



**Collaboration:
Strengthening
Collaborative
Teaching Practices**

Welcome!
Please introduce yourself



**In the chat, please share your
school and location**

***What does collaboration look
like at your school?***





mlrc

Multilingual Learning
Research Center



**Collaboration:
Strengthening
Collaborative
Teaching Practices**

Today's Webinar:





Today's Presenters



Jon Nordmeyer

*MLRC School
Network
Director*



Kelly Hogan

*American School of
Guatemala,
Dual Language Liaison*



Summer Alcauter

*International School of
Panama,
Coordinator of
Multilingual Learners*



Kathy Patton

*International School
of Panama,
Elementary School
Principal*



The MLRC is a **research center** based at the top-ranked School of Education at the University of Wisconsin-Madison.



We **collaborate** with scholars and schools around the world with a focus on **equity** and **innovation** to improve outcomes for **multilingual learners**.

The MLRC School Network



150+ schools in 60+ countries

A global **research–practice partnership** dedicated to excellence and equity for multilingual learners. We explore challenges and co-create impactful solutions through **access, improvement, action** and **insights**.

The MLRC School Network



Access

Research-based tools for professional learning *to build knowledge and skills in teaching MLs*

Improvement

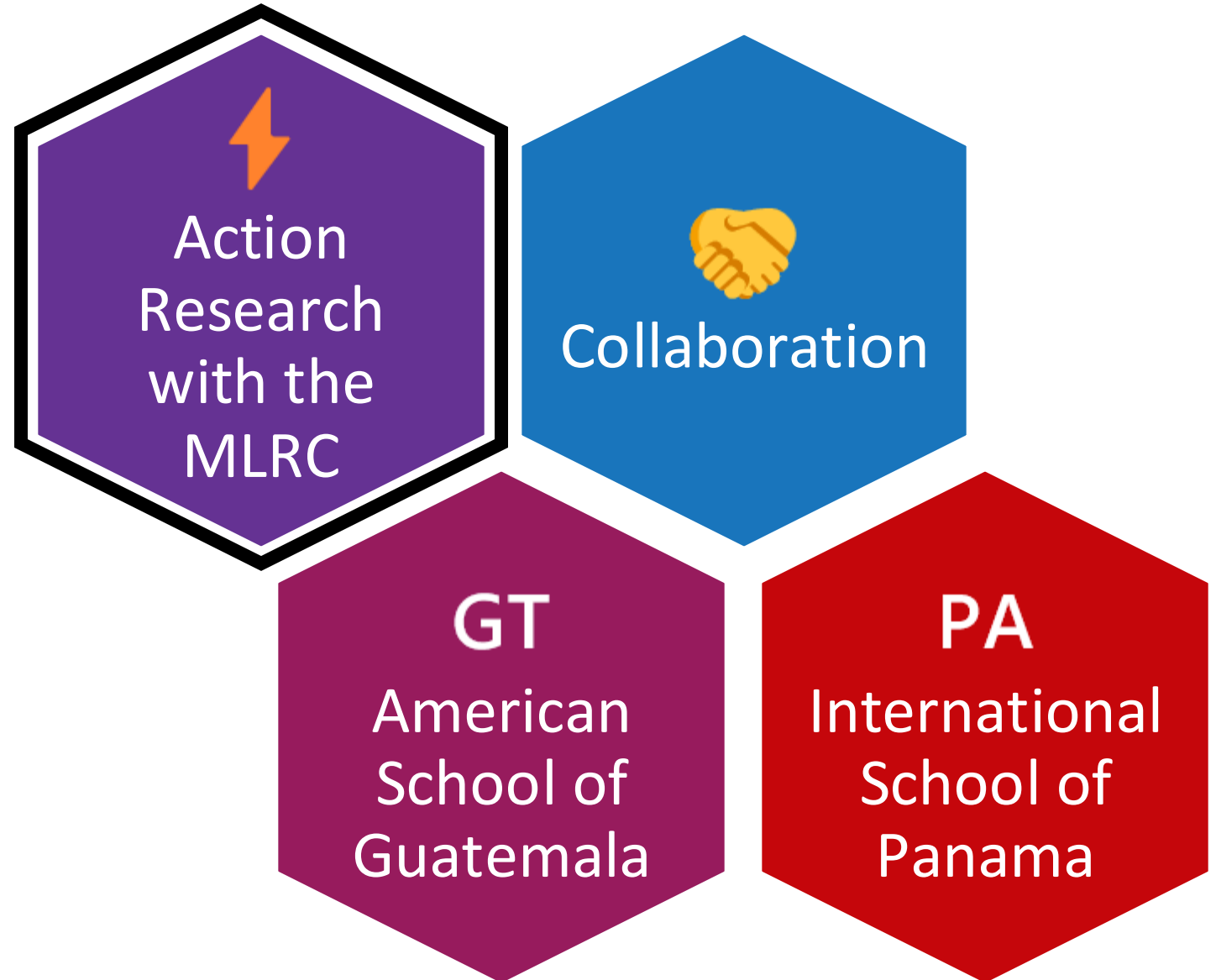
Collaborative inquiry *to identify assets, provide feedback and set school goals for serving MLs*

Action

School-based action research, implementation and dissemination *to build collective efficacy*

Insights

Shared investigation across the network *to create new knowledge about teaching MLs*



Why (not) Research?

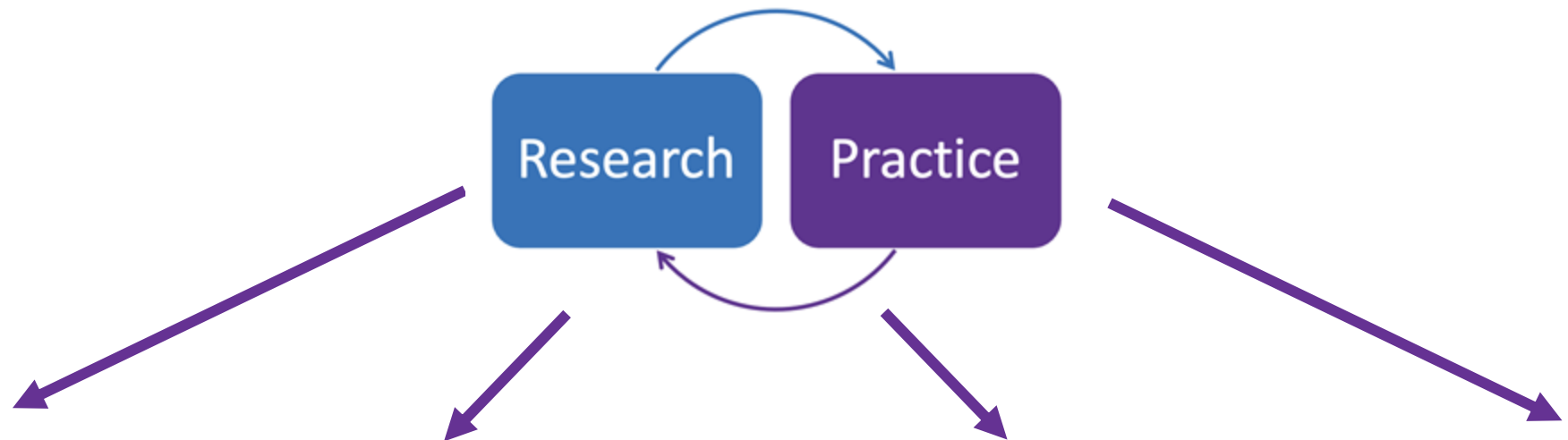


- Only **1/3** of teachers regularly engage with research
- Research is either **not accessible** or **not relevant** to practice
- Researchers are often **disconnected** from classrooms

(Walsh et al., 2022)

Action

School-based action research, implementation and dissemination *to build collective efficacy*



Training and support
for action research

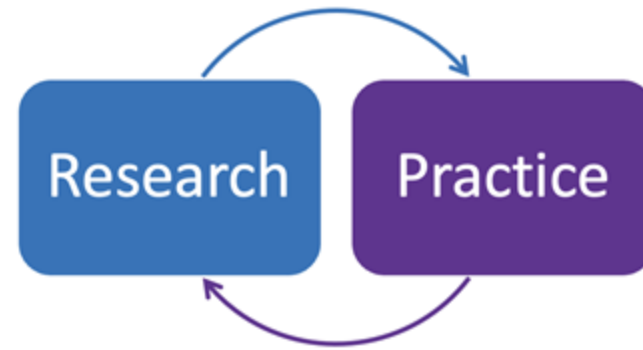
Connections with
global scholars

Capstone report

Support for publishing
& presenting



Action Research...



...is conducted **by practitioners** within their **own context**, focused on **local innovation** or a specific **problem of practice** and resulting in an **action plan**.



Research Symposium

Learn about research on
teaching MLs

Learn about the process
of doing research

2 Days In Person

+

Monthly Meetups & Coaching calls

Coaching and
support for school-
based action
research projects

4 months Online

**Capstone
Report**

Publish or Present

What is the **impact** of Action Research?

Individual/Team

- Shifts individual **teaching practices**
- Develops **research self-efficacy**
- Professionalization of role and growth in **capacity to contribute**

School

- Contributes to **school improvement** and evaluation of individual programs
- Informs professional **learning opportunities for colleagues**
- Supports **accreditation** processes

External

- Presentations by participants: **webinars & regional conferences** for international school educators

Impact: Action Research



“Research has become more accessible to me. It seemed daunting before this process.”

“I think it absolutely empowered me to...I guess, see myself as a researcher, or potential researcher.”

“My interest is to help understand challenges, new practices in learning and navigate solutions through action research.”

DIG: Dissemination & Implementation Group

- **Next steps** after school-based research
- **Implementation** or **scaling up**
- Feedback and templates for **writing** or **presenting** at regional conferences.



