

Report to
the Board of Trustees

Clayton Park School

Principal's Sabbatical Leave

Paul Wright

Term 2 2016

For their meeting in

November 2016

1. Covering letter

2. "A subtle dance of power and authority with no rules" (Earl & Katz, 2007)

A review of research literature concerning the effectiveness of models of collaboration between schools and subsequent impact on learning outcomes

3. Figure: Attributes of COLS

4. Figure: COL coherence continuum

Tena Kotou Kaitiaki

I would like to express my gratitude to the Board and to the Ministry for the support and generosity in granting me a one-term period of sabbatical leave which I took in term 2 2016.

I am pleased to report that I am once again in excellent health, and have been very much refreshed by the sabbatical. In particular I benefited from some mindfulness training provided by the North Shore Hospital on a one-to-one basis.

I have completed another Master's paper on Research Methods delivered by the University of Auckland, gaining a final mark of 84%. This is worth 30 points towards a 120 point Master's degree, most likely in Educational Leadership (Honours) again at the University of Auckland. Although this paper was delivered in the second half of the year, I was able to complete much of the course reading and requirements during my sababatical.

I completed a Literature Review which considered research evidence about effectiveness of collaboration between schools. This forms the basis of a manuscript for submission to NZSET in November 2016. I attach a synopsis for the consideration of the Board.

I also used this time to develop two figures intended to help in the formation and development of COLS, 'Attributes of COLS' and the 'COL coherence continuum'. These will both be included in the manuscript for submission to NZSET, and are part of my ongoing work within the UACEL and with groups of school leaders and trustees.

I would be pleased to discuss or respond to any questions about this report.

Aku mihi nui ki a koe

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A review of research literature concerning the effectiveness of models of collaboration between schools and subsequent impact on learning outcomes

“A subtle dance of power and authority with no rules” (Earl & Katz, 2007)

This literature review considers a range of relevant, high-quality research about the impact of collaboration between schools on student learning, in order to arrive at some conclusions about the viability and helpfulness of different approaches to developing collaborative networks between schools.

The importance of context in building interschool collaboration

Inter-school collaboration can lead to improvement in student achievement outcomes, but only if the context and conditions are conducive. (Ainscow, Muijs & West, 2004; Earl & Katz, 2007, Chapman & Muijs, 2014; Howland, 2014; Lee & Smith 1996; Mourshed, Chijioke & Barber, M., 2011). Some of these conditions are necessary but may not by themselves be sufficient. Necessary conditions include: high levels of social capital; active and positive leadership by principals; a common focus or purpose based on student achievement outcomes. (Ainscow et al., 2004; Chapman & Muijs, 2014.) Other factors may act as constraints, and these may include: conflicting interests between schools typically manifested as competition to select the ‘best’ pupils; desire to retain autonomy or to conceal weaknesses; imbalance of power which may occur between a large school and a small school, a high school and a primary, or a high performing school and a weaker school. (Busher & Hodgkinson, 1996; Chapman & Muijs, 2014; Howland, 2014.)

The importance of Social Capital

High social capital both within schools and between schools is necessary for effective collaboration, though this may not by itself be sufficient. Individual schools need good levels of internal social capital, which is to say positive relationships between teachers (Leana & Pil, 2006), before they can make a contribution to the network. A wider network of schools needs good levels of external social capital, defined as positive relationships between principals and stakeholders (Leana & Pil, 2006) in order to systematically raise student achievement, especially for the 'most vulnerable students' (Mullan & Kochan, 2000). Where a wider network does have high internal and external social capital there is a definite correlation with high levels of student achievement (Leana & Pil, 2006; Lee & Smith, 1996), though the causal relationship is not yet understood (Chapman et al., 2010; Lindsay et al., 2007). Strong social capital may actually be a consequence of high student achievement rather than a cause (Leana & Pil, 2006). It seems likely that the relationship between achievement and social capital is synergistic rather than consequential. Where high levels of social capital do not exist, then these must be built before effective interschool collaboration can occur, as much within schools as between schools (Leana & Pil, 2006; Mullen & Kochan, 2000).

