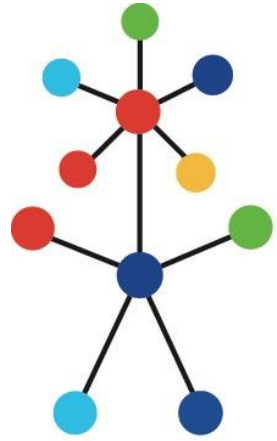


2016



# EFFECT

European Methodological  
Framework for Facilitating Teachers'  
Collaborative Learning

## Guidelines for designing pilot programmes

*Draft version*

### Contents

<i>Introduction.....</i>	<i>1</i>
<i>Structure and function of the draft MF.....</i>	<i>3</i>
<i>Guiding ideas: definitions, criteria and key determinants.....</i>	<i>4</i>
<i>Guidelines for designing and evaluating pilot programmes...10</i>	

Authors: *EFFECT project consortium*

ALBRECHT-GARAI, Katalin

B. TIER, Noemi

BARANOVSKA, Inta

BARNA, Margit

KAUFMANE, Guntra

KIRKHAM, Glynn

MACHALÍK, Tomáš

O'DOHERTY, Teresa

RISKU, Mika

ROBERTS, Amanda

STEPHENSON, Joan

SZEGEDI, Eszter

TUNA, Aija

WOODS, Philip

## Introduction

Teachers in the 21<sup>st</sup> century need to respond to a rapidly-changing environment characterised by fast technological progress, changing labour market needs, demographic changes, as well as the need to facilitate learning that enables students to flourish and grow as people. In order to have up-to-date knowledge and skills to be able to live up to this expectation, lifelong learning needs to be a reality for teachers as professional educators. The main focus of the EFFECT project is to enhance opportunities for teachers' collaborative learning and innovation and for effective networking between teachers, teacher educators, researchers and other educational stakeholders, so they can improve their competencies and keep them up-to-date, through enhanced opportunities for learning at all stages of their career. Evidence shows<sup>1</sup> that fostering strong working relationships among teachers and **promoting professional collaboration between teachers** and other educational stakeholders in ways that allows them to deepen their knowledge and **improve student outcomes** are critical in terms of effectiveness.

The project aims to develop a European Methodological Framework (MF) for facilitating collaborative learning of teachers, which can be used as a guideline for teachers, teacher educators, school leaders, policymakers and other educational stakeholders. The purpose of the MF is to inspire and inform. The MF will offer ideas and resources to help in developing innovative policy measures and other initiatives at regional, local and institutional levels for facilitating and enhancing teachers' collaborative learning. This document is a first draft of the MF which is to be piloted and circulated for comment and feedback. This version of the MF will then be revised in light of the results of the piloting and consultation.

In the first phase of the project (November 2015 – June 2016), **cases of good practice** in teachers' collaborative learning were collected and examined. The selection of cases was guided by **criteria** which describe the characteristics of collaborative learning, as defined by the project partners. The cases were analysed individually and comparatively, and similarities and differences between them identified.

---

<sup>1</sup> Darling-Hammond, L., Wei, R.C., Andree, A., Richardson, N. and Orphanos, S. (2009): *Professional Learning in the Learning Profession: A Status Report on Teacher Development in the United States and Abroad* in *The Status of Professional Development in the United States*, Stanford University.

Hargreaves, A., and Fullan, M. (2012): *Professional Capital Transforming Teaching in Every School*. Teachers College Press, New York.

TALIS – *Teaching and Learning International Survey* (2008, 2013): OECD research results <http://www.oecd.org/edu/school/talis.htm>