2025-2026 MLRC Research Symposia



Panama City, Panama - November 15-16, 2025



Beijing, China - December 6-7, 2025



Malaga, Spain - January 17-18, 2026



Manila, Philippines - January 24-25, 2026

MLRC Key Research Focus Areas



**Teacher
Collaboration**

Beyond Co-
Teaching



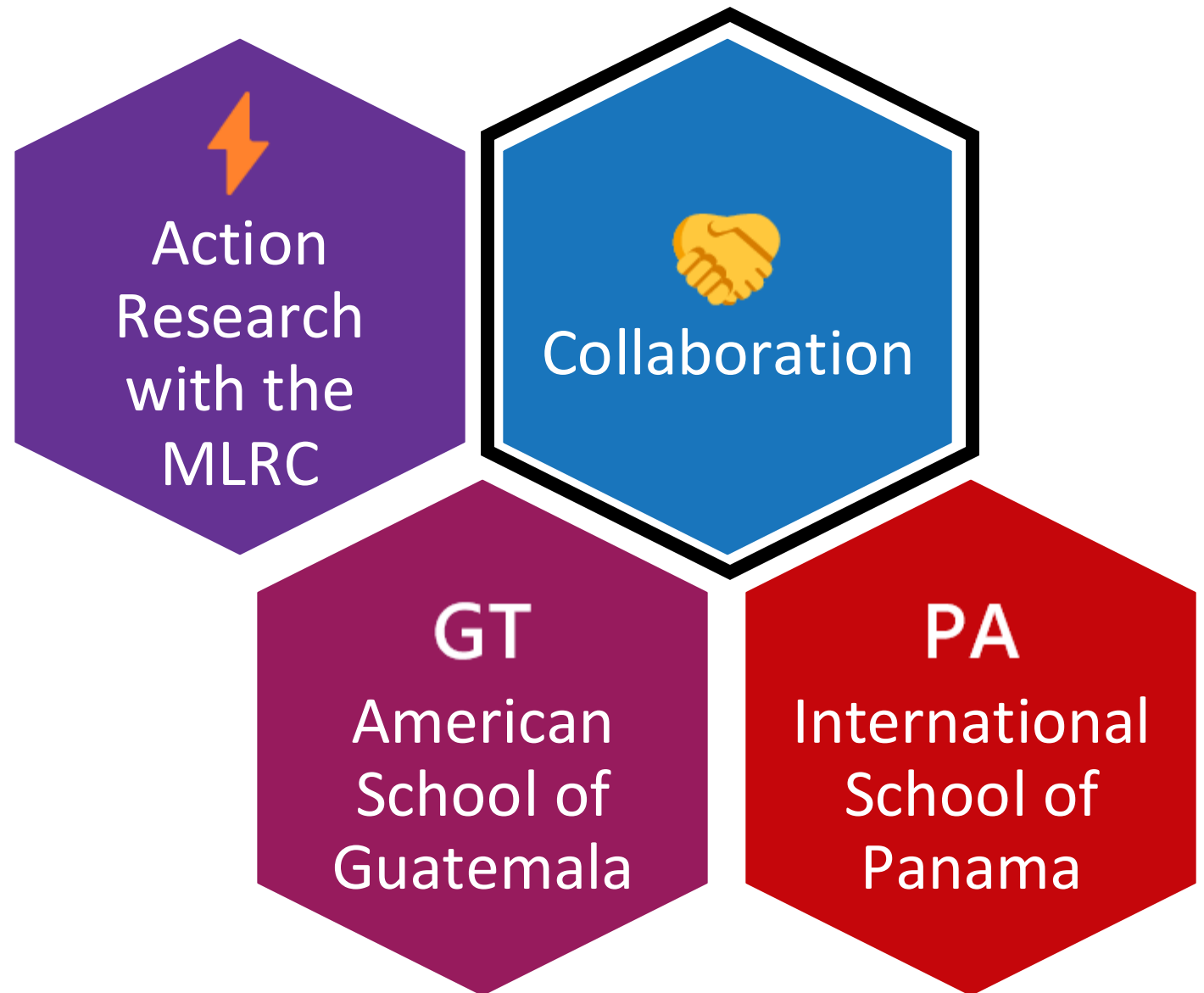
Translanguaging

Multilingualism
for Learning



