



**THE TEACHER LEARNING AND  
LEADERSHIP PROGRAM:  
Research Report  
2013-2014**

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*with*

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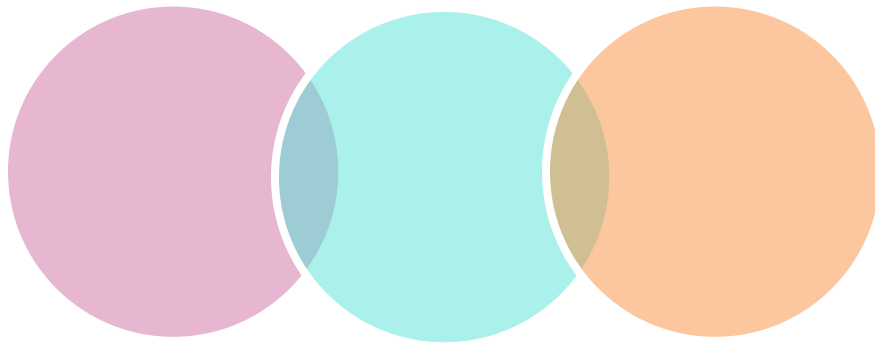
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## THE TEACHER LEARNING & LEADERSHIP PROGRAM Research Report 2013-2014

### BACKGROUND

Following completion of an initial Teacher Learning and Leadership Program (TLLP) research study and report (Campbell, Lieberman & Yashkina, 2013a, b), a subsequent study was developed by the research team in discussion with the Ontario Teachers' Federation (OTF) and the Ontario Ministry of Education (Ministry). This document provides a report on the research currently in process and emerging findings (1 October, 2013 – 30 April, 2014).

Our overarching research questions are:

1. What are the impacts of TLLP projects for:
  - a. Teachers' professional learning?
  - b. Teachers' knowledge, skills and practices?
  - c. Teachers' leadership skills and experiences?
  - d. Other adults affected by the TLLP projects?
  - e. Student engagement and learning?
2. How is learning being shared beyond the TLLP project team?
  - a. What approaches to sharing learning are being used?
  - b. How does the sharing of learning affect participants?
  - c. What approaches appear to support the spread of knowledge and changes in practice?
  - d. What approaches appear to support implementation and sustainability of improvements in practice?
  - e. What successes can be identified?

- f. What challenges are encountered? And how can they be mitigated?
  - g. What is unique about the TLLP approach for knowledge exchange and sharing of successful practices?
3. What longer-term impacts of participating in TLLP projects can be identified?

## REPORT ON PROGRESS: OCTOBER 2013 – APRIL 2014

### 1. RESEARCH COMPLETED

#### 1.1 TLLP Projects Cohorts 5 and 6: Analysis of Approved Projects and TLLP Final Reports

All teachers receiving funding for a TLLP project must complete a TLLP Teacher Participant Final Report Form using a standard template format plus supporting evidence. We proposed to update the analysis of TLLP cohort data for approved projects and for Final Reports by examining descriptive data about applications approved and from analysis of a sample of Final Reports for cohorts 5 onwards. In 2013-2014, we analyzed data for Cohorts 5 and 6. The sampling, coding and analyses of Cohorts 5-6 data were consistent with the procedures developed for the Cohorts 1-4 data (see Campbell, Lieberman & Yashkina, 2013b). We use also a similar reporting format and make comparisons across all of the Cohorts where it is possible and/or of particular interest.

##### 1.1.1 Methods

First, we conducted a descriptive analysis of all TLLP approved projects in Cohorts 5 and 6, involving a total of 164 projects.

**Table 1: Total Number of TLLP Final Reports (20011-2013)**

Cohort	English Public	English Catholic	French Public	French Catholic	English/French	Public/Catholic	School Authorities	Total
Cohort 5	42	36	2	4	78/6	44/40	2	86
Cohort 6	37	37	0	2	74/2	37/39	2	78
Total	229	190	11	24	419/35	240/214	12	466

Second, using suggestions from the OTF and Ministry and the sampling criteria developed previously, we selected a purposive sample of 20% of the final reports (total of 33 projects) for more in-depth analysis of the projects undertaken and the reported successes, challenges and overall impacts. A detailed coding structure was utilized to analyze the reports in relation to our overall research questions and connected to the goals of TLLP. The sampling criteria included: representative distribution across English Public, English Catholic, French Public, French Catholic, and School Authorities; elementary and secondary schools; regional distribution; size of project in terms of dollars and also in terms of people on teams; range of types of project theme; and variations in volume and quality of final reports. The features of the sample are as follows:

*By Board Type:* All board types are represented in the total sample. However, there were no projects from a French Public board in Cohort 6.

