as she prepared for the upcoming school year. Another participant, a first-year teacher, indicated that she became overwhelmed with all the emails she had received in the beginning of the year but decided to participate after seeing me in her meeting. Data from participants regarding their reasons for volunteering and perceived biases are addressed in the Data Analysis section. All interviewee participants scheduled and attended appointments, signed the consent forms, and participated in member checking of their individual interview transcriptions.

Phase 2: Meeting observations. Qualitative research can be time-consuming as it relies on interactions with individual participants or members in larger group settings, such as meeting observations (Merriam, 2009). Sixteen meetings in six different buildings were observed including five BLTs, two DLTs, and nine TBTs. During data collection, high school TBTs included science, mathematics, and English. Junior

High/Middle School TBTs included electives, mathematics, and English. Elementary TBTs were not categorized by content or grade level. A single high school department was observed three times during September. The purpose of observing the same team during different meetings was to explore how the team interacted over time and to observe their attitudes, activities, and behaviors.

Table 11 lists the six buildings in which I completed meeting observations and the strata observed within each building. The table includes stratum observed, building level, and its pseudonym. While each category represents one stratum, DLTs include members from each stratum, and BLTs include members from the building and classroom levels, including principals, counselors, and classroom teachers. TBTs consist only of teachers but can be configured differently in each building based on the BLT's recommendations. Furthermore, the OIP encouraged principals to visit and interact with TBTs. During my observations, principals came into TBTs twice and stayed for less than 3 minutes each time. Meetings were scheduled for 45 minutes to 2.5 hours.

Table 11

Meeting Observations and Strata Observed

Building	Level	Observed TBTs	Observed BLTs	Observed DLT
Krimble Elementary	K-4	X	X	NA
Washington	9-12	X	X	NA
Freedom	6-8	X	X	NA
Maple Hills	6-8	X	No	NA
Deer Creek	K-4	X	X	NA
North Pine Creek	District	NA	NA	X

For each meeting, I arrived early and was introduced by an administrator or teacher leader and stayed for the entire meeting. I used a sketchbook for field notes. I captured seating arrangements at each meeting, the number of participants, my reflections and questions using a multi-colored pen changing ink color to capture notes (black), my thoughts and questions (purple), and reflections added after the event (green). An example of my sketchbook is presented as Figure 6. Additional seating arrangements are presented in Appendix J.

Emergent themes identified during data collected during the Phase 1 personal interviews provided additional foci for meeting observations. For example, teachers identified reliance and focus on TBT forms. Overwhelmingly, teachers stated that the purpose of TBTs is to fill out the form (B. McNulty, personal communication, June 20, 2018). This was corroborated by Brenda, who talked about the TBT form nine times during the interview. During meeting observations, I wanted to understand how forms

were used. Each DLT, BLT, and TBT meeting opened with the form being displayed

on an overhead projector or referenced by the facilitators.
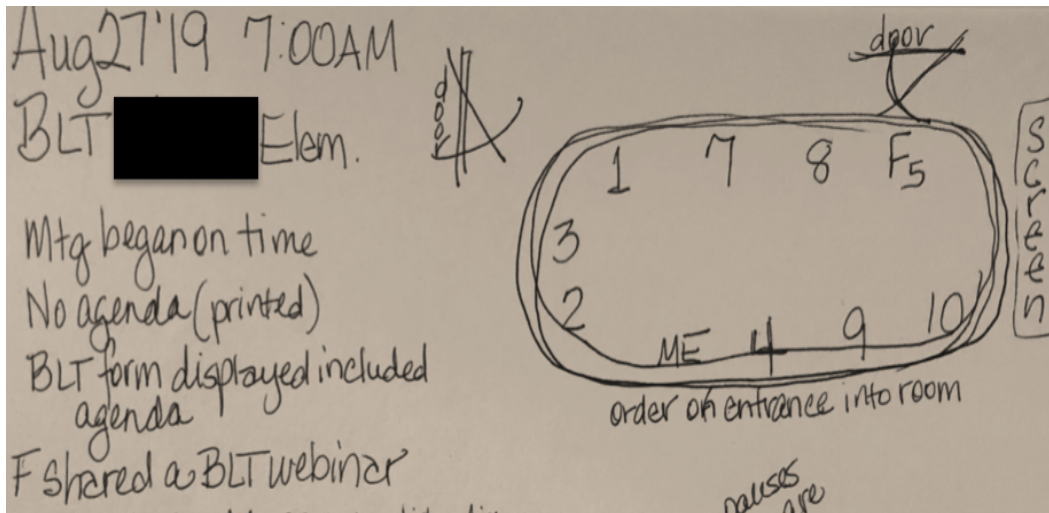
Figure 6. Sketchbook sample BLT meeting, August 2019.

Phase 3: Artifacts and documents. Artifacts can serve as historical remnants

(Coffey, 2014). Bhattacharya (2017) suggested that artifacts provide a means to explore

deeper understandings, often undiscovered meanings. I reviewed archived district

artifacts to explore how teams interacted and how the OIP had been implemented by

teams at each stratum. Some artifacts were accessed through the ODE's website

including historical district report cards. Others were obtained from the district's

website such as the vision, strategic plans, and board policies regarding the OIP. During

the first interview, Brenda discussed the TBT forms that her team used in detail and

then offered me digital access. Joan and Mia both described their BLT forms and

offered digital access. Beth described her TBT forms and offered access. I accepted

each offer reminding participants that I could only accept redacted copies. As documents were received, I checked for personal identifiers. None of the documents included personally identifiable information. I then assigned each document a case number and uploaded it to NVivo.

Most artifacts were provided digitally, but a few were hard copies. Hard copies were scanned and, as digital copies, were maintained on the SD cards. Study participants provided access to one TBT schedule as a hard copy and multiple digital documents. Examples of documents, redacted to exclude identifiable information have been included in Appendix G.

Digital documents collected included DLT form template, DLT agendas and minutes for 3 months, BLT agendas and minutes from 7 buildings, one copy of the BLT to DLT reporting form, Building Continuous Improvement Plan, TBT form templates from two buildings, and completed and redacted TBT forms from one TBT team in each of three buildings. Study participants provided access to one TBT schedule as a hard copy and multiple digital documents. Examples of documents, redacted to exclude identifiable information have been included in Appendix G. The first document example, a CIP was included because it contained (a) beginning of the year goals for the team, (b) brief explanation of how the team goals linked to the district goals, (c) team's plan for progress monitoring, and (d) instructional strategies that the team indicated would be used for teaching and learning.

The second document, a TBT form from a second-grade teacher team, was included to demonstrate the overall structure of the forms developed by the ODE: the

roles appropriate within the process as outlined in *The OIP Facilitator Guide*; examples of student grouping by colors, in this case red, yellow, green, and blue; team norms; and detailed standards and associated skills that teachers were focused. The third document was included because it represented one of the BLT teams and the middle organizational strata. The document included grade-level goals and provided insight into how the BLT members sought to understand the instructional strategies at each grade-level. The document also included a great deal of data represented in graph format. One central idea associated with the OIP is that BLT teams should learn from the TBTs and provide supports. This artifact provided evidence of one of those two ideas. By collecting data from grade-level teams, the BLT is inquiring into what strategies were working for students in the school building. However, there was no evidence included in the document that demonstrated that TBTs were seeking supports, structures, or resources, nor did it include information regarding offered supports, structures, or resources by either the BLT or the DLT.

The fourth example is a DLT agenda and meeting notes from one of the meetings that I observed. This document was included to display evidence of norms that have been developed at the district level. The document also included preliminary student achievement data from the state standardized assessments. The district's goals, according to the Executive Director of Teaching and Learning, were developed using tools provided by ODE that allowed building and district teams the opportunity to examine achievement data. The tool allowed the district to identify critical needs and

establish goals based on those needs. This represents the first step in the OIP's 5-step process.

Emergent Issues and Research Design Adjustments

As conditions emerged, I was compelled to adapt the study design. I strove to be flexible, maintaining the original design's integrity while not undermining the credibility of the study. First, the superintendent chose to have all district principals participate in the UCSDIC program, for which I served as a program manager. The first training date that I would directly deliver content in training sessions was the second week of August, less than 8 weeks between IRB approval to collect data and my contact with all principals. The principals lead their respective BLTs and participate in DLT meetings. This meant that the principals participating in the Oli[4] program could introduce bias or even a perception by principals as a hierarchical relationship. This issue emerged after IRB approval as the school year concluded. Therefore, I began interviews with a few of the principals who had volunteered and planned to have the remaining principal volunteers participate in focus groups. However, once the first program date approached, I did not have enough volunteers to conduct focus groups.

Second, the original plan focused on criteria to ensure a unique and representative sample across all strata. Due to low return rates of interest-surveys and the quickly approaching training date, I briefly considered conducting focus groups with those who had volunteered or had already participated in a personal interview. My reflections described my thinking during these weeks between IRB approval and the first training date:

- do not having enough volunteers to complete focus groups as planned;

- initial data from personal interviews indicates participants are amplifying the term collaboration which leads me to believe they might do so again in focus groups if I decide to use volunteers for both personal interviews and focus groups;

- second round of invitations sent out last week, little response and focus groups seem unlikely at this point, I am disappointed.

Reflections, low rate-of-returns of interest-surveys, access to additional interviewees, and expanded observations prompted my decision to change the design, resulting in the elimination of the focus groups as a data collection instrument. There were not enough volunteers to have both unique individual interview participants as well as unique focus groups participants and asking participants to participate in both individual and focus group interviews would have required an undue demand on their time. In addition, the individual interviews in conjunction with the meeting observations were deemed to provide sufficient saturation and data to answer the Research Questions. I used evidence collected during interviews to focus the meeting observations, paying specific attention to interactions between principals and teachers at BLT meetings, and between district-level employees, building principals, and instructional coaches (contract teachers on special assignment) at DLT meetings. I increased the number of meetings I attended from the originally planned 3 to 17. Furthermore, I realized that the artifacts collected included evidence of member interactions that were, to a limited degree, similar in nature to the purpose of a focus

group. The absence of observing direct interactions between organizational members during focus groups was not replicated by increasing the number of personal interviews (6 to 12), meeting observations (3 to 17), and review of the artifacts. The limitations and benefits associated with the revised research plan are addressed in the data analysis and the results sections below.

The phased approach to data collection allowed me to identify emerging categories, such as incomplete communicative mechanisms or misinterpretation of an important term. Early emergent categories were used to explore and compare subsequent data (Merriam, 2002; 2009). The iterative process of analysis also allowed me to amend future personal interviews and provided expanded foci for meeting observations.

Increases in the number of interviews and observations provided an expanded understanding of the OIP implementation within the district. During data collection events I was able to observe collaborative behaviors associated with the OIP along actual team operating expectations. Additionally, I observed actionable roles in accomplishing the district's vision and structures to support teaming activities Furthermore, observing more team meetings provided insight into communicative mechanisms and practices throughout the organization.

Data Analysis

Ravitch and Carl (2015) suggested that researchers purposefully and comprehensively plan for data collection and analysis. As indicated in Chapter 3, the original plan included interviews, observations, and focus groups. The plan was

adapted and was still comprehensive by increasing the number of interviews and observations. With the availability of archived documents, I was able to maintain methodology triangulation. Likewise, narrative analyses activities allowed me to examine, explore, and scrutinize the data.

According to Bakhtin (1981, as cited in Lieblich, Tuval-Mashiach, & Zilber, 1998) "narrative materials require dialogical listening" (p. 10). In this study, dialogical listening has been interpreted as learning through conversations. Each of the conversations that I participated in and those that I directly observed expanded my understanding of the OIP implementation processes, collaborative behaviors, stated and actual team operating expectations, habits of distributed leadership, and roles in accomplishing the district vision. In qualitative research, the researcher is central not only in data collection but also during analysis and interpretation (Merriam & Tisdell, 2015).

Lieblich et al. (1998) identified four narrative analyses processes that were grounded in "two main independent dimensions…(a) holistic versus categorical approaches and (b) content versus form" (p. 12). Figure 7 presents the two dimensions and four analytical methods described by Lieblich et al. (1998). Holistic versus categorical refers to the unit of analysis. My interpretation of Lieblich et al.'s meaning of holistic is it represents a big picture of the discussion, dialogue, or interactions while categorical means a narrowed focus on the what versus the why, respectively (Lieblich et al). Lieblich et al. suggested that the categorical dimension could be utilized when the investigation centers on a singular problem or event and the holistic dimension is

often associated with the entirety of the person, or in this instance, the organization as the focus of the study. The second dimension, content versus form, refers to either an
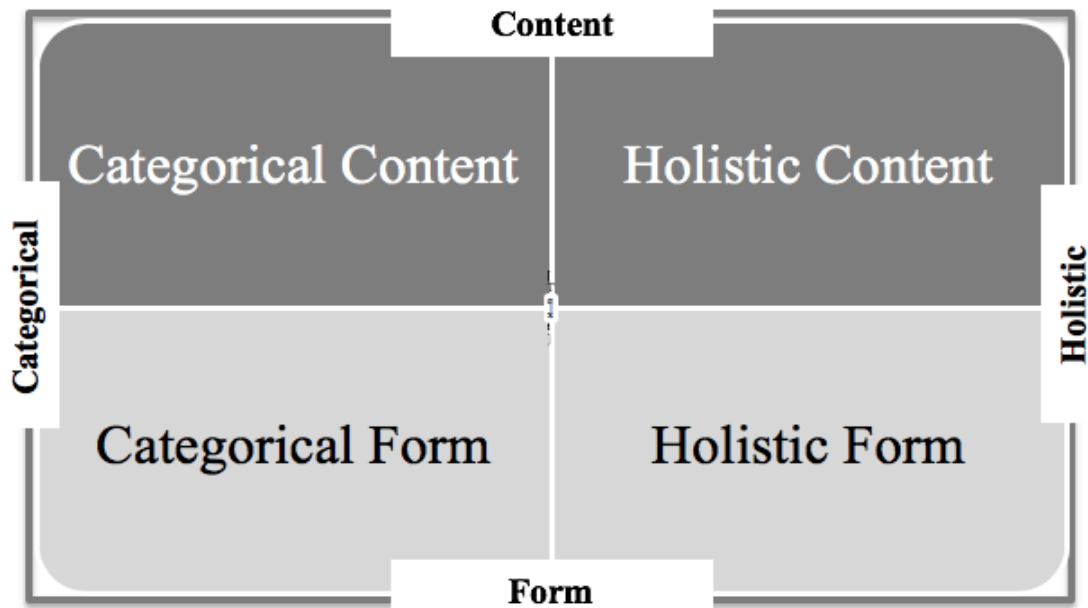
Figure 7: Four narrative analysis perspectives as presented by Lieblich et al. 1998.

"explicit content" (p. 12) or "the structure of the plot, the sequencing of events" (p. 13).

I wanted to understand the complexities of what OIP team members did and why they behaved the way that they did as it related to improvement practice. Data was collected in phases and using different instruments to triangulate data, providing a means to see, as well as possible, inconsistencies in thought and action. Therefore, I chose to use both categorical content perspective (CCP) and holistic content perspective (HCP) to explore both research questions and to discover as much about individuals', teams', and the organizations' what and why. In this study, two of the four methods

noted above were used to fully analyze and describe the story of collaboration within an improvement process as told through individual narratives, my personal observations, and organizational artifacts.

The remaining two methods described by Lieblich et al. (1998) were not chosen for use in this study. The third perspective, Holistic Form Perspective (HFC) is used to focus "on its formal aspects rather than its content" (p. 16). HFC concentrates on understanding the structure of a story, such as the plot and the introduction or order of event or character. Categorical Form Perspective (CFP) allows a researcher to understand a topic by examining the literary aspects and the dialect that exists within the narrative. Both perspectives would not work well in my study since the topic, collaboration, exists beyond the literary components and the formal composition of the narrative. I choose not to use these perspectives as neither would have provided insight into how members collaborated or the culture within the improvement system.

Early Analysis During Data Collection

Prior to beginning data collection, I identified codes from the literature that I believed would appear in the data and loaded those codes into NVivo. As each interview concluded, I immediately added my thoughts, reflections, challenges encountered, and slight modifications I thought should be made to questions, ordering, or processes. The next step was to complete the transcription of the audio recording. As I read each transcript, verifying its accuracy, I often jotted down additional thoughts regarding the data. The first referred to actions that participants described as part of their TBT work. The later refers to misinterpretations, as illustrated by Grace, when she

described collaboration between her students instead of as part of adult interactions. Recording my initial thoughts during transcription was a pre-coding activity.

Furthermore, as each narrative was transcribed, I identified it as a case within NVivo. Similarly, all field notes, reflections, and artifacts were also uploaded into the software program as individual cases. Field notes and artifacts were also skimmed briefly prior to beginning coding, and initial thoughts were jotted down or added as comments to digital copies. These pre-codes were then incorporated once formal coding processes began.

Part 1: Categorical Content Perspective Analysis of RQ1

CCP was employed to examine and explore data based upon both literature-identified (deductive) and emerging (inductive) concepts. CCP provided a means to analyze all participants' narratives and their engagement in collaboration within the OIP via direct researcher-observed strata meeting field notes. As described later in this section, CCP was used to answer the first research question. HCP was used to answer the second research question.

As presented in Figure 8, coding was completed in a continuous, iterative process. The steps were completed on each data set as it was collected, including interview transcripts, meeting observation field notes, and artifacts provided by members. My reflective notes, which I considered as secondary or supplemental data, did not go through the same coding process, but were reviewed, notations made, and examined.

The first two steps, identification of codes from the literature and pre-coding, were included in Figure 8 and were described earlier in the Data Collection section. A complete list of codes generated from the literature is presented in Appendix H. Codes were developed from Senge's (1991) and Gronn's (2000) theories, which comprised the conceptual framework (see Figure 1) and other related factors.
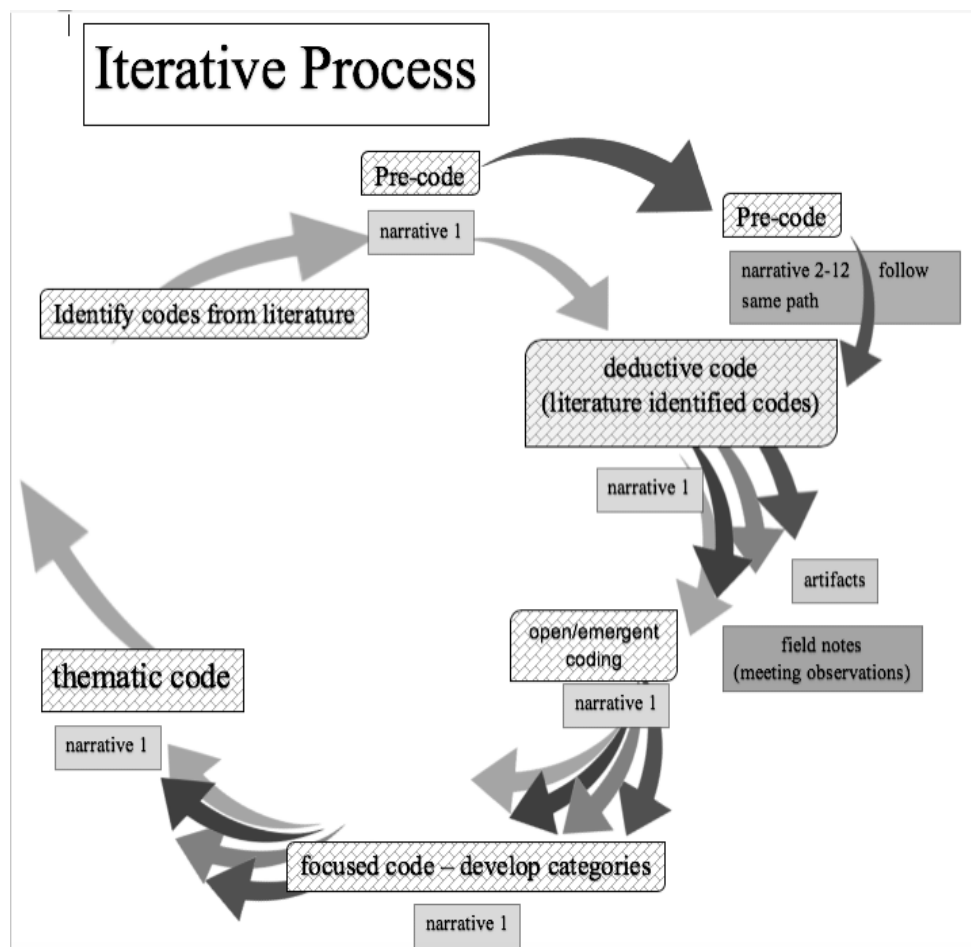
Figure 8. Iterative analytical approach including coding activities during CCP for RQ1.

Deductive coding. Codes were assigned to subtext within each narrative using a deductive approach. Lieblich et al. (1998) characterized subtext as words, phrases, sentences, paragraphs, or entire sections of text aligned with one of the literature-identified concepts. To accomplish my goal of collecting and analyzing data in a systemic and objective manner, I continued to code data by counting instances for specific codes. Lieblich et al. provided step-by-step directions for conducting CCP that included (a) select subtext, (b) define categories, (c) sort selected subtext into categories, and (d) draw conclusions. Lieblich et al. proposed that researchers modify or adapt the steps in a manner that would answer the research questions. A screenshot of a NVivo® dashboard taken during my deductive coding subtext cycle is presented as Figure 9 to illustrate some of the codes that were assigned to subtext. My list of literature-identified codes was not comprehensive, and at times, I would identify a code that was obvious in the subtext but had not been preloaded into the software. When this happened, I made a note of the "new" code so that when I returned to the transcripts for open coding, I would also be aware of the code in case a subtext could be coded. An example of this is the code "leader action." I had preloaded both shared leadership and distributive leadership into the software program for coding. However, leader actions are directly related to both previous codes, but I determined that actions can either support shared leadership or thwart it.

lame	Files ^	Referen...	(
Personal vision	3	8	
Power	2	3	
Purpose	4	6	
Shared Leadership	2	2	
System thinking	1	2	
Tension	0	0	
Trust	5	11	
Values	0	0	
Vision	5	19	

Figure 9: Example from NVivo® dashboard of pre-identified codes during Step 1 of coding subtext

Inductive coding. The next step in the analytical cycle was to inductively analyze data using an open coding technique. If, during deductive coding activity, subtext surprised, intrigued, or disturbed me, I made a note of the section with a question mark. After deductive coding was completed, I returned to all subtext that I had identified, read it again, and completed open coding. The idea of open coding motivated me to go through all data and complete open coding across all data sets, including my reflective journal. As I completed open coding, my approach included suggestions from Sunstein and Chiseri-Strater (2012, cited in Saldaña, 2016) in which three questions were asked during opening coding activities:

- What surprised me?

- What intrigued me?

- What disturbed me?

Saldaña explained that the first question supports the identification of suppositions. The second supports the researcher's positionality, and the third identifies conflicts between the researcher's values, attitudes, and beliefs. I used these questions during open coding as I identified emerging codes in the subtext. Examples of emergent codes included compliance, progress monitoring, and digital structures. Later, progress monitoring was delineated to include progress monitoring for students and progress monitoring for adults. The distinction was needed to demonstrate when adults spoke about monitoring student learning versus when adults discussed monitoring their own learning, implementation fidelity regarding programs, or as the term related to the district or building strategic plans.

Open coding was a valuable step in the analytical process as it added richness as codes were grouped. For example, earlier I discussed identifying a new code that could be attributed to the literature (leader actions). The literature spoke of both distributed leadership and shared leadership. However, the differences between distributing or sharing leadership seemed important to me during my open coding analysis. I made a note and began differentiating between the two ideas and leader actions. When Irene described her role as a member of the BLT, she was charged with communicating to her TBT (a distributed leadership practice by the principal), but she also demonstrated that she understood the work of the BLT and TBTs differently than her principal. She began to exhibit characteristics of a highly effective leader such as sharing the leadership with her colleagues by seeking their input, leading learning about best

practices for TBTs, and developing long-term planning, and then communicating it to her principal.

Focused coding. Following literature coding, I continued CCP analysis by completing what Holsti (1969) described as a "technique for making inferences by objectively and systematically identifying specified characteristics" of the subtext (p. 14). Focused coding was a multi-step process itself in which I first looked at the list of codes and collected similar codes together into groups. The first step resulted in grouping codes into categories (see Appendix H).

There were outliers, which led me to return to the subtext to look at the content and context with the subtext. Within NVivo, I could pull up all subtext associated with one code, or I could go back to a solitary subtext and read and reread it to determine if it fit well with one group or another. At times, I created additional codes to fit the identified subtext or would then lump the subtext with one of the existing codes or categories. Second, to have a strong sense of the codes' context, I characterized codes and categories with factors from the literature. Open codes were not borne from the literature as were deductive codes, but most aligned well with literature-related concepts.

At times codes seemed to belong in more than one category. Saldaña (2016) described this as "fuzzy category boundaries" but indicated that when it occurs too frequently, it could be considered "messy" (p. 11). Examples of fuzzy codes, whose which fit into multiple categories, included the code "form." Analyses processes eventually further clarified the term form resulting in *forms/templates* in the category

focused professional practices and the code *templates for agendas/minutes* in the category *compliance, respect, protocols*. The categories were later assigned into subthemes and eventually I identified themes. It became clear that themes were related to culture, practices, and systems. I allowed codes to flow and decided to return afterward and clean up the codes to ensure I did not have a mess. As I examined the coding structure, I considered that codes, for example, *norms,* could inform each theme in different ways. When codes had informed categories, subthemes, and themes, occurrences were consistent. Each time a code informed two themes, it informed cultural practices, system thinking, and systemic practices. For example, whenever I coded a *Team activity* (DLT-BLT-TBT), the subtext was almost exclusively related to habits. When Irene, a teacher on the BLT, discussed her role as a member of the BLT, she described both distributed and shared leadership (see Inductive Coding section). Both codes were eventually included in the theme, habits of collaborative professionalism since one (distributive) included communication and the other (shared) included a leader's actions when she sought her peers' input, leading toward TBT best practices, and initiated her own professional learning activities outside of school.

Thematic coding. As I continued to explore the data, including lists of codes and categories, subthemes began to emerge. My reflective journaling was paramount during this stage as it assisted in discovering themes. The initial list of themes agreed with Lieblich's et al. (1998) description of "many subtle" themes that can emerge to convey the "richness and variation" of the data (p. 113). Examples of my subtle themes, which have been identified as subthemes, included communication, governance, build trust, and improvement practices. As I attempted to "reach a balance between" the

many and "meticulous sorting" I chose the latter and sorted the six subthemes into three

overarching themes (Lieblich et al., 1998, p. 113). Table 12 identifies the themes and

the subthemes, categories, and the number of emergent and literature-identified codes

associated with each theme for RQ1.

Table 12

Summary of Themes, Subthemes, Categories, and Number of Literature-Identified and Emergent Codes

Themes	Subthemes	Categories	Number of Codes (E=emergent; LI = Literature-identified)
Systems Thinking and Systemic Practices	• Challenges to improvement and collaboration • Improvement Practices	• Attitudes • Unfavorable perceptions • Capacity requisites • Leadership practices for improvement • Reflection and growth	LI: 9 E:22
Fundamental Distributive practices	• Keystones and cornerstones	• Guideposts • Organizational • cornerstones	LI: 11 E: 2
Habits of collaborative professionalism	• Communication & governance • Build trust and respect • Team habits	• Processes • Supports • Results • Structures • Belief/perception • Practices • Team inputs	LI: 11 E: 19

Part 2: Holistic Content Perspective of RQ2

After I completed CCP analysis to discover, code, and describe the narratives and field notes to answer RQ1, the second form of narrative analysis, HCP, informed my interpretation of participants' perceptions to answer RQ2. Figure 10 represents the process that I used to complete HCP analysis. The two distinct analyses enhanced my interpretations of members' actions and their perceptions. During HCP analysis, I used the processes described by Lieblich et al. (1998) by noting my general impressions, always mindful of the context of collaboration within improvement systems and my professional cultural perspectives.

Figure 10. Holistic content perspective analytical approach for RQ2.
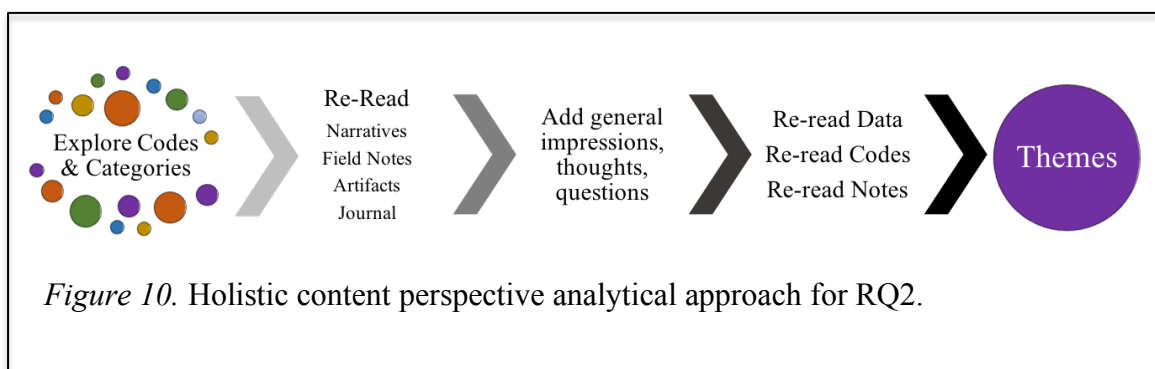
During the HCP process, I explored the codes and categories that were generated during CCP analysis. All lists of codes and categories (see Appendix H and I) were revisited. I did not regroup or reorganize the codes and categories, but instead wrote out my impressions, thoughts, and questions. The thoughts and questions did not result in new codes but were recorded in the documents. As an example, the negative feeling code was noted as *negative feelings are not supportive for improvement efforts* and *do the negative feelings and members practices align? Are teaching practices*

negative? I continued to reread the narratives, field notes, and artifacts and group my

impressions and questions. Table 13 provides examples of my notes and questions

during the rereading process.

Table 13

Examples of Notes, Impressions, and Questions from HCP Analysis

Code/Category Artifact/Narrative	Notes/Impressions	Questions
Interview transcript	Mia previous district-level employee understood systemic practices.	Does Mia share her views of systems with building member intuitively? At all? Outside this study (but worthy of further).
	District level perspectives do not align – not systemic.	Why do most members not understand systems? Big picture is absent.
Artifact: TBT forms	The detailed forms appear to be prepopulated with strategies (as they appear across multiple); Central office members have created "habits" for organizational members by providing structures. Forms are systemic but the concepts associated with collaboration feel forced.	The forms appear compliance driven and not performance, Habits of and for compliance? Do members understand the why of the work?
Field notes / reflections	BLT meetings generally focused on management issues; Ciara's showed of a webinar to "help BLT members understand the purpose and collective responsible for the success for all students; general misunderstandings not addressed.	Do management type tasks demotivate or demoralize members? Do these tasks contribute to their attitudes? How do habits support or impede improvement efforts? What is the best method to build or reinforce habits? Do attitudes shift too?

around them. Table 13 identifies examples from each data set, including interview transcripts, artifacts, and my field notes/reflections.

It was at this point that the idea of habitats surfaced as I considered the conditions leaders ensure are present and how leaders nurture positive attitudes. The research question could not be answered by the data as I had observed only one TBT in behaviors and practices. Then I considered the resulting habits when a leader provides the structures and supports to members. As I read further, it became apparent that habits were not simply a product of a leaders' behaviors but the behaviors themselves were a product of district-employees' habits. Therefore, I identified the patterns across all strata and identified specific habits that were necessary at each stratum to support collaborative professionalism.