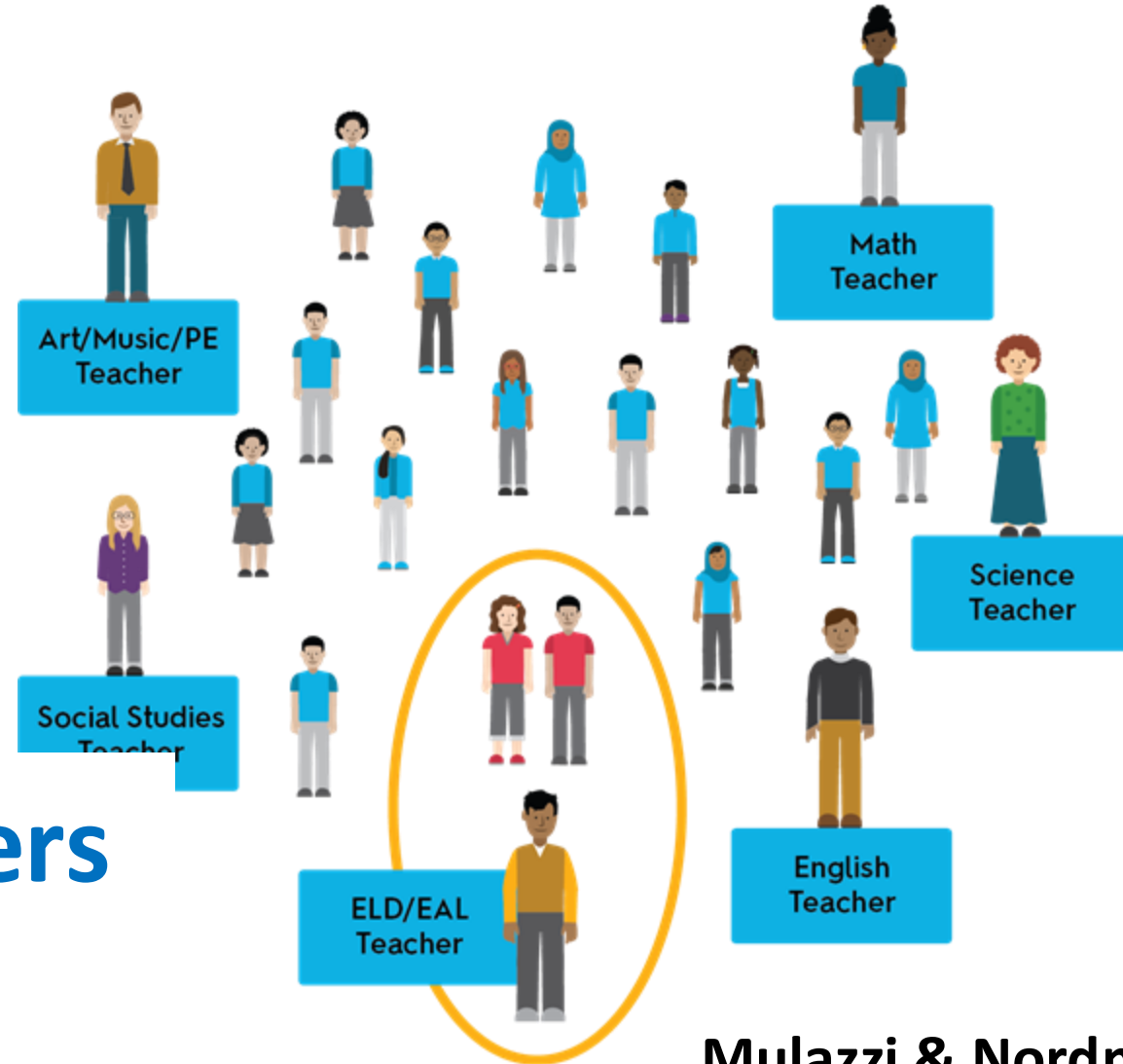
Inclusive EAL

Multilingualism
x
Neurodiversity



From 20th Century to 21st Century paradigms for Multilingual Learners

20th Century Paradigm

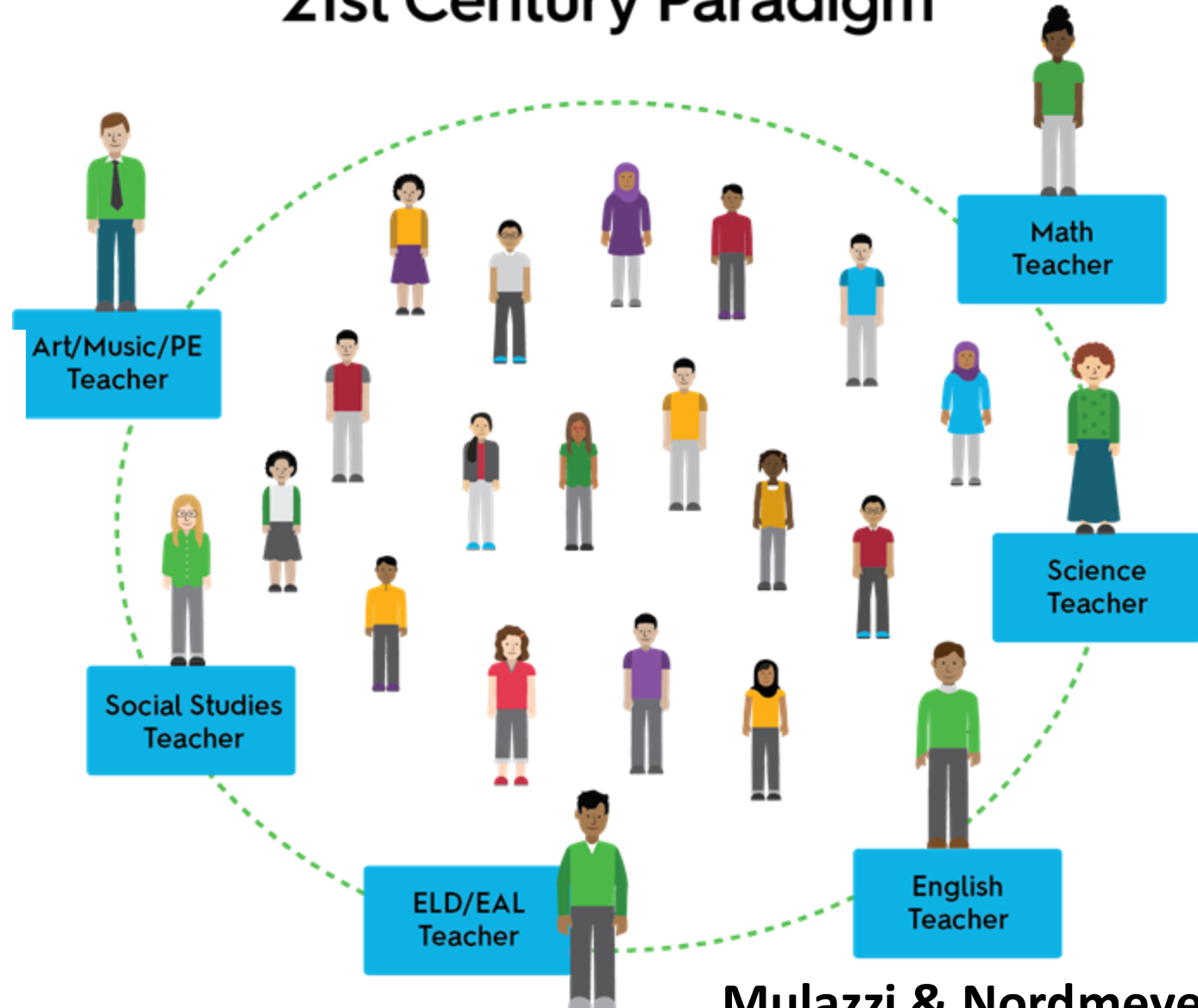


Mulazzi & Nordmeyer, 2012

21st Century Paradigm

From:
**Segregation
Fragmentation
Isolation**

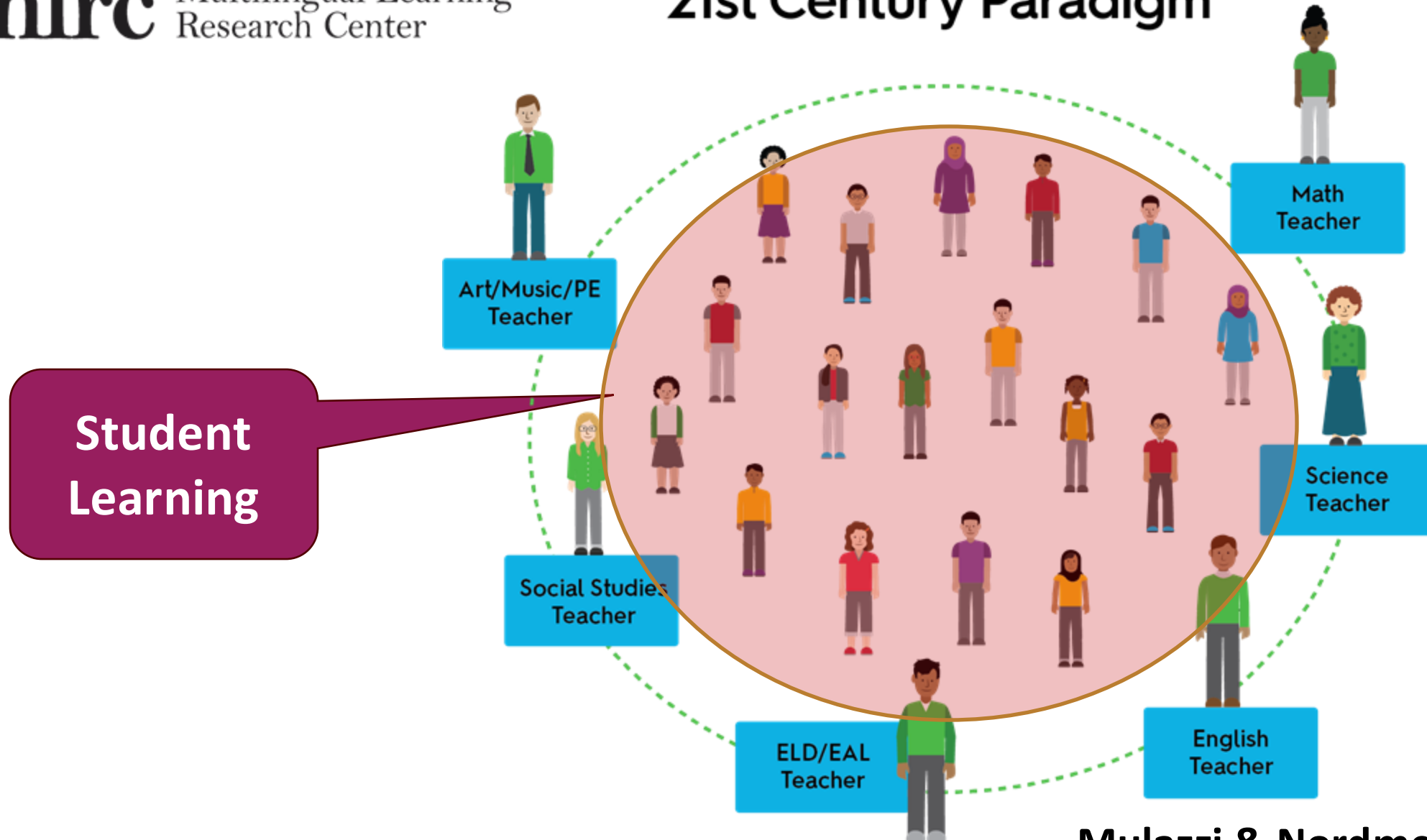
To:
**Integration
Inclusion
Collaboration**