**Table 2: Sample of 33 TLLP Project Final Reports by Board Type**

Sample	Cohort 5	Cohort 6	Total
Total	17 out of 86	16 out of 78	33 out of 164
English Catholic	5 out of 36	5 out of 37	10 out of 73
English Public	8 out of 42	8 out of 37	16 out of 79
French Catholic	2 out of 4	2 out of 2	4 out of 6
French Public	1 out of 2	0 out of 0	1 out of 2
School Authorities	1 out of 2	1 out of 2	2 out of 4

*By Region:* All regions are represented in the sample. At least one region is represented in each Cohort. In total: six TLLP projects from Ottawa, six TLLP projects from Barrie, seven TLLP projects from London, five TLLP projects from GTA, six TLLP projects from Sudbury, and two TLLP projects from Thunder Bay.

*By Team Size:* A wide range of TLLP team sizes is represented in the sample. The number of people on a TLLP team ranged from 1 to over 50.

**Table 3: Sample of 33 TLLP Project Final Reports by Team Size**

Team Size	Cohort 5 17 projects	Cohort 6 16 projects	Total 33 projects
Range	1-6	1 - 50	1-50
Single (1 person)	3	2	5
Small team (2-4 people)	11	10	21
Medium team (5-10 people)	3	3	6
Large team (>11 people)	0	1	1

*By Budget Size:* A wide range of budget sizes is represented in the sample.

**Table 4: Sample of TLLP Project Final Reports by Budget Size**

Budget Size	Cohort 5 17 projects	Cohort 6 16 projects	Total 33 projects
Range	\$5,868 - \$41,965	\$4,520 - \$59,331	\$4,520 - \$59,331
Small ( $\leq$ \$10,000)	7	3	10
Medium (\$10,000<X<\$50,000)	9	11	20
Large ( $\geq$ \$50,000)	0	2	2

*By Panel:* Both types of grade levels (elementary and secondary) as well as cross-panel projects are represented in the sample for each Cohort.



**Table 5: Sample of TLLP Project Final Reports by Panel**

Panel	Cohort 5 17 projects	Cohort 6 16 projects	Total 33 projects
Elementary	11	9	20
Secondary	3	4	7
Both	3	3	6

## 1.1.2 Results

### 1.1.2.1 Project Description

#### All Projects in Cohorts 5 & 6 (2011 – 2013)

Each project in Cohorts 5 and 6 submitted a Teacher Participant Final Report including project information, project goals and successes, professional learning, project sharing, challenges and projected learning and impact beyond the TLLP funding. We conducted a descriptive analysis of all 164 Final Reports from Cohorts 5 and 6; we report results of this analysis, alongside previously reported results for the first four Cohorts to allow for comparison and further analysis.

**Table 6: Cohort 1 – 6: Total Approved Projects by Board Type**

Cohort	English Public	English Catholic	French Public	French Catholic	English/French	Public/Catholic	School Authorities	Total
Cohort 1	42	30	1	3	72/4	43/33	3	79
Cohort 2	35	28	1	5	63/6	36/33	0	69
Cohort 3	32	31	3	6	63/9	35/37	2	74
Cohort 4	41	28	4	4	69/8	45/32	3	80
Cohort 5	42	36	2	4	78/6	44/40	2	86
Cohort 6	37	37	0	2	74/2	37/39	2	78
<b>Total</b>	<b>229</b>	<b>190</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>419/35</b>	<b>240/214</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>466</b>

As indicated in Table 6, a total of 466 projects were conducted during the first six TLLP Cohorts. Although there has been a slight fluctuation, an average of 78 projects was funded per year. Projects have been funded across the publicly funded education systems in Ontario. The majority of TLLP projects have been in the English sector; whereas the number of French sector projects is significantly smaller. There are even fewer French sector projects conducted in the last two Cohorts, especially in Cohort 6 with only 2 such projects funded.

The projects range considerably in size, in terms of the number of people involved in the project team as well the size of the project budget. In Cohorts 5 and 6, the number of people on the team ranged from 1 to 50; nevertheless, the majority of projects (75%) were small-team projects which involved 2 to 4 people. This finding is consistent with what we observed before in Cohorts 1 through 4 where 70% of projects involved small teams. Single person projects remains an important feature of TLLP as well, with 13% of such projects conducted in Cohorts 5-6, compared to 17% in Cohorts 1-4. At the other end of the scale, in Cohorts 5 and 6, 2% of projects involved more than 10 people (compared to 3% in Cohorts 1-4) and 10% of projects involved 5 to 10 team members (similarly, 10% of projects involved 5 to 10 team members in Cohorts 1-4). As outlined in Table 7, the average number of people on the project team remains approximately four, despite a variation in the number throughout the years (which is mostly due to outliers – a small number of very large projects funded in some years but not the others). Overall, these findings show no significant changes in TLLP team size across the 6 Cohorts. It is important to note these numbers of TLLP participants refer to identified TLLP group applicant members. This does not include the much wider array and number of people potentially affected by a TLLP project.

