

Running head: TEACHERS' PERSPECTIVES OF THE IMPACT OF COLLABORATIVE  
LESSON PLANNING STRATEGIES ON PROFESSIONAL LEARNING

**The impact of collaborative lesson planning strategies on professional learning in the  
context of one International Baccalaureate school in Kazakhstan**

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**The impact of collaborative lesson planning strategies on professional learning in the  
context of one International Baccalaureate school in Kazakhstan**

**Abstract**

Collaborative lesson planning (CLP) is a practice that unites teachers usually of one department or one grade level in a school to plan lessons, share their views on learning tasks, and prepare effective learning resources together. Previous studies have concluded that CLP is a useful tool to increase teachers' confidence in lesson planning and improve their professional learning. Since CLP is a relatively new concept for Kazakhstani schools and teachers, there are no empirical studies in this field. The current study explored the impact of CLP strategies on the professional learning of Kazakhstani teachers' in one International Baccalaureate (IB) school.

This limited qualitative ethnography used observations and semi-structured individual interviews to collect data. The research site was a convenience location enabling the researcher to be a participant observer within the context in which she is employed. Participants were recruited using purposeful convenience sampling within the research site. Criteria used to select participants were both novice and experienced teachers actively involved in CLP. Collected data were analyzed in five steps: compiling, disassembling, reassembling, interpreting, and concluding as outlined by Castleberry and Nolen (2018).

The research revealed that the school leadership encourages and motivates school teachers to plan their lessons collaboratively, but the process does not limit teachers from individualizing their plans to cater for student needs. CLP is considered to positively influence professional learning. Middle Years Program teachers were more actively engaged in CLP practices compared to Primary Years Program teachers. The research concluded that the following CLP strategies such as doing prior research on resources for lesson planning, being open to sharing ideas and materials with colleagues, being open-minded and motivated,

and demonstrating a high level of attitude towards responsibility for shared workload are helpful tools to improve teachers' professional growth.

*Keywords:* collaborative lesson planning, collaborative lesson planning strategies, CLP meetings, teacher learning, professional development, IB school.

**Влияние стратегий совместного планирования уроков на профессиональное  
обучение в контексте одной школы Международного Бакалавриата в Казахстане**

**Аннотация**

Совместное планирование уроков (СПУ) - это практика, при которой учителя обычно из одного методического объединения или одной параллели объединяются, чтобы планировать ежедневные занятия, делиться своими взглядами на задачи и готовить лучшие ресурсы совместно. Обзор литературы рассматривает СПУ как полезный инструмент для повышения уверенности учителей в планировании уроков, тем самым улучшая их профессиональное обучение. Поскольку СПУ является относительно новой концепцией для казахстанских школ и учителей, в этой области нет эмпирических исследований. Таким образом, данное исследование изучает влияние стратегии СПУ на профессиональное обучение учителей в контексте одной школы Международного Бакалавриата (МБ) в Казахстане.

Данное качественное, ограниченно этнографическое исследование использовало методы наблюдения и полуструктурированные индивидуальные интервью для сбора данных. Место исследования было удобным, позволяющим исследователю быть участником-наблюдателем в школе, в котором она работает. Участники были набраны с использованием целенаправленной удобной выборки на исследовательской площадке. Критериями отбора участников были как начинающие, так и опытные преподаватели, активно участвующие в СПУ. Собранные данные были проанализированы в пять этапов: составление, разборка, повторная сборка, интерпретация и заключение, предложенные Каслберри и Нолен (2018).

Исследование показало, что школьное руководство поощряет и мотивирует школьных учителей планировать свои уроки совместно, но этот процесс не ограничивает учителей в индивидуализации своих планов для удовлетворения

потребностей учеников. Считается, что СПУ положительно влияет на профессиональное обучение. Учителя средней школы были более активно вовлечены в практику СПУ по сравнению с учителями начальной школы. Исследование привело к выводу, что следующие стратегии CLP, такие как проведение предварительного исследования ресурсов для планирования урока, открытость для обмена идеями и материалами с другими коллегами, мотивация, а также демонстрация высокого уровня отношения к ответственности за совместную рабочую нагрузку являются полезными инструментами для повышения профессионального роста учителей.

*Ключевые слова:* совместное планирование урока, стратегии совместного планирования урока, встречи СПУ, обучение учителя, профессиональное развитие, школа Международного Бакалавриата.

**Қазақстандағы бір Халықаралық Бакалавриат мектебінің контекстінде  
сабақты бірлесіп жоспарлау стратегияларының кәсіби дамуға әсері**

**Аңдатпа**

Сабақты бірлесіп жоспарлау (СБЖ) - мектептегі бір әдістемелік бірлестік немесе бір сынып параллелі мұғалімдерін сабақты жоспарлау, оқу міндеттері туралы пікірлерімен бөлісу және тиімді оқу ресурстарын бірге дайындау үшін біріктіретін тәжірибе. Бұрын жүргізілген зерттеулер, СБЖ мұғалімдердің сабақты жоспарлауға деген сенімін арттыратын және кәсіби білімін жетілдіретін пайдалы құрал ретінде қарастырады. СБЖ - бұл қазақстандық мектептер мен мұғалімдер үшін салыстырмалы түрде жаңа тұжырымдама болғандықтан, бұл салада ешқандай эмпирикалық зерттеулер жүргізілмеген. Бұл зерттеу бір Халықаралық Бакалавриат (ХБ) мектебінде қазақстандық мұғалімдердің кәсіби біліміне СБЖ стратегияларының әсерін зерттеді.

Бұл шектеулі этнографиялық, сапалық зерттеу деректерді жинау үшін бақылаулар мен жартылай құрылымдалған жеке сұхбаттар әдістерін пайдаланды. Зерттеу алаңы зерттеушінің өзі жұмыс істейтін контексте қатысушы-бақылаушы болуымен ыңғайлы орын болды. Қатысушылар зерттеу алаңында ыңғайлы мақсатты іріктеулерді қолдана отырып тартылды. Іріктеу критерийлеріне сәйкес, қатысушылар жас және тәжірибелі, бірлесіп сабақ жоспарлау тәжірибесіне белсенді қатысып жүрген мұғалімдер болды. Жиналған мәліметтер Каслберри мен Нолен (2018) ұсынған бес кезеңде талданды: құрастыру, бөлшектеу, қайта құрастыру, түсіндіру және қорытындылау.

Зерттеу нәтижесі мектеп басшылығының мектеп мұғалімдерін сабақты бірлесіп жоспарлауға итермелейтінін және ынталандыратынын анықтады, сондай-ақ әр мұғалімнің өз оқушыларының қажеттіліктеріне сәйкес қажетті өзгерістер мен толықтырулар енгізуге шектеу қоймайды. СБЖ кәсіби дамуға оң әсер етеді деп



саналады. ХБ мектебіндегі орта мектеп бағдарламасының мұғалімдері бастауыш сыныптар мұғалімдерімен салыстырғанда СБЖ тәжірибесіне белсенді айналысады деген қорытынды жасалды. Зерттеу нәтижелері бойынша, сабақты бірлесіп жоспарлаудың ресурстарды алдын-ала зерттеу, идеяларыңыз бен материалдарыңызды басқа әріптестеріңізбен бөлісуге дайын болу, ашық және ынталы болу және ортақ жұмыс жүктемесіне жауапкершіліктің жоғары деңгейінің көрінісі сияқты стратегияларының мұғалімдердің кәсіби өсуін жақсартудың пайдалы құралдары.

*Түйінді сөздер:* сабақты бірлесіп жоспарлау, сабақты бірлесіп жоспарлау стратегиялары, СБЖ жиналыстары, мұғалімдерді оқыту, біліктілікті арттыру, ХБ мектебі.

**Table of Contents**

Author Agreement.....	i
Declaration.....	ii
Ethical Approval.....	iii
CITI Training Certificate.....	iv
Acknowledgments.....	v
Abstract.....	vi
Table of Contents.....	xii
List of Figures.....	xv
List of Tables.....	xvi
Chapter 1. Introduction.....	1
1.1. Introduction.....	1
1.2. Definition of Collaborative Lesson Planning.....	2
1.3 Collaborative Lesson Planning in Kazakhstan.....	3
1.4. Statement of the Problem.....	4
1.5. Purpose of the Study.....	5
1.6. Research Questions.....	5
1.7. Significance of the Study.....	5
1.8. Conclusion and Structure of the Thesis.....	6
Chapter 2. Literature Review.....	7
2.1. Introduction.....	7
2.2. Conceptual Framework.....	7
2.3. Teachers' Perspectives of Collaborative Lesson Planning and its Benefits.....	10
2.3.1 Professional Development: Exchange of Ideas and Experiences.....	11
2.3.2 Teachers' Time Management.....	12
2.3.3. Lesson Planning and Planning Resources: Shared Responsibilities.....	13
2.4. Challenges of Using Collaborative Lesson Planning.....	13
2.4.1. Time Scarcity: An Obstacle to Collaborative Lesson Planning Process.....	14

2.4.2. Resistance to Collaboration.....	14
2.5. Summary .....	15
Chapter 3. Methodology .....	16
3.1. Introduction .....	16
3.2. Research Design .....	16
3.3. Research Methods.....	17
3.4. Case Study Site Selection .....	17
3.5. Participant Selection .....	18
3.6. Position of the Researcher.....	19
3.7. Data Collection Procedures and Tools.....	19
3.8. Data Analysis .....	21
3.9. Ethical Considerations .....	22
3.10. Summary .....	23
Chapter 4. Findings .....	25
4.1. Introduction .....	25
4.2. The Researcher's Role in the Study .....	26
4.3. Observation Data .....	27
4.3.1. Observations of Team One Collaborative Lesson Planning .....	28
4.3.2. Observations of Team Two Collaborative Lesson Planning.....	29
4.4. IB Program Policies and the Role of School Leadership in Implementing Collaborative Lesson Planning .....	32
4.5. Teachers' Perspectives on Benefits and Challenges of Collaborative Lesson Planning....	36
4.5.1 Benefits of Collaborative Lesson Planning.....	39
4.5.2 Challenges of Collaborative Lesson Planning.....	42
4.6. Foundational Collaborative Lesson Planning Strategies to Sustain Teachers' Professional Learning .....	43

4.7. Summary .....	45
Chapter 5. Discussion .....	47
5.1. Introduction .....	47
5.2. IB Program Policies and School Leadership Encourage Collaborative Lesson Planning .....	47
5.3. Teachers' Perspectives on Benefits and Challenges of Collaborative Lesson Planning ...	48
5.4. Impacts of Collaborative Lesson Planning Strategies on Teachers' Professional Learning .....	53
5.5. Summary .....	53
Chapter 6. Conclusions and Recommendations .....	55
6.1. Introduction .....	55
6.2. The Summary of Findings.....	55
6.3. Recommendations for Sustaining Collaborative Lesson Planning for Teachers' Professional Learning .....	56
6.4. Limitations of my Study and Implications for Further Research .....	57
6.5. Contribution of the Study.....	58
6.6. Summary of the Entire Thesis .....	58
References .....	60
Appendices.....	65
Appendix A: Letter of Invitation.....	65
Appendix B: Written Informed Consent Form .....	67
Appendix C: Questions for Semi-structured Interviews.....	73
Appendix D: Data Analysis Audit Trial .....	75

**List of Figures**

Figure 1. Conceptual Framework of this Study .....9

**List of Tables**

Table 1. List of participants of observation groups.....27

Table 2. List of interviewed participants .....27

## **Chapter 1. Introduction**

### **1.1. Introduction**

In January 2018, the first President of the Republic of Kazakhstan, Nursultan Nazarbayev, in his message to the people of Kazakhstan “New Development Opportunities in the Conditions of the Fourth Industrial Revolution” noted that “we need to accelerate the creation of our own advanced education system designed for citizens of all ages” (Nazarbayev, 2018). At the same time, “the key priority of educational programs should be the development of the ability to constantly adapt to changes and learn new knowledge” (Nazarbayev, 2018). In order to implement the updated curriculum, the State Compulsory Educational Standard and Educational Program on Continuing Education Course (CEC) for teachers was developed to update teachers’ knowledge of the content of the secondary education curriculum of the Republic of Kazakhstan (Almagambetova & Kabdirova, 2017). Bridges, Kurakbayev and Kambatyrova (2014) noted that in countries such as Egypt, Mongolia and Kazakhstan, new curriculum and educational practices are implemented in selected schools before translating the practices to mainstream schools. In Kazakhstan, the updated curriculum was implemented in selected schools such as Nazarbayev Intellectual Schools (NIS) with an aim to later transfer the experience among mainstream schools (Bridges, Kurakbayev & Kambatyrova, 2014).

Since the researcher was a teacher at one of those selected schools, she witnessed the hardship of that period of time for teachers. If NIS teachers received high quality teacher training and professional support from Cambridge educational leaders in implementing the updated curriculum reform (Ayubayeva, 2018), their counterparts from mainstream schools had to learn from local trainers, others in their departments and on their own. Beginning from this time, the researcher like many other teachers around the country, started to understand the importance of teacher collaboration, especially while acquiring new knowledge in teaching

the updated content of the curriculum and planning lessons in accordance with its requirements.

In former times, teachers did not pay much attention to the lesson planning process, relying instead on textbooks and ready-made exercises (MoES, 2016). However, updating the content of the education system was accompanied by fundamental changes in pedagogical practice (Almagambetova & Kabdirova, 2017). Due to the implementation of the updated curriculum in 2016, fixed textbooks have been removed. Consequently, teachers now generate lessons with multiple worksheets from different sources (MoES, 2016) and they are expected to plan lessons as a collaborative activity.

This research study aims to explore the impact of CLP strategies on teachers' professional learning in the context of one IB school in Kazakhstan. This chapter introduces the problem which motivated the study, outlines the purpose of the study, the research questions, the significance of the study, and provides an outline of the whole thesis.

## **1.2. Definition of Collaborative Lesson Planning**

CLP is an activity which occurs when teachers gather to plan lessons together, sharing different ideas, resources, solutions to potential problems, and reflect on those lessons. The concept is expressed in a variety of different ways, with a range of similar terms often used synonymously. Similar terms include: joint planning, team planning and co-planning. These terms are connected because CLP implies the joint development of a lesson by more than one person (Bauml, 2016; West, 1990), and usually involves a group of teachers from one grade. A further related term is 'professional community' which Achinstein (2002) defines as a group of people involved in common work to share values about teaching and students, exchanging experiences and operating collaboratively.