Mulazzi & Nordmeyer, 2012



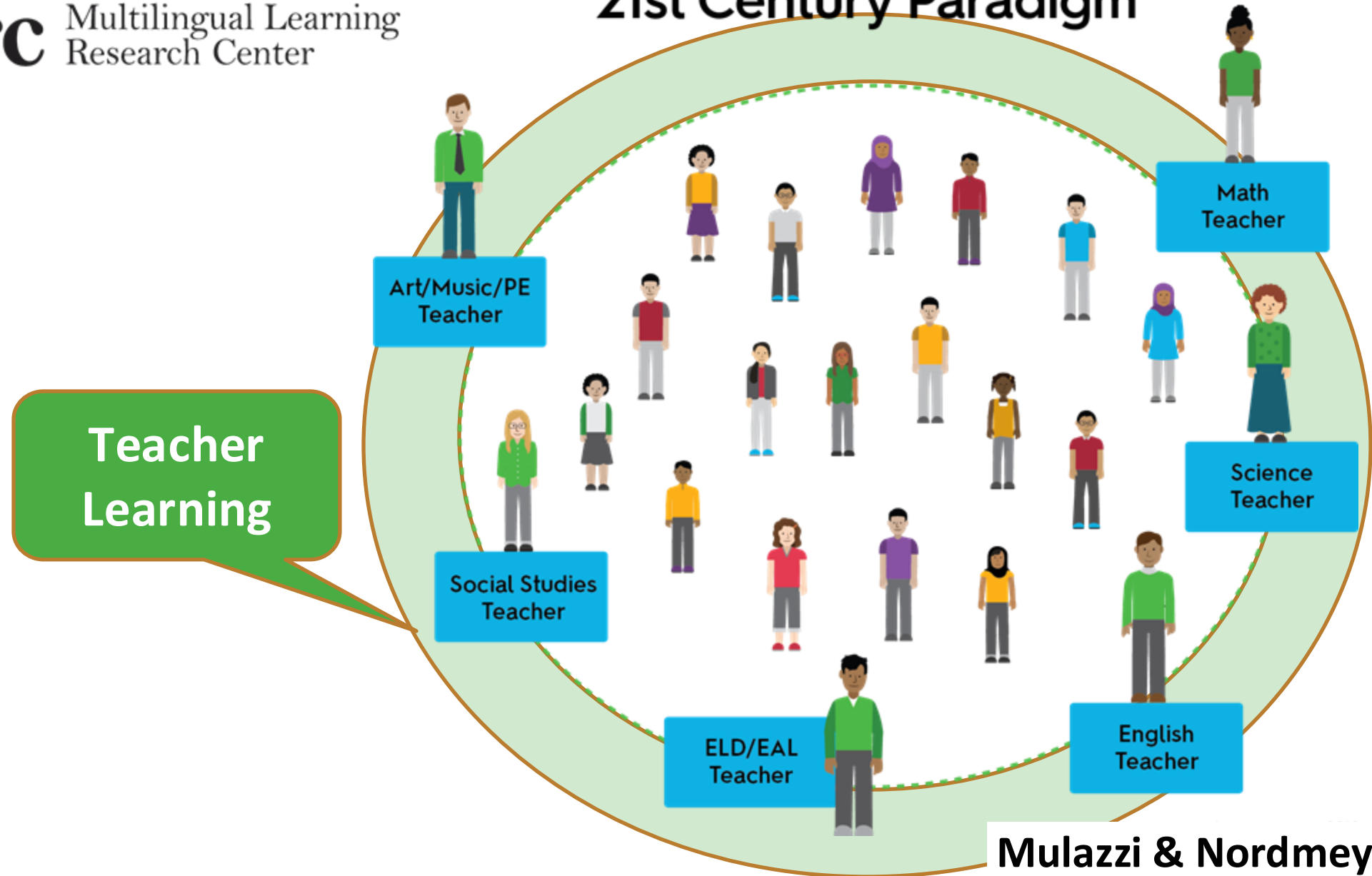
21st Century Paradigm



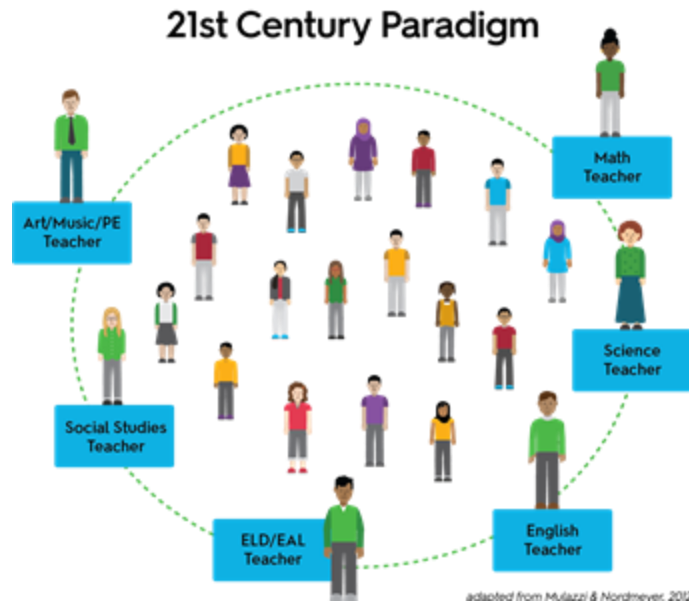
Mulazzi & Nordmeyer, 2012



21st Century Paradigm



Mulazzi & Nordmeyer, 2012

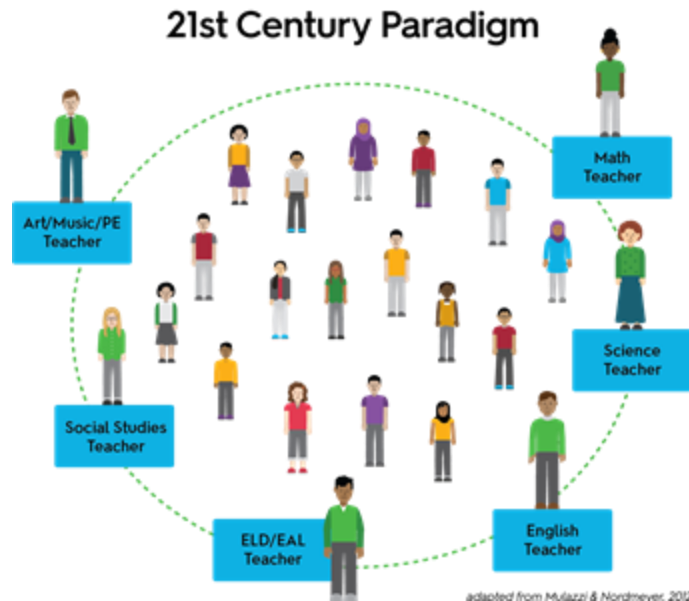


One study found that **peer learning among small groups of teachers** was the most powerful predictor of improved student achievement over time

(Jackson & Bruegmann, 2009)

Another found a significant direct effect of leadership on teacher collaboration and a **significant direct effect of collaboration on student achievement** (Goddard et al., 2010).

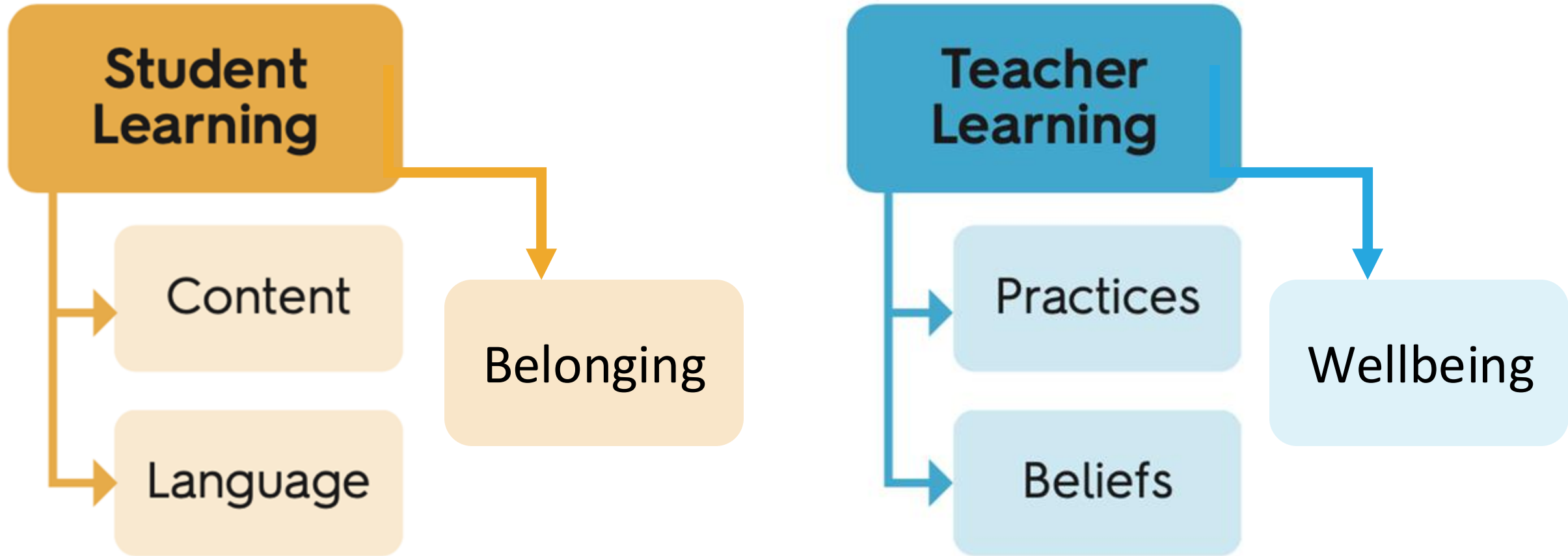
Evidence-Based Practices



Teacher collaboration between EAL specialists and classroom teachers has been linked to improved learning outcomes and engagement, particularly for multilingual learners (MLs).

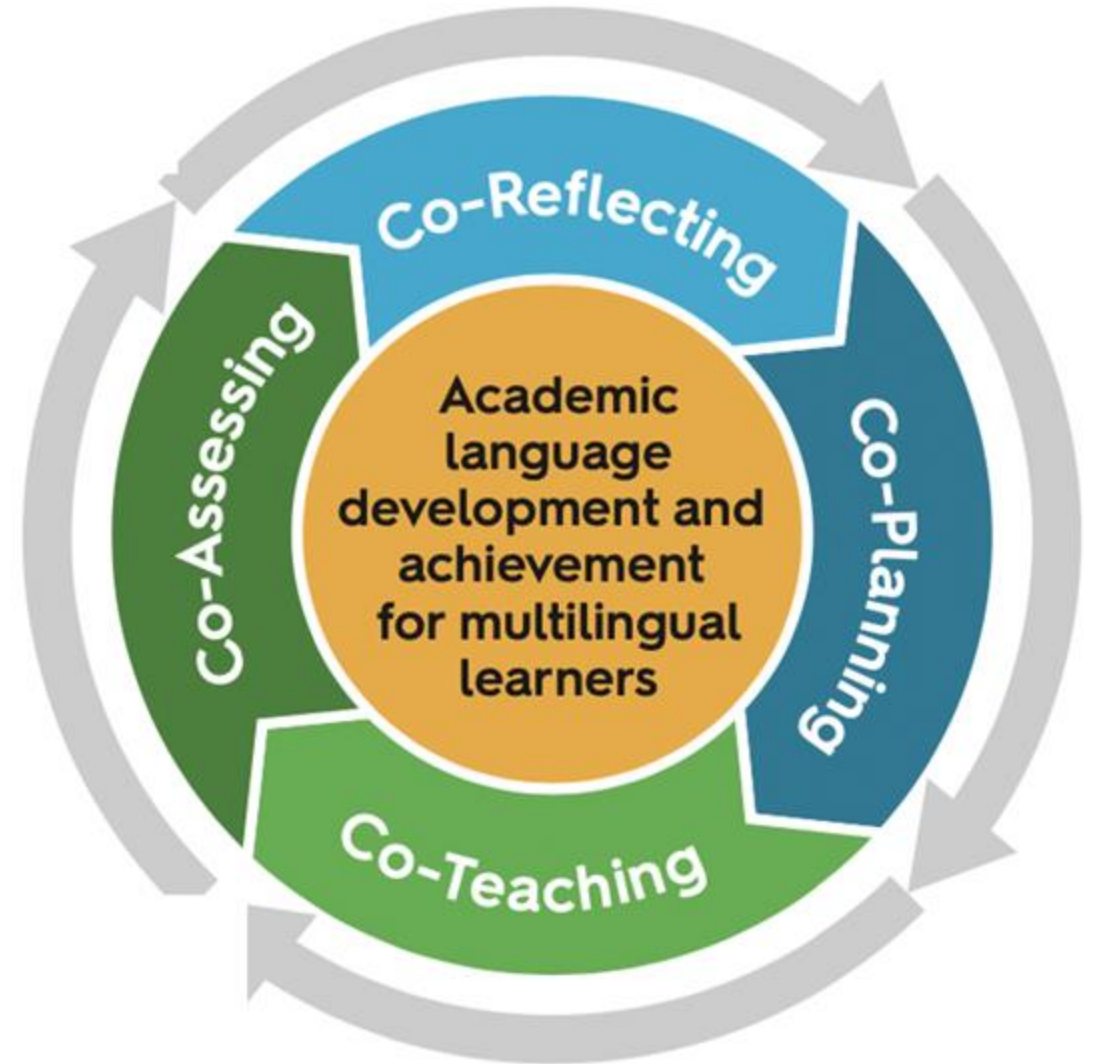
Greenberg Motamedi et al. (2019), Theoharis & O'Toole (2011)