**Table 7: Cohort 1 – 6: Total Approved Projects by Project Size (Number of People on the Team and Budget Size)**

Cohort	People Sum	People Average	\$ Sum	\$ Average
Cohort 1	158	2	\$982,051	\$12,341
Cohort 2	406	5.9	\$818,006	\$11,855
Cohort 3	350	4.7	\$1,125,308	\$15,207
Cohort 4	342	4.3	\$1,257,925	\$15,724
Cohort 5	373	3	\$1,231,079	\$14,315
Cohort 6	255	4.8	\$1,301,929	\$16,691
<b>Total</b>	<b>1,884</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>\$6,716,298</b>	<b>\$14,412</b>

According to Table 7, the overall expenditure on TLLP projects has increased, with the highest reported in the last Cohort analyzed in our current research (Cohort 6). The highest average per project budget is also observed in Cohort 6. However, there is a considerable range in per project budgets with about a third of projects (in both Cohorts 1-4 and Cohorts 5-6) receiving less than \$10,000 contrasted with six projects (four in Cohorts 1-4 and two in Cohorts 5-6) receiving over \$50,000. The majority of projects (about two thirds in all Cohorts) received between \$10,000 and \$50,000.

**Table 8: Cohort 1 – 6: Total Approved Projects by Project Theme (Rank Order)**

Theme	Cohort 1	Cohort 2	Cohort 3	Cohort 4	Cohort 5	Cohort 6	Total
Differentiated Instruction	26	17	34	33	42	38	190
Technology	22	19	29	23	37	41	171
Literacy	38	22	21	15	26	26	148
Professional Learning Community	27	25	20	16	23	22	133
Student Assessment	18	14	20	13	14	19	98
Math literacy	11	15	11	14	19	17	87
Student with Special Needs	10	9	9	7	13	13	61
Transition years	5	6	13	10	10	7	51
Media literacy	4	5	2	5	10	5	31
French	3	7	5	2	8	3	28
Arts	1	5	6	6	5	3	26
Gender-Based Learning	4	5	5	7	2	2	25

TLLP projects include a range of priority themes with projects generally including multiple themes and areas of activity. Over time, the OTF and Ministry have asked TLLP teacher leaders to self-identify the main themes of their projects. As projects generally include and combine several themes, it is challenging to categorize projects clearly and distinctly. Nevertheless, based on our analysis of TLLP Final Reports, Table 8 indicates the most prevalent project topic themes. Overall, differentiated instruction, technology, literacy, and professional learning communities have been the most prevalent areas of foci. Nevertheless, there have been some shifts over the cohorts. The number of projects focusing on differentiated instruction and technology grew significantly in the last two cohorts. Literacy, on the other hand, was by far the most common topic in Cohort 1, whereas fewer projects are now focused mainly or exclusively on literacy. There

were also changes observed in less common themes. While mathematical literacy and students with special needs have increased as a priority focus, gender-based learning has experienced some decrease.

### 1.1.2.2 Sample Projects from Cohorts 5 – 6

In addition to our descriptive analysis across all 164 projects in Cohorts 5-6, we identified a sample of 20% of projects (17 in Cohort 5, and 16 in Cohort 6) for further analysis. The characteristics of the projects in the sample are presented below.

*Board Type:* All board types are represented in the sample. Since there were no projects from a French Public board in Cohort 6, therefore they are not included in the sample for Cohort 6.

**Table 9: Sample of TLLP Project Final Reports by Board Type**

Sample	Cohort 5	Cohort 6	Total
Total	17 out of 86	16 out of 78	33 out of 164
English Catholic	5 out of 36	5 out of 37	10 out of 73
English Public	8 out of 42	8 out of 37	16 out of 79
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French Public	1 out of 2	0 out of 0	1 out of 2
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*Region:* All regions are represented in the sample. At least one region is represented in each Cohort. In total: 6 from Ottawa, 6 from Barrie, 7 from London, 5 from GTA, 6 from Sudbury, 2 from Thunder Bay.

*Team Size:* A wide range of TLLP team sizes is represented in the sample. The number of people on a TLLP team ranged from 1 to over 50.

**Table 10: Sample of TLLP Project Final Reports by Team Size**

Team Size	Cohort 5 17 projects	Cohort 6 16 projects	Total 33 projects
Range	1-6	1 - 50	1-50
Single (1 person)	3	2	5
Small team (2-4 people)	11	10	21
Medium team (5-10 people)	3	3	6
Large team (>11 people)	0	1	1

*Budget Size:* A wide range of budget sizes is represented in the sample.

**Table 11: Sample of TLLP Project Final Reports by Budget Size**

Budget Size	Cohort 5 17 projects	Cohort 6 16 projects	Total 33 projects
Range	\$5,868 - \$41,965	\$4,520 - \$59,331	\$4,520 - \$59,331
Small ( $\leq$ \$10,000)	7	3	10
Medium (\$10,000<X>\$50,000)	9	11	20
Large ( $\geq$ \$50,000)	0	2	2

*Panel:* Both types of grade levels (elementary and secondary) as well as cross-panel projects are represented in the sample for each Cohort.