In CLP, teachers plan the stages of the lesson (student activity) to continuously develop the learning process (Ross & Gray, 2006). The process may also include reflection on



previous lessons to “evaluate the outcomes of those lessons and plan further instructions accordingly” (Bauml, 2016, p. 59). Thousand et al. (2006) recognize that collaboration on planning and teaching is helpful in dealing with teachers’ obligations and meeting the needs of various types of learners.

In this study, terms such as “collaborative lesson planning” and “co-planning” will be used. “Co-planning” will be used to describe different types of teacher collaboration sessions: discussing long-term/ short-term plans, units, assessment, reflection on units etc. “Collaborative lesson planning” will focus on joint-planning of lessons by several teachers/ groups of teachers.

### **1.3 Collaborative Lesson Planning in Kazakhstan**

Teacher collaboration is necessary for school teachers in Kazakhstan, because of innovations and educational reforms that are still new for most teachers. Collaboration is seen as a vital strategy to effectively implement these reforms and improve teaching. Although collaborative lesson planning was first introduced in NIS in 2011 (Ayubayeva, 2018), its use is still in the process of transfer from NIS to mainstream schools.

Teachers in Kazakhstan collaboratively develop course programs, as well as long-term, mid-term and short-term plans and lesson plans for each unit of student learning. This way, teachers have a common understanding of the learning outcomes they will reach at the end of the learning block; that is, they have a shared vision of what students need to study, and how to do that.

In particular, collaborative lesson planning is an essential part of the International Baccalaureate (IB) program. IB schools around the world expect their teachers to plan lessons collaboratively, reflect on them, and constantly reconsider subject curricula (IBO, 2015).

#### **1.4. Statement of the Problem**

The effectiveness and quality of teaching is closely interrelated to lesson planning. The purpose of lesson planning is to develop clear learning objectives and align teaching content and pedagogy with the lesson objectives. Planning allows teachers not to be distracted, to optimize time and progress according to the plan. Bilen stresses the importance of lesson planning as an indicator related to enhancing the quality of teaching (cited in Süral, 2019).

Basset, Bowler and Newton noted that lesson planning is one of many important parts of the teaching process (as cited in Lewis, 2015). However, in the current Kazakhstani educational system teachers are facing difficulties in moving to lesson planning that is not reliant on textbooks, that fosters students' engagement and raises motivation.

Some school teachers are obliged to plan lessons collaboratively. For example, in the researcher's previous workplaces at NIS and IB schools CLP is a requirement. These schools are concerned with maintaining sustainable teachers' professional growth. However, the majority of mainstream schools in Kazakhstan are still unable to implement collaborative work due to lack of time and insufficient resources.

Another reason why CLP is not developed in Kazakhstan is teachers' lack of experience in this area, and the culture within the teacher professional community. The updated curriculum requires teaching that is implemented through modeling and analysis of real-life situations, the use of active and interactive techniques, and participation in project activities. Teachers need to practice teaching interdisciplinary integration within the new curriculum too (Almagambetova & Kabdirova, 2017). However, the implementation of the updated curriculum without additional teacher learning makes it difficult for teachers to plan lessons in accordance with the new requirements. Hence, the current study investigates the impacts of CLP on teacher learning and professional growth.

### **1.5. Purpose of the Study**

The purpose of this qualitative study is to investigate what impact collaborative lesson planning strategies have on teachers' professional learning. This study explored the CLP experiences of teachers in one IB school in Kazakhstan to draw implications and suggest possible improvements to assist with collaborative planning processes. A case study conducted in one IB school may provide other mainstream schools with strategies to improve the use of collaborative lesson planning for professional growth. While there are previous studies about CLP, and its impact on professional learning, my research is expected to fill the gap of studying the impacts of CLP on teachers' professional learning and in the Kazakhstani context.

### **1.6. Research Questions**

The following research questions were addressed in the study:

**Central research question:** What impact does collaborative lesson planning strategies have on teachers' professional learning in the context of one IB school in Kazakhstan?

**Sub-questions:**

1. How is collaborative lesson planning operationalized and perceived in an IB school in Kazakhstan?
2. What are teachers' perspectives on the benefits and challenges of collaborative lesson planning?
3. What enhances or inhibits the effectiveness of collaborative lesson planning for professional learning?

### **1.7. Significance of the Study**

The major significance of the study will be teachers' reflection on their CLP experiences and insights into any impacts on their professional learning. Their contribution to this study will help policy makers and school leaders to apply strategies suggested by the

study to develop successful reforms on CLP or policy documents that will make an impact on developing teachers' proficiency. The study can be used for further research, not only by Kazakhstani, but also by researchers of post-Soviet Union countries that have a similar educational research area. Kazakhstani teachers of mainstream schools will know what are the potential benefits and drawbacks of CLP and strategies to use CLP more effectively to improve their professional learning.

### **1.8. Conclusion and Structure of the Thesis**

This chapter has introduced the key elements of the study such as the problem statement, purpose of the study, research questions, and significance of the study. Chapter 2, "Literature Review" presents a review of major studies in the field of CLP, the strategies associated with CLP, the benefits and challenges, as well as the potential impact of CLP on teachers' professional growth. In addition, the chapter includes the conceptual framework upon which the research will be built. Chapter 3, "Methodology" explains the research procedure. This chapter will describe the research design, research site, participants, data collection and data analysis processes, and ethical considerations. Chapter 4, "Findings" presents the major findings of the research, to fill in the gap of Kazakhstani context. Chapter 5, "Discussion" provides the interpretations of the major findings, and relates those findings with similar studies described in the "Literature Review" chapter. In the final chapter, "Conclusions and Recommendations", the findings are summarized in relation to the research questions, the limitations of the study are described, implications for further research of the field and recommendations for policymakers and the contribution of the study will be presented. The study concludes with a summary of the entire thesis.

## **Chapter 2. Literature Review**

### **2.1. Introduction**

Teachers' learning has become one of the significant drivers of educational reforms. Ongoing pressure for change in education requires improvement of both teachers' methods of teaching practice and attitudes towards students learning (Meirink, Meijer, & Verloop, 2010). Teacher collaboration is considered to have a positive impact on teacher learning. Teachers worldwide describe teacher collaboration as a powerful tool for learning, as well as sharing ideas and experiences, discussing and developing curricula and materials, providing feedback and being a critical friend while teaching practices (Butler, Novak Lauscher, Jarvis-Selinger, & Beckingham, 2004; Dunn & Shriner, 1999; Johnson, 2003; Meirink, Meijer, & Verloop, 2007). This chapter presents a review of literature relevant to the study. It includes a description of the conceptual framework, provides a review of studies investigating teachers' perspectives of CLP, the benefits and challenges of CLP and the impact of CLP on teachers' professional learning.

### **2.2. Conceptual Framework**

This study of the impact of CLP on teacher learning was informed by two theories: Malcolm Knowles' (1984) Andragogy (Adult learning) and Desimone's (2009) Professional Development. Andragogy is a term derived from the Greek language that means "leading man" (Knowles, 1980). The notion refers to adult education approaches and values. Andragogy describes adult learning as "self-directed, rich with resources for learning and performance-centered human beings" (Knowles, 1980, p. 45). However, Knowles noted that adults need to know the design of learning, i.e. adults must have the purpose of learning, and they should learn together, and use this knowledge immediately in their real life (as cited in El Afi, 2019).

Desimone studied the effectiveness of professional development (PD) and proposed a framework for studying what makes PD effective. According to Desimone (2009) the critical features of professional development are: a content focus, active learning, coherence, duration, and collective participation. Each of these are explained further below.

*Content focus.* Desimone (2009) considers the content focus of teacher learning as the most significant part of the PD process. The focus of PD content should relate to both teachers and students' learning, with content that increases teacher knowledge and skills aimed at improving student achievement (Desimone, 2011). In this study, the content of teachers' professional learning was teachers' practice of collaborative lesson planning within the IB program. However, the current study did not explore the impact of teachers' learning on students' achievements, rather it focuses on teachers' professional learning.

*Active learning.* Teachers should be active in their professional learning. Active learning involves observing experienced teachers' lessons, as well as being observed by them, practicing giving feedback and holding discussions. In this study, teachers' collaboration for lesson planning followed the active learning practice suggested by Desimone.

*Coherence.* Teachers' professional learning activities should correspond with the school's mission and vision, educational reforms and policies. The cohesion of PD content with teachers' actual learning and teaching will positively impact on student learning as well (El Afi, 2019). In this research, the coherence feature was used to analyze how teachers of IB school adhere to IB policy documents and use them for CLP.

*Duration.* Professional learning activities should be long-term and systematic, with sufficient duration in terms of number of hours and length of PD sessions (Desimone, 2009). In this study, the duration feature was used to find out the amount of time allocated for CLP in IB school, and explore how consistency of meeting for CLP impacts on teachers' professional learning.

*Collective participation.* Groups of teachers from the same grades, departments or schools gather for professional learning and create learning communities (Desimone, 2011). Such groups provide a powerful form of teacher learning (Desimone, 2009).

Desimone’s PD framework was chosen to explore the impact of CLP on teachers’ professional learning. Knowles’ theory of Adult learning (Andragogy) was applied to explore teachers’ professional learning through collaborative lesson planning. These theories best suited the study as teachers are adult learners, and CLP is a PD tool to explore teachers’ professional learning. The relationship between these theories are presented in Figure 1 – the Conceptual Framework for this study.

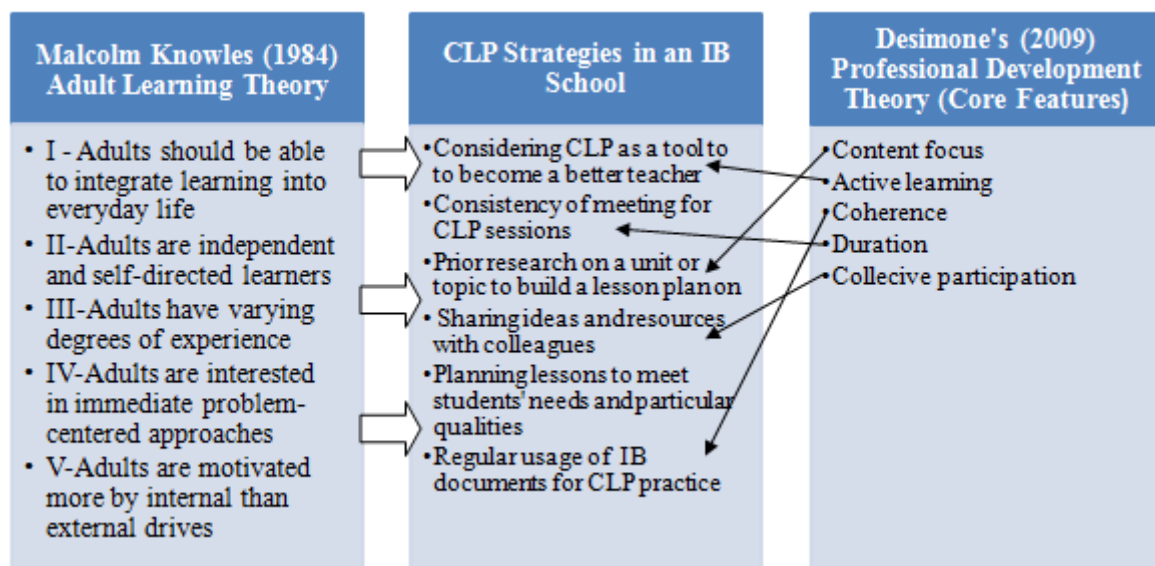


Figure 1. Conceptual Framework of this Study

The figure represents how knowledge of Knowles' Adult learning and Desimone’s PD theories were used to analyze data collected in an IB School to represent the impact of CLP on teachers’ professional learning. As can be seen from the figure above, when two theories merge with CLP Strategies for PD, the concepts explain to teachers the characteristics of their learning and suggest approaches to professional learning. These theories were very important

for this study as they were used to understand and analyze the ways teachers as adults acquire new knowledge.

### **2.3. Teachers' Perspectives of Collaborative Lesson Planning and its Benefits**

While teacher collaboration involves many features, the current study focuses only on collaborative lesson planning. There are several reasons to support this choice. Firstly, CLP is mostly practiced in schools, where the researcher is a teacher-insider who is able to see how teachers are coping with newest educational reforms and policies. Secondly, during CLP, teachers are likely to improve in their knowledge and skills, which will positively impact student achievement. However, the current study does not research student achievement, rather the impact of CLP on teachers' professional learning. This section presents empirical studies that have examined teachers' perspectives of CLP.

A study by Bauml (2014) demonstrated the importance of team planning. Bauml's study (2014, p. 189) investigated how one novice teacher was able to "develop curricular knowledge, pedagogical content knowledge, and professional contextual knowledge about the school". The planning team helped the teacher in delivering content of the subject through clear instructions, and feeling confident while teaching (Bauml, 2014). The teacher reported gaining a deeper understanding on accessing and using school teachers' primary resources such as the curriculum and its guide.

However, Bauml (2016) stated that not only novice teachers benefit from team planning. According to Bauml (2016, p. 60), collaborative lesson planning is helpful for experienced teachers in "bringing them together to talk about their work and their students". Bauml (2016) believes that practice will contribute to the school improvement, and he strongly highlights that collaborative lesson planning leads to teacher learning.

The basic benefits of CLP can be outlined as professional learning, improved job satisfaction and better lesson plans (Bauml, 2014; Bauml, 2016). These findings are similar to



those reported in a MetLife Survey of the American teacher (2010). Those teachers who were in CLP teams indicated higher levels of job satisfaction. In addition, Johnson, Reinhorn, and Simon (2015) revealed that teachers in CLP teams feel less stressed and isolated. Other scholars such as Brickhouse and Bodner (as cited in Blumenfeld et al., 1994) prove that teacher collaboration helps avoid teacher isolation.

As cited in Blumenfeld, Krajcik, Marx, and Soloway (1994, p. 548), international scholars (for example, Ball & Runquist, 1993; Weinstein, et al., 1991) have identified collaboration as a crucial process in assisting teachers with “understanding new conceptions of teaching and in developing innovative classroom practices” (p. 541). Simon and Schifter (as cited in Blumenfeld et al., 1994) claim that teachers construct understanding of new data through interacting with each other.