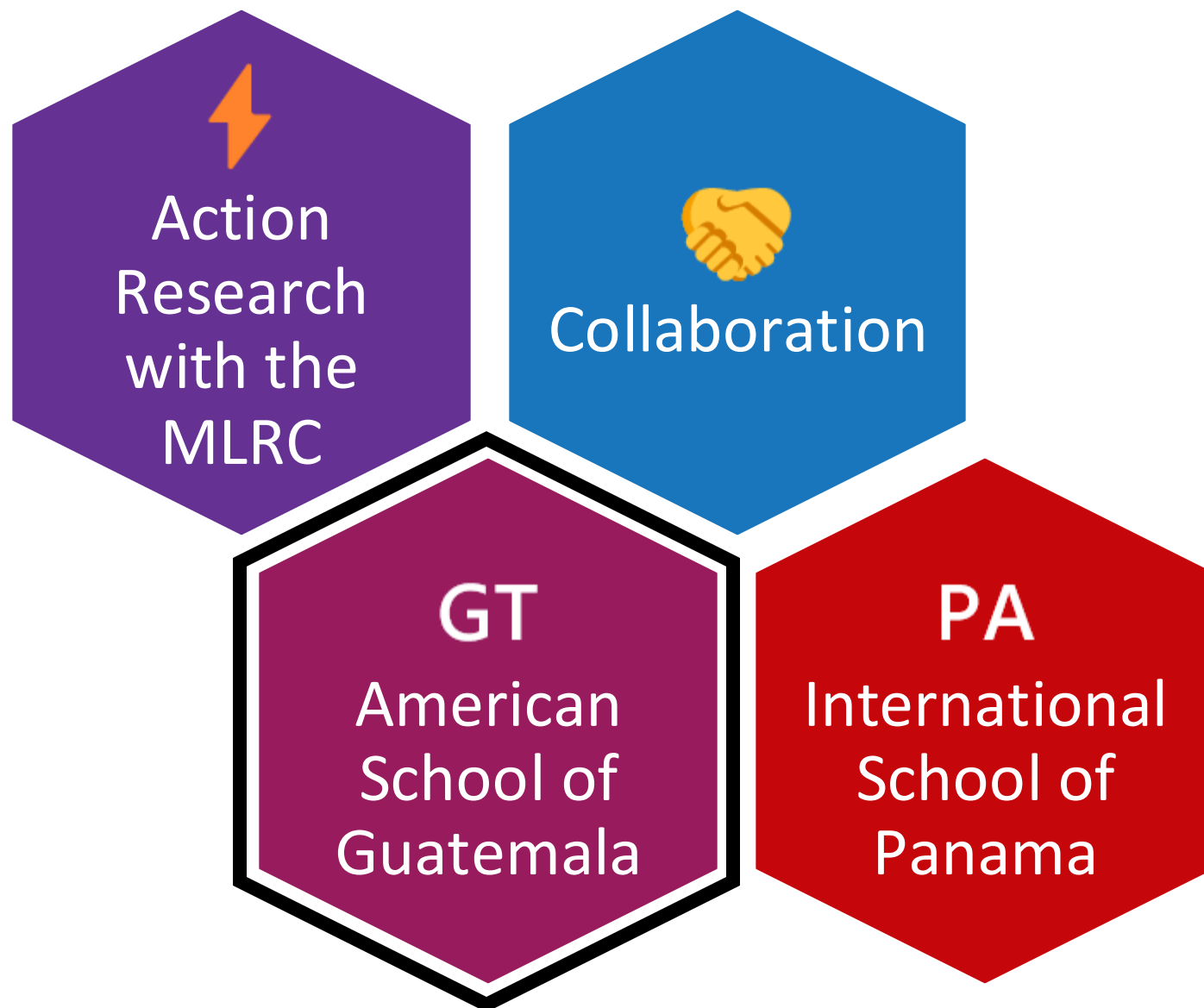
Collaboration Impacts



Thinking Beyond Co-Teaching to a Cycle of Collaboration

(Dove & Honigsfeld, 2018)





Strengthening Collaborative Teaching Practices: An Insight into Action Research

The American School of Guatemala
Kelly Hogan



Research Question:

What challenges are LS CAG faculty members experiencing in their collaborative teaching relationships?

Research Context:



Dual Language at CAG: Non-Negotiables

- Prepare students to be fluent in both Spanish and English.
- Provide literacy and content instruction to all students in English and Spanish, PK-12.
- Stay true to the language of instruction.
- Provide time for cross-linguistic connections using tools provided.



CAG CO-Teaching Model: “Better Together”

At CAG we conceptualize co-teaching as a **student-centered, collaborative** approach where two or more educators **share the responsibility of instructing** a group of students . Our model identifies 4 fundamental co-teaching practices:

Co-Planning – Co-Teaching – Co-Assessing – Co-Reflecting

Each provides an opportunity to build connection, trust, and shared responsibility.

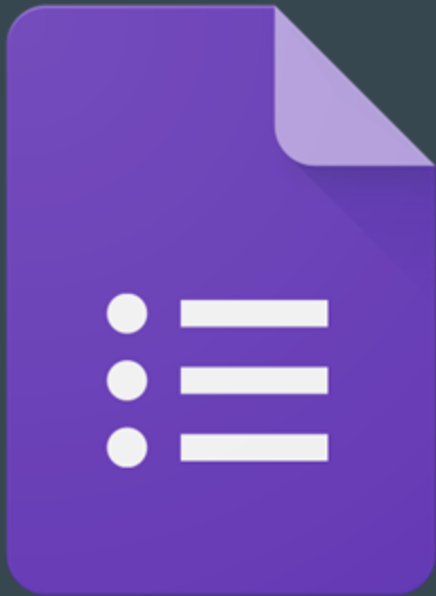
- Learning Lab
- SED Department
- Bilingual Auxiliary Teachers
- Homeroom Teachers (Spanish/English)



Methodology



Google Survey: Complete Lower School Faculty



Collaboration - Beliefs and Practices

*For the purpose of this survey **collaboration** is defined by **4 dimensions**: co-planning, co-teaching, co-assessing and co-reflecting.*

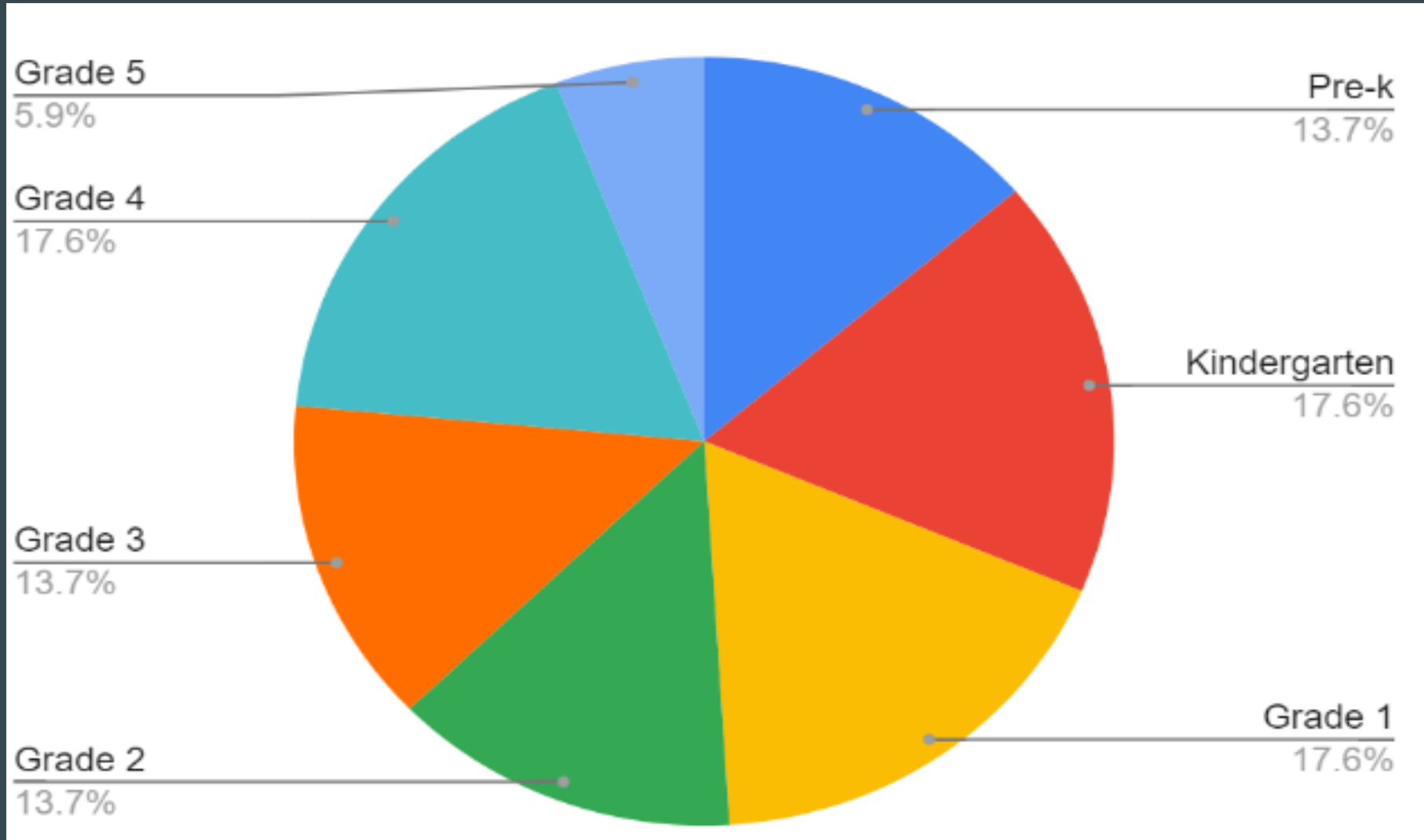
The purpose of this survey is to collect information about how our teaching community implements collaborative practices. We also hope to collect data surrounding the beliefs and barriers to collaboration that exist within our community.