Review of themes associated with RQ2. These thoughts reinforced the habits that I had identified during CCP. I began to consider habits as I reread the narratives. Mia's systems thinking behaviors sparked the concept of an environment or culture. I began to think of culture as a habitat that supports adult learning at its core. Kaplan and Ownings (2013) defined culture as:

> the general feel people get when they walk into a school…it influences every aspect of school life, including how teachers feel about students, how administrators relate to teachers…culture of bureaucracy provides another layer, enforcing its own values, beliefs, assumptions, and communication methods as well as prescribed processes for decision making (pp. 5-6).

Kaplan and Ownings' description inspired me to consider the district's culture as a habitat, one in which teachers and administrators live each day. Two themes were identified from the patterns in the data. The two identified from the subthemes included habitats and habits. I continued rereading the data, which led to a third theme surfacing from the data. The third theme, habitudes, grew out of my perception of Senge's (1991) mental models and how those paradigms might influence members' behaviors.

Members' mental models of personal compliance behaviors when completing TBT forms is an example of a mental model that has developed in teachers' minds. I considered how members regarded the form in interviews and during observations. Negative mental models can affect individuals' self-efficacy, ability for teams to achieve high levels of collective efficacy for instruction, and aversion to the ability for teams to realize high quality collaboration for improvement (Goddard et al., 2015). I considered negative mental models as a detriment to collaboration.

HCP analysis resulted in two additional themes. The fourth theme, habitats for organizational learning, described the environment necessary to cultivate and nurture organizational learning at all strata. The fifth theme, balanced habitudes, incorporates two concepts. The first is professional habits and the second is attitudes. When the two merge habitudes results. The two must be in balance as well. Positive, professional habits can influence attitudes, moving from negative towards positive. Negative attitudes can impact healthy professional habits as well, plunging them towards ineffective and time-wasting behaviors. The Results section below provides detailed descriptions of the themes that surfaced during HCP analysis.

Discrepant Cases

According to Creswell et al. (2007), discrepant cases include cases that do not fit within a theme or that were significantly different than other accounts While there were discrepant and even conflicting views expressed by participants, none of these were collected in a way that rose to the level of a discrepant case(s). Rather, all views fit within the primary themes, subthemes and coding structure and offered a range and depth of views that enhance the findings discussed in the results sections below. Further, this rich and complex data informed my interpretations, recommendations and implications shared in Chapter 5, all of which were enhanced and made more robust due to the insights gained by exploring this range of views, behaviors, and experiences.

Evidence of Trustworthiness

Yin (2011) described trustworthiness as a convergence of three objectives: being transparent at each phase, following a methodical set of procedures, and adhering to the evidence gathered. Together the three objectives increase the four domains of trustworthiness, most notably credibility. As I collected and analyzed data, I maintained an audit log to provide transparency. I have described the procedures I used to code data. and I observed and followed the protocols that I developed to gather evidence. The following sections detail my practices to ensure trustworthiness.

Credibility

The research design described in Chapter 3 outlined two methods for triangulation to increase credibility. However, after careful consideration of analysis, two forms of analysis were used to add a third triangulation method. The first

triangulation method was based on the conceptual framework described in Chapters 2 and 3; the second triangulation method encompassed multiple data collection methods including, observations, artifacts, and researcher reflections; and the final triangulation occurred as I used two narrative analysis perspectives to view the data.

The conceptual framework, outlined in Chapters 1 and 2, provided a lens to explore both research questions. Senge's (1991) and Gronn's (2000) theories overlap on concepts such as systems thinking and awareness and organizational vision. Yet each brought unique concepts such as personal accountability, power, mental models, and team learning. This allowed me to explore collaboration in practice and the organization's culture. The use of two theories further reduced potential biases. Theoretical triangulation, described by Hoque et al. (2015), is the analysis of data through varying theoretical lenses. This triangulation method enabled me to explore differing levels of meaning developed by members' perceptions, actions, and evidence within and across the organization's strata. The varied data collection methods also provided triangulation.

The use of CCP and HCP to explore data deductively and inductively, as well as categorically and holistically, provided multiple opportunities to explore the topic and to answer the research questions. The tiered approach, presented in Figure 9, allowed me to use CCP to explore the narratives, artifacts, field notes, and my own reflective journal by first identifying codes associated with the literature in a deductive approach followed by an inductive approach using open coding. Themes emerged that aligned

with the literature on members' engagement and actions. A second analytical approach further triangulated the study.

During HCP, I revisited the codes, categories, and themes that emerged during CCP and recorded my impressions, thoughts, and questions. HCP was used to explore the second research question and the analysis allowed additional themes to emerge that aligned with the second research question specifically on member's perceptions on visioning, team learning, and systems thinking.

Narrative transcripts, field notes, and reflective journal entries were reread multiple times to allow me to immerse myself in the stories to understand how individuals perceived the organization's vision, team learning, and how they understood systems thinking. Interpreting the data in this tiered approach, first through coding steps and then through a holistic view of the data, enriched my understanding of how participants practice collaboration within the improvement system and how they perceived conditions and culture surrounding collaboration. These analytical approaches further expanded the theoretical triangulation described in Chapter 3.

Potential biases identified prior to the study and those that surfaced during the study are also documented within this report. One bias that surfaced late in data collection included participants that volunteered immediately following meeting observations. Explanations were revealed in interview transcripts. One teacher, Irene, indicated that after she met me while I observed a TBT meeting, she wanted to share more about the TBT process and her professional learning. Irene stated, "it would be

great if they used feedback to improve." Irene explained why she had not responded to the two email invitations sent in June and August:

> Most teachers are not checking email often or at all at this time, and they may be only reading emails from administration or known senders. For me, I checked in July. In August, teachers are in scramble-mode, and the numerous emails from administration mean most teachers don't have the time or focus for nonessential activities. After Labor Day, routines are established, and teachers are more likely able to participate.

> Another participant, Catherine, expressed "I am one of those people that get really overwhelmed when there's, like, a million e-mails." Potential for increased or manipulative bias due to late volunteers is addressed in detail in the data analysis section.

Reflective journaling was used to reinforce credibility and was completed during each phase of the study. Member checking was completed for personal interview participants. Interview transcripts were returned within 3 weeks to interview participants to verify the transcript's accuracy and allow each interviewee to clarify misconceptions. No participants corrected or added to the transcriptions. Follow-up interviews were conducted with two participants to ask clarifying questions about strategic planning, visioning processes, and program implementation that included teacher professional learning.

Method triangulation was planned for and included the use of multiple data collection methods. According to Flick (2018), methodological triangulation can result

in three different outcomes. First, data "converge, mutually confirm, and support the same conclusion" (Flick, 2018, p. 18). The use of CCP and HCP further triangulated the study. CCP analysis identified subtext in interview transcripts, field notes, researcher reflections, and artifacts and used both inductive and deductive coding processes and defined categories. Each category was described and supporting data was presented.

Transferability

In qualitative research, transferability refers to the likelihood that the findings are valuable in similar situations. To achieve this, Yin (2012b) encouraged researchers to provide rich descriptions of the setting and participants. This report provides a rich description of the study site, participants, data collection methods, and analytical approaches and culminated in a rich narrative of collaboration practices and perceptions within a district that practiced the OIP for continuous improvement.

Dependability

Dependability is comparable to quantitative reliability and refers to the ability of others in similar situations or settings to use the findings. To increase dependability, I documented data collection, including interview protocol sets. I also documented data analysis processes I used. Audit logs were maintained for (a) raw data, (b) consent forms, field notes, journals, and reflections, (c) data reconstruction products as narrative analysis were conducted, (d) process notes, and (e) and copies of formal email communications.

Confirmability

The use of research findings within similar environments or with similar populations adds to the scholarly literature and provides new information to build upon others' work. It is vital that other scholars understand the potential biases and how those biases may have influenced these findings to ensure the findings benefits others. Preexisting, evolving, and potential biases and the methods used to mitigate bias are disclosed in this report.

Chapter 3 described preexisting biases including my history within the field and my work with school reform efforts, critical friends training, engagement with the OIP and learning communities. Prior to the start of the study, I did not have a relationship with any member of the study site. I had previously met the Designee at a conference, which likely helped the study site agree to participate.

Since beginning the study, the district's superintendent decided to participate in the UCSDIC program in which I serve as a Program Manager. At the time of data collection, I had worked in a limited capacity with the Designee and building principals. I did not work with other central office staff or teachers.

Reflective journaling was completed each time I collected or analyzed data. I also journaled on other days, such as days when I worked on writing the report or when I had contact with the study site. Reflective journaling, described in Chapter 3, can reveal personal or professional biases. The reflective journal was uploaded to NVivo® and was coded and themes identified.

An audit log was also maintained. The log included dates, times, and locations of interviews and field observations. It also included a list of all records, their digital file locations, and formal email communications. A codebook was maintained in NVivo®. Participant identities are maintained in the codebook. Codes were generated using a system that identified each participant's role with the line that their name appeared in the codebook, such as T23. If a quote from one of the participants is used within this report, a pseudonym was generated by using a historical baby name website and a random year generator within the codebook. A name was assigned based on the random year assignment, for the last name Rea, R and a random year of 1879, when Rosie was one of the most popular girl baby names, was used. Rosie would have been assigned to Rea as a pseudonym.

<div align="center">**Results**</div>

The descriptions that follow are presented according to themes, include three themes: systems thinking and systemic practices, fundamental distributed practices, and habits for collaborative professionalism in response to RQ1. Additionally, two additional themes, habitats for organizational learning and balanced habitudes, were developed from the data to inform RQ2. Subthemes, categories, and codes, both those generated from the literature and emergent codes are included.

Results for RQ1

RQ1 asked: How do organizational members within and across organizational strata engage in collaborative practices within the context of a public K-12 educational setting that has implemented an improvement process? The subthemes presented in

subsequent sections, developed into three main themes. Figure 11 illustrates how the subthemes informed each of the three main themes and how I perceived the relationships between the three themes.

The base theme, systems thinking and systemic practices, serves as the infrastructure and foundation for the other main themes. It serves as infrastructure because it represents the interconnective nature of nodes and components within a system. It serves as the foundation because it provides purpose and direction. The infrastructure/foundational subthemes that informed Theme 1 included challenges to improvement and collaboration and improvement practices. Theme 2, foundational distributive properties, included one subtheme, keystones, and cornerstones. The third
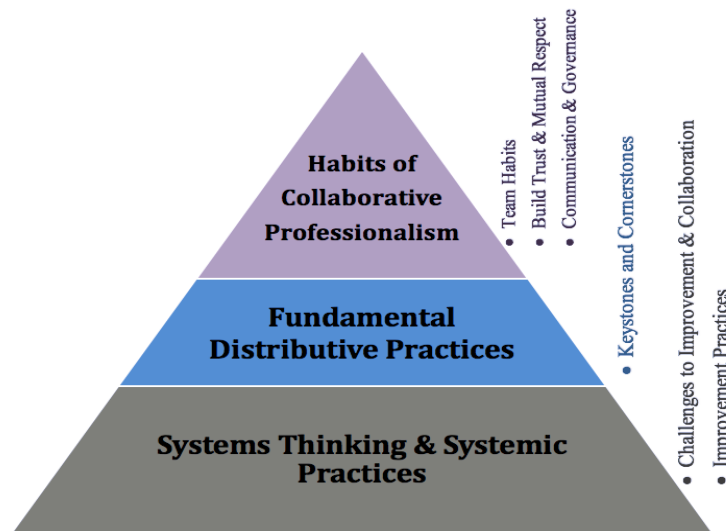
Figure 11. Themes and subthemes developed from CCP analysis.

theme, habits of professional collaboration, included three subthemes, team habits, build trust and mutual respect, and communication and governance.

Theme 1: Systems thinking - systemic practices. As I continued to explore the data, looking at each of the codes, categories, and subthemes, I noted that two subthemes were associated with systemic improvement. Systems thinking and systemic practices focused on challenges to improvement and collaboration and leadership for improvement.

Systems thinking, like team learning, was not known by interview participants and practices normally associated with team learning, such as collective reflection, were not observed. Evidence suggested that some participants were aware of the larger system. Observations did not support an awareness of the concept in any of the meetings at any stratum.

Members' understanding of the OIP provided insight into the disruption to systems thinking as described by Senge (1991). Additionally, perceptions and attitudes were often negative about the district or building and below-the-line comments about students were observed. Improvement practices had been deeply ingrained throughout the district, including systemic practices using templates for strata-level meetings to capture the work of teams. DLT and BLTs were observed as high functioning, utilizing group norms and processes. TBTs did not use the many tools to help teams to function effectively. Often teams operated as singletons in a team setting, often not even facing one another or isolating themselves from the group. Many voiced their views of TBT work as compliance. Two subthemes emerged to inform the first theme. The first

subtheme included challenges to improvement and collaboration. The second subtheme

included several categories and codes associated with improvement practices.

Subtheme 1a: Challenges to improvement and collaboration. This subtheme

includes challenges noted within individual teams and across strata that have the

potential to impact an entire system. Categories which informed this subtheme included

(a) OIP understandings and perceptions, (b) attitudes, and (c) capacity requisites, which

refers to professional learning needs. Table 14 presents the categories and codes for

challenges to improvement and collaboration.

Table 14

Categories and Codes for Subtheme 1a: Challenges to Improvement and Collaboration

Category	Literature-identified codes	Emergent codes
Attitudes		Misunderstandings
		Perceived compliance
		Disapproving of leaders/systems/ procedures
		Positive attitudes
		Territorial behaviors (BLT non-negotiables)
Unfavorable perceptions		Below the line
		Negatives feelings
		Yours-Mine-Ours [kids]
Capacity perquisites	Systems aware	Data rich – information poor
		Program reliance
		Labels-student Differentiation for student sub-groups
		Research Teaming

OIP understandings and perceptions. Understanding the purpose of any work

is an essential feature of the OIP and systems thinking. Both the OIP and systems

thinking described the importance of members' roles. Many teachers seemed unsure of the purpose of teaming and others were not aware that the OIP was an improvement process or that teams existed as part of the OIP. Grace described the purpose of teaming as "I'm sure the purpose [of TBTs] is to improve our teaching." Here Grace seemed to understand that her TBT had a purpose. She continued, "the activities of our TBT are to meet every Thursday for one hour" Her description of the team revealed that the understood and actionable purpose was to simply meet. Grace concluded, "our department chair completes the [TBT] form and sends it in. He tells us to go ahead and leave and he'll complete the form." This last statement refutes the purpose that she described in the beginning as the team is not even staying to complete the form and the department chair is reportedly concocting information to a form and submitting it. It is understandable why she believes that the purpose of her team is to merely meet. During Catherine's and Robin's interviews, neither knew what the OIP was or that it was the reason for meeting in TBTs. When asked about the OIP, Robin stated, "they don't teach that in college." Catherine's wondered, "Do you mean when a teacher is placed on an improvement plan?" She incorrectly associated the OIP with improvement plans, a requirement of teachers who have received an ineffective rating, in Ohio's teacher evaluation system. Overall, teachers did not understand the purpose of the OIP as a means for continuous improvement.

Attitudes. Both negative and positive attitudes regarding OIP process were observed. Both DLT and BLT meetings that were observed were largely structured.

TBTs were less structured. This may account for a greater number of negative attitudes during conversations with TBT members and during TBT meetings.

Brenda, a second-grade teacher, described frustrations with both BLT and TBT processes in a series of comments. She began, "it was just overwhelming coming to meetings, it was just more meetings, or the same number of meetings with more goals." Brenda continued, "I was shocked when I found out that not all districts do this. I mean I don't know what they do, but when this first started, I would talk to teachers [in other districts] and they said, I have no idea what you're talking about." In this statement Brenda was dismayed why her district was participating in the OIP and why other districts, as reported by Brenda, did not use the OIP. In systems thinking, it is essential that all members understand the purpose for the OIP as understanding can temper frustrations.

Additional negative feelings associated with meetings were observed. During one meeting, a middle/junior high school teacher stated, "I don't know what we are supposed to do. I should just leave this room." Another teacher in a high school TBT stated during the meeting, "so basically, we accomplished nothing." A third example from another middle/junior high school, three teachers successively stated, "we already do that, I'm *not* doing that, and I'm going to use yours.

These teachers appear to want to use their time more effectively, needed additional direction, and required guidance or facilitation. The feelings that are expressed within the comments indicate gaps in the OIP implementation. In addition,

their negative feelings could signal their frustration with collaborative practices within the improvement system or misunderstanding of the purpose associated with both.

In my past experiences, I used the phrase "below the line" to describe negative behaviors during teaching and learning discussions. For the following examples, I identified individual teacher behaviors and comments as *below-the-line.* Examples, presented in Table 15, include descriptions and related research. The examples included mockery of students, including what was inferred as a discriminatory reference to an alternative English dialect (Blake, Shousterman, & Newlin-Łukowicz, 2015). In these examples, teachers freely expressed indifference to being accountable for all students. My reflective journal noted, "these teachers did not know me and yet felt comfortable enough to express this view while I am present."

There were examples of positive attitudes as well. For example, Irene worked to implement TBT practices. She reported that she and the instructional coach took an initiative to complete an OLAC online seminar focused on TBTs. She indicated that she and the coach also sought to attend a conference where the webinar presenter was the keynote speaker. Irene and the coach then created a plan to shift the TBT's practices by sharing information with their peers. Irene also created a calendar for the school year outlining the focus of each meeting. Irene stated, "It's very easy to misunderstand the process and I feel that the district, maybe in pockets, misunderstands the process. But I feel, again best intentions, right, whatever people are doing they're doing because they do value self-reflection, and they do value growth." Her statement revealed that she understood the concept of systemic practice and acknowledged there were gaps in OIP

Table 15

Below the Line Observations

Team	Statements from Observation Field Notes	Relevancy/Research
TBT	These kids can't learn no grammar (laughing)	Mocking and indicative of teachers who do not believe in students[1] Discriminatory reference to alternative English dialect [2]
TBT	I blame the grammar on their elementary and junior high teachers.	Passing blame/not taking responsibility[3]
TBT	They don't even see their mistakes when they're pointed out	Teachers who do not believe in students[1]
BLT	Those are our low kids	Labeling students[4]
TBT	They went through the material; they should have it	Wrong focus. TBTs focus on teachers learning to support all students[1]
TBT	I don't know why they come to me for help. They are not my kids"	Resist idea of *all kids* are *our kids*[4]

[1] Turner, Christensen, & Meyer (2009)
[2] Blake, Shousterman, & Newlin-Łukowicz, (2015)
[3] Thrupp (2008)
[4] Klehm (2014)

implementation across the district. She also revealed that she believed in the district's

membership had good intentioned and that they were focused on professional growth.

Irene's comments contrasted with the negative attitudes reported above.

Capacity requisites. According to ODE's (2016) guidance on developing high

quality professional development, three key elements should be considered. The first

element stated that professional learning "must be organized, coherent and provide

ongoing learning opportunities." The second indicates it must align with the standards for professional educators. The third is that it must be collaborative and "with shared accountability" (p. 2). Senge et al. (2000) did not specifically state that professional development must include explicit instruction on systems thinking but did identify the need for collaboration across grade levels, consensus on standards, team learning, and individual mastery. As educational organizations in Ohio work to support teachers' ongoing professional learning, their capacity development, organizations might consider intentionally planning for systems thinking capacity development for individuals and especially for teams (Schwille, Dembélé, & Schubert, 2007). Explicit systems thinking training could fulfill Senge's suggestions.

Individual and team capacity might include skills, content, or both. Codes that were grouped into capacity perquisites, meaning that a skill or knowledge is necessary for systems thinking, included *systems awareness*, *data rich-information poor*, *program reliance*, and *instructional strategies for subgroups.* Systems awareness is delineated from systems thinking as members beginning awareness of a system, but not a deep understanding of systems thinking. In the earlier example of Irene's positive feelings, she expressed her understanding of the system. Yet I noted that most teachers did not understand that the system existed or their role within it. Understanding that a system exists with key components of Senge's (1991) concept that problems are inherent and that members all play a role in solving those problems is necessary for district-level employees who plan for and develop training as well as members who reside within the system.

The data rich, information poor code referred to the often-ineffective focus on teachers' analysis using primarily, effect or student data. A renewed emphasis on adult implementation data might also effectively shift teacher attitudes regarding teaming activities (Doubek, 2018; McNulty, 2018). In Ohio, the phrase *adult implementation data* and *student data* were used to clearly articulate the difference between adult behaviors related to teaching and student learning data. Teaching activities could include designing, planning, teaching, scoring, marking, assessment development, etc. As described in the *OIP Facilitator's Guide* and documents associated with the OIP reboot, the focus of teams should be on cause data. As teams focus on cause data, adult implementation data, the outcome shifts to team learning. In personal interviews, Brandy referred to effect data 25 times. Joan 13 times, Salvador 7 times, Susan 9 times, and Brenda and Catherine 6 times each. One of my reflective notes during my interview with Brandy was "seems to be selling me on the idea of student data as collaboration." One principal, attempting to nudge teachers toward cause data posed this question to the elementary TBT team, "how do we shift our actions for kids who aren't learning or still have skill gaps?" By using "we" instead of "you", the principal provided an entrance into the team's discussion. She then carefully steered teachers to the next steps by discussing tiered instruction, strategies for underperforming students, and use of curricular resources.

Brandy described team learning as "we go to a lot of conferences" and "monthly meetings." Robin likened team learning to attending PD that was presented by an instructional coach. Mia spoke about book studies. Brenda was frustrated when she

stated, "I go to another grade level and I share what I am thinking, but then they said it

was not right. There was a lot of confusion as to what we were supposed to be doing.

There still is confusion." Brenda was describing an expanded view of team learning

that occurs when TBTs share across a building or district, further building on

organizational learning.

Reliance on programs was noted as well. According to both Camila and Brandy,

district-level personnel, the district had made significant strides to reduce the number of

programs. Brandy reported, "We had a million different programs and the feedback that

we got from the teachers was that it was too many to manage. We streamlined those to

find a program that met all needs." Even after they streamlined, the district website

identified more than 30 programs for elementary teachers and students with 38 for

middle/junior high school and high school. Teachers spoke often about software

programs including assessment software (Catherine), reading programs (Brandy,

Brandon, Camila, Irene, and Salvador). Software was discussed during eight of the nine

TBT meetings and each BLT and DLTs that I observed. Finally, instructional strategies

for sub-groups most often was reported or observed as leveled groupings or labeling.

This was evident in artifacts, including the TBT form presented in Appendix H.

Developing capacity to address an entire system as districts implement the OIP can be a

challenge.

In Subtheme 1a, participants in BLTs and TBTs expressed frustration because

they did not understand why they were participating in teams. Furthermore, they did not

feel that they were all responsible for the success of all students. Finally, shared

leadership that includes power to make decisions and to be accountable for the success of the district was absent from many of the participants. One method to empower teams and members is to provide access to improvement practices via the OIP to develop capacity.

Subtheme 1b: Improvement practices. Improvement practices are essential to complex organizations and include practices across all strata. This subtheme included two categories, described in more detail below. Table 16 presents the literature-identified codes and emergent codes.

Categories that informed this subtheme included leadership practices for improvement and reflection and growth. Practices identified by Garmston and Wellman (1995) that were included in this subtheme:

- arriving to the meeting on time

- beginning or ending on time,

- facilitation,

- maintain focus on pre-identified professional tasks,

- not talking over one another,

- obvious consideration of idea put forth

- paying attention to the person speaking

- professional courtesies,

- seating arrangements that supported inclusion of all participants,

- sidebar conversations, and

- team members working together to achieve a common task or goal.

Table 16

Categories and codes for Subtheme 1b: Improvement Practices

Category	Literature-identified codes	Emergent codes
Leadership Practices for Improvement	Facilitation Focused professional practices Shared decision-making Teaming	Data review supports Forms/templates Goals/goal setting supports Identify critical needs Plan for implementation Monitor Implementation Research Teaming
Reflection and Growth	Culture of inquiry Reflective practices Team learning Systems thinking	Examine, reflect, adjust Reflective supports

My meeting observations noted that every meeting had at least one person arriving late and at least one leaving early. Meetings were usually started on time but often ended early. TBT meetings often seemed to drift away opposed to an official end. One DLT meeting ran past the identified end time. DLTs always maintained focus on agenda items and usually maintained the focus throughout. Some BLT meetings resulted in a continuous focus while others did not. One TBT meeting met the criteria of a professionally focused for the entire meeting time. Usually, TBT members either spoke over one another or there were multiple sidebar conversations that indicated members were not focused on the speaker.

One elementary TBT was focused on an identified topic, student data from a recent reading test. The teachers were huddled together at a small kidney-shaped table looking at their computer screens, reviewing data and making decisions regarding

instruction for students who needed intervention. Specific instructional strategies were discussed by the TBT as well. However, the meeting ended, and teachers had not identified actionable steps to complete before the next meeting. From this one observation, it appeared that they were stuck in steps 1 and 2 of the 5-Step Process.

BLT meetings were generally focused, used an agenda, identified goals and actions, and members. Members almost always sat around a large table or several tables pulled together in a library or a conference room. The first BLT meeting I observed, all but two of the 10 members arrived on time. The meeting time was used to review an online seminar regarding the purpose and strategies for a high-functioning BLT. Members listened and at predetermined times, the principal paused the video and asked questions of team members. I observed a couple of sidebar conversations and off-topic remarks, but generally, the principal led the meeting to accomplish a goal. The principal asked members, "where are TBTs now?" and probed to get a response. She asked members how they planned to support TBTs in the coming year

Improvement practices were observed at each stratum and were included in the systems thinking and systemic practices theme because the practices impact the entire system. Observed leadership practices included leading team meetings, facilitation, evidence of a culture of inquiry, reflective practices, focused collaborative professionalism, development and delivery of professional learning, goal setting, use of data, and development and distribution of templates for team meetings and communication. Leading meetings differs from facilitation as facilitation includes collective planning (members can submit agenda items prior to the meeting),

development of a collective agenda, ensure records are taken and archived, curate artifacts, pose questions as an alternative to providing guidance, active listening, build consensus, and brainstorm to solve problems.

While leadership practices were observed, data indicated that the practices were not systemic. Camila indicated that district personnel was aware that there were gaps. She explained that the principals were enrolled in the UCSDIC program beginning during the 2019-20 school year, to provide an opportunity for all principals to receive training focused on BLT and TBT processes. She further indicated that they had looked for leadership training, but that it was often expensive and not focused on the OIP.

Participants understood the evolutionary nature of learning through OIP processes. Brandy stated, "They [BLTs] started kind of vague and now it's getting better and better." Brenda said, "I think, like I said, it's way better than it was at the beginning. I think people see it as part of their role now." Mia agreed, "They implemented BLTs and then we kind of struggled through that process a little bit. Yeah, even sometimes now we still continue to struggle with it." Joan stated, "It's interesting to kind of see it as we've kind of evolved." Each participant reflected on the growth of BLTs and attributed the growth, in part, to the district-provided training sessions.

I questioned if members were aware of the other strata and understood how the OIP specifically identified three levels to function cohesively in a recursive process. For example, neither Susan or Grace serve on the DLT or respective BLTs and did not mention the district's DLT. Salvador and Brandon, district-level employees, both often spoke about their DLT activities but infrequently about TBT activities or practices.

Brandon stated, "I like to hear the building reports [at DLT meetings]. It gives me a perspective of the work." But Brandon had never served on or observed a TBT.

While participant accounts indicated that good things were happening, they also provided a narrative of inconsistency and lack of actionable goals and tasks at DLT meetings. Regarding the DLT Brandon stated, "To be honest, I think we're probably going to have to maybe revamp the agenda." Regarding a decision to adopt a new software program, Salvador reported that it had been a small group of district-level employees who decided to make the change. When asked if the decision had been made at a DLT meeting, he indicated that it had not. He further stated,

> Honestly, I don't know if we've made a lot of decisions at the DLT. To be
> honest with you I feel like every time we're in a DLT we get a lot of reporting. I
> don't necessarily know if we walk out of there with any things to do or any
> changes. I mean we come up with goals. We've had the same goals for 3 years
> now.

Salvador's narrative provides insight into shared leadership decision-making. The power resides with a small group of people. He further indicates that the DLT might be operating at a superficial level by not making meaningful revisions to goals and by not identifying actions and following through on them. At one DLT meeting, a member reminded the team members that the OIP was meant as a communication vehicle and that it could be used to inform BLTs and ask them to gather input from teachers. Joan recommended,

There needs to be some non-negotiable step that we take at the district level. We currently have one, a pretty vague one, but it's a start. Now that you have all this, like so for example, if I take Algebra at one school and algebra in another school, this math department allows retakes and this one does not. If I'm a parent and my kid is taking sixth-grade math, ok, I might be a little upset but in the grand scheme of things it matters, like high school credits that kind, of kind of matters.

Joan pointed out that there was a lack of consistent policy implementation across the district with grading practices. She believed that the DLT could be a way to gather information about the policy and then make recommendations or standard operating procedures with input from teachers and principals by monitoring each strata's implementation of the OIP. Mia and Joan both referred to implementation of the OIP as they described the gradual rollout and constant improvement of their processes and practices. Mia stated,

The district office spent some time before they rolled it out to us [buildings], probably implementing it within the DLT, I would say maybe four or 5 years. Then they implemented BLTs and we struggled through that process a little bit.

Mia's statement suggests that the district intentionally rolled out the OIP after ensuring that DLT members understood the process. Mia's statement of OIP evolution in the district is an important point. The members are aware that their work to implement an improvement process is indeed a process. It illustrates reflection processes. In organizations that learn, members plan for implementation, and reflect on

past practice to learn and adapt future practice. Mia continued, "We still continue to struggle with it. The BLT is well established and then TBT, we work to help them on a regular basis. We've evolved. We realize that we're going through the process." Mia's statement provided insight into her understanding of continuous improvement ("we continue to evolve") and the system ("we continue to struggle with it").

According to McNulty (2018), there is a hierarchy to the shared leadership in the OIP. The hierarchy, district, buildings, and teacher teams provide for the effective distribution of systemic practices. Therefore, the DLT's purpose is to support each BLT by monitoring their work and then providing support, resources, and structures to BLTs to support the work of TBTs. The system also allows for an efficient method of communication and to gain input from all levels of the district. The artifacts demonstrated a strong effort to implement by the district to systemically implement the OIP. All teachers were assigned to one team (some to more than one). Schedules were established so that all teacher teams had time to meet on a regular basis. All BLTs also had established annual schedules. All documents and templates were made available to all members. The district encouraged school-based decisions regarding training and provided district-wide training for all BLT members since 2014.

The DLT team set goals and used data to inform their work. Personal interviews indicated a great deal of information was shared, but the team did not make decisions or assign tasks. Salvador's statement above described the lack of decision-making corroborated this finding that the DLT is not a decision-making body in this district.

The DLT included all principals, central office staff, and a few instructional coaches. Collaborative processes were observed at BLT meetings in elementary, middle/junior high schools, and high schools. While norms might have been included in the original templates, they were referred to only once and were not applied. Elementary BLTs were noticeably more engaged and focused on the topics included on their agendas. Middle/Junior High Schools and High Schools team members often engaged in multiple side bar conversations. One TBT was comprised entirely of sidebar conversations. Similarly, it was often noted that principals led conversations and rushed through topics. One BLT was focused on developing a common school vision, purpose, and non-negotiables. Shared leadership varied across the district.