**Table 12: Sample of TLLP Project Final Reports by Panel**

Panel	Cohort 5	Cohort 6	Total
	17 projects	16 projects	33 projects
Elementary	11	9	20
Secondary	3	4	7
Both	3	3	6

*Project Themes:* An array of project themes is represented in the sample. In addition to the priority themes identified by a team leader, Table 13 also includes project themes identified by the research team.

**Table 13: Sample of TLLP Project Final Reports by Project Themes (Rank Order)**

Theme	Projects #
	33 projects
<b>Differentiated Instruction</b>	<b>19</b>
<b>Professional Learning Community</b>	<b>15</b>
<b>Math literacy</b>	<b>13</b>
<b>Technology</b>	<b>12</b>
Literacy	8
Student with Special Needs	7
Student Success/Transition years	6
Student Assessment	3
Arts	3
Community Engagement *	3
Mental Health/Health Education *	3
Aboriginal Education *	2
French	1
Media literacy	1
Gender-Based Learning	1
Social Justice *	1

\* Themes identified by the researchers.

As indicated in Table 13, the sample projects involved a wide range of project foci. The predominant themes were differentiated instruction, professional learning communities, math literacy, and technology. In addition to the project themes developed by the Ministry, the research team has identified several new themes: Community Engagement, Mental Health/Health Education, Aboriginal Education, and Social Justice. We suggest these themes to be added to the project theme list of the Final Report Form.

*Project Goals:* A thorough analysis of the Final Reports of the projects in the sample helped identify several common project goals; they are reported in Table 14.



**Table 14: Sample Projects: Stated Project Goals (Rank Order)**

Project Goals	Projects	
	#	%
<b>Improve understanding/knowledge</b>	26	79%
<b>Develop strategies/approach</b>	22	67%
<b>Develop/improve skills/practices</b>	16	48%
Develop professional collaboration	14	42%
Develop resources	13	39%
Raise awareness of the issue	6	18%
Establish relationship with community	4	12%

Consistent with the priority goals for the TLLP, the stated project goals included approaches to professional learning, leadership, students' learning, and sharing knowledge and developing wider partnerships. The top three goals for the TLLP projects were to develop and improve understanding and knowledge (79% of projects), strategies (67%), and skills (48%). These goals were mostly focused on improving teaching and learning – such as learning about a new approach and developing strategies for its implementation, or developing a brand new program or approach, or improving particular instructional, assessment, or technological skills. Developing professional collaborations within and across divisions and panels, within and across schools was a goal of 42% of projects. Examples of goals for collaboration included professionals working together to develop strategies for integrating technology into classroom practice, or to support transitions from elementary to secondary schools. Goals for developing resources (stated in 39% of projects) included purchasing or creating resources for classroom use, professional training sessions, or for parental use. Development of such resources usually would help advance other goals of the project. Six projects aimed to raise awareness of such issues as mental health and Aboriginal education among school staff, students and community. Finally, four projects included a goal to establish community relationships, which indicates TLLP projects aiming to reach out and develop knowledge and connections beyond the school. Examples of goals included

connecting with Aboriginal communities, engaging parents, and developing school-community projects.

### 1.1.2.3 Teacher Professional Learning

A key goal of TLLP is “to support experienced teachers in undertaking innovative, self-chosen professional learning activities in areas that are meaningful to them” (Ontario Ministry of Education, n.d., p.1). Consistent with this goal and the learning goals set by individual projects, TLLP participants engaged in a number of professional learning activities that resulted in new knowledge, skills, and behaviours.

#### *Professional Learning Activities*

**Table 15: Sample Projects: Professional Learning Activities (Rank Order)**

Project Activities	Projects	
	#	%
Teacher collaborative learning	28	85%
Lit/research review	18	55%
Action research	17	52%
Workshops/training	11	33%
Networking	8	24%
Working with a specialist/expert	5	15%
Conferences	4	12%
Collaborating with the community	3	9%

The TLLP participants engaged in a number of professional learning activities during the course of their project. By far, the most common activity was teacher collaborative learning, involving 85% of projects; for example, professional learning

communities were created among TLLP members or development of professional collaboration to learn together by analyzing student data, reflecting on practice, creating resources, discussing strategies, and teaching together. In their Final Reports, TLLP teacher leaders highlighted the importance of such collaborative learning activities:

*The TLLP learning opportunity afforded staff with the opportunity to participate in collaborative inquiry to conference regularly as a means to help enhance planning, instruction and assessment. The dialogue helped to engage team members in critical conversations that focused on student learning, achievement, engagement and collaborative inquiry.*

*Another successful aspect of this TLLP was the opportunity it provided the teachers to collaborate and to share ideas. In a busy school setting, there is often limited time for teachers to get together to discuss best practices, so having monthly feedback sessions provided each teacher with valuable information and even validation that their programs were effective.*

Collaborations extended beyond school in a number of projects. TLLP participants in about a quarter of projects in the sample engaged in professional networking either in person (e.g. field trips, meetings) or online (via blogs, webcasts, WIKI spaces). Three projects engaged in professional learning happening outside of school by collaborating with parents, elders, and/or community partners.

