

Running head: TEACHERS' ATTITUDES, KNOWLEDGE AND SKILLS FOR  
COLLABORATIVE PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

**Teachers' Attitudes, Knowledge and Skills for Collaborative Professional Development**

Saltanat Abdazimkyzy

Submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

Master of Science in Educational Leadership

Nazarbayev University Graduate School of Education

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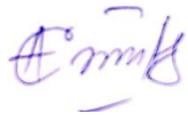
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**Nazarbayev University**  
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[www.nu.edu.kz](http://www.nu.edu.kz)

53 Kabanbay Batyr Ave.  
010000 Astana,  
Republic of Kazakhstan

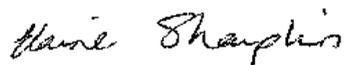
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Dear Saltanat

This letter confirms that your research project entitled: *Teachers' Attitudes to Collaborative Professional Development* has been approved by the Graduate School of Education Ethics Committee of Nazarbayev University.

You may proceed with contacting your preferred research site and commencing your participant recruitment strategy.

Yours sincerely



Elaine Sharplin

**Professor**  
**Chair of the GSE Research Committee**  
Graduate School of Education  
Nazarbayev University

Block C3, Room 5006  
Office: +7 (7172) 70 9371  
Mobile: +7 777 1929961  
email: [elaine.sharplin@nu.edu.kz](mailto:elaine.sharplin@nu.edu.kz)

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**Dedication**

I dedicate this thesis to my loving mother, Balkhiya Tulepbergenova and to my careful father, Abdazim Dauymbekov.

### **ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

I would like to express my special thanks of gratitude to my thesis supervisor Professor Elaine Sharplin for her consistent support, excellent guidance and very constructive feedback in the thesis writing process. I have been greatly benefited from her recommendations and critical reviews. She helped and encouraged to keep the balance between the work, my study and carrying the pregnancy period.

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## **Abstract**

The education system in Kazakhstan is experiencing fundamental changes, with teachers as the most significant change agents. Consequently, teachers' professional learning through collaboration has attracted the growing attention of researchers, policy-makers, school administrators and teachers. Nazarbayev Intellectual Schools (NIS) created new approaches to teachers' collaborative learning, requiring teachers to undergo dramatic changes for alignment with new professional development expectations. The problem is that teachers' voices on the current changes in professional development, their skills and knowledge which are necessary for collaboration are ignored.

This qualitative study explored teachers' attitudes towards collaborative professional growth in one NIS school in Kazakhstan. The research investigated skills and knowledge that are crucial for teachers while collaborating. The study collected data from face-to-face interviews to answer the main research question: What are the teacher attitudes towards, knowledge and skills needed for, collaborative professional learning? The research was guided by the following sub-questions (a) How do teachers understand collaborative learning? (b) What is the attitude of teachers towards participation in collaborative professional development? (c) What skills and knowledge do teachers have or need to develop to engage in collaborative professional development? (d) What would enhance teacher participation in collaborative professional development? Nine teachers were purposefully selected according to the criteria: years of teaching experience, places of previous work and experience in collaborative activities.

The findings of this study showed that various school reforms related to teachers' professional development affect teachers attitudes towards collaborative teacher professional learning. It was revealed that teachers need to possess special pedagogical knowledge, content

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knowledge and soft skills in order to collaborate with colleagues effectively. The study concluded by suggesting some recommendations to policy-makers, school administration and teachers on how to enhance the involvement of teachers in collaboration for professional development.

**Keywords:** teacher collaboration, professional development, teacher skills, teacher knowledge, Kazakhstan

### **Аннотация**

Система образования в Казахстане претерпела фундаментальные изменения за последние десять лет. В основном, эти изменения ожидаются быть внедрены учителями. В связи с этим профессиональное обучение учителей посредством совместной работы привлекает все большее внимание исследователей, политиков, администрации школ и учителей. Назарбаев Интеллектуальные Школы (НИШ) создали новые подходы в развитии совместного обучения учителей. В результате ожидается, что учителя претерпят кардинальные изменения, чтобы соответствовать новым требованиям профессионального развития. Проблема заключается в том, что мнение учителей о текущих изменениях в профессиональном развитии, их навыки и знания необходимые для сотрудничества, игнорируется.

В этом исследовании изучалось отношение учителей к совместному профессиональному росту в одной школе НИШ в Казахстане. В ходе исследования были изучены навыки и знания, которые необходимы учителям для совместной работы. В этом исследовании используется качественный исследовательский подход, и интервью, чтобы ответить на главный вопрос исследования: Каковы отношения, знания и навыки учителя, для совместного профессионального обучения? и следующие подвопросы (а) Как учителя понимают совместное обучение? (б) Каково отношение учителей к участию в совместном профессиональном развитии? (с) Какие навыки и знания у преподавателей есть или нужно развивать для совместного профессионального развития? (d) Что будет способствовать участию учителей в совместном профессиональном развитии? Девять учителей были специально отобраны для участия в исследовании. Для получения разных ответов были установлены следующие критерии: годы преподавательского опыта, место предыдущей

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работы и опыт участия в различных совместных мероприятиях.

Результаты этого исследования отражают отношение учителей, работающих в одной из школ НИШ в Казахстане. Результаты показали, что различные школьные реформы, связанные с профессиональным развитием учителей, влияют на отношение учителей к совместному профессиональному обучению учителей. Исследование завершилось предложением некоторых рекомендаций для представителей сферы образования, администрации школ и учителей о том, как повысить вовлеченность учителей в сотрудничество для профессионального развития.

**Ключевые слова:** сотрудничество преподавателей, профессиональное развитие, навыки учителя, знания учителя, Казакстан

### Андатпа

Соңғы он жылда Қазақстандағы білім беру жүйесі түбегейлі өзгерістерді бастан кешіруде. Көбіне бұл өзгертулерді мұғалімдер жүзеге асырады деп күтілуде. Осыған байланысты мұғалімдердің бірлескен әрекеті арқылы кәсіби оқыту зерттеушілердің, саясаткерлердің, мектеп әкімшілігі мен мұғалімдердің назарын аударды. Назарбаев Зияткерлік мектептері (НЗМ) мұғалімдердің бірлескен білімін дамытудың жаңа тәсілдерін жасады. Нәтижесінде мұғалімдердің біліктілігін арттырудағы жаңа талаптарға сәйкес келуі үшін түбегейлі өзгерістер болады деп күтілуде. Туындаған мәселе: мұғалімдердің кәсіби дамудағы қазіргі өзгерістер, олардың бірлесіп жұмыс істеу үшін қажетті дағдылары мен білімі ескерілмейді.

Бұл зерттеу мұғалімдердің Қазақстандағы бір НЗМ оқытушыларының бірлескен кәсіби өсуіне деген көзқарастарын зерттеді. Зерттеу барысында мұғалімдердің бірлесіп жұмыс жасауы үшін маңызды болып табылатын дағдылар мен білім зерттелді. Бұл жұмыста сапалы зерттеу әдісі қолданылды және зерттеудің негізгі сұрағына жауап беру үшін бетпе-бет сұхбаттасу қолданылады. Зерттеудің негізгі сұрағы: Бірлескен кәсіби оқыту үшін мұғалімнің көзқарасы, білімі мен дағдылары қандай? және қосымша сұрақтары: а) Бірлескен оқытуды мұғалімдер қалай түсінеді? ә) Бірлескен кәсіби дамуға қатысуға мұғалімдердің көзқарасы қандай? в) Бірлескен кәсіби дамуға қатысу үшін мұғалімдер қандай дағдылар мен білімге ие болуы керек немесе дамыту керек? г) Бірлескен кәсіби дамуға мұғалімнің қатысуын не күшейтеді? Зерттеуге қатысу үшін тоғыз мұғалім таңдалынып алынды. Әр түрлі жауаптар алу үшін келесі критерийлер белгіленді: көпжылдық еңбек өтілі, алдыңғы жұмыс орны және бірлескен іс-шараларға қатысу тәжірибесі. Осы зерттеудің нәтижелері Қазақстандағы бір мектепте жұмыс жасайтын

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мұғалімдердің көзқарастарын білдіреді. Нәтижелер мұғалімдердің кәсіби дамуына байланысты мектептегі әртүрлі реформалар мұғалімдердің бірлескен кәсіби оқытуға деген көзқарастарына әсер ететіндігін көрсетті. Зерттеу саясаткерлерге, мектеп әкімшілігіне және мұғалімдерге біліктілікті арттыру үшін бірлесіп жұмыс жасайтын мұғалімдердің қатысуын қалай жақсартуға болатындығы туралы бірнеше ұсыныстарды ұсынумен аяқталды.

**Кілтгі сөздер:** мұғалімдермен ынтымақтастық, кәсіби даму, мұғалім дағдылары, мұғалім білімі, Қазақстан

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## **Chapter 1: Introduction**

### **1.1. Introduction**

The purpose of this qualitative study was to explore teachers' understanding of collaborative professional development and the knowledge and skills required for collaboration in one Nazarbayev Intellectual School (NIS) in Kazakhstan. This study investigates teachers' attitudes, knowledge and skills for collaborative professional development because collaboration for professional learning is a key factor to overcome teachers working in isolation and enabling them to grow professionally, together with colleagues. This chapter provides information about the background of the current research, describes the statement of the problem and the purpose of the study. Next, it presents the research questions, briefly describes the research design and the significance of the research. Finally, the full structure of the thesis is outlined.

### **1.2. Background of the Study**

This section gives a brief overview of new reforms in Kazakhstan and their influence on teacher professional collaborative growth. In addition, this section provides examples of international experience of reforms that are changing teaching practices.

One of the key priorities and challenges for Kazakhstan is to develop human capital through education (Bridges, 2014). In order to improve the education system in the country, a new network of NIS was launched with the purpose of experimenting with the international experience of new educational programmes prior to dissemination of new practices to mainstream schools across the country (Bridges, 2014). The new approaches in education require additional teacher competencies and opportunities for professional growth are expanding (State Programme for Education and Science Development for 2016-2019, [SPESD] 2016).

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Teachers need to develop ICT skills, 21st century skills, critical thinking, approaches to student-centered learning, and active learning pedagogies.

In this regard, the demands on teachers have significantly increased (Bridges, 2014). Inger (1993) states that for a long time teachers worked in isolation and collaboration with colleagues took place in word only. They planned lessons and solved problems related to teaching methods on their own. As a result, their potential and ability to grow professionally was hidden (Inger, 1993). This is no longer possible with the educational reforms. The changes have directly influenced teachers' role at schools and now there is a requirement for teachers to be constantly engaged in learning. This in its turn has challenged teachers' priorities and their busy school schedules (Bridges, 2014). As a result, there is a compelling need for teachers to engage in collaborative professional learning.

Nowadays, teacher continuous learning has become one of the essential topics in educational research (Meirink, Imants, Meijer & Verloop 2010). This interest is the result of ongoing educational reforms which require changes both in teachers thinking and in their teaching practice in the classroom. Thus, stress is put on teacher professional learning through collaboration.

Since Kazakhstan launched a new education programme, there have been challenges for all stakeholders (Bridges, 2014). Kazakhstani teachers are currently facing huge changes in the education programme which directly influences teachers and their competence. Teachers experienced significant changes to their roles and their own beliefs about teaching practice. To facilitate the new programme of reform, a network of NIS was first created. The aim of these schools was to develop and apply new education practices before they were transferred to mainstream schools around the country. Centres of Excellence were developed to support

teachers' professional growth through a "cascade model" of collaboration (Bridges, 2014).

Nevertheless, Bridges (2014) points out that this model is sometimes an "unreliable one" since it does not meet teachers' requirements (p. 34).

Fullan and Hargreaves (1991) support the idea that any educational reform which is related to teachers needs to involve teachers' voices. Fullan and Hargreaves believe that any educational change that does not involve teachers will fail or result in "change for the worse" (p. 28). Where there is change, teachers need to be a key element because it is teachers who implement improvement into the class (Fullan & Hargreaves, 1991). Similarly, Russell, McPherson and Martin (2001) state that teacher-related reforms in most cases are based on theories and do not include teachers' participation in decision-making. Thus, it creates a significant gap in teacher collaborative professional learning (p. 1). Zeng and Day (2019) argue that active participation of teachers in teacher-related reforms is frequently based on local issues such as, their own school, department or even classroom.

Reform in education inevitably concerns teachers. Teachers are key actors in reforms and this has implications for teachers' professional improvements.

### **1.3. Statement of the Problem**

In the light of the recent changes in the education system in Kazakhstan, policy makers have modernized approaches towards teacher professional learning. The aim is to spread international experience of teacher collaborative professional development programmes around the country (SPESD for 2016-2019, 2016). However, Bridges (2014) states that deep change in education is more than simply following procedures or structures. He argues that it involves changing teachers' beliefs about pedagogical practices and professional development.

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International studies have revealed that effective teacher collaboration may have a positive influence on teacher professional development. For instance, Cordingley, Bell, Rundell, Evans, and Curtis (2003) claim that teachers who work in collaborative environments are likely to gain greater confidence, enhance beliefs on their own power to make changes, positively influence colleagues and raise enthusiasm for trying new things and experiences.

Ayubayeva (2018) states that teachers in Kazakhstan are neglecting collaboration for professional development. Ayubayeva (2018) explains that teachers have diverse attitudes towards collaborative professional learning and inadequate skills and competency to collaborate with their colleagues. Consequently, there is a risk that attempts at teacher collaboration may not contribute to effective professional development. Teachers lack experience, knowledge and skills for collaborative professional development. Therefore, there is a threat that teachers who have minimal experience and knowledge on working collaboratively will not grow professionally.

## **1.4. Purpose of the Study**

Given the context and the nature of the problem described above, this research study explores teachers attitudes towards collaborative professional development in one NIS school in Kazakhstan. Teachers of this school have experience of working collaboratively with colleagues. The research aims to study whether teachers possess the skills and knowledge necessary for effective collaboration. Finally, this research aims to identify challenges that may appear during teacher collaboration.

## **1.5. Research Questions**

The central research question of this study is: 1) What are the teachers' attitudes towards, knowledge and skills needed for collaborative professional learning? The central research

question was explored through a series of guiding questions: (a) How do teachers understand collaborative learning? (b) What is the attitude of teachers towards participation in collaborative professional development? (c) What skills and knowledge do teachers have or need to develop to engage in collaborative professional development? (d) What would enhance teacher participation in collaborative professional development? These questions focus on the phenomenon of the study – collaborative professional development.

### **1.6. Definition of Central Phenomenon**

According to Hargreaves (1994), globally there is no one definition for “collaborative professional learning”. Thus, the words “collaboration”, “collegiality” and “cooperation” are commonly used as synonyms to describe actions where at least two teachers are engaged to work together. In addition, Day (as cited in Forte & Flores, 2014) agrees that different schools have different terms related to teacher professional collaboration.

Peterson (1994) explains that professional collaboration is being involved in professional dialogue with colleagues, regularly being engaged in problem solving of school or classroom issues and constantly sharing knowledge and ideas. Collaboration has been defined as a process to solve problems that occur in education (Hargreaves, 1994; Montague & Warger (2001) These solutions may benefit separate schools, a teacher or even the country (Levine & Marcus, 2010). Even though collaboration has become a political key-phrase for problem solving in education, its meaning is not always clear (Forte & Flores, 2014). However, Friend (2000) claims that essential characteristics of “collaboration” include shared goals, good communication skills and the obligation of participants to “maintain parity throughout their interactions” (p. 130).

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Kelchtermans (2006) states that in most literature “collaboration” is defined as the same action as “collegiality”. However, Kelchtermans argues that those terms are not identical. Additionally, Kelchtermans explains that collaboration is a more descriptive term to describe cooperative actions whereas collegiality focuses on the quality of the relationships among colleagues. Walker and Solberg (1994) identify teacher collaboration as “teamwork” and suggest using teamwork anytime while planning and implementing cross-curricular themes. Hargreaves (1994) and Little (1990) explain that collaboration may take place in different forms such as co-teaching, co-planning, mentoring, professional dialogue, involving actions such as simple advice through to complex consultation and decision-making.

The term collaboration is specifically used in relation to teacher professional learning. According to Ning, Lee and Lee (2016) professional learning is needed to help to build the capacity of teachers in order to meet students’ demands. Generally, Ning et al. (2016) describe collaborative professional development as an organization of teachers within schools, departments and teachers into learning teams (p. 235). In recent years, the importance of job-based and constant professional development programmes were highly emphasized (Abdul-Razzak, 2013). Similarly, Sawyer and Faufman (2007) agree that today it is necessary and important for teachers to communicate among each other in order to grow professionally.

To sum up, in this study the term teacher collaboration is defined as a joint action of teachers in order to share their own viewpoint on lesson planning, discussing teaching-related issues, co-teaching, consultation and professional dialogues. It may be labeled in different ways in different schools such as teamwork, collegiality or cooperation. The main aim of teacher collaboration is to share pedagogical knowledge among teachers of the school, city, region,

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country and around the world. This is vital because the modern education system requires high levels of teacher competence.