The district implemented the OIP and received district-level support from the SST. There was no reported specific or targeted training for BLT or TBT supports. As Irene indicated, she learned of the "true meaning" of TBTs by watching a video from the OLAC website. Reeves (2019) warned that for effective implementation, in this instance, the implementation for increased student achievement, at least 90% of teams need to implement fidelity focused on the three topics that McNulty (2018) viewed as most important for effective TBT implementation. The three topics were (a) deconstruction of standards, (b) development of common formative assessments, and (c) team learning and mastery of instructional strategies. None of the observed TBT meetings focused on these topics. Document analysis indicated that one high school TBT planned to begin the work described by McNulty. The group was led by an instructional coach who had not, according to one of the interview participants,

received formal training. The instructional coach and teacher (interview participant) had watched multiple videos, again from the OLAC website. Subtheme 2 demonstrates collaboration occurs at the study site but there are gaps in how collaboration works at each level. An elementary TBT agenda and minutes provided evidence of compliance with completing the form, including student (effect) data, student goals, four groups of students that was based on identified effect data, and strategies to address student learning gaps. However, review of the team's subsequent minutes revealed a new goal, new data, new groupings, and new strategies.

System thinking holds that problems are inherent and chronic within a system and that to address challenges, all members work to solve problems (Senge, 1991). I recognized that the codes and categories, presented in tables in the following subthemes sections, informed this theme. Each code related to or supported systems thinking and systemic practices. I noted that members' aptitudes, the knowledge of systems thinking and systemic practices that would allow them to fully engage in the habits of collaborative professionalism (Theme 3) within and for the district as a system, were notably absent. It is believed that if members engaged deeply in systems thinking and systemic practices, they would have a new appreciation for the purpose of the OIP. Through implementation of the OIP, members would continuously develop team skills within and across all organizational strata thereby realizing systemic practices by understanding systems thinking.

To accomplish this, districts would need to monitor implementation fidelity, which entails teams striving to consistently and continuously improve how they work,

refine skills, innovate, and generate knowledge. Mia and Joan both referred to
implementation when they described the gradual rollout of the OIP. Mia stated, "We
still continue to struggle with it. The BLT is well established and then we worked to
help TBTs. We've evolved. We realize that going through the process we've certainly
improved over that course of time." Mia's statement alone would suggest that the
district intentionally rolled out the OIP after ensuring that the DLT members
understood the process. Brandy, a district-level employee, indicated that the district's
turnover of four superintendents during that period interrupted the OIP rollout since
district-level members repeatedly had to convince each new leader to support the OIP
and the resources for implementation. This was especially true since the district was not
required to use the OIP. District-level members' tenacious support of the OIP suggests
they understood a problem and were actively trying to implement a solution.

As new programs or processes are initially implemented, leadership and
membership support are essential. In learning organizations, members across all strata
plan for implementation and reflect on each step so that teams learn, adapt, and
improve future actions. One misunderstanding in OIP implementation in this district
was that it was being implemented in a top-down approach. If members at each stratum
had integrated members at other strata in meaningful ways, the challenges such as
members not understanding purpose, might have been averted. In Mia's statement,
earlier in this section, she provided insight into her implicit understanding of
continuous improvement ("we continue to evolve") and the system ("we continue to

struggle with it"). Yet it was noted that TBTs often struggled and did not appear to perceive their interconnectedness with the broader system.

According to McNulty (2018), the purpose of a DLT, is to support building teams by monitoring the supports, resources, and structures that the building team should be also provide to classroom teams. DLT meetings effectively established norms. but did not adhere to those norms. The district team identified data and set goals. They also spent a good deal of time reporting out. Salvador, a district-level employee, articulated the roles of each strata's teams. He stated, "we work to understand how BLTs can support TBTs and then how can we, the DLT, support all BLTs and TBTs." Salvador also indicated that the DLT was not functioning as it should because it identified needs, analyzed data, shared information, but rarely made decisions or identified actionable tasks to achieve strategies.

Compliance-oriented processes were also observed at BLT meetings in elementary, middle/junior high schools, and high schools. While norms were included on the forms/agendas, they were referred to only once and not followed. Elementary BLTs were noticeably more engaged and focused on the topics included on the agendas. Middle/Junior high schools' and high schools' team members often engaged in sidebar conversations. Similarly, it was often noted that principals led conversations and rushed through topics. One BLT was focused on developing a common school vision, purpose, and non-negotiables. Shared leadership varied across the district.

The district implemented the OIP and received Tier 1 (History of school improvement systems section in Chapter 2) support from the SST at the district level.

According to the regional consultant, no building-level supports, such as training for BLT or TBT members, was provided. Irene, a classroom teacher, indicated that she learned the "true meaning" of TBTs by using free OLAC resources. The district has provided training to BLT members, who in theory, would share what they have learned with TBTs. Yet, members were not aware of the system. Like the chicken or the egg causality dilemma, members did not comprehend how negative attitudes about students, the OIP, or teaming were inherent problems within the system and as part of the system, members were both the problem and a potential solution.

For the district to be successful, in the instance meaning that all students obtain a proficient or higher score on state standardized testing, all teams needed to be highly effective (Reeves, 2019). Highly effective teams understand the tenets identified above and work as a group to achieve common goals. Considering Reeves myth of linearity, for the OIP to be implemented successful across all strata, at least 80 percent of teams needed to be highly effective and focused on the three primary topics posited by McNulty (2018). The district has provided a considerable number of professional growth and development opportunities for members. Camila, a district-level employee, could not recall any training that focused on systems or systemic thinking. However, Camila and Brandy, a district-level employee, both indicated that district-level personnel did participate in training provided by the SST. Due to scarce SSoS resources and the district's Tier 1 status, limited training and facilitation services were available through the SST and the services were reserved for district-level members.

As indicated in Ohio's Frameworks for System Improvement section in Chapter 2 and evidenced by the ODE's reboot of the OIP in 2019, continuous improvement has been a constant since its inception. As described in the literature review, the original intent of the OIP process was to develop systemic practices and that the theory of action posited that district leaders' participation in SSoS training and guidance would distribute skills and knowledge to principals and teachers. Baxter (a pseudonym), a consultant within the SSoS, stated that consultants in her region conducted root cause analyses and integrated individuals' and team reflections of consultants who had supported OIP implementation. Analyses indicated that district leaders did not have the capacity (time, knowledge, skills, capital) to effectively disseminate the OIP processes to BLT and TBT members. Baxter indicated that facilitation for TBTs was offered with the caveat that the building principal participate. Baxter indicated that this was deemed necessary to build capacity within the building and to help shift attitudes and behaviors from compliance-oriented to performance-focused. Baxter indicated that past experiences indicated that without facilitation-modeling, principals and district leaders were unlikely able to replicate expected outcomes, high performing teams. My observations indicated that most teams were compliance oriented.

Systems thinking was evident in Mia's interview but was largely absent from the remaining participants' interview transcripts. Data from meeting observations indicated that most members did not understand the concepts associated with systems thinking such as problems are inherent and that within a problematic system, the members are best situated to solve the problems. Lieberman and Miller (1999)

indicated that systems thinking "is not intuitive-especially for those people who have been thinking in terms of my classroom and my kids for most of their professional lives" (p. 26). Furthermore, behaviors associated with systems thinking such as ownership of problems and professional actions to solve problems were observed infrequently. Some members were aware of the evolutionary and learning nature of systemic practices and that they occupied part of the larger system. Members had not participated in training that explicitly conveyed the tenets of systems thinking has been completed for district members. Considering Reeves research and the findings presented here, for members to achieve the district's goals, collaborative teams should understand the concepts associated with systems thinking and systemic practices.

Theme 2: Fundamental distributive practices. This theme was developed from the subtheme, keystones, and cornerstones. I relabeled the theme Fundamental Distributive Practices to convey the fundamental (necessary) and distributive (shared and deeply integrated) cultural components. This theme described the culture of a deeply integrated and co-created vision. Teachers seldom understood the district's vision and while one district-level employee described how teachers' input was gathered, teachers were not aware. Goal setting and decision-making processes were not well understood at the TBT level either.

Subtheme 2: Keystones and cornerstones. In the construction trades, a keystone is an important piece to build doorways or arches while cornerstones provided a means to align the corners of a structure. This subtheme has a similar role among the subthemes. Categories and codes that informed this keystones and cornerstones are

presented in Table 17. As I completed the first two teacher interviews, I noted that

teachers were unable to clearly articulate the district's vision, which was available on

the district's website. Grace, a middle school/junior high teacher, indicated that the staff

in her building had been shown a slide show presentation during a staff meeting in May

2019 (approximately one month prior to her interview with me). Brenda, an elementary

teacher, confirmed Grace's understanding. Each of the two women taught different

grade levels in two different buildings within the district. The teachers' perceptions of

the district vision were corroborated and indicated that neither of them had a deep

understanding of the district vision.

Table 17

Categories and Codes for Subtheme 2: Keystones and Cornerstones

Category	Literature-identified codes	Emergent codes
Guideposts	Data	Individuals values
Organization cornerstones	Student outcomes Building goals District goals Improvement focus Non-negotiables Student outcomes Teacher team goals Team adopted values Vision building Vision district	Personal vision

I considered how district-level members had created and planned for sharing the

vision. Had district-level employees intended to share leadership, such as including

teachers' voices as it was developed? If they had gathered teachers' input as was

described by Brandy, had the intention been shared? I planned to ask district-level employees more direct questions in later interviews and added questions regarding communication of the vision, goals, and strategic plans to accompany vision development questions in the protocol sets. During interviews I asked, "Tell me how the district's vision was communicated to members at the building and classroom levels?" and "Describe how the DLT envisioned the role of teachers and principals to develop and accomplish the vision?" Data demonstrated a conflict between what leaders believed they had communicated and what teachers understood about the district's vision. Brandon, a district-level employee said,

> At the end of the day if we walk in your classroom and ask what the vision is, they [teachers] could at least tell us what our vision is for our school district. They don't have to know everything that relates to it, but how does that impact their classroom.

Only one of five interviewed teachers were able to identify the main idea of the district's vision, two had a vague idea, and the remaining two could not identify basic tenets of the vision. Irene stated, "so our vision, I can't quote it but given that we were just talking about the vision of Washington High School, (a pseudonym) which I think ties into the vision that the district uses… is supportive, inclusive?"

Grace stated,

I know we've been told what vision is. We had a meeting about it. I know that they've given us this vision. But the way they convey it to us is not a way that makes it stick in my mind.

In four BLT meetings that I observed, principals shared the district vision with BLT members. Each of the meetings was the first of the year and at one of those meetings the principal discussed the building's vision as well. None of the other principals discussed the building vision during BLT meetings and there was no discussion regarding vision at any of the observed TBT meetings.

Like the vision, district and building goals are essential within the improvement process. Camila stated that DLT goals were developed by working through the decision framework, a tool made available to schools by ODE. According to ODE (2019), the decision framework is a tool used to review achievement data and identify critical needs. Camila indicated that some of the buildings and the district utilize the tool, but not all buildings do. The use of the tool by some but not all was indicative of the misalignment noted. I inferred that when a vision, purpose, or goals were missing from one stratum, the teams' actions were misaligned. Camila expressed frustration with the buildings that had not used the decision framework and those who only used it superficially. The purpose of identifying the critical needs, she stated, was to make sure that there was a focus for the school. Specifically, she pointed to two schools that choose goals to increase ACT scores while less than 40% of students were achieving proficient on the end of year math tests. Camila was frustrated by the lack of using the tool to identify critical needs. The misalignment of vision, purpose, or goals can result in miscommunication and mismanagement of efforts. The goal of any culture is to nurture highly effective practices so that members can achieve the organization's desired outcomes (Fullan, 2007; Hord, 1997; Zepeda, Derrington, & Lanoue, 2020).

The first factor that emerged was a common vision. A common vision has been developed through shared leadership and is deeply integrated throughout the organization. A common vision incorporates a moral purpose, which, according to Fullan (2001), is "acting with the intention of making a positive difference" (p. 3). When Grace could not describe the district's vision, she conveyed her own moral purpose and her personal vision when she shared,

> I want my students to become good citizens. I feel that they need to know everything there is to know about science, but they also need to know life skills, so I try to coach them a little bit in that area.

Evidence of a disconnect between what the district-level employees believed happened and what building, and classroom employees perceived had happened regarding vision development and dissemination existed. A culture that includes a common vision and moral purpose considers the voices of key stakeholders and makes clear the intention of including voices (Hargreaves & Fullan, 2012; Harris, 2013). Brandy, a district-level employee, indicated that teachers' voices had been used to develop the vision, yet teachers were not aware that a representative sample of teachers, parents, and community members had participated in the development of the district vision and strategic plan. Salvador indicated that the same instructional coaches who serve on the DLT, represented teachers in the vision development. While Salvador, a district-level employee and member of the DLT knew that teacher representatives helped with the vision, teachers were not aware. According to Telfer (2011), a focused set of goals is essential in a culture focused on continuous improvement.

Camila, a district-level employee, described how the district's goals had been developed using a tool, the decision framework, provided by the State of Ohio. The tool auto populates district and building-level data including achievement data, gap closing, prepared for success, teacher education levels, enrollment, mobility, graduation, K-3 reading, et al. The tool includes questions to guide teams through a need assessment. Figure 12 illustrates an example of one question from the tool that focused on highly effective instructional practices. District members completed the decision framework, and it was available to all buildings. Camila indicated that most buildings used the decision framework to analyze data and set building goals. Camila felt "they [BLTs] don't use it in a meaningful way." Camila indicated that most BLTs flew through the process and only a few analyzed data and develop goals in a meaningful way. Camila indicated that some schools did not use the tool at all and building goals were not developed. While a vision can be developed without systems thinking, systems thinking necessitates visioning practices (Senge, 1991). For continuous improvement, goals must be developed to provide direction and strategic plans provide a blueprint for goal attainment. Therefore, vision (with moral purpose) and goals (with strategic plans) are fundamental components that build on Theme 1. Developing a vision and goals using shared leadership practices further builds upon the first theme and provides the conditions necessary for organizations to support habits for collaborative professionalism.

Figure 12: Screenshot of Decision Frame Sample from Ohio Department of Education. Free Use.

Theme 3: Habits of collaborative professionalism. The third theme, habits of collaborative professionalism, in part, inform the intent of gathering information and then communicating intentions, such as the intent to gather teacher voices for the development of a district vision. Habits of collaborative professionalism is a concept attributed to Hargreaves and O'Connor (2018). Subthemes that informed this theme included communication and governance, building trust, and developing mutual respect, and team habits that result in productive team outputs and outcomes. The first and second subthemes aligned with the qualities of collaboration described by D'Amour et al (2005), which are outlined in Table 1 in Chapter 2.

Hargreaves and O'Connor (2018) suggested that collaborative professionalism meant:

More professionalism involving good data and good judgment, more candid and respectful professional dialogue, more thoughtful feedback, more collective responsibility for each other's results, and more courageous engagement with

bolder visions of education that will help young people become change makers"

(p. 8).

I perceived good data to refer to data that teachers can use to make informed decisions about their own teaching. To achieve this, teachers would need a combination of adult implementation data, that is, data regarding teaching, and good student data, about students' learning. While the use of student data was observed at some of the TBTs and was included in the artifacts, adult implementation data were not observed at meetings. The lack of reflection of instructional habits was noted as well. DLT and BLTs both used many of the supports and resources such as team norms, goal setting, and rotating facilitation. TBTs were provided ample time to meet. For example, the high school was provided with two team meetings per week. However, other grade bands met twice per month. Most TBT meetings did not sit facing one another but sat facing forward and some ostracized themselves completely by sitting outside of the group and not participating. The following subthemes clarify the nuances of the primary theme.

Subtheme 3a: Communication and governance. Continuing the construction analogy, the foundation has been laid, the cornerstones and keystones are in place, the framework is comprised of the three remaining subthemes. The three subthemes comprise the habits of members at varying strata that result in the habits of collaborative professionalism or support it. Categories and codes that informed this subtheme are presented in Table 18.

Table 18

Categories and Codes for Subtheme 3a: Communication and Governance

Category	Literature-identified codes	Emergent codes
Processes	Processes for teams	Team activity (BLT-DLT-TBT)
Supports	Compliance	Training /
Results	Respect	Time for teams
Structures	Protocols	Training by district
		Performance
		Criticism
		Comm. Plans
		Facilitation
		Methods of communication
		Time
		Space for teams to meet
		Templates for agendas and minutes
		Training for teams

State and district-supplied supports were observed during meetings and described during interviews. Supports, such as forms and templates, were included in the leadership practices for improvement subtheme. The supports informed this subtheme in how the district had decided to distribute and use forms and templates for all teams at all strata across the district. During a Freedom Junior High School BLT, the principal used a DLT form that included the agenda and minutes from an earlier DLT meeting. The minutes included the district's vision and goals. The principal had used the minutes to develop a work session for BLT members that included actions to develop building-level vision and goals for the school. She asked BLT members to review data, identify needs, and develop goals to include within the school's

improvement plan. She shared the DLT's process and demonstrated how they were completing the 5-step process.

The principal emphasized that the BLT members would support TBTs and ensure they remained focused on mastering instructional strategies. Templates used by the district served as a way for the principal to provide supports. The templates were used to gather data and identify actions for members. After observing the BLT at Freedom Junior High, I had an opportunity to observe two of the building's TBT meetings. The first was an English department TBT conducted in the media center. During the meeting, the department chair used the BLT generated agenda and minutes to share the building's purpose. The second meeting was less focused and did not share the minutes with TBT members.

I noted that TBT templates were consistent across all the buildings where I either observed TBTs or had access to artifacts. The cohesiveness of the use of the district-utilized forms was meant to provide consistency by communicating the district's goals and actions. Camila indicated that templates were developed from those originally supplied to the district by the SST Region 11 consultants.

While templates were noted and used across strata, some interview participants recognized that forms were sometimes not well-received by all TBT members. Camila indicated that the TBT form was intended to guide the team to move through the cycle of inquiry, also presented as the 5-step process (Figure 4). The completed form presented in Appendix H, served as an agenda and minutes for a second-grade team. The form was maintained on the district's Google Drive and was accessible to all team

members, the building instructional coach, and the principal. Members of the

curriculum department also could access the document. According to Camila, the broad

access was intended to support communication across the district. Andrea, a district-

level employee, stated that it was rare for her to review TBT forms as the forms were

numerous and grew exponentially each week. I was provided with very detailed TBT

forms by Beth and Mia. The TBT form presented in Appendix G included a team goal

for reading and math with instructional strategies, student growth, and interventions for

underperforming students. According to Mia, BLTs also used a form for planning,

recording, and reporting. The form was maintained and shared with all staff members to

encourage communication, although members would have to initiate reading the

document on their own. Camila described another form, a BLT to DLT form, which

was used to communicate specific information to district leadership.

The DLT form included an agenda with space for minutes/notes and was

prepopulated with data when the meetings began. The DLT also included norms on the

form, which were discussed in the opening conversations. Table 19 illustrates phrases

from participants' interview transcripts regarding the use of forms. During team

observations, I never observed a TBT completing the form.

Supports were evident across all strata and in all buildings that I observed.

Teachers in elementary schools were provided time for TBTs to meet twice per month.

Table 19

Participant Quotes Regarding the Use of "forms"

Participant	Context	Dialogue
Brandy	Describing TBTs use of forms	• It is more structured with the forms that they fill out
Brenda	Describing her TBT use of forms	• We use a form, it's on Google • …half of the form is filled out for the first part. And we after we give the pretest, we write down the collected data. Then we talk about the strengths and weaknesses and we break it down into four groups based on students' formative assessment results.
Catherine	Describing her TBT use of forms	• We have a Google document that we kind of keep track of what we are doing.
Grace	Aware of the form but had not used it	• The department head fills the TBT form out. I don't see these forms, but he fills it out.
Irene	Describing her thoughts on the use of forms	• they did fill out the worksheet* • we don't use the worksheet* currently • worksheets* just are not the important part
Joan	A principal describing the BLT use of form	• For example, our math goal is research-based instructional strategies will be shared during meetings. And so therefore then they will provide in the agendas or on their form. • So, I think that to start, I think where we mis stepped, that like we were where we didn't implement correctly. In my own opinion is that we focused on the form and that's really not the focus. • But looking back from a leadership

Table Continues

Participant	Context	Dialogue
Joan	A principal describing the BLT use of form	standpoint we should have went through the process first and then introduced the form but instead we talked about the form and how the form had to be presented at BLT and how it was presented at DLT and it just seemed so cumbersome that people started to resist the process. • So, we've tried to refine the form and do this stuff for the form and at the end of the day last year was pie the first year that like I felt like my teachers I would say that like it was meaningful because I told them I said don't worry about the form. Don't worry about it. It's not about the form it's about the

High school and middle/junior high schools provided meetings twice per week. The time was built into teachers' contractual workday. Another aspect of governance is capacity of leadership to provide training. Participants who served on their buildings' BLTs praised training the district had provided to BLTs members. Brandy said, "I think that BLT trainings have really helped. During a BLT training, we have time to collaborate with other BLTs." Mia shared how the BLT training was implemented and the benefit of the training for staff:

a lot of what we share with the staff, it's very effective because it lets teachers

be able to present to other teachers. And it helps, I think, for them to see that.

they're able to share and to lead, just every bit as much as any of the rest of us. And that's important.

While BLT training was implemented systemically, TBT training was not mentioned by any participants and was not discussed in any meetings. One participant, Irene, attended a conference to meet Brian McNulty after she and an instructional coach had watched one of his webinars on TBTs then attempted to implement the TBT process within their department. She indicated that they were not successful and hoped that meeting and learning from McNulty would provide insight. She said,

> He chatted with us briefly, and we were already processing, that was January and you're already processing for the new [school] year. So, having two people versus just one person…we both saw the process clearly, distinctly we understood the steps; we understood the value of keeping it separate from other department activities. We had this goal and this belief in the process.

Irene and the instructional coach worked together. They participated in an online seminar, attended a conference, and sought out McNulty to question him and to discuss how best to implement TBTs. Their actions demonstrated a valiant but weak attempt at a grass-roots effort to execute TBTs in a meaningful way. Irene indicated that she was aware that there would be several challenges, including resistance from their colleagues. The principal in Irene's building communicated her pride and joy in Irene's initiative but had not offered additional supports or created a plan to replicate Irene's actions.

Structures were also observed and discussed in interviews. One literature-identified structure, protocols, were expected but not observed. Protocols promote engagement with colleagues to "achieve deep understand through dialogue" that "leads to effective decision-making" (Brown Easton, 2009, p. 7-8). Facilitation is another structure that was observed during DLT meetings. Facilitation was observed during Irene's TBT, although she attempted to do so without training and struggled. During BLT observations principals always facilitated meetings. Except for Irene's attempt to facilitate, no TBTs included clear facilitation. To be clear, department chairs usually began meetings, and one used a standing agenda, but the meeting did not include any of the practices associated with collaboration such as those identified by Reeves as necessary for deep implementation of collaborative practices. To implement deeply, TBTs should (a) participate in training, (b) be provided skilled facilitators, (c) use structures such as protocols, norms, agendas, and minutes, (d) use a framework for inquiry processes, (e) be provided time and space to meet, and (f) focus on learning about teaching and learning. Processes, supports, and structures are in place in the district but were not used consistently across all strata. The goal, as described by Camila, was to provide cohesiveness throughout the district and to communicate the work being done in TBTs.

Subtheme 3b: Build trust and mutual respect. Categories and codes that informed this subtheme are presented in Table 20. The importance of trust was evident in the data. Trust and mutual respect did inform other themes and subthemes, yet it was prevalent enough to warrant a subtheme.

During participant interviews, trust was mentioned by three participants in response to three different questions. Each described trust between members of another stratum. Brandon was describing his trust for cabinet members. Brandy was describing trust between her and the superintendent. Finally, Brenda was describing trust between herself and her principal. Table 21 provides the questions posed and responses that included the term trust.

Table 20

Categories and Codes for Subtheme 3b: Build Trust and Mutual Respect

Category	Literature-identified codes	Emergent codes
Belief/ perception	Shared leadership	Accountability beliefs
Practices	Trust	Conflict
Team inputs	Purpose	Discourse
Team outcomes	System awareness	Tension
	Systems thinking	Distributing properties of
	Decision-making	Leadership
	Training	Hierarchy
	Student achievement	Subordinate passivity
		Tokenism

Susan, a building-level employee and member of her BLT and DLT, described trust with her teams' members: "I think it's important to ask each other hard questions. I think we need to be able to discuss some tough things, but you have to be ready for an honest answer." Joan indicated distrust between teachers and central office personnel. She said, "I would think that a lot of teachers don't think very highly of our district office. I think that they feel like they [district-level members] don't understand what

happens at the building level. Whether that's fair or unfair. I think that's a very accurate

depiction of what they feel."

Table 21

Trust Used During Interviews

Question	Participant	Response
Please share an experience when you and your team members learned something together?	Brandon	I was transitioning to this job. I relied on the cabinet quite a bit…that really was my team. We developed relationships and anytime I have an issue outside or inside the district I feel like I have a team that I can trust.
Describe your team's decision-making process?	Brandy	I feel like our superintendent really has. Trust and faith in what we're doing. So, he it's not that we asked permission, but we always run it by him obviously. But I don't feel like we know I'd like to make a presentation or. Anything like that to say to get the OK if I put it that way.
Please tell me about how you interact with [insert other stratum classroom, building, district]?	Brenda	I get the opportunity to talk to him one-on-one he's a very good listener. He's very positive. I'm like 95 percent sure he has my back. And I feel like he trusts me to do what's best for my students.

Shared leadership is used, in part, to build trust and respect. In two separate

observations of one BLT, it was noted that the principal, Eleanor (a pseudonym), spoke

in a rushed tone for almost the entire hour. As the meeting progressed, she would ask

members, "is that good?" but never waited for a response and immediately moved onto

the next topic. According to *The OIP Facilitator's Guide*, one benefit of BLTs is the

opportunity to authentically share leadership with teachers through professional

discourse. This idea aligns with Senge's systems thinking that all members are both part of and should work together to solve problems. One attribute of distributed leadership described in Chapter 2, was that the members felt accountable, responsible, and powerful to make decisions (Harris & Jones, 2017b; Hord, 1997; Park & Datnow, 2009).

Furthermore, when leadership is shared, members participate in co-creation of knowledge, vision, values, and reflected on their own learning and on collective inquiry. In the previous example, the principal dominated the conversation, which resulted in non-participation by BLT members. In a subsequent meeting, the principal shared that the district wanted the school to develop a new algebra goal since the previous year's passage rate was below 50 percent. Eleanor immediately suggested that they change the title of last year's goal (geometry) to algebra. The BLT members nodded in agreement or did not respond. An opportunity was missed to explore and create a shared approach to solving a problem. Instead, the district worked with an outside consultant to provide training for all high school algebra teachers.

Other BLT meetings were much more inclusive. Mia's BLT met in one of the teachers' rooms. While Mia led the meeting, a teacher began by presenting a spreadsheet for tracking student writing data across all grade levels. The spreadsheet, the teacher indicated, would automatically calculate students into one of four categories. The principal shared that groupings were used for enrichment and intervention. After the teacher had finished, Mia asked each grade level to share out grade-level writing goals. After the meeting had ended and as Mia escorted me to the

front door, she confided that the writing goals were not as rigorous as she had hoped. The following week Mia sent me an email. In the email she admitted that she had been wrong. Upon visiting one of the classrooms, she observed the writing goal in action and was amazed at the degree of rigor. During the meeting, Mia had not expressed disappointment but had instead followed up by visiting classrooms to see instruction in practice. Mia demonstrated respect for the teacher teams during the BLT and followed through to ensure teaching and learning were meeting her expectations. In the email, Mia indicated that she should have asked more questions of the team leads to ensure instruction planning was rigorous. Mia distributed leadership in a meaningful way; Eleanor had not. This difference provided a glimpse into how two leaders within the same district approached shared leadership differently.

Subtheme 3c: Team habits. Table 22 presents the categories and codes that informed this theme. Team habits are group behaviors and individual actions. According to Garmston and Wellman (1995), "there is no such thing as group behavior. All 'group behavior' results from the decisions and actions of individuals. When individual choices align in productive patterns, the group generates positive results" (p. 33). The concept of individuals' behaviors forming group behaviors framed the way that I choose to explore collaboration as I continued to analyze the data. As some TBTs engaged in professional collaboration as described by McNulty (2018) and in *The OIP Facilitator's Guide,* it was noted that most did not. One elementary team reviewed baseline reading data for their K-3 students. In highly effective TBTs that I have encountered, team members individually analyzed data prior to attending the regular

meeting. Individual analyses allow members to question, and come to some understanding of, in this instance, their own students' data. In my experience, when teams explore instructional practices, teachers analyzed her/his/their own data and brought the analysis to the team meeting.

Table 22

Categories and Codes for Subtheme 3c: Team Habits

Category	Literature-identified codes	Emergent Codes
Team habits	Facilitation Focused professional practices Reflective practices Teaming	Teacher led instruction/ planning Teacher leadership Teaming self-reflection

As I observed the elementary reading teams' discussion, it became clear that analysis had not been completed prior to the meeting. Team members were unsure of which reports they should generate. They discussed various options based on classroom, building, or individual students related to the diagnostic instrument that assessed students' phonological awareness, phonics, high frequency works, and reading comprehension. It did not appear that the data led them to a conclusion regarding "what was next" as one explained to me "this is a new program, and we are looking at baseline data." The conversation included discussion of one instructional strategy, a Frayer model. No additional discourse regarding learning objectives or standards. This team functioned as one but was not highly effective even though they explored data and discussed instructional strategies.

One high school writing TBT began with a clear focus for the meeting. The problem was identified as "students were not engaging in reading." The team did not identify data that had been used to identify the "critical need," the first step in the 5-Step Process within the OIP. The leads were focused on the topic, attempting to elicit ideas on how to engage students in reading, but participants strayed from the topic multiple times. The leader attempted to bring them back but struggled. Other TBT meetings were rarely focused on a topic. In one high school TBT, everyone participated multiple, small group (2 or 3-member) sidebar discussions. Agendas were used only one time in the nine TBT meetings. In a middle/junior high school math TBT, the focus was development of a team goal, as requested by the BLT. Unlike the English department in the same school, this team was not facilitated. One person sitting next to me expressed frustration as she stated that she "was a TBT of one." The math team did not create a goal, but each individual subject/grade taught (seventh grade Algebra, seventh grade integrated math, eighth grade Algebra, eighth grade geometry, and 8th grade integrated math) attempted to do it.

The location and configuration of meetings has the potential to impact the way teams collaborated. During observations, the majority of TBTs met in classrooms. Teachers usually sat at desks and often did not move the chairs to face one another, but instead faced forward. In these instances, no one stood at the front of the room, members just spoke forward. One TBT moved their chairs into a circle, and another met in the media center and pulled four tables together, which allowed them to interact and discuss the identified topics. One TBT met in a classroom where the desks were

arranged in quads and teacher entered between 2 and 10 minutes late. As they entered, they sat at one of four quads while the classroom teacher remained at his desk. This occurred frequently. I often observed the classroom teacher remain at his or her own desk, focused on other work such as grading, working on their computer, or in one case helping students distribute products from a fundraising sale. The teachers usually did not participate in the TBT discussion, except to interject off-topic statements. Field note drawings of seating arrangement diagrams are presented in Appendix I.