More than half of the projects in the sample referred to literature and research to improve their knowledge and understanding of the topic. 52% of the projects reported engaging in action research or started using research methods to gather data and act on it. Some examples were using surveys to identify the interest and gap in knowledge about Aboriginal education and then addressing that gap, using pre and post surveys to measure student and teacher learning, analyzing student data to adjust instructional strategies, and testing new strategies. It is worth mentioning that the percentage of projects using research methods has grown compared to the first four cohorts.

To increase their level of knowledge and/or skills, a third of the projects in the sample provided one or more of their members with an offsite or in-service workshop or training, and four projects (out of 33) sent their members to a conference. In five projects, TLLP teacher leaders chose to learn directly from an expert/specialist in the area such as a professor, a researcher, a publisher, or a board consultant. A TLLP teacher leader of a cross-panel project on math literacy

considered a particular expert on teaching mathematics “pivotal to the success of the project”, as she “was able to bring her wealth of knowledge to the group and engage them in activities that built their teacher efficacy.”

### ***Teacher Learning Benefits***

**Table 16: Sample Projects: Teacher Learning Benefits (Rank Order)**

Teacher Learning Benefits	Projects	
	#	%
Improved knowledge and understanding	31	94%
Improved instructional and assessment practices	25	76%
Improved leadership skills	18	55%
Improved communication/collaboration	14	42%
Improved technological skills	13	39%
Increased self-efficacy	12	36%
Improved facilitation and presentation skills	6	18%
Improved research skills	3	9%
Improved classroom management skills/practice	3	9%

Table 16 outlines the main themes of teacher learning benefits identified in a sample of 33 Final Reports from Cohorts 5 and 6. The top identified benefit was new knowledge and improved understanding. This was generally in relation to some specific strategies, such as problem-based learning, or to teaching practices in general, as one TLLP leader puts it “As teachers, we deepened our understanding of ways in which we can integrate the curriculum to improve student learning”.

In 76% of the sampled projects, teachers improved their instructional and assessment practices by implementing the new knowledge and learning in their classrooms. For example, the Final Report for a project on inquiry-based learning in a secondary panel included:

*The team of teachers on this project learned to work together to reflect on current teaching practices, research new strategies and to put research into practice. Teaching is a profession that changes over time. As a group of teachers, we were able to support each other as we continued to re-evaluate our own instructional strategies and to make small changes to our practices to improve student learning.*

TLLP teacher leaders reported improvements in other areas related to teaching and learning such as technological skills (mostly with iPads and SMART boards), facilitation and presentation skills, research skills, and classroom management practice.

An enhanced professional confidence and sense of self-efficacy was also an important teacher learning benefit. In a project focusing on restorative practice, the Final Report explained:

*Our comfort level with the practice has increased dramatically and is now incorporated into the day to day functioning of the classroom... As a team, we are much more comfortable using restorative practices and have also been able to look to the future identifying areas we can improve on our use of the practice.*

Increased sense of self- and team- confidence were also reported in two projects dealing with mental health issues:

*Our project was a success because during the time that we had to collaborate and brainstorm ideas we felt empowered to make a change...*

*The greater lessons that I learned this year are more about who I am and what I can now accomplish. I feel an incredible sense of pride about how far we have come in our work and I know that the skills I gained will transfer into my teaching and collaboration with colleagues for years to come.*

Improved communication and/or collaboration among and between educators, students and community members was another main outcome of teachers participating in TLLP-related professional learning activities. For example, in a cross-panel project on math literacy, the Final Report described development of a deep professional relationship among teachers:

*Our TLLP project dramatically increased the level of collaboration among the intermediate and senior Math teachers within our family of schools. By joining one another in a team-teaching environment on a regular basis, we*

*developed a level of professional ease rarely experienced across panels. We coached one another and developed deeper professional relationships rooted in trust and a common goal to improve our teaching practice. While we did learn much from one another during these sessions, we continue to learn and support one another outside of these sessions via our online TLLP teacher edmodo site.*

The Final Report of another TLLP project stated:

*During this project, the teachers involved learned to work effectively as a group to support each other as we learned to develop new instructional strategies to test in our own classrooms. Our ability to collaborate and brainstorm new ideas, plan to test our new ideas and to professionally reflect on the outcomes of our initiatives have developed greatly over the course of the year.*

Therefore, an array of professional learning benefits was identified: improvements in knowledge and understanding; teaching and leadership skills and practices; self-efficacy; and collaboration. As the leaders of a project on technology integration described the outcomes of TLLP-related professional learning the best:

*The professional learning that we acquired as a result to our project has been three-fold between our role as facilitators, teachers, and learners. Below are descriptions for each piece of our puzzle.*

*Facilitator: We have developed our facilitation skills by understanding the big picture of what goes into creating an effective workshop. Such components include: setting up a PD session from start to finish (i.e., budgeting, facility, applications, presenting, debriefing) and incorporating effective presentation techniques (i.e., time management, audience engagement, room positioning).*

*Teacher: We have really learned how to incorporate iPads into everyday learning both as a teacher tool and student resource. Additionally, we now know how to manage iPads in the classroom community; including how to tether iPads, and sync Apple accounts. We also learned to take risks and let kids lead the way being technology experts; more about indirect discovery learning.*

*Learner: We know now the benefit of reaching out to experts (Apple Consultants, Board Itinerants, Board Directors) and how to prioritize the*

*need to maximize time each week to applying strategies learned and not just 'putting them on the shelf'.*

While all projects reported some kind of professional learning outcome, actually monitoring and measuring changes in teachers' learning proved to be challenging in the previous years. This seems to have changed recently. In Cohorts 5 and 6, in 70% of projects in the sample, TLLP leaders reported attempting to measure their learning in some formal way. In particular, 45% of the projects in the sample obtained one or more of the following formal feedback measures: surveys of teachers, students, and parents, formal focus groups, and observations. For example, a project on math literacy, the Final Report commented on the use of pre- and post- teacher surveys:

*Comparing the data from the initial to post survey, we found a significant increase in the number of times teachers implemented the 3-part lesson in a week.*

In addition, 30% of the projects used student assessments and 6% used teacher assessments to measure teacher learning. One of the projects reported on the usefulness of student achievement data:

*Student achievement data has validated our efforts. ...We are able see the evolution of our learning in our classroom environment - our classrooms look very different, more student generated and less teacher controlled...*

Less formal feedback mechanisms were common as well. Self- and team-reflections were used as teacher learning measurements in 70% of the projects. Teachers used reflective journals, learning logs, blogging, and team meetings to reflect on their personal and team learning. For example, in one of the projects, an online collaborative environment was used as a reflective journal:

*Qualitative measures of our learning can be found in our online collaborative environment. In some ways, this environment serves as a reflective journal for each of our team members, as we share our classroom successes and challenges relating to iPad use. When we respond to one another to support colleagues' further learning and/or to share our expertise, we add a new dimension to the reflection journal.*

Other forms of informal monitoring and attempting to assess teacher learning included: classroom observations, feedback from students, feedback from colleagues after classroom visits, and other anecdotal evidence.

Even though all of these methods of measuring teacher learning provide teachers with important information on how their learning is changing, they do not show a full picture of all the learning happening:

*We have tried to document our learning in various ways, but we know that it is not a full picture of how far we have come, and the changes that are now fully embedded in our practice.*

Comparing to the previous years, we found that in Cohorts 5 and 6 the number of TLLP projects undertaking formal and other approaches to monitoring their learning increased. We recommend that the provincial TLLP partners should continue emphasizing the importance of these attempts through the TLLP Leadership Skills for Classroom Teachers sessions and in Ministry reporting procedures.

#### **1.1.2.4 Teacher Leadership**

Fostering teacher leadership is one of the TLLP's overarching goals. However, the original TLLP Final Report form did not specifically ask about teacher leadership. Based on our previous recommendations, the TLLP Final Report has been revised to include sections about teacher leadership. For the current analysis, the TLLP Cohort 5 and 6 were using the original TLLP Final Report which did not ask specifically about teacher leadership; nevertheless, TLLP participants did write about their leadership or leadership-related project management experiences in their Final Reports. In fact, the development of teacher leadership was one of the top three benefits of teacher learning identified in the Final Reports (see Table 16). More than half of the projects in the sample (55%) reported improvements in TLLP participants' teacher leadership. This is a significant increase compared to the first four cohorts where development in teacher leadership was explicitly stated in only 15% of the sampled projects. Improvement in leadership included advances in: project management skills (budgeting, time management, human resources, and conflict resolution); leading adult learning (planning and managing professional learning communities, professional development events); level of confidence in being a teacher leader in a particular area; and distributed leadership.