### **1.7. Design of the Study**

A qualitative research method was used to explore NIS teachers' attitudes towards collaborative professional development in one NIS school. According to Creswell (2012), qualitative research is used to investigate the central phenomenon of the study in-depth by exploring the attitudes of participants. To be specific, this study used single-case study since it investigated one school. As a novice researcher, it is effective to study single case in order to

This research site is the current workplace of the researcher. Thus, it makes it a convenient research site, giving easy access to the researcher and making available documentation. Nine teachers were purposefully selected from two different departments of this NIS school, with different lengths of teaching experience and different previous workplaces. The reason for this was to consider the attitudes of teachers who had different experiences of teacher collaboration and teacher professional development. These two departments were suggested to contribute to the research since most of them have experience in international collaborative professional development.

This study collected data using qualitative semi-structured interviews with open-ended questions in face to face interviews with the participants. Semi-structured interviews are a very flexible tool for data collection (Cohen, Manion, & Morrison, 2007). Qualitative interviews enabled the researcher to gain "research-relevant information" (p. 351). According to Creswell (2012) semi-structured interviews help to get more precise answers from the interviewees since the researcher may ask additional questions, reword them or explain in case it is unclear for the participant. All the collected data was analysed through manual coding in order to identify

themes and sub-themes. According to Saldana (2013) manual coding is the most effective way for small-scale studies and for the novice researchers since manual coding on the paper gives more control and ownership of the work.

### **1.8. Significance of the Study**

In the current context of reform in Kazakhstan, teachers need the skills to participate in collaborative professional development. This study aims to address the gap in the literature of teacher collaborative professional development in Kazakhstan. The findings of this study may inform policy-makers about the attitudes of teachers and whether teachers believe that collaboration may lead to professional growth. Moreover, it will produce understandings of the knowledge and skills teachers need for professional collaboration with peers.

In addition, as NIS schools are piloting new education systems to mainstream schools all across the country, the demand for teacher competence will increase. Thus, teachers' attitudes towards collaborative professional development can be one of the crucial elements in the implementation of education system reform. The process of implementation of the reform may become challenging if teachers resist changes or even more worse if they are pressed to admit changes in the education system, specifically in teacher collaboration and professional development.

The researcher believes that, if policy-makers take into account teachers' attitudes when making decisions related to teacher professional development and collaboration, it may result in positive results in education. For example, Kafyulilo (2014), agrees that successful teacher collaboration is more likely to lead to professional improvement of teachers, positive teacher relationships, increased student outcome and academic progress and finally school improvement.

In response to this problem, this research study explored attitudes, knowledge and skills of teachers involved in collaborative professional learning in one NIS school in Kazakhstan.

Finally, this research study can contribute to the literature about collaborative teacher professional development in Kazakhstan, since there is a literature gap related to the topic of collaborative professional learning in Kazakhstan. It may help organizers of professional development courses or programmes for teachers of NIS schools or across the country.

### **1.9. Outline of the Study**

This thesis consists of six chapters. This first chapter has described the background of the study, the purpose of the study and the research questions. It described the research design and the significance of the study.

The second chapter presents a review of the literature central to this study. The empirical studies reviewed focus on teacher collaboration and teacher professional development in a range of contexts. It also studied different factors that influenced teachers' collaborative learning. Finally, this chapter includes a critical analysis and synthesis of all the studied literature sources.

The third chapter provides detailed information on the methodological approach and justifies the choice of it. The chapter explains the choice of research site and participants. Next, there is information provided about the research instrument and the data collection procedure is described step by step. Finally, this chapter describes the process of data analysis, provides detailed information on ethical issues and describes measures of research quality relevant to the study.

The fourth chapter presents the findings which were revealed after careful data analysis. The findings were grouped into the four following themes: 1) Teachers identified co-planning as

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the main collaborative actions 2) Teachers agree on the necessity of pedagogical knowledge, content knowledge and soft skills for effective collaboration, 3) Teachers support collaboration as a tool for professional development, 4) Teachers suggest voluntary collaboration as the ideal teacher professional collaboration. The findings chapter is followed by the fifth chapter where the findings are discussed in relation to the reviewed literature and the research questions.

The sixth chapter Conclusions and Recommendations summarises the main findings and suggests recommendations for policy, practice and future research. The thesis concludes with a summary of the significance to education in Kazakhstan.

## **Chapter 2: Literature Review**

### **2.1. Introduction**

The previous chapter presented the background of the study and the significance of the problem related to teacher professional development and teacher collaboration. The aim of the research was to study teachers' attitudes towards collaborative professional development and to explore whether teachers have skills and knowledge to work in a professional collaborative environment. This chapter reviews international literature sources since there is a gap in literature from the Kazakhstani or Central Asian context.

The literature review chapter starts with an explanation of teacher collaboration for teacher professional development and it also gives some information on the historical background of professional collaboration. Next, is a discussion of different literature on the main reasons that teachers participate in collaboration. A discussion of knowledge and skills that are necessary for professional collaboration of teachers follows. Finally, the chapter considers the advantages and disadvantages of support and pressure for collaboration.

### **2.2. Teacher Collaboration for Professional Development**

This section reviews the empirical literature related to the benefits of teacher collaboration. It summarises literature identifying collaboration as one of the successful tools for teacher professional development. In addition, it includes a review of literature which identifies factors that contribute to ineffective teacher collaboration.

Research has consistently emphasised the importance of collaboration in teachers' jobs since it is considered to contribute to school improvement and teacher professional growth (Shah, 2012). Shah (2012) believes that collaboration of teachers is a crucial aspect of teachers' professional development and it increases their knowledge. It breaks the "individualism and

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isolation” of teachers which are known as threats to teacher professional growth (p.1243).

Peterson (1994) points out that in schools where teachers tend to work collaboratively, successful staff development occurs more frequently.

When teachers work in deep collaboration they have the opportunity to reflect, interact with colleagues and be involved in collaborative problem solving (Kaplan, Chan, Farbman, & Novoryta, 2015). However, Lieberman and Miller (ac cited in Ayubayeva, 2018) believe that collaborative learning takes teachers professional growth beyond reflection to a place where they learn from their professional peers. This gives teachers' confidence and readiness for novelties, experimentation and risks (Hargreaves, 1994).

According to Forte and Flores (2014) teacher collaboration has a positive influence not only on school achievement but at the same time it has a number of benefits for individual teachers. Support during collaboration provides considerable opportunities for teachers to discuss problems, overcome difficulties, failures and allow them to deal with personal insecurity. However, Lumpe (2007) argues that short workshops and seminars on professional development are not effective and cannot transform teachers' practice. Moreover, he identifies some factors that professional development needs to provide for teachers, for example effective feedback, cooperation with other teachers, practice-oriented development, shared beliefs and vision. Lumpe (2007) suggests developing professional learning communities in order to implement those factors effectively. He explains that collaborative professional development provides opportunity for long-term learning of teachers which may continue even after workshops. He states that collectivism is more effective than one-day seminars.

Doppenberg, Brok, and Bakx (2012), state that there are many examples of successful collaboration of teachers in small groups rather than in school-wide practice. Conversely, one-to-

one teacher collaboration may rarely contribute to changes in education. However, Fullan (2006) argues that any changes that individual teacher experiences simultaneously focus on changes in the education system. Similarly, Stoll, Bolam, McMahon, Wallace, and Thomas (2006) suggest that teachers' individual development changes their attitudes, beliefs, understandings, perceptions and values which as a result influence positively the education system as well.

To sum up, teachers who are more enthusiastic about professional interaction with colleagues and actively participate in lesson planning and lesson discussions are more likely to increase their own knowledge, skills and change classroom practice (Lieberman & Grolnick, 1996). Finally, successful teacher collaboration increases teachers' beliefs and values towards their own teaching practice as well as the whole education system.

### **2.3. Teacher Collaboration and Student Academic Improvement**

Goddard, Goddard and Tshannen-Moran (2007) conducted the first large-scale research on collaboration in order to identify the relation between teacher collaboration and student achievement. This study revealed that elementary schools with effective teacher collaboration show high level of student achievement. Goddard et al. (2007) continued testing the link between learners' academic achievement and teacher collaboration and found that successful teacher collaborative work may be related to frequency of teacher collaboration and participation of teachers in formal collaboration. In addition, teachers who consider challenge and personal accomplishment through constant professional development are more likely to continue in the teaching profession and be fully engaged in hard work to improve learners' achievements (Louis, Marks, & Kruse, 1996).

Moreover, Ronfeldt, Farmer, McQueen, and Grissom (2015) writes that collaboration around student data may become beneficial for student academic achievement, leading to “data-based decision-making” (p. 6). One empirical study showed that teachers in experimental groups who were working in teams to identify learning needs of students showed far higher academic results of students rather than teachers in a controlled group (Ronfeldt et al., 2015). Teachers in the experimental group had frequent meetings with colleagues to collaboratively discuss and find solutions to issues.

Researchers claim that teacher collaborative work influences student achievement as teachers try to adapt new practices in the classroom, which results in support of student learning (Almog & Shecktman, 2007; Caprara, Barbaranelli, Steca, & Malone, 2006; Goddard, Hoy, & Hoy, 2004). Teachers are more likely to apply strategies to meet individual needs of students in the classroom when teachers collaborate (Goddard et al., 2004). However, Goddard et al. (2007) emphasise the importance of the structure and frequency of collaboration if student improvement is the purpose of the collaboration.

Overall, research confirms the importance of teacher collaboration for students' academic improvement. Teachers who tend to work in a collaborative environment are more likely to improve teaching strategies which consequently results in students' academic achievements.

#### **2.4. Co-planning as Means of Collaboration**

This section gives a short description of the main type of collaboration - co-planning as a format of teacher collaboration and professional improvement. It identifies reasons for co-planning being held as one of the successful tools of teacher continuous learning.

Mofield (2020) describes co-planning as an action where two experts develop lesson materials, decide on a teaching method, create assessment criteria and evaluate lesson results

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collaboratively. Another definition of co-planning comes from Baumi (2016), who explains that co-planning is not simply developing a lesson plan collaboratively. It is having opportunities for joint evaluation of outcomes and developing further instructions (p. 59). Eisenman, Pleet, Wandry, and McGinley (2011) identify co-planning as a potential source for teachers' professional growth. They explain that it provides opportunities for reflection on own practice. Rimpola (2014) argues that collaborative planning can take place only when each member of the collaboration shares time, knowledge and professional commitment. Moreover, co-planning is a process where teachers in collaborative working conditions analyse resources, evaluate them in order to decide to use them for their lessons and brainstorm new ideas (Bilovar & Ortiz, 2017). This is beneficial for teachers to improve teaching practice (p. 175).

Kaplan et al. (2015), emphasise that joint lesson planning is beneficial both for teachers and school improvement since the lesson plan is produced by more than one teacher, with each teacher contributing experience, knowledge and skills. According to Mofield (2020) improved lesson planning has an influence on students' achievement which consequently occurs as one factor of school improvement.

Baumi (2016) highlights the effectiveness of collaborative lesson planning for novice teachers who gain opportunities to develop knowledge and skills during this collaboration and grow professionally. This may contribute to improved job satisfaction and even reduce teacher attrition.

Conversely, Murawski (2012) mentions one disadvantage of co-planning and claims that it is time-consuming. Teachers need to listen to each other carefully in order to understand the perspective of one another, divide responsibilities and come to one decision. Baumi, (2016) sees challenges of co-planning which are in most cases "lack of time and resistance of teachers to

collaborate” (p. 61). It is obvious that time is a challenge for teachers since teachers have the busiest schedule. In terms of resistance, teachers are forced to change their routines working in isolation and interact with other colleagues. Even though co-planning is the most difficult part of co-teaching, it should not be neglected (Murawski, 2012).

To sum up, collaboration of teachers may take place in different formats. Currently co-planning and co-teaching can be considered as those forms of collaboration which are more effective and directly practiced in the workplace.

## **2.5. Knowledge and Skills for Collaborative Professional Development**

This section reviews the international literature about lack of knowledge and skills that teachers need to successfully collaborate effectively.

McManus and Kauffman (1991) point out that teachers do not have appropriate knowledge and skills for collaboration that would lead them to successful interaction with peers. McManus and Kauffman (1991) explain the situation of teachers lacking special skills for collaboration because teachers more commonly worked in isolation in the past. Teachers can be very professional in their own specific teaching area, but this may not appear in collaborative situations (Gersten, Darch, Davis, & George, 1991).

In this regard, Peterson (1994) argues that it is crucial for each teacher to possess skills in order to collaborate with other colleagues. For example, a teacher needs to be a leader, needs to have effective communication skills, needs to possess “problem-solving, planning, and decision-making strategies” (p. 16). Moreover, Fullan and Hargreaves (1991) agree that being a leader is a key skill in collaboration and explain that every teacher is able to be a leader during interaction among colleagues.

In addition, Friend (2000), agrees that even simple conversation requires use of skills. He is confident that poor communication skills may fail any collaborative actions. Collaboration skills cannot be expected as something to appear naturally, they need to be “carefully taught and nurtured” (p. 132). McCormick, Noonan, Ogata, and Heck (2001) support Friend (2000) and state that for collaboration it is crucial for teachers to have special training and learn skills of interaction with other adults. Through professional collaboration teachers have opportunities to enhance their own communication skills while interacting with colleagues, which also enables teachers to be open on different viewpoints and avoid conflicts (Kafyulilo, 2014).

To conclude, Rhodes and Beneicke (2002) argue that teachers who participate in any collaboration activities need to possess higher order personal, professional qualities as well as communication skills. For example, inappropriate comments or feedback may destroy relationships between colleagues and even push teachers to have negative views about collaboration altogether.

### **2.5.1. Content Knowledge for Professional Collaboration**

This section emphasises the importance of collaboration where teachers need content knowledge for effective teacher interaction. It includes a brief explanation of the advantages of content knowledge during collaboration.

Birman, Desimone, Porter, and Garet (2000) and Cohen and Hill (1998) point out that, collective participation of teachers in professional collaboration activities which are focused on content knowledge directly increase knowledge and skills of teachers. They explain that professional development activities where teaching techniques are centralized but content knowledge is neglected are not appreciated by teachers (p. 5-6). Another advantage of focusing on content knowledge during professional collaboration is that it leads to “specific subject area

or a subject specific teaching methods” and helps to avoid general teaching methods (Birman et al., 2000, p. 30).

Overall, content knowledge plays a key role in successful teacher collaboration as it may lead to improvement in teachers' subject-specific knowledge. Finally, collaboration where content knowledge is ignored is more likely to fail in teacher collaborative professional growth since teachers do not share their subject-specific knowledge.

### **2.5.2. Collaboration in the Same Grade and Subject Teaching**

This section reviews literature of co-planning in the same grade and the same level of schools. It includes a short explanation of the advantages of collaboration with teachers who work in the same grade and subject.

According to Birman et al. (2000), professional development courses that include collective participation of teachers who work in one department, in the same grade or teach the same subject is more likely to make teachers involved in the course. In addition, it provides more chances for teachers to relate their other experiences with the professional development course they are participating in. Since teachers who work in the same school or in one department participate in professional development activities this has a huge advantage such as the constant sharing of newly gained knowledge among teachers, because these teachers work on common curriculum and with common assessment requirements (Birman et al., 2000). Similarly, Ball (1996) agrees that collaboration of teachers who teach the same grade or the same subject are more likely to develop common understanding of methods, issues and solutions. Roger and Babinski (as cited in Sawyer & Rimm-Kaufman, 2007) notes that when teachers collaborate they prefer to work with teachers who are in the same level since they have a chance to discuss common objectives, teaching materials and methodology.

Overall, teachers who collaborate with colleagues who share the same grade and the same subject are more likely to interact more frequently by sharing common beliefs, knowledge and practice which results in constant teacher learning.

## **2.6. Support vs. Pressure for Collaboration**

This section describes the importance of support for teacher collaboration. To be specific, it includes a review of voluntary versus mandatory participation of teachers in collaborative actions.

Nowadays, teachers are strongly encouraged by their school administrations to work in collaboration (Baumi, 2016). As a result, school administrators constantly report about successful and unsuccessful attempts of collaboration among teachers. Wlodkowski (2003), points out that teachers' interest and involvement in professional collaboration is enhanced more when they feel the relevance of the topic of collaboration and see a shared vision and values. Teachers' positive attitudes towards collaboration increases if there is an interest and own initiative to continue professional learning.

Similarly, Friend (2000) claims that collaboration needs to happen not because it is a mandate of administrators but because teachers understand its benefits and feel confident about their skills and knowledge for professional collaboration. However, these conditions usually do not take place, and what is more, these are frequently not even expectations (p. 131). Moreover, collaboration requires time, because of this it should not be pressed to be started and finished within time limits (Friend, 2000). Thus, any individual who participates in collaborative activity needs to clearly see the advantages and set the time in accordance with their own priorities.