Reflection, a key component in Gronn's (2000) LDT was not observed or discussed by interview participants. Mia referred to BLT meetings and stated, "I'm not sure that we spent a lot of time actively reflecting. I think that the reflection piece is probably, oftentimes, the part that we missed before we implemented the improvement process", which refers to a collective reflection and team learning. Data did reveal that reflection, while not specifically referred to, was occurring. As Grace described her feeling when she learned about scoring assessments with her TBT and principal she said, "We [the TBT members] were at least on the same cognitive terms while grading papers. But it also gave me a vision of why other teachers were grading the way they were grading as well. I don't think we all learned. I think at least one of us learned something."

Coding of team norms, such as reflection and assumption of positive intent, was based on my personal experience and from my historical perspective working with districts to implement the OIP, including the development of curricula for BLT and TBT training sessions. The codes and categories that comprised this subtheme were

examined by opening each and comparing it to the strata. This allowed me to explore

norms across the organization but also within each stratum of the organization. Stratum

codes associated with the OIP and with observed team behaviors included *BLT*

Activities, *DLT Activities*, and *TBT Activities*.

As members came together in teams, they usually acted as individuals sitting in

the same room. They did not demonstrate qualities of highly effective collaborative

teams such as pre-meeting preparation, active listening and engagement with peers,

generating ideas from data to drive instruction, reflection, or generating new knowledge

for self or the team. The qualities of collaboration or characteristics of collaborative

professionalism were not visible.

The habits that I identified are not specific to any one stratum, but TBT strata

members appeared to lack habit development more than BLT or DLT members.

Considering the structures, protocols, and procedures associated with the OIP

framework I noted that some TBT members were hesitant to participate in

collaboration. Teams had not engaged in ways that I had expected, including the simple

act of facing one another during their meeting. Grace described one of her TBT

meetings when she walked into the department chair's room and was told, "I'll fill out

the form" then she left. There was no engagement, just a prevailing influence to

complete the form. To illustrate habits, Table 23 provides a list of habits delineated by

stratum.

Members may believe that habits of using structures and resources contradict

and complicate the ability for members to create innovative solutions as described by

Ahmed et al. (2016). In the high school English department TBT, teachers did refer to the district goal of reading, but did not use data to identify a critical need. They believed that if kids read more often, even multiple times a day, the reading goal would be met. The 5-Step process was not used to determine the critical need.

Protocols were not used in any meetings and were not recorded in any artifacts. Brandon, the superintendent, referred to the OIP, "It isn't working at the building level. We're not seeing the results or it's not effective…but that is part of the process."

Table 23

Habits Observed or Reported by Strata

Habits	BLT	DLT	TBT
Agenda/Notes	Sometimes	Often	Rarely
Facilitation	Sometimes	Often	Rarely
Focused on Topic	Often	Always	Rarely
Goal + Actions	Sometimes	Always	Rarely
Norms	Often	Always	Rarely
Prepared for meeting	Rarely	Always	Rarely
Protocols	Never	Never	Never
Shared Leadership	Rarely	Always	Rarely
Templates provided by district	Always	Always	Always
Training for Team	Often	Never [1]	Never [2]
Voices, all	Rarely	Always	Sometimes

Brandon's conclusion that the process was not working may have been correct, or not. The 5-step process could be used to identify DLT critical needs would be a habit that provides insight and provides opportunity for distributed leadership to solve problems. The same would be true at both BLT and TBT levels. Brandon's reflection that "that is part of the process" illustrates either (a) reflection, as part of the processes of the OIP,

have led him to this point or (b) the reflection is random and as such might not provide useful to move the district processes forward.

To understand the operationalization of team performance, it is helpful to examine the qualities of collaboration described by D'Amour et al. (2005) that included trust and establishing team norms. *The OIP Facilitator's Guide* outlined the adoption and implementation of professional practices, protocols, and mechanisms with an emphasis on planning for communication, development of team norms, and importance of shared leadership by shifting team roles. Absent from the guide were steps on team facilitation or advice to work with a skilled facilitator. The district had identified a need for peer instructional coaches, also referred to as peer facilitators. Instructional coaches did serve as facilitators in at least three TBT meetings that I observed. However, it did not appear as if the coaches were highly skilled at leading a collaborative meeting. Additionally, skills such as providing constructive feedback, analyzing adult and student data, or creating goals and strategic plans in student achievement gaps were not evident.

At the beginning of each of the two DLT meetings observed, the team norms were discussed, and members were asked if other norms would be helpful for the work. No members suggested additional norms. The DLT established norms are included on page 1 of the DLT meeting agenda and minutes from August 28, 2019, which is included in Appendix G. District norms were presented on the agenda as a numbered list. The norms from the agenda included:

1. Begin and end on time,

2. Manage electronic devices,

3. Be respectful of each other's opinions,

4. Stay focused on student learning,

5. Listen with an open mind, and

6. Stay mentally and physically present.

Furthermore, BLTs sometimes replicated the DLT norms, used the norms published in *The OIP Facilitator's Guide*, or in one case had used the district norms as a basis to create their own norms. However, field notes indicated that the norms were never fully observed during DLT meetings. One of the norms was "members will be physically and mentally present." I observed members on their phones, coming and going, and not paying attention. When norms were not observed, other DLT members did not ask the violator to stop the behavior. My field notes indicated that when a member was not engaged, such as using their cell phone, other members were visibly frustrated, which then resulted in their diminished engagement in the collaborative practice.

During the five BLT meetings, norms were included on all five agendas and were intentionally referred to by two principals. The remaining three principals skipped that section of the agenda. Norms were generally followed but it was noted that meetings often meandered, or the objective of the meeting was not clear. Examples from my observation field notes included:

- norms were included on the agenda,

- norms referred to by principal,

- at least three people are texting on their phones,

- principal did not discuss norms,

- multiple sidebar conversations, and

- the principal sped through the agenda and only two of the members
  spoke.

Team norms were referred to once during the nine TBT meetings. I concluded that the lack of the use of meeting norms contributed to a low engagement and shortage of professional topics of conversation. My field notes included the following to indicate professional topics of conversation:

- personal life updates among team members

- as of 2:45 I have not heard any discussion regarding professional topic

- teacher is on phone "hurry up and get down here, there is a person
  observing our TBT today"

- members are discussing latest student fashions

- talking about baby due dates

- member interrupts facilitator and begins a discussion on student cell
  phones. Facilitator unsuccessful at pulling discussion back to focus on
  reading goals

- multiple sidebars

- reminder that because I am in the room that they only discuss
  professional ideas

- one teacher sitting at her desk grading papers

- two teachers are not participating at all

- assistant principal comes into the room and begins personal conversation with the teacher at desk grading

- our entire plan depends on the instruction coach and he isn't here

- I don't know what we are supposed to be doing

The majority of TBTs observed were not focused on the three main tasks of TBTs that include adult learning regarding (a) instructional strategies, (b) deeper understanding of skills and knowledge that comprise Ohio's New Learning Standards and (c) development of formative assessments. According to McNulty (personal communication, December 10, 2019), these are the three main tasks associated with TBTs.

Hargreaves and O'Connor (2018) describe 10 tenets of collaborative professionalism for teacher teams that deepen teachers' professional practice around teaching and learning. The tenets are principles that guide the work. Habits for collaborative professionalism, practices that are repeated until they become automatic, deepen the professional practice of members at all levels of the organization. Habits for collaborative professionalism are presented in Table 24. The habits presented in Table 24 were gleaned from the data across all strata. Members described the habits or exhibited them, and the habits were not always clearly articulated. The table includes the tenets from Hargreaves and O'Connor (2018) and demonstrates how the habits are expressed across all strata.

CCP provided a means to analyze data to answer the first research question and provide insight into the systems that support a culture of continuous improvement which supports the habits of collaboration. Understanding the practices of members was important. The second research question sought to understand the culture more deeply. The next step was to complete HCP analysis on the data sets to understand the culture and to explore the cultures and subcultures identified in the three themes.

Each phase of CCP explored subtext of interview transcripts, meeting observations, and artifacts provided by participants. The observed patterns validated previous research but did not provide a deeper understanding, or what Weber (in Gann, 2017) referred to as "verstehen" (p. 31). My understanding of the term can be directly applied to the phased approach to analysis. CCP allowed me to gain an understanding of the categories, subthemes, and themes within the data. After completing CCP analysis to answer RQ1, I completed HCP analysis. The use of two analytical approaches was not meant to be completed as two distinct, solo methods, but were completed to explore intersecting concepts within the data. CCP exposed behaviors, attitudes, practices, and perceptions associated with improvement practices of the OIP including challenges that individuals and teams met. CCP analysis further identified a hierarchical nature of the findings including systems thinking, fundamental components of the culture, and the habits of individuals across strata for collaborative professionalism. The habits comprised the bulk of the findings, which was anticipated, as behaviors of individuals alone and as a member of teams were the focus of RQ1.

HCP provided insight into organizational learning environments and expanded on the habits and attitudes discovered during CCP. Two themes emerged across the data, which included habitats that support organizational learning and habitudes, habits developed that eventually shift attitudes toward positive, professionally focused. An advantage of that emerged from the harmonious approaches was that the findings from CCP were deepened. For example, while the CCP analysis identified the culture associated with visioning and goal setting, HCP revealed a clear need for habitats, or cultures, that support Senge's (1991) disciplines for organizational learning, including visioning practices that are both deeply integrated and developed through shared leadership, another discipline of Senge's OLT.

Table 24

Habits for Collaborative Professionalism Descriptions

Habit	Description	Hargreaves & O'Connor's Tenets
Accept risks for innovative solutions	Team members accept risk as inherent in quest for innovative solutions. As appropriate, building and district teams would encourage risks and solutions.	Collaborative inquiry
Accountable and responsible	Accountable and responsible for success of all students. As appropriate, building and district teams are responsible for the success of all teams. These levels are also responsible for dissemination of learning across the system.	Collective responsibility
Develop and maintain team purpose & goals	Team identifies purpose, goals, strategy, & tasks. Goals are aligned across system.	Collective initiative Common meaning and purpose
Distributed decision-making/power	Teams make decisions and follow through to achieve goals. As appropriate, building and district teams provide autonomy to teacher or building team.	Collective autonomy
Monitors progress	Monitors progress toward team-identified goals. Evaluates through reflection and examination of work during a cycle. As appropriate, building and district teams monitor progress of other strata.	Collaborative inquiry

Table Continues

Professional habits	Arrive on time, report absences, maintain work artifacts, respect all voices, ensure all voices are heard. Hold one another accountable for expected behaviors.	Collective responsibility
Reflection	Team reflection on learning and growth. Individuals reflect as part of this habit.	Joint work
Structures, tools, resources	Some teams may need more structure while others will not need any. Structures include external facilitation, external monitoring and/or evaluation (of team not individuals). Tools include protocols. Team accepts responsibility to seek support and resources as needed and as identified from reflection or team self-monitoring activities. As appropriate, building and district teams would provide the structures, resources, and tools.	
System awareness	Understand team's role in the system and understand how other habits support a systemic approach (archives to expand organizational learning, etc.)	Big picture awareness for all
Transparency	Agenda/minutes available to organization. Templates configured according to team needs.	Collective responsibility
Trust builders	Maintain confidentiality. Open to constructive feedback. Reflect honestly to team's growth in skills and knowledge.	Mutual Dialogue
Work habits	Prepare for meet time: data analysis (cause and effect); create agenda; complete tasks. Use meet time effectively, purposefully.	Collective responsibility

Summary of Findings for RQ1

Three themes emerged from CCP analysis and provided a rich description of the study site's collaborative practices at and across each district stratum. Each subtheme, detailed in the previous sections, demonstrated the concomitant nature of subthemes and how each informed the resulting themes derived through CCP and supported my efforts to answer RQ1. The first theme, systems thinking and systemic practices, focused on practices such as challenges to improvement and collaboration and leadership practices for improvement. Subtheme 1a described the challenges that organizations face for improvement and for collaboration. The challenges were observed across all strata and have the potential to impact the entire system. Subtheme 1b described improvement practices, such as those embedded in the OIP. Theme 2 described fundamental distributive practices that were essential for improvement such as vision and goals. The third and final theme, habits of collaborative professionalism, included three subthemes. Subtheme 3a, communication and governance, described managerial processes of governance and communication mechanisms and subtheme 3b described trust and mutual respect. The last subtheme, 3c, addressed team habits, described group behaviors and individual actions that formed team habits at each of the three organizational strata.

Table 25 provides a summary of findings from the previous sections. The principles that informed each theme are represented in the table. Habits of collaborative professionalism include habits across all three strata. Environmental factors that contribute to habitats for organizational learning. Systems thinking and systemic practices can be found across all principles and findings.

Table 25

RQ1 Summary of Findings

Principles	Findings/Observations
Co-created and deeply integrated vision	The vision was not known to all members, especially with teachers. Members for the most part did not participate in the development of the vision.
Distributed decision-making/power	BLTs were free to make decisions regarding their strategic planning. Teachers felt free to make decisions regarding their own classrooms.
Mental models	Some members identified the OIP and the teams/processes associated. Some members were unaware of the OIP. All participated on a team, but some did not understand the greater purpose or vision associated with the district's use of the OIP
Primary topics of TBT work	One TBT was focused on one of the three primary topics/functions (formative assessment). The remaining TBTs observed were not.
Structures	The district had provided multiple forms for teams to use, norms, time to meet, facilitation
	The district used norms for their meetings. BLTs and TBTs did not use norms for their meetings.
	TBTs were provided time and space to conduct their meetings.
Supports	Professional facilitation was not used at any strata. Rotating facilitators were noted at DLT meetings. Principals facilitated all BLT meetings. One TBT was facilitated; the remaining appeared to be disorganized without a clear focus.
	The district provided annual BLT training for the buildings' teams.

Table Continues

Systemic implementation	Implementation of the OIP appeared to have been introduced. Progress monitoring of TBT implementation was not observed. District and building visions were known by BLT members but not TBT members.
Team learning	Lack of team learning experiences. Members believed that team learning was going to a conference or participating in professional development. This is an opportunity to deepen members understandings of the power of collective reflection and learning.
Trust/Mutual Respect	Two-way trust was observed and reported by teachers.
Vision/Purpose	The district had developed a detailed vision with three primary themes. The strategic plan aligned to the vision.

Results for RQ2

RQ2 asked: How do individuals perceive the organization's vision, team learning, and systems thinking as a result of collaborative practice within an improvement system? The following sections include two additional themes, Themes 4 and 5. These themes do not include subthemes. To complete HCP analysis, I reread the codes and categories first and recorded my impressions and questions. Next, I reread the interview transcripts, multiple times, including my reflective notes associated with each transcript. Again, I noted my impressions and questions. Then I read through the artifacts. While the artifacts did not specifically indicate how members perceived the organization, the artifacts coupled with the interview transcripts and my reflective journal provided insight into her perception of the organization.

An example of my process began with Brenda, a teacher. Brenda described a lack of trust of district level employees. She was unsure of the trust between herself and her

principal but had tremendous faith in her TBT. She also felt that teachers came to her and trusted her. As I reviewed the codes, trust, forms, and compliance emerged. As I reviewed her transcript and the TBT form, she supplied, I concluded that the culture, or habitat of the organization was deepening her distrust of members at other strata. As I reread the transcripts, artifacts, and reflections the idea of mistrust morphed into encouraging innovative thinking, which implies that trust exists. I recorded those impressions. As additional concepts emerged, I sifted the concepts until themes began to emerge. Sifting describes this process because each pass through the data allowed ideas to clump together like sand in a child's pail and sieve in the sandbox. The process was repeated until habitats for organizational learning and balanced habitudes emerged from the clumps of ideas. Trust is inherent in both themes and the concepts were not limited to one theme or another. The following sections discuss the two themes that supported my response to RQ2 in detail and how the data inform each associated theme.

Theme 4: Habitats for organizational learning. The fourth theme that emerged from analysis was habitats to support organizational learning. The conceptual framework described in detail in Chapter 2 identified environmental conditions such as a shared vision, systems thinking, a culture that supports learning, and supports provided by leadership. Like physical habitats studied in science, habitats of learning organizations include fundamental conditions that are necessary for the organization to survive and thrive. Underlying conditions that were observed or identified in narratives during HCP analysis included leadership that:

- encouraged innovative thinking among members,

- created conditions for individuals to learn new skills, and

- sought input from external experts.

Additional conditions that were not observed or reported but that would further support the development of a learning organization as described in Telfer's (2011) research included:

- providing freedoms and supports that encourage members to inquire into processes that are not supporting learning for teams at all stratum,

- strengthening learning by providing protocols and processes at all stratum,

- facilitating collaborative learning for teams, and

- articulating the vision in a more consistent manner that identifies the roles of all members.

In this district, the superintendent built upon the district's previously developed vision and mission statements, core values, and strategic plan and implemented a plan for progress that merged the previous and new efforts. He verbally indicated that the vision had been shared with all organizational members at 2019-2020 district opening day. Teachers and principals interviewed during the previous June could only slightly describe the district's vision. Some did not describe it at all. One reported that a PowerPoint had been presented at a staff meeting. The seemingly simple presentation demonstrated a lack of participation even though a district curriculum member indicated in her interview that teacher surveys had been collected that guided the new superintendent's ideas. The connection between the survey and the vision was not clear to teachers that participated in personal interviews.

Teachers and principals who were interviewed in September could not provide any details about the vision. One interview participant reported that she participated in the development of the district vision. The system is responsible for creating and supporting habitats to support collaboration, which includes a co-created and well-communicated vision and purpose. Since data was collected, the district has enrolled in a program in which I serve as a program manager. The leadership development program focuses on operationalizing six domains that include shared leadership, and developing a culture of inquiry using DLT, BLT, and TBT team practices.

The district's vision included references to aspirations for community and societal improvement, providing opportunities for all children, and the inclusion of every child. The district's mission was described in terms of engaging, holistic, empowering, innovative experiences, for reliable, constructive, and responsible residents. The superintendent referred to a strategic plan that had been developed prior to his hire and his efforts to streamline that strategic plan into a more recognizable vision for the district. For example, the strategic plan included eight goals. The first goal included 12 strategies with more than 70 action items assigned to district-level employees and was void of any specific resources to accomplish the goal.

Senge's (1991, 2014) fourth discipline described the concept of a shared vision as an organization's common image of purpose, values, and specific outcomes that have been co-created and owned by all members. According to Senge (1991) organizational leaders should include all voices to develop a purpose or why of the organization. Brandy, a district-level employee, indicated that teacher surveys were collected to inform

the vision's development. Other members shared differing accounts. All teachers that were interviewed had different perspectives. Grace stated,

> I know we've been told what the vision is, we had a meeting about it. So, it's like, I know that they've given us this vision. But it's just the way they conveyed it to us is maybe not a way that makes it stick in my mind.

Similarly, Brandy stated:

> There was a meeting at the end of the school year to share the vision. There are three things that basically you know help the students achieve the highest goal that they can to keep them safe and to make our facilities 21st century. I don't know if those are right but that's something along those lines.

The differing accounts indicate that teachers' voices had not heard during the vision's early development. They did not report actions that the district used to gather their voices. If the district had sought teacher input, as was reported by Brandy, teachers were not aware of the attempt. Irene, a high school teacher, who leads her TBT and serves on the BLT, indicated that she was aware of the building's vision because it is included in the student handbook and believed that the district's vision was similar. She believed that the vision included something about educating students, both academically and civically. This, she stated, was central to her responsibilities. Both principals that were interviewed could accurately identify the district's vision. Joan indicated that she should model excellence for her staff, students, and parents. Mia understood her role as "aligning our school goals with the district's goals" and bring information from our BLT to the DLT and from the DLT to the BLT. According to Huffman (2003), comprehensive

and integrated visions, which include understanding both the vision and the individual's role in accomplishing that vision, should be continuously communicated with staff. Neither principal indicated that the vision is integral to the daily work. During one of the building's first BLT meetings of the school year, the principal shared the district vision with the teachers that serve on the team. Observing the same teachers in TBTs, the district vision was not addressed in the meeting.

Superintendent Coulston indicated that he had recently shared the vision with all staff during convocation. He described three "pillars" that comprised a holistic vision for the district that included: academics, learning environment, and fiscal responsibility. He explained that often these three functions of a school district were "siloed" but that the district's vision was meant to create a cohesive, focused effort. He shared, "at the end of the day if I walk into your classroom and I say, what is our vision, they could at least tell me what our vision is." While most of the principal participants could articulate the vision, most teacher participants could not.

The second concept incorporated in RQ2 and associated with Senge (1991) was team learning. Senge suggested that organizations will become stagnant if they are not structured as learning organizations. In these institutions, members contribute to the district's success through learning at the individual and team levels. Senge further suggested that learning must be purposeful, intentional, and meaningful and that pursuit of solving the organization's problems by its members is ongoing, in pursuit of continuous improvement.

Another factor associated with team learning was what Senge described as mental models. These models are based, in part, on individual and collective reflective practices (Senge et al., 2012). Therefore, team learning was described as a culmination of solving problems by members of the organization through collective reflection and open discourse. Figure 2, a diagram of the conceptual framework for this study, identified the components of Senge's theory. Personal interviews revealed a missing component of the team learning experiences described by participants. Brandy described team learning as "we go to a lot of conferences together" and "I have monthly meetings with my coaches to go over district initiatives." Irene reported both positive and negative experiences. She stated, "So while you might have a really good morning of PD [professional development] you might also be booked into it you were required to be - you had to be put in a PD." Brenda shared that she felt frustrated because she could not understand or communicate to her peers the purpose of the trainings. She stated,

> We would go to these trainings that our district does for the facilitator each year and like half of the day they have a speaker come in and he's showing us different teaching strategies. He would have to come back and try to give us all that information. I didn't feel like I was informed enough to adequately teach the other people at my grade level what we should be doing.

Grace shared a story of one time when the members of her TBT each graded the same piece of student work and then participated in a calibration activity. She said "it gave me a vision of like why the other teachers were grading the way that they were grading. I don't think we all learned. I think at least one of us learned something, me."

Grace learned through a team activity, but she felt isolated in her learning. Transparent

discourse on the learning did not take place after the activity. Joan described BLT

trainings as a positive experience and said "You know no one is, some people are close to

retirement but most of us are mid-career you know like we're mid-career. And so

sometimes it's hard because everyone's seen everything, they've done everything and that

sort of thing." Mia also believed that BLT trainings were beneficial to her and her team.

She recounted, "We all enjoy those, and we all talk about them after." Irene described an

experience where "team members at those PD were all engaged and had this desire to

bring back information to the departments." Finally, Robin described learning from her

peers on district-led professional development days where teachers present mini sessions.

She said, "I get a lot of my ideas from the professional development put on by other

teachers. I really enjoy that." These examples demonstrate that there was no clear

understanding of what team learning is or how it occurs. There was no reference to

solving problems or reflecting as individuals or as a team. The learning seemed disjointed

and forced. Some volunteers shared examples that more closely related to Senge's

description of team learning.

     The accounts provided by Brenda, Brandy, and Irene might present an

organizational challenge that teams could solve, given an opportunity to do so. Senge

(1991) described OLT as members working together to solve complex problems that exist

within the organization. Joan, Mia, Grace, and Robin's narratives provided a foundation

for OLT and team learning. For organizational learning to be effective, reflection must be

addressed intentionally for teams by team members. The OIP could serve as a framework

to share the concept of OLT, systems thinking, and problem solving as an opportunity for team learning.

Theme 5: Balanced habitudes. The fifth theme for the study that emerged during HCP was balanced habitudes. The term incorporates habits and accompanying attitudes that are necessary for collaborative professionalism at the individual, team, and organizational levels (D'Amour et al., 2005; Dewey, 1916; Dewey, 1922) as outlined in Tables 1 and 2. Dewey (1916) described habitudes as "the exercise or practice of the faculties of the mind till they become thoroughly established habitudes" (p. 71). Dewey compared the development of mindful activities to those of athletes or a "billiard player… who by repeated use of certain muscles in a uniform way, at last, secures automatic skill" (p. 71). Balanced was added to the theme to represent the idea that habits and attitudes combine but when not balanced, the outcome is skewed. Balanced habitudes are fundamental for collaborative professionalism that would suggest how individuals perceive and work within teams that function within the OIP. For this context, balanced habitudes were determined to include individuals' behaviors and attitudes that influence and are congruent with effective collaboration at all strata. The term balanced refers to the concept that positives and negatives cancel each other out. Therefore, positive attitudes plus positive habits are in balance and are highly effective for collaboration and improvement.

Habitudes are the actionable attitudes that help individuals and teams learn and grow. Habitudes indicate that members' actions are intentional and align with the

qualities outlined in Tables 1 and 2. Individual positive habitudes I identified from

observation field notes included the following:

- individuals within a team setting remained focused on a topic or task,

- peer facilitators attempted to guide individuals back toward topics when they went astray,

- peers and formal leaders encouraged others to share,

- individuals were punctual and came prepared,

- tasks were distributed or shared equally among members,

- members expressed their own personal accountability for student ,learning,

- members conveyed concern for their peers and cross-strata members,

- criticized an idea but not the person,

- development of an annual schedule that included time and location,

- asked questions or responded to questions,

- summarized the action items and confirmed next meeting date,

- development and distribution of agendas and minutes located in a shared Google folder,

- other consistent communication such as emails with summaries and meeting reminders,

- complimentary toward other members,

- reflection was used to describe personal learning in team setting and shared with the larger group,

- language that encouraged critical thinking,

- respect for new ideas, and

- fulfillment of roles (facilitator, record keeper, timekeeper) and rotation of the roles.

As stated in the Role of the Researcher section, my work at the UCSDI Center focused on the behaviors and beliefs of formal leaders and the behaviors and attitudes of those leaders' teachers. Those experiences coupled with my research regarding collaboration provided certain behaviors and attitudes (habitudes) that I looked for during observations. I did not observe the following habitudes of collaboration that I had expected would be present in a school district that had implemented the OIP. These included:

- use of protocols or the intentional use of other tools for structure beyond the forms provided by the district,

- conflict management or resolution,

- critical or constructive feedback to peers or other members,

- use of probing questions,

- encourage members who have not participated to do so, and

- diplomatic disagreement.

During personal interviews, one principal participant was especially aware of her role within the system and the importance of thinking about the entire system. Mia pointed to the need for coherent and consistent instruction, specifically regarding curricular materials and common assessments across the entire district. She indicated that "Well the DLT comes up with the plans for the district and then BLTs aligns their goals

with the district goals. When we meet in our BLT, we have each [grade level]

representative share what they have talked about in their TBTs." The goal, Mia stated,

was for the TBT goals to align with the BLT and DLT goals for alignment across the

district. She continued, "You know there's pros and cons when you have site-based

management, where you can make decisions, you're on an island. I see the strength in

making using the OIP to make our district stronger."

Overall, observed habitudes were positive. There were examples of negative

habitudes. These included teachers referring to "those kids." One teacher was heard in a

meeting talking about students who had been identified as special needs. She went on to

say, "they are her responsibility, not mine." This demonstrated an attitude that she was

not willing to teach all kids, just those that she had identified as *hers*. Other examples of

negative habitudes included interview participants not being able to identify specific

skills associated with collaboration or referring only to the form that the district used for

teams. Some did not see the need for collaboration in general nor for improvement

efforts. Robin was not aware that TBTs were a part of an improvement process and, when

asked, believed that improvement was related to teachers who had been evaluated poorly

on their annual evaluation. I inferred from that conversation that she had a negative view

of improvement overall. This was confirmed in a conversation with principals at a DLT

meeting when one principal stated that her teachers believed improvement was negative

and asked if she could call it something else. Other members of the DLT shared that she

should convey that we strive for perfection through continuous improvement. It is

important to note that the teacher was a high school teacher, and the principal represented a junior high.

The inability of members to articulate the district's vision or purpose was determined to be indicative of a negative habitude. Senge et al. (2012) posited, "Visions that tap into a school system's deeper sense of purpose have unique power to engender aspiration. The practical goal of such visions is to invite people to continuously renew their commitment to the people of the school, particularly the children and students" (p. 87). It is even more meaningful to step beyond members knowing, regurgitating, or summarizing. When leadership invites members, or representative members, to create a shared vision and then support the ongoing effort to meet the district's goals, the vision is stronger, and members are more engaged.

Habitudes that included negative willingness were observed and noted most often in TBT meetings at junior high and high school meetings when members simply placed themselves outside of the group. Once outside of the group, they graded papers or worked on their computers and did not contribute to the team's discussion. There were higher rates of sidebar conversations at TBTs as well. In BLTs, principals usually led meetings. But even in some of the BLT meetings that I observed, two or more members would continue to participate in conversations by themselves, often on topics unrelated to those included on the agendas. Often these outliers contributed in a manner inconsistent with the team's focus. In one high school team the outlier interjected ideas or tasks from her daughter's junior high English classroom. The habit of interjecting ideas from a members' child's school was noted in two additional TBTs. While norms were discussed

earlier in this chapter, it is important to note that some teams clearly referred to the norms at the beginning of each meeting while others did not include them at all.

Fook (2016) stated, "The concepts of reflective practice and the learning organization are frequently coupled" (p. 57). Argote and Levine (2020) described the significance of team reflexivity, which included team goal setting and team reflection. Jay and Johnson (2002) outlined a typology or descriptive, comparative, and critical reflection to guide reflection. Reflection then, at both individual and team levels, would provide opportunities for individual and team growth. Schippers, West, and Edmondson (2018) posited that commonly understood team goals, mutual respect and trust provide the correct circumstances for effective team reflexivity. Personal reflection is not *visible* unless intentional design provides opportunities for individuals to reflect and then to capture the reflections. During interviews, I captured some participants' reflections. Grace said:

> I think that when we were all grading the same student's paper. That was probably the most eye-opening for me because, especially because the principal was in there doing it with us. The principal was also grading the student's paper along with us, which I felt was very helpful because it made me feel validated {because I was never sure if my grading, if I was grading things the way they should be graded and I found out I was on the same page as my principal. Which made me feel like I was doing what I needed to be doing}. It [the activity] also gave me a vision of why the other teachers were grading the way that they were grading. [I don't think we all learned].

Grace's participation as a member of the team and her personal reflection on that experience provided an opportunity for her own professional growth as a teacher, resulting in increased self-efficacy. Further, she reflected that other team members did not learn as much as she felt she had learned. Grace reported that the team did not discuss the learning. Reflection, or behaviors that comprise reflection, were not observed during the meetings. Reflective behaviors are often hidden from view and can be difficult to codify. Furthermore, identifying specific visible behaviors associated with team reflection is beyond the scope of this study.

Summary of Findings for RQ2

To answer RQ2, I applied a second analysis technique, HCP. The process, described in the Analysis section, relied on me rereading the codes and categories from CCP, full interview transcripts, artifacts, and field notes. My impressions and questions guided the development of the following two themes that allowed me to respond to RQ2. Table 26 provides a summary of findings from the previous sections that included Themes 4 and 5. Theme 4 detailed habitats for organizational learning. This theme provided insights into practices that are necessary to support a learning organization. The district had identified and was working towards a deeply integrated vision, although as stated previously, not all members were aware of the efforts to gain their voices nor could they all describe the vision. The district has also attempted to implement system-wide use of templates to guide team meetings such as templates for forms, meeting agendas, and minutes. Other tools and resources such as protocols and norms were used to varying degrees.

The final theme, balanced habitudes, described the balance of attitudes and habits. It was noted that negative feelings and perceptions permeated the district across all strata. Learning organizations counter negative attitudes by encouraging all members to work together to solve the inherent problems. If members were explicitly made aware of a focus on organizational learning as the theory of action, then they might not feel so negative. Once it is understood that problems are expected and persist, members could work to help solve the problems instead of adding to the challenges.