Individual Interviews: Sample of Lower School Faculty

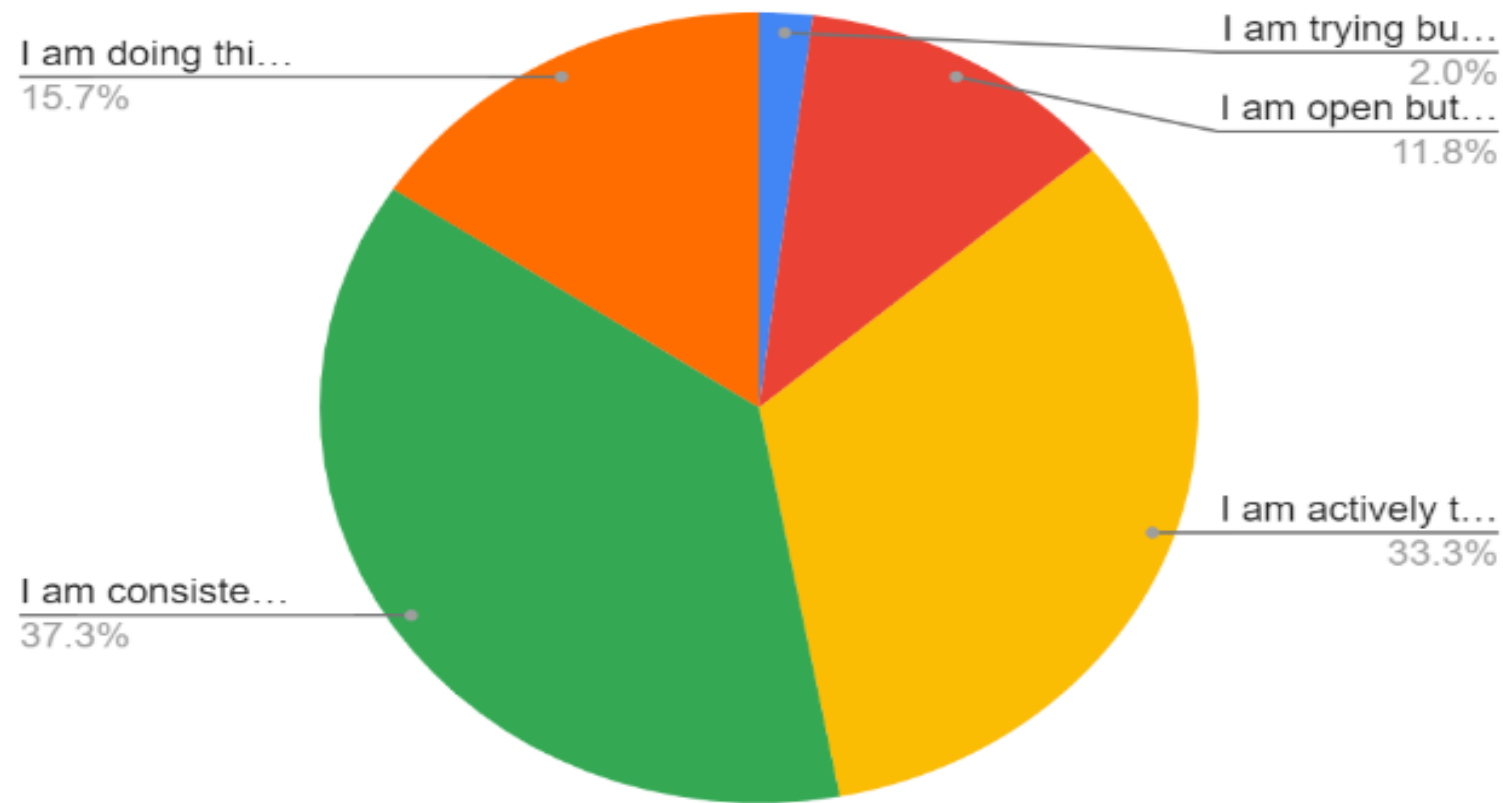
Interview Questions (make sure to pause while asking and state intent):	Role of the interviewee: Responses (looking for EXACT quotes for presentation)	
1. How do you rate yourself as a collaborator from 1-5? 1 being low 5 being high. Why?	1 2 3 4 5	
2. Who do you collaborate with?	How often do you plan?	How? Co-Plan (CP) / Co-Teach(CT) / Co-Assess (CA) / Co-Reflect (CR)
☐ Learning Specialist ☐ Homeroom teacher ☐ Grade level colleagues ☐ Bilingual ☐ Auxiliary ☐ Other Grade Level Teachers ☐ Other: _____		
3. A very important part of our research is to understand what is working well in collaboration at CAG and what isn't. Can you share an example of a very positive collaboration relationship and why? Can you share an example of a challenging collaboration relationship and why?		
Based on who we are interviewing		
4. What are you asking your collaborators to do? Or what are being asked to do as a collaborator?		
5. What is something you feel <i>is not</i> an appropriate ask of your collaborators or co teacher?		

6. How do you and your collaborators agree on and organize tasks and responsibilities? Do you use any specific tools? (Planning document?)		
Show Responsibility Chart 7. Based on these shared responsibilities, what do you feel you and members of your team collaborate on? Why those? Why not the others? What would you like to collaborate on more? And with who?	☐ Lesson/curriculum planning ☐ Creating materials ☐ Implementing interventions ☐ Discipline ☐ Assessing student learning ☐ Grading assessments ☐ Reflecting on instruction ☐ Connecting with parents	
8. What are the barriers you feel are still standing in your way as a collaborator? Why? What would help remove these barriers?		
9. Based on our research, the majority of survey respondents said that a barrier to collaboration at CAG is not having unclear and undefined roles of the members of my collaboration team. Why do you think this is a barrier? What is a strategy that you think CAG could do to tackle this barrier?		

Integrated Results:



I am trying but have not had success,yet	1
I am open but need more support (PD,admin, guidance, resources...)	6
I am actively trying and see some results	17
I am consistently doing this and am seeking out strategies to make it work	19
I am doing this daily, understand the research findings and it is my preferred teaching style	8



What do you need to feel more successful as a collaborator (co-planner, co-teacher, co-assessor, co-reflector)?

Specific collaboration blocks programed into my schedule by admin

Concrete collaboration tools (various templates, planning documents, etc.)



A model/procedure to follow

Professional development that includes real life examples (video, role play) of people collaborating (co-teaching, co-planning, co-assessing, co-reflecting)

Clear expectations on each of the four dimensions of collaboration (co-teaching, co-assessing, co-planning, co-reflecting)

Clear and defined roles of each of the members in my team that I could be collaborating with (ex: what responsibilities is each person expected to take on?)

Resources (ex: differentiated texts for reading, lesson templates, access to subscriptions, etc.)

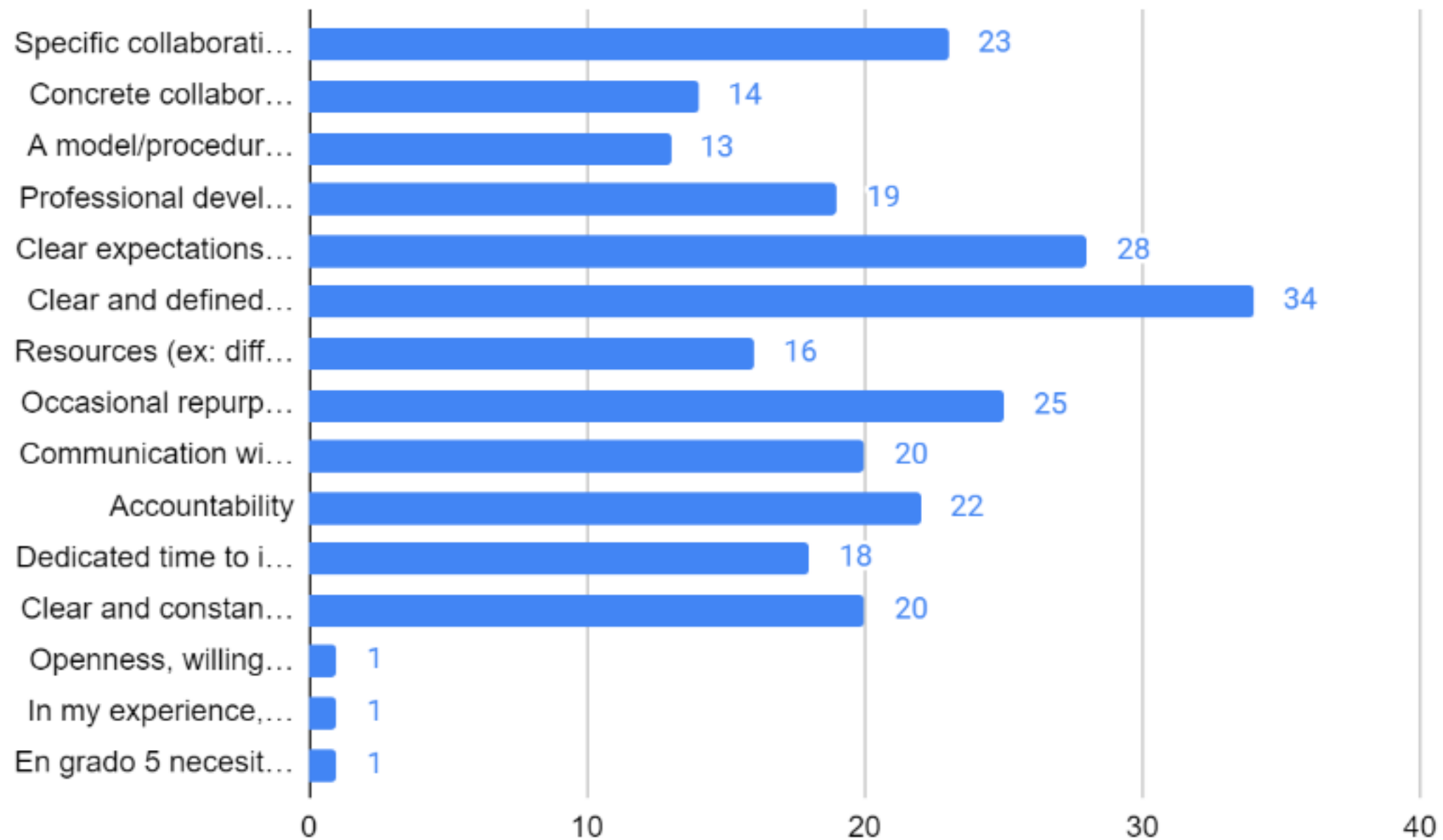
Occasional repurposed PD time for collaboration with peers

Communication with collaborators

Accountability

Dedicated time to improve interpersonal relationships with peers I should be collaborating with

Clear and constant support from admin on practicing and maintaining effective collaboration



Post Research



Looking Forward

In response to the most commonly stated barriers to successful collaboration:

- Frequent PD on varied roles/expectations, being required to read the job descriptions of others, modeling of roles in the classroom, admin support for accountability of roles
- Dedicated PD time to team building activities throughout the school year, scheduled planning time (as set by admin.) to ensure all team members are considered/included, admin check-ins during team meetings to be more aware of teams that are struggling and may need support
- Utilizing the documents and shared responsibility charts that already exist to guide conversations about collaboration expectations