Perez-Katz (2007) suggested studying the competence of each teacher who participates in collaboration and pairing one less skillful teacher with one more skillful teacher to make the

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collaboration process useful for teachers' professional growth. As a result, Perez-Katz (2007) found that if there is no voluntary participation of teachers in collaboration it is rare that professional improvement takes place. Additionally, in this case, teachers' work experience, whether the teacher is open for novelties or is an isolated teacher, does not play a key role.

Baumi (2016) states that support of school administrators for teacher collaboration can be an effective solution of the problems such as lack of time or teachers trust that appear during the collaboration. For example, Baum (2016) explains that teachers tend to face problems with time, training and support, and trust that are barriers for teachers' successful collaboration. This means that school administrator support for teacher collaboration may provide solutions to problems that occur during the collaboration process (Baumi, 2016). In order to solve the problem with time for collaboration, principals of schools are suggested to set adequate time and encourage teachers to collaborate during their summer holidays, which needs to be paid. However, this cannot be a guarantee of successful collaboration since in most cases it is still a demand of the school administration.

Finally, if schools do not provide training and support for teachers to collaborate, it frequently leads to failure (Baumi, 2016). Baum (2016) argues that for successful collaboration teachers need to have their own willingness, own reason and purpose to participate but not because it is a mandate that comes from school administration.

To conclude, professional development through collaboration demands teachers' willingness and ability to communicate among each other (Ning, Lee, & Lee, 2015). Ning et al. (2015) explain that each teacher needs to understand and realise that he/she is an integral part of the community. The value of a collaborative environment is that it prioritises group interest over self-interest and teachers with voluntary participation are more open to collaboration rather than

individualists. Teachers who participate in collaboration by their own choice are more productive rather than teachers who were mandated. Finally, the support that school administrators provide may overcome barriers that appear during the collaboration process.

## **2.7. Conclusion**

This chapter presented a critical analysis of the literature sources that were studied during the research. It includes the literature on teacher collaboration and teacher professional development. After reviewing literature on the topic, it can be concluded that teacher collaboration is one of the key factors in education. In addition, teachers' successful professional collaboration is more common to lead to increase of teacher competence. However, it is clear now that effective teacher collaboration is affected by skills and knowledge that teachers need for interaction. In addition, teachers are more successful in voluntary collaboration. Finally, different formats of collaboration may take place during the teacher interaction, but co-planning and co-teaching is more common to happen since it provides constant teacher professional development.

In summary, the phenomenon of teacher collaborative professional learning has been widely studied in international context and the results of different research were presented. However, during the current research it was revealed that there is a huge gap in the literature related to the topic in Kazakhstani context. In this context, it is crucial to conduct a research on collaborative development of Kazakhstani teachers in order to minimize its barriers.

### **Chapter 3: Methodology**

#### **3.1. Introduction**

In the previous Literature Review chapter a clear understanding of the literature related to the current study was presented. This “Methodology” chapter explains why a qualitative, single case study research approach was used for the study and justifies the research design, the method of data collection, explains the method of data analysis, ethical issues and measures of research quality.

#### **3.2. Research Design**

In this section I present the information about the research design which was used in this study and explain the choice. Since the purpose of this study is to explore attitudes of teachers towards collaboration and the knowledge and skills needed for collaboration as a tool for professional growth, a qualitative research design was chosen. Winchester (2005) points out that qualitative researchers are more concerned with individual's experiences. According to O'Dwyer and Bernauer (2014, p. 9), a qualitative research design aims to get “a valid and accurate understanding of phenomena”. In this research, the main phenomenon under study is collaborative professional learning. The literature that was studied during the research also supports that this approach is the most relevant to explore the issue, by focusing on research participants' opinion and personal view. Cohen, Manion, and Morrison (2007) explain that a qualitative research approach is focused on detailed and information-rich answers of the participants which enables the study of opinions and personal viewpoints of participants. A qualitative research approach is suitable to this study since it studies, in depth, the attitudes of teachers towards teacher collaboration and its role in their professional development (Creswell, 2012).

This study uses a single case study approach. Arthur (2012) states that case study research gives an opportunity to explore a phenomenon about which not many things are known. In addition, he explains that case study may describe the problem of the study in detail. The case will be teachers of one NIS school in Kazakhstan and the site meets the needs of the research that is teachers with a wide range of experience in teacher collaboration.

### **3.3. Research Questions**

The main research question of this paper is:

- 1) What are the teachers' attitudes towards, knowledge and skills needed for collaborative professional learning?

Sub-questions: (a) How do teachers understand collaborative learning? (b) What is the attitude of teachers towards participation in collaborative professional development? (c) What skills and knowledge do teachers have or need to develop to engage in collaborative professional development? (d) What would enhance teacher participation in collaborative professional development?

### **3.4. The Central Phenomenon of the Study**

According to Creswell (2012), the central phenomenon of any study is its key and central idea. The central phenomenon of this study is the concept of teacher collaboration and its influence on teacher professional growth in the education system of Kazakhstan.

### **3.5. Research Site**

This section explains the choice of the research site. The study was conducted in the current workplace of the researcher in order to study her own school. Glesne calls this research "backyard research" (2011). According to Glesne (2011), currently novice researchers often choose "backyard research" (p. 41) as this provides the researcher with relatively easy access to

a site. Conducting research within the researcher's own school context is useful for the professional development of the researcher as he/she studies his/her own professional context (Glesne, 2011). Such sites are often called convenience sites because access to the site is easier and access to participants can occur efficiently (Creswell, 2012).

The research site of this study was one NIS school in Kazakhstan. Teachers of this school are mostly encouraged to work collaboratively by NIS school teacher's attestation rules (2016) in order to grow professionally and therefore they are more engaged in collaborative activities. This means that these teachers are able to think and reflect on the topic that the researcher was interested in. According to competence requirements for teacher attestation, teachers are supposed to collaborate for professional learning (Attestation Rules of NIS teachers, 2016).

This also introduced potential research biases which were managed in the data analysis process and will be discussed in the section on the measures of research quality below.

According to Glesne (2011), a researcher needs to get official agreement on gaining access to the proposed research site (p. 58). The Principal of the school where the research took place received a Letter of Invitation (Appendix 1) to request access to teachers at the school to participate in this study. This letter consisted of brief information about the study such as: aim of the research, significance of the research, plans and methods. The principal gave a verbal agreement to conduct the research in the school.

### **3.6. Participant Selection**

This section presents and justifies participant selection procedures. As Miles, Huberman, and Saldana (2014) argue, participant selection is critical for any research. According to Creswell (2012), in qualitative inquiry the aim for the best selection of participants is to make a deep exploration of the central phenomenon (p. 206). To be specific, participants of this research were

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chosen purposefully. Purposeful sampling is used in qualitative research because participants who are “information-rich” may help to study the topic in depth (Patton, 1990, p. 169; O’Dwyer & Bernauer, 2014). The researcher set the following criteria to purposely select the participants: teachers with collaborative professional learning experience and teachers with maximal variation of teaching experience (experienced teachers and novice teachers). Two departments were chosen because teachers of these departments have more experience on collaborations since they speak English well.

The two departments will be referred to as Department 1 and Department 2, to enhance the confidentiality of the participants. These departments were purposefully chosen because in these departments there are teachers of different ages with a range of experience in collaboration. The teachers in these departments are more involved in collaboration than other department teachers. The teachers are required to integrate their lessons with teachers of another department. Finally, teachers of these two departments have more experience of participating in different international professional development courses with world-wide collaboration opportunities. For example, teachers who studied with “Bolashak” scholarship, teachers who have certificates of CELTA courses abroad and teachers who did a master’s degree at Nazarbayev University Graduate School of Education and had extensive experience of professional collaboration and growth. The reason that teachers with international collaboration experience were sought to participate in the research was to get their comments, attitudes and opinion on world-wide collaboration. It was believed that their experience would enrich the data.

In total, nine teachers from two Departments of one NIS school, who have a range of experience in collaborative professional learning voluntarily participated in the research. Table 1 summarises data about the research participants by giving general information about their age,

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total work experience, the Departments they are in, previous workplace and international collaborative experience. This demographic information below was presented in order to give detailed information about participants.

Table 1.

Research participants' general information

| Participant code | Age | Work experience (years) | Department   | Previous work place        | Participants' international collaboration background |
|------------------|-----|-------------------------|--------------|----------------------------|--|
| Teacher 1        | 30  | 7                       | Department 1 | Private language centre    | Studied CELTA course in Oxford, England              |
| Teacher 2        | 29  | 6                       | Department 1 | Mainstream school          | Post-graduate of NUGSE                               |
| Teacher 3        | 32  | 8                       | Department 2 | State Technical University | Internship course by "Bolashak" programme (UK)       |
| Teacher 4        | 35  | 15                      | Department 1 | Private University         |  |
| Teacher 5        | 32  | 10                      | Department 1 | Private language centre    |  |
| Teacher 6        | 35  | 16                      | Department 1 | Mainstream school          | Post-graduate of "Bolashak" programme (Switzerland)  |
| Teacher 7        | 40  | 18                      | Department 1 | Mainstream school          | Post-graduate of NUGSE                               |

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|           |    |   |              |                             |                                  |
|-----------|----|---|--------------|-----------------------------|----------------------------------|
| Teacher 8 | 36 | 7 | Department 1 | Mainstream school           |                                  |
| Teacher 9 | 27 | 4 | Department 1 | No previous work experience | Studied CELTA course in Scotland |

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The rationale for selecting teachers with various teaching experience is that more experienced teachers may have had experience of working mostly in isolation during the Soviet school system. This may contrast with the experiences of less-experienced teachers who have not been socialized according to the Soviet school culture. Overall, there are four teachers with more than ten years of work experience and four teachers with more than five years of work experience and one teacher with less than 4 years working experience. Even though all teachers of the Department 2 were suggested to participate in the research, only one teacher agreed to contribute to the study.

In addition, the table includes information about previous workplace and background of international experience of participants. Previous workplace details were presented in order to compare answers of teachers who worked in mainstream schools, language centres and universities. These places were in the interest of the researcher since schools were of different types such as private and state schools.

Finally, there are two graduates of “Bolashak” programme, two Post-graduates of NUGSE and two teachers with CELTA certificates. All these teachers had opportunities to work and study in professionally collaborative environment and had experienced international collaboration, not only school or city level collaboration.

Once the principal gave access to the school as a research site, the researcher distributed the Information Sheet and Consent Form (Appendix 2) to two department teachers in order to inform them about the research and involve teachers who were willing to contribute to the study and reflect on their own attitudes, knowledge and skills on collaborative professional learning.

### **3.7. Data Collection**

This section provides information on the data collection method and explains its relevance to the overarching research question and sub-questions of the current study. This research aimed to conduct semi-structured interviews with the participants of the study since interviewing is effective in qualitative research because it studies attitudes of participants (Creswell, 2012). Creswell (2012) mentions that one-on-one interviews are an ideal process since it gives opportunities for participants to “speak and share their ideas comfortably” (p. 218). Moreover, Creswell (2012) mentions that in most cases a researcher asks open-ended questions during the semi-structured interview which allows a participant to respond and express their own opinion which is not influenced by a researcher or by participants' own past experiences. Semi-structured interviews were used because it gave opportunities to get more precise and specific answers from the participants (Creswell, 2012). In addition, semi-structured interviews allow the researcher to ask follow-up questions during the interview in order to clarify the participants' answers.

#### **3.7.1 Data Collection Instrument**

The researcher developed 15 interview questions (Appendix 3) originally in English and translated into Kazakh and Russian languages. All the interview questions were carefully constructed (Glesne, 2011). Patton (2002) states that there are various kinds of questions that may be included in the research interview. He also points out that experience/behavior questions

are the easiest questions that make interviewees feel comfortable to begin answering all other questions. Thus, participants first were asked questions related to their own experience in order to make them feel relaxed during the whole interview process and give the best answers. The participants were interviewed in the language in which they felt most confident.

Before starting the interview with the teachers, I piloted my interview questions to get recommendations for improvement and to develop my skills as a research interviewer. Glesne (2011) believes that revising and piloting questions plays an important role in the data collection process.

### **3.7.2. Data Collection Process**

After receiving ethical approval from the Graduate School of Education Ethics Committee at Nazarbayev University, I contacted the school Principal and shared the letter of invitation (Appendix 1) to the school principal with the brief description of the research. The principal confirmed his/her agreement to conduct the research in the school. Next, I disseminated information sheets (Appendix 2) within the two departments in order to recruit volunteers to participate in the study. The participants were given the information sheet and consent form (Appendix 2) where key information about the research was provided in three languages (Kazakh, Russian, English) to assist their decision about whether to participate or not. If the participant was prepared to volunteer, they were asked to sign the consent form which was provided. By signing the consent form participants agreed to their responses being recorded. Overall nine teachers demonstrated their willingness to participate in the research study.

Data collection procedures took place from December to January 2019-2020. I contacted each participant in advance to agree on a time and a day to conduct the interview. I had no more

than two interviews a day since it is crucial to think and reflect on the response of each participant (Glesne, 2011). The one hour, face-to-face interviews were audio-recorded. Glesne (2011) emphasises that one hour of steady talk is generally an appropriate time scale for the interview. The interviews took place in the research site. The researcher looked for a quiet and comfortable place in advance and agreed to it with the interview, because the location can affect the quality of answers from the participants (Glesne, 2011). Moreover, I selected the most convenient time for interview for both interviewer and interviewee since this is crucial in a busy teacher schedule.

It is important to have an interview protocol during the interview (Creswell, 2012). The researcher used an interview protocol (Appendix 4) in order to make notes on emotions of the respondents during the interview in order to not to forget the feelings the interviewee expressed while answering a particular question. I used the interview protocols to recall participants' emotions, feelings or even intonations.

### **3.8. Data Analysis**

This section gives information about data analysis methods and the role of the researcher. The data analysis process was done in three main steps: 1) transcribing the recordings, 2) coding the data, and 3) interpreting the data. The data analysis process started immediately after data collection. The aim of this analysis was to reveal teachers' attitude to and the knowledge and skills needed for collaborative professional development.

After the data was collected, all the recorded responses were transcribed manually (see for example Appendix 5) and were read several times to get the general ideas from the participants. The transcript was sent to each participant to confirm the accuracy of the transcript. All the participants confirmed the correctness of their words. Creswell (2012) emphasizes the

necessity of multiple reading of participants' responses during the data analysis in order to understand them correctly and deeply. In addition, Creswell warns that qualitative research is very "interpretive" research, therefore it is essential not to be biased during the data analysis and interpretation of the responses (p. 238). In order to prevent being biased I constantly was reflecting on the data by keeping in mind the aim of the study (Glesne, 2011).

The next step was coding, to break down the data and identify main themes related to the central phenomenon. A code can be a single word, short phrase or a symbolic sign which is "essence-capturing" in qualitative data (Saldana, 2013, p. 3). In addition, Charmaz (as cited in Saldana, 2013) describes coding as the key link between data collection and its explanation (p. 3). In this order, a coded transcript (Appendix 6) was developed with the quotes of the participants. Next, a matrix of the data was developed (Appendix 7). According to Miles et al. (2014) a matrix is created to display the data. Then, the findings of the data analysis were grouped into themes and sub-themes which are key and detailed information of the study.

### **3.9. Measures of Research Quality**

This section gives brief information on the role of the researcher and the researcher effects. Miles et al. (2014) highlights that there is always a threat of a researcher being biased towards the research. As a person who works in the research site, the researcher experienced the threat of field relation. According to Glesne (2011), a researcher needs to enter the research site which is his/her own workplace as a "clean slate" (p. 140). This may help the researcher not to convey his/her own perspectives into the research study (p. 140). Constant repetition of the aims of the study made the intentions of the researcher clear towards participants and the research site. Moreover, the strategies of Miles et al. (2014) "to keep research questions firmly in mind" every

time there is a threat of putting your own thoughts or beliefs towards the research study was frequently followed by the researcher (p. 298).

During early data analysis, discussion of the first findings with the supervisor revealed that the findings were influenced by the researchers own viewpoints. From this point, constant and clear reflection on the researcher's behaviour and thoughts was done, to identify bias (Glesne, 2011). The researcher kept in mind the aim of the research and was neutral to the participants' answers.

Finally, referring to reliability, the data collection process was made in an appropriate setting and time. In addition, data collection protocols (Appendix 4) are available for revision. Referring to credibility, the conclusions of the data collection was "considerate to be accurate by the participants' (Miles et al., 2014).

### **3.10. Ethical Issues**

This section gives information about ethical norms which were strictly followed during the research work. Glesne (2011) warns that in qualitative research ethical issues associated with relationship with participants are of great importance (p. 163). As Miles et al. (2014) argue, a researcher cannot deal with every single ethical issue, but he/she needs to try hard to "raise as much ethical consciousness as he/she can" (p. 56).