In a large organization, complex problems persist (Senge, 1991). The first step to building a learning organization with balanced habitudes begins with identifying organizational learning as a priority strategy. Next steps include intentionally sharing leadership with members to integrate the vision and the common goals. Then the district purposefully communicates that collaboration is the vehicle to solve the latent obstacles. This would result in continuous improvement efforts to ensure that challenges and barriers are addressed to meet the district's primary outcome of supporting teaching and student learning.

The principles described in Table 26 summarizes findings associated with Themes 4 and 5. Habitats for organizational learning, the environments of an organization that cultivates organizational learners, is the fourth theme. Balanced habitudes, the fifth theme, included converging habits and attitudes. Habits within a strata and habits of personnel in support of members in other strata. Support most often flows from district to building and building to classroom members.

Table 26

RQ2 Summary of Findings

Principles	Findings/Observations
Deeply integrated vision	Members across stratum had not participated in development of vision and had not taken ownership of it.
Habits in support of collaboration in another stratum	Development and distribution of templates as forms for agendas, minutes, and action items. Forms were used across all stratum with varying degrees of fidelity.
Habits in support of collaboration in another stratum	Processes, protocols, norms, and other tools developed, adopted, or implemented to varying degrees.
Organizational learning	All voices encouraged in team settings
Organizational learning	Individuals mastered new topics and skills. These were sometimes shared with team members or larger groups.
Vision/Purpose	Non-consistent message regarding the vision and district's purpose.

Summary

In this chapter, I described the setting and demographics of North Pine Creek School District. I also discussed my phased approach for this research, the data collection and analysis, and how I managed data that included 12 personal interviews, 16 team observations, artifacts, and documents. I explained a deviation from the original research plan and how I increased the number of interviews and meeting observations to compensate.

The chapter includes a description of the qualitative analyses approaches, CCP and HCP, and their respective association with each of the two research questions. Analysis began during data collection and was described in two parts. No discrepant cases emerged during data analysis. Evidence of trustworthiness, including credibility, transferability, dependability, and analytical triangulation were completed to increase trustworthiness. The results of the analytical triangulation are presented in the results section for each of the two research questions. Findings associated with RQ1 included conditions for collaboration such as trust, respect, and a focus on the habits of district-level leadership that included professional learning, time and space for teams to meet, facilitation, norms, and templates for the 5-step inquiry cycle that included forms, agendas, and minutes. A summary of findings was presented in Table 25.

Five themes emerged and helped to answer both research questions. The first three themes, systems thinking and systemic practices, fundamental distributive practices, and habits of collaborative professionalism answer RQ1 and themes four and five, habitats for organizational learning and balanced habitudes answer RQ2. When all themes are present in an organization, improvement efforts and collaboration is harmonious and equitable, meaning all themes are present and all members are aware of the components that comprise their work in collaborative teams to solve the organization's problems. The five themes also informed the three findings presented in Chapter 5.

I inferred that while members engaged in collaboration within and across strata, collaborative practices were not aligned with the intent of the OIP, which is a focus on

shifting adult behaviors through team learning. Shared leadership, an important feature of the OIP, was not observed in all BLT meetings but was during DLT meetings. Trust and mutual respect were observed in DLT meetings but was not expressed in the narratives or in BLT meetings. Teachers did feel free to make decisions regarding their students. but it was expressed as if in a silo, without input from other members.

Systemic implementation was described in the manner that the district phased in the OIP, beginning with the DLT. In addition to DLT implementation, training was provided to BLTs over the previous 3 years. It was noted that TBTs lacked professional focus on three primary functions. All strata used the tools provided including team forms, agendas, and posted minutes using Google Docs® that were shared with team members. Some of the artifacts were made available and were reviewed. Collective reflection was observed in one DLT meeting but was generally absent from BLT and TBT meetings. Similarly, members' narratives did not reveal instances of collective learning through reflection. As noted, the concept of a vision and systems thinking was intertwined throughout all findings.

The second theme, fundamental distributive practices, which focused on cultural factors such as a co-created and deeply integrated vision. While district-level administrators believed that the district's vision had been developed collaboratively, teachers were seldom aware of the vision. Similarly, the goal setting and decision-making processes utilized by the district were not understood by teachers and in some cases, principals. While the OIP provides a vehicle for communication through the DLT to the

BLT and then to TBTs and back up again, communication of ideas did not appear to travel through existing channels.

The third theme, habits of collaborative professionalism focused, in part, on the intentionality of communication, as identified in Theme 2. The theme focused on habits at each stratum both for collaboration and in support of collaboration that occurred at other levels. Team habits were observed at each of the three strata. Habits that were observed included teams coming together and acting as if they were alone, where the members did not interact. In many cases, team members sat in meetings and did not face one another and in many cases, at least one person sat outside of the group. Norms were noted in DLT meetings but seldom noted in BLT or TBT meetings. Protocols were not observed in BLT, DLT, or TBTs. The third theme also identified trust as essential to collaboration. Shared leadership was identified as one method to build trust and nurture mutual respect. Examples of shared leadership and examples of leaders not sharing their leadership with BLT members were observed. Sharing leadership allowed for co-creation of knowledge as well.

To answer the second research question which stated: How do individuals to perceive the organization's vision, team learning, and systems thinking because of collaborative practice within an improvement system, I completed HCP analysis. Table 26 summarizes the findings and observations associated with RQ2. I inferred that members across the district had not been provided a consistent message regarding the purpose for using the OIP. This was deduced from reviewing the district's state report card that reports students' participation and achievement levels, value-added data coupled

with interview transcripts and field notes. The district performed well on the Ohio ODE report card and most buildings are high achieving. Principals reported that teachers misinterpreted *improvement* as punitive. I concluded that team learning was not a concept that was known to interview participants. Similarly, I determined that members participating in team meetings at all stratum were not focused on their own learning or their learning as part of a team. Tasks associated with team meetings included reviewing data, general information distribution, or were chaotic.

The focus on habits and habitudes was intentionally aligned with the components from the original conceptual framework. The proportions of the components were also intentional to demonstrate the importance placed on not just a vision, but one that is co-created and deeply integrated into the tasks of all members throughout the organization.

Chapter 5 includes my interpretations that confirm the research presented in Chapter 2 and extends scholarly knowledge in the education field for PK-12 districts that have implemented an improvement process and use collaboration to increase performance. The chapter also includes analysis and interpretation in relation to the conceptual framework that was developed, specifically Senge's (1991) and Gronn's (2000) theories. Furthermore, the chapter provides descriptions of the limitations to trustworthiness that surfaced during the study. Finally, I outline the positive impact for social change, that is, how understanding the alignment between the two themes with emphasis on habitats to support organizational learning, development of habits to support collaboration, and balanced habitudes, all of which can help districts to modify their

improvement efforts to strengthen collaborative professionalism and sustain a learning

organization.

Chapter 5: Discussion, Conclusions, and Recommendations

Introduction

The purpose of this mini-ethnographic case study was to qualitatively explore district OIP team members' behaviors and practices across organizational strata at North Pine Creek School District in Ohio to discover how systems, specific to the OIP that include collaborative practices may influence continuous improvement efforts. Problems persist in some educational organizations that have implemented improvement systems, such as the OIP, with structures to support collaborative culture.

The OIP was developed to support all Ohio districts to conduct needs analyses, develop goals, strategies, action and monitoring plans, and to provide frameworks, and in some cases, state supports, for collaboration at and across all strata. Districts who want to continually examine their own practices with regard to continuous improvement and collaboration have spent significant amounts of time investigating and implementing the OIP without expert support.

A gap existed in research regarding how supports, resources, and structures were used to frame members' collaborative practices when interacting with members in other strata. Fullan et al. (2015) posited that understanding how members at each stratum engage in collaborative practices, and across organizational strata, could clarify the shared vision, increase communication within the organization, and support team learning for continuous improvement. This study was conducted to help districts in Ohio to support continuous improvement efforts and understand the characteristics, practices, and behaviors of district employees who participate in BLTs, DLTs, or TBTs. These

populations usually include teachers, paraprofessionals, principals, assistant principals, school counselors, and district-level administrators. Additionally, the findings of this study help leaders implement future school reform attempts. The findings provide insight and guidance for future research to better understand systemic collaboration within improvement systems.

Findings presented in Chapter 4 associated with collaborative practices and improvement processes included team learning, specifically that team learning occurs when teams take time to reflect. These behaviors were not observed during team meeting or in the artifacts reviewed. Many TBT team behaviors were deemed superficial based on content focus, such as lackadaisical discussions about making high school students carry a book so that the students would read more or personal discussions about weekends or families that lasted the entire meeting time. While some teams were focused on student data, there were relatively few examples of teams learning together. During analysis, a few examples in the data emerged that demonstrated teamwork habits, specifically teacher teamwork, had focused on three primary topics including: deconstruction of student learning standards; development, calibration, and examination of formative and summative assessments; or exploration of instructional strategies for personal mastery and team learning. The structures and supports embedded within the OIP that would allow members of these teams to demonstrate habits for collaborative professionalism were not observed or reported. An encouraging finding was that limited systemic implementation of the OIP was observed, with pockets of truly amazing work by TBT members who exhibited strong behaviors associated with shared leadership, vision

development, and attempting to pilot team learning. Findings included evidence that some members were attempting to lead their teams through the OIP at each of the three strata. However, intermittent examples will not result in systemic continuous improvement without additional attention and focused efforts. Findings also included the habits of members at BLT and DLT levels that supported collaboration in other stratum and supported Senge's (1991) theory that members' continuous learning support organizational learning to strengthen the effectiveness of the organization. These habits hold promise for organizational efforts that attempt to close learning gaps, strengthen K-3 reading for at-risk students, improve student achievement and progress, and improve the various components of career preparedness.

Chapter 5 includes a description of associated context considerations that provide a detailed description of the problem from the perspective of the study site's benchmarks. The chapter also presents my interpretations of primary findings, the conceptual framework, limitations, recommendations, implications, and conclusions. The three primary findings include: habits for collaborative professionalism; habitats for organizational learning; and balanced Habitudes. The reconceptualized conceptual framework is illustrated and described in detail. The limitations encountered are presented along with actions taken, when appropriate, to reduce impact of limitations on the study. Finally, the chapter concludes with my recommendations and the implications for social change.

Associated Context Considerations

Understanding how improvement processes and collaborative practices have not yet met the district's goals provides contextual considerations to frame the problem that guided this study. These problems exist in other Ohio school districts that have implemented the OIP, which was initially developed to improve student learning outcomes as measured by standardized assessments and reported on each district and school's state report card. The 2019 state report card included achievement, gap closing, progress, improving at-risk K-3 readers, graduation rates, and prepared for success. Achievement is a two-part score made up of performance index and indicators met. Performance index provides a score on how well students performed on all tests in all tested grades, overall. The second component of achievement is indicators met and provides a score for how well students performed on the tests.

North Pine Creek School District received a C for each of the past five years for the combined score. The performance component was a B, C, C, C, B over the past five years and the indicators met score was F, F, F, D, B with the most recent year presented first in each instance. The district received A's in each of the past five years for high school for both 4 and 5-year graduation rates. The state's prepared for success rating considered career technology students' credential assessment passage such as the American Society of Phlebotomy Technicians Certified Phlebotomy Technician or esthetician from the Ohio State Board of Cosmetology. Additionally, the prepared for success rating included student participation in and scores for both the ACT and SAT assessments. Other measures of the prepared for success rating included the percentage of

students who enrolled and participated in remediation-free Ohio public college coursework during their freshmen or sophomore years. The district received a prepared for success scores for the past four years of D, D, C, and C. This category has only been scored over the last four reporting years.

The district's data reveals that subgroups of students, specifically students with disabilities, socioeconomically disadvantaged, and Black students all underperform their peers. Gifted students scored a D in value-added on the last report card and Fs in the three preceding years with a B five years ago. The inconsistency associated with the subgroups, which represent vast numbers of students, demonstrates the problems that districts face and the need for continuous improvement efforts.

The OIP was and remains the improvement process that ODE supports through the SST. As noted in Chapter 1, most of the SSTs support is focused on high-need, Tier 3 districts. ODE provides OIP resources, tools, and guidance, often through vendors and via OLAC, for free consumption for all Ohio districts. The OIP was built on tiered collaboration across three stratum and was initially rolled out as a means for compliance. The OIP modeled continuous improvement over the years through a focus on improving the improvement process, resources, and tools. However, some past practices such as a focus on compliance, such as form completion, remained the normal practice in many districts. The lack of access to facilitation by trained SST members may have unintentionally reinforced compliance practices since many districts learned initially from SST members with severely limited access later. Therefore, the problem of high percentages of students needing remedial college courses, or high numbers of Black

students performing significantly below their peers, may have been exacerbated because as the OIP morphed to focus on adult implementation practices while fewer options for SSTs to support Tier 1 districts such as North Pine Creek District. The inability to provide supports for Tier 1 and, in many cases, Tier 2 districts, meant that new practices focused more on adults were not used by many of these Tier 1 and Tier 2 districts. Therefore, little was known about how organizational members of TBTs, BLTs, and the DLT in the Tier 1 and 2 districts participated in collaborative practices, especially with members in different strata. The contextual considerations presented provide insights into my interpretations of the findings. Many school districts that have implemented the OIP and have similar outcomes to this study site may benefit exploring these findings, recommendations for further research, and implications for social change.

Interpretation of Findings

Themes in Chapter 4 include habits for collaborative professionalism (cultural practices, system thinking, and systemic practices), habitats for organizational learning, and balanced habitudes. The first theme, habits for collaborative professionalism, related to TBT, BLT, and DLT members' behaviors and actions when they participate in collaboration within their respective stratum. This also includes how leaders, such as building principals and district-level administrators throughout the organization, collaborate with one another and how they support collaboration in other strata, such as DLT supporting BLT collaboration. Examples of habits for collaborative professionalism include classroom teachers participating in TBTs and serving as members of BLTs or DLTs. Examples of district-level supports included scheduling meetings during the

school day, providing space for meetings, offering embedded professional learning, supplying materials, and offering professional facilitators.

The second theme is habitats for organizational learning. This finding emerged from questions associated with and related to RQ1. Habitats supporting collaborative professionalism included:

- Authentic team learning,

- Capacity development for individuals to master new skills and content,

- Shared leadership, distributed power, and responsibility, and

- Visionary practices that guide members or clearly articulate their roles to accomplish the district's vision, goals, and strategic plans.

The third finding is balanced habitudes, which incorporates positive behaviors and positive attitudes necessary for productive collaboration and effective improvement efforts, specifically the improvement actions outlined in the OIP.

These thematically organized findings reinforce and extend previous research described in the literature review. The combination of Senge's (1991) OLT and Gronn's (2000) LDT identified the link between team learning and collective reflection. When team members practice collective reflection typology (Jay & Johnson, 2002) and layer critical reflection on instructional practices in conjunction with the OIP's tenets of adults' collaboration with the specific purpose "to improve education for every student in every school" (ODE, 2012, p. vi). This study expands on McNulty's (2018) research. McNulty described the three primary topics that TBTs should focus on during meeting time. This research expands on the three topics by delineating them and expanding on each. For
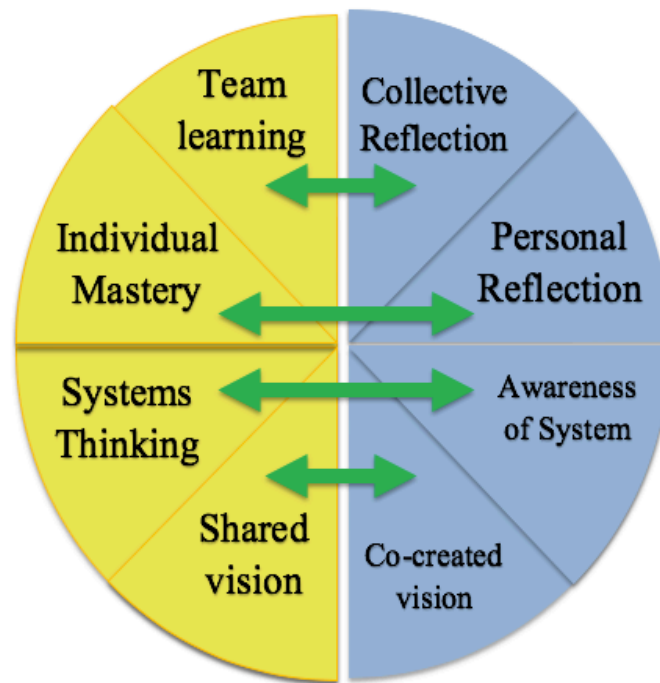
Figure 13. OLT and LDT theory alignment. alignment of elements across the two theories.

example, when McNulty suggested that TBTs should focus on formative assessments, I

posited that TBTs should focus on both formative and summative assessment and that

work should include design, development, calibration, and evaluation of existing

assessments.

The conceptual framework model for this study, first introduced in chapter 1 and

described in chapter 2, introduced overlapping factors drawn from both Senge's (1991)

OLT and Gronn's (2000) theories. Other intersecting factors associated with the two

theories include (a) cocreated and shared vision, (b) team learning and collective

reflection, (c) individual mastery and personal reflection, and (d) systems thinking and

awareness of the system. The factors from each theory are represented in Figure 13. OLT

is presented in yellow (left side) and LDT is presented in blue (right side). The double-headed horizontal arrows represent the alignment of factors across the two theories. The wedges represent systems thinking, visioning, and personal responsibility. As described earlier, Senge's (1991) topic of individual mastery connected with Gronn's (2000) personal reflection topic. This study reports on the connections between collective reflection and team learning, personal reflection and individual mastery, systems thinking and an awareness of the system and one's role in the system to a shared and co-created vision.

Reimaging a Conceptual Model Based on Study Findings

As I examined the conceptual framework that guided this study, I considered how incorporating the study's findings would change the original model (see Figure 1). I considered the study's data and findings then discovered that the findings could inform and improve the model. l reimagined how I had originally conceptualized and represented the various components. The results of that reconceptualization follow and are illustrated in Figure 14.

Changes to the original conceptual framework figure are illustrated in Figure 14 and are described here. The foundation initially presented as systems thinking in Figure 1 (symbolized by the flattened cylinder with connected nodules) has been moved to the top, representing an umbrella, whereas systems thinking should be a part of all work, both academic and operations. The four cylinders in the original figure have been included as three of the original four cylinders now located under systems thinking instead of the secondary foundation. The change represents my new thinking after combining factors
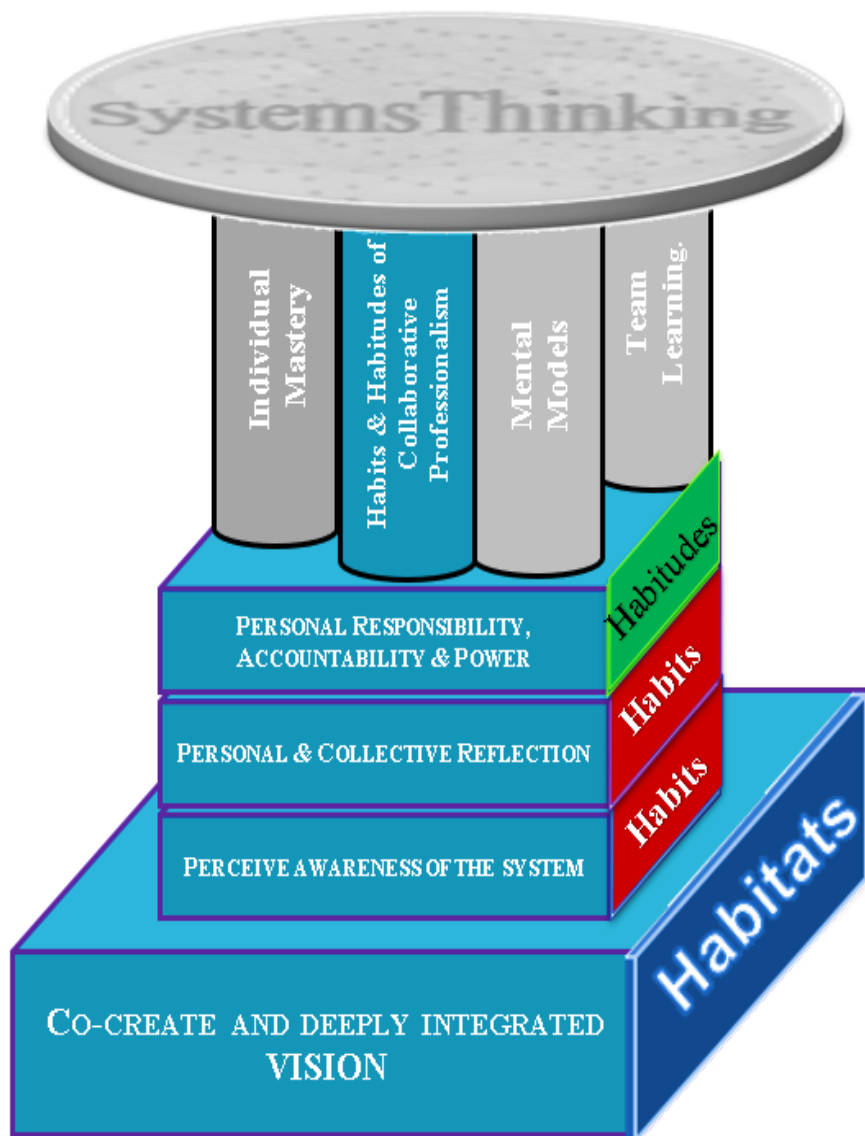
Figure 14. Reconfigured Conceptual Framework
with Insert of Original Conceptual Framework
(Figure 1).
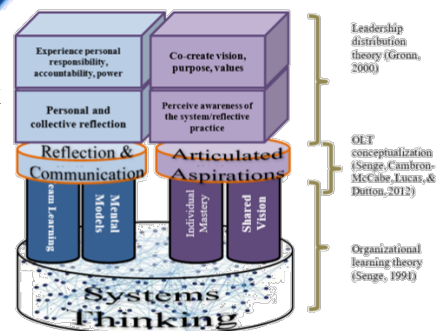
from the two theories and adding habits, habitats, and habitudes from my interpretations.

I also added Hargreaves and O'Connor's (2018) collaborative professionalism as a fourth cylinder. Additions and combinations are represented by the deep blue (the fourth cylinder and the four foundational elongated cubes). The cubes, combinations of both Senge's (1991) OLT and Gronn's (2000) theories include an alignment with the habits, habitudes, and habitats. These are represented on the side of the cube and the colors align with the appropriate finding. To better capture the findings of this study, I propose that a co-created and deeply integrated vision (previously referred to in Figure 1 as co-created vision, purpose, and values now serves as the most fundamental footer in the foundation of the depicted systems thinking model. This representation signifies the importance of not simply a vision, but a vision for all members that encompasses their values, purpose, and work tasks each day. A school district's vision drives all its work, across and through all strata. The normal strata associated with a school district included TBT, BLT, and DLT.

Finding 1: Habits for Collaborative Professionalism

Habits for collaborative professionalism, originally described in the research of Hargreaves and O'Connor (2018), emphasizes the first group of findings. Habits practiced in collaborative settings must be intentional, focused, aligned with the vision, and include team expectations for behaviors. Intentionality includes the members understanding the purpose of teaming activities, inputs, outputs, and outcomes.

Team habits apply to teams at each stratum across the school district. Habits at the TBT level are distinct from habits that are supportive from the BLT and DLT that include habits that introduce, maintain, and sustain continuous improvement efforts

throughout the organization. The two distinct domains for habits are described in detail below as team habits and supportive habits. Figure 15 represents habits for collaborative professionalism for both domains. The outer circular arrow represents the OIP processes that drive the habits. The next arrow represents collaborative practices across the school district. The wedges indicate groups of habits. The darker wedges with white print
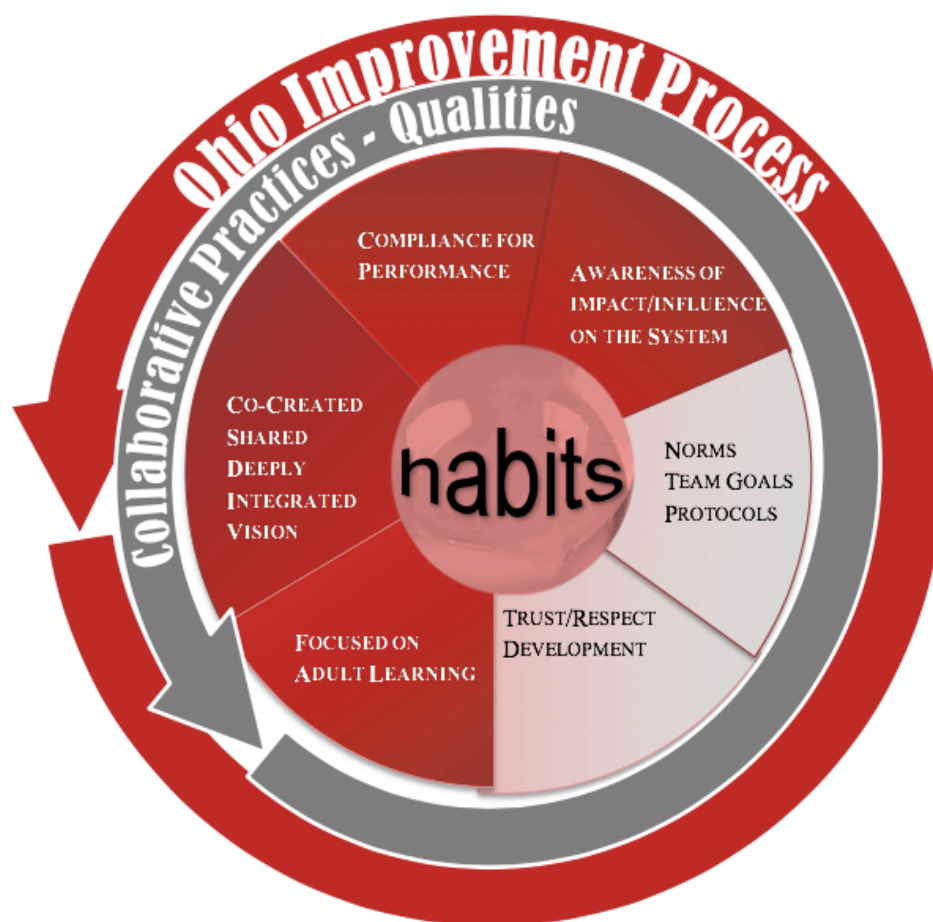
Figure 15: Habits of Collaborative Professionalism, described by Hargreaves and O'Connor (2018) and aligned with concepts from Senge's (1991) organizational learning theory and with Gronn's (2000) leadership distribution theory.

represent DLT and BLT habits that support TBTs. The lighter wedges represent habits that apply to all three strata (TBT, BLT, and DLT).

Habits for TBT members and teams. McNulty (2018) suggested that TBTs should primarily focus on three functions that included (a) deconstructing standards to deeply understand the skills and knowledge that students need to demonstrate to master a standard, (b) develop formative assessments to gauge students' learning, and (c) team learning of highly effective, research-based instructional strategies. These are distinct from the focus, described by McNulty, of BLT and DLT teams, which exist to support the work of TBTs.

My findings extend McNulty's (2018) research by identifying that TBT actions include creating formative and summative assessments to gauge student learning and to evaluate learning. Further teams participated in calibration activities to understand their own grading practices. Finally, team members reported examining and evaluating vendor-supplied assessments. This extends McNulty's research identified in the previous paragraph. indicating that TBT habits include:

- continuous examination of student learning standards;

- identify mastery level for each skill and content knowledge for student learning;

- develop, examine, and calibrate formative and summative assessments to inform teaching practices and measure students' learning; and

- collective inquiry to learn and master research-based instructional strategies.

BLT and DLT team members' supportive habits. The district had attempted a significant effort to provide structures and tools to BLTs to create consistent expectations and outcomes from BLTs and to elevate the effectiveness of their own meetings. DLT meetings focused, to a limited extent, on the work of BLTs. Furthermore, the district had provided training for BLT teams for 3 years prior to this study and planned to continue the practice. The district's emphasis on training for BLTs followed a systemic approach of shared leadership (Leithwood et al., 2007). However, TBTs were not functioning at the highly effective levels Reeves' (2008) myth of linearity suggested were necessary to improve student achievement as evidenced by the 2018-19 district's state report card. Achievement gaps remained for subgroups of students in the district. One building had been identified as a focus school by ODE due to persistent subgroup gaps. Furthermore, individual teachers in the focus school had tried to implement effective TBT processes on their own, and while their principals had pointed to them as exemplars, those same teachers felt that more should have been done to support their efforts and to provide support to their peers across the building and district. This is a valid point, as systemic support for TBTs across the district could elevate TBT effectiveness to a level that would realize and sustain continuous improvement as evidenced by improved student learning outcomes.

Once an organization is committed to fully implementing an improvement process and to organizational learning, it will "support practical action and continuous improvement" (Hargreaves & O'Connor, 2018, p. 5) of collaborative professional habits. When done systemically, individual members and teams will benefit from the provision

of structures that include tools, resources, supports, training, coaching, and facilitation of processes to bring about highly effective individual and team learning. Systemic planning, monitoring, and evaluation will ensure continuous improvement (Park et al., 2013). Facilitation of meetings is one effective tool that can be used to achieve collaborative professionalism.

Professional facilitation supports teams to become highly effective. The district had relied on leadership, specifically, shared leadership by BLT members. This approach had not yet achieved outcomes that the OIP had indicated would occur with shared leadership. Specific facilitation of TBT processes by trained facilitators could have provided additional supports and supported communication regarding the vision and purpose with a message of system awareness. According to Kim (1999), one reason is that understanding how systems work – and how we play a role in them – lets us function more effectively and proactively within them. "The more we understand systemic behavior, the more we can anticipate that behavior and work with systems (rather than being controlled by them) to shape the quality of our lives" (Kim, 1999, para. 1).

Facilitation would serve to share leadership and would support:

- effective team practices such as coaching and constructive feedback (Hargreaves & O'Connor, 2018; National School Reform Faculty, 2006),
- a focus on the three primary functions of TBTs (McNulty, 2018),
- effectively focus on solving problems inherent in the system (Kim, 1999; Senge, 1991),

- authentically distribute the vision and purpose (Gronn, 2000; Senge, 1991), and

- provide a form of governance that delivers a genuine and intentional communication mechanism (D'Amour et al., 2005; ODE, 2012).

Hargreaves and O'Connor (2018) also suggested that members implement feedback processes to achieve high levels of collaborative professionalism. The National School Reform Faculty provided specific guidelines that allow colleagues to offer and receive feedback that results in continuous improvement within a culture of inquiry. Within the OIP, constructive feedback was described for each of the five stages of implementation. It is important for members to understand the function of feedback and to learn how to provide effective feedback. Learning to provide feedback is essential to "influence, reinforce, and change behaviors, concepts, and attitudes" (Sarkany & Deitte, 2017, p. 740). Professional coaching, such as that provided by this district's instructional coaches, distribute practices and share information to reduce performance gaps (Rowland et al., 2018; Sarkany & Deitte, 2017). While the district staff had provided multiple structures and resources, they still did not exhibit habits of highly effective teams with a deeply integrated vision. Habits, the recurring actions of organizational members, can lift or diminish collaboration. Understanding the positive habits of members at each stratum for collaboration will elevate organizational learning and support continuous improvement that support student learning.