For example, in a Final Report, a TLLP team leader commented on his development in project and team management:

*I ... learned and practiced techniques used to liaise with team members at different locations as well as had to identify and help problem solve around challenges with working on the project like available time, lack of supply teacher availability, bringing in new team members, increased work*



*demand. As team leader I also learned the importance of accurately assessing the interest of project members when taking on such a comprehensive and lengthy project. To this end, I also had to recognize the variety of learning styles and approaches to the project which ranged to full involvement and embracing the project to individuals being more selective of their involvement...*

The Final Report for a TLLP project on technology integration described the team's development in the area of leading adult learning:

*The project empowered team members to adopt a mentorship role to support professional dialogue and learning among colleagues at their respective school sites.*

Another TLLP leader commented on his growth as a leader in multiple areas:

*The project has also provided an opportunity for me to develop my own leadership abilities. I feel that I have learned to help guide teachers through a process of self-reflection as we revised what we already do in our classrooms to incorporate ideas of Cooperative Group Problem Solving. I have learned to better articulate my long range goals. I have also developed an ability to facilitate focus groups with more effectiveness so that discussions can have a clear focus with a defined outcome. I have learned to think critically at myself as a teacher and also as a leader. ... This experience has allowed me to reflect on my leadership as a department head.*

The finding and examples presented above confirm TLLP's influence on teacher leadership.

### 1.1.2.5 Knowledge Exchange and Sharing Learning

The third priority goal of TLLP is knowledge exchange. The TLLP Program Guidelines explain:

#### Sharing of Exemplary Practices

*This component of the TLLP will facilitate sharing opportunities for experienced teachers that will provide benefits for Ontario students. Within the context of their project, participants will be required to share their learning and promising practices with others on an intra-board/inter-board and/or provincial basis. (p.3)*

In this section we will report on the level/spread of sharing, audiences for sharing, methods of sharing and benefits of sharing identified in analysis of the sample of Final Reports for cohorts 5 and 6.

#### Level of Sharing Learning and Practices

**Table 17: Sample Projects: Level of Learning Sharing**

Level of Sharing	Projects	
	#	%
Within own school(s)	28	85%
Within own school board	18	55%
Larger educational community	11	33%
Across schools	9	27%
TLLP community	3	9%
Across school boards	2	6%

Our analysis of a sample of 33 TLLP Final Reports indicated that the vast majority of TLLP projects (85%) share learning and spread practice within their own school(s). In 27% of the projects, sharing also happened across one or several schools (e.g. a family of schools, interested schools across the district or even the province). More than half of the projects also attempted spreading their learning and/or practices within their own school board by sharing knowledge and materials with all subject/grade teachers, school/district administrators, or board consultants. The

exchange of knowledge also happened between school boards when the participating school board shared strategies and approaches with another board that was already implementing similar strategies or was interested in doing so. In a third of projects, sharing of learning and practices extended beyond their immediate educational community and reached audiences across the province or even the globe. Such sharing happened via conference presentations, online networking, and publications. In three projects, sharing across the larger TLLP community was also mentioned; but we suspect that more projects (in fact all) are engaged in such kind of sharing either via NING or the Sharing the Learning Summit and/or some other way.

***Methods of Sharing Learning and Practices***

**Table 18: Sample Projects: Methods of Learning Sharing (Rank Order)**

Method for Sharing	Projects	
	#	%
Workshop/PD session	18	55%
Online Media	18	55%
Staff meeting	15	45%
Teacher learning community/group	14	42%
Conference presentation	12	36%
Modeling	9	27%
Mentoring	4	12%
Newsletter	4	12%
Community events	3	9%
Forthcoming Publication	3	9%
Mass Media	1	3%

As indicated in Table 18, the majority of methods of sharing focused on professional learning, development and collaboration, for example, through school and board-wide professional development sessions (55%), staff meetings (45%),

established or newly developed learning communities (42%). Some TLLP members also engaged in modeling their practices (by opening their classes for other teachers and administration, demoing lessons during workshop or school visits), while others engaged in developing professional relationships and provided one-on-one mentoring to interested teachers from their own or other schools. Seeing other teachers implementing new practices in classroom added legitimacy to the project and sparked interest in those who observed. One TLLP teacher leader commented on the value of classroom observations:

*Although sharing this learning can be difficult outside of the teachers involved, interest from other teachers was generated through witnessing student engagement and creativity. Often teachers would inquire about the style of teaching because they could see that the students were passionate, involved and on task.*

Alongside professional sharing locally, another major area of sharing learning and knowledge exchange involved a larger professional community (beyond the school or board), including at provincial, national and international levels. Online media, conferences, and publications were used to reach those audiences. Compared to Cohorts 1-4, more TLLP leaders have started using online media for collaborating and sharing purposes and in more ways. Example of online media use include posting information and resources on school/board and other educational organization websites, developing project-dedicated website, engaging in discussions on online forums, blogging, and creating project-related groups on social networks.