Collaboration in challenging circumstances

There is broad consensus that effective interschool collaboration is more difficult in areas of high challenge and low social capital. Several studies, both qualitative and quantitative, mark the difficulties in raising achievement in schools in challenging circumstances particularly

where resilience, capability and internal social capital of the school in question are low. (Ainscow et al., 2006; Chapman & Muijs, 2014; Lindsay et al., 2007) In these situations, the quality of individual principal leadership is the most critical factor in the development of effective collaboration. A key theme that emerges is the critical importance of the school leader's role in establishing and sustaining effective networks, that result in improved student achievement. This is reflected in both qualitative and mixed-method investigations of researchers such as Ainscow, Muijs & West (2006), Busher & Hodgkinson (1996), Chapman & Muijs (2014), Earl & Katz (2007), Lee & Smith (1996), and Lindsay et al. (2007). There is evidence of direct positive impact on achievement for vulnerable students from 'hard' federations where the weaker school is directly 'harnessed' to the leadership of the stronger school (Ainscow et al. 2006; Chapman & Muijs, 2014; Lindsay et al., 2007). A 'hard' federation is formed when two or more schools come under a single 'Board of Governors' (trustees), and possibly a single head teacher. Positive gains in achievement at the weaker school definitely occur, but appear dependent on the distribution of effective leadership and culture across to the weaker school. The body of 'turnaround leadership' research (Clark, 1998; Hampton & Jones, 2000; Stoll & Myers, 1998 cited in Chapman & Muijs, 2014 p. 390) largely describes heroic principals who achieved substantial achievement gains in weaker, partner schools in 'very challenging contexts' (Chapman & Muijs, 2014), with 'fractured and often dysfunctional cultures' or 'low-capacity settings' (Ainscow et al., p.390). It is specifically hard 'performance federations' that lead to improvement in achievement outcomes. (Chapman & Muijs, 2014). Responsibility for two or more schools demands considerable extra commitment to the point that one 'super-leader' assumes leadership of all the schools (Ainscow et al., 2006; Chapman & Muijs, 2014; Lindsay et al., 2010). Beyond hard federations, however, it is not clear that

collaboration has any positive impact on learning outcomes. Chapman and Muijs (2014) found only “tentative evidence suggesting federation might be an important mechanism for supporting school improvement in challenging contexts”, and Sammons et al. (2007) found “no overall network learning community effect on attainment outcomes” (p.1) in their wide-ranging analysis of networking initiatives in the UK.

Coercion and effectiveness

There is a strong relationship between sustained improvement and apparent coerciveness. The only robust evidence of successful improvement where it seems reasonable to link cause and effect comes from studies of schools facing high challenge, within highly coercive models, ‘hard federations’ and ‘performance federations’. (Ainscow et al. 2006; Chapman & Muijs, 2014; Lindsay et al. 2007). This echoes the ‘turnaround leadership’ research (Clark, 1998; Hampton & Jones, 2000; Stoll & Myers, 1998 cited in Chapman and Muijs, 2014, p.390) about schools in ‘very challenging contexts’ (Chapman & Muijs, 2014. p. 390) with ‘fractured... dysfunctional cultures’ or ‘low-capacity settings’ (Ainscow et al. 2006 p.390). This research describes rigid control, standardization of practice and a subversive-dominant power relationship which ‘franchises’ the model of the dominant school. Mourshed et al. (2011) set this phenomenon within the wider context of world systems, characterizing this as ‘tightly controlled teaching... from the center because minimizing variation... is the core driver of performance improvement at this level.’ (p. 30), and within a particular stage of development within that context, typified by the prevalence of ‘scripted lessons’ and a ‘high degree of scaffolding’ (p.30). This contrasts with the model of a sustainable, longer-term mechanism of collaboration built on distributing leadership, social capital and raising teacher expectations

(Leana & Pil, 2006; Lee & Smith, 1996; Mullen & Kochan, 2000), although the goal of lifting achievement through raising the expectations of the teachers is the same. Whether through the slow process of building social capital, (Leana & Pil, 2006; Lee & Smith, 1996; Mullen & Kochan, 2000) or the more coercive process of hard federation (Ainscow et al. 2006; Chapman & Muijs, 2014; Lindsay et al. 2007), collaboration appears to be one of the few tools to achieve this.