Access Co-
Teaching Handbook

***Shared Responsibilities...**

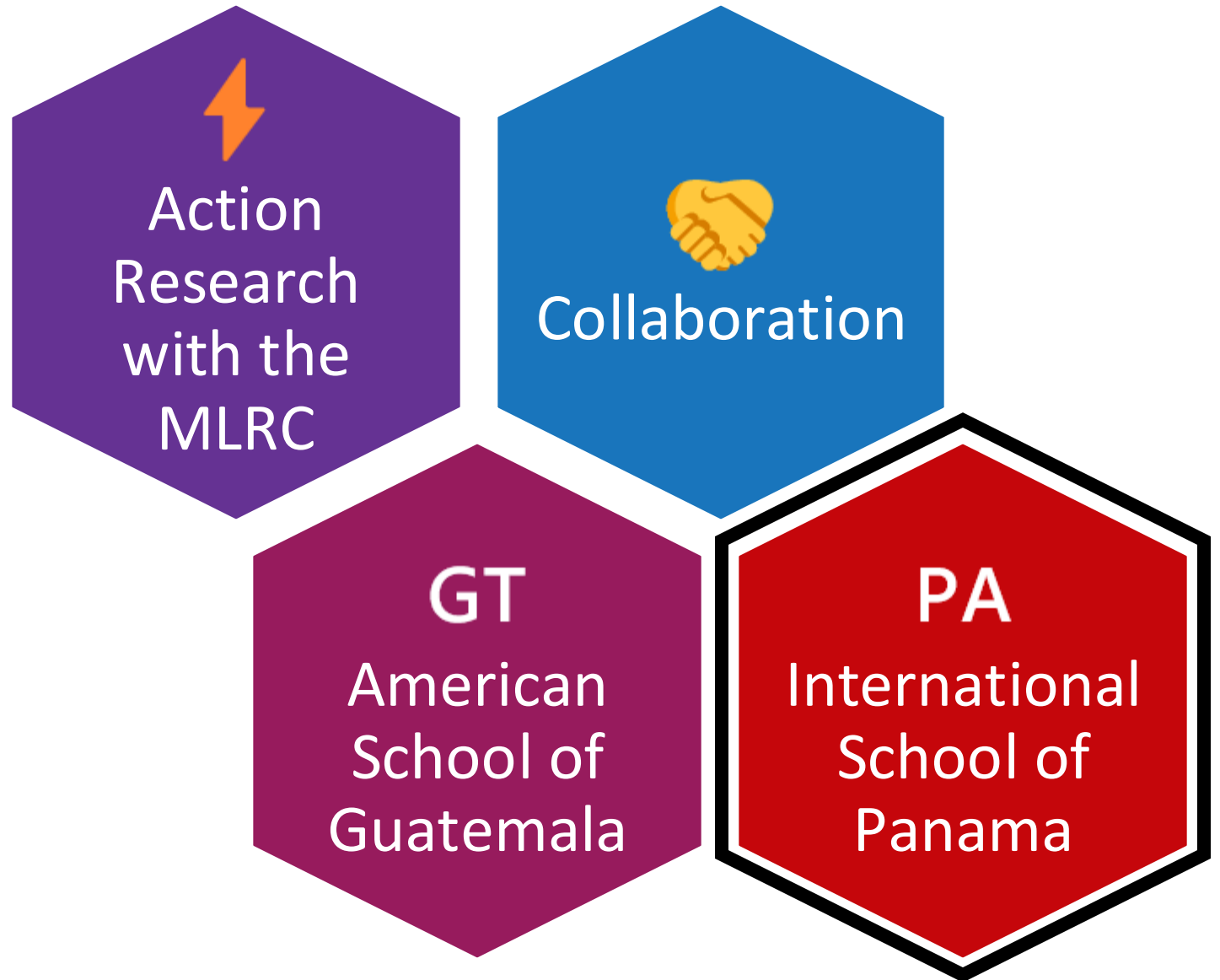
1. Lesson/curriculum planning
2. Creating materials
3. Implementing interventions
4. Discipline
5. Assessing student learning
6. Grading assessments
7. Reflecting on instruction
8. Connecting with parents

Thank you - Questions?



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ISP Context

Primary language
of instruction is
English

Emerging support
for all student
languages

ES: Spanish classes
2x weekly for 85
minutes

MS/HS: Spanish
classes 70-75
minutes every
other day

ES: EAL support
push-in model

MS: EAL push-in
model + EAL class

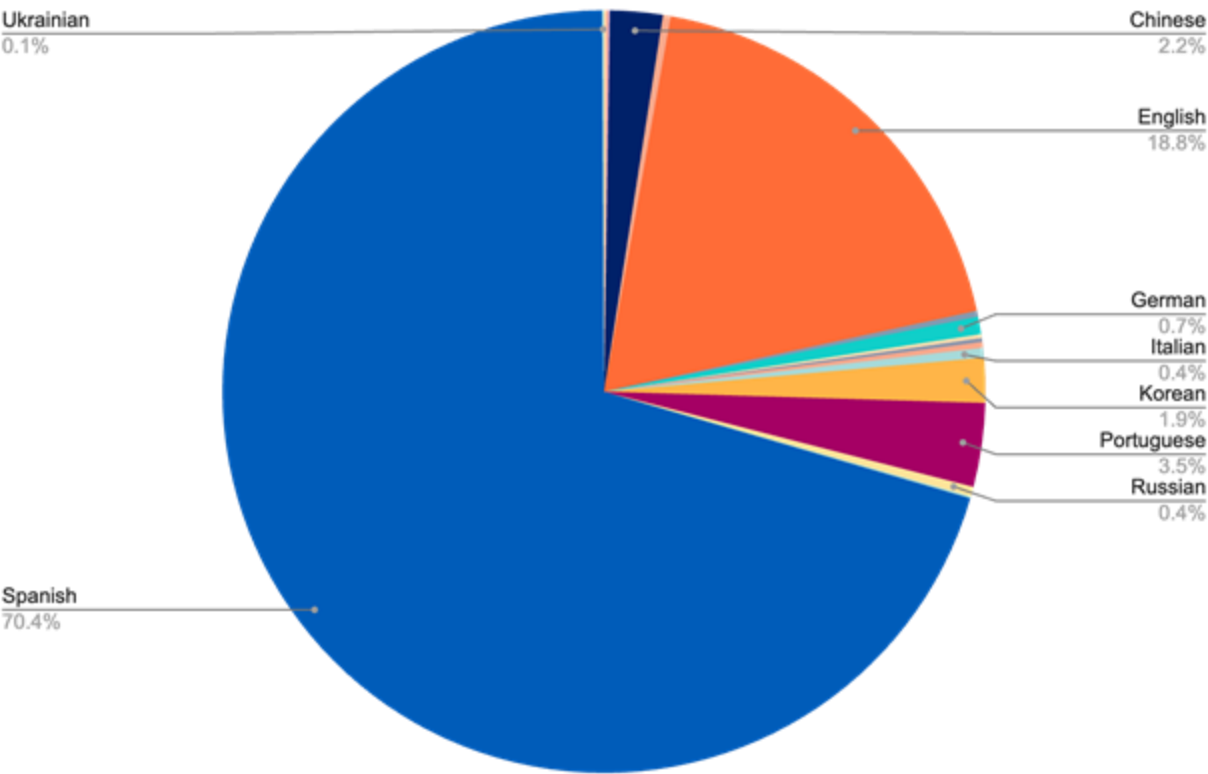
HS: EAL class



Afrikaans	0.08
Arabic	0.08
Catalan	0.08
Chinese	2.23
Dutch	0.33
English	18.80
French	0.25
German	0.74
Greek	0.16
Hebrew	0.16
Hindi	0.25
Italian	0.41
Korean	1.90
Portuguese	3.54
Russian	0.41
Serbian	0.08
Spanish	70.40
Ukrainian	0.08

18 primary languages, 24 languages in total

Primary student languages



Research question: What improvements can we make to our schedule to increase collaboration opportunities and co-teaching effectiveness?



Implementation focus 1

Common, consistent co-planning time

Initial proposal

Wednesday afternoon
co-planning for 40
minutes

No other school
meetings during this time

Year 1: ES and MS
implementation

Year 2: HS
implementation

Lesson learned: focus
where there is buy-in



Semester 2				
Week of:	Team Meetings Leader: Admin or CIC + planning meeting	Specialists & Spanish Meetings Leader: Admin or CIC + planning meeting	Wednesday Collaboration 3:15 - 3:45	Friday 1:30-2:30 Prof Lrng or Curric Work 2:30-3:15 Flex Time
May 5th	Lectura Assessments (K) and MAP Testing (2-5)			
	ES: Curriculum & Instruction	Student Review Teams	PK: Collaboration ES: Collaboration	Divisional PK: Playdate ES: Classlists intro and data entry
May 12th	mClass and Lectura Assessments and ES Musical			
	ES: Admin (review classlist drafts)	Curriculum & Instruction	PK :Collaboration ES: Collaboration	Divisional: PK: WIN Block Eval ES: Classlists Final
May 19th	ES: Curriculum & Instruction	Admin	PK:Collaboration ES: Collaboration	Curriculum Alignment PK & ES: English/Writing/DSS Alignment

Wednesday Collaboration Time

Teams determined focus based on their grade level needs.

2024–2025 Collaboration



Goal: Enhance our teaching practices using the ISP Way as a guide to positively impact student learning.

Purpose aligned with the ISP Way:

Mindset

- We believe all students are OUR students.

Collaboration

- We engage in opportunities to learn together and share resources with a variety of colleagues.
- We seek opportunities to co-plan and co-teach with colleagues.

Location: Team Lead's Classroom

Collaboration Teams:

- Spanish
- Specialists
- Grade Levels (with grade level teachers, LAs, EAL and LS)



ES Collaboration - Beg of Year Survey (24/25)

This year we are moving forward with weekly collaboration time on Wednesdays. Our hope with this collaboration time is that we will have the opportunity to work together to enhance our practices to further impact student learning. This survey is an important first step in our collaborative work this year and we'd greatly appreciate your time and thoughts.



ES Collaboration - End of Year Survey (24/25)

As we enter 4th quarter and begin to wrap up the year, we want to reflect on our weekly collaboration time and how we can improve it for next year. Our goal is to make this time more meaningful and effective in strengthening our practices to better support student learning. Your feedback will help us refine our collaboration time moving forward, and we truly appreciate your time and input!