Notwithstanding teachers’ feelings, CLP is a pivotal aspect of teaching practice. Bauml highlights that the benefits of CLP outweigh the drawbacks of it, and explicitly outlines major benefits such as: professional learning, job satisfaction, better lesson plans, time management, training, support and trust (Bauml, 2016). In addition, teachers noted being more confident and feeling part of the community (Thousand, Villa & Nevin, 2006). Below, the most important benefits of CLP from the literature are presented.

### **2.3.1 Professional Development: Exchange of Ideas and Experiences**

Teacher development plays a crucial role in school improvement, with the success or failure of school reforms depending on the level of effectiveness of professional development. Desimone (2011) delineated various kinds of professional development in schools. Professional development can take place during mentoring, co-teaching, and teacher network. Secondly, activities such as reviewing curriculum materials, reflecting on student work and running different clubs such as a movie or book clubs can be considered as professional development too.

One of the most powerful locations for development is considered to be teachers' own classrooms. Classrooms are an ideal space for teachers' learning through reflecting on their own lessons, observing the effectiveness of activities, and feeling success or failure of lesson planning stages through the atmosphere in the classroom (Desimone, 2011). However, the highest level of teachers' professional learning and teachers' collaboration is collaborative lesson planning (Bauml, 2016; Meirink et al., 2010; Merritt, 2016; Thousand et al., 2006). Merritt (2016) reported that teachers in Wisconsin found effectiveness of collaborative lesson planning at the top choice of the list, even "above more money and fewer disruptive students" (p. 32). Summing up, CLP is designed to serve teachers' needs and core features that Desimone's PD features put forward.

### **2.3.2 Teachers' Time Management**

When collaborative lesson planning functions well, it makes teachers' work easier and more rewarding. Teachers share experience and knowledge and divide labour on lesson planning to save time (Kaplan, Chan, Farbman, & Novoryta, 2015). Merritt (2017) suggests two types of lesson planning for effective lessons and time saving. These are: individual planning and common planning. Merritt strongly supports the idea of saving time by planning first individually, then through discussing, sharing ideas and critiquing coming to a finalized lesson plan.

Well-built time management plays a key role in teachers' engagement, well-being, job satisfaction and student learning. Therefore, teachers who teach several grade levels will benefit greatly from CLP by spending more time on lesson discussions and devoting less time on writing lesson plans due to shared responsibilities among CLP team teachers. Bauml (2014) claims that novice teachers usually spend more time on co-planning compared to experienced teachers, and thus daily lesson planning is challenging for new teachers. To support that, Murawski refers to Dieker's research (2001) that states "veteran co-teachers"

need only ten minutes' time to plan lessons effectively. Therefore, once a team has managed to gather more often to plan lessons collaboratively, gradually less time will be required for them to plan.

### **2.3.3. Lesson Planning and Planning Resources: Shared Responsibilities**

Usually, teachers apply the strategy of 'divide and conquer' with CLP, where they share responsibilities of planning separate content areas and sharing them with one another. Implementation of those lessons might begin after teachers gather to discuss or critique those lesson plans. Ideally, the highest level of collaborative work is reached when all teachers equally contribute to the creation of these plans (Bauml, 2016).

Effective collaboration requires shared goals, good communication, and the equal contribution of all participants. At the same time, it is important to understand that collaborative lesson planning might not always produce effective lessons. Bauml states that teachers should be given time to get used to working in groups, developing and following the principles of effective lesson planning (Bauml, 2016). Merrit (2016) agrees with Bauml concerning teacher learning time and principles of effective lesson planning.

### **2.4. Challenges of Using Collaborative Lesson Planning**

For many teachers CLP is a "welcome aspect of teaching", for some it is a "dreaded chore" (Bauml, 2016, p. 58). The most common challenges teachers experienced while using CLP are: lack of time and resistance to planning collaboratively (Bauml, 2016; Merritt, 2016). Bauml (2016, p. 61) describes learning to teach as "replete with challenges". Especially novice teachers compared to more experienced ones, might face such difficulties as "lack of depth understanding of curriculum, pedagogy, appropriate practices, and preparing for and implementing instructions" (2014, p. 182).

#### **2.4.1. Time Scarcity: An Obstacle to Collaborative Lesson Planning Process**

Teachers do multiple tasks during the day such as: teaching, assessing student papers, meeting with parents and specialists to support individual students and planning differentiated lessons. Teachers from Wisconsin declared lack of planning time as a reason for leaving the teaching profession (Merritt, 2016). Teaching in current times is different from earlier times, as policymakers have been adapting to new forms of curricula and assessment. Lack of planning time is a “barrier to successful implementation” of those educational reforms (Merritt, 2016, p. 32). Bauml (2016) mentions the busy schedules of school teachers. While accomplishing countless everyday activities, teachers simply do not have enough time to organize and conduct joint planning with their colleagues. Teachers will continue everyday routines, avoid team planning and go on with their separate planning, unless school leadership makes CLP a priority. In addition, if mentorship does not operate in a school, collaborative work within the same grades might serve as a source of professional growth (Bauml, 2014). Therefore, teachers involved in collaborative lesson planning would benefit from it both by saving time and sharing responsibilities for lesson planning of the same grade levels. Collaborative lesson planning is considered to positively impact student achievement through teachers' professional growth (Hay, 2011).

#### **2.4.2. Resistance to Collaboration**

Resistance can be quite a serious issue while implementing innovations or educational reforms. Concerning CLP, the literature depicts high levels of teachers' resistance for collaborative lesson planning. Bauml (2016) identifies two threats that teachers are likely to feel, when asked to plan collaboratively. These are loss of autonomy and conflict in teaching styles and relationships.

Loss of autonomy is experienced when teachers are called out to plan collaborative lessons for the same grade level students. Once teachers are gathered, they are likely to face

contradictions due to different teaching styles that influence their relationships. Possible solutions to such issues are suggested in many studies (Achinstein, 2002; Bauml, 2016; Merritt, 2016). Bauml (2016, p. 61) considers school leadership as the group to solve the issue of conflict by “strategically introducing, implementing and supporting collaborative lesson planning”. Merritt (2016) agrees with Bauml, although suggests more practical ways to provide teachers with less teaching time and more planning time. Claiming that conflict processes are natural, Achinstein (2002, p. 424) also addresses school leaders to reconsider “naive” beliefs and provide teachers with the necessary amount of time and working conditions.

Going back to the conceptual framework, teachers are adult learners, who are perfectly capable and advised to learn together. Moreover, the core features of Desimone’s PD features such as: active learning and collective participation best describe the importance of CLP in schools. The study applies those theories, and benefits and drawbacks of CLP in order to explore the possible impact of CLP on teachers’ professional learning.

## **2.5. Summary**

This chapter provided the theoretical background for this study of collaborative lesson planning, its benefits in terms of professional learning by sharing ideas and experiences, saving teachers' time and the benefits of shared responsibilities. The literature review highlighted the benefit of CLP for novice teachers. The literature reveals the challenges of CLP as well. The major challenges identified by the literature are: teachers' lack of time and resistance to collaboration. Scholars are mainly positive towards CLP practice, since they stress the importance of CLP for both novice and experienced teachers. The two theories of Andragogy (Knowles, date) and Desimone’s characteristics of professional development (date) which inform the conceptual framework are aligned with findings from this literature review.

## **Chapter 3. Methodology**

### **3.1. Introduction**

The research design and methods used to conduct this study are presented and justified in this chapter. The chapter consists of an explanation of the research design, a description of the case study site selection, participant selection, and the position of the researcher. The chapter includes data collection tools, procedures and analysis and ethical considerations of the study.

### **3.2. Research Design**

The study applied a qualitative, limited ethnographic case study method. The rationale for choosing a qualitative design was the necessity to investigate teachers' communities from inside and within a real-life context. This research attempted to study impacts of CLP on professional learning through teachers' experiences, strategies and challenges towards CLP and by discussing and observing teachers engaged in collaborative lesson planning.

The researcher in the study adopted a constructivist position. The ontological position of the research was relativism as it “searched for meaning in the experiences of individuals” (Guba & Lincoln, 1994, p. 110). Relativism is the belief that reality cannot exist without context. Therefore, CLP strategies and its impact on teachers' professional learning cannot be investigated without investigating teachers, program coordinators and school leadership in a specific context. The study supposed the presence of multiple mental constructions of reality.

The epistemology of the study suited the constructivism paradigm, as the researcher believes that different people construct their own truths. As Guba and Lincoln (1994) state “realities are based on knowledge that individuals or groups construct on interaction with the social environment” (p. 126). The study had several “truths” or realities that were socially constructed. The study considered both the researcher and participants as co-creators of the research findings.

### **3.3. Research Methods**

The case study approach was applied in the study. Case study researchers focus on an in-depth exploration of the actual case (Yin, 2003). In the study, the case was CLP groups of teachers in one IB school in Kazakhstan. LeCompte and Schensul (cited in Creswell, 2012) highlighted that scholars often use case study in conjunction with ethnography. Within case study research, limited ethnographic strategies were used to study both individuals and a culture-sharing group to understand what impact CLP strategies have on teachers' professional learning in a specific school site. The limited ethnographic design of the study allowed the researcher to investigate the groups of teachers collaborating for lesson planning as an insider, and to observe the impact of it on professional learning. The researcher was a participant observer in the study because the researcher works within CLP teams at the proposed site. The study was completed over a short period of time, hence this research was not intended to be a full-scale ethnography.

Data collection proceeded with the help of several instruments such as individual interviews and observation notes from CLP meetings. Data analysis was held along with the data collection to interpret the findings at this instant, and transcribe the interviews for deep understanding and reflection of the concepts.

### **3.4. Case Study Site Selection**

The research site was one IB school in Kazakhstan, in which the researcher is a teacher, and a member of CLP teams. This school is a private school with foreign teachers who have international teaching experience. It gave the researcher an opportunity to interview and observe both local and International teachers. The fact that the researcher was employed at the research site made it easy to gain access to the school for the research from the Principal. After the GSE Ethics Committee granted ethical approval for the research, the Information Sheet, Letter of Invitation, and GSE Ethics Approval were presented to the

School Principal (see Appendix A). The Principal's approval allowed the researcher to contact teachers, Co-Coordiators, and Coordinators to interview and observe their CLP practices. In order to accomplish this, the researcher conducted a short, information session, where the study and ethics of the research were introduced. Teachers interested in volunteering were requested to contact the researcher.

### **3.5. Participant Selection**

After receiving the consent from the school Principal, the researcher asked three heads of departments to join at the end of their weekly meetings to announce the research. Information Sheets were disseminated during the meetings (see Appendix B). The potential participants were informed about the voluntary character of participation, also about an opportunity to quit the study or withdraw their responses at any time until the thesis submission.

Non-probabilistic purposive sampling was applied to identify seven participants actively involved in CLP. This type of sampling is "extremely rich for materials and in-depth exploration of the actual case" (Creswell, 2012, p. 228). The criteria to select participants were: active engagement in CLP. Within this purposive sampling, maximal variation was also used to include teachers with a range of perspectives from varied years of experience and range of levels of experience teachers in an IB context.

Altogether five teachers from two departments and two Program Coordinators volunteered to participate in the study by contacting the researcher via her corporate email and phone as indicated in the information sheet. According to the ethical considerations, participants should not be pushed or forced to participate in any research. The fact that the researcher does not hold any managerial position assures the absence of any threat or duress towards the participants.



### **3.6. Position of the Researcher**

The researcher has been a Language Acquisition teacher at the research site for two years. First, she was accepted at PYP to teach two primary grade levels. Next year, she was shifted to MYP to teach two middle years grade levels. During work at PYP, the researcher was not actively engaged in CLP, while in MYP she was a member of two CLP teams. In this ethnographic study, the researcher was a participant observer. She constantly participated in CLP sessions of both teams. In a team of one grade level, she was a grade leader for one semester, which made it possible to lead the work of that team. Further information about the position of the researcher will be included in the Findings chapter.

### **3.7. Data Collection Procedures and Tools**

After the ethical approval by NUGSE Ethics Committee, the researcher contacted and received permission to conduct the study from the IB school Principal. The school Principal was informed that he/ she would not be given access to gathered data (interviews, observation notes) of the research. The researcher received the school Principal's permission to conduct the research. The researcher then joined weekly departmental meetings of several departments. After a short presentation of the research objectives, teachers were given information sheets with detailed information about the study. Program Coordinators also teach subjects, thus take part in departmental meetings. Volunteered teachers and program coordinators contacted the researcher via phone number and/ or corporate email to let the researcher know about their decision to participate in the study.

Each participant was reminded about the research details and given a written consent form to sign. Participants were assured about the confidentiality of their identities and responses and their ability to avoid answering questions or withdraw their responses at any time before the submission of the thesis.

The study used two data collection tools: individual, semi-structured interviews with teachers, Co- Coordinators and Coordinators and observation notes of CLP meetings. Before starting the data collection, the researcher piloted the interview questions.

Individual interviews are important for receiving in-depth, reflexive information about the process of CLP. The semi-structured interviews were used to explore knowledge about CLP from participants. The researcher aimed to let participants express freely insights about CLP, previous experiences, any strategies they found useful, as well as drawbacks of planning lessons collaboratively.

Interviews were conducted at a suitable place and time for participants in the school. Since the research site was an International school, the majority of the staff spoke English. Thus, all interviews were conducted in English. Volunteering participants were asked consent to audio record interviews. Each interview lasted for approximately 40-50 minutes. The interview questions were designed to find out answers to the research questions, and other supporting details (see Appendix C). The semi-structured character of the interview made it possible for the researcher to ask open-ended, follow-up and probing questions during the interviews. The researcher recorded the interview and took notes. At the end of interviews, participants were thanked for contributing to the research, and were informed about member-checking procedure after the interviews were transcribed. Afterwards, the audio recordings were transcribed for further coding process and data analysis.

Creswell (2012, p. 235) stated that observing people and their actions at a research site are vital components of “gathering open-ended, firsthand information”. There were eleven teachers altogether in two CLP teams. The approach of involving the same group of teachers both in interviews and observations would have provided the researcher with more detailed, deep and real-life data to reveal what CLP strategies impact on teachers’ professional

learning. However, not all teachers of CLP teams gave consent to be recorded. Thus, the observation notes of CLP meetings only, in which the researcher was a member, were taken.