Confidentiality is an essential ethical issue to address in qualitative research. The researcher did not indicate names of the school or participants in the study. Names of the participants were substituted with numbers and the departments of each teacher were designated as Department 1 and Department 2. However, Creswell (2012) states that participants may choose whether to indicate their names or stay unknown (p. 232). In my case all participants were given this choice in advance, but all the interviewees preferred have their identity remain

anonymous. Information which was shared by the participants was used only for this research study. Date, time and a place of the interview was known only to the researcher and the interviewee in advance. This helped both participants and a researcher to feel safe.

All the research information which from the interview was not discussed or shared with anyone else, other than the research supervisor. Comments made by participants were not identifiable in any way.

### **3.10.1. Risks and Benefits for Participants**

All participants were aware about the benefits and risks that they may face during the research study. Participants experienced only minimal risk, such as loss of their time in participating in the interview. In order to tackle this issue, the researcher agreed on the time and day with the interviewees in advance, since teachers have busy schedules almost every day.

According to Creswell (2012), participants may find some questions too sensitive and avoid answering them. For this reason, I informed each participant that they were free to not to answer any or all questions and they may terminate the interview at any time if they want. Moreover, the researcher informed all participants that withdrawal from the study will not influence their professional or friendly relationship. In addition, participants were told that the researcher or anyone else would not push participants to take part in the study. Because the researcher is already known to participants, in order to prevent this risk of being biased, the researcher will constantly explore and reflect on her own subjectivity (Glesne, 2011). For example, constant reading of the research aim will prevent the research being biased.

Regarding the benefits, the participants and the school will benefit from this research study by contributing their voice about collaborative professional learning so they can be heard.

Teachers were provided an opportunity to reflect on their attitudes, knowledge and skills they possess towards collaborative professional development. This research study will contribute to knowledge about collaborative teacher professional development in Kazakhstan. The findings of this study might be helpful for policymakers, school administrators and teachers in improving teacher collaboration programmes for professional development.

### **3.10.2. Data Management**

All responses were recorded and saved on the researcher's personal computer which was protected with a password. Participants were aware in advance that their answers will be recorded and saved for five years' time. According to ethical norms, after five years of finishing the study all responses of all participants, emails, consent letter and list of participants will be deleted.

### **3.11. Conclusion**

This chapter described detailed information about methodology of the current study. Additionally, it provided justification for the choice of the research approach, research site and participant selection. Qualitative research approach was suitable to the current study, since the aim of the research was to explore attitudes and viewpoints of the participants. One NIS school in Kazakhstan was chosen to conduct the research since the researcher has access to the site and to additional documentations. The semi-structured, individual interview was conducted with the participants in order to get detailed and precise information. Careful data analysis which was done in main three steps such as transcribing the recordings, then coding the data and finally interpreting the data was done and all findings will be discussed in the Findings and Discussion.

## **Chapter 4: Findings**

### **4.1. Introduction**

This chapter presents the findings of the study investigating teachers' attitudes to and knowledge and skills needed for professional collaboration in one NIS school in Kazakhstan. The purpose of this study was to explore teachers' attitudes towards collaboration as one tool for professional development and to study whether teachers possess the knowledge and skills to work in collaborative environments. A qualitative research design was used with data collected from semi-structured, face to face interviews with nine participants to answer the overarching research question: What are the attitudes and skills needed for collaborative professional learning?

Nine teachers of one Kazakhstani NIS school with a range of teaching experience and from different age groups participated in the research, as presented in the previous chapter. The collected data was transcribed by the researcher manually and then coded. Coding helped to identify emerging themes shaped by the research sub-questions.

The findings of the study are grouped into four themes and presented with the participants' quotes as evidence. The following four findings were identified: 1) Teachers identified co-planning as their main collaborative action 2) Teachers agree on the necessity of pedagogical knowledge, content knowledge and soft skills for effective collaboration, 3) Teachers support collaboration as a tool for professional development, and 4) Teachers suggest voluntary collaboration as the ideal teacher professional collaboration. All the four findings will be presented in the rest of this chapter.

### **4.2. Co-planning as the Main Action of Collaboration**

This section describes teachers' general understanding about collaboration and presents examples of collaboration activities that participants shared. The findings are presented with participants' quotes to support the analysis.

All participants were actively involved in a range of collaborative teaching activities, giving examples of collaborative activities they are engaged in at the school. More than half of the interviewed teachers reported that teacher collaboration consists of planning lessons together in order to be able to discuss different opinions. For example, six out of nine interviewed teachers agreed that in most cases collaboration takes place as co-planning, "collaborating about what to teach, how to teach, planning, some kind of skills or something of the things that must be taught to students or could be eliminated from the teaching process". Participant 6 explained that collaboration occurs within departments through discussion of lessons and planning different lesson activities. Participant 7 summarized this by saying "this is among our teachers in department, co planning, we meet to do some lesson plans or to prepare activities for this or that event."

Summing up, most teachers identify professional collaboration as interaction for co-planning and discussion of teaching materials. They believe that the most frequent reason they meet for professional interaction is planning lessons together with colleagues.

#### **4.3. Pedagogical Knowledge, Content Knowledge and Soft Skills for Effective Teacher Interaction**

This section presents findings about the knowledge and skills that teachers perceive are necessary to have effective professional interaction with colleagues. The following sub themes were identified: a) pedagogical knowledge for teacher collaboration b) content knowledge for teacher collaboration and c) soft skills for teacher collaboration.

#### **4.3.1 Pedagogical Knowledge for Teacher Collaboration**

This section provides information about pedagogical knowledge that participants underlined as crucial for effective professional collaboration. According to participants, pedagogical knowledge of teachers helps to collaborate professionally and have efficient results. The vast majority of the participants stated that they believe that being professional in one's own teaching area is crucial for the collaboration process. Seven teachers out of nine emphasised the importance of being competent in their professional sphere and that it may lead to effective teacher collaboration among colleagues. To demonstrate, Participant 2 states: "It depends on what you are working on. For example, if you are collaborating for some workshops we of course need professional skills in that specific area. If you are for example planning a lesson all together it means you need to have professional skills on lesson planning." Similarly, Participants 4 and 6 both say that pedagogical knowledge in teaching is a key for effective collaboration of teachers, "I think the awareness of teaching methods we need to share and know how to do activities, if it is about the lesson how to critically come to one point of view for this kind of thing."

However, two other participants feel less confident about the need for possessing pedagogical knowledge for successful collaboration. The teacher of Department 2 points out that being professional in your own teaching sphere is not crucial during the collaboration. He/she commented: "for me... professional knowledge in your subject, is not helpful when you collaborate." This teacher appreciates interpersonal skills as more helpful for professional collaboration. Similarly, Participant 9 does not support the idea of needing pedagogical knowledge for better collaboration either. He/she explains that there are more chances for successful collaboration if teachers share the same teaching sphere and same direction rather

than having any pedagogical knowledge, "I don't think there are some kind[s] of pedagogical knowledge that should be mentioned, it is more like if you have the same floor or the same teaching, like path with your colleagues it is easy to collaborate."

Overall, most of the Participants highlight the importance of pedagogical knowledge for teacher collaboration. They explain that common pedagogical knowledge of teachers who interact professionally leads to effective collaboration since they share among each other their knowledge.

#### **4.3.2. Content Knowledge for Teacher Collaboration**

This section presents findings about content knowledge that teachers perceived to be necessary for effective professional collaboration. According to participants, if teachers possess knowledge in the areas that they teach, this will increase the effectiveness of the collaboration.

Almost half of the participants emphasised the importance of possessing content knowledge in order to be able to understand each other and collaborate effectively. Four participants mentioned the importance of knowledge of the subject that they teach. For example, Participant 6 said "your knowledge, teaching knowledge, first of all, if you're a teacher of English you should be educated in your subject more. I mean, you have to be an expert at that subject." Furthermore, Participant 7 explains that when he/she collaborates it is crucial that other teachers need to be at least a teacher of the same subject or a teacher of a very closely related subject "the person with whom I collaborate must be firstly a teacher in the same area as I am, it's even more profitable or more beneficial for me because we have the same understanding of the topic." Likewise, according to Participants 8 and 9, both agreed that having the same knowledge and experience in teaching is crucial during the collaboration among teachers. For example, Participant 8 says "Professional knowledge exactly we need to know our subject well

enough because when we have some points to discuss, we should know what we are discussing.”

Participant 9 states “For sure, it is like being competent in your professional teaching. What to teach how to teach for example, teaching [Subject]. Well, we're, like higher than average, because if we don't have this kind of knowledge, it will be hard to teach students. And it is easier to use terms or some kind of things instead of explaining everything what to do and how to do.”

To sum up, almost half of the participants agreed that knowledge in the subject that they teach is crucial for professional collaboration. If teachers have good content knowledge of their own teaching area this may influence useful teacher collaboration.

#### **4.3.3. Soft Skills for Teacher Collaboration**

This section provides information about soft skills that teachers believe are crucial for successful professional collaboration. Half of the interviewed teachers agreed that applying soft skills in collaboration plays a key role. Nine soft skills were identified by the participants, as listed in Table 2. The skills they identified are: being open to someone else's view, tolerance, being supportive, friendliness, communication, flexibility, team player, patience and leadership skills.

According to Table 2, participants mention the importance of different soft skills in teacher collaboration. Almost half of the participants point out that being open to new ideas, opinions and vision is important for effective collaboration where teachers come to one opinion and solve the issue that was the reason for the collaboration activity. Another important skill mentioned by participants is being tolerant/lenient/patient towards colleagues. This soft skill was mentioned as one of the key skills in collaboration. Similarly, other skills such as being a team player, flexibility, being supportive, leadership skills and communication skills were mentioned once.

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To sum up, soft skills such as being tolerant with others' views are perceived to be important for fruitful collaboration among teachers. Likewise, being a good team player, patient, and having communication skills and others are the key skills that participants mention as essential to possess during the collaboration.

Table 2.

Soft skills for an effective collaboration

| Soft skills                  | Frequency of response | Sample responses   |
|------------------------------|-----------------------|--|
| Being open to others views   | 4                     | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. I think that the most valuable thing is so called soft skills such as supporting each other and being open to someone else's view, being ready to accept that views, not necessary agreeing with that but accepting that and at the same time explaining and justifying your own thing</li> <li>2. Being open minded, I think because every person has his own vision and his own ideas on different topics</li> <li>3. ... of course, respecting the different points of views</li> <li>4. ...and of course, respecting the different points of views.</li> </ol> |
| Tolerance/ lenience/patience | 3                     | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Tolerance is the key quality in collaboration</li> <li>2. ...to be lenient on some questions because when you collaborate with three or five teachers, they all get different opinions and thoughts. So it is tolerance.</li> <li>3. There are some we need some more personal skills like patience</li> </ol>   |
| Support                      | 1                     | I think that the most valuable thing is so called soft skills such as supporting each  |
| Being friendly and positive  | 1                     | Something like friendliness, creating a positive atmosphere and so on.   |
| Being a leader               | 1                     | leadership is important skill  |

|                      |   |  |
|----------------------|---|--|
| Flexibility          | 1 | being flexible is important  |
| Communication skills | 1 | I think first of all, you have to have soft skills. I mean, communication skills. Getting well with other teachers |
| Team player          | 1 | I would say the skills are to be a good team player  |

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In conclusion, all three sub themes a) pedagogical knowledge for teacher collaboration b) content knowledge for teacher collaboration c) soft skills for teacher collaboration play by an important role in professionally growth, effectively motivating and positively influencing collaborative environment for teachers.

#### **4.4. Teacher Collaboration as a Tool for Professional Development**

This section shares information about teachers' vision of collaboration as a tool for professional growth. According to participants, collaboration activities may promote teachers' professional growth. In the interview, all participants strongly highlighted the benefit of professional collaboration and stated that it directly influences professional growth of teachers.

According to all nine teachers, collaboration is one of the key methods for teachers to improve professionally. One example was given by Participant 2 who emphasized the support of his/her colleagues who helped to improve his/her teaching methods and become more professional in his/her own work: "in my own experience I have grown professionally because of collaboration. I should say this because my colleagues help me to grow professionally because of collaborative activities." Learning from a colleague during collaboration was considered

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effective because it gives teachers opportunities to discuss, share visions, and get advice from peers. Participant 7 said: “one teacher has learned something and he wants to share it, and he can also collaborate. So, if I have something to share, I can call my colleagues and also share with this knowledge and this can be helpful for increasing knowledge”.

Participant 6 agreed that it is necessary to collaborate with colleagues in order to grow professionally. This participant states that while collaborating, teachers may overcome their own weaknesses in teaching: “So, that means that ... tips that I have heard from the collaborative meetings will be able to use in my teaching and it like finally works out very like effectively for me and I can say that I can improve some my weaknesses.” At the same time this participant suggests that collaboration needs to take place more often which will help to grow professionally: “Of course, I do find it professionally developing and I think we need more and more projects to do that.”

Finally, the attestation process of NIS teachers was mentioned as one tool for teacher professional growth. Participant 1 says that during the attestation year that takes place at a school every three and four years (depending on the teacher degree) teachers are required to collaborate to disseminate experience. This example was explained in detail by the participant in the interview. To be attested, teachers need to follow the rules of attestation related to collaboration and this rule varies for every stage. For example, to be attested as a “Teacher” a young teacher is required to collaborate at school level and share experience with all school staff. The next stage is “Teacher-Moderator” where a teacher is required to collaborate and disseminate the experience at the city level, with city schools or even regions. Participant 1 explained: “From Teacher to Teacher Moderator - something that you can share and it also shows that it is a sign of development when you have something to share. For example, Moderator at the city level, region

level and when you have the next level it's like the chain of NIS schools then finally to republic and international level." During the attestation year, teachers get the chance to collaborate professionally with colleagues at the school level by co-planning and co-teaching, in the city level and even in the country level by conducting seminars and participating in different professional development courses. As a result, this leads to professional growth of the teacher like raising in teacher rank.

To conclude, participants see the advantages of professional collaboration and agree that these advantages help teachers to grow as a teacher and learn new things related to their professions. Moreover, they believe that frequent collaboration among colleagues on different teaching related topics will give them opportunities to improve their weak points. Finally, school attestation process which is common for all NIS schools also provides good opportunities for professional collaboration which consequently leads to professional improvement.

#### **4.5. Voluntary Teacher Interaction as the Ideal Teacher Professional Collaboration**

This section provides information shared by participants about voluntary or mandatory collaboration. According to participants, voluntary teacher collaboration is more likely to promote teacher professional growth.

Participants were asked whether they are forced to collaborate with their colleagues or whether it happens by teachers' own choice. Six out of nine teachers stated that collaboration takes place as voluntary activities in their school. In almost all cases they are not compelled to collaborate and what is more, it takes place once they feel there is a necessity for it or they want to interact with their colleagues. Participant 2 said: "I think because sometimes it is my initiative to collaborate with teachers." Another participant claims: "I voluntarily collaborate with teachers, if I have any problems or any issue I discuss with my colleagues, I think that is very

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useful and I'm not forced to collaborate" (Participant 3). Similarly, Participant 5 emphasises that collaboration happens for advice and when he/she is willing to interact with other teachers because he/she sees the advantage of it as well: "I don't think this is sort of mandatory or compulsory. I think it is voluntary and I always willingly go for collaboration. Whenever a teacher asks me or whenever I need help, I'm emerging teacher." It was also mentioned by Participant 7 that collaboration happens in the school because it is a usual habit now and nobody is forced to do so: "I think we do it on our own will...it's just the culture of our school". One more teacher who agrees that collaboration is something that happens because it is perceived as valuable to the professional development of the individual is Participant 9: "Actually, we're not required by our school. We are doing it for ourselves because it's really helpful and efficient of course."

However, two participants state that collaboration takes place in the school in both forms, as voluntary action and mandatory action. Participant 4 stated: "Mostly, I think that we are required to do by our administration, but also I think that we sometimes choose ourselves to voluntarily collaborate with others." Participant 8 also accepts that collaboration is voluntary as well as mandatory. He/she explains that when it takes place because of the teacher's own wish it is more helpful but when teachers are forced to collaborate they even cannot share appropriate time for it, Participant 8 said: "It might be 50/50. When it is about my teaching ...it is voluntary because I know my weak points. The main problem is that both of us are forced to take part in this project and both of us do not have enough time to collaborate in this field."

Nevertheless, Participant 1 emphasised that it is mandatory to collaborate with colleagues at school: "frankly speaking, in many cases I am required to do so...take an example of Lesson

Study that was one of the requirements for undergoing the attestation process. So, mostly it is not my initiative but something that we are required to do.”

The culture of collaboration at school is less mandatory now, which gives opportunities to teachers for collaboration. Participants state that they have a clear vision about the aims of collaboration which is in most cases joint planning of lessons. More than half of participants say that now they have chances to create opportunities for collaboration without force from school administration.

More than half of the participants agreed that the collaboration usually takes place as a voluntary action among teachers and that they are willing to participate in them. Furthermore, two participants stated that professional collaboration of teachers may take place equally in both cases, when it is voluntary or mandatory. Nevertheless, teachers support voluntary collaboration as more effective rather than when it happens by pushing. Only one participant stated that teachers collaborate because they are required to do so in order to undergo the school attestation.