Habits across all strata. D'Amour et al. (2005) identified collaborative qualities that align with the findings presented here including trust and mutual respect. According

to Tschannen-Moran (2014), trust is developed when there is a reliance on others, in this case, teams. Furthermore, Tschannen-Moran and Gareis (2018) indicated that trust is developed when there is a common focus of caring, honesty, openness, reliability, and competence. Therefore, the habits that develop trust are built through the team's work. Considering possible changes in members' behaviors while an observer was present, mutual focus on care and openness to develop trust. Based on teachers' responses and actions of teachers, one habit, ensuring that a message had been received, was notably insufficient. During a personal conversation, active listening serves as a means for individuals to determine if a message was received. In large organizations, progress monitoring of communication is a vital step. This will be especially important in districts that choose to focus team efforts on team learning. Habits, the recurring actions of organizational members, can lift or diminish collaboration. Understanding the positive habits at each stratum for collaboration will elevate organizational learning and support continuous improvement that will increase student learning.

Finding 2: Habitats for Organizational Learning

The second finding includes four factors that were expected to be observed or reported in narratives but were not reported at levels anticipated. The factors, drawn from the literature, included a shared vision, shared leadership, resources and supports for team learning, and perceived awareness of the system. This finding emphasizes the cultural and organizational conditions that are necessary to support members as they practice habits. The outer circular arrow in Figure 16 depicts the OIP processes that drive culture. The inner arrow represents collaborative practices across the organization that are
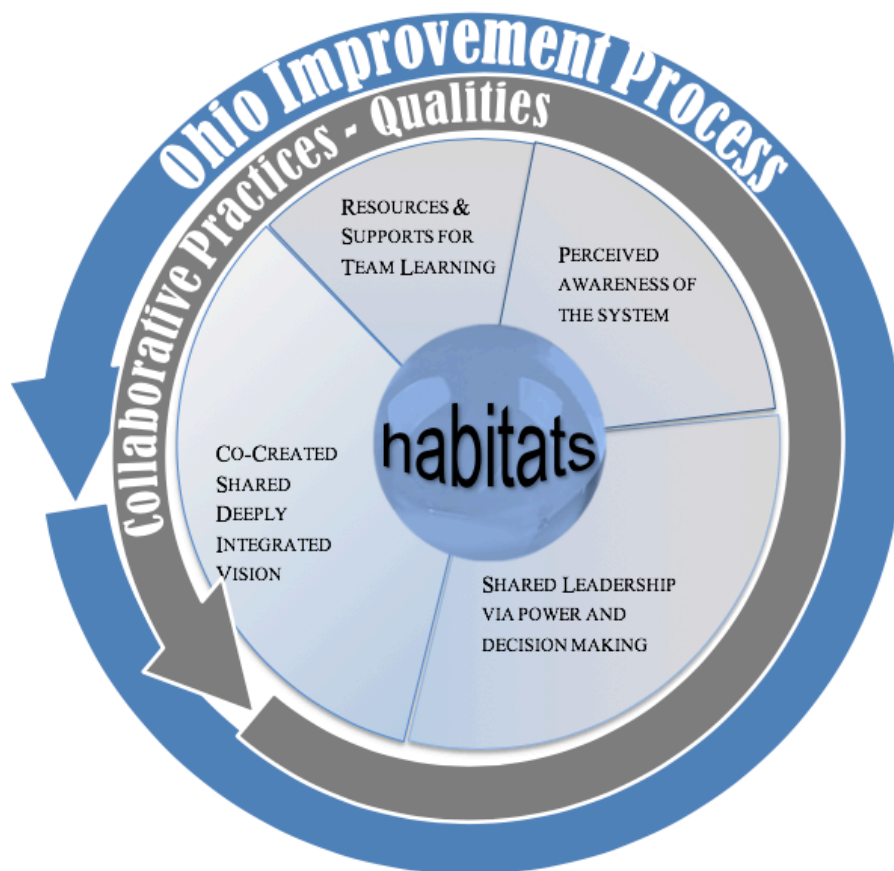
Figure 16. Habits of collaborative professionalism.

supported by the cultural conditions. The wedges, each identifying a factor from the

literature, illustrates vision and shared leadership. The wedges are presented to emphasize

a greater influence on organizational practice. The remaining wedges include a perceived

awareness of the system and resources and supports for team learning.

Co-created, communicated, and deeply integrated vision. As indicated above,

a co-created, communicated, and deeply integrated vision is fundamental to collaborative

practices and effective continuous improvement. Senge (1991) posited that a shared

vision contributed to the overall health of the organization. Hopkins and Spillane (2015)

and Spillane et al. (2002) suggested the process associated with the development of a

shared vision enhances members' engagement and focuses them on the work of continuous improvement while creating new knowledge. Findings indicated that a gap existed between the district's vision and members' narratives of that vision. The fact that leaders articulated their belief that the vision was well communicated among all levels conflicted with the principal and teacher reports. Senge (1991) posited that leaders can take advantage of creative tension or can dismiss it and he described a binary choice to either (a) lower the vision to current reality, or (b) raise the current reality toward the desired future state as described by its vision. In learning organizations, leaders and members understand that problems are inherent in the system, yet to achieve the goals set forth in the district's vision, all members' ideas must be mined to solve the complex problems facing school districts.

The significance of a shared, co-created, and deeply integrated vision is that the vision becomes the driver for all members, across all strata, to achieve the desired, future state. Senge (1991) stated, "leaders have to create and manage creative tension-especially around the gap between vision and reality. Mastery of such tension allows for a fundamental shift. It enables the leader to see the truth in changing situations" (p. 9). Furthermore, Senge (1991, 2014) and Senge et al. (1999) described a shared vision as a mutually understood, intellectual image that encompassed the values and future state of the organization held by its stakeholders.

OIP team members' narratives conveyed that they perceived that they were actively engaged in collaboration at all levels, but often in ways that were not meaningful to them and were not aligned with district and building goals. Observations indicated that

collaboration was often data heavy and lacked actionable steps. Collaboration did not

lead to meaningful reflection, personal mastery, or team learning. Sheppard et al. (2009)

described shared vision as detailed images inclusive of descriptions that outline a future

state with best practices that propel each member to embrace learning. Sheppard's

description would compel leaders to provide structures for organizational members. The

OIP's 5-step process (see Figure 4) was implemented and needed additional support to

ensure implementation with fidelity. As stated earlier, implementation should be planned,

monitored, and evaluated. The OIP emphasized the creation of an organization's vision

and development of a culture that supports every member as a learner.

Shared vision via power and decision-making. The concept of shared or

distributed leadership, as described in Gronn's (2000) LDT theory, provides for systems

in which OIP team members' behaviors and beliefs surrounding responsibility and

accountability are nurtured and expanded. In such systems, members understand that they

have the power to act on their decisions. Members' narratives and observations indicated

that they felt empowered to make decisions that affected their classrooms and buildings.

As have been noted, leaders' actions have the potential to provide employees with the

knowledge and skills to understand how those decisions influence the organization.

In some instances, leaders did not fully provide opportunities for members to

participate in shared leadership, which resulted in frustration and feelings of helplessness.

Leaders need to reflect on their practices that provide authentic and intentional

opportunities to share leadership, accountability, and responsibility to ensure the success

for each student within the district. Leaders should also seek critical feedback from

members at other strata to ensure that all voices are heard and that all individuals work together to contribute to the organization's overall success. This was especially true in buildings that are struggling, as was the case in Washington High School where Irene took it upon herself to learn about highly effective TBTs and try to replicate the practice without her leader's help.

Harris (2003) indicated that to distribute leadership in school settings, formal leaders must yield power, specifically, decision-making, to members belonging to a different stratum. Harris identified traditional hierarchical structures as a barrier to power distribution. Across North Pine Creek district, other BLTs and the DLT had learned to distribute power by sharing the team roles, such as record keeper, timekeeper, and facilitator. By rotating the responsibilities associated with the team, they helped to distribute leadership and build trust. Hornstrup et al. (2012) emphasized shared leadership as an essential component of systemic processes. Similarly, the OIP specifically addressed the need for teams to rotate roles to distribute power. What was absent in some instances, was a systemic mechanism to change the behavior of some of the leaders who maintained old hierarchical structures and who did not follow the OIP suggested practice and further did not listen to the voices of the members of the BLT. The lack of authentic shared leadership with members in other strata eroded trust and impeded efforts to use the OIP to foster actions that result in continuous improvement.

Perceived awareness of the system. Only a few instances were noted when district members of TBTs or BLTs understood the concept of systems or implementing an improvement process, such as a new program or instructional strategy, at scale. Robin,

a teacher, did not even know what the OIP was and when I elongated the abbreviation, believed it was associated with an improvement plan for the Ohio teacher evaluation system. Mia, a principal and leader of her building's BLT and the district DLT, did understand the concepts associated with the system and shared that this was her understanding because she had previously worked at the district level.

DLT members who also worked as district administrators were more apt to be able to discuss systems thinking concepts when asked during personal interviews. This was true for each of the three district administrators on the DLT, but only Mia of the building administrators. There are benefits to systems thinking. According to Winowiecki (2019), when applied consistently across organizational culture, systems thinking resulted in positive outcomes for teams, including increased morale, engagement, and feelings of empowerment.

When a system implements an improvement process, which relies on leadership to distribute properties, and the leader neglects to do so, the systemic qualities of the process fail. When the distribution fails, the system will experience pockets of greatness while the remainder of the organization is stagnant and organization members struggle. This concept is explained in Reeve's (2008) myth of linearity theory, noting that a majority of members must implement fully in order for the district to experience significant improvement. To address that issue of spotty implementation, another purpose of the OIP is to "systematically and systemically implement focused strategies and actions" (ODE, 2012, p. 66). Therefore, it is imperative that all OIP team members have a common understanding of the concepts of the OIP, including distributed leadership.

It is important for all academic members of a district to truly understand what distributed leadership looks like, how it is defined, and what outcomes are expected. It is especially important for formal leaders such as principals and teacher leaders. Furthermore, the habitat should support high quality adult learning opportunities, for both individual and teams, to achieve leader and teacher growth with the goal of improved student learning outcomes in the areas reported on the state report card. This can be accomplished through providing the structures, resources, and supports necessary for collaborative practices and continuous improvement of the organization. To address capacity gaps, all members would have basic understandings of the purpose of the OIP, the roles of teams and team members, the goals of the district, schools, and individual teams, and that continuous improvement is not retribution but a means for members to reflection and learn. Tenets include (a) a system exists; (b) we are part of the system; (c) problems persist; (d) we are part of the problem; (e) we are part of the solution; (f) the collective is more knowledgeable, innovative, and skilled than we each are alone; (g) we and the team will learn through reflection; and (h) we will continuously improve implementation of the system for the system. Addressing the capacity of membership will help to shift attitudes while developing skills for stronger collaborative practices. Consistently strive for their own continuous improvement.

Progress monitoring of implementation of the improvement process is important across all strata. Collective reflection can serve as one means for self-monitoring. Many participants thought of the OIP as compliance avoiding the importance of the

improvement system and misidentifying compliance as a negative element. Compliance provides guardrails for implementation and is eventually supplanted with performance.

Resources and supports for team learning. Structures and tools elevate meetings, coaching, feedback processes, planning, and monitoring to "support practical action and continuous improvement of the work undertaken together" (Hargreaves & O'Connor, 2018, p. 5). Supovitz et al. (2019) described social structures that control professional interactions, indicating that routines, norms, and protocols support improvement efforts.

The resources and supports identified in the data and directly observed in meetings, described during interviews, and reviewed in artifacts included: (a) dedicated and longitudinal BLT training, (b) dedicated and protected collaborative time across all strata, (c) consultants serving as facilitators, (d) external coaches for leaders, (e) templates used to guide team work, (f) programs supporting assessment development, programs designed to provide student data including diagnostics and progress monitoring, and (g) identified space for team meetings. One resource identified in the literature as highly effective was protocols (Supovitz et al., 2019). The use of protocols was absent in all data. Identifying and learning about the conditions of habitats where collaboration thrives will offer new insights into how leaders at all levels of the organization can shift their focus to support members' habits throughout the organization.

Finding 3: Balanced Habitudes

The OIP was developed to address low student achievement as measured by standardized assessments. To address the needs of a statewide system, the OIP, in

conjunction with the Ohio Leadership Advisory Council, identified the need to address leadership skills. ODE provided supports for schools that were identified as needing intensive support or moderate support. The goal of the OIP was to change leaders' behaviors so that they could influence the behaviors of other adults in the system through collaborative teams, shared leadership, and an emphasis on cycles of inquiry. Districts that included identified intensive or moderate support schools were given additional support via Ohio's SSoS. Because student achievement has not significantly improved across the state, especially in struggling schools, it is posited that the OIP has not been implemented in a way that has changed behaviors of teachers.

Balanced habitudes provide an equilibrium of behaviors and attitudes necessary to support the habits of collaborative professionalism described in Finding 1. Behaviors and attitudes across the study site were mostly positive. Some below-the-line behaviors that were heard, such as "Those are not my kids" or "I blame their grammar on their elementary and junior high teachers," were observed at the middle and high school levels and not the elementary level.

Negative attitudes feed behaviors in the team settings that counter the district's vision for positive improvements. Dewey (1916) posited that behaviors need to be practiced and eventually mastered for new attitudes to emerge. Positive attitudes feed positive habits and vice versa. To change behaviors, affirmative habits, described above, must be practiced, and attitudes should become congruent. Similar to mental models, when habitudes are balanced and positive, highly effective collaboration and continuous improvement will occur (Senge et al., 2012). When student data indicates a significant

gap, a comprehensive approach to shifting adult behaviors is necessary as shown in Figure 17 which illustrates how the various factors influence the habitudes of organizational members.
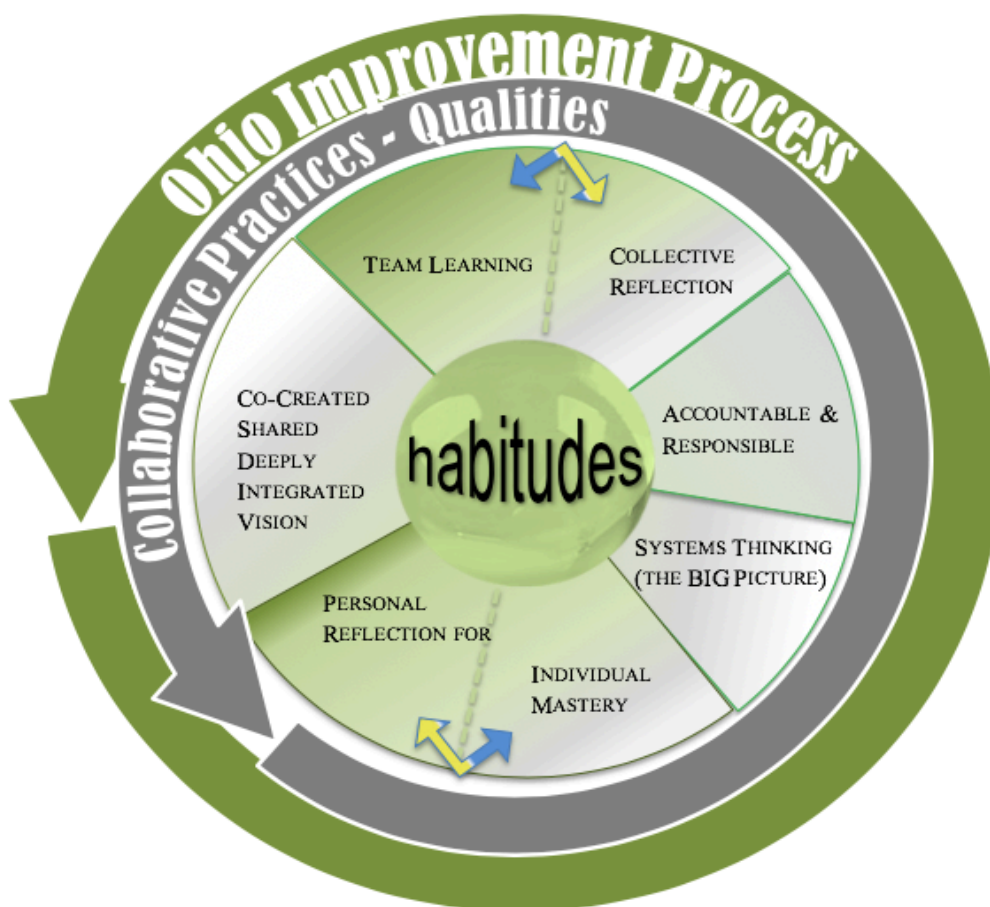
Figure 17. Balanced habitudes demonstrating connections between individual mastery and personal reflection and team learning and collective reflection.

Senge (1991) posited that systems thinking counters simplistic frameworks that are often used to solve the complex problems inherent within a system. Senge further suggested that before members solve those complex problems, they must first recognize described reflection as an "active, persistent, and careful consideration of any belief or

supposed form of knowledge" (p. 9) and Schön (1987) described reflective practice as a kind of grappling with previous understandings, one could imagine that participation in a research study could initiate reflection. As participants interrupt previously held beliefs about improvement and collaboration and fully engage in discourse, teams will begin to the system and that personal and team learning are ongoing processes. Dewey (1933) learn (Senge, 1991; Senge et al., 2006). Senge (1991) further described individuals' mental models as concealed and intuitive assumptions that influence behaviors. Senge et al. (2006) posited that for organizational learning to occur, members must acknowledge and explore their own mental models to support learning and performance. For individual and team learning to occur, personal and collective reflection is required (Gronn, 2000). Santos et al. (2015) described team learning as reflective behaviors, following protocols and processes, outcome focused, and authentic discourse as necessary as teams develop collective knowledge.

Limitations

The study was designed in a way to increase triangulation across methodology, theories, and analyses to reduce limitations, yet limitations exist. This study's limitations included the low return rate of interest surveys, the absence of focus groups as a data collection tool, and the transformation of my role with the subject site. I experienced low return rates of my electronically distributed interest surveys, which resulted in limited access to a smaller pool of potential participants. The lower than anticipated return rates impacted my ability to conduct the four planned focus groups.

Several actions were taken to mitigate the impact of the lower response rate and access to data from focus groups. I was able to use stratified, purposive sampling to identify members at each stratum of the organization to provide a stratum-representative sample of the study site. Additionally, the number of meetings observations was increased from 6 to 16. I used the additional meetings and increased number of interviews to reach saturation, which was achieved when these additional data sources were not offering any more insights.

To reduce the effect of limitations on my study, I had made specific plans prior to the start of data collection. Early in the design phase, I intentionally identified potential study sites that had not previously or were not then participating in the UCSIDC program for which I served as program manager. I chose a study site that had not participated in the program at UCSDIC. Furthermore, the timing of data collection was planned for the end of the 2018-19 school year. Unexpected delays in the start of data collection meant that some data were collected in June of the 2018-19 school year, including five interviews and artifacts and the remaining were completed in August through October in the 2019-20 school year. After data collection, had begun, the district chose to participate in the UCSDIC program, which is funded by the ODE. Observations began in August at the start of the 2019-20 school year. During that period, the district decided to enroll in the program, which meant that I would have contact with principals and one district-level employee in my work setting. To mitigate my personal bias, I chose not to complete additional principal interviews, asked principals not to communicate my role in the new program, and completed personal reflective journaling.

Recommendations

This study discovered that understanding the outcomes associated with team learning could be beneficial to all team members. Conducting future research to examine how collaboration could be used to disseminate the concept of collective reflection for team learning could provide new ways to operationalize improvement systems. More research is needed to understand how collaboration is influenced by the combination of collective reflection and team learning. Similarly, as systems thinking was not commonly understood by OIP team members, additional research to explore how a targeted training program, which develops school district members' skills and concepts associated with systems thinking, would enhance these individuals' awareness. While the scope of this study was limited to one Ohio suburban school district that voluntarily implemented the OIP, similar research would benefit from a setting that included a school district with mandatory implementation of a targeted training program. Furthermore, such a program would support school district members' understanding of how to shift their work from silos towards a holistic learning organization. Programs could be beneficial to other districts, especially if districts plan to implement an improvement process. Research to understand how systems thinking and collective reflection work together would be valuable to better inform collaborative practices moving forward.

Collaboration is a process that is often discussed but is not deeply understood. Collaborative practices are not simply teams working together, but rather are comprised of specific inputs, outputs, and outcomes. D'Amour et al. (2005) described specific characteristics regarding collaboration in medical settings. This study began to explore

how the qualities described by D'Amour et al. could be applied in an educational setting that has implemented an improvement process. Structures and systems, culture, governance, processes, and communication were observed within the OIP. Findings that I identified included habits for professional collaboration that included governance, habitats that provide supports and structures, and habitudes such personal and team reflection for mastery and team learning. Additional research, especially individual case studies of a holistic nature, on how collaborative qualities, habits, and attitudes combine to drive collaboration and improvement would be beneficial, especially in districts where an improvement process has been implemented.

My findings presented a concept of habitudes, a combination of habits and attitudes within collaborative cultures. Habitudes included systems thinking, a co-created and deeply integrated vision, personal reflection for individual mastery, and collective reflection for team learning are necessary for collaborative professionalism for school improvement to occur. While delving into the nurturing culture of the school district or deeply examining OIP team members' habitudes were beyond the scope of this study, understanding more about how habitudes are influenced by or how they influence collaboration would provide insights as leaders attempt to implement the OIP in this district or other similar districts. Understanding how negative habitudes such as below-the-line attitudes might be shifted towards more positive habitudes through team learning, collective reflection, and understanding systems thinking would be beneficial to leaders in other districts that have voluntarily adopted the OIP as they attempt to implement change systemically and with fidelity in their districts.

Implications for Social Change

The findings from this study can create the conditions for positive social change for organizations that use collaboration or have implemented an improvement process. As depicted in Figures 16, 17, and 18, organizations that use collaboration, whether the district voluntarily adopted the OIP or not, can use the findings of this study to identify specific habits that will deepen collaborative efforts, create habitats that support a learning organization, and develop habitudes that foster reflection and learning within and across all levels. Potentially, whenever an organization and the members that comprise it examine their habits, habitats, and habitudes, the potential for social change is considerable.

A shared vision and systems thinking/awareness are foundational aspects to consider for district leaders. There is more to organizational design than simply moving around departments or changing lines of authority. Organizations, like skyscrapers, need an aligned frame and a deep and solid foundation on which all else is constructed. The foundation and frame of an organization are its purpose, vision, and core values by which people act, interact, and achieve.

Once OIP district leaders have led development of a co-created, deeply integrated vision throughout the district, implementation committee members can turn their focus to developing habits at each stratum associated with the OIP and utilized in this district to deepen collaborative practices. District employees will need a deep understanding of the structures, supports, and resources prior to attempting to implement with BLT and TBT members. One way to implement would be for district-level employees to serve as

facilitators and gradually release facilitation to members in BLTs and TBTs. Facilitation would provide for lasting impact on how well teams functioned for team reflection and learning, embedded professional learning, and increased effectiveness of adult implementation as well as improvement to student learning measured by both state standardized assessments and district-identified assessments.

Considering that collaboration, continuous improvement, and organizational learning occur in many educational settings, there are potential positive social change implications for organizations that use collaboration within an improvement system like the OIP. To support more consistent culture across educational settings, embracing inquiry, sharing leadership, developing co-created vision, and ensuring members are aware of systems thinking were determined to be basic tenets of a culture that supports organizational learning. Often, a culture might embrace perfection and dissuade mistakes. When organizations have goals for continuous improvement to survive and thrive, they will understand that a culture focused on a deeply integrated vision, supporting collaboration at all strata, and supporting the input of all voices, and individual mastery for team learning. One of the findings of this study indicated that team facilitation was not equitable for the three strata with more training for facilitation at BLT and DLT levels and practically none for TBTs. As identified by McNulty (June 4, 2018), it would be beneficial for the BLT and DLT to monitor collaboration effectiveness. Furthermore, it could be valuable to understand how teams establish and use norms, examine artifacts such as minutes, generate actionable tasks during meetings by establishing progress monitoring. One way to support early team development would be to provide a skilled

facilitator and then using a gradual release model as teams learn to serve as their own team facilitators.

Organizations that implement improvement processes should consider Reeves' (2008) myth of linearity, which warns of haphazard implementation, where some teams achieve at high levels while the majority remain static. Therefore, it is important to frame implementation of collaboration and improvement processes within systems thinking to ensure members understand their role in addressing challenges. To address members' knowledge gaps, the organization should consider the benefits of providing learning opportunities for all members on topics of systems thinking and systemic practices to amplify the impact of using these findings to improve collaborative practices. Collaboration is not simply working together but is a complex set of habits and habitudes within a habitat primed for team learning. When collaboration is done well, school improvement efforts, such as the OIP, will be more effective. When the complexities of collaborative practices are understood, districts can more easily plan for, implement, monitor, and evaluate collaboration within an improvement process.

Habitats are within the control of the district, the state, and the federal departments of education. The findings illustrated in Figure 17 can inform policy makers at the federal and state levels as they interpret laws and develop supports for school districts, including those that have been identified as needing intensive support. For districts, the findings have implications for practice in that they can help identify gaps in implementation of collaborative structures to strengthen team learning and support continuous improvement efforts. Finally, the results from this study could be valuable for

other industries that seek to become learning organizations through continuous improvement and team collaboration. The structure of the OIP could be adapted to other sectors to help collaborative processes by providing the necessary foundations, supports, structures, resources, and tools for members to solve the inherent problems within the system.

Implications for positive social change among policy makers include the potential to provide guidance for future iterations of current policies and structures, such as the recent reboot of the OIP. Modeling continuous improvement may prove a stronger approach than simply rolling out another program, process, or structure. Two benefits are realized when policy makers model continuous improvement processes and organizational learning practices. The first is to demonstrate to district leaders and members that adult and organizational learning is ongoing. The second is that organizations, similar to this one Ohio district, that learn yield healthier, more robust organizations. Particularly relevant is Senge's (2000) description of continuous inquiry:

When we inhabit a school as a living system, we discover that it is always evolving. We participate in that evolution by asking questions like "Why is the system this way? Why do these rules exist? What is the purpose of this practice? We are not willing to settle for explanations meant to pacify us, such as: "The people who have the power make it that way." Since we are part of the system ourselves, we are drawn to inquire more deeply to look for ways that our own assumptions and habitual actions are integral to creating the system as it operates today. (p. 55)

State level members of the Ohio Department of Education could benefit include bureaucrats, who can use the findings to concentrate their resources and support on the most essential aspects of cultures of inquiry that promote organizational learning. Support at state levels would contribute to a systems approach and support a shift of members' discourse from only or mostly student-generated data towards a focus on adult learning to improve student outcomes. When cause and effect data are analyzed together, adults understand why and when students learn or why and when they do not learn. In addition to statewide systems that support school districts, other stakeholders could use the findings to shift collaborative practices.

As described above, the findings have the potential to positively impact collaboration, improvement, and organizational learning. This is especially true when educators take time to stop, reflect critically, and improve their person practice. Understanding the intricacies of collaboration may well contribute to a positive social impact across all organizations.

Conclusions

The ASCD Committee described the educational purpose of schooling as to provide "for the fullest possible development of each learner for living morally, creatively, and productively in a democratic society" (ASCD, 1957 in Van Til, 1986, p. 2). To achieve these purposes and reach their visions, districts have adopted improvement processes like the OIP. As districts adopt, implement, and monitor the OIP, it is imperative that districts understand how best to support collaborative practices at each

level and all academic members and all executive leaders understand that collaboration is one method the district can use to achieve its vision. It is vital for members to understand systems thinking and how they have a critical role in helping to solve the problems inherent within the system.

In the fall of 2019, ODE identified 689 schools in 162 districts – or equivalent (such as charter schools throughout the state) – as requiring either intensive support or moderate support. Three additional districts with 25 schools were identified as being in academic distress (ODE, 2020). According to ODE (2019), these districts serve more than 418,000 students. Students in these schools are likely caught in an opportunity gap neither demonstrating proficiency on achievement assessments or meeting graduation requirements (Darling-Hammond, Friedlaender, & Snyder, 2014; Gorski, 2017).

This research study identified ways in which systems thinking strategies and structures offered opportunities for teams to solve problems when they encountered obstacles. Members often did not understand they were part of a larger system and that problems they encountered were inherent within that system. Some TBT and BLT members implied that the district's problems belonged to the district administrators and not each member in all strata. The BLT and TBT members also failed to understand that they were central to solving those problems. Specifically, TBT and BLT members often understood that they were part of the district, but they did not understand how their decisions, when made for the classroom or the building, represented a distribution of power and leadership. The distribution of leadership and decision making through collaboration might provide systemic team learning. According to Jaaron and Backhouse

(2014) , the use of systems thinking "facilitates group learning, shared decision-making and improved organizational resilience" (p. 107).

Indications from this study were that power was not always shared intentionally as described in shared leadership. While teachers often failed to understand when and how their voices had influenced leadership decisions, a clearer foundation of shared leadership could help teachers make informed decisions and feel part of the organization. Leaders should be intentional when planning to ensure that all voices are heard and ensure that plans are developed and followed to ensure that when members' voices are gathered to make decisions, the purpose is clear to all.

This study's findings indicate that critical collective reflection is a key component of team learning. Senge (1991), Gronn (2000), and Bresman and Zellmer-Bruhn (2013), have described actions associated with team learning that included (a) critical questioning of members, (b) seeking, accepting, and building upon feedback, (c) open discussion of failures, and d) social interaction between team members (Edmondson, 1999; Wilson & Dunn, 2004). The link between collective reflection and team learning was clearly seen in this study and forms a key finding that extends knowledge associated with collaboration.

Teams at all school district strata need to develop trust and build respect. While this concept has been widely researched (Breuer Hüffmeier, Hibben, & Hertel, 2019; Greenberg, Greenberg, & Antonucci, 2007; Tschannen-Moran, 2014; Wibowo & Hayati, 2019), there are complexities associated with actively building trust, such as member competency, proactivity, task-related benevolence, team-related integrity, and consistency (Breuer et al., 2019). When districts implement improvement processes that

include collaboration, it is vital for leadership to understand the operationalization of trust and work to build and nurture it. In instances where mutual respect and trust were projected by team members and study participants, there was evidence of a mental model of reciprocity being built between strata. While efforts to build trust between team members can be difficult where their mental models, presumptions, and past experiences have resulted in negative paradigms, but it can be done and is worth the effort.

Habits, habitats, and habitudes impact each school district stratum and are vital for organizations to become learning organizations. Habits are the practices that each member, at each stratum develop to achieve collaborative professionalism. Habitats are the cultures that are nurtured to support collaborative practices within and across strata. In reconceptualizing Dewey's (1916, 1922) idea of habitudes as a combination of habits I extend this concept to show how, when practiced, habits can begin to shift attitudes. Organizational members, specifically leaders, can develop positive habitudes through co-creation of a vision, systems thinking, collective reflection for team learning, personal reflection for individual mastery, and personal responsibility and team accountability. When each member believes that he/she/they are personally responsible for all students and when team members work together, the organizational goal of high fidelity for implementation (Reeves, 2008) can be achieved. This goal is evident in *The Ohio Standards for the Teaching Profession,* Standard 7 that stated in part: "Teachers assume responsibility for professional growth, performance and involvement as an individual and as a member of a learning community" (ODE, 2005, p. 14). For teaching teams to implement with high fidelity, positive balanced habitudes will be needed. Similarly, *The*

Ohio Principal Standards, Standard 5 stated: "The effective educational leader supports all staff by promoting and organizing an environment focused on continuous improvement and personal growth to achieve positive outcomes for each student" (ODE, 2018c, p. 10). Taken together, when district leadership, principals, and teachers effectively collaborate by sharing leadership, power, and a common vision, in an effort for continuous improvement, student achievement will increase.