At the school site, there are five collaborative planning teams. Two teams were selected for this study because the researcher was a member of those teams. Team 1 consisted of three teachers only, because there were only three grades (A, B, C) in this grade level; Team 2 consisted of eight teachers, as there were five grades (A, B, C, D, E) in this grade level. Team 1 was different from Team 2 in terms of the number of teachers, as in Team 2 there were International teachers co-teaching with local teachers.

### **3.8. Data Analysis**

Data analysis procedures were held simultaneously with data collection. Harding and Whitehead (2013, p. 143), applied the term “constant comparative data analysis”, that can be used for data analysis. The researcher made verbatim transcripts of the audio taped interviews and sent those to each participant to ensure the correctness of the words (member checking of data - Birt, Scott, Cavers, Campbell & Walter, 2016). Castleberry and Nolen (2018) outlined the analysis of qualitative data in five steps: compiling, disassembling, reassembling, interpreting, and concluding. Before starting the coding process, the researcher highlighted the main ideas on interviews, and identified several directions of themes. All transcripts were labeled with codes, and these codes were grouped into major themes (thematic analysis). Thus all coding was presented in one table (see Appendix D). As a result, that strategy helped the researcher to build the “Findings” as patterns emerged from the data.

The observation notes were used to interpret participants’ behavior, attitudes, engagement in CLP and perspectives towards benefits and challenges of CLP. Observations lasted for four months: November, 2019 till February, 2020. In total, the researcher participated and observed thirty-two CLP sessions. Each CLP session lasted from thirty minutes up to two hours depending on CLP teams. Team two consistently gathered once a

week, but for one to two hours. Team one gathered one or two times a week, but for thirty to fifty minutes, because of the bigger number of team members. Often teachers had additional classes to teach, which was an obstacle for CLP sessions. Since the researcher was a member of both observed CLP teams, she was actively participating in all discussions and lesson planning sessions. Thus, during observations she focused on teachers' behaviors, involvement in the CLP process, progress in their understanding and applying IB Program requirements for lesson planning, and impact of CLP on their professional growth. The researcher was using a notebook to take notes about each CLP session, as well as reflect on observation details. The whole set of analyzed data was framed according to the research questions and conceptual framework of the study, and the findings were presented in Findings and Discussion chapters.

### **3.9. Ethical Considerations**

The study was conducted in accordance with the ethical standards of NUGSE, including confidentiality and the collection of written informed consent. Confidentiality was an essential component of the research ethics to protect individuals from public exposure. The study involved only school teachers and program coordinators, and the study did not involve a vulnerable population. Participants were considered unlikely to experience anything other than the inconvenience of loss of time. To minimize any disruption, the interviews and observations of CLP meetings were conducted during working hours, from 8 a.m. till 5 p.m. To address this issue, interviews were conducted at the most convenient time and place for the participants.

Another concern for participants during observations of CLP meetings could have been a risk of damage to collegial relationships. However, not being given consent to audio recording by team members not involved in interviews, the researcher was taking notes only related to those participants who volunteered to contribute to the study (all three participants from Team one; four participants out of eight from Team two). Also, the researcher was

participating in meetings as a member of the team, and contributing to the lesson planning procedure equally as other members. All participants were able to withdraw from the study at any time, up until the presentation of the thesis, without any potential harm to them.

Anonymity was not possible in the study due to the qualitative design of the research. In this study the participants' identities were known to the researcher. The study involved observations of CLP meetings. Conducting CLP meetings is a normal school business, standard school process, that does not require confidentiality. However, as a participant observer, the researcher ensured that attendees in observed sessions were aware of the researcher's role in such meetings and data only from participants that had given their consent to participate in the research was used. The name of the school or school Principal has not been included in the research.

The researcher kept any identifying information out of the thesis. Since the researcher works in the same place with participants, in order to protect the confidentiality of participants, communication was held only through direct emails. Place and time for the interviews were known only by participants and the researcher. Information collected during the interview was used for research purposes only. Participants' names and other identifying information was kept confidential as pseudonyms only were used.

All information was kept confidential. All data was saved only electronically on the researcher's computer with a safe password protection. On the expiry of five years after finishing the study, the researcher will destroy the recorded interviews, emails, consent forms, all notes and the list of participants.

### **3.10. Summary**

This chapter provided detailed information on the methodology part of the research. A qualitative, limited ethnography case study research design was applied to explore the impact of CLP strategies on professional learning. The research was conducted at the researcher's

workplace, because that way was convenient for getting permission from the school Principal and reaching volunteer participants.

Non-probabilistic purposive sampling was used to recruit participants who would share relevant information regarding their experiences, insights, benefits and challenges of being engaged in CLP. The study used two instruments: individual interviews and observation notes of CLP meetings. Collected data was transcribed and collected into one data analysis audit trail. Identified codes were developed into propositions/ themes to present the findings of the research. Ethical considerations while data collection and data analysis were strictly followed as requested by NUGSE. In the next chapter the research findings were presented.

## **Chapter 4. Findings**

### **4.1. Introduction**

This chapter presents the findings of this research, that aimed to explore the impact of CLP strategies on teachers' professional learning in the context of one IB school in Kazakhstan. The research sought answers to the central question: What impacts do CLP strategies have on teachers' professional learning in the context of one IB school in Kazakhstan? It was guided by three sub-questions: 1) How is CLP operated and perceived in an IB school in Kazakhstan? 2) What are teachers' perspectives on the benefits and challenges of CLP? and 3) What enhances or inhibits the effectiveness of CLP for professional learning?

The findings are presented from the data analysis. Data collection and data analysis processes of the study were shaped by two theories: Knowles' (1984) Andragogy Theory (Adult learning) and Desimone's (2009) Professional Development Theory. Since the research participants were teachers, Co-Coordiators and Program Coordinators their learning as adults was investigated. The research attempted to find out how CLP strategies helped teachers to improve their professional knowledge. Desimone's PD Theory consisted of five core features, which were explored during the interviews and observations of the research participants.

This chapter presents data from two methods of data collection: observations involving eight participants from two teams and interviews with seven participants from one IB school. Each participant has been labeled with a letter, and will also be identified by their team, for example T1 or T2. Direct quotations of the research participants are presented in this chapter to provide evidence of the findings and will appear, for example, as participant A, T2; participant L, T1 and so on.

#### **4.2. The Researcher's Role in the Study**

As a limited ethnographic case study, the researcher explored CLP practice at an IB school in which the researcher was employed. The researcher was a participant observer in the study as she worked within two CLP teams in the research site. The researcher has been employed at the school for almost two years. In the previous academic year, the researcher worked for the Primary Years Program for seven months, and had one year experience in the Middle Years Program. During the work for the PYP Program, the researcher was not involved in CLP practice even after returning from maternity leave, when she needed support from her colleagues. In the English Language Department, where the researcher worked, the practice of CLP was not mandatory, hence not all teachers of the department were involved in this practice. Only a few teachers who taught one grade level were conducting meetings to discuss general issues, but lessons were planned by teachers individually. On the initiative of the researcher, she was transferred to MYP Program from the next academic year, where CLP was encouraged and supported by Program Coordinators. The researcher's role in this study is crucial since she has had a chance to work in two CLP teams, as she taught two grade levels. She was able to observe work of two different CLP teams, as well as find inconsistencies of CLP operating within one school.

The participants of this study were involved in two collaborative learning teams at the school. Table one provides a summary of the team structure and the participants' association with each team. The researcher was a participant observer in both collaborative learning teams. Table two provides a summary of the participants' years of experience and the length of their employment at the current research site. Among interviewed participants, one participant was a young novice teacher, two participants had experience over 4 years, and the rest were more experienced teachers with more than 6-7 years of teaching.



Table 1. List of participants of observation groups

Observation groups		
	Team 1	Team 2
Number of teachers in each team	3	8
Participants giving consent to the research	1. Participant L 2. Participant B 3. Researcher	1. Participant A 2. Participant B 3. Participant C 4. Participant D 5. Researcher

Table 2. List of interviewed participants

Participants	A.	B.	C.	D.	E.	F.	G.
Position	Teacher	PC/ Internat. teacher	Teacher	Internat. teacher	Teacher	PC/ Teacher	PC
Total years of experience	1	16	6	11	4	14	7
Years of experience in the IB school	1,5	10	1	1	3	4	5

The first section of this chapter will present data collected during the observation, and the role of school leadership regarding implementing and operating CLP in an IB school. The second section presents the findings about teachers’ opinion and attitude towards CLP; discusses benefits and challenges of CLP from the perspectives of participants; suggests foundational strategies to sustain teachers’ professional learning through CLP.

### 4.3. Observation Data

In total, observations of two teams during CLP sessions occurred over 4 months from November 2019 until February 2020. The researcher was a member of two CLP teams. Participating in their regular CLP meetings, the researcher was able to observe how CLP was operating in certain teams, also behaviour, interactions, emotions that team members displayed. Following ethical rules, the lesson planning sessions were not recorded, since not all members of the collaborative teams agreed to participate in the research. Instead, the researcher observed and made notes of those participants who gave their permission to be observed for the study. No details were recorded about members of the teams who had not

given their consent to participate. Notes made it possible to monitor teachers' attitude and behavior towards CLP, progression and different emotions caused during CLP sessions.

#### **4.3.1. Observations of Team One Collaborative Lesson Planning**

In team one, there were three teachers including the researcher, because there were only three classes of this grade level (A, B and C). Both teachers gave their permission to be observed for this study. One teacher was quite experienced in IB Programs (Participant L, T1 in Table 1), while another one (Participant B, T1 in Table 1) was new both to IB Programs and the school. The small number of participants in this team made it possible to do both: CLP and co-planning, as teachers were expected by the school administration not only to plan their lessons collaboratively, but also do a wide range of other collaborative activities. The team completed the unit planners, planned daily lessons, prepared assessment tasks, conducted standardization on summative assessment of students and reflected on units at their end. The CLP process used to take place in a spare room at school and lasted approximately two hours each Friday morning. Because conducting daily lessons was of most importance, the team members used to reflect on the lessons they had during 10-15 minutes' meetings, then planned lessons for the coming weeks.

The team shared responsibilities for CLP. That meant that teachers altogether discussed the unit, its key concept, related concepts, Global context, Approaches to Learning (ATL) and weekly topics. Afterwards, they completed a unit planner, where learning objectives for each lesson were outlined. In other words, if one unit lasted for six weeks, and lessons were held three times a week, teachers had to outline what topic (considering grammar and vocabulary) they would teach during each of these lessons. The workload would have been enormous for each teacher, if he/she planned the unit and weekly lessons individually. In addition, each teacher had at least two grade levels to teach, for example, grade 6 and 7. Therefore, teachers of this team agreed on sharing the workload, by dividing

weeks. In this particular team, each teacher had to plan two weeks per unit. However, planned lessons for each week were presented, discussed and moderated by the whole team. CLP sessions for each week started with reflection on recent lessons, and then progressed to planning a new week.

The researcher noticed that most of the time, the teachers were satisfied with the planned lessons as they managed to plan lessons and prepare resources collaboratively and this was considered easier than individual planning. Sometimes learning objectives outlined during CLP were not met in some classes due to lack of differentiation, as students were grouped according to phase levels. The researcher and Participant B from T1 mainly raised such issues as lack of differentiated approach, as both had limited experience in IB Program, and they were only in this particular team since September. In order to meet the needs of students with lower phase levels, in further sessions the team agreed to discuss and share various activities for applying differentiation and active learning methods.

The researcher constantly observed a friendly atmosphere and support among team members. Participant L from T1 guided and mentored both the researcher and participant B, T1 during CLP sessions. Successful team collaboration under the supervision of one experienced teacher led to professional growth of both Participant B, T1 and the researcher. As Participant B, T1 commented: "Unit after unit, I started to feel more confident as an IB teacher, and in less than one year, I learned a lot about student-centered teaching". Good leadership, the contribution of all team members, scheduled CLP sessions were the key factors for the success of this team. The observation noted all team members being open-minded and showing respect to each other's points of view as they stayed in very good relationships.

#### **4.3.2. Observations of Team Two Collaborative Lesson Planning**

The second team, where the researcher was also a member, was a much larger group with eight teachers due to five classes of this grade level. Among this team, four people in addition to the researcher, consented to participate in the study. Meetings of this team took place every Wednesday afternoon and lasted for approximately an hour. Due to the larger number of teachers, sometimes this team had to meet two times a week. The team used one of the spare classrooms of the English Department block to meet. The team used WhatsApp application and Outlook corporate emails to set the meetings and remind team members about deadlines.

Responsibilities were shared, as in the first team, and all team members had a respectful attitude towards their responsibilities. All teachers understood the responsibility to plan lessons and prepare resources in allocated pairs on time and to send them to their grade leader. Compared to the first team, the second team had a grade leader – one of the teachers to moderate weekly planned lessons of all teachers. If one unit lasted for eight weeks, each teacher had to plan lessons twice: with one partner for one week, and with another one for a second week. A new grade leader was assigned by the MYP Program Coordinator at the beginning of a new term. This kind of rotation provided an opportunity for teachers to plan collaboratively with all team members, and better understand the responsibility of a grade leader.

After each pair of teachers collaboratively planned the weekly lessons with all necessary resources, a grade leader studied all materials and gave feedback on areas of improvement. Receiving the grade leader's feedback, teachers had to edit and change the plan. The researcher found out that in previous years, students were not divided according to their phase levels. Lesson materials and assignments were not adapted to student's phase levels too. However, beginning from the current academic year, the school administration recommended starting phase-based teaching. Therefore, the majority of teachers were advised

to develop phase-based tasks and resources. The grade leader was supposed to support teachers in applying differentiation for different phase levels of students. Once weekly materials were planned, the grade leader sent them to corporate mails of all teachers in the team.