#### **4.6. Conclusion**

This chapter presented the findings of the study which were revealed in the process of interview analysis. The first part introduced co-planning as a general understanding on teacher professional collaboration of teachers in one NIS school in Kazakhstan. Next, it presented findings on the necessity of pedagogical knowledge, content knowledge and soft skills for effective teacher interaction. The third part discussed teachers' vision of collaboration as a tool for professional development. Finally, it shared teachers' view of voluntary interaction for ideal teacher professional collaboration. The findings will be further explored and discussed in the next chapter.

## **Chapter 5: Discussion**

### **5.1. Introduction**

The previous chapter presented four main findings grouped into four themes 1) Teachers identified co-planning as their main collaborative action, 2) Teachers agree on the necessity of pedagogical knowledge, content knowledge and soft skills for effective collaboration, 3) Teachers support collaboration as a tool for professional development, and 4) Teachers suggest voluntary collaboration as the ideal teacher professional collaboration. These were revealed during the data analysis of the current study which explored teachers' attitudes towards collaborative professional development. This chapter discusses the findings and relates them to the literature reviewed in Chapter Two and the research questions. This chapter presents the discussion in four parts 1) Teacher collaboration for professional development 2) Teachers' knowledge and skills for professional collaboration 3) Voluntary teacher collaboration for professional development 4) revisiting research questions and their relation with the findings.

### **5.2. Teacher Collaboration for Professional Development**

This sub-section discusses findings on teachers' attitudes to collaboration as one tool of professional growth and links these findings with the reviewed literature. The data was collected during the semi-structured interviews revealed that, all participants were aware of benefits of collaboration towards professional growth and they believed that it is the key tool to improve professionally. In this regard, Shah (2012) states that teacher collaboration is more likely to provide opportunities for teachers' professional development and it promotes an increase in their knowledge. Most of the participants mention that learning from a colleague during collaboration was considered effective because it gives teachers opportunities to discuss, share visions, and get advice from peers. This is similar with the findings of Kaplan et al. (2015) who identified that

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when teachers work in deep collaboration with each other, they are more likely to reflect on own teaching practice. Consequently, teachers learn from peers and are more involved in collaborative problem solving.

Participants of this study stated that collaboration may help teachers to overcome their own weaknesses in teaching because there is support from colleagues. This aligns with Forte and Flores (2014) who point out that support during the collaboration provides considerable opportunity for teachers to discuss problems, overcome the difficulties, failures and allow them to deal with personal insecurity. In this regard, participants suggested that more collaboration will promote chances for professional development and that teacher professional collaboration needs to take place constantly in order to provide teachers with continuous learning and growth. This coincided with Mishra and Koehler (2006), Lumpe (2007) and Kafyulilo (2014) who believe that the effectiveness of teacher collaboration increases if there is continuous learning of teachers through collaboration. They state that all knowledge that teachers gain during the collaboration is more likely to be effectively implemented in teaching practice.

Most of the responses of participants on teacher professional collaboration coincided with Kafyulilo (2014) who studied professional development through teacher collaboration. Kafyulilo (2014) states that collaboration is a process where teachers keep in mind their roles, their teaching practice “improve lessons, teaching materials and interaction with students” (p. 673). Similarly, Lumpe (2007) agrees on benefits of collaboration towards professional development and points out that teachers who are engaged in collaboration with colleagues are more likely to be critical towards own professional development and able to effectively implement knowledge from collaboration into own teaching practice.

Summing up, this study revealed that collaboration is considered as one of the key way

for professional growth of teachers. This aligned with reviewed studies on teacher professional collaboration which identify advantages of collaboration that consequently lead to professional growth of teachers. Participants of the study identified collaboration as one of the crucial tool for teachers to grow professionally by increasing own knowledge and teaching practice. Especially, the study by Kafyulilo (2014) stated very similar findings on teacher collaborative professional development. This study mentions teacher collaboration as an essential element in teacher professional improvement since teachers need to grow constantly.

### **5.3. Teachers' Knowledge and Skills for Professional Collaboration**

This sub-section discusses knowledge and skills that are necessary for teachers while collaborating. According to my findings teachers need to possess content knowledge and soft skills in order to collaborate professionally with colleagues, because content knowledge is helpful for teachers who teach the same subject and skills are essential for communication with other colleagues. Participants mentioned the special importance of content and soft skills as crucial during collaborative professional development.

#### **5.3.1. Content Knowledge**

Almost half of the participants emphasized the importance of content knowledge in professional collaboration with colleagues, especially when collaborating with teachers of the same grade and level. Participants valued having similar fields of knowledge and experience in to have common understandings. Ball (1996), agrees that collaboration of teachers who teach the same grade or the same subject are more likely to develop common understanding of methods, issues and solutions. In this regard, Roger and Babinski (as cited in Sawyer & Rimm-Kaufman, 2007) notes that when teachers collaborate they prefer to work with teachers who are in the same level since they have a chance to discuss common objectives, teaching materials and

methodology. Furthermore, participants explain that teachers need to be at least a teacher of the same subject or a teacher of a very closely related subject. This was aligned with Birman et al. (2000) who support that professional development courses that include collective participation of teachers who work in one department, in the same grade or teach the same subject is more likely to make teachers involved in the collaboration process. In addition, it provides more chances for teachers to relate their other experiences with the professional development course they are participating in.

Participants pointed out that during the collaboration they need to have a teacher who knows what to discuss and be more than aware of the subject they teach in because this leads to successful professional collaboration. Birman et al. (2000) also point out an advantage of focusing on content knowledge during professional collaboration and say that it leads to “specific subject area or a subject specific teaching methods” and helps to avoid general teaching methods (p. 30).

Overall, teachers with the same knowledge in the area they teach are more likely to succeed in professional interaction. Content knowledge plays key role while teacher collaboration, since it helps to effective teacher collaboration take place and increase teachers' subject-specific knowledge.

### **5.3.2. Skills for Collaboration**

This sub-section provides brief discussion of the skills that were identified by participants of this study. All participants mentioned soft skills that are crucial during the teacher collaboration process. In this regard, Peterson (1994) agrees that it is crucial for each teacher to possess skills in order to collaborate with other colleagues. Almost half of the participants identified that being open to new ideas, opinions and vision may produce effective collaboration.

This aligned with Friend (2000) who identified that even simple collaboration among teachers requires basic communication skills. In this regard, professional collaboration requires from teachers to possess soft skills and communication skills to be effective. McCormick et al. (2001) support Friend (2000) and state that for collaboration it is crucial for teachers to have special training and learn skills on interaction with other adults.

In addition, participants explain that each teacher needs to have at least one of the following skills such as patience, being a team player, being flexible, being supportive, leadership skills and communication skills. One participant emphasized the importance of having communication skills during the collaboration and explained that it helps to get on well with other teachers. Similarly, Maeroff (as cited in Peterson, 1994) agrees that teachers need to possess skills to collaborate with colleagues. For example, a teacher needs to have effective communication skills and needs to possess “problem-solving, planning, and decision-making strategies” (p. 16).

The importance of skills for teacher professional collaboration was mentioned in the study of McManus and Kauffman (1991). They identified that teachers who do not have appropriate skills for collaboration would rarely have successful interaction with peers. McManus and Kauffman (1991) agree that communication skills such as being friendly and being open to new ideas are key skills in professional collaboration with adults. Teachers can be very professional in their own teaching area but this advantage may totally fail if there is a lack of collaboration skills (Gersten et al., 1991).

Summing up, these findings underline the importance of skills when teachers collaborate since it provides successful teacher interaction. Similarly, reviewed studies mention that teachers who possess skills are tend to have effective and useful collaboration with colleagues.

#### **5.4. Voluntary Teacher Collaboration**

According to my findings, most of the participants of the study stated that collaboration takes place as voluntary activities in their school. Participants explain that when it is voluntary there are more advantages for professional learning since teachers have their own willingness and interest in the collaboration process. Wlodkowski (2003), points out that teachers' interest and involvement in professional collaboration is enhanced more when they feel the relevance to the topic of collaboration and see a shared vision and values. Teachers' positive attitudes towards collaboration increases if there is an interest and own initiative to continue professional learning.

However, in this study, participants stated that collaboration takes place in the school in both forms, as voluntary action and mandatory action. In this regard, Friend (2000) supports voluntary collaboration and claims that collaboration needs to happen not because it is mandated but it arises because teachers themselves demonstrate own interests to participate in collaboration. Friend (2000) underlines that when teachers understand the benefits of voluntary collaboration they are more confident about their skills and knowledge for professional collaboration.

Summing up, according to the findings of this study, collaboration takes place in two forms (voluntary and mandatory) in the school. However, most of the participants mentioned that they participate in the collaboration with colleagues because they see the advantages of it. They pointed out that collaboration happens because they have their own interest and in most cases, it is voluntary action. Finally, voluntary teacher collaboration was explained as ideal collaboration form by the study of Baumi (2016) who strongly supported that teachers need to have their own willingness to participate in any collaboration with colleagues. It is crucial for teachers to have own reasons and purposes in participation in teacher collaboration.

### **5.5. Revisiting Research Questions**

The findings of the studied are linked directly to the guiding questions of the study in the section below.

### **5.5.1. What are the attitudes, knowledge and skills needed for collaborative professional learning?**

Overall, participants of the study expressed positive attitudes towards collaborative professional development. The vast majority of the participants highlighted the importance of collaboration in teachers' professional growth. Participants mentioned that collaborative environment are more supportive for professional development of teachers since they are provided opportunities for mutual learning. They stated that while collaboration teachers have chance to share their opinion on various issues, discuss common problems, analyse and reflect on own teaching practice and collaboratively participate in problem solving process. This in its turn may be concluded that teachers of one NIS school in Kazakhstan believe that professional collaboration of teachers consequently tend to lead to professional growth.

Regarding the skills that are necessary for professional collaboration are soft skills and communication skills that were mostly mentioned by participants. All participants underlined the significance of skills for collaboration among colleagues. All participants mentioned various skills for teachers to have in order to collaborate professionally. They highlighted being open to new ideas, being tolerant, being a leader, being friendly and positive are crucial for teachers to possess in order to have effective collaboration. Therefore, it can be concluded that for teachers of this NIS school having soft skills and communication skills is key while professional collaboration with colleagues.

Regarding the knowledge that play one of the crucial roles in collaboration, participants underlined content knowledge. Participants believe that teachers need to be informed about the

content of collaboration since it affects on the interest and involvement of all teachers into the collaboration process. In other words, it is necessary for teachers to have common understanding on the topic of collaboration and being able to share it.

To conclude, teachers of this NIS school have positive attitudes towards teacher collaboration by explaining that it is one of the effective tools for professional growth. Similarly, they highlight the importance of possessing soft skills in order to focus on effective collaboration process.

#### **5.5.2. How do teachers understand collaborative learning?**

Generally, teachers understand collaboration as participating in planning lessons with other colleagues together. Participants stated that they collaborate with other colleagues in order to plan lessons and discuss the lesson materials. They explained this by saying that during the joint lesson planning teachers have opportunities to share their own experience and ask for advice from peers. Consequently, this may be concluded that teachers of this NIS school understand co-planning as one of the main ways of collaboration and that it can be useful way of collaborative learning.

#### **5.5.3. What is the attitude of teachers towards participation in collaborative professional development?**

Overall, all participants expressed positive attitudes towards participating in collaborative professional learning. Participants underlined the importance of collaboration among colleagues in professional growth. They stated that professional collaboration is one of the ways that gives to teachers to express opinions on different issues, assess own abilities, analyse own practice and reflect on it. As a result, participants mentioned that during the collaboration teachers increase

their knowledge professionally and helps to establish friendly relationships with the colleagues.

#### **5.5.4. What skills and knowledge do teachers have or need to develop to engage in collaborative professional development?**

Generally, participants of the study underlined the significance of teachers to have skills and knowledge in order to be engaged in collaboration. Participants mentioned content knowledge and pedagogical knowledge as crucial elements of the professional teacher collaboration. Participants demonstrated that while collaboration it is important to possess pedagogical knowledge since it helps to understand each other while discussion of teaching methods and lesson activities. Teachers added that it is not necessary to be an expert in teaching, however having basic knowledge in pedagogy is tend to lead to more effective and useful collaboration.

Regarding to content knowledge, participants underlined that content knowledge play crucial role while collaboration since all teachers need to have shared knowledge on the topic of collaboration. According to the findings of this study, it is more helpful if teachers teach the same subject and the same grade. This in its turn make collaboration interesting, useful for all teachers and effective for professional development.

To conclude, it was revealed that teachers need to have content knowledge and pedagogical knowledge in order to collaborate with colleagues at the same level and be able to contribute to the collaboration and share own best practice.

#### **5.5.5. What would enhance teacher participation in collaborative professional development.**

Overall, all participants emphasised voluntary participation in collaboration as one of the ways to make teachers more engaged in collaboration. All participants highlighted own choice of

teachers to be engaged in collaboration as key factor to enhance teachers' participation in collaboration. Participants stated that it is crucial for teachers to demonstrate their own willingness to take part in collaboration since it influences the effectiveness of collaboration process.

According to the findings of the study, in case if teachers are pressed by school administration to participate in collaboration this may decrease the effectiveness of collaboration. Participants explained it that when teachers are required to collaborate they do not feel any responsibility for their own development and even they do not feel their relevance to the collaboration process.

As a result, this may be concluded that one way to enhance teachers' participation in professional collaboration is to give teachers the choice to participate and make collaboration voluntary action because this may lead to make more teachers to be interested in collaborative professional development.

## **5.6. Conclusion**

This chapter discussed the most important findings which are related to teacher professional collaboration. This chapter provided the discussion of the link between the main findings with scholarly literature revision and with the research questions.

Firstly, during the comparison of participants' attitudes towards professional teacher collaboration it was a full alignment with the literature that studied the same question. It was revealed that participants of the study strongly believe that teacher collaboration can be one of the effective tools in professional growth of teachers. Numerous researchers underlined the benefits of collaboration in teachers' professional improvement as well.

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Secondly, the synthesis of participants' responses revealed that teachers need to have soft skills in order to collaborate effectively with each other. In most cases, being open to new ideas was mentioned by vast majority of participants. The rest of participants were mentioning being friendly and communication skills as crucial skills while collaboration. The comparison of these findings with the literature showed that it is essential for teachers to possess skills in order to collaborate with other teachers. However, the literature presented various skills as key for successful teacher collaboration.

Participants mentioned the significance of having common content knowledge among teachers while collaboration process. They stated that teachers need to be at the same level with the same knowledge of their own teaching area in order to have useful and effective collaboration. The analysis of the literature pointed out that it is crucial for teachers to possess content knowledge since the main focus of collaboration is usually in shared knowledge and vision.

Thirdly, the comparison of this study findings and reviewed literature revealed that voluntary participation of teachers in collaboration is more likely to lead for professional growth. Most of the participants stated that they voluntarily take part in the collaboration process at school and added that it is more useful and effective. This was also supported by the synthesis of scholarly literature which studied the same question and emphasized that when teachers show their own interest in collaboration they feel more confident and responsible towards the professional development.

Overall, it may be concluded that teachers need to possess soft skills and content knowledge and participate in collaboration on their own choice in order to gain benefits of professional collaboration.

## **Chapter 6: Conclusions and Recommendations**

### **6.1. Introduction**

The previous chapter provided discussion of the main findings of this study and related them with the synthesis of scholarly literature and with the research questions. This chapter will suggest recommendations for education stakeholders, present implications for further research and summarise the contribution and limitations of this study. This study aimed to explore attitudes of teachers in one NIS school towards collaborative professional development. In order to achieve this aim, the main research question and sub-questions were addressed: 1) What are the attitudes, knowledge and skills needed for collaborative professional learning? (a) How do teachers understand collaborative learning? (b) What is the attitude of teachers towards participation in collaborative professional development? (c) What skills and knowledge do teachers have or need to develop to engage in collaborative professional development? (d) What would enhance teacher participation in collaborative professional development?

This chapter consists of three parts. The first part presents recommendations for policy-makers, school administrators, and teachers and presents implications for further research. The second part presents the limitations and contributions of this study. The third part summarises the whole thesis.

### **6.2. Recommendations**

This section presents some recommendations that were revealed from the conclusions of this study. In addition, this section includes some implications for further research regarding teachers' attitudes towards collaborative professional development.

#### **6.2.1. Recommendations for Policy-makers**

The main recommendation for policy-makers is that each educational institution needs to clearly

define what they mean by collaborative professional development taking into account conditions for collaboration and demands of the educational programmes. It is important to consider teachers' knowledge and skills teachers have when organizing a collaborative professional programme for teachers' development. This recommendation is consistent with recommendations by McCormick et al. (2001).