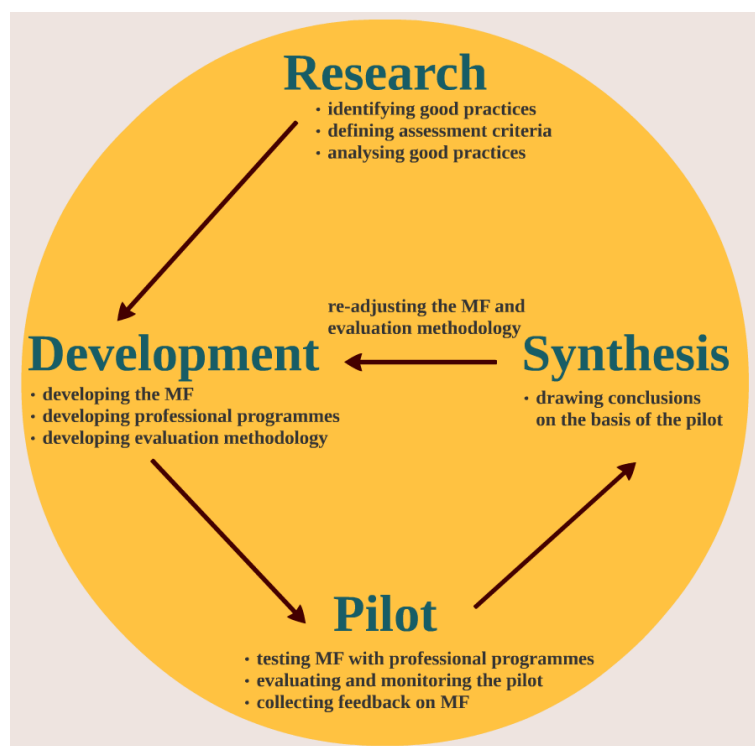
Vangrieken, K., Dochy, F., Raes, E., and Kyndt, K. (2015): *Teacher collaboration: A systematic review*. Educational Research Review, Elsevier Ltd.

White, M., Crouse, A., Bafale, C. and Barnes, H. (2009): *Extraordinary Teachers: Teaching for Success*. Lead and Learn Press, Englewood.

During the second phase (April 2016 – October 2017), based on the conclusions of the case studies' analysis and on intensive discussion, the partnership has designed a draft **methodological framework** (MF). During this phase, **pilot professional development programmes on collaborative teacher learning**, for which **the draft MF serves as a guideline** have been designed. The pilot programmes will take place in the Czech Republic, Hungary and Latvia.

In the last phase of the project (November 2017 – April 2018), the partnership will finalise the development of the MF while incorporating a range of user-friendly resources based on the identified innovative practices. In this way, the MF aims to serve as an effective tool to foster school, local or regional collaborations between teachers and other members of the school community, inspiring and informing teachers, teacher educators, practitioners and policy makers. The revised MF will build on the pilot participants' feedback and experience and on the evaluation reports from the piloting.

*Designing process of the European Methodological Framework in the EFFECT project*



## Structure and function of the draft MF

The draft Methodological Framework consists of the two sections which follow: ***Guiding ideas*** and ***Guidelines for designing and evaluating pilot programmes***. The MF has two functions.

Firstly, it offers ideas and guidance on the development of collaborative learning practices between teachers and between teachers and other stakeholders. The final version of the MF is intended to be a useful guide and resource for teachers, teacher educators, researchers and other educational stakeholders, including students, parents and policy-makers.

Secondly, it offers guidance in designing the pilot programmes that the EFFeCT project is creating. Although the participants of the pilot programmes do not have to rigorously follow these conditions in their own activities, however the pilot leaders and facilitators are strongly recommended to bear in mind the principles and suggestions provided by the MF. Self-evaluation activities and external evaluation is part of all the pilot programmes and should be in line with the defined Guiding ideas. The project partnership does not aim to assess the quality of the programmes (together with identifying the success factors this can be part of the self-evaluation process) but will examine the benefits of the elements and recommendations of the MF that are part of the pilot programme (e.g. processes, structures, activities or tools). Moreover, the aim is to identify new characteristics of professional collaborative learning that emerge from evaluation of the pilot programmes.

The methodological approach for this EFFeCT project has initially been qualitative and grounded, using case studies from a variety of contexts and with a variety of content. For the needs of professional learning, it is essential to formulate a methodology which includes a cognitive, constructivist dimension together with that emerging from a professional learning environment. It is likely that the generation of data emerging from evaluations will produce quantitative outcomes for later analysis. The result will be an appropriate mixed mode. This sits well with an action science (Argyris et al., 1985<sup>2</sup>) methodology.

---

<sup>2</sup>Argyris, C, Putnam R & McLain Smith D 1985 *ACTION SCIENCE Concepts, Methods, and Skills for Research and Intervention*, San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass Inc., Publishers

## Guiding ideas: definitions, criteria and key determinants

As it is described in the relevant literature<sup>3</sup> the development of professional skills that is implemented over a long period of time and on a systematic level, and involves collegial expertise, has a greater effect on teachers' effective work with students than individual skill development. Collaborative teacher learning can take place in many different forms. For example, it may engage teachers in school-based activities, classroom observations followed by reflection, regular face-to-face events, as well as online communication, mutual support between schools and activities with local and national government and other agencies and external expertise.