At the beginning of the observation, the researcher noticed that some team members struggled with the lesson planning process. They were the researcher, Participant A, T2 and one more teacher who moved from PYP to MYP at the beginning of the year. MYP requirements for lesson planning were completely different from PYP requirements. Participant A, T2 was a novice teacher. During four months of observations, she was very attentive to CLP discussions, but she did not actively participate in them. Surprisingly, by the end of the fourth month of observation, she had started not only being actively engaged in discussions, but critically analyzing decisions and offering better solutions. For example, on one occasion she said that some lessons planned by her colleagues were boring and suggested to plan lessons and prepare resources in a more interactive way. The researcher became more confident and a more active participant of CLP sessions too as she improved the quality of planned lessons. More experienced MYP teachers guided and supported newcomers explaining IB Program policies and lesson planning demands, for example following a Subject Guide while formulating lesson objectives and following the lesson stages structure (starter, development and plenary). It was highlighted by teachers that in IB schools, lessons would be planned collaboratively. The researcher noticed that teachers were well informed about CLP, motivated and encouraged to plan lessons collaboratively and during these four months of observation, the CLP process was consistent.

Teachers were usually prepared for allocated weekly topics and planned lessons collaboratively. However, due to the number of members in this team, sometimes disagreements and long discussions among teachers took place. Those disagreements referred

to co-planning rather than CLP, for example, teachers would disagree on assessment criteria or task types. When such situations happened, the subject leader solved the issue and brought everyone to consensus. Therefore, for subject leaders it is extremely important to acquire good knowledge on IB program policies, and have effective interpersonal and leadership skills.

#### **4.4. IB Program Policies and the Role of School Leadership in Implementing**

##### **Collaborative Lesson Planning**

According to the findings of both observations and interviews of the study, there were significant documents in the IB Program that the school processes were guided by. The common guides are “From Principles to Practice”, “Subject Guides” and “My IB” online platform. However, not all participants were fully aware of these central documents. In addition, there is a gap between CLP functioning between the two programs PYP and MYP.

The majority of teachers were aware of the IB program requirements to plan lessons collaboratively, but they had limited knowledge of the documents that obliged all IB schools to plan lessons collaboratively. Program Coordinators, by virtue of their position, had a very clear understanding of those documents. As one of the Coordinators explained:

Here in this school, it is required by one of the standards stipulated by International Baccalaureate, Standard C. That is why here we are required to plan together, that’s why here we go to the collaborative planning session meetings and plan together with teachers of the same grade. (Participant F)

Another Coordinator added:

Collaborative planning is necessary for all IB programs, because there is a standard called C1, which has nine practices, all are collaborative planning. I need to make sure that these collaborative practices take place in our school. (Participant G)

From this response, it was clear that there are various levels of co-planning in an IB program, and Standard C1 under Section C: Curriculum (IBO, 2014) stipulated CLP, and other types of collaboration far beyond lesson planning. All nine practices of

Section C are given below to present a wider understanding of the IB Program Standard

C1:

1. Collaborative planning and reflection addresses the requirements of the program (s).
2. Collaborative planning and reflection takes place regularly and systematically.
3. Collaborative planning and reflection addresses vertical and horizontal articulation.
4. Collaborative planning and reflection ensures that all teachers have an overview of students' learning experiences.
5. Collaborative planning and reflection is based on agreed expectations for student learning.
6. Collaborative planning and reflection incorporates differentiation for students' learning needs and styles.
7. Collaborative planning and reflection is informed by assessment of student work and learning.
8. Collaborative planning and reflection recognizes that all teachers are responsible for language development of students.
9. Collaborative planning and reflection addresses the IB learner profile attributes. (Program Standards and Practices, 2005)

According to a Program Coordinator (Participant G), all nine practices are considered during lesson planning sessions to implement IB Program successfully. Moreover, standardization that is held every three to five years checks whether all practices are being processed in real life among school leadership, teachers and students. Therefore, it is vital for the school to follow all IB Program policies. However, very few teachers knew about Standard C1 and its nine practices in theory, even though they have been doing those in practice. For instance, one novice teacher responded:

I do not think it is in school policy. Like for example, we have language policy, academic honesty policy, but I think there is no policy on teaching and collaborative lesson planning. (Participant A, T1)

Participant B, T1 (a new teacher in IB) was also convinced about the absence of any official policies to stipulate CLP in IB school:

No. None that I can remember. The thing is that the structure in the school where I work now - IB school, we are expected to co-teach and so it is only logical that we should collaboratively plan the lesson since we're going to teach it together, but in terms of a document that supports that, no.

More experienced IB Program teachers mentioned specific guides such as “From Principles to Practice”, “My IB online platform” and “Subject Guides” for planning the lessons and developing assignments for students. For example, Participant C, T2 commented:

We have documents that we need to follow during the lesson planning process. For example, in this school, we need to take into account the “Language Acquisition Guide”. Also, the guide about “The Principles from Theory to Practice”, I guess, and we need to take into account students, students’ characteristics and their needs.

Participant E added to this saying:

There is a platform on the internet, My IB and all the teachers share, ask questions and share their experiences. In general, the Subject Guide, it is mentioned that we have to collaborate, because it is very important to hear and mention different teachers’ perspectives. You have to listen to other people, maybe you're not right. And it is in our mission.

While in practice teachers have been following the program policies, sometimes this has been without clear knowledge of the actual documents.

The school has three phased programs: PYP, MYP and Diploma Program (DP), functioning in different levels regarding CLP procedures. According to one novice teacher, who worked for the PYP program last year and moved to MYP, the level of CLP in the PYP program is considerably lower compared to the MYP program. Participant A comments:

I first worked in primary school and yes we had to do collaborative planning. But I wouldn't say it was perfect in primary school, because in the beginning we did discuss the plan: activities, what went well, what went wrong with these plans for a week, but actually after one or two months of this positive planning we stopped doing this. We just did individual lesson planning in primary school.

Further on, the participant tried to explain from her own perspectives, the reasons for such inconsistency between two programs:

I think the main reason is because of the time, because after two months, it was the time of different holidays and different activities that teachers should do to prepare for a concert or a contest for students. So we didn't have time to meet. Secondly, there is no system that checks meeting times of teachers. There is no one database for teachers to send their plans. So I think the administration doesn't know. Finally, I think that because both: PYP and MYP have different coordinators. Coordinators are usually those who help teachers to understand



the IB system, they help with collaborative planning, with understanding the concepts, how in general the learning should be in such kind of schools. The coordinators for PYP and MYP are different. (Participant A)

There are different levels of collaborative planning in this IB school. As defined in chapter 1, co-planning is about planning units, discussing teaching practices, learning expectations, learning experiences of students, their needs, and some of the issues that individual teachers cannot address and solve on their own. In this regard, the role of school leadership is crucial. In IB schools, Program Coordinators act as a bridge between teachers and the IB program (curriculum, IB Learner's Profile, ATL skills etc.) Therefore, the study explored not only teachers' but also Program Coordinators' knowledge and experiences. All interviewed MYP Program teachers agreed that school leadership along with Program Coordinators are hard-working, open-minded and supportive. As one of the Program Coordinators said: *"IB wants us to collaborate and we as a school encourage collaboration"* (Participant G). Another Program Coordinator mentions a very important point, that is *"because of the Standard CI is required to be in place, to be authorized or to be ready to different organizations like CIS or IB Standardization - it's a must to have collaborative planning. That's why as the school we encourage this - administration tries to find or release time for teachers to meet to co-plan"*. Overall, school leadership encourages CLP for two purposes: 1) fulfilling IB requirements and 2) mastering professional teaching skills.

Both Coordinators believe that collaboratively planned lessons should not be accepted as something fixed. They claim to advise and even urge teachers to adapt commonly accepted rules or activities to suit their teaching approaches and their student needs. They also evaluate the level of co-planning implementation as "meets expectations" and move forward to become even better. Participant F commented on this as follows:

To a certain degree, I think that the school is doing well, because I know that there are meetings scheduled officially and that no teacher is allowed to skip

those meetings. Besides, there are some interdisciplinary units. So, the teachers of different disciplines have to meet for certain units and plan together common concepts in MYP. While in primary stage, they also like grade level teachers to meet once a week or once a unit to discuss them (learning objectives, assessment and maybe some practices that they are going to do) to plan together.

In order to consider the level of CLP in the school, teacher participants were asked the same questions as program coordinators. The perspectives of all participants concerning the level of CLP matched with the Coordinators' responses. All participants stated that they receive enough support from school leadership. However, there was an inconsistency between how CLP operated in MYP and PYP Programs of this IB school. According to one novice teacher's response, when she taught in the PYP Program last year, the level of collaboration with colleagues was very low. When asked the reason for such inconsistency between two programs of one school, Participant A, T2 answered that initially they stopped CLP due to lack of time. In addition, the participant supposed that PYP Program Coordinators were aware of CLP not taking place in their department, but did not take any actions to encourage it among teachers. As a former member of the PYP Program in the previous year, the researcher agreed with this statement. Neither the researcher nor Participant A, T2 were involved in CLP practice in PYP as much as they did in MYP Program.

Summing up, there are specific policies that regulate collaborative planning, but teachers lack full understanding of sections and standards of those policies. While school leadership members were positive towards their contributions to the implementation of CLP in school, some teachers did not agree with the claimed "high" level of CLP practice in school, because CLP functions differently between two IB Programs within one school. The school leadership tries to sustain CLP among all teachers, consequently MYP program teachers claim to feel professional support.

#### **4.5. Teachers' Perspectives on Benefits and Challenges of Collaborative Lesson Planning**

This section presents the findings regarding teachers' opinions, attitudes and insights towards CLP in the context of one IB school in Kazakhstan. The fact that IB school teachers are actively engaged in CLP allowed the researcher to gather data about the benefits and challenges of CLP. This part consists of two subsections: 1) Benefits of CLP, and 2) Challenges of CLP.

Teachers acknowledge the importance of CLP, expressing a positive attitude towards collaborative lesson planning. As an example, two teachers below commented:

In this school administration and the school encourages teachers to plan lessons together. Individual planning is possible, but it's not highly encouraged by the administration. So that's why usually teachers plan together. (Participant C)

So I teach in IB school, it's International Baccalaureate and following our policy we have to plan collaboratively. (Participant E)

Program Coordinators also added to the demand of planning lessons collaboratively stating:

IB is not a standalone planning, it is never an individual planning. It's always collaborative planning. So, it is an idea out there, but deliberated by the entire team. (Participant B)

Firstly, the requirements of the IB program is that whatever we do is approved by the guides - "From Principles into Practice", our policies and our "Subject Guides". Secondly, collaborative planning and reflection takes place regularly and systematically. (Participant G)

This can be explained by the IB program requirements. From these responses, it can be stated that MYP teachers of this IB school are highly encouraged and engaged into CLP.

Participants reflected on their background experience and shared their insights about their planning procedures in different schools. Some participants compared lesson planning practices in their previous workplaces such as in mainstream schools and universities, highlighting the total absence of CLP in most of them. However, participants expressed their preferences towards CLP as Participant B mentioned, "*there were different curricula,*

*different demands and approaches to those curricula, and then collaborating with other colleagues was always useful*". Most teachers compared individual planning with CLP, considering positive and negative sides of both types of planning and concluded that CLP is more effective for student learning as well as teacher learning. For example, Participant C (a new teacher in IB) clearly discusses this issue by saying:

In order to increase the quality of education there are two factors, two things to improve: its students' learning and teacher learning. Collaborative planning suits well if you draw in students learning as well as teacher learning, because firstly, it helps beginner teachers so they have a special term - beginner teachers, it's new teachers who just came to this profession and they have no experience of teaching. And this planning process, it really helps them to improve their teaching practice, to get better knowledge from other wise and experienced teachers.

Interestingly, novice teachers stressed the fact that CLP sessions were useful for them to better understand program characteristics and learn various teaching strategies. Meanwhile, more experienced teachers mentioned that CLP was good to address student needs and fulfill their expectations. A program coordinator comments on this:

Collaborative planning and reflection incorporates differentiation for students' learning, for students' learning needs, and styles. So we take into account learning styles of students and their learning needs. (Participant G)

However, one participant believes that CLP is effective if teachers are in a good relationship between each other:

You have to like a person, I think. If you don't like the person you're working with, it is really difficult. No matter how professional or how strong that teacher is. It is really hard to work with people that you don't like. It is very important to be in good relationships with them. If you have conflicts with them, it won't work. (Participant E)

The same participant thinks that lessons developed collaboratively do not always succeed. It also depends on student needs and interests. This assumption was explained by her personal experience:

No, sometimes it does not work. For example, in grade 10 this time, we had a unit called "Why poverty?" and our aim was to explain to students that poverty is around us and it's dangerous and it's bad, but they didn't agree with that. Our students did not show empathy, in contrast they showed indifference

towards those poor countries and their people. I was really sad by the end of that unit because I thought maybe it was my mistake that I could not deliver the lessons in an appropriate way. Even though the unit and its lessons are designed collaboratively, it does not work sometimes. (Participant E)

Nevertheless, Participant D contradicts with the view that when certain rules and regulations are followed by all team members, CLP can be effective:

First, you have to be self-driven, and I hope every teacher is and then of course there comes the quality, I call it a quality because a lot of people don't have it, but the constant quality of being open minded, that is very key because you're working with people. You're trying to achieve one goal, but with a different perspective and everyone has a different perspective towards things. So you should be more open minded to be able to listen to others and be able to understand their point of view and be more accommodative.

Overall, teachers acknowledge the effectiveness of CLP and its importance for both teacher and student learning; however, this study does not directly consider impacts of CLP on student learning. All participants who are whether MYP teachers or Program Coordinators accept CLP in this IB school and operate in accordance with its policies.

Since the focus of the research is teachers' perspectives on CLP, their responses were grouped into one subtheme: Benefits of CLP for teachers. As mentioned earlier, the current study did not directly explore the impact of CLP on student learning. However, teachers provided their perspectives about the effectiveness of lessons and connection with CLP, concerning student learning. Therefore, findings related to student learning have been presented too. Possible changes and drawbacks also appeared in participants' responses and were presented as challenges of CLP.