Moreover, it is recommended for policy-makers engage teachers in the organization of collaborative professional learning. Teachers' voices should be included by conducting a survey or questionnaire to learn about working conditions of teachers in schools because teachers are those who participate in this collaboration and professionally grow.

### **6.2.2. Recommendations for School Administrators**

The main recommendation for school administrators is to encourage more teachers to participate in collaborative professional learning activities. However, school administrators should understand that participation of teachers needs to be voluntary. In this regard, it is suggested for school administrators to carefully organize informative seminars that will explain teachers about benefits of collaboration on their own teaching practice. Moreover, teachers need to understand the effectiveness of collaboration towards professional development. In order to achieve this, it is suggested for school administrators to conduct special informative trainings explaining advantages of collaborative professional learning to teachers.

Finally, it is recommended for school administrators to support teachers with special training and courses that develop the skills and knowledge that are necessary for effective collaboration. This recommendation goes in line with what was suggested by Friend (2000).

### **6.2.3. Recommendation for Teachers**

The main recommendation for teachers is to enhance their knowledge about different forms of teacher collaboration. In other words, teachers need to learn and study about a variety of forms of collaboration. In addition, it is suggested for teachers to learn different other types of collaboration not only co-planning and use their advantages for own professional development. Using various ways of collaboration may encourage more teachers to be engaged in collaborative professional learning.

### **6.3. Limitations of the Study**

This section presents the information about limitations of the current study. Firstly, this study explored the attitudes of teachers who work in one school in Kazakhstan. Moreover, there were only nine teachers who participated in the research. Thus, this sampling cannot represent the opinion of the whole school. In this regard, the results cannot be generalized to other schools in the country. In addition, the study was conducted in one NIS school in Kazakhstan, so the results of the study cannot be generalized to other mainstream schools of the country.

Secondly, this study was conducted by the person who works in the research site and a part of NIS system. Therefore, the personal opinion and threat of being biased might have affect the results of the research. However, the researcher took measures on the research quality by considering credibility, transferability and validity.

### **6.4. Recommendations for Further Research**

This study explored collaborative professional development from teachers' perspective of one NIS school. The recommendation for further research in collaborative professional learning is to study perspectives of teachers of mainstream schools. Since teachers of mainstream schools have different working conditions, it is probable that they will have different understandings of collaborative professional learning.

Next, it is recommended to explore perspectives of school administrators as they play a key role in organization of collaboration activities in schools. Moreover, to gain all benefits from collaborative professional learning, it is suggested for further research to explore perspectives of policy-makers as they develop collaborative professional learning programmes for teachers. Furthermore, it is recommended to explore students' perspective on teachers' collaboration and know what benefits do they see in the lessons where teachers are more engaged in collaboration and what challenges do they see in the lessons where teachers work in isolation. In addition, it is suggested to enlarge the research area and study attitudes of all department teachers within the school. Finally, it is strongly recommended to compare attitudes of teachers from different educational institutions such as mainstream schools, private schools and NIS schools with different research approach and data collection tools.

### **6.5. Contribution of My Study**

The result of this study will benefit stakeholders who are responsible for teachers' professional development in educational institutions. Policy-makers will have chance to get the data that reflects Kazakhstani context on teachers attitudes towards collaborative professional growth. This data presents a real picture of teacher collaboration for professional development that takes place in one NIS school in Kazakhstan. In addition, this research studied teachers' perspective on collaborative professional development and its findings can be beneficial in reconsidering the content and conditions of collaborative professional development programmes. Moreover, this research study will contribute to the literature about collaborative teacher professional development in Kazakhstani context.

Regarding the school administrators, this study may help to enhance their knowledge on collaborative professional development of teachers and develop strategies on engaging more

voluntary participation of teachers in collaboration.

### **6.6. Summary of Whole Thesis**

This research study explores teachers' attitudes towards collaborative professional development in one NIS school in Kazakhstan. It investigated teachers' skills and knowledge necessary for collaboration. This study has qualitative research approach with semi-structured interview of nine teachers which was conducted in order to answer the main research question: What are the attitudes and skills needed for collaborative professional learning? The central research question was approached through the sub-questions (a) How do teachers understand collaborative learning? (b) What is the attitude of teachers towards participation in collaborative professional development? (c) What skills and knowledge do teachers have or need to develop to engage in collaborative professional development? (d) What would enhance teacher participation in collaborative professional development?

Regarding the main research question, the findings of the study revealed that teachers overall have positive attitudes towards collaborative professional learning since they find it one of the effective ways to grow professionally. Participants highlighted the opportunities to learn from colleagues, share own experience and be able to increase teaching experience.

Regarding to the first sub-question, participants of the study mentioned co-planning as the main type of collaboration that takes place in the school. All participants stated that joint lesson planning takes place in the school in order to collaborate with other peers and learn from each other. However, this showed that teachers need to enhance their own knowledge on collaboration in order to collaborate for other reasons as well.

Regarding to the second sub-question, participants of the study underlined the significance of the collaboration in their professional development. They explained that while collaboration they are provided opportunities to learn from colleagues, analyse own teaching

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practice and reflect on own strengths and weaknesses which is consequently more likely to lead to effective professional growth of teachers.

Referring to the third sub-question, participants of the study stated that teachers need to possess skills and knowledge in order to collaborate with colleagues. All participants mentioned soft skills such as being tolerant and open to others' ideas, being friendly and positive, communication skills as crucial to have while the collaboration. In addition, participants mentioned content knowledge and pedagogical knowledge of teachers as key factors in professional collaboration. They pointed out that collaboration with teachers who teach in the same grade or level and are aware of the teaching methods and at least possess basic knowledge of specific teaching area are important while collaboration.

Referring to the fourth sub-question, participants of the study all highlighted voluntary participation in collaboration as ideal collaboration for professional learning. All participants believe that it is essential for teachers to express own willingness and interest in participation in collaboration. This in its turn may lead to effective professional learning through collaboration since teachers understand own relevance and responsibility while collaboration.

The study concluded by making recommendations for policy-makers to take into account different conditions of schools and identify definition of collaboration. In addition, policy-makers were suggested while organization of collaborative professional development programmes to take into consideration skills and knowledge that are necessary for teachers for collaboration.

Next, school administrators are recommended to increase voluntary participation of teachers in collaboration and explain to more teachers about the benefits of collaborative professional learning. Moreover, teachers were recommended to enhance knowledge on collaboration and use various forms of collaboration in order to increase own teaching practice.

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Finally, this research recommended for further research to study attitudes of teachers of mainstream schools since they may give totally new insights on the collaborative professional development.

To conclude, teachers understand the importance of collaboration for professional growth. They underline that during the collaboration they have opportunities to learn from colleagues, reflect on own teaching practice, share ideas and get to know new methods and approaches in teaching. Similarly, teachers believe that voluntary collaboration is more effective since it promotes teachers to feel that they are essential part of the collaborative practice and become responsible towards own professional growth. Finally, it was revealed that teachers need to have knowledge such as content and pedagogical, skills such as communication and soft skills in order to benefit from collaborative professional learning.

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## **Appendices**

### **Appendix 1**

#### **Letter of Invitation to School Principals (English version)**

Dear Pricncipal,

My name is Saltanat Abdazimkyzy and I am a Master Student in Educational Leadership: School Leadership 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’ Attitudes, Knowledge and Skills for Collaborative Professional Development”.

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 explore attitudes, knowledge and skills of teachers on collaborative professional learning in one NIS school in Kazakhstan.

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

The findings of the present study will contribute to the development of two spheres, they are the field of educational research in Kazakhstan and improving teacher’s professional skills and knowledge on collaborative learning. First, the findings of the present study are expected to fill the existing gap in Kazakhstani educational research in terms of teacher collaboration and its influence on professional development. Second, the findings of the current study will inform the school administration, teachers and other educators involved in teaching and learning process about teachers’ attitudes towards and skills, knowledge for collaborative professional learning.

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

Approximately 7-10 teachers will be asked to participate in a research interview which includes questions about their experiences in collaborative learning. The findings of this research study will be used in my master’s study. The interview is confidential. No information that can somehow identify teachers, such as their names or the name of your school, will be recorded.

I kindly ask you to provide access to the email of your school teachers to forward Informative Consent Letter.

All information collected will be treated in strictest confidence and neither the school nor individual teachers will be identifiable in any reports that are written. Participants may withdraw

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from the study at any time. 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 Consent Form and interview questions.

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, email: [elaine.sharplin@nu.edu.kz](mailto:elaine.sharplin@nu.edu.kz))

**Consent**

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

Best regards,

Saltanat Abdazimkyzy

Email: [saltanat.abdazimkyzy@nu.edu.kz](mailto:saltanat.abdazimkyzy@nu.edu.kz)

Telephone number: +77017117760

### **Мектеп директорларына зерттеуге шақыру хат (Kazakh version)**

Құрметті мектеп директоры

Менің аты-жөнім Абдазимқызы Салтанат мен Назарбаев Университетінде Білім берудегі көшбасшылық бағдарламасында магистратура оқимын. Мен профессордың жетекшілігімен білім беру саласында зерттеу жүргіземін, Элейн Шарплин – Назарбаев Университеті Жоғары Білім Беру Мектебінің профессоры. Менің диссертациямның тақырыбы: «Мұғалімдердің өзара ынтымақтасу арқылы кәсіби дамуға деген көзқарасы, білімі және қажетті дағдылары».

Назарбаев Университетінің Жоғары Білім Беру Мектебі ғылыми-зерттеу комитеті менің зерттеу жұмысым үшін мектеппен байланысқа шығуға келісім берді. Осы хатта олардың мақұлдау көшірмесі бар. Сізді осы зерттеуге қатысуға шақырамын. Бұл зерттеу НУ ЖББМ зерттеу комитетінің этикалық талаптарына сәйкес келеді.

#### **Зерттеу жұмысының мақсаты**

Бұл зерттеудің мақсаты-Қазақстандағы бір Назарбаев Зияткерлік мектебінде бірлескен кәсіптік оқыту бойынша мұғалімдердің көзқарасы, білімі мен дағдыларын зерттеу.

#### **Зерттеу жұмысының маңыздылығы**

Осы зерттеу нәтижелері екі саланың дамуына ықпал етеді, олар Қазақстандағы білім беру саласындағы зерттеулер мен мұғалімдердің өзара ынтымақтасу арқылы кәсіби даму туралы көзқарасы мен қажетті дағдыларының жақсаруы. Біріншіден, осы зерттеу нәтижелері Қазақстанның білім беру саласындағы кәсіби даму бойынша мұғалімдердің көзқарасы, білімі мен дағдылары мәселесіне қатысты ғылыми әдебиет қорын толықтырады. Екіншіден, осы зерттеудің нәтижелері мектеп әкімшілігіне, мұғалімдерге және тәрбиешілерге мұғалімдердің өзара ынтымақтасу арқылы кәсіби дамуы туралы ақпарат береді.

#### **Зерттеу әдістемесі**

Шамамен 7-10 мұғалім өзара ынтымақтасу арқылы кәсіби даму тәжірибелері туралы сұрақтардан тұратын зерттеу сұхбатына қатысады. Осы зерттеу жұмысының нәтижелері менің магистрлік диссертациямда пайдаланылады. Мұғалімдердің жеке басын анықтайтын қандай да бір ақпарат, мысалы, аты-жөні немесе мектептің аты жазылмайды.

Зерттеудің ақпараттық хатын жіберу мақсатында сізден мұғалімдердің электрондық поштасына қол жетімділік беруіңізді сұраймын.

Жиналған барлық ақпарат қатаң түрде сақталады және мектеп те, жеке мұғалім де қандай-да бір есептерде анықталмайды.

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Қатысушылар кез келген уақытта зерттеуден бас тарта алады. Мектептің рөлі ерікті, сондықтан мектеп директоры кез келген уақытта мектептің қатысуын тоқтату туралы шешім қабылдауға ерікті.

Сіздің ақпаратыңызға келісім нысаны мен сұхбат сұрақтарының көшірмелері қоса беріледі.

Осы ақпаратты оқуға уақыт бөлгеніңіз үшін рахмет. Егер сіз осы зерттеудің кез-келген аспектісі туралы көбірек ақпарат алғыңыз келсе, төмендегі мәліметтер бойынша маған немесе менің жетекшіме хабарласыңыз {Элейн Шарплин, электрондық пошта: [elaine.sharplin@nu.edu.kz](mailto:elaine.sharplin@nu.edu.kz).

**Келісім**

Сіздің мектебіңізде зерттеу жүргізуге маған жазбаша мақұлдауыңызды ұсынатын электрондық хат жіберуіңізді өтінемін.

Құрметпен,

Абдазимқызы Салтанат

[saltanat.abdazimkyzy@nu.edu.kz](mailto:saltanat.abdazimkyzy@nu.edu.kz)

+77017117760

### **Письмо-приглашение для директоров школ (Russian version)**

Уважаемый Директор школы

Меня зовут Абдазимкызы Салатант я учусь в магистратуре в Назарбаев Университете по программе Лидерство в Образовании. Я провожу исследование в области образования под руководством Элейн Шарплин – профессор Высшей Школы Образования Назарбаев Университета. Тема моей исследовательской работы: “Отношение учителей, навыки и их знания об профессиональном развитии через колаборацию.

Исследовательский комитет Высшей Школы Образования Назарбаев Университета дал согласие на обращение в школы для моего исследования. Копия их одобрения содержится в этом письме. Я приглашаю вас принять участие в этом исследовании. Данное исследование будет соответствовать требованиям комитета по этике исследований Высшей Школы Образования.

#### **Цель исследования**

Целью данного исследования является изучение отношений, знаний и навыков учителей по совместному профессиональному обучению в одной школе НИШ в Казахстане.

#### **Значимость данного исследования**

Результаты настоящего исследования будут способствовать развитию двух сфер: 1. областью исследований в области образования в Казахстане и 2. Улучшение профессиональных навыков и знании учителя в области совместного обучения.

Во-первых, ожидается, что результаты настоящего исследования восполнят существующий пробел в казахстанских исследованиях в области образования с точки зрения сотрудничества учителей и его влияния на профессиональное развитие. Во-вторых, результаты текущего исследования проинформируют администрацию школы, учителей и других педагогов, вовлеченных в процесс преподавания и обучения, об отношении учителей и навыках, знаниях для совместного профессионального обучения.

#### **Методика исследования**

Приблизительно 7-10 учителей примут участие в исследовательском интервью, которое включает вопросы об их опыте совместного обучения. Результаты этого исследования будут использованы в моей магистерской работе. Интервью конфиденциально. Никакая информация, которая может каким-либо образом идентифицировать учителей, такие как их имена или название вашей школы, не будет записана.

Я прошу вас предоставить доступ к электронной почте ваших школьных учителей для пересылки Информационного письма о согласии.

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Вся собранная информация будет обрабатываться в строжайшем секрете, и ни школа, ни отдельные учителя не будут идентифицированы в любых письменных отчетах. Участники могут отказаться от исследования в любое время. Роль школы является добровольной, и директор школы может принять решение прекратить участие школы в любое время.

К вашему сведению прилагаются копии формы согласия и вопросы для интервью.

Спасибо, что нашли время, чтобы прочитать эту информацию. Если вам нужна дополнительная информация о каком-либо аспекте этого исследования, пожалуйста, свяжитесь со мной по приведенным ниже деталям или с моим руководителем (Элейн Шарплин, электронная почта: [elaine.sharplin@nu.edu.kz](mailto:elaine.sharplin@nu.edu.kz))

### **Согласие**

Пожалуйста, предоставьте электронное письмо с вашим письменным согласием на проведение обучения в вашей школе.

С уважением,

Салтанат Абдазимкызы

Электронная почта: [saltanat.abdazimkyzy@nu.edu.kz](mailto:saltanat.abdazimkyzy@nu.edu.kz)

Номер телефона: +77017117760

## **Appendix 2**

### **Informed Consent Letter (English version)**

#### **TITLE OF STUDY**

Teachers' Attitudes, Knowledge and Skills for Collaborative Professional Development

#### **PURPOSE OF THE STUDY**

The purpose of this study is to explore attitudes, knowledge and skills of teachers on collaborative professional learning in one NIS school in Kazakhstan.

#### **STUDY PROCEDURES**

The research participants will be teachers who have a range of experience in collaborative professional learning. They will take part in a research interview. The interview will take approximately an hour for each participant. You will be contacted in advance to agree on a time and place for the interview.

#### **RISKS**

As a participant, you are likely to experience only minimal risk, such as loss of your time in participating in the interview. You may choose not to answer any or all questions and you may terminate the interview at any time if you want.

#### **BENEFITS**

The participants and the school will benefit from this research study. Teachers will be provided an opportunity to reflect on their attitudes, perceptions, knowledge and skills they possess towards collaborative professional development. This research study will contribute to knowledge about collaborative teacher professional development in Kazakhstan. In addition, teachers will contribute their voice in collaborative professional learning so they can be heard. The findings of this study might be helpful for policymakers in improving teacher collaboration programmes for professional development.