The EFFECT partnership seeks to create a practical tool for facilitating effective professional development of teachers, rooted in the evidenced good practices provided by the original case studies. The Guiding ideas in this section are, therefore, formulated with the prime intention of informing practice rather than advancing theory.<sup>4</sup> They are offered as support for designing activities and programmes that enable teachers and other stakeholders to engage in collaborative learning. This section offers *definitions* of key terms, a description of the *criteria* of effective teachers' collaborative learning practice and some suggested *key determinants* of that practice.

### Definitions

**Collaborative teacher learning** involves working together with one or more partners, through **purposeful processes of interaction** intended to advance teachers' learning. In the project's understanding for using the MF successfully, we have to differentiate between individual and collaborative learning and other co-operative activities among teachers. Both *individual-focused teacher learning* (when a teacher takes action to advance his/her learning without the purpose of working together with another to achieve this goal) and *teachers' co-operative or collaborative activities* (which are indispensable in a school community but do not necessarily have a learning purpose) are both important but differ from the project's focus. In the case of **collaborative teacher learning**, knowledge is created by and emerges from the interactions of the participants, whose engagement is motivated by the aim of professional development. The

---

<sup>3</sup> Ibid.

<sup>4</sup> Therefore the MF does not follow an existing or new definition of collaborative learning nor make an exact distinction between cooperative and collaborative learning. The results and recommendations made here are built on a theoretical background incorporating learning theories (e.g. Vygotsky's Social Development Theory) and findings from social psychology (e.g. positive interdependence, Deutsch, Johnson), as well as results from the OECD's Teaching and Learning International Survey (TALIS 2013) and recommendations of the related professional movements (Collaborative Networked Learning, Computer-supported collaborative learning).

process of collaborative teacher learning, however includes individual actions which take place among joint interactions with the aim of professional development.

The learning that collaborative teacher practice generates has two aspects that can be distinguished analytically in practice, however, they are intertwined. The first aspect is the individual learning that occurs. This is the learning that is experienced by the individual as an outcome of the collaborative practice. The second is collective and emergent learning. This is the learning that is shared by and which emerges from the relationships and activities of the group. It includes new knowledge and understanding that might not have been created without collaborative activity. It is also important to note that the learning that occurs does not have to be limited by the original plans of the collaborative group, since new aspects can emerge in the course of the collaborative activity. This feature is one of the great strengths of collaboration.

Effective collaborative teacher learning can involve one or more levels of the educational system, including at the school level (across a school or within parts of a school), at a local level (e.g. between teachers from different local schools), regional (e.g. involving teachers, schools and/or agencies facilitating collaborative teacher learning across a region), at a national level and at international level. It may include collaboration between teachers and other stakeholders concerned with education, such as local authorities, central government and non-teachers (students, parents, etc.).

### **Criteria and key determinants**

Teachers' collaborative learning has a wide range of variety and forms. In the research phase of the EFFeCT project a set of characteristics were proposed as criteria to identify and present the examples of good practice and both from the theoretical background and from analyses of the case studies some key determinants has been identified that are important in developing successful cases.

#### **Criteria:**

- participative professionalism
- deep-level collaboration
- equity
- holistic learning

#### **Key determinants:**

- moral purpose
- ownership
- reflection
- flexible development process
- common purpose
- evaluation

*With regard to its practice, effective collaborative teacher learning is characterised by:*

### **Participative professionalism**

that is, reflecting a participatory or democratic model of professionalism involving leadership that is shared and enacted by teachers and other stakeholders as active agents of change (co-leadership), mobilisation of their knowledge and expertise, and considered interpretation of policy by teachers and others rather than unreflective policy implementation; in this model, the teacher is not merely a ‘technician who simply “delivers” the curriculum’ but ‘a professional who helps to create it... in a process that is creative, critical and active’<sup>5</sup>

**Deep-level collaboration** may be evidenced in the following:

displaying characteristics such as mutual support; a cohesive culture and strong team identity; discussion and critical examination of pedagogy, educational aims and ways of enhancing teachers’ practice; and working creatively together to provide new holistic ways to support learning, children and families<sup>6</sup>

*With regard to outcomes, effective collaborative teacher learning promotes*

**Equity** is evident in advancing the four different aspects of social justice<sup>7</sup>

- *developmental*: fair opportunities for learning and growth
- *participative*: fair opportunities to be heard and contribute to decision-making
- *cultural*: absence of cultural domination, non-recognition and disrespect
- *distributive*: absence of unjustified socio-economic inequalities and deprivation

---

<sup>5</sup> Page 20, in Frost, D. (2006): *The Concept of ‘Agency’ in Leadership for Learning*, *Leading & Managing*, 12(2): 19-28.