#### **4.5.1 Benefits of Collaborative Lesson Planning.**

The major benefits of CLP mentioned by participants were: less workload/time-saving, planning student-oriented lessons, contribution to professional learning/growth and improved content/resources. Six out of seven participants believed that the effectiveness of

their lessons was a result of their teaching experience and collaborative work with their colleagues. However, Participant E presented an alternative view that despite the IB requirement to plan lessons collaboratively, she was skeptical about its benefits. In her opinion, CLP is good when everybody makes an equal contribution. In addition, she believes that lessons should be student-oriented, and other teachers are not aware of her students' needs and interests. Therefore, she confessed doing CLP only because she is obliged to work collaboratively:

When we plan with our colleagues, we usually plan the general topic and we can even share resources. But when it comes to lessons, you are individual anyway, right? And sometimes, for example, my colleague, she might be very soft. While I may be strict, we have different approaches to teach our students or our students can be different. So it's individual. It doesn't work like that when you plan a 100% same topic, the same activities, and it works the same as we plan. When you go to class and start working, start teaching, it's always different.

Participant A, who is a novice teacher, compared CLP with individual planning and analyzed both types of planning. She shared her insights as follows:

Personally I would like to work with other teachers and plan collaboratively because when I had to plan myself, it took so much time. Maybe I am a new teacher and I don't have a bank of ready ideas that I can use all the time. If I had more experience, I could have had tons of ideas. When I started working in MYP, I worked with other teachers and we shared ideas, it was easier. For example, when teachers send their lessons, sometimes they use different activities that I didn't know, and they work well, I wouldn't know these activities if those teachers didn't share. That's why I would prefer collaborative planning because I still have to research myself and I still do bring out my ideas that I create the lesson plans after my research, but at the same time, other teachers also help me learn more about teaching and learning.

Program Coordinators were certain about the benefits of CLP and expressed their desire to improve it further. For example, Participant G explained that there are different levels of collaborative planning in school, and sometimes some standards, some questions could be answered only when everybody works as a team.

While reflecting on the benefits of co-planning for teachers, participants shared their insights about the benefits of CLP for students. All participants, except one (Participant E), believe that co-planning is good for addressing student needs and meeting student expectations. Participant B thinks that planning with colleagues is more effective because there are a lot of ideas. Participant C supports ideas of Participant B, and adds that basically collaborative planning helps both teacher learning and student learning. As for student learning, she comments:

Collaborative planning helps to increase students' outcomes. Because, like, when you meet with teachers once or twice a week, like you were each time you were improving the content that you are teaching, and you know the expectations for your students and as a group, you can discuss the ways to motivate students, you may discuss the problems, the common problems that all teachers experience. And their collaborative planning of collection of resources also helps to improve the content. And that's why it positively influences students' outcomes.

However, as mentioned earlier, Participant E thinks that CLP should not be detailed to cover all stages of lessons, rather be limited by discussing unit planners and assessment criteria. In her responses, this participant was very caring towards her students and she comments her attitude saying:

I love my students. And I care about each of them. So I differentiate them. I know that student A. is visual, for example, while student M. is audial, so I try to consider each of them. While some people just want to generalize, like they don't like differentiation.

Her attitude can be explained by other notions such as under-estimating her colleagues on their proficiency or on her resistance to cooperate with others. Participant A, on the contrary, claims that she adapts materials designed by her colleagues to suit herself and her students: *"When we receive lesson plans from other teachers who created their week, I adapt them to my vision, to the vision of my students, my classroom then I negotiate and discuss the lesson plan with my co-teacher"*.

Overall, from the responses of participants, it can be concluded that CLP in MYP is done systematically, and it concerns all school teachers. Moreover, school teachers see benefits of CLP on their students, although not everyone. At the same time, it seems that there are possible ways of avoiding unhelpful sides of CLP by using adapting materials to certain needs. So, CLP is not only about planning units and planning lessons, rather teaching practices, learning expectations, learning experiences of students, their needs, and some of the issues, we as individual teachers cannot solve, cannot address. The participants try to plan collaboratively, as expected by the IB requirements. Overall, participants were able to share their insights towards the benefits of CLP.

#### **4.5.2 Challenges of Collaborative Lesson Planning**

Challenges of CLP were identified through comparative analysis of different types of planning: individual vs. collaborative lesson planning. In other words, participants were sharing their insights concerning drawbacks of CLP in comparison to individual planning approaches. The most common challenge mentioned was: catering for student differences. It leads to disagreements among teachers: disagreement on resources, content, instructions, expectations because of student differences. However, Participant C, T2 believes that differentiation can be the solution for this issue. In addition, Participant C, T2 shared how CLP works in her team and how the teachers try to avoid these obstacle:

A good idea that works in this school is a unit planning process. The unit planners help teachers to see the overall picture of the educational process at least for one term or semester. Firstly, it saves teachers' time because they already see what is going on, what they are expected to do, what the students are expected to do. Also, when they see the core - the skeleton of the lessons for the upcoming term or semester, they can also use differentiated instruction.

Participant C, T2 believes that teachers can differentiate the unit plan, outcomes, assessment or resources to address their specific groups of students. Other participants expressed their concerns about challenges asserting that CLP is time-consuming, often caused by time spent



on discussing clashes of interests. According to the response of Participant B, T1 often it looks as follows:

So when there's a clash of interests, you want something and the other colleague feels it is not important or necessary, you kind of waste more time trying to argue and trying to justify the fact that it should be there.

Participant E claims that clashes of interest might lead to wasting time. Participant E explains that this occurs when other team members tend to rely on more experienced and active colleagues. Reflecting on her personal experience, she comments: "I don't want to spend my time to plan with the people who don't have any ideas and want only your ideas".

As for Program Coordinators, they mentioned: lack of time due to long teaching hours, administrative work at school, extra lessons for less progressive students and work with their parents. As the Program Coordinators state, the school leadership is aware about the lack of time devoted to CLP, and is thinking of proactive ways to solve these problems.

Analyzing the responses, it can be concluded that teachers of this particular IB program experience some issues that arise due to lack of time and clashes of interests.

#### **4.6. Foundational Collaborative Lesson Planning Strategies to Sustain Teachers' Professional Learning**

As the central focus of the research was to explore the impact of CLP on teachers' professional learning, participants were asked to reflect on what strategies (if any) helped them to improve professional learning. Participants shared their recommendations to make CLP more effective. The current section presents teachers' recommendations towards improving CLP. The most important strategies mentioned by participants for the effective functioning of CLP were as presented below. From teachers' point of view, if all these

recommendations are followed by all team members, their experience of CLP practice would have been at a higher level.

- being open-minded and motivated
- always coming ready to meetings (prior reading the agenda)
- bringing to co-planning sessions some resources (prior research)
- being actively engaged into discussions
- being open to share ideas and materials
- following time-management
- meeting deadlines to share resources or sending materials to the whole group
- showing high level of responsibility and attitude.

The majority of participants claimed that CLP positively influenced their knowledge and teaching skills, especially for less experienced and novice teachers. One participant stated that she improved her knowledge by reading a lot about teaching and learning theories. However, not all participants asserted that they improved proficiency due to active engagement into CLP sessions. The opinions of participants can be grouped into two here. The first group of participants think that various IB workshops, seminars and courses were a great help in improving their professional learning. For example, Participant G strongly believes that the more opportunities teachers use to improve their knowledge, the better they become as teachers. Participant B is also convinced that background knowledge, teaching experience at different locations and active learning improve teachers' professional knowledge and skills. They considered CLP as one of the tools for professional growth, though not a crucial one.

The second group of participants is convinced that everyday small activities such as CLP, learning to use a Google Drive for instance or discovering a new way of brainstorming in the classroom is professional learning too. For instance, Participant D believes that CLP is a very good and productive way of professional learning, even though that would look unintentional and not explicit. He adds:

Now, we don't understand that day to day experience is part of our professional development actually. And that's usually the best because that is like a "formative assessment". It is something you learn gradually day by day and then you improve professionally.

Participant C highlights that CLP helps teachers to reflect on their practice: *“So I can say that the reflection part helps teachers to reflect both on students’ learning and on their learning”*.

The Program Coordinators claimed that the school is strongly interested in teachers’ professional development. IB requires the school to ensure that teachers get professional development continuously, therefore IB offers three types of workshops: online, regional face to face workshops, and within the school. The school offers all these opportunities. So, Participant F commented on this as follows:

Some teachers do online workshops for IB. Sometimes the school organizes in school workshops where they invite an IB trainer to come and conduct their workshop for certain departments. And sometimes it's very costly, but we send teachers for regional workshops, where they can go abroad and see other colleagues from different IB schools and work with them.

Apart from that, IB has an online “My IB” platform, where teachers from all IB schools around the world can communicate and share experience. So, Participant F justified the huge interest of teachers’ professional development by giving a range of other examples to support her perspectives. Therefore, she believes that CLP is one of the great tools that sustain teachers’ constant development.

#### **4.7. Summary**

In this chapter, the findings of the research were provided. The chapter consisted of two main sections. The first section presented the findings related to: 1) the researcher's role in the study and observation data, and 2) IB Program policies and the role of school leadership in implementing CLP to stipulate CLP. It was concluded that school leadership encourages and motivates school teachers to plan their lessons collaboratively, but also do not limit them from applying changes where needed. Moreover, the observations showed positive influence of CLP on professional learning.

The second section presented the findings about: 1) teachers' perspectives on benefits and challenges towards CLP, and 2) foundational CLP strategies to sustain teachers' professional learning. It was concluded that MYP teachers in that particular IB school were actively engaged in CLP practices. In addition, it was recommended that following certain strategies, CLP could be used as a helpful tool to improve teachers' professional learning.

## **Chapter 5. Discussion**

### **5.1. Introduction**

The previous chapter presented the major findings of the research. The main findings were that teachers of one IB school had positive attitudes towards CLP; all MYP Program teachers are involved into CLP process; teachers and Program Coordinators are aware of both benefits and challenges of CLP; the school leadership encourages teachers to co-plan as this is an IB requirement; the process of CLP is operated by “shared responsibilities” approach; and teachers are eager to improve the practice of CLP by suggesting proactive recommendations.

This chapter discusses the research findings in relation to previous studies presented in the literature review. The discussion chapter is divided into three sections to summarize the findings in relation to the research and guiding questions: (1) IB Program policies and school leadership encourage CLP, (2) Teachers’ perspectives on benefits and challenges of CLP, and (3) Impacts of CLP strategies on teachers’ professional learning.

### **5.2. IB Program Policies and School Leadership Encourage Collaborative Lesson**

#### **Planning**

The findings revealed that teachers are required to plan lessons and unit planners collaboratively. There are certain documents in the IB Program that stipulate the CLP practice and require everyone to follow them. These documents are “From Principles to Practice” and “Subject Guides”. In “From Principles to Practice” there is Section C: Curriculum. Section C consists of four Standards. Standard C1 is called collaborative planning. “From Principles to Practice” clearly indicated MYP requirements related to CLP: “The school has an approach to curriculum planning that involves all MYP teachers” (IBO, 2014, p. 17). However, the findings revealed that some teachers do not know about those significant IB policy documents regarding CLP, and do not use them for planning lessons. The observation data revealed that teachers use “From Principles to Practice” only for formulating lesson objectives and for

looking up verb definitions for task specific clarifications of assessment sheets. The researcher noticed that the “Subject Guide” is used for designing formative and summative assessment tasks rather than everyday lesson plans. Teachers use the “Subject Guide” for assessment tasks because they are requested to prepare assessment sheets for three to four different phases of students. One of the Program Coordinators mentioned about the “My IB” online platform, where teachers could build a teacher network with all other IB teachers worldwide. Although, the researcher noted that during one of CLP sessions teachers claimed about the absence of access to that platform. Up until the end of data collection via observations, neither of the teachers received access to that platform.

Overall, despite the research findings that school leadership encourages and supports teachers in CLP and teachers are actively involved in CLP sessions, IB policy documents are mainly used for designing assessment tasks purposes. Responses regarding IB policy documents that facilitate CLP varied, which shows inconsistency of following certain policy documents or regulations.

### **5.3. Teachers’ Perspectives on Benefits and Challenges of Collaborative Lesson Planning**

According to the research findings, it was revealed that teachers of an IB school, MYP Program were actively engaged in CLP, and were aware of its benefits and challenges. The research findings were based on responses of novice and experienced teachers, Program Coordinators, observations of CLP sessions and interviews.

Teachers were aware of collaborative lesson planning and perceived it to have both benefits and challenges. The school leadership encouraged teachers to plan lessons collaboratively. However, very few teachers were able to articulate its benefit to better understanding/ learning of IB programs, curriculum peculiarities and professional growth as a whole. Consequently, teachers' level of knowledge of Adult Learning Theory (Malcolm Knowles' Andragogy) was limited. Although, data analysis shows that teachers are aware of

critical features of Desimone's Professional Development Theory, as they mentioned these features in their responses inexplicitly referring to the theory.

**Benefits of using CLP.** In the study conducted by Bauml (2014) the experience of one novice teacher was observed, and made a conclusion that CLP greatly helped to acquire such knowledge as developing curricular knowledge, better content delivering, giving clear instructions, feeling confident while teaching and getting contextual knowledge about the school. The literature review demonstrated that experienced teachers benefit from CLP sessions too. Similarly, in both observation teams teachers who had a sufficient experience of teaching (the researcher - 10 years, Participant B, T1-11 years, Participant C, T2 - 6 years) claimed that each CLP session they were acquiring new knowledge regarding resources and IB requirements such as ATL, Learner's Profile etc. This example shows that teachers (adults) learn by doing things in practice (Knowles' 1984). Similarly, six out of seven participants showed positive attitudes towards CLP. As one participant shared CLP with her colleagues helped her to better and more quickly understand IB requirements for lesson planning. Another participant claimed that with the help of CLP she learned a lot about different activities to do in a classroom. She stated that CLP sessions helped her to understand the IB program, its requirements, curriculum characteristics and assessment criteria. Constant communication with teachers while lesson planning improved her teaching strategies and positively influenced her teacher-student relationships.

**Professional development: sharing ideas and experiences.** Two teachers and two Program Coordinators out of seven interview participants mentioned the impact of CLP on professional development. They claimed that constant exchange of ideas, reflections on units, discussions about summative assessment tasks and students' achievements, various ways of improving student learning that take place during CLP sessions significantly improved their knowledge. During the observations, the researcher noticed that team members became more

confident in making decisions related to the choice of proper resources, assessment criteria and even solving some issues regarding behaviours of students. Similarly, in studies conducted by Desimone (2009, 2011) teachers improve their professional level in various ways such as mentoring, co-teaching and teacher network. A range of other scholars (Bauml, 2016; Meirink et al., 2010; Merritt, 2016; Thousand et al., 2006) noted that planning lessons collaboratively with colleagues is the highest level of teacher collaboration and professional learning of teachers. The research findings revealed that teachers of this particular IB school follow the core features of Desimone's PD Theory such as content focus, active learning and collective participation. These features were present in participants' responses concerning professional development. Another two features: coherence and durations were mentioned by participants while discussing teachers' time management and the benefits of CLP on it.