#### **COMPENSATION**

No compensation will be given to participants. However, the participants will be able to get information about the research at any stage of its progress and the research results will be available for participants once the study is completed (a digital copy of the final version of the study will be disseminated to participants).

#### **CONFIDENTIALITY AND PRIVACY**

All the research information which is shared during the interview will not be discussed or shared

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with anyone else. All information is confidential and anonymous to everyone other than the researcher. Comments made by you will not be identifiable in any way. All your responses will be recorded and saved on the researcher's personal computer which is protected with a password. All data will be securely saved for five years. After five years of finishing the study all responses of all participants, emails, consent letter and list of participants will be deleted.

**VOLUNTARY NATURE OF THE STUDY.**

Your participation in this research study is strictly voluntary. It is up to you to decide to participate or not to participate in this study. In case you agree to participate in this study, you will be asked to sign a consent form. After you sign the consent form, you are still free to withdraw at any time and without any explanation of your decision.

**CONTACT INFORMATION**

If you have any questions about the research or you feel worried as the result of the participation you may contact the Principal Investigator: [\_\_\_\_\_] or Research Supervisor: [\_\_\_\_\_]. If you have any other questions about your rights and you feel you cannot discuss it with the Principal Investigator or Research Supervisor you may address your question to the Nazarbayev University Institutional Research Ethics Committee, [resethics@nu.edu.kz](mailto:resethics@nu.edu.kz).

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**Statement of Consent**

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

Give my voluntary consent to participate in this study.

I have read and I understand the provided information about the study and have had the opportunity to ask questions to the researcher. I know that my participation is voluntary and that I may withdraw at any time, without giving a reason and without any cost. I know that I will be given a copy of this consent form. I voluntarily agree to take part in this study.

Participant's signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

I am informed that my responses will be recorded.

Participant's signature \_\_\_\_\_

Investigator's signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

### **Ақпараттандырылған Келісім Хат (Kazakh version)**

#### **ЗЕРТТЕУТАҚЫРЫБЫ:**

Мұғалімдердің Өзара Ынтымақтасы Арқылы Кәсіби Дамуға Деген Көзқарасы, білімі және қажетті дағдылары.

#### **ЗЕРТТЕУ МАҚСАТЫ**

Бұл зерттеу жұмысының мақсаты - Қазақстандағы бір Назарбаев Зияткерлік Мектебінде кәсіби даму мақсатында өзара ынтымақтасу туралы мұғалімдердің көзқарасы, түсінігі, білімі мен дағдыларын зерттеу.

#### **ЗЕРТТЕУДІҢ ЖҮРГІЗУ ЖОЛДАРЫ**

Зерттеудің қатысушылары өзара ынтымақтасуда тәжірибесі бар мұғалімдер болады. Олар зерттеу сұхбатына қатысады. Сұхбат әр қатысушы үшін шамамен бір сағатты алады. Сұхбаттасу уақыты мен орнын келісу үшін сізге зерттеуші алдын-ала хабарласады.

#### **ҚАУІП**

Қатысушы ретінде сіз тек минималды қауіпке тап болуыңыз мүмкін, мысалы сұхбатқа қатысуға уақытты жоғалту. Сіз кез-келген немесе барлық сұрақтарға жауап бермеуді таңдай аласыз және сіз қаласаңыз, кез-келген уақытта сұхбатты тоқтата аласыз.

#### **АРТЫҚШЫЛЫҚТАРЫ**

Қатысушылар мен мектеп бұл зерттеудің артықшылықтарын пайдалана алады. Мұғалімдерге өзара ынтымақтастық арқылы кәсіби дамуына қатысты өздерінің көзқарасы, қабылдауы, білімі мен дағдылары туралы ойлануға мүмкіндік беріледі. Бұл зерттеу Қазақстандағы мұғалімдердің өзара ынтымақтастық арқылы кәсіби дамуына ықпал етеді. Сонымен қатар, мұғалімдер өзара ынтымақтастық арқылы кәсіби даму туралы ойын білдіреді. Осы зерттеудің нәтижелері білім саласындағы саясаткерлерге мұғалімдердің біліктілігін арттыру бағдарламаларын жақсартуда көмектесуі мүмкін.

#### **ӨТЕМ**

Қатысушыларға өтемақы берілмейді. Дегенмен, қатысушылар зерттеу туралы ақпаратты оның орындалуының кез-келген кезеңінде ала алады және зерттеу нәтижелері зерттеу аяқталғаннан кейін қатысушыларға қол жетімді болады (сандық көшірме ретінде зерттеудің соңғы нұсқасы қатысушыларға таратылады).

#### **ҚҰПИЯЛЫҚ**

Сұхбат барысында бөліскен барлық зерттеу ақпараты ешкіммен талқыланбайды. Барлық ақпарат құпия болып есептелінеді, және зерттеушіден басқа ешкім білмейді. Сіз жасаған пікірлер ешбір жағдайда анықталмайды. Сіздің барлық жауаптарыңыз құпиясөзбен қорғалған зерттеушінің дербес компьютеріне жазылады және сақталады. Барлық деректер

бес жыл бойы қауіпсіз жерде сақталады. Зерттеудің аяқтағанынан кейін бес жыл өткен соң барлық қатысушылардың жауаптары, электронды хаттар, келісу хаттары және қатысушылар тізімі жойылады.

### **Зерттеуге өз еркімен қатысу туралы**

Сіздің осы зерттеу жұмысына қатысуыңыз өте маңызды. Осы зерттеуге қатысуды немесе қатыспауды өзіңіз шешесіз. Егер сіз осы зерттеуге қатысуға келіссеңіз, сізден келісім формасына қол қою сұралады. Сіз келісім хатына қол қойғаннан кейін де кез-келген уақытта және өз шешіміңізді түсіндірместен сауалнаманы тоқтатып, қатысудан бас тарта аласыз.

### **БАЙЛАНЫС ҮШІН**

Егер сізде зерттеу туралы сұрақтар туындаса немесе қатысу нәтижесінде сіз өзіңізді мазасыз сезінсеңіз, Зерттеушіге: [ \_\_\_\_\_ ] немесе ғылыми жетекшісіне хабарласуыңызға болады: [ \_\_\_\_\_ ]. Егер сіздің құқықтарыңызға қатысты басқа сұрақтарыңыз болса және сіз оны зерттеушімен немесе ғылыми жетекшімен бірге талқылай алмайтындығыңыз туралы ойласаңыз, өз сұрағыңызды Назарбаев Университетінің зерттеу этикасы комитетіне өз сұрағыңызды [resethics@nu.edu.kz](mailto:resethics@nu.edu.kz) жібере аласыз.

### **Келісім Туралы Мәлімдеме**

Мен \_\_\_\_\_,

осы зерттеуге қатысуға ерікті келісімімді беремін.

Мен зерттеу туралы берілген ақпаратты оқыдым, түсіндім және зерттеушіге сұрақтар қою мүмкіндігіне ие болдым. Менің қатысуым ерікті екенін және кез келген уақытта, себепсіз және ешқандай шығынсыз зерттеуге қатысудан бас тарта алатынымды білемін. Маған осы келісім хаттың көшірмесі берілетінін білемін. Мен өз еркіммен осы зерттеуге қатысуға келісемін.

Қатысушының қолы \_\_\_\_\_ Күні \_\_\_\_\_

Менің жауаптарым таспаға жазылатындығы туралы мені хабардар етті.

Қатысушының қолы \_\_\_\_\_

Зерттеушінің қолы \_\_\_\_\_ Күні \_\_\_\_\_

**Форма информированного согласия (Russian version)**

**НАЗВАНИЕ НАУЧНОЙ РАБОТЫ**

Отношение учителей, знания и нужные навыки для профессионального развития через коллаборацию

**ЦЕЛЬ ИССЛЕДОВАНИЯ**

Целью данного исследования является изучение отношения, восприятия, знаний и навыков учителей по совместному профессиональному обучению в одной школе НИШ в Казахстане.

**ПРОЦЕДУРА ИССЛЕДОВАНИЯ**

Участниками исследования станут учителя, имеющие большой опыт совместного профессионального обучения. Учителя участники примут участие в исследовательском интервью. Интервью займет примерно час для каждого участника. С вами свяжутся заранее, чтобы договориться о времени и месте собеседования.

**РИСКИ**

Как участник, вы, скорее всего, подвергнетесь лишь минимальному риску, такому как потеря времени на участие в интервью. Вы можете не отвечать на один или на все вопросы, и вы можете прекратить собеседование в любое время, если захотите.

**ВЫГОДЫ**

Участники и школа получают пользу от этого исследования. Преподавателям будет предоставлена возможность поразмышлять об их отношении, восприятии, знаниях и навыках об коллаборации для профессионального развития. Это научное исследование будет способствовать получению знаний о коллаборативном профессиональном развитии учителей в Казахстане. Кроме того, учителя будут вносить свой вклад в совместное профессиональное обучение, чтобы их могли услышать. Результаты этого исследования могут быть полезны для политиков в сфере образования в улучшении программ сотрудничества учителей для профессионального развития.

**КОМПЕНСАЦИИ**

Компенсация участникам не предоставляется. Тем не менее, участники смогут получать информацию об исследовании на любом этапе его проведения, и результаты исследования будут доступны участникам после завершения исследования (цифровая копия окончательной версии исследования будет распространена среди участников) ,

**КОНФИДЕНЦИАЛЬНОСТЬ**

Вся исследовательская информация, которая передается во время интервью, не будет обсуждаться или передаваться кому-либо еще. Вся информация является

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конфиденциальной и анонимной для всех, кроме исследователя. Ваши комментарии не будут разглашены никоим образом. Все ваши ответы будут записаны на аудио и сохранены на персональном компьютере исследователя, который защищен паролем. Все данные будут надежно сохранены в течение пяти лет. После пяти лет окончания исследования все ответы всех участников, электронные письма, письмо информированного согласия и список участников будут удалены.

## **ДОБРОВОЛЬНЫЙ ХАРАКТЕР ИССЛЕДОВАНИЯ.**

Ваше участие в этом исследовании строго добровольно. Вы сами решаете участвовать или не участвовать в этом исследовании. Если вы согласны участвовать в этом исследовании, вам будет предложено подписать форму согласия. После того как вы подпишете форму согласия, вы по-прежнему можете отказаться в любое время и без объяснения своего решения.

## **КОНТАКТЫ**

Если у вас есть какие-либо вопросы по поводу исследования или вы чувствуете беспокойство в результате участия, вы можете связаться с Исследователем: [ \_\_\_\_\_ ] или Научным Руководителем: [ \_\_\_\_\_ ]. Если у вас есть какие-либо другие вопросы о ваших правах, и вы считаете, что не можете обсудить их с Исследователем или Научным руководителем, вы можете направить свой вопрос в Комитет 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 этом исследовании.

Я прочитал(а) и понимаю предоставленную информацию об исследовании и имел(а) возможность задать вопросы исследователю. Я знаю, что мое участие является добровольным и что я могу отказаться в любое время, без объяснения причин и без каких-либо затрат. Я знаю, что мне дадут копию этой формы согласия. Я добровольно согласен принять участие в этом исследовании.

Подпись участника \_\_\_\_\_ Дата \_\_\_\_\_

Я согласен(а) что мои ответы будут записаны на аудио.

Подпись участника \_\_\_\_\_

Подпись исследователя \_\_\_\_\_ Дата \_\_\_\_\_

**Appendix 3**

**Interview questions (English version)**

1. How long have you been teaching?
2. How long have you been involved in teacher collaboration?
3. When did you first participate in any collaboration process with your colleagues?
4. How often do you professionally collaborate with your colleagues?
5. What are the main reasons for you to collaborate with your colleagues?
6. Describe the collaboration activities you are involved in?
7. Did you voluntarily choose to be involved or are you required by your school to participate in these activities?
8. What professional skills are necessary for collaboration?
9. What professional knowledge is necessary for collaboration?
10. Have your collaboration activities ever been professionally rewarded?
11. Are there any advantages of teacher collaboration, in your opinion?
12. Are there any disadvantages of teacher collaboration, in your opinion?
13. Do you find engaging in teacher collaboration professionally developing? Why/Why not?
14. Do you have any suggestions to improve teacher collaboration for professional growth in your school, or generally?
15. Do you have anything to say?

**Interview questions (Kazakh version)**

1. Сіз қанша уақыттан бері сабақ бересіз?
2. Сіз мұғалімдермен бірге өзара ынтымақтастыққа қай уақыттан бері қатысасыз?
3. Әріптестеріңізбен бірге өзара ынтымақтастыққа алғаш рет қашан қатыстыңыз?
4. Әріптестеріңізбен бірге қаншалықты жиі өзара ынтымақтасасыз?
5. Әріптестеріңізбен өзара ынтымақтастық орнатудың негізгі себептері қандай?
6. Өзіңіз қатысатын өзара ынтымақтастық әрекеттерін сипаттаңыз?
7. Сіз өз еркіңізбен қатысуды таңдадыңыз ба немесе сіздің мектебіңіз осы іс-шараларға қатысуды талап етеме?
8. Әріптестеріңізбен өзара ынтымақтастықта болу үшін қандай кәсіби дағдылар қажет?
9. Өзара ынтымақтастық үшін қандай кәсіби білім қажет?
10. Сіздің әріптестеріңізбен өзара ынтымақтасқан іс әрекетіңіз кәсіби түрде марапатталды ма?
12. Сіздің ойыңызша, мұғалімдермен өзара ынтымақтастықтың артықшылықтары бар ма?
12. Сіздің ойыңызша мұғалімдермен өзара ынтымақтастықтың кемшіліктері барма?
13. Сіз кәсіби түрде дамып келе жатқан мұғалімдермен ынтымақтастықта боласыз ба?  
Неге / неге жоқ?
14. Сіздің мектебіңізде немесе жалпы кәсіби даму үшін мұғалімдердің ынтымақтастығын жақсарту бойынша ұсыныстарыңыз бар ма?

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15. Қосымша айтатын сөзіңіз бар ма?

**Interview questions (Russian version)**

1. Как долго вы пропадаете?
2. Как долго вы вовлечены в коллаборативному профессиональному развитию учителей?
3. Когда вы впервые участвовали в каком-либо процессе сотрудничества со своими коллегами?
4. Как часто вы профессионально сотрудничаете со своими коллегами?
5. Каковы основные причины коллаборации с коллегами?
6. Опишите совместные действия с коллегами, в которых вы участвуете?
7. Вы добровольно решили принять участие или от вашей школы требуется участие в этих мероприятиях?
8. Какие профессиональные навыки необходимы для коллаборации с коллегами?
9. Какие профессиональные знания необходимы для коллаборации с коллегами?
10. Были ли ваши совместно организованные мероприятия профессионально вознаграждены?
11. Есть ли какие-то преимущества коллаборации учителей, по вашему мнению?
12. Есть ли какие-то недостатки в коллаборации учителей, по вашему мнению?
13. Считаете ли вы, что коллаборация с преподавателями профессионально развивается?  
Почему, почему нет?
14. Есть ли у вас какие-либо предложения по улучшению коллаборации учителей для профессионального роста в вашей школе или вообще?

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15. У вас есть что добавить?

## Appendix 4

### Interview protocol

Research project: Teachers' attitudes towards and skills for collaborative professional development

Time of interview: 13:30

Date: 23, December, 2019

Place: NIS school

Interviewee: P1

Good morning/ afternoon! I am very grateful that you agreed to participate in this project which purpose is to explore in-depth the attitudes of teachers towards collaborative professional development. Additionally, it aims is to identify what skills and knowledge are necessary for teachers to participate in collaborative professional learning.

To achieve this purpose, I am going to conduct interviews with different teachers of this NIS. I hope to receive full and outspoken answers form my interviewees. Please, be assured that all data collected will be confidential and your answers stay anonymous. Our interview will be tape recorded with your permission and stored in a password protected file which will be subsequently destroyed after transcribing. This is the first interview and it will be about an hour long.

Please read again and sign the consent form.

[Ask the interviewee's permission to use the tape recorder.]

### Interview questions

#### Part 1: General professional information

1. How long have you been teaching?

#### Part 2: Information related to collaborative professional development

1. How long have you been involved in teacher collaboration?
2. When did you first participate in any collaboration process with your colleagues?
3. How often do you professionally collaborate with your colleagues?
4. What are the main reasons for you to collaborate with your colleagues?
5. Describe the collaboration activities you are involved in?
6. Did you voluntarily choose to be involved or are you required by your school to participate in these activities?

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7. What professional skills are necessary for collaboration?
8. What professional knowledge is necessary for collaboration?
9. Have your collaboration activities ever been professionally rewarded?
10. Are there any advantages of teacher collaboration, in your opinion?
11. Are there any disadvantages of teacher collaboration, in your opinion?
12. Do you find engaging in teacher collaboration professionally developing? Why/Why not?

**Part 3. Additional question related to the project**

1. Do you have any suggestions to improve teacher collaboration for professional growth in your school, or generally?
2. Do you have anything to say?