International
School of Panama

Beginning the year collaboration thoughts

summary of the 3 most common concerns



Time Constraints:
Teachers need more dedicated time for meaningful collaboration amid competing responsibilities



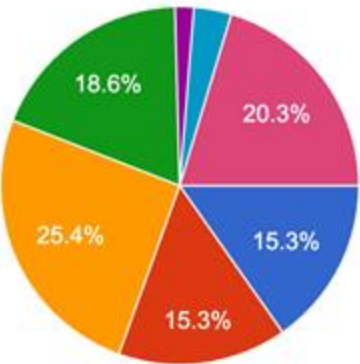
Inclusivity:
Learning Assistants (LAs) need to be active participants for effective collaboration



Differentiation Needed:
Current approach may focus too much on core students, overlooking advanced and specialized needs

Last year, how much time do you have for collaboration each week? (for returning staff members)
59 responses

Beginning of the Year

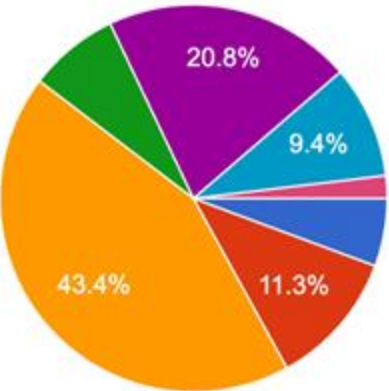


- 0-15 mins
- 15-30 mins
- 30-45 mins
- 45-60 mins
- 60-90 mins
- 90-120 mins
- Not applicable

49.9%
30 mins or more

This year, how much time have you had for collaboration each week?
53 responses

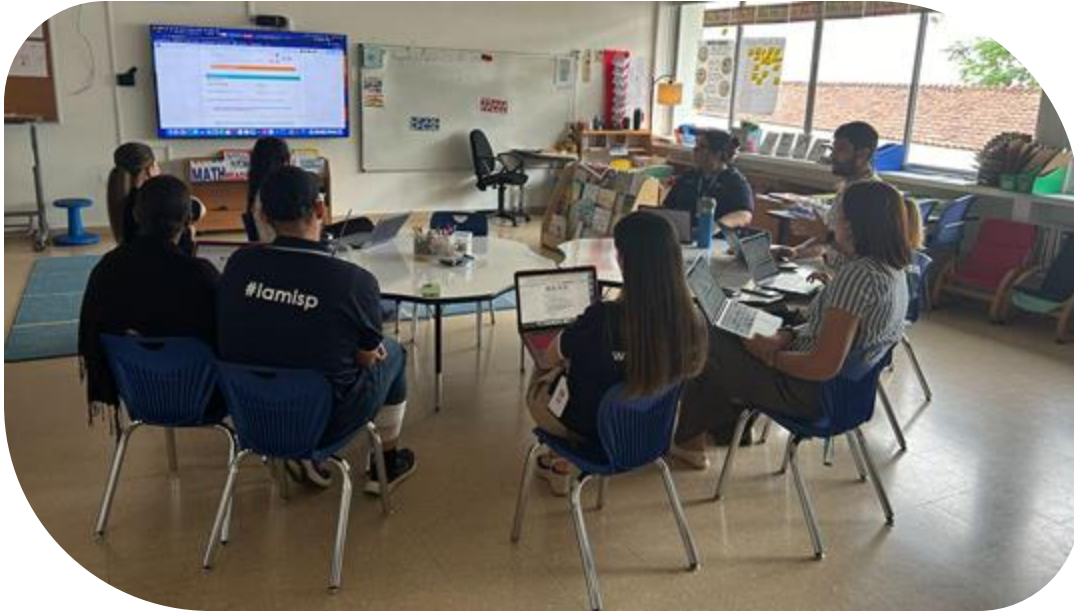
End of the year



- 0-15 mins
- 15-30 mins
- 30-45 mins
- 45-60 mins
- 60-90 mins
- 90-120 mins
- Not applicable

81.1%
30 mins or more

Collaboration in Action



Homeroom Teachers

Learning Assistants

EAL Teachers

Inclusion Learning Assistants

Learning Support Teachers



Implementation focus 2

Co-teaching model

Elementary School English acquisition:

- Transition from a pull-out to push in model for English acquisition
- Students with emerging English proficiency clustered into cohorts
- EAL teachers co-teach in 2 classroom per grade 2 days a week



Implementation focus 2

Co-teaching model

Elementary School Spanish

- Transition from pull-out to push-in rotation stations for all Spanish proficiency levels
- Two co-teachers
- Students with emerging Spanish proficiency clustered in cohorts
- Exception: 3rd-5th grade newcomers small group pull-out for 8 weeks



Implementation focus 2

Co-teaching model

Middle school English language acquisition:

- EAL and learning support teachers co-teach across content areas (math/science, ELA/social studies)
- Students who are acquiring English also have an EAL block
- WIN blocks 2x a week



Implementation focus 2

Co-teaching model

Middle school Spanish language acquisition:

- Spanish as an additional language is a separate class for learners at a beginning or intermediate level
- Co-teacher in grade level class to support advanced language learners



Implementation focus 3

Empowering co-teaching relationships

Types of co-teachers

classroom teacher with
learning assistant

classroom teacher with
specialist teacher

Guidelines and Support

ISP Way (internal
teaching guide)
Language policy
Co-teaching handbook



ispway.softtr.app



International
School of Panama

Research question: What improvements can we make to our schedule to increase collaboration opportunities and co-teaching effectiveness?



Outcomes



“One of the most meaningful aspects of collaboration time this year was how it **brought us closer together as a team**. We shared ideas, activities, and feedback with empathy and a **common goal**. The open and positive communication among us made it easier to **understand each other’s perspectives** and work more effectively. The spirit of teamwork and mutual support **made our planning more purposeful and impactful.**”

Based on the EOY feedback, the key collaboration strengths were:

1. Dedicated meeting times including all team members
2. Flexibility in how collaboration time was used
3. Effective shared planning for specialized activities
4. Resource and idea sharing that improved instruction
5. Team bonding that fostered trust and open communication

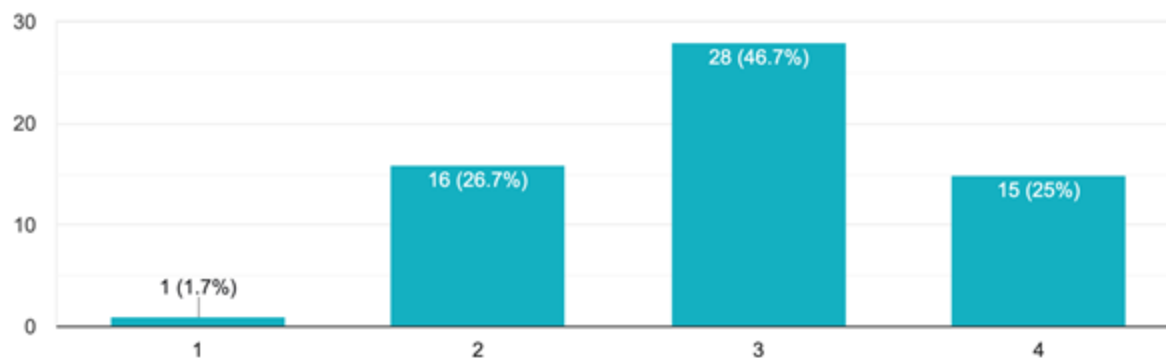


Outcomes

Beginning of Year

On a scale of 1-4, rate the effectiveness of collaboration at ISP on impacting teaching practices.

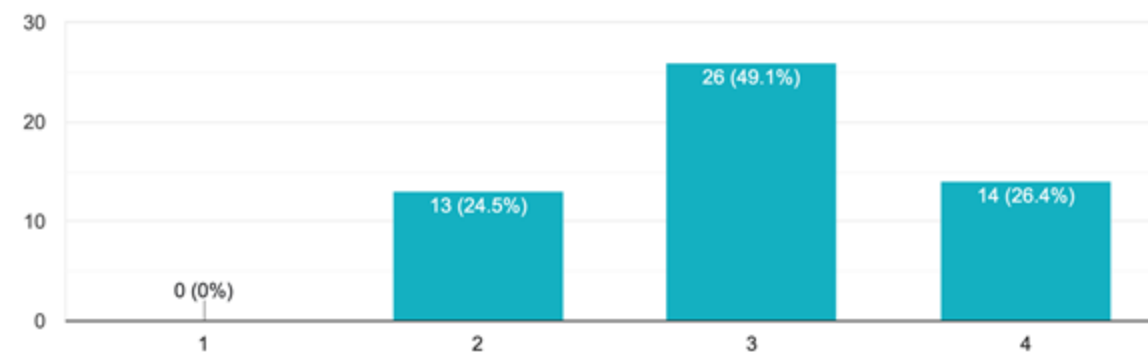
60 responses



End of the year

On a scale of 1-4, rate the effectiveness of collaboration at ISP on impacting teaching practices.

53 responses



Outcomes

- Increase in leadership awareness for the need to co-plan and co-teach
- Improvement in co-teacher communication and planning
- Student improvement for inclusion and belonging
- Early years: improved literacy outcomes and reduction of students needing additional linguistic support



Next Steps

Analyze academic data
to measure
effectiveness

Finalize co-teaching
handbook and provide
professional learning

Continue to collect
feedback from faculty

Expand to high school



Research question:

What improvements can we make to our schedule to increase collaboration opportunities and co-teaching effectiveness?

Implementation Focus Areas:

1. Common, consistent co-planning time
2. Co-teaching model
3. Empowering co-teaching relationships

The MLRC School Network



Access

Research-based tools for professional learning *to build knowledge and skills in teaching MLs*

Improvement

Collaborative inquiry *to identify assets, provide feedback and set school goals for serving MLs*

Action

School-based action research, implementation and dissemination *to build collective efficacy*

Insights

Shared investigation across schools *to create new knowledge about teaching MLs*

Collaborate.

Discover.

Transform.

How can our school get involved?

- ✓ Join the MLRC School Network
- ✓ Explore the MLRC Online Research Hub
- ✓ Partner with us for School Improvement
- ✓ Send a team to a Research Symposium
- ✓ Present or publish your work!





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Questions?

Thank you!

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