<sup>6</sup> Vangrieken et al in their review (see footnote 1) concluded that deep level collaboration is rare: “[D]eep level teacher collaboration seemed to be less frequent as teachers often tend to restrict collaboration to a focus on practical affairs. Consultation with colleagues is often restricted to discussing ideas and materials, planning teaching activities, the nature and content of testing, and the pace and content of teaching. Discussing aspects of the didactics of teaching, problems teachers meet in their daily practice, observing each other in the classroom, discussing each others’ functioning, and critical examination of teaching seemed to be rare’ (p27).

<sup>7</sup> For further information on this four-fold scheme, see

Cribb, A. & Gewirtz, S. (2003): *Towards a sociology of just practices: an analysis of plural conceptions of justice*. In C. Vincent (Ed.). *Social Justice, Education and Identity*, London, Routledge/Falmer

Woods, P. A. (2012): *A Four-fold Approach to Social Justice*. A 2-page information sheet (Available at [https://www.academia.edu/5755395/A\\_Four-fold\\_Approach\\_to\\_Social\\_Justice](https://www.academia.edu/5755395/A_Four-fold_Approach_to_Social_Justice))

Woods, P.A. and Roberts, A. (2013): *Distributed Leadership and Social Justice (DLSJ)*. National Review, prepared for European Policy Network on School Leadership. (Available at <https://herts.academia.edu/PhilipWoods>)

## Holistic learning

When advancing holistic learning, included are the development of<sup>8</sup>

- *the full range of human capabilities*: intellectual, emotional, ethical, aesthetic and spiritual, so that knowledge, understanding and practical life-skills are developed as well as an appreciation of those things in life that nourish the senses and give a sense of purpose and inspiration
- *democratic citizenship*: an understanding of democratic citizenship and appreciation of values such as justice, democracy, the rule of law, tolerance, mutual understanding and a concern for the welfare of others and the natural environment
- *how to learn*: the ability to reflect on and understand how one learns so that people continue to learn throughout their lives.

and meeting the purposes or functions of education identified by Biesta<sup>9</sup>:

- *qualification*: the knowledge, skills, understanding, dispositions and judgements for doing things, such as a particular craft, profession or other activities involved in family and community life
- *socialisation*: becoming a member of a group, community or organisation, such as the teaching profession or other groupings (e.g. the student community) within the school and the wider community in which it is located
- *subjectification*: developing as an individual with some independence from the groups, communities or organisations into which the person is socialised, with an ability to think critically and independently.

---

<sup>8</sup> This draws from a range of work that includes

Forde, C, McMahon, M and Hamilton, G (2015): *Rethinking professional standards to promote professional learning*. Professional Development in Education. 1-17

Frost, D. and Roberts, A. (2011) '*Student leadership, participation and democracy*'. *Leading and Managing* 17 (2): 64-84

Woods, P. A. and Roberts, A. (2015): *Developing distributed leadership for equity and learning: A toolset for policy-makers and school leaders*, European Policy Network on School Leadership (EPNoSL) Available at <https://herts.academia.edu/PhilipWoods>; Woods, P. A. and Woods, G. J. (eds) *Alternative Education in the 21st Century: Philosophies, Approaches, Visions*, New York: Palgrave.

<sup>9</sup> Biesta, G. (2009): *Good education in an age of measurement: on the need to reconnect with the question of purpose in education*, *Educational Assessment, Evaluation and Accountability*, 21(1): 33-46.



*There are certain **key determinants which contribute to** and are essential for successful teachers' collaborative learning. among others which may be deemed more practical are the following, these include:*

**Moral purpose**

- Cultivating moral purpose as a dimension of extended professionalism, including making explicit the aim of enhancing social justice.

**Ownership**

- Engaging teachers in the design, implementation and evaluation of their learning processes which enhances their day-to-day practice.