Consider for a moment the power of a screw, a simple machine, that pulls objects together or lifts them. Collaboration is like the screw. Collaboration can be used to both pull teams together and to lift them to a higher purpose. In this study, I sought to understand collaborative practices within a school system that had previously implemented the OIP and explore the culture of collaboration within and across strata. Understanding the intricacies of collaboration, team learning, collective reflection, individual mastery, and personal reflection can lift schools toward a higher purpose.

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Appendix A: Acronyms

Acronym	Description
BLT	Building Leadership Team
CCP	Categorical Content Perspective
CoP	Community of Practice
DLT	District Leadership Team
ESEA	Elementary and Secondary Education Act
ESSA	Every Student Succeeds Act
HCP	Holistic Content Perspective
IGI	Instructional Guidance Infrastructure
IRB	Institutional Review Board
LDT	Leadership Distribution Theory
NCLB	No Child Left Behind
ODE	Ohio Department of Education
OIP	Ohio Improvement Process
OLAC	Ohio Leadership Advisory Council
OLT	Organizational Learning Theory
RttT	Race to the Top
SSoS	State System of Support
SST	State Support Team
TBT	Teacher Based Team
UCSDIC	University of Cincinnati's System Development and Improvement Center

Appendix B: Ohio Improvement Process Resource Table

OHIO IMPROVEMENT PROCESS (OIP) RESOURCES – SPRING 2012	0 - Preparation.	1	2	3	4	DLT/ CSLT	BLT	TBT	OIP tools used with resources.
Ohio Department of Education — Ohio Improvement Process. Any of the following resources may be customized and used during preparation and in more than one stage of the OIP. The chart to the right indicates which collaborative teams can most appropriately use the resource and tools during stages of the process. The purpose of each resource is explained following the number/name of the resource.									
RESOURCE 1 — OIP Orientation PowerPoint Presentation	●	●	●	●	●	X	X	X	
This resource can be used for district/community school and/or building orientation on the OIP, to inform stakeholders about the continuous improvement process and general information about completing the process, and as material for written and electronic communication to the general public.									
RESOURCE 2 — OIP Visual and Summary of Stages	●	●	●	●	●	X	X	X	
This visual illustrates the OIP process (Stages 0, 1, 2, 3, 4), a brief description of each stage, and identifies who is involved in the process (DLT/CSLT, BLT, TBT). This can be used for orientation or professional development, written or electronic communication to a variety of stakeholders.									
RESOURCE 3 — DF/BDF Flowchart and DF/BDF Tabs	●	●				X	X		DF/BDF
This resource is used to orient the district/community school and/or building to the organization of the DF/BDF and how each level relates to each other in order to identify the most critical needs and probable causes.									
RESOURCE 4 — Meeting Effectiveness Checklist	●	●	●	●	●	X	X	X	
This checklist provides guidance on how to plan, start, structure and close meetings. Individuals or groups can use the checklist to evaluate the effectiveness of planning and conducting meetings and may be used after each meeting or after a series of meetings.									
RESOURCE 5 — OIP Implementation Criteria and Rubric	●	●	●	●	●	X	X	X	
The purpose of this analytic rubric is to create increased awareness of high quality implementation and alignment by judging continuous improvement based on clearly articulated uniform criteria. This analytic rubric, organized into the three areas of A) Effective Teams; B) District/Community School/Building Leadership Teams; and C) Teacher-Based Teams, allows for more precise feedback to districts/community schools, regions and LEAs. The appropriate areas of the rubric can be used by the DLT/CSLT, BLT and/or TBT to evaluate their plan and support.									
RESOURCE 6 — Data Source Identification		●			●	X	X		D/BDF
This resource provides a list of possible data needed for informed, data-based decisions necessary to complete each level and area of the **DF**. This resource has two uses: 1) to guide the discussion to determine what data the district /community school and/or building has readily available that can answer the questions in the **DF/BDF**, and 2) to provide an organizer for summarizing data to support **DF/BDF** ratings/judgments.									
RESOURCE 7 — DF/BDF Essential & Expanded Questions		●	●	●	●	X	X		DF/BDF CCIP/IMM
These questions are built into each level of the electronic DF/BDF and are provided here to allow a facilitator to view the entire set so he/she may probe deeper. The additional questions are designed to deepen investigation of root causes for discrepancies in student achievement and deepen the investigation of factors affecting student achievement including students with disabilities, early childhood, student physical, social and emotional health and school climate.									

OHIO IMPROVEMENT PROCESS (OIP) RESOURCES – SPRING 2012		OIP STAGE					USE			OIP TOOLS
		0	1	2	3	4	DLT/CSLT	BLT	TBT	OIP tools used with resources.
RESOURCE 8	**Grain Size and Definitions of Goal, Strategy, Action Steps, Tasks and Indicators**			●		●	X	X	X	CCIP/IMM

This visual illustration defines goal, annual goal target and multi-year goal indicator, strategy, action steps, tasks and adult and student performance indicator and can be used to help the DLT/CSLT and BLT understand the differences among them.

RESOURCE 9	**Focused Plan Descriptors Checklist**			●		●	X	X		CCIP/IMM

The DLT/CSLT and BLT can use this checklist to determine the degree to which the plan(s) they have created meet specific criteria for SMART goals, strategies, action steps and indicators.

RESOURCE 10	**Focused Plan Templates (Implementation Management/Monitoring – IMM)**			●	●	●	X	X		IMM

This paper version of the electronic district and building IMM is provided as a worksheet for the DLT/CSLT and BLTs to use as they draft their plan action steps, monitoring evidence/data, person(s) responsible, timelines, and resources.

RESOURCE 11	**Task Implementation Template**			●	●	●				IMM

This template helps define the tasks that district and building level collaborative teams will undertake to implement action steps.

RESOURCES 12 A, B	**Implementation Effectiveness Survey: Conditions to Support Successful Collaborative Teams** A – DLT/CSLT B – BLT			●	●	●	X	X	X	

These surveys, customized for each collaborative team (DLT/CSLT, BLT), allow the team to determine its readiness to support and continued growth by examining whether the conditions for successful implementation. There are several purposes for this resource:

- To determine the overall status of these conditions in the district/community school and building.
- To identify specific tasks related to these conditions that must be implemented more effectively in order to achieve success for the team.
- As a baseline and progress measure for judging growth in supporting, implementing and monitoring collaborative teams.
- To review OIP structures and systems effectiveness throughout the district/community school.

RESOURCE 13	**Teacher Based Team (TBT) Conditions and Next Steps Inventory**									

This resource can be used by the DLT/CSLT and/or BLT to assess conditions needed to develop, implement, and sustain TBTs. In addition, this inventory guides discussion around next steps needed for ensuring all conditions are in place for effective implementation of TBTs.

RESOURCE 14	**TBT 5-Step Process Visual**			●	●	●	X	X	X	

This visual illustrates the 5-step teacher based team process. It can be used by the DLT/CSLT, BLT, and TBT as an orientation for teams, professional development for teams, a guide for team meetings or used in written documents.

RESOURCE 15	**TBT 5-Step Process Implementation Checklist**			●	●	●	X	X	X	

OHIO IMPROVEMENT PROCESS (OIP) RESOURCES – SPRING 2012	OIP STAGE					USE			OIP TOOLS
	0	1	2	3	4	DLT/ CSLT	BLT	TBT	OIP tools used with resources.

This checklist provides teacher-based teams a description of what should be accomplished during each step of the 5-step process and approximately how much time it takes to complete each step. This resource also provides a template for recording data for Steps 1 and 5.

| RESOURCE 16 | TBT 5-Step Process Rubric for Self-Assessment and Monitoring | | | ● | ● | ● | X | X | X | |

This rubric can be used for TBT self-assessment or by the DLT/CSLT and BLT for monitoring. The results may be used for a) determining which TBTs require additional support and/or PD, and b) identifying TBTs that are effectively implementing the process for replication in a building or district.

| RESOURCE 17 | High Quality Professional Development (HQPD) Checklist | | | ● | ● | ● | X | X | | |

This checklist includes evidence-based characteristics that help a DLT/CSLT and BLT ensure professional development (PD) is high quality, aligned to the continuous improvement plan and meets state standards for PD. Using this list of characteristics as a checklist helps guide choice and use of PD services. Included is a chart describing the five levels of professional development evaluation.

| RESOURCE 18 | PD Alignment Template | | | ● | ● | ● | X | X | | |

DLTs/CSLTs completing this template will have a thorough description of PD for the district and all buildings. The results will help them determine whether PD is aligned, logically sequenced, monitored and will result in goal accomplishment.

| RESOURCE 19 | Assessment Definitions and Inventory Template | | ● | ● | ● | ● | X | X | | DF/BDF |

Types, definitions and purposes/uses of Ohio assessments are described, followed by a template that the DLT/CSLT can use to gauge whether it has an aligned and comprehensive assessment system that can provide data to identify critical needs, monitor implementation of the plan indicators and evaluate results.

| RESOURCE 20 A, B, C, D | Sample Protocols to Support the OIP
A – PROTOCOL FOR EXPLORING STUDENT WORK – ANALYSIS OF STUDENT WORK
B – TUNING PROTOCOL
C – PROTOCOL FOR DEVELOPING "LOOK FORS"
D – PROTOCOL FOR ANALYZING SUCCESS | | | | ● | | X | X | X | |

This resource offers samples of protocols for a district and/or building to use with their collaborative structures. Each protocol is for a different purpose as described in the OIP Guide. Protocols create a structure to ask challenging questions and allow for active listening to help teams stay focused and on task.

| RESOURCE 21 A, B, C | 5-Step Process Meeting Agenda and Minutes Template
A – DLT /CSLT
B – BLT
C – TBT | | | | ● | | X | X | X | |

These three templates, customized for each collaborative team (DLT/CSLT, BLT, TBT), provide a format for a standard meeting agenda using the 5-step process. Each step provides: some questions for consideration, information needed, and a place to record data and instructional conclusions.

| RESOURCE 22 | Coaching TBTs: Prompts and Log | | | | ● | | | X | | |

	OIP STAGE					USE			OIP TOOLS
OHIO IMPROVEMENT PROCESS (OIP) RESOURCES – SPRING 2012	0	1	2	3	4	DLT/ CSLT	BLT	TBT	OIP tools used with resources.

Individuals coaching TBTs may use the prompts that are organized by the 5-step process to guide their conversations with TBTs. A log to record what occurred and next steps for the coach is provided. The completed log can be summarized and submitted to the BLT for its monitoring and follow through.

RESOURCE 23	Progress Monitoring and Evaluation Model and Descriptors				•	•	X	X	X	

The visual illustrates the monitoring and evaluation model for the OIP and is followed by a chart defining monitoring and evaluation by purpose, focus, timeline, frequency and feedback. This resource can be used for district/community school and/or building orientation on the OIP, to inform stakeholders about the relationship of Stages 3 and 4, and as material for written and electronic communication to the general public.

RESOURCE 24	Monitoring System Components and Methods to Monitor Student Performance and Adult Implementation				•	•	X	X	X	

The chart on the first two pages of this resource describes the eight components of a good monitoring system. The remainder of this resource assists in addressing two of the components, i.e., what to gather for monitoring student performance and adult implementation and how to gather it. The resource is divided into three parts:

- Part A describes ways to monitor student performance.
- Part B provides ideas on what and how to monitor adult implementation.
  - Classroom Observation Overview
  - District Walkthrough Protocol (Generic)
  - Observation Checklist Protocol
  - Selected Document Review, e.g., BLT and TBT minutes, lesson plans, observation summaries
- Part C describes sample "Look for" behaviors associated with a variety of district indicators and can be used in Part A and B. Specific samples provided are Content "Look Fors", Differentiated Classroom-Formative Assessment "look fors: and Curriculum-Academic Rigor "Look Fors".

RESOURCE 25 A, B	Recording and Reporting Monitoring Data Templates A – TBT 5-STEP PROCESS TEMPLATE B – BLT TO DLT REPORTING TEMPLATE				•	•	X	X	X	IMM

TBTs may use Template A, which is aligned to the 5-Step Process, for reporting to the BLT at the end of the process and/or they can summarize the data on the form according to a schedule prescribed by the BLT. BLTs can complete Template B on a regular basis and submit them to the DLT. The DLT can then create graphs that show differences/similarities between buildings, grade levels, etc. The DLT can aggregate data to show total numbers/percents for the entire district.

RESOURCE 26	Directions for Answering the 6 IMM Evaluation Questions and Evaluation Report Template					•	X	X		IMM

Steps to answer the six evaluation questions are provided in this resource. The format for responding to these questions can also serve as a template for formative and summative evaluation reporting.

RESOURCE 27	Facilitator Competencies Assessment	•	•	•	•	•	X	X	X	

The purpose of this resource is to assess competency and enhance performance in knowledge, skills and behavior for any staff employed to facilitate the

Appendix C: Interview Question Protocol

Interview Name	VERIFY spelling of name
Role	
Email	VERIFY
Introduction Script	Hello [Insert Name]. Thank you for agreeing to speak with me today. This research project focuses on the cultures and practices associated with improvement processes. To assist my note-taking, I would like to record our conversations today as indicated in the email when we confirmed today's interview. Do I have your permission to proceed? *Begin recording.* Please sign the consent form. Let's begin with a discussion of the process and information confirm that everything is clear and we can each have a copy of the consent form with our signatures. I am the only person who will have access to audio recording or data generated from it. The audio recordings will be destroyed at the end of this research project. I will securely maintain data for a period of 5 years. To confirm that you understand what is involved, the consent form states (1) all information will be held confidential, (2) your participation is voluntary, you may stop at any time during this interview if you feel uncomfortable, and (3) there is no intent to inflict any harm. I have planned this interview to last approximately one hour. During this time, there are approximately 20 questions that I would like to cover. It may be challenging, but if we keep the pace moving we should be able to get to all of them without feeling too rushed. Please let me know if you need to take a break at any point and you may choose to not participate at any time. Ok? Let's begin.

Questions	Notes
IT1. What grade/subject do you teach? IA1. What is your role in the district?	
IT2. How long have you taught that grade/subject? IA2. How long have you been in that role?	
IT3. How long have you been teaching in the district? IA3. What was your role prior?	

IT4.Overall, how long have you been teaching? IA4.How long were you in that role?	
I5.What does the Ohio Improvement Process mean to you? Probe: When did [District] first begin the OIP? Probe: How was the OIP implemented? Probe: When did you first begin the Ohio Improvement Process at [insert district name here]? Probe: How was the Ohio Improvement Process implemented?	
I6.Please describe the purpose of your [Insert TBT/BLT/DLT]	
I7.Tell me about the activities that occur in your [Insert TBT/BLT/DLT] meetings?	
I8.Please describe your definition of collaboration.	
I9.Describe how your definition aligns, or does not, with your team's work?	
I10.What are some of the activities involved in collaboration? Probes When and where does collaboration take place? Who is involved? In what roles/capacity?	
I11.In your experience, who initiates collaboration?	
I12.What supports/structures are provided for you and your team to collaborate?	
I13.Describe your district's vision	
I14.Tell me about your role in accomplishing the vision? Probe: Did you participate in creating the vision? If yes - Can you describe that experience?	

I15.Please share an experience when you and your team members learned something together? Probe: How did you feel when that happened?	
I16.Please tell me about how you interact with [insert other stratum classroom, building, district]?	
I17.Describe your team's decision-making process? (instructional practice; building policy; district policy).	
I18.Describe the next steps after your team has made a decision.	
I19.Please describe a recent change you have experienced? Follow-Up: How did that recent change effect [insert appropriate group: teachers; principals in other buildings; the superintendent; the community]	
I20.What, if anything, would you do differently? Why?	
Closing Script	Thank you for sharing your experience with me today. Do you have any additional thoughts that you would like to share? I want to remind you that your responses will remain confidential and ask that you maintain confidentiality of the other participants. Thank you again for sharing your time and your experiences with us. Have a nice day/evening.
Debriefing Script	The consent form provides information on the purpose of this study. Once the study is completed and published, I will forward a link to you if you would like to review the report. My Walden email is included on the consent form if you have additional thoughts.
Reflections	Record thoughts immediately after focus groups ends. Use the following questions to guide the reflection. Did the interview timing and pace seem appropriate? Describe your feelings during the interview. Were you prepared for the interview? If not, what will you do to prepare for the next interview? Thinking about the process, what could be improved moving forward?

Appendix D: Focus groups Protocol Sets
Focus groups Protocol – Homogeneous Groups[1]

Introduction	Hello. I appreciate you each taking time to speak with me today. My name is Lori Foltz-Rea. I am a doctoral candidate at Walden University. This research project focuses on the cultures and practices associated with improvement processes. To assist my note-taking, I would like to record our conversations today as indicated in the email when we confirmed today's meeting. Do I have your permission to proceed?
	Begin recording.
	Let's begin with a discussion of the process and information and confirm that everything is clear. We can each have a copy of the consent form with our signatures.
	I am the only person who will have access to audio recording or data generated from it. The audio recordings will be destroyed at the end of this research project. I will securely maintain data for a period of 5 years. To confirm that you understand what is involved, the consent form states (1) all information will be held confidential, (2) your participation is voluntary, you may stop at any time during this interview if you feel uncomfortable, and (3) there is no intent to inflict any harm.
	Are there any questions? Great let's begin.
	I have planned this focus groups to last approximately 90 minutes. During this time, there are approximately 13 questions that I want to cover. It may be challenging, but if we keep the pace moving we should be able to get to all of them without feeling too rushed.
	As we begin I want to remind you that there are no *right* answers. I am here to listen to your views. I also want to hear all voices. At this time, if you have a cell phone with you, could you please silence the ringer – but feel free to leave if you need to take a call or if you feel uncomfortable.

Questions	Notes
F1-1. Let's begin by learning about each of you. Could you please tell us your first name, your role in the district, which building or office your work in, how many years' experience you have in education	

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[1] Focus Groups were planned but not used for this study. The protocol set is included to support Chapter 3.

and how many of those years are here in [ADD DISTRICT].	
F1-2. Your district uses the Ohio Improvement Process which has a focus on collaborative practices. Describe the character of (DISTRICT) since you have implemented the Ohio Improvement Process.	
F1-3. Considering how you described the character of the district, please share how the entire system has adapted since the Ohio Improvement Process was implemented.	
F1-4. What is the purpose of the collaboration in your (district, building, classroom)?	
F1-5. What structures or processes are in place that support your team's collaborative work?	
F1-6. Please share your experiences with collaboration across the organization such as TBT to BLT or BLT to DLT.	
F1-7. Please describe your team's decision-making processes?	
F1-8. What happens after the team makes a decision?	
F1-9.Describe the purpose or vision of (District).	
F1-10. How do you see your team's role in achieving that vision?	
F1-11. Tell us, who do you feel is responsible for the success of the district?	
F1-12. Describe adult learning in [DISTRICT]?	
F1-13. Earlier you shared your thoughts on how the Ohio Improvement Process was implemented. Based on those thoughts, would you share ideas on how you might have improved the rollout?	
Closing	Thank you for sharing your experience with me today. Do you have any additional thoughts that you would like to share? I want to remind you that your responses will remain confidential and ask that you maintain confidentiality of the other participants. Thank you again for sharing your time and your experiences with us. Have a nice day/evening.

Debriefing Procedure	The consent form provides information on the purpose of this study. Once the study is completed and published, I will forward a link to you if you would like to review the report. My Walden email is included on the consent form if you have additional thoughts.
Reflections	Record thoughts immediately after focus groups ends. . Use the following questions to guide the reflection. Did the interview timing and pace seem appropriate? Describe your feelings during the interview. Were you prepared for the interview? If not, what will you do to prepare for the next interview? Thinking about the process, what could be improved moving forward?

Focus groups Protocol – Heterogeneous Group

Introduction	Hello. I appreciate you each taking time to speak with me today. My name is Lori Foltz-Rea. I am a doctoral candidate at Walden University. This research project focuses on the cultures and practices associated with improvement processes. To assist my note-taking, I would like to record our conversations today as indicated in the email when we confirmed today's meeting. Do I have your permission to proceed? *Begin recording.* Let's begin with a discussion of the process and information and confirm that everything is clear. We can each have a copy of the consent form with our signatures. I am the only person who will have access to audio recording or data generated from it. The audio recordings will be destroyed at the end of this research project. I will securely maintain data for a period of 5 years. To confirm that you understand what is involved, the consent form states (1) all information will be held confidential, (2) your participation is voluntary, you may stop at any time during this interview if you feel uncomfortable, and (3) there is no intent to inflict any harm. Are there any questions? Great let's begin. I have planned this focus groups to last approximately 90 minutes. During this time, there are four topics that I want to cover. It may be challenging, but if we keep the pace moving we should be able to get to all of them without feeling too rushed. As we begin I want to remind you that there are no *right* answers. I am here to listen to your views. I also want to hear all voices. At this time, if you have a cell phone with you, could you please silence the ringer – but feel free to leave if you need to take a call or if you feel uncomfortable. If you need to take a break, feel free to do so at any time.
Questions	Notes
F2-1. Let's begin by learning about each of you. Could you please tell us your first name, your role in the district, which building or office your work in, how many years' experience you have in education and how many of those years are here in [ADD DISTRICT].	

F2-2. Your district uses the Ohio Improvement Process which has a focus on collaborative practices. Let's first discuss school improvement. What does school improvement mean to you?	
F2-3. Based on [RESTATE COMMON THEMES FG2 IDENTIFIED IN F2-2] what conditions, structures, or processes are necessary for school improvement to here?	
F2-4. Ok, you have defined school improvement and have identified conditions, structures, and processes. Based on those discussions, share an experience that might indicate that school improvement is happening here.	
F2-5. Describe any experiences that might indicate school improvement is not working?	
Ok – your conversations have been great and I appreciate your sharing your experiences. Let's move onto another topic.	
F2-6. In my first statement the word *collaboration* was mentioned. Please share what collaboration means to you.	
F2-7. Based on [RESTATE COMMON THEMES FG2 IDENTIFIED IN F2-6] share an experience when you participated in collaboration.?	
Thank you for your input so far. Let's start on another topic.	
F2-8. Most organizations create a vision or purpose. Share with us your perception of the district's core purpose or vision.	
F2-9.Great, what I heard was [recap responses]. Did I miss anything important? Ok considering your description, tell us how you/your team or both, feel about your role in accomplishing that vision/purpose. *If the descriptions or purpose were negative*: Describe what you believe the purpose/vision of the district should be.	
F2-10. How do you see your team's role in achieving that vision?	
F2-11. Tell us, who do you feel is responsible for the success of the district?	

Great, we are almost finished. One more topic to cover. There is some research that indicates that team learning and systems thinking are valuable to a school district. Team learning is defined as district staff learning together and from one another.	

F2-12. Please share an experience when you learned something new as part of a team.
 	
Follow-up:
  a) Describe how you think the other team members felt?
  b) Why do you think they felt that way?	

F2-13. Part 2 focuses on systems thinking, which is defined as the ability of members to participate in solving organizational problems. Thinking about that definition, share an experience, including any processes you used when you were involved in solving a problem within this district.	

Closing	That is the end of my questions. Thank you for sharing your experiences with me today. Do you have any additional thoughts that you would like to add? I want to remind you that your responses will remain confidential and ask that you maintain confidentiality of the other participants. Thank you again for sharing your time and your experiences with us. Have a nice day/evening.
Debriefing Procedure	The consent form provides information on the purpose of this study. Once the study is completed and published, I will forward a link to you if you would like to review the report. My Walden email is included on the consent form if you have additional thoughts.
Reflections	Record thoughts immediately after focus groups ends. Use the following questions to guide the reflection. Did the interview timing and pace seem appropriate? Describe your feelings during the interview. Were you prepared for the interview? If not, what will you do to prepare for the next interview? Thinking about the process, what could be improved moving forward?

Appendix E: Observation Field Note Template

Observation Field Notes

Date	Time
Location	Group
Participants (first name only)	**Role**

Details	**Reflections**
Prior to start of meeting use this column to record details about the setting (sketch on back of page if time permits). Scribe as the meeting occurs to capture discourse, interactions. Collect artifacts including minutes from prior meetings (if available) and agenda.	Use this column to record details for analysis such as authority, power, voices, knowledge, relationships/interactions.

Appendix F: Letter of Cooperation

████████
████████████

April 23, 2019

Dear Lori Rea,

Based on my review of your research proposal, I give permission for you to conduct the study entitled "Exploring Systemic Collaboration across Organizational Strata within Public Schools' Improvement Systems" within the ████████████████████. As part of this study, I authorize you to contact staff using publicly available email addresses. Data will be collected on district premises from district employees. Individuals' participation will be voluntary and at their own discretion.

We understand that our organization's responsibilities include: providing private space for personal interviews and focus groups. We will also allow access to one District Leadership Team meeting, one Building Leadership Team meeting, and one Teacher Based Team meeting. To secure confidential consent, ████████ will 1) ask building principals' to distribute a link to your study participation survey, 2) arrange for private space to conduct personal interviews, not to exceed 6 interviews, 3) provide private meeting space to conduct focus groups, not to exceed four 4 focus groups, and 4) provide access to one meeting at the district, building, and classroom levels. We reserve the right to withdraw from the study at any time if our circumstances change. No other resources will be provided beyond those described above.

I do require supervision of research activities or the researcher. DESCRIBE HERE

I understand that the student will not be naming our organization in the doctoral project report that is published in Proquest.

I confirm that I am authorized to approve research in this setting and that this plan complies with the organization's policies.

I understand that the data collected will remain entirely confidential and may not be provided to anyone outside of the student's supervising faculty/staff without permission from the Walden University IRB.

Sincerely,

_____   _____
████████   ██
████████████

Appendix G: Examples of Artifacts Provided by Study Site Employees

BUILDING CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT PLAN (CIP)

████████████████ ate: September 2019-2020

Building Strengths:

Strength: Third grade met proficiency indicator in ELA (81.1%) and Math (89.5%).

Strength: Fourth grade met proficiency indicator in ELA (85.9%) and Math (94.9%).

Strength: received an A (100%) on the gap closing area of the Ohio State Report Card.

Strength: 45% of students scored advanced or accelerated overall in school achievement.

18-19 Writing data

Building Areas of Challenge:

W████████ved a D in K-3 literacy. Only 28.1% of students improved from "not on track" to "on track."

W█████ess: students continue to struggle solving multi-step word problems.

Focus: (Goals)

a. Goal 1: By the end of school year 2019-2020, we will improve economically disadvantaged, African American and EL student achievement levels in ELA to meet 90% on the performance index on the state local report card.

b. Goal 2: By the end of school year 2019-2020, we will improve writing scores, at least
76% of our students per grade level will meet the measures of mastery on our school writing benchmark assessments. (Average score on writing of 3 or 4 on the writing rubric)

c. Goal 3: By the end of the 2023-24 school year, the building will reduce the percentage of students who miss more than 5% of their instructional days, either through discipline or absences, to 3%.

Actions:	Mid Year Check:
1a. • During TBT's we will specifically discuss these three subgroups and document progress throughout the school year.	1. • Results of iReady Reading, OST, and OELPA.

• Provide specific interventions based on their instructional needs.	

2b.
• Teachers will administer common writing benchmark assessment using Wit and Wisdom Rubric to score student work.
 	
• Teachers will grade and analyze student writing to provide interventions based on a common rubric.
 	
• Teachers will work collaboratively to determine effectiveness of strategies, based on student work, in order to efficiently and effectively make alterations to increase achievement.
 	
• Grade-level teams will utilize informational texts to teach students to write about a selected topic using their own words. Post clear expectations of what needs to be included in the structure and content of student's writing.
    ○ Cold Writes
    ○ Oral retellings
    ○ Use of social media to record oral presentation of learned material
    ○ Timed writes
    ○ Painted Essay
    ○ Signed Post of Literature/Non-Fiction (Note and Noted-Book)
    ○ Language Frames
    ○ RACE-restate; answer/annotate; cite; explain/elaborate
    ○ Descriptive Feedback
 	
• Teachers will read, participate and present a Chapter of our book study, Writing for Understanding
	2.
	• Results of Winter Writing Benchmark
	
	• BLT members will meet with the grade level TBT's and document using the BLT Log.
	
	• Student evidence of informational writing strategies.

3c. • Students who miss a day or less (7 hrs.) for each quarter earn building incentive • Students will be responsible to track their own attendance in data binder • Schedule grade level town hall meetings to announce quarterly attendance recognition	**3.** • An attendance report provided by the office or tracked by teacher through Infinite Campus

• Loop a video of those students recognized during lunch periods	

Results we expect:	Mid Year Check:
1. By the end of school year 2019-2020, we will Improve economically disadvantaged, African American and EL student achievement levels in ELA to meet 90% on the performance index on the state local report card.	1. • During grade level TBT's we will analyze Winter results of iReady Reading and Writing Benchmark Assessment data.
2. By the end of school year 2019-2020, we will Improve writing scores, at least 76% of our students per grade level will meet the measures of mastery on our school writing benchmark assessments. (Average score on writing of 3 or 4 on the writing rubric)	2. • During grade level TBT's we will analyze Winter results of iReady Reading and Writing Benchmark Assessment data.
3. By the end of the 2023-24 school year, the building will reduce the percentage of students who miss more than 5% of their instructional days, either through discipline or absences, to 3%.	3. • During BLT meetings, the committee will review monthly attendance data

Link to District CIP

Teacher-Based Team Protocol

District: ▓▓▓▓▓▓OOL DISTRICT   School: ▓▓▓▓▓▓▓

Date (Pre): Date (Post):	Team/Grade/Subject: First Grade/Math	Start/End Time:
Facilitator:	Time Keeper:	Recorder:

Participants/Titles

Norms of Collaboration

1. Begin and End Meetings on Time
2. Participate
3. Respect Each Voice Equally
4. Honor Confidentiality

Academic or Climate Strand/Topic/Focus:	OA 1 Use addition and subtraction within 20 to solve word problems.
Standard/Skill:	Students will solve addition word problems within 20
Unpacked Learning Target(s):	Depth of knowledge level 3
Identify the cognition level (rigor) or depth of knowledge (DOK):	Students need to be able to solve addition word problems within 20.
Identify the relevance or enduring understanding of the learning outcome(s):	OA 1 Use addition and subtraction within 20 to solve word problems.

Step 1 and 5: What data has been collected and analyzed that are aligned to the standards to identify how students are performing/progressing?
Math Grade Level Data Link Reading Grade Level Data Link

Step 2: Analyze student work specific to the data.

Each teacher write a few notes about each group's strengths and weaknesses
Teachers put this in before TBT Meetings.