The right kind of principal leadership

Whilst it is possible to build and sustain schooling networks without strong principal leadership, these networks do not lead to improved achievement outcomes (Chapman & Muijs, 2014; Robinson, 2016). Except in the case of coercive models where power is not distributed, collaborative leadership involves extra responsibilities, commitments, and difficulties to be negotiated. Even simple subscription to the network involves more complexity, more relationships to form, manage and lead. (Busher & Hodgkinson, 1996; Earl & Katz, 2007). Establishing shared leadership, where everything has to be negotiated and much can be hidden, entails a completely different set of power relationships. Earl & Katz describe this as a 'subtle dance of power and authority, with no rules' (Earl & Katz, 2007. p.256) leading to distraction from the true purpose of raising achievement, and the likelihood of fruitless meetings and time wasted. (Busher & Hodgkinson, 1996). Chapman & Muijs go further to describe 'empty' collaborations where schools acted as 'sleeping partners' to access incentives, but contributed nothing. (Chapman & Muijs, 2014. p.390). If principals are not 'internally committed' to the community, and instead subscribe for the wrong reasons,

then the network will simply become a 'time consuming and expensive forum' with no subsequent impact on student learning (Robinson, 2016).

Voluntary collaboration

The evidence that less coercive collaborative structures can lead to improved student performance is also mixed. (Leana & Pil, 2006; Lee & Smith, 1996). It takes considerable time and investment to create the conditions and build the required trust necessary for leaders and teachers to accept the risk of disclosing, owning and responding to persistent patterns of underachievement. It is not clear that this pays off for students. Some, but not all of the research supports the concept that voluntary subscription to a collaborative process between schools leads to increased student achievement. Some of the supportive studies are purely qualitative (Busher & Hodgkinson, 1996; Lee & Smith, 1996; Mullen & Kochan, 2000) with the risk of being captured by the 'insider view'. Other studies do evaluate student achievement in the light of quantitative assessment data (Mullen & Kochan, 2000; Leana & Pil, 2006), but achieve this by 'working backwards' from very large national or state-wide achievement datasets based on standardized testing, then relating this to the impact of collaboration in a particular network of school. This is to 'draw a very long bow', for it is difficult to link cause and effect, with no time scales or specific goal-setting to measure achievement at a local level.

Collaboration within competitive schooling systems

Collaboration is of particular interest in schooling systems where competition prevails and where there is high disparity between the achievement levels of particular groups. Muijs et al.

(2010) describe this as a 'fourth wave' of schooling improvement, Chapman and Muijs (2014 p. 351) as a 'new paradigm', going on to identify the deliberate development of collaborative networks in Australia, United States, England, and Sweden. New Zealand and Columbia. According to PISA, these are countries with high and increasing educational disparity, with vulnerable groups of students falling further behind (Schleicher, A., 2010). All except Colombia achieve high average educational performance; all six are in the bottom quartile for educational equity (Schleicher, A., 2010). This problem is increasingly evident in New Zealand, to the point where schools in the lowest socio-economic 'decile' grouping are now made up almost completely of Maori and Pasifika students, with persistent poor achievement patterns (Rodgers, 2015). On the other hand, systems which are performing more evenly do not appear to be interested in 'collaboration', possibly because they are not facing the problem of high disparity.

It seems the focus on developing or coercing collaborative schooling models may be a response to entrenched achievement disparity through trying to make schools 'fix each other', and only of interest where the ideological basis to the schooling system is about competition between schools.