**Teachers' time management and shared responsibilities.** Kaplan, Chan, Farbman and Novoryta (2015) highlight the importance of time for teachers to keep balanced and not overloaded. If CLP functions well in a school, it makes teachers' work much easier. Indeed, the research findings revealed that doing things together makes it easier and less stressful for teachers, who are often overloaded with a lot of responsibilities. Thus, three teachers out of seven interviewed participants agreed that consistency of CLP sessions in their school is a great help for teachers to save time by sharing responsibilities. For example, a novice teacher Participant A, T2 said that with a lot of additional classes to teach her students, it would have been very difficult for her to find time to plan lessons every day individually. Participant F admitted that sometimes she asks to share ready lesson plans and resources from her colleagues, because being a Program Coordinator she keeps very busy. She added that sharing responsibilities is a good strategy to sustain CLP: *"but teachers need to discuss the unit and the outline first, then each teacher can adapt the lesson with all materials according to the needs and interests of their students"*. During observations, the researcher revealed that each



teacher had at least two grade levels to teach, which meant that they had to prepare lessons for two different curricula. Thus, prior discussion of the unit, weekly topic, lesson objectives, assessment criteria, planning lessons in pairs and sending to a grade leader for moderation was a very useful solution for teachers of this particular school. Hence, as Murawski (2012) stated, once a team has set effective strategies for planning lessons collaboratively, less time this practice would take later.

**Challenges of using CLP.** In their studies conducted by Bauml (2014, 2016) and Merritt (2016) two main factors were considered as challenges of planning lessons collaboratively with colleagues: lack of time and teachers' unwillingness to cooperate with other colleagues. Indeed, both interviews with participants and observations discovered that teachers did not gather to plan lessons together apart from the appointed days and time. This kind of behaviour was not relevant to those teachers who planned lessons in pairs though, as they tried to find spare time to plan lessons and send them to a grade leader, for example in Team two. Besides the appointed day and time for CLP, teachers were not eager to discuss lesson plans or any other issues.

**Time scarcity: an obstacle to CLP.** Teachers in this IB school were very busy mostly working with students. The school was private, thus teachers had many additional lessons to conduct for less progressive students. Also, MYP students are engaged in various social and research projects, which are conducted under supervision of teacher-advisors. The school leadership is both supportive and demanding at the same time. Thus, teachers spend most of their spare time from teaching classes on individual work with students. As mentioned in the study of Merritt (2016) insufficient time for planning lessons is an obstacle in successful implementation of any educational reforms. MYP Program Coordinators pay attention to teachers' CLP meetings, thus assigning grade leaders to take responsibility for the presence and engagement of all teachers in CLP sessions. The researcher noted that none of teachers

used to miss CLP sessions without any reason, and Program Coordinators participate in these meetings too at a time. The role of school leadership is crucial in allocating specific time and place for CLP meetings to take place. Hence, another strategy that works in this IB school is a smart scheduling of teachers' timetable and the discipline of conducting CLP sessions.

**Resistance to collaboration.** The observations during the study noted that some teachers demonstrated indifference and lack of interest during CLP sessions. For example, Participant E was convinced that individual planning was better than CLP, because she thought that each teacher had different students, thus lessons should be planned according to their needs and interests. She added that she was not benefitting much from CLP sessions. However, as discussed earlier, Program Coordinators claimed that they did not limit, on the contrary, encouraged teachers to adapt collaboratively planned lessons to suit their needs. Bauml (2016) identified two major threats that teachers usually feel when asked to collaborate. These are conflicts/ clash of interests and loss of autonomy. In this study, only one participant out of seven demonstrated her unwillingness to collaborate with her colleagues for lesson planning. Merritt (2016) suggested solving this kind of issue by providing less teaching and more planning time. In this regard, Participant G who is a Program Coordinator mentioned that while scheduling teachers' timetables they try to free one day in a week to let teachers prepare for lessons. Another solution proposed by Achinstein (2002) considers clash of interests and even cause of conflicts as a natural phenomenon, thus suggests school leadership to provide teachers with necessary time and working conditions to make teachers work collaboratively. Since the majority of interviewed teachers of the school did not resist collaborating, it is concluded that school leadership followed the right strategy of providing teachers with sufficient time and conditions to work collaboratively, including CLP.

#### **5.4. Impacts of Collaborative Lesson Planning Strategies on Teachers' Professional Learning**

Most reviewed research studies investigated CLP practice in terms of its benefits and challenges, while this study used Desimone's PD Theory to explore impacts of CLP on teachers' professional learning. It was revealed that participants referred to five core features of Desimone's PD Theory, even if they articulated those in different words. Thus, the study found the use of Desimone's PD Theory applicable for the character of this study. The research findings revealed that teachers of this IB school were well informed about advantages and disadvantages of CLP, also shared strategies that positively impacted their professional learning. The research findings summarized participants' responses from interviews, and those strategies were presented.

The major CLP strategies shared by teachers were: coming ready to CLP meetings by doing prior research on resources for lesson planning, being open to share your ideas and materials with other colleagues, being open-minded and motivated, demonstrating a high level of attitude towards CLP and taking responsibility for shared workload and meeting deadlines. Teachers of this particular school outlined these strategies as useful for successful implementation and sustaining of CLP.

#### **5.5. Summary**

This chapter discussed the research findings in relation to previous studies that investigated the field of CLP practice. The results showed that teachers of this research site were actively engaged in CLP sessions on an ongoing basis. The role of school leadership in providing teachers with working conditions and spare time in teachers' schedules made it possible for teachers to participate in CLP sessions without missing. Since IB is a worldwide commercial educational program, it has significant policy documents regarding collaborative planning. Standard C1 of Section C is related to CLP and reflection. According to IB MYP

Program requirements, all teachers are involved in CLP sessions. However, teachers tend to use policy documents such as “From Principles to Practice” and “Subject Guide” for preparing assessment sheets only.

Further, the chapter discussed teachers’ perspectives on the benefits and challenges of CLP. Major benefits outlined by participants were: opportunities to share ideas and experience; and reducing workload by sharing the responsibilities. The findings revealed that since almost all teachers have to teach two or more grade levels, they shared planning of weekly lesson plans. Nevertheless, CLP meetings take place on appointed day and time, and all teachers participate in discussing units, weekly topics, study materials for each week and lesson etc. IB MYP teachers acknowledged the importance of CLP for their professional learning. However, there were contradicting views on the benefits of CLP too. Thus, factors that inhibit the effectiveness of CLP were also discussed. Mainly, teachers who considered CLP not as important claimed that this practice was a waste of time and not effective, because each teacher has students with different needs and viewpoints. The section presented solutions to deal with such issues proposed by International scholars.

Finally, as the central focus of the study was to reveal possible impacts of CLP on teachers’ professional learning. The findings revealed that both teachers and Program Coordinators were aware of useful strategies that help teachers to improve their professional growth. Therefore, it can be concluded that strategies suggested by participants could be used by teachers of mainstream schools to implement CLP in their schools too, because the study aimed at exploring CLP strategies from teachers’ perspectives based on their personal current and background knowledge and experience. Thus, the study should not be considered as related to IB Program only.

## **Chapter 6. Conclusions and Recommendations**

### **6.1. Introduction**

This chapter summarizes the entire thesis, suggests recommendations for sustaining CLP for teachers' professional learning, and provides limitations of the study and implications for further research. Various stakeholders, and mainly school administration might find the recommendations and implications for further research useful if they decide to implement CLP practice in their schools. The study answered the central question, and all three sub questions. All answers are provided in the section below.

### **6.2. The Summary of Findings**

**Central Question: What impacts do CLP strategies have on teachers' professional learning?** CLP strategies have positive impacts on teachers' professional learning. Since teachers are adults, they learn by doing things in practice, suggested by Knowles (1984). For example, a novice teacher, the researcher, an International teacher, who did not know much about IB MYP requirements, lesson planning structures etc. started feeling more confident and CLP significantly impacted their professional growth. Two participants added that they improved learning through professional development tools such as attending seminars, workshops, reading literature and getting a Master's Degree. Although, they considered CLP as one tool to learn from colleagues on a daily basis without spending extra time or other resources. Program Coordinators claimed that once teachers inoculate CLP strategies such as coming ready to CLP sessions, doing prior research on a unit or topic and being actively engaged in discussions and lesson planning practices definitely impact positively on teachers' learning.

**Sub Question 1: How is CLP operated and perceived in an IB school?** In this IB school, CLP is operated via a shared responsibilities strategy. Depending on the length of a unit, on average each teacher plans lessons collaboratively with another colleague two times a

unit, that is in one week Teacher 1 plans lessons collaboratively with Teacher 2, and next week with Teacher 5. This kind of rotation lets each teacher have a chance to plan lessons collaboratively with other teachers too. Even if two teachers plan lessons for one week, they stay informed about other weeks as during CLP sessions they are all encouraged to actively participate in meetings. Once lesson plans are ready, teachers in pairs send the whole set of lesson materials to a grade leader, who would moderate the materials before disseminating to the rest of team members.

**Sub Question 2: What are teachers' perspectives on the benefits and challenges of CLP?** The main benefits of CLP were opportunities to learn from each other and save time by sharing the responsibilities. The major challenges were lack of time to plan lessons collaboratively and unwillingness to cooperate with other colleagues.

**Sub Question 3: What enhances or inhibits the effectiveness of CLP for professional learning.** School leadership, especially Program Coordinators enhance CLP for professional learning by providing spare time and working conditions. Work of incompetent Program Coordinators as in the case of PYP Program inhibits the effectiveness of CLP, because if not supported and encouraged by school leadership, teachers would not get involved into CLP sessions.

### **6.3. Recommendations for Sustaining Collaborative Lesson Planning for Teachers'**

#### **Professional Learning**

Almost all participants expressed their satisfaction on how CLP operated in their school. Four out of seven interviewed participants (3 teachers and 1 Program Coordinator) gave recommendations for further improvement. One of the Program Coordinators expressed her desire for teachers to be more responsible for the teaching process and student learning. She highlights that not all teachers are eager to use available online resources, and strongly recommends teachers to be versatile and proactive. Apparently, communication skills are

lacking between teachers and administration, because teacher participants recommend Coordinators to be engaged in CLP sessions more often, and especially support novice and less experienced teachers. More experienced teachers recommended novice teachers to be self-learners, supporting the Program Coordinator's point of view. For instance, Participant C suggested: *“The first thing that I recommend for beginning teachers is to perceive this process as a process that helps you and your students. You shouldn't perceive it as intrusion into your time”*.

Overall, grouping the recommendations given by the participants, the current IB school needs to take into consideration the following while implementing and operating CLP:

- teachers perceive CLP as a creative process;
- teachers consider it as a way of self-development;
- teachers always follow documents and guidelines to avoid mistakes;
- teachers are open to share new ideas, thoughts and fears;
- teachers consider CLP as an easy, free of charge way to improve teachers' professional development; and
- Coordinators guide and support teachers as the school leadership.

Participants reflected on their own CLP practices and experience, and outlined these characteristics as necessary to improve in this IB school. They believed that if all teachers considered CLP as an effective tool to improve their professional learning, CLP sessions would have been higher quality and less time-consuming.

#### **6.4. Limitations of my Study and Implications for Further Research**

As discussed in earlier chapters, the current study focuses on impacts of CLP on teachers' professional learning through their perspectives, attitudes and opinions towards this practice. The study does not explore the possible impact of teachers' engagement into CLP on

student achievements. However, during the data collection process, participants spoke about both teacher learning and student learning.

The study findings will not be appropriate for mainstream schools to implement CLP the same way as in IB due to differences in programs, curricula, teacher workload and working hours. However, policymakers might consider the study useful if implement CLP in mainstream school, because the study explores teachers' perspectives towards CLP in general, not specifically in an IB field. The International Baccalaureate consists of several Programs such as Primary Years Program, Middle Years Program, Diploma Program etc. The research investigated only MYP teachers' perspectives regarding impact of CLP strategies on teachers' professional learning. Thus, the study findings will not be applicable for PYP, DP or other programs of IB.

### **6.5. Contribution of the Study**

The study was valuable for Kazakhstani educational researchers, policymakers in terms of considering the CLP practice as an effective tool to improve teachers' professional learning. The study revealed that all teachers, novice and experienced, would benefit from being involved in CLP, because the educational system of Kazakhstan is facing dramatic changes by implementing promising yet challenging educational reforms. Thus, as observations found out teachers and Program Coordinators of the research site - IB school reflected on their successful work through collaboration. CLP as one form of collaboration made it possible for teachers to plan good quality lessons to meet students' needs, interests and IB requirements.

### **6.6. Summary of the Entire Thesis**

The thesis presented the study conducted to explore teachers' perspectives regarding impacts of CLP on their professional learning. The thesis consisted of six chapters that covered the introduction of the study, review of literature in this field, the methodology that



was used, research findings, discussion of findings in relation to previous studies and conclusion to summarize the whole thesis. The current study makes a contribution to the knowledge of Kazakhstani teachers in their way to implement and sustain CLP in schools. Thus, the study has the potential to be useful for various stakeholders aiming to implement CLP especially in mainstream school, because knowledgeable teachers will educate outstanding students, who will bring changes to the prosperity of Kazakhstan.

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## **Appendices**

### **Appendix A: Letter of Invitation**

**Dear, \_\_\_\_\_!**

My name is Meirim Urazbayeva, and I am a Master's Student in Educational Leadership: School Education at Nazarbayev University. I am conducting research on the field of education under the supervision of Elaine Sharplin – Professor of Graduate School of Education (GSE) at Nazarbayev University. The topic of my research thesis is “Teachers’ perspectives on the impacts of collaborative lesson planning strategies on professional learning”. I am requesting your permission to conduct my research in your school.

Nazarbayev University Institutional Research Ethics Committee has given approval to approach schools for my research. A copy of their approval is contained with this letter. I invite you to consider taking part in this research. This study will meet the requirements of the Research Ethics Committee of the GSE.