TIERS	Strengths		Weaknesses	
URGENT				
	TEACHER INITIALS	**STRENGTH**	**TEACHER INITIALS**	**WEAKNESS**
		Number recognition 1–5		Addition within 5
		Count up to 10 objects		Model addition with 5 using objects
		Recognize numbers 1–5		Model addition with 5
		n/a		n/a
		Recognize numbers 1–5		Numbers and Operations
INTERVENTION				
	TEACHER INITIALS	**STRENGTH**	**TEACHER INITIALS**	**WEAKNESS**
		Modeling addition within 5		Modeling addition within 10
		Fluently add within 5		Model addition within 10
		Fluently add within 5		Model addition within 10
		Fluently add within 5		Model addition within 10
		Fluently add within 5		Model addition within 10
ON WATCH				
	TEACHER	**STRENGTH**	**TEACHER**	**WEAKNESS**

	INITIALS			INITIALS	
		Modeling addition within 5			Modeling addition within 10
		Fluently add within 5			Model addition within 10
		Fluently add within 5			Model addition within 10
		Fluently add within 5			Model addition within 10
		Fluently add within 5			Model addition within 10

	TEACHER INITIALS	STRENGTH		TEACHER INITIALS	WEAKNESS
AT/ABOVE		Modeling addition within 10			Fluently adding within 10
		Fluently add within 10			Fluently add within 20
		Fluently add within 10			Fluently add within 20
		Fluently add within 10			Understand base 10
		Fluently add within 10			Fluently adding within 10

Overall Strengths and weaknesses of the grade level

Groups	Strengths (and why)	Weaknesses (and why)
Urgent	• Students can concretely work within 5-kindergarten standard	• Fluently add within 5-they aren't beyond the concrete of adding within
Intervention	• Fluently adding within 5-Kindergarten standard	• Modeling addition within 10-haven't had practice with strategies for
On Watch	• Fluently adding within 5-Kindergarten standard	• Modeling addition within 10-haven't had practice with strategies for
At/Above	• Fluently adding within 10-students have grasped the basic concept of	• Fluently adding within 20- students need further strategies to add beyond

Percentage of Students in Each Category

	Urgent Tier 3 0%-9%	Intervention Tier 2 10%-24%	On Watch Targeted Tier I 25%-49%	At/Above 50%-99%
PRE	6%	15%	16%	64%
POST	0%	9%	12%	76%

Steps 3: Establish shared expectations for implementing specific effective changes in the classroom. What do we plan to have students do to address the identified needs?

Instructional Strategy

Determine instructional strategy(ies) to be used with students.
This may include using technology
~~Examples of Strategy Resources include: Marzano, GreatMinds, SpringBoard, ODE, FIP, Hattie, etc.~~

Big Idea	Addition within 10			
What are we doing	Counting on			
How do we get each group there	Using concrete models within 5 to count on by using touch math or number line	Students will move beyond the concrete to the abstract of counting on. Students will start with the biggest number and count on from there.	Students will move beyond the concrete to the abstract of counting on. Students will start with the biggest number and count on from there.	Students will automatically recall facts within 10 by introduction of timed tests.
	Urgent Tier III 0%-9%	Intervention Tier II 10%-24%	On Watch Targeted Tier I 25%-49%	At/Above 50%-99%

SMART GOAL:
Prediction of Grade Level Student Growth:
Given the implementation of the above conditions

69% of our first grade students will be at or above grade level on the STAR math test.

Step 4: Implement Changes Consistently
- Who will implement? How often will we implement? How long will we implement?
- What will you see in the classroom when the selected strategies are implemented?
- How will we know if we implemented with fidelity?

Time All teachers will implement counting on strategies daily during math instruction.

Step 5 (Continued): Collect, chart, and analyze pre- and post-data. After implementing our plan, how effective were we with each instructional group and with students in each subgroup? (Visual representations, graphs, charts .)

LINK TO YOUR GRADE LEVEL PLC FOR THIS CYCLE

Math Grade Level Data Link
Reading Grade Level Data Link

What is our evidence or documentation of implementation of agreed upon instructional strategies?		
At what % did we implement agreed upon instructional strategies?	100%	

	Strengths/Successes	Obstacles/ Challenges	Supports Needed
COMMUNICATION	25% of our students grew to at or above grade level. 0% of our students are in urgent intervention	Some of our students struggle in fact fluency to 5	

Assignments/Next Steps	
What needs to be done before the next TBT meeting?	Who's responsible?
Continue to practice fact fluency	Teachers
Parking Lot: issues to be addressed at a later date	

Resource 21B: BLT 5-Step Process Meeting Agenda and Minutes Template

Date: March 6, 2019   Time 3:40   Site: Conference Room

Facilitator: **Timekeeper:**

Recorder:

Team Members Present:

Agenda:

1. Data Review: Common Assessments/TBTs, ST Math, PBIS Data, W/T Data, STAR Data (BLT to DLT Data)
2. TBT Check in- We discussed where TBT's are currently at, and how to cover the Technology program presentation during 2 hour delays.

Step 1: Collect and chart adult implementation and student performance data	Data is available from all TBTs for all students and subgroups Analysis is done Data provided prior to meeting	Data is available from the BLT and/or building personnel Analysis is done Data provided prior to meeting
5th Grade ELA: Results of last common assessment discussed the vocabulary question and we will be implementing specific vocabulary skills and we discussed the other missed question of "except." We felt overall that the kids did really well on the assessment for the reading portion because we only had 18 kids that were basic or limited. The students have really improved with their writing. We are focusing on elaboration. **5th Grade Math:** Module 4 Common Assessment: Fractions	**TBT Data: TBT data is linked to a folder. I will share with you a copy of a TBT cycle form. On the left you will see the highlights of our conversations.** **W/T Data:**	

Step 2: Analyze adult implementation and student performance relative to the data	_Determine overall student strengths and areas of concern by grade levels, subject areas, etc._ _Are there patterns, trends and urgent needs?_ _Identify points of possible replication, e.g., high performing grade/subject areas, strong performance in skill/content areas, etc._	_Determine overall adult performance strengths and areas of concern by grade levels, subject areas, etc._ _Are there patterns, trends, and urgent needs?_ _Identify points of possible replication, e.g., high performing TBTs, effective instructional strategies, etc._	_Develop feedback to TBTs relative to:_ _Growth/areas of concern in student performance_ _Growth/areas of concern in adult performance_ _Grade-levels, subject areas that may be worthy of replication_ _Specific professional development/support that the district or building will provide_ _Expectations for improvement/changes_
What does the data tell you about the students' learning and adult performance within and across grade levels, subject areas?	Our students are progressing through the standards. We need to make sure that we continue to adjust instruction to meet the needs of all of our students. We had a great conversation at all of TBTs this morning.		
Step 3: Review and/or refine the building focused action steps relative to the data and TBT needs	_Develop or refine the following if needed:_ _Adult implementation indicator(s)/"look fors."_ _Student performance indicator(s)/assessments(s) us_		
What changes to the plan need to be made to ensure fidelity of implementation and desired results?	We need to take a deep look at the PLDs to make sure that we are teaching to the higher levels of the standards.		
Step 4: Establish building-wide implementation and monitoring actions/tasks for Step 3.	_Develop or refine actions steps to implement/maintain/monitor professional learning based on building and TBT data and/or instructional needs – aligned to plan, job embedded and ongoing, differentiated based on student and adult data_ _Administrator walk-throughs are tied to the strategies/actions_		_Determine how the BLT will execute the action steps/tasks_ _Determine how and when feedback is provided to TBTs (see Step 2)_
What does the DLT/CSLT need to change to ensure district-wide implementation? What will administrators observe	We will observe the action steps in our walk throughs.		

in the classrooms?			
	Everyone comes with the data ready	*Best practices shared from TBTs that had high student results on post-test*	*Includes pre-data and post for all students and any subgroups* *Data from TBTs provided on common form*
What does the post-data look like? What proved to be successful?	The post data shows us that our students did really well with the 5th grade reading common assessment and writing is improving with the 5th grade. We discussed how we need to go back and reteach some of the math concepts that our students are struggling with during e and i time and blended learning stations.		

Meeting Evaluation	*What was our level of implementation - full, partial, not at all?*	*What did we learn - successes and obstacles?* *Reflections*	*Our recommendation: continue with this strategy for ..., select alternative, adapt, obtain PD, receive support.*
What was successful? What needs to be revised or changed?	N/A		
Communicate	*What message(s) needs to be delivered?* *How will the messages) be delivered?*		*Who needs to receive the message(s) students, families, DLT/CSLT, building personnel, Board members, other stakeholders?* *What feedback, if any, is needed?*
How will two-way communication be accomplished?	BLT minutes will be sent out.		
Assignments/Next Steps	*What needs to be done between now and the next meeting?* *Who is assigned to do it?*		*What do we need to bring to the next meeting?*
What are the next steps to prepare for the next meeting?	Prepare the agenda and discuss data		

Parking Lot (What other issues need to be addressed at another date?)

DLT Agenda and Minutes August 2019

District DLT

Date: August 28, 2019 Time: 9:00 Location: DO

Facilitator:

██████

DLT MEETING NORMS:

1. Begin and end on time 2. Manage electronic devices 3. Be respectful of each other's opinions 4. Stay focused on student learning 5. Listen with an open mind 6. Stay mentally and physically present

District Improvement Goals: (From 2018 - 2019)

Grade 7 Math - Achievement in 7th grade math will improve 1.325% per year for the next 4 years to reach at least 80% proficiency by the end of the 2021- 2022 school year. (Continued goal from last year) Last year 74.7% proficient, This year 69.9% proficient - Did not meet

ELA II - Achievement in ELA II will improve .375% per year for the next 4 years to reach at least 80% proficiency by the end of the 2021 -2022 school year. (Continued goal from last year) Last year 78.7 % proficient, This year 76.8% proficient - Did not meet

Grade 8 Math - Achievement in 8th grade math will improve 8.18% per year for the next 4 years to reach at least 80% overall proficiency by the end of the 2021- 22 school year. Last year 47.3% proficient, This year 67.4% proficient - Met with an increase of 20.1%

Geometry - Achievement in Geometry will improve 6.68% per year for the next 4 years to reach at least 80% overall proficiency by the end of the 2021-2022 school year. Last year 55.3% proficient, This year 65.1% proficient - Met with an increase of 9.8%

Closing the

Gap:

Students with disabilities will reach a performance index of 80 in ELA by 2025/26 by increasing the PI by at least 2 each year. (66 - 80) Last year performance index was 66, This year performance index was 68.124 - Met with an increase of 2.124

Students with disabilities will reach a performance index of 80 in Math by 2025/26 by increasing the PI by at least 2.65 each year. (61.5 to 80) Last year's performance index was 61.5. This year's performance index was 63.4 - Did not meet.

PBIS Goal:

The district will reduce the percentage of students who miss more than 10% of their instructional days, either through discipline or absences, to 5% by the end of the 2023-24 school year.

District Strategies: Teachers will regularly meet in teacher- based teams (TBTs) that use common assessments to analyze student data, collaboratively design and implement instruction and intervention using differentiated strategies. Faculty and staff will implement research-based, district designated instructional and intervention strategies.

Agenda Items:

1 Welcome/Introductions (5 minutes)

2 Review 7 Norms of Collaboration █████████████████████████

and DLT NORMS (10 minutes)

3 Review DLT Responsibilities (20 minutes)

████████████████████████████████

4 5-Step Process Addressing data source (90 minutes)

5 Develop a Communication Plan (10 minutes)

6 Develop a Preliminary Agenda for the Next Meeting (10 minutes)

7 Evaluate the Meeting (5 minutes)

STEP 1: Collect and Chart Data (adult implementation and student performance data) collected by TBTs/ BLTs/DLT Collecting student data without corresponding adult data limits a team to only part of the picture. Teams can measure this cause and effect relationship in many ways.

Brief description of data: (attach as necessary)

1. **Looking at goals from last year (Please see above) Suggested goals recalculated:**

GRADE 7 Math: Achievement in 7th grade math will improve **3.37%** per year for the next 3 years to reach at least 80% proficiency by the end of the 2021- 2022 school year. (Continued goal from last year)

ELA II - Achievement in ELA II will improve **1.1%** per year for the next 3 years to reach at least 80% proficiency by the end of the 2021 -2022 school year. (Continued goal from last year)

Grade 8 Math - Achievement in 8th grade math will improve **4.2%** per year for the next 3 years to reach at least 80% overall proficiency by the end of the 2021- 22 school year.

Geometry - Achievement in Geometry will improve **4.97%** per year for the next 3 years to reach at least 80% overall proficiency by the end of the 2021-2022 school year.

Closing the GAP

Students with disabilities will reach a performance index of 80 in ELA by 2025/26 by increasing the PI by at least **1.697** each year. (66 - 80)

Students with disabilities will reach a performance index of 80 in Math by 2025/26 by increasing the PI by at least **2.395** each year. (61.5 to 80)

PBIS

Goal:

Preliminary Report Card Data Summary

https://docs.google.com/document/d/1F1C50DX68hSgOkrjSyvrmzlS81MRLJxDoMOMkpO1l58/ed it Gifted data - Todd https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/14ZMqf6v8Qc2xRTVNotAVthImsRj-Th0YvYRNoa8p49g/ edit#gid=0

EL data - Tracy 2018/2019 EL Gap Closure

Data

NOTES/MINUTES: Shared Norms for the meetings and collaboration:

We all agree to these. Shared DLT meeting norms:

Shared DLT responsibilities as we go through the OIP process:

Improve Teaching and Learning Are supports working and how do we

know? i.e. summer school K-12 Support Principals

BLT responsibilities: Share from ██████ **BLT members**

attend other TBT groups

District Data: I- ready has had glitches so we do not have data. ████ **shares Technology**

information - everything auto-populated through ████████. **Issues with correct**

information in IC. Rosters needed to assign apps. Recommendation is to not do any testing

until after the first full week of school. Should full PD in August should be pushed back in

order to have data? Lack of Devices or unequipped devices have also been an issue.

Reviewed District Improvement Goals: Areas of concern are larger the same Shared revised

Goals with revised data Should goals be broader to encompass grade bands instead of specific

goals for a grade level Transition years seem to be the most challenging. Decision Framework

allows us to determine areas of need. Should the District Level view be that areas of the need

based on the report card? We cannot assume to know what is going on at other buildings. Share

expectations from each grade level.

Shared Preliminary Report Card Data Gap closing is an A for the

district with all the groups represented

Shared Gifted data: Gifted Inputs and Performance

Indicator increased Desire to increase offerings for

gifted services Using a new test this year to identify that

is non verbal.

Shared EL data: 493 last year 440 this year / 80 have not been flagged yet this year

Discussed EL staffing

STEP 2: Analyze adult implementation and student performance data (20 minutes) What does

the data tell us about student learning? What instructional strategies were successful? Are

there areas in which teams are not seeing expected progress? Are students demonstrating

common strengths and weaknesses? Are there patterns, trends, urgent needs?

Strengths: Obstacles:

STEP 3: Review and/or refine the focused plan strategies/indicators relative to the data. What changes to the plan need to be made to ensure fidelity of implementation and to achieve the desired results?

We are going to get finalized report card data and go through the decision framework to determine goals.

Step 4: Establish district-wide implementation and monitoring actions/tasks for Step 3. What does the DLT need to change to ensure district-wide implementation? What will administrators observe in the classroom? How will the DLT ensure consistent delivery of supports?

1. Check for final data for building level. 2. Determine what goals were met and not met. 3. DLT supports building

a. New forms with Principal presentations at DLT b. Look at needs based for each building as individual buildings. 4. Model a high functioning group of adults

Step 5: Define adult and student data for review at next meeting. Everyone comes ready with the data. Best practices are shared. Includes pre and post data.

1. Look at I-ready, ALEKS and Reading Inventory data. 2. Use of meaningful data as it relates to goals. 3. Examine usage data for programs. 4. Focus on specific strategies and interventions.

Protocol Evaluation: What was successful? What needs to be revised or changed?

1. Followed the process. 2. Nice new form. 3. Air turned off - everyone talk louder!

Communicate: What message needs to be delivered and how? How will two-way communication be accomplished?

Drop data into the DLT folder anytime you are ready. Agenda will be placed in the shared DLT folder. DLT synopsis is sent out monthly to all staff members. Leadership share the work with the BLT. Consider telling our story to the community in a way that they will understand. What successes can be sent out by the district to share? Report out your cycle when your cycle occurs. No set dates. TBT goals should connect to building/district goals.

Parking Lot (What other issues need to be addressed at another date?)

Revisit district goals when report card is finalized.

Are we still tracking and monitoring student progress in Illuminate? How do we utilize the IC early warning management system? Does not include assessment data.

Rotate roles at the next DLT. Who wants to facilitate? Pam is our next fearless leader.

Appendix H: Themes, Subthemes, Categories, and Codes for RQ1

Table H1: Themes, Subthemes, Categories, and Codes for RQ1

Theme 1	Subthemes	Category	Literature-identified codes	Emergent codes
Systems Thinking and Systemic practices	Challenges to improvement and collaboration	Attitudes		Misunderstandings
				Perceived compliance
				Disapproving of leaders/systems/ procedures
				Positive attitudes
				Territorial behaviors (BLT non-negotiables)
		Unfavorable perceptions		Below the line
				Negatives feelings
				Yours-Mine-Ours [kids]
		Capacity perquisites		Data rich – information poor
			Systems aware	Program reliance
				Labels-student Differentiation for student sub-groups

	Improvement Practices	Leadership Practices for Improvement	Facilitation	Data review supports
			Focused professional practices	Forms/templates
			Shared decision-making	Goals/goal setting support
			Teaming	Identify critical need
				Implement
				Monitor implementation
				Plan for implementation
				Opposing views
				Research Teaming
		Reflection and Growth	Culture of inquiry	Examine, reflect, adjust
			Reflective practices	Reflective supports
			Team learning Systems thinking	

Theme 2	Subthemes	Category	Literature-identified codes	Emergent codes
Fundamental Distributive Practices	Keystones and Cornerstones	Guideposts	Data	Individuals values
			Student outcomes	Personal vision
		Organization cornerstones	Building goals	
			District goals	
			Improvement focus	

Non-negotiables
Student outcomes
Teacher team goals
Team adopted values
Vision building
Vision district

Theme 3	Subthemes	Category	Literature-identified codes	Emergent codes
Habits of collaborative professionalism	Communication & Governance	Processes	Processes for teams	Team activity (BLT-DLT-TBT)
		Supports		Training / Time for teams
				Training by district
		Results	Compliance Respect	Performance Criticism
		Structures	Protocols	Comm. Plans Facilitation
				Methods of communication
				Time
				Space for teams to meet
				Templates for agendas and minutes
				Training for teams
	Build trust & mutual respect	Belief/ perception	Shared leadership	Accountability beliefs
			Trust	Conflict Discourse

Team habits			
			Tension
			Distributing properties of Leadership
			Hierarchy
	Practices	Purpose	Subordinate passivity
		System awareness	Tokenism
	Team inputs	Systems thinking	
		Decision-making	
		Training	
	Team outcomes	Student achievement	
	Team habits	Facilitation	Teacher led instruction/ planning
		Focused professional practices	Teacher leadership
		Reflective practices	Teaming
		Teaming	self-reflection

Appendix I: Field Notes and Artifacts Codes, Characteristics, Literature

Table I1: Literature-Identified Codes and Categories with Characterization and
Corresponding Data

Codes	Characterizat ion:		Quotes Field Notes	Reference from Literature
RQ1: How do organizational members within and across organizational strata engage in collaborative practices within the context of a public K-12 educational setting that has implemented an improvement process?				
Related to building level strata	data revi ew goal s/go al setti ng nor ms prof essi onal ly foc use d	Factors associated with BLT strata from personal interviews and field notes	Joan: The BLT typically sets a reading goal and a math goal and then a PBIS goal. They [TBTs] list out or share like what the strategies are so then the BLT can say like OK are these really research based or do we think that they are. How do you know that they are? Field notes: During the BLT meeting, i asked her BLT members to participate in a BLT webinar to review the purpose for their work and to reinforce their roles as leaders in the building and emphasize their collective responsible for the success of the entire building. Field notes: Teachers were involved in personal conversations while facilitator	Strategic planning with limited number of goals; Effective data routines (Telfer, 2011); developmen t and practice of professional norms (Argyris & Schön, 1978; Garmston and Wellman, 1993; OIP Facilitator Guide, 2012); professional focus (Supovitz, D'Auria, & Spillane, 2019)

continued with the meeting.

Three people arrived 7 minutes after the meeting began.

The meeting was not focused and all but two of the original 12 members left prior to the meeting ending.

| Related to district level strata | data review goals/goal setting norms professionally focused data review goals/goal setting instructional strat | Factors associated with DLT strata from personal interviews and field notes | **DLT MEETING NORMS:**

1. Begin and end on time
2. Manage electronic dev
3. Be respectful of each o
4. Stay focused on stude
5. Listen with an open mi
6. Stay mentally and phys

Related District Goal

The district will reduce t percentage of students v miss more than 10% of t instructional days, eithe through discipline or absences, to 5% by the of the 2023/24 school ye

Brandon: I don't want it to be just a compliant meeting.

Brandon: To be honest I think we're probably going to have to maybe revamp the agenda a little bit because you know as well as I do after you go through it a couple of times I think |

	egie s nor ms prof essi onal ly foc use d		the principals sometimes just go through the motions. Mia: the building's goals are aligned with the district goals.
Related to classroom/te acher team level strata	data revi ew goal s/go al setti ng inst ruct iona l strat egie s nor ms prof essi onal ly foc use d	Factors associated with TBT strata from personal interviews and field notes	Susan: I think for some things it was a lot of trial and error and I also think that when you know better you do better. So, it's gotten a little bit smoother. I know at the beginning when we started our TBT process it was very scripted *data, data, data.* And not that data is not important but teachers never really got a chance to discuss their kids with each other or *hey I'm struggling with this concept-what can we do to better, to teach this so that they [students] will do better on the assessment.* And a lot of what was happening was people were reviewing data but nobody it was great the data was there but they didn't have a chance to apply any new skills to the teaching so that quickly changed just

because there wasn't enough time.

Grace: I am sure the purpose of them is to improve our teaching. You know to help our students better improve so they can do better on the state tests. That's what appears to be the purpose.

	time, space for teams to meet; templates for agendas and minutes, clearly identified purpose, facilitation, training for teams	Brenda: We meet every Wednesday morning for about 45 minutes. When we first started we were meeting too much. Susan: And we do ours before school. We were doing ours before	March and Olsen (1976) identified routines, standard operating procedures, protocols, and processes to provide current and future employees with a history of the organization's learning.
Structures/Supports			

school. And it's not much time at all. We have to be here at 7:40am. Most of the teachers have some sort of duty in the morning. So, by the time

D'Amour et al. (2005) described administrati

everybody got there you had about 30 minutes. And it seemed like we had very little time, it had no meaning at all.

LF-R: Tell me a bit more about BLT training and other learning that has been a valuable experience for your team.

Brenda: So, my answer is not straightforward. I would say that the intentions again are positive and we have the opportunity to attend or, may be required to attend. It was obvious to all of us that there was good content and quality information that would help us as teachers help our kids as learners. However, I would say also as a companion component to that there were consistent inconsistencies. So while you might have a really good morning of PD you might also be booked into because you had the requirement to be there and the districts had the requirement for you to be there that you had to be placed into a session.

ve supports as a factor that supports collaboration.

The OIP Facilitator's Guide (2012) outlines structures and supports for the improvement process.

But the PD [session] was not tailored to actual needs so you might have half a day where you felt like you were productive and learning and growing and then maybe half the day where your felt like you were not.

Brandy: We have what we call BLT trainings. And those started, you know, ever since I've been in the curriculum department. They started kind of vague and now it's getting, it's getting better and better. We have quarterly trainings.

Communicative mechanisms	Messages, plans, methods	Brandon: I think we do a good job of communicating and I think we do a good job of. But I also think we can do better	D'Amour et al. (2005) described communication mechanisms as a factor that supports collaboration. The OIP Facilitator's Guide (2012) outlines structures and supports for the improvement process.
		Grace: No. The vision was communicated through PowerPoint at a meeting after school, during our planning time after school. I believe it may have been optional	
		Salvador: I think, one of the weaknesses that I've talked to Carmen about is the piece that we haven't done a good job	

| | | is that data going back down to them

Mia: My role is to collaborate with DLT and to communicate to DLT and answer any questions, you know. that they might have about our work here at school and with the BLT.

Salvador: She's done this for the last couple of years or so is a brief synopsis of what went on in the DLT back out to everybody in the district. So, she started doing that. I feel we could do a better job of that. | |
| Reflective practice | self-reflection collective reflection | Brenda: I always thought it was interesting sitting on the BLT to see, you know, what kindergarten was doing, how we're all working towards the same standard but at the different levels. When you see that, you think oh well maybe I should do more of this because it will help when they're in third or fourth grade.

Irene: I would say that though the language was being used in my department we're – of course always best | Considering how Dewey (1933) described reflection as an "active, persistent, and careful consideration of any belief or supposed form of knowledge" (p. 9) and how Schön (1987) described reflective practice as |

intentions of being self-reflective and growing as an educator. But my experience and you know part of it could be my fault too right like my own lack of engagement and lack of pursuing additional information and it gives ownership in the participants as much as leadership. So, I you know I accept that possibly I could have done more to understand the process prior to being the department head.

Mia: I'm not sure that we spent a lot of time really actively reflecting on whether the processes that we were putting in place. I think that reflection piece is probably oftentimes the Part that we missed before implementing the improvement process.

a kind of grappling with previous understandings, one could imagine that participation in a research study could initiate reflection. As participants

Gronn LDT (2000).

| Trust-Respect | tension conflict discourse | Brandon: Because that really was my team and, and like I said most of them have experience in this district for a long time and not that it was. but it gave, I felt like when we developed relationships and, I can use the word *trust* will happen. But anytime I have an issue outside | Power, defined earlier in this Chapter, refers specifically to the perception of members that they can make |

the district or inside the district I feel like I have a team that I can pull together and trust what they're telling me.

Joan: But I think it's because they feel like they've been burned in the past and this is a veteran staff and they don't know how to trust again. And it's not really fair to people at district office but at the same time that's probably the reality of it.

Grace: Some of us may have different ideas of how to do things. Because we're very different. I'm very different from the other two people in my TBT.

Irene: In which case if you are compartmentalizing as you said, seeing it separate from their own self-reflection, then never the twain shall meet. Like you're not going to be, you're always going to see it as something additional and you miss the point. Whereas, if you say "Oh I'm already self-reflecting this is putting my self-reflection to a new mode of processing

decisions and act on those decisions without concern of repercussions (Leithwood, et al., 2008). Furthermore, power is not necessarily 'granted' but is distributed to other members and relies on trust, a shared understanding of the vision, goals, and strategies of the organization (Gronn, 2000; Spillane, Halverson, & Diamond, 2001). The two components when viewed together can provide an in-depth

	getting a better conversation with colleagues then it's not you it's just a new way to do what you always do. But I don't think they do that. I would say this too that when I was in the classroom I had come out of the business world so I valued team time. But I still didn't know how to implement it for education because people didn't want to participate.	view of the culture of the organization and its members. Mental models may not reflect reality as others experience it and that difference can impact communication, relationships, respect, and trust (Senge, 2012, 2014).

RQ2: How do individuals perceive the organization's vision, team learning, and systems thinking as a result of collaborative practice within an improvement system?

Visioning	Principal is leading vision development activity for BLT. She has referenced district vision multiple times. BLT are viewing building level data. They were asked to identify and prioritize needs. She referred to the SIP (school improvement plan). superintendent shared vision. Teachers indicated that they received PPT about the	Williamson, K., Archibald, A., & McGregor, J. (2010). Huffman, J. (2003). Senge, P. M. (2012), Senge, P. M. (2014), Senge, P. M., Cambron-McCabe, N., Lucas, T., Smith,

	vision. But they could not identify components of the vision.	B., & Dutton, J. (2012)
	Principal (Mia) could articulate the vision.	
	Principal (Joan) could explain one goal. She did not know the remaining pillars.	
	District level employees (Brandy, Salvador, Camila) all knew the vision. Each indicated that they participated in vision development	
	DLT meeting 1 & 2	
	vision and goals are included on DLT agenda/meeting minutes	
Team Learning	Mia I'm not sure that we spent a lot of time actively reflecting. I think that the reflection piece is probably, oftentimes, the part that we missed before	Senge (1991) Bresman, H., & Zellmer-Bruhn, M. (2013)
	Brandy: we go to a lot of conferences; monthly meetings	
	Robin: attending PD presented by a instructional coach/peer	
	Mia: book studies	
	Effect data /student data	

Shared leadership	dist ribu ting pro pert ies of lead ersh ip hier arch y	Brenda: I go to another grade level and I share what I am thinking, but then they said it was not right. There was a lot of confusion as to what we were supposed to be doing. There still is confusion	
		Mia: It's just been wonderful because it allows my role to be there to clear the path and to coordinate. Reference 3: 0.57% coverage I can provide resources I can share that document so that you know and really look at it to make sure that everything's working but as far as the planning of it. I have nothing to do with it anymore. It's been wonderful. Reference 4: 0.25% coverage it really divides the leadership and because of that you can conquer. So much more effectively	Gronn and OIP Facilitator Guide
		Field notes: BLT Elementary School in August. The principal shared leadership with the team. She did not assign, but asked teachers on the BLT to lead one portion of the agenda. One led the	

development of a reporting form and shared it with the other members for them to share with the TBTs. Another shared the (social-emotion learning) vision that the building had developed with the whole staff and described the process with the BLT for future development of a school vision. Another member shared with the entire BLT about how TBTs were discussing curriculum.
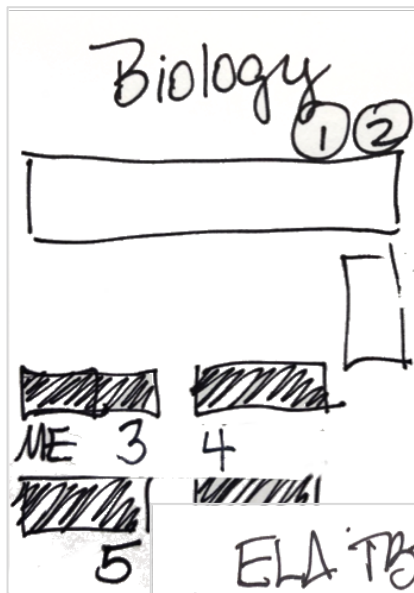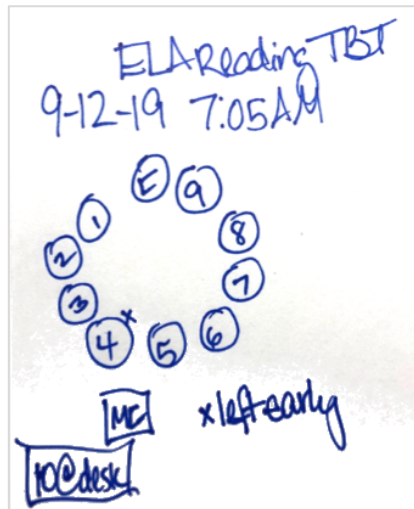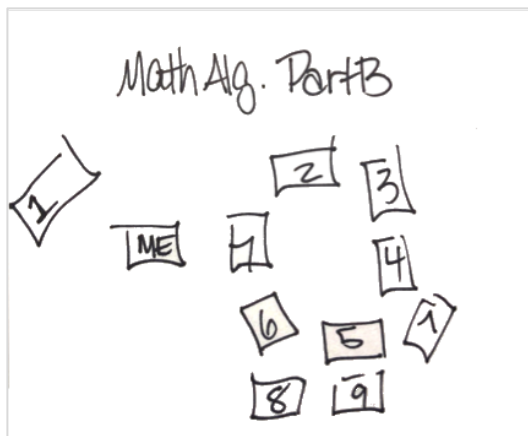
Field notes: DLT Meeting in August. The facilitator asked for different members to serve as record keeper, time keeper, etc. and at the end of the meeting asked for a volunteer to facilitate the September meeting.

Systems thinking

Senge
Gronn
(awareness)

Appendix J: Seating Arrangement Drawings from Field Notes

JH ELA TBT 9-5-19
2:20PM

JH Math 8th Grade

JH Electives TBT
9/25   2:15AM

ELA Writing TBT

Elem TG 2nd

Math Part A