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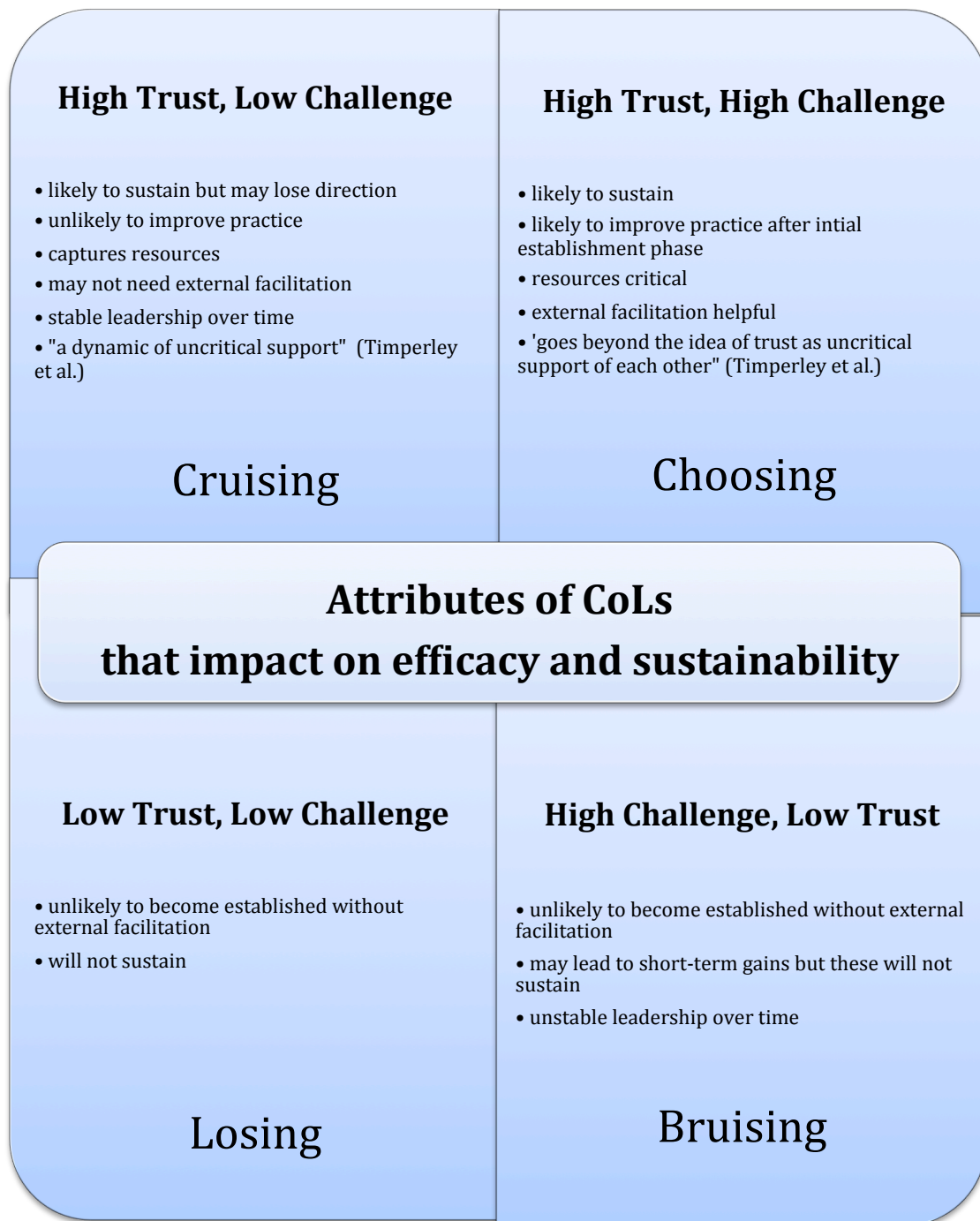
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CoL Coherence Continuum - Where are we and where do we want to be?

Emergent		Mature ¹
<p>Coerced ‘Hard’ collaboration to others that have been subject to direct external pressure to collaborate</p> <p>Ainsow, Chapman, Muijs</p>	<p>Resource-driven to groups that have been induced to do so in the context of incentives</p>	<p>Autonomous ‘Soft’ collaboration groups of schools that have volunteered to work together</p> <p>Earl & Katz, Daly</p>

Theory of Action			
<p>No evidence of awareness of theory behind action</p> <p>Earl & Katz, Aporia</p>	<p>Words don’t match actions</p>	<p>Words match actions i.e. Coherence between espoused theory and theory in action</p>	<p>Actions leads to measureable strategic outcomes</p> <p>Timperley,</p>