[Thank respondents for participating in the interview. Assure them again about the confidentiality of the collected data.]

## Appendix 5

### Interview Transcription

R: How long have you been teaching?

P1: I've been teaching for more than six years.

R: How long have you been involved in teacher collaboration?

P1: I suppose since the moment I was employed here at this school.

R: So, it is for six years?

P1: Yes, approximately six years

R: When did you first participate in any collaboration process with your colleagues?

P1: Can you give me an example of collaboration process? Do you mean co-planning?

R: Any collaboration.

P1: All right. So, to take an example co-planning so I think that was at the very beginning. At least we tried to collaborate while planning the lessons and you know helping each other and at least discussing materials that we were going to have in different grades.

R: So, that was the first year of teaching at this school?

P1: Yeah

R: Okay, thank you. How often do you professionally collaborate with your colleagues?

P1: Hmm. I won't say very often. Whenever we are asked to do, I think. So, when we are involved in different projects such as Lesson Study that was last year I think, or the stuff like Action Research and so on and whenever we have to plan integrated lessons.

R: Okay, thank you

P1: That was formal thing

R: What are the main reasons for you to collaborate with your colleagues?

P1: Hmm, the first and foremost I would say it's a sharing experience and have additional perspective on the stuff that you are going to present to students. You know, when you for example, we all have different views towards different issues, right? So, when it comes to even those methods for taking different materials, so I think it is important to have another person to talk to, to discuss questions or just to have some additional view. So, ammmm in one way it is like sharing the experience and discussing.

R: Okay. Please, Describe the collaboration activities that you are involved in now?

P1: Hmm, as I've already mentioned it's co-planning I would say and Action Research project. So, this year we've started Action Research cycle I would say and I think that this is an example

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of that. So even though the co-planning doesn't exist as often as we are supposed to do, to my mind it could be an example of that.

R: Okay. Did you voluntarily choose to be involved or are you required by your school to participate in these activities?

P1: Ammmm, frankly speaking, in many cases I am required to do, for example take an example of Lesson Study that was one of the requirements for undergoing the attestation process and second one Action Research that was, so there were two options only Lesson Study or

Action Research that is why once I already worked with Lesson Study I chose Action Research. So, mostly it is not my initiative but something that we are required to do.

R: Okay. What professional skills are necessary for collaboration?

P1: I think that the most valuable thing is so called soft skills such as supporting each other and being open to someone else's view, being ready to accept that views, not necessary agreeing with that but accepting that and at the same time explaining and justifying your own thing, you know your argument I would say. Something like friendliness, creating like positive atmosphere and so on.

R: Okay. What professional knowledge is necessary for collaboration?

P1: I think it depends on the field. For example, if we talk about co-planning, I think the most necessary thing is to have an experience of teaching one and the same group, for example, just simple example I cannot recommend something useful for grade 11's teachers for example if I have no idea of their course plan and if I don't teach them. I need to teach them in a current year or at least have an experience of teaching that in last year or something like that. I mean, in one word it's like experience teaching the same thing. When it comes to bigger projects such as Lesson Study or Action Research again it is like at least knowledge of theory, I would say reading or at least general information from the Internet resources. I mean to be aware of the staff that we are going to apply.

R: Okay. Have your collaboration activities ever been professionally rewarded?

P1: That's a very good question. Honestly, so, awarded can be different types, right? So, when you are awarded in for example, formally with certificate or something like that so the answer is hardly ever I would say but the second one is like praise or warm words, respect or support from your colleagues. So, this one I think I experienced that. However, I remember the situation that was the contest of pedagogical ideas I can say that this is one of the examples of teacher collaboration because we conducted that together with my colleague and we were praised with certificate for the most talented one or something like that.

R: Okay. Are there any advantages of teacher collaboration, in your opinion?

P1: Yeah, that is obvious that it has a lot of advantages such as, let's take an example when I work alone as an introvert I prefer working alone because I find it easier you know more not productive but let's say easier for me. However, having worked here for about six years I understood the importance of collaboration when you work together and when you share the responsibilities and when you try and when you learn to rely on somebody and when you learn to justify someone else's expectations I would say, soft skills and sometimes you know we are

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limited with sources, internet sources and the simple example is that another person can suggest different sources, different methods and different way of looking and solving the same problem I would say, so it's like resources, new perspectives and someone else's opinion. These are the advantages of collaboration.

R: Thank you. Are there any disadvantages of teacher collaboration, in your opinion?

P1: And again, as an introvert, maybe it depends on the way how the collaboration is organized at school because some people prefer working alone, some people prefer working in teams. At the end of the day we are human beings we have our own individual styles of working and sometimes there are some people who think they work more than others or indeed they work more than others. So it is about keeping balance between those and when you know sharing the responsibilities and some people maybe think it is unfair when you have to do more responsibilities rather than others or less than others it depends.

R: Do you find engaging in teacher collaboration professionally developing?

P1: Yes, so you know it is just quite weird comparison but if I explain the attestation process of the school where I am currently working so from teacher assistant to teacher the required staff is your own achievement. From teacher to teacher moderator something that you can share and it also shows that it is a sign of development when you have something to share. For example, moderator at the city level, region level and when you have the next level it's like the chain of NIS schools than the finally to republic and international level and I think that this clearly shows that person starts with himself or herself and it is a basic level and then being able to collaborate with others to conduct coordinated actions it's like a next step of your development and professional development.

R: Thank you. Do you have any suggestions to improve teacher collaboration for professional growth in your school, or generally?

P1: And again, my suggestion is to take into consideration person's individual preferences like as practice shows when the person takes initiatives and when they how to say express willingness to work themselves I mean bottom up approach is better one rather than required thing as opposed to top down approach so my recommendation is to give more freedom to the teaching staff and to encourage them to take the initiative on their own.

R: Ok thank you and the last question. Do you have anything to say about teacher collaboration as a tool of teacher professional development? You may add something if you have.

P1: So, the thing that I would add is that it is important thing to study teacher collaboration because it directly influences professional development of teachers and it is something that we need to at least to start to study and we need to consider in order to see the direct and indirect advantages for teachers.

R: Ok thank you for participation in this interview and this is the end thank you for your time and effort.

**Appendix 6**

**Sample of a Coded transcript**

| Interview transcript   | Code-descriptive and inferential | Memos   |
|--|----------------------------------|---|
| <p>R <b>How long have you been teaching?</b></p>   |                                  |   |
| <p>P1 I've been teaching for more than six years.</p>  | <p>Exper: 6y</p>                 |   |
| <p>R <b>How long have you been involved in teacher collaboration?</b></p>  |                                  |   |
| <p>P1 I suppose since the moment I was employed here at this school.</p>   | <p>Collab exper 6y</p>           | <p>First experience of collaboration started in current workplace</p> |
| <p>R <b>So, it is for six years?</b></p>   |                                  |   |
| <p>P1 Yes, approximately six years</p>   |                                  |   |
| <p>R <b>When did you first participate in any collaboration process with your colleagues?</b></p>  |                                  |   |
| <p>P1 All right. So, to take an example co-planning so I think that was at the very beginning. At least we tried to collaborate while planning the lessons and you know helping each other and at least discussing materials that we were going to have in different grades.</p> | <p><b>Type: Co-planning</b></p>  | <p>Teaching material discussion as a co-planning</p>                  |
| <p>R <b>So, that was the first year of teaching at this school?</b></p>  |                                  |   |
| <p>P1 Yeah</p>   |                                  |   |
| <p>R <b>Okay, thank you. How often do you professionally collaborate with your colleagues?</b></p>   |                                  |   |

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P1 Hmm. I won't say very often.  
Whenever we are asked to do, I think.  
So, when we are involved in different  
projects such as Lesson Study that was  
last year I think, or the stuff like Action  
Research and so on and whenever we  
have to plan integrated lessons.

**Freq: Not Often**

**On demand (from  
whom?)**

**Context: Lesson  
Study**

**Context: Action  
Research**

**Context: integrates  
lesson planning**

**(These sound like  
prescribed teacher  
development  
activities)**

**Formal way of  
collaboration through  
school projects**

R Okay, thank you

P1 That was formal thing

R What are the main reasons for you to  
collaborate with your colleagues?

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- P1 Hmmm, the first and foremost I would say it's a sharing experience and have additional perspective on the stuff that you are going to present to students. You know, when you for example, we all have different views towards different issues, right? So, when it comes to even those methods for taking different materials, so I think it is important to have another person to talk to, to discuss questions or just to have some additional view. So, ammmm in one way it is like sharing the experience and discussing.
- R Okay. Please, Describe the collaboration activities that you are involved in now?
- P1 Hmmm, as I've already mentioned it's co-planning I would say and Action Research project. So, this year we've started Action Research cycle I would say and I think that this is an example of that. So even though the co-planning doesn't exist as often as we are supposed to do, to my mind it could be an example of that.
- R Okay. Did you voluntarily choose to be involved or are you required by your school to participate in these activities?
- Reason: dissemination of experience**
- Reason: additional perspective**
- Discussion of teaching materials with teachers for additional view**
- Type: Action Research**
- Type: Co-planning**
- Frequency: not often**
- On demand (from whom?)**

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P1 Ammmm, frankly speaking, in many cases I am required to do, for example take an example of Lesson Study that was one of the requirements for undergoing the attestation process and second one Action Research that was, so there were two options only Lesson Study or Action Research that is why once I already worked with Lesson Study I chose Action Research. So, mostly it is not my initiative but something that we are required to do.

**On demand**

**Attestation requirement to collaborate professionally.**

R **Okay. What professional skills are necessary for collaboration?**

P1 I think that the most valuable thing is so called soft skills such as **supporting each other** and **being open** to someone else's view, being ready **to accept** that views, not necessary agreeing with that but accepting that and at the same time **explaining and justifying** your own thing, you know your argument I would say. Something like **friendliness, creating like positive atmosphere** and so on.

**Professional skills: soft skills,**

Teacher-leader skills

R **Okay. What professional knowledge is necessary for collaboration?**

I think it depends on the field. For example, if we talk about co-planning, I think the most necessary thing is to have an **experience of teaching** one and the same group, for example, just simple example I cannot recommend something useful for grade 11's teachers for example if I have no idea of their course plan and if I don't teach them. I need to teach them in a current year or at least have an experience of teaching that in last year or something like that. I mean, in one word it's like experience teaching the same thing. When it comes to bigger

**Professional knowledge: the same grade teaching experience**

At least to be informed (basics) about the topic for collaboration

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projects such as Lesson Study or Action Research again it is like at least **knowledge of theory**, I would say reading or at least general information from the Internet resources. I mean to be aware of the staff that we are going to apply.

**R Okay. Have your collaboration activities ever been professionally rewarded?**

P1 That's a very good question. Honestly, so, awarded can be different types, right? So, when you are awarded in for example, formally with certificate or something like that so the answer is hardly ever I would say but the second one is like praise or warm words, respect or support from your colleagues. So, this one I think I experienced that. However, I remember the situation that was the contest of pedagogical ideas I can say that this is one of the examples of teacher collaboration because we conducted that together with my colleague and we were praised with certificate for the most talented one or something like that.

**R Okay. Are there any advantages of teacher collaboration, in your opinion?**

P1 Yeah, that is obvious that it has a lot of advantages such as, let's take an example when I work alone as an introvert I prefer working alone because I find it easier you know more not productive but let's say easier for me. However, having worked here for about six years I understood the importance of collaboration when you work together

**Official reward:**  
**certificate**

One official reward:  
certificate

**Frequency: hardly ever**

**Nonofficial: praise, warm words from colleagues**

**Pros: share responsibilities, rely on colleagues, different ideas, methods, perspectives**

Self-reflection on past attitude towards collaboration

**Limitations: lack of**

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and when you share the responsibilities and when you try and when you learn to rely on somebody and when you learn to justify someone else's expectations I would say, soft skills and sometimes you know we are limited with sources, internet sources and the simple example is that another person can suggest different sources, different methods and different way of looking and solving the same problem I would say, so it's like resources, new perspectives and someone else's opinion. These are the advantages of collaboration.

**sources, internet sources**

One example of getting official reward for collaboration

**R Thank you. Are there any disadvantages of teacher collaboration, in your opinion?**

P1 And again, as an introvert, maybe it depends on the way how the collaboration is organized at school because some people prefer working alone, some people prefer working in teams. At the end of the day we are human beings we have our own individual styles of working and sometimes there are some people who think they work more than others or indeed they work more than others. So it is about keeping balance between those and when you know sharing the responsibilities and some people maybe think it is unfair when you have to do more responsibilities rather than others or less than others it depends.

**Cons:**

Depends on how collab is organized

**Individual style of working**

**Individual preferences**

**Not balanced responsibilities**

**R Do you find engaging in teacher collaboration professionally developing?**

P1 Yes, so you know it is just quite weird comparison but if I explain the attestation process of the school where I

**Level: teacher-assistant, teacher-moderator**

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am currently working so from teacher assistant to teacher the required staff is your own achievement. From teacher to teacher moderator something that you can share and it also shows that it is a sign of development when you have something to share. For example, moderator at the city level, region level and when you have the next level it's like the chain of NIS schools than the finally to republic and international level and I think that this clearly shows that person starts with himself or herself and it is a basic level and then being able to collaborate with others to conduct coordinated actions it's like a next step of your development and professional development.

**Step by step: in school level, city level, country level**

**R Thank you. Do you have any suggestions to improve teacher collaboration for professional growth in your school, or generally?**

P1 And again, my suggestion is to take into consideration person's individual preferences like as practice shows when the person takes initiatives and when they how to say express willingness to work themselves I mean bottom up approach is better one rather than required thing as opposed to top down approach so my recommendation is to give more freedom to the teaching staff and to encourage them to take the initiative on their own.

**Improvement suggestions: individual preference, initiative, willingness**

**Suggested approach: bottom up**

**More freedom, encouragement**

**R Ok thank you and the last question. Do you have anything to say about teacher collaboration as a tool of**

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**teacher professional development?**

**You may add something if you have.**

- |    |   |                                      |   |
|----|---|--------------------------------------|---|
| P1 | So, the thing that I would add is that it is important thing to study teacher collaboration because it directly influences professional development of teachers and it is something that we need to at least to start to study and we need to consider in order to see the direct and indirect advantages for teachers. | Collaboration affects teacher growth | Direct and indirect advantages of collaboration |
| R  | Ok thank you for participation in this interview and this is the end thank you for your time and effort.  |                                      |   |

**Highlighted texts** in the transcript are the segments of data to which the codes are tagged.

R= researcher, P1= Participant 1

Appendix 7

Summary matrix of the data

| Data   | Participants   | Quotes   |
|--|--|--|
| <b>Demographics</b>  | <b>P1</b><br>6y exp<br>1 sch<br>F  | <i>I've been teaching for more than six years.</i>   |
| <b>Understanding of teacher collaboration</b><br><br><b>Types of Teacher collaboration</b> | Co-planning<br>School projects as Action Research, Lesson Study<br>Integrated lessons                        | <i>...while planning the lessons and you know helping each other and at least discussing materials that we were going to have in different grades.<br/>...when we are involved in different projects such as Lesson Study that was last year I think, or the stuff like Action Research and so on and whenever we have to plan integrated lessons.</i>   |
| <b>Reasons</b>   | Sharing the experience<br>Discussion the lesson  | <i>I would say it's a sharing experience and have additional perspective</i>   |
| <b>Attitudes</b>   | Positive:<br>Negative: Requirement   | <i>...in many cases I am required to do, for example take an example of Lesson Study that was one of the requirements for undergoing the attestation process</i>   |
| <b>Skills and knowledge</b>  | <b>Skills:</b> soft skills (support, open for new)<br><br><b>Professional knowledge:</b> teaching experience | <i>I think that the most valuable thing is so called soft skills such as supporting each other and being open to someone else's view, being ready to accept that views, not necessary agreeing with that but accepting that and at the same time explaining and justifying your own thing.<br/><br/>I think the most necessary thing is to have an experience of teaching one and the same group</i> |
| <b>Teacher collaboration for professional development</b>                                  | Yes  | <i>...so from teacher assistant to teacher the required staff is your</i>  |

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|                                 |   |  |
|---------------------------------|---|--|
|                                 |   | <i>own achievement. From teacher to teacher moderator something that you can share and it also shows that it is a sign of development when you have something to share ... it's like a next step of your development and professional development.</i>   |
| <b>Advantages/Disadvantages</b> | <b>Beneficial</b><br><br><b>Challenging</b> | <i>...and the simple example is that another person can suggest different sources, different methods and different way of looking and solving the same problem I would say, so it's like resources, new perspectives and someone else's opinion.<br/><br/>... some people maybe think it is unfair when you have to do more responsibilities rather than others or less than others it depends</i> |
| <b>Recommendations</b>          | <b>Initiative on collaboration</b>          | <i>...to take into consideration person's individual preferences ... I mean bottom up approach is better one rather than required thing</i>  |