

**Building a Network for Action: Collaborative Dialogue for Educators'  
Professional Learning in BC  
BC Education Collaborative: November 3, 2017**

Twenty-five individuals gathered to further the conversation and delineate next steps in moving the conversation regarding quality professional learning forward in BC. The day was co-planned by members of the BC Education Collaborative who were able to attend the meetings. Each organization was given the opportunity to send representatives in order for all to have a voice. It was an energizing dynamic dialogue with thought leaders providing input from varied perspectives.

Carol Campbell provided an overview of the Canadian Study. Sue Elliott and Rod Allen [both members of the Canadian Advisory Committee] provided a context for the day, an overview of the BC Case study, and ideas to ponder: What learning and support will be required to ready our students entering K - for graduation in 2030??

The three questions in the conclusion of the BC Case Study are intended to further the conversation about enabling and challenging conditions and as potential points of comparison and contrast with neighbouring Canadian provinces.

Each table had a facilitator. Groups re-organized for each question. The following notes are a summary from what the table group facilitators reported out.

**Discussion 1: “How might educational organizations more effectively identify, share and learn from the many promising practices, currently in play throughout BC’s geographic regions, and across role groups – whose participants encompass not only teachers and administrators but also school business officials, trustees, and higher education faculty?”**

**BIG IDEAS** emerged from the introductory conversation:

- How to identify and set criteria for ‘promising practices’ - what to profile
- Requires a process
- Be clear on the ‘End in Mind’
- Agency and flexibility are important’
- Important to ‘grow from what we are learning’ – think differently
- Professionalism is important
- Silos and competition are issues
- Need for cross role conversations
- AND to go deeper
- Important to start where we are
- Quality content is important
- Trust is key
- Research based practices are important
- Keep it simple
- Need to find spaces and stories in our networks for this work

**Perspectives on how to IDENTIFY, SHARE and LEARN FROM promising practices** were abundant. Asking students: “what is working for you?” and honouring diversity of roles in the conversation were key elements, as well as valuing the importance of shared language, and evidence that the professional learning impacts students.

Participants valued sharing conversations in a myriad of contexts that honour cross role/diversity and networks, ensuring that we share the metrics we are using and asking questions. We can learn from promising practices where there is evidence that it works by examining the process being used in what’s working. Being exposed to other ideas and inquiring if the PD / Professional learning is it aligned, coherent and sustainable, and if it activates awareness, engage/pulls us in, supports implementation was discussed. Learn from whether the practice ‘legitimizes’ the individual, and there is positive agency.

**Discussion 2: “ Having identified time and resources as systemic obstacles to achieving high-quality, sustainable professional learning experiences, how might BC’s professional learning communities respond in organizational, material and policy terms to address these disabling conditions?”**

**In the discussion of TIME and RESOURCES** worthy of note were the conversations that called for creating new realities, a mind shift regarding where and how learning occurs AND that it is important for folks to have their work legitimized, have agency. The system needs to be behind teachers. Time is a resource – want high quality. Lunch and learn, district support to augment knowledge and skills, UBC MOOKS using own time and space, asynchronous and reduced workload for new teachers were some of the resources suggested.

**Discussion 3: “How might professional learning stakeholders work collaboratively toward improving systemic coherence and alignment while acknowledging and respecting the diversity of individual and educators’ needs, contexts, and aspirations?”**

**MOVING FORWARD COLLABORATIVELY** with designer mindsets was core to creating shifts – and coherence. Being strategic re strategies to use is part of the designer’s mindset. The needs to soften roles and to focus on the end in mind – clarity of purpose - were key in the conversations. How to meet and talk together with diversity, and about where learning ‘lives’, who is leading and ‘invited’ to the learning were discussed.

- Wellness and being ready to learn are important
- Work with quality learners / educators – not get stuck with ‘definitions’
- Strong teachers – get out of the way
- Get to the classroom [listen to teachers]
- Identify commonalities
- Layer based learning – use same language

- A layered partnership with clarity is key – create a ‘magnetic field’
- Professional agency is core
- What’s worth fighting for?

The conversation also surfaced using the curriculum for student learners for adult learners - understand the learning experience. The new BC curriculum provides cause to reflect on what’s important and unique? Look for alignment through the curriculum. Also look at and align to the Truth and Reconciliation work.

**The NEXT STEPS conversation** suggested that we ‘go through the recycling bin’ and look at what occurred inside BCELC that worked to bring groups together and share effective practice. It is important to keep the conversation going and decide what tools to use to share information. Have commitment – stay at the table. Be part of the conversation.

Recommendations:

1. Report out collective thinking to our partner groups.
2. Engage next ‘circle’ – communities of learners – ours and other groups within our spheres of influence.
3. Set up a collective network repository – commit to putting achievements and failures (?) up. Tell OUR STORIES [as Pasi talked about last December]. Feed into a loop – repetition and new ideas [Bruce B’s work]
4. Bring back to the collaborative
5. Put into a final report for:
  - Nov 3 participants,
  - Carol and her research team and the Advisory Committee,
  - Other Canadian Affiliates,
  - Use in further conversations building a Canadian network, and
  - Use in Orlando at the Learning Forward Conference.

Aspects to consider:

- Who are the leaders?
- What’s the role of the Ministry in quality professional learning? [Note: they were not able to attend on Nov 3 due to other commitments].
- Terminology – need further discussion to ensure understanding [on coherence and alignment]

This summary will be shared with participants at the November 3 session, Carol Campbell and her team, the Ontario Affiliate in order to explore common ground in our mutual conversations from the Canadian Study as we move forward in a Canadian conversation, and in pertinent meetings at the Learning Forward Orlando Conference.