#### **Aims of the Research**

The purpose of this study is to investigate teachers’ perspectives on collaborative lesson planning, its strategies, and impacts on their professional learning, in one International Baccalaureate school in Akmola region of Kazakhstan.

#### **Significance of the Research Project**

The research is significant in two ways. Firstly, this research will attempt to reveal teachers' experiences of collaborative lesson planning in one department of the school. Secondly, the study will attempt to explore the role of collaborative lesson planning for developing teachers' proficiency.

#### **Research Plan and Method**

The research will involve face-to-face interviews, audio recordings of the interviews, and recording of collaborative lesson planning meetings in one department.

All information collected will be treated in the strictest confidence and neither the school nor individual teachers will be identifiable in any reports that are written. Participants may withdraw from the study at any time. This means that the identity of the participants cannot be revealed to you. The role of the school is voluntary and the School Principal may decide to withdraw the school's participation at any time.

Attached for your information are copies of the Information Sheet and interview questions that will be used in the study.

Thank you for taking the time to read this information. If you would like more information about any aspect of this study, please contact me on the details below or my supervisor - Elaine Sharplin, Professor of Graduate School of Education (GSE) at Nazarbayev University.

**Consent**

Please provide an email giving your written approval for me to conduct my study in your school.

**Best regards,**

**Meirim Urazbayeva**

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### **Appendix B: Written Informed Consent Form**

**Introduction.** You are invited to participate in a research study entitled "Teachers' perspectives on the impacts of collaborative lesson planning strategies on professional learning".

**Procedures.** The purpose of this study is to investigate teachers' perspectives on collaborative lesson planning, the strategies used by teachers while collaboratively planning, what impacts this has on professional learning. Participants from one International Baccalaureate school in the Akmola region of Kazakhstan will be invited to volunteer. The research will involve face-to-face interviews with teachers involved in collaborative lesson planning and recording of collaborative lesson planning. Interviews will take approximately one hour. With the permission of the participants, collaborative lesson planning meetings will be recorded to analyze the interactions during the meetings.

**Risks.** As the research involves school teachers and school leadership only, it is supposed to be "no more than minimal risk". Volunteers may experience the inconvenience of loss of time. However, participants are able to withdraw from the study at any time, up until the presentation of the thesis, without any potential harm to them.

**Benefits.** The major benefit for participants will be an opportunity to reflect on their collaborative lesson planning experiences and gain insights of any impacts on their professional learning. Their contribution to this study will help school leaders and teachers in optimizing strategies of professional learning. The findings of this study could be used by policymakers in developing successful reforms about collaborative lesson planning or policy documents that will make an impact on developing teachers' proficiency.

**Compensation.** Participants' contribution to the study will be appreciated by their contribution to the development of the system of education in the Republic of Kazakhstan. By

the end of the research, participants will be provided a copy of the findings. The study will be published in a form of thesis and uploaded on NU Repository.

**Confidentiality & Privacy.** Participants will be informed about the high level of confidentiality and privacy warranted by the GSE ethics approval. During face-to-face interviews, no data will be interpreted to anyone except the researcher and participants. Since the study involves collaborative lesson planning observations, more than two people will be participants of the meeting. Collaborative planning meetings are a standard school process, that will not require confidentiality. Nevertheless, the researcher ensures that the identities are kept anonymous to other people outside the study by providing non-identifying information on data analysis and findings of the study. The identities are kept anonymous to other people outside the study.

The researcher will guarantee that all data will be stored in a personal computer under password protection. All data, including interview transcripts, audio recordings, observation lists and audit trials will be destroyed after five years of the research published.

**Voluntary Nature of the Study.** Participants have the opportunity to withdraw from the study at any time, even after the consent form has been signed.

**Points of Contact.** In case some questions arise concerning the study, or research related injury is received, the research supervisor, Professor - Elaine Sharplin, or researcher - Meiirim Urazbayeva should be contacted. Any other questions or concerns may be addressed to the Nazarbayev University Institutional Research Ethics Committee, [resethics@nu.edu.kz](mailto:resethics@nu.edu.kz).

**Statement of Consent.**

I, \_\_\_\_\_

Give my voluntary consent to participate in the study. I understand that my participation in the research is voluntary. I am aware of withdrawing from the research at any time I decide so, without any negative consequences on me.

I realize the educational purpose of this study.

I have read the information on the Information Letter above, and got answers to all my questions.

I understand that all the data I provide will be kept confidential and my will remain anonymous to people other than the researcher, and other participants in the collaborative planning meetings.

Hereby, I give my voluntary consent for the audio recording of the interview.

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Researcher:

Signed \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Hereby, I give my voluntary consent for the recording of the collaborative lesson planning meetings.

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Researcher:

Signed \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

## Приложение В. Форма письменного информированного согласия

### ПИСЬМЕННОЕ ИНФОРМАЦИОННОЕ ПИСЬМО

**Введение.** Вам предлагается принять участие в исследовании под названием «Взгляд учителей на влияние стратегий совместного планирования уроков на профессиональное обучение».

**Процедуры.** Цель этого исследования - изучить взгляды учителей на совместное планирование уроков, стратегии, используемые учителями при совместном планировании, как это влияет на профессиональное обучение. Участники из одной международной школы бакалавриата в Акмолинской области Казахстана будут приглашены на волонтерскую работу. Исследование будет включать личные интервью с учителями, участвующими в совместном планировании урока и записи совместного планирования урока. Интервью займет около часа. С разрешения участников будут записаны совместные встречи по планированию урока для анализа взаимодействия во время собраний.

**Риски.** Поскольку в исследовании участвуют только школьные учителя и руководство школы, предполагается, что оно «не более чем минимальный риск». Волонтеры могут испытывать неудобства из-за потери времени. Тем не менее, участники могут отказаться от исследования в любое время, вплоть до представления диссертации, без какого-либо потенциального вреда для них.

**Выгоды.** Основным преимуществом для участников будет возможность подумать о своем совместном опыте планирования уроков и получить представление о любом влиянии на их профессиональное обучение. Их вклад в это исследование поможет школьным руководителям и учителям оптимизировать стратегии профессионального обучения. Результаты этого исследования могут быть использованы управляющими органами при разработке успешных реформ, касающихся совместного планирования уроков или политических документов, которые окажут влияние на повышение квалификации учителей.

**Компенсация.** Вклад участников в исследование будет оценен их вкладом в развитие системы образования в Республике Казахстан. К концу исследования участникам будет предоставлена копия результатов. Исследование будет опубликовано в виде дипломной работы и загружено в репозиторий Назарбаев Университета.

**Анонимность и Конфиденциальность.** Участники будут проинформированы о высоком уровне анонимности и конфиденциальности, гарантированном этическим утверждением Высшей Школы Образования, Назарбаев Университета. Во время личных интервью никакие данные не будут интерпретироваться никому, кроме исследователя и участников. Поскольку исследование включает совместные наблюдения за планированием урока, более два человека будут участниками собрания. Сопровождения по совместному планированию являются стандартным школьным

процессом, который не требует конфиденциальности. Тем не менее, исследователь гарантирует, что идентификационные данные хранятся анонимно для других людей за пределами исследования, не предоставляя информацию, допускающую установления личности, об анализе данных и результатах исследования. Личности хранятся анонимно для других людей за пределами исследования.

Исследователь гарантирует, что все данные будут храниться на персональном компьютере под защитой паролем. Все данные, включая стенограммы интервью, аудиозаписи, списки наблюдений и аудиторские испытания, будут уничтожены через пять лет после опубликования исследования.

**Добровольный характер исследования.** Участники имеют возможность отказаться от участия в исследовании в любое время, даже после подписания формы согласия.

**Точки соприкосновения.** В случае возникновения каких-либо вопросов, касающихся исследования или получения травмы, связанной с исследованием, следует связаться с научным руководителем, профессором - Элейн Шарплин или исследователем - Мейирим Уразбаевой. Любые другие вопросы или проблемы могут быть адресованы Комитету по этике институциональных исследований Назарбаев Университета, [resethics@nu.edu.kz](mailto:resethics@nu.edu.kz).

**Заявление о согласии.**

Я, \_\_\_\_\_

Даю свое добровольное согласие на участие в исследовании. Я понимаю, что мое участие в исследовании является добровольным. Я осознаю, что могу отказаться от исследования в любое время по своему усмотрению, без каких-либо негативных последствий для меня.

Я понимаю образовательную цель этого исследования.

Я прочитал (а) информацию в Информационном письме выше и получил (а) ответы на все мои вопросы.

Я понимаю, что все данные, которые я предоставляю, будут храниться в тайне, и я буду оставаться анонимным для людей, не являющихся исследователями, и других участников совещаний по совместному планированию.

**Настоящим я даю свое добровольное согласие на аудиозапись интервью.**

Дата подписания: \_\_\_\_\_

**Исследователь:**

Подпись \_\_\_\_\_ Дата: \_\_\_\_\_

**Настоящим я даю свое добровольное согласие на запись совместных  
совещаний по планированию урока.**

Дата подписания: \_\_\_\_\_

**Исследователь:**

Подпись \_\_\_\_\_ Дата: \_\_\_\_\_

### **Appendix C: Questions for Semi-structured Interviews**

**Title:** Teachers' perspectives on the impacts of collaborative lesson planning strategies on professional learning

**Purpose:** The research aims to investigate teachers' perspectives on collaborative lesson planning, and identify what CLP strategies support their professional learning.

#### **Questions to ask at the interviews.**

1. What subject do you teach?
2. How long have you been teaching in schools?
3. Tell me about how you plan your lessons.
4. What are the main criteria or characteristics you follow to plan the lessons?
5. Do you plan your lessons on your own or together with your colleagues? Why? Is this your preference?
6. How do you evaluate the effectiveness of a lesson?
7. I would like to ask you more specific questions about collaborative lesson planning. Are there any documents to oblige you to plan lessons collaboratively?
8. Have you ever tried to plan your lessons collaboratively with your colleagues? How was it?
9. How long have you been planning collaboratively?
10. How often do you meet to collaborative lesson planning sessions?
11. What do you like most and least about collaborative lesson planning?
12. Do you reflect on your lesson plans or the lesson planning process? How and when do you reflect?
13. How can you improve the quality of your lessons?
14. Does collaborative planning contribute to teachers' professional growth?
15. What do you see as the benefits and drawbacks of co-planning?
16. What enhances or inhibits the effectiveness of collaborative planning?

17. Is there any support and/ or motivation from school leaders' side to encourage teachers for collaborative work?
18. Do you participate in professional learning activities? If so, what sort?
19. What do you do to sustain your professional learning?
20. What foundational strategies of professional development can you name?
21. Do you have any questions for me?



**Appendix D: Data Analysis Audit Trial**

	<b>Participant A</b>	<b>Participant B</b>	<b>Participant C</b>	<b>Participant D</b>
<b>Demographics</b>	F 24 y.o. 2 y exp 2 schl Current school 1.5 Y Novice teacher	F 37 y.o. 16 y exp Taught in schools only International teacher	F 26 y.o. 6 y. exp. Current school 1 year	M 35 y.o. 11 y. exp. International teacher
<b>Process</b>	Discussion  Sharing responsibilities  Adaptation  Moderation  Sending out	Collaborative planning  Backward planning	Agreed expectations, resources and assessments	Natural process
<b>Personal attitude</b>	Positive towards co-plng.	Supports co-planning	Constant collabor.plng	Supports collabor.plng Individual vs. co-plng
<b>Benefits</b>	Save time - Bank of ideas for novice teach. - Learn diff.activities - Learns more About teaching and	Sharing of best practices Common vision Student - oriented Reflection	<b>Type:</b> <b>1) Individual planning:</b> -time-saving -address the student needs - differentiated approach  <b>2) Co-planning:</b> - contributes	Less workload Improves learning Wealth of ideas  Depends on teachers' mood

	<p>Learning</p> <p>Workload</p>		<p>teach.prof.dev.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- stud.learning</li> <li>-teach.learning</li> <li>-helps novice teachers</li> <li>-learn from exper.teach.</li> <li>- understand the school system</li> <li>-be equipped to implement new reforms</li> <li>-raise stud.outcom.</li> <li>-share ideas to motivate students</li> <li>-discuss the common problems</li> <li>-improved content/resources</li> </ul>	
<b>Challenges</b>	<p>Teacher's neglect twrds co-plng.</p> <p>Unwillingness to share ideas/resources</p> <p>Teacher's attitude</p> <p>Misunderstandings/conflicts</p>	<p>Novice teach. need supp.</p> <p>Teacher resistance or free-riding</p>	<p><b>Challenges of co-planning:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- diversity of students</li> <li>-disagreements amongst teachers on:</li> <li>- contents</li> <li>- instructions</li> <li>-expectations</li> </ul> <p>Recommendations :</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- differentiated approach of teaching</li> </ul> <p><b>X School practice:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-unit planning</li> </ul>	<p>Time-consuming</p> <p>Clash of ideas</p>

			<p>process</p> <p>-overall outline of the whole term</p>	
<b>Professional learning</b>		<p>Learning from everyone and everything</p>	<p><b>Background experience:</b></p> <p>-workshops, seminars</p> <p>-Master's degree</p> <p>-daily routine of co-planning</p> <p>-teachers' assistance in implementing the program</p>	No man is an island
<b>Sch.leadership role</b>	<p>Control needed</p>	<p>Opportunity for co plan</p> <p>Intervene during planning</p> <p>See the implementation of planning</p> <p>Give feedback</p>	<p>Sch.adm encouragement</p> <p>Ind.plng isn't appreciated</p> <p>Tech-s are urged to co-plan</p>	International approach
<b>Recommendations</b>	<p>Be prepared for meetings</p> <p>Use modern technology</p>	<p>Prior research</p> <p>Motivation</p>	<p><b>Changed attitudes:</b></p> <p>-teachers perceive co-planning as a creative process</p> <p>-a way of self-development</p> <p>- on daily basis</p> <p>-follow documents and guidelines</p> <p>-be open to share your thoughts, fears.</p> <p>-be open for new ideas</p> <p>-respect your colleagues</p> <p>-be considered as</p>	<p>Every day learning</p> <p>Self-driven</p> <p>Being open-minded</p>

			an easy, free of charge way to improve teachers' prof.dev.	
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