**Reflection**

- Using dialogic activities to support reflective practice.

**Flexible development process**

- Creating a structured yet flexible development process, which contains regular elements and takes into account the group's preferred learning methods and changing demands.

**Common purpose**

- Ensuring there is a well-defined common purpose for learning, which emphasises identifying practical problems, developing and piloting solutions and co-creating knowledge, based on relevant theory and practice.

**Evaluation**

- Defining evaluation criteria as an integral part of the learning process which are used to review critically participants' work through reflection.

## Guidelines for designing and evaluating pilot programmes

This section presents designing and evaluating tools. The guidelines are intended to support the development of initiatives that promote teachers' collaborative learning and for designers of the EFFeCT pilot programmes. This is a structured set of pointers to the important questions that need to be addressed in developing and supporting teachers' collaborative learning. This section which contains practical tools seeks to be a structure or skeleton to support activities which develop opportunities for learning in a collaborative setting, whether this will be groups of teachers together in a room or in a digitalised environment, or a combination of the two.

The design approach should be consistent with the goal for learning. It is essentially experiential in nature, thus the MF is both methodical and methodological. Since it is a framework, the pilot programmes do not necessarily have to comply with all of the details. The final and validated guidelines will come from the experiences of the different countries and the case studies produced after reflection on the pilot programmes.

### Designing aspects and related activities

The common characteristics to be found from examples of collaborative learning suggest that it is likely to be successful where the following apply:

- Teachers acting as professionals recognise that objectives (in this case, learning) can be achieved more easily if everyone works together and is involved in making decisions.
- They behave as supportive, critical friends with a level of discussion and debate which, while incorporating practice, goes beyond it and involves conceptual and theoretical perspectives.
- There is a recognition of the set of teachers as being a community of learners and of the value of each individual and of their joint activity. All are treated respectfully and without any form of discrimination by others.
- The level of learning includes reflection and professional action on that reflection and touches on and transcends all aspects of human activity.

When initiating teachers' collaborative learning process it is necessary to take into the consideration both the organisational or infrastructural conditions and attributes of the practice and the personal and group characteristics. At the design stage the most important task is clarity and understanding about the purpose and purposefulness of the exercise – answering the *why* question – and how to structure an environment which promotes learning for teachers in a professional setting considering the *what* and *how* questions.

Whatever is presented before teachers in the offerings of professional learning, there has to be meaningfulness in relation to the individual teacher and her/his competence set (professional knowledge, professional understanding and professional capability, attitude and practice) and the context in which she/he is teaching. Personalisation of professional learning opportunities is thus a critical factor when designing professional learning opportunities for teachers.

Within the story of all successful scientific endeavours are indicated the rationale or purpose (what is the goal?), the players (who is involved?), the elements (what is involved?) and the process (how success was achieved). There is recognition of the fact that the particular environment (what are the local conditions?) and the time and timing of the event (when?) are also significant. There is also the moral/ethical and epistemological question (why this particular approach?).

The value of these questions is well recognised and understood in the field of professional development but the author and poet, Rudyard Kipling, writing at the beginning of the twentieth century in part of a verse from 'The Elephant's Child' suggests that they are essential for everyone to gain knowledge and understanding.

I keep six honest serving-men:

(They taught me all I knew)

Their names are What and Where and When

And How and Why and Who

*Rudyard Kipling - The Elephant's Child*

What; Why; When, Where, Who and How – some pointers coming out of collaborative learning. Changing the order of Kipling's poem a little, let us look at whether other's experience of taking part in collaborative learning (CL) could help in using CL in the appropriate own context.

#### What is

CL? In its simplest terms, it is a series of diverse activities where individuals form groups of varying size (from 2 up) and learning singularly and cohesively from and with others. All of them have something to contribute and also take from the experience.

#### Why?

CL is one of a great number of methods or 'vehicles' through which learning can take place? Its strength and attractiveness for many is because it is a social transaction, where whilst being able to 'learn' for the teachers themselves (individual learning) and they are also able to learn alongside and interact with others who are also seeking to find out more, problem solve, improve their knowledge, skills and practice and/or break out into completely new territory. Group learning also takes place building on, challenging, using and enhancing the collective experiences, knowledge and skills of the whole group. New ideas and possibilities can arise be analysed, assessed and evaluated from a multi-angled perspective. One person's habitual practice may prove to be another's new

initiative and challenge assumed sets of beliefs and behaviours. On the other hand confidence can be built in colleagues who have worked in isolation and now find that at least some of their methods and ideas have been successfully used elsewhere. Participants claim that CL gives them insights into both their professional and personal lives.