Defensive		Collaborative	
<p>Network components isolated, resist external inputs</p> <p><i>Morley, McKinsey</i></p>	<p>Leaders seek to manage and control external inputs</p> <p><i>Chapman, Ainscow, Muijs, West</i></p>	<p>Collective approach to seeking and building on external input and evaluation</p>	<p>Collective approach to co-construct meaning with external partners</p> <p><i>Daly, Senge, Sergiovanni,</i></p>

Pedagogical capacity	
<p>Pedagogical strength and weakness not ‘mapped’ across network</p> <p><i>BES</i></p>	<p>Professional learning needs are systematically identified across network informed by data and reflected in strategic planning</p> <p>Leadership and expertise is shared across the network, to address identified gaps</p> <p>Network recruitment becomes more strategic</p>

Evaluative Capacity		
<p>Data is collected and used within individual schools only</p>	<p>Agreed data is collected across the network</p> <p>Observable coherence and</p>	<p>Shared data collection frameworks are transparent, sustained over time, and helpful</p>

¹ “a variety of cooperative arrangements, from groups of schools that have volunteered to work together, to groups that have been induced to do so in the context of incentives, to others that have been subject to direct external pressure to collaborate” Ainsow, M. Muijs, D & West, M. (2006). Collaboration as a strategy for improving schools in challenging circumstances *Improving schools* Vol. 9(3) p.192-202 “There is some evidence that the particular pressures faced by schools with a history of internal failings, or external interventions, make collaboration even more difficult. Specifically, these pressures may mean that such schools have a low capacity for within-school collaboration, thus making it more difficult for them to develop effective partnerships with colleagues in other schools” (Morley, 2006).

Schools subscribe to different assessment tools and methodologies (i.e AsTLe v. PACT) Schools measure different things	agreement about which achievement outputs should be measured	Coherence and agreement about assessment tools and methodology to measure longitudinal achievement (i.e. across sectors) Evidence of sustained shared moderation processes used between schools and across sectors
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Strategic purpose		
No shared awareness of strategic purpose	Shared strategic purpose, but no evidence of progress	Strategic progress evident in documentation, practice and outcomes
No observable strategic network activity intended to achieve in achievement gains	Network activity leads to observable activity intended to achieve gains in student achievement in target areas sustained over time	Network activity leads to measurable gains sustained over time

Relationship Capacity		
Trust, risk-taking, challenge do not pose threats or problems because individual schools do not expose their practice to collective scrutiny <i>Whalan</i>	Network explores and establishes high-trust ways of working that enables risk-taking, transparency, identification of problems and issues in order to address them Bryk & Schneider, Leana & Pils, Earl & Katz	Sustainable, transparent, inclusive and culturally inclusive kawa
Low internal social capital	Islands of high internal social capital, poor external social capital	High internal capital High external social capital

Leadership capacity – ability to lead and be led		
No apparent consensus	Evidence of progress towards coherence and capability for network leadership Pedagogical and other leadership increasingly distributed across network	Evidence of sustainable and effective network leadership

Systems and Procedures ² Senge Lean & Pils, Daly , Chapman etc		
Invisible but nothing good is happening – conflict and false starts	Systems and procedures have been made transparent	Systems and processes transparent and universally espoused but network defaults to high trust

Impact on achievement – Maori and Pasifika		
Poor achievement outcomes for Maori and Pasifika at NCEA Poor retention within network especially across Year 8 – 10 ‘bridge’ Isolated pockets of achievement No apparent responsibility for poor achievement outcomes beyond school level Individual responses to accountability measures	Acceptance of shared responsibility for impacting achievement outcomes of all Maori and Pasifika students across network and sectors Deliberate collaborative activity focussed on distributing achievement gains across network and across bridges	Increasing achievement distributed across network Lift in achievement outcomes for all Maori and Pasifika at ‘ endpoint ’ (i.e. NCEA 2)

Horizontal Engagement		Vertical Engagement
with other schools in same sector	across Primary-Secondary interface	with Tertiary and ECE

Agendas		
Mainly about Principals’ needs	Mainly about individual schools	Mainly about students