#### Where?

CL is universally used across politics, business and institutions to name but a few, in the case of the EFFECT project we concentrate on looking at its use with education, covering schools and teachers, educational institutions at all levels, assessors and evaluators and policy makers across multi-contexts.

#### When?

The EFFECT project runs from 1 November 2015 to 2018 and the piloting phase is between November 2016 and November 2017. In other contexts whenever there is felt to be a need to address an issue affecting individuals, teams, content, methods, strategies, systems, administration, management or control within a body of people working together.

#### Who?

In this case all of the pilot participants, as individuals involved in teaching and learning, educational management and/ or policy-making at various levels.

#### How?

There is no definitive answer, each situation and context can evolve its own 'How'. Having said that however, by examining examples of CL across a number of contexts there are pointers towards what may be helpful or the reverse in setting up and maintaining a CL initiative.

### **Favourable factors**

From the case studies does emerge a set of favourable factors which support teachers' active professional learning in collaborative environments. It is from these that one can build a methodical approach when planning such opportunities for learning in collaborative settings.

a) Build in to the timing of the event sufficient "coffee breaks" to allow for 'informal' learning between participants. Ensure that there is an ethos of peer support – with an openness, honesty, trustfulness between participants and, at the same time, professionally rigorous collegial challenge and professional debate and openness to change.

b) Debate furthers identity construction of what it is to be an educator and enhances the concept of membership of a professional community.

c) While attendance at such events may be an individual decision of one or more educators from an organisation, it is preferable that their attendance is supported by the senior managers of the school or organisation.

d) The leadership and facilitation of such events should be sufficiently expert and recognised as such by those in the field. Their expertise may not be necessarily related to positions held in organisational hierarchies. It is their professional capabilities that have gained them the authority to act as de-centred agents.

e) While maintaining the stated and declared learning goals, those leading and facilitating such events should respond with fluidity and flexibility in order to meet the learning requirements of those before them. What is presented as feasible should be based on sustainable structures, processes and practices.

f) Content should incorporate new and challenging ideas which develop the educator as educator-researcher, researching her/his own professional practice and that of others working in the field, building professional expectations in relation to traditional approaches. The relationship between reflection, learning and reflexivity should be clearly elicited. Opportunities to reflect and respond to 'new' ideas/methods as individuals and in small groups with feedback to the event facilitators need to be built into the programme at regular intervals.

g) Event facilitators need also to present the forms of support material which would allow individuals and/or groups to develop further their knowledge and understanding of the concepts presented prior to and after the event. This may or may not include online support.

h) For any event, there need to be clear goals, well-written guidelines and any manual supporting the event needs to demonstrate clarity and a clear direction and purpose commensurate with professional practice. The ratio of Biesta's (2009) purposes (*qualification, socialisation and subjectification*) is a design and planning consideration here.

i) If there is a team of facilitators, each should know and be competent in the role that they are to perform.

j) Within the parameters of the theme of this project, which focuses on opportunities for professional learning in collaborative settings, sharing professional activity is an essential prerequisite. It is a means by which individual and collective understanding of professional competence is achieved.

### Evaluating questions

When originating, designing and planning programmes or events for teachers' professional development, it is essential to build in or incorporate and articulate the means by which will be evaluated the outcomes. If the level of learning will be evaluated, for example, then it is essential to build opportunities for individuals and groups to further their learning into the programme. Similarly, if the level of professional participation will be evaluated, then it is neces-

sary to ensure the opportunities for such activity and interactivity are built into the programme. Further, it is essential to ensure that the evaluating means should be carefully defined in order that participants completing the evaluations have a common understanding of what is being evaluated and why. Equally, if there is a desire to measure concepts, for example, 'equity', it would be necessary to define it clearly and to understand contextual differences both in meaning and in practice. If individuals are to complete evaluations including their own level of collaboration during professional learning opportunities then it will be necessary to have a sufficiently-refined tool which takes into account individuals preferred methods of learning and participation.

The tables in the APPENDICES (accompanying document at this stage) may serve as tools that can be used in the process of evaluating the pilot programmes, together with other tools, developed by EFeCT partners at the national level, in line with the pilot programmes' specific learning aims, content and the national context.