Several projects also attempted sharing their knowledge with the local community by organizing various community events, distributing newsletters, and engaging a local TV station and a newspaper. For example, one project on experiential and authentic learning developed a series of informational and cultural workshops for educators and local community partners:

*This project learning was shared at PLC opportunities at Spirit Point Lodge in North Bay (2 x 3 day workshops), a dream-catcher workshop, lacrosse workshops, Inuit Arctic games workshop, throat-singing workshop, ceremonial dance workshop, Horse-Spirit Connections excursion, Residential School/Survivor of Residential School excursion, crafting workshops, dog-sledding excursion, Sweatlodge ceremony, culminating year-end school trip to Spirit Point, Circle of Trust, guest speakers, Peel-Aboriginal Network, Métis Credit River Council workshop, and drumming workshops.*

A further method for sharing learning and mobilizing knowledge is through the development of actual resources and artifacts that can be used by other teachers, schools, boards and wider community members. The development of actual materials that can be used in class (which happened in almost in the majority of the projects), such as sample lessons, lesson plans, assessment tasks, teaching

strategies, supported the spread of practices. Other artifacts included kits with recommended resources, development of an entire program or a framework (e.g. departmental process for transitioning students), tutorials, research and literature review reports, and video of teachers demoing practices and students talking about the effects of those practices.

***Main Audience for Sharing Learning and Practices***

Knowledge exchange involves consideration of audience. In all projects in the sample, the main audience for sharing was teachers, which is expected and is consistent with the goals of the program. In 45% of the projects, TLLP teacher leaders reported sharing with district administration, in many cases with the hope to spread the word about their innovation across the board. Five out of 33 projects shared their learning with parents and seven projects reached out to various community partners. We believe that supporting and encouraging TLLP participants to think about a wider audience can be beneficial for developing TLLP teachers’ leadership and practices as well as for influencing and sharing learning and practices locally and beyond.

***Benefits of Shared Learning (for People Beyond TLLP Project Team)***

**Table 19: Sample Projects: Benefits of Shared Learning (Rank Order)**

Benefits of Shared Learning	Projects	
	#	%
Improved knowledge and understanding	31	94%
Inspired to make a change	10	30%
Change in practice	10	30%
Increased self-efficacy	6	18%
Stronger community	3	9%

Our analysis of the sample of Final Reports identified several benefits of sharing learning from the TLLP project with a wider group of people, as outlined in Table 19. It is important to remember that Table 19 refers to explicitly listed benefits in the Final Reports. The main benefit is improved knowledge and understanding, which was reported in almost all Final Reports. Almost a third of the Final Reports

stated that educators (outside of the TLLP team) who received new learning were inspired to make a change in their practice. One Final Report included the following comments from the project workshop evaluations:

*This was a great day! I learned a lot and feel confident that I can start to implement this into my own classroom.*

*What a great workshop! My teachers get it and are so excited to go back to our school and begin rolling it out there.*

Yet another third of the projects claimed that this change in practice had already happened. For example, one TLLP team set to integrate a problem-based learning approach to teaching mathematics; they created a website where they shared recourses, developed materials, and reflections on their progress. The team used this website not only to share and exchange information but also to monitor their personal and others' learning. Visitors to their website were invited to take a few short polls. As the year progressed, they noticed that an increasing number of visitors started classifying themselves as "routine" users of project-based learning. Other benefits of shared learning were increased self-efficacy (e.g. teachers feeling more comfortable about the issue they were dealing with, a particular innovation, or their teaching in general), and development of a stronger school community (as a result of sharing of learning/raising awareness among school community members).

It is challenging to measure the impact of sharing learning and practices, particularly beyond the immediate TLLP project team and their school(s). Nevertheless, in our analysis of the sample of Final Reports, the majority of the projects (64%) sought to include some formal measures of the impact of sharing learning. Of those most were workshop feedback forms or exit cards; there were also pre and post surveys of teachers, parents, students, and a few interviews and focus groups with stakeholders on the effects of the intervention. At the same time, a third of the projects relied solely on non-formal assessments such as personal conversations and personal observations, expressions of further interest via emails, blog comments, and calls, and website visit statistics. While these less formal methods might provide less accurate data on changes in teacher learning, they still can provide some insight into teacher learning and practice. For example, the leader of a single-person project on using iPads in teaching mathematics to teenagers made the following comment about the usefulness of informal indicators of teacher interest and potential learning:

*I have received an overwhelming amount of positive feedback by those who have been present for the Tap Into Teen Minds workshops and those who visit the blog. I have received e-mail and "tweets" from other educators in North America and around the globe who are using the resources and strategies I have shared online to create their own iPad paperless classrooms with much success...Although I have not measured their learning through a survey, the number of requests for assistance and suggestions as others begin their own iPad journey is an indicator that the knowledge shared is having a positive effect in moving new technologies in the classroom forward.*

When comparing to the previous cohorts, we observed an encouraging pattern similar to the one observed during the analysis of the measuring personal teacher learning: in Cohorts 5 and 6, more projects undertook formal and other approaches to monitoring learning of others. The TLLP leadership team should continue emphasizing the importance of these attempts via training sessions and reporting procedures.

#### **1.1.2.6 Student Learning**

While the TLLP is primarily focused on teachers' learning and leadership, the intended improvements in professional knowledge, skills and practice are anticipated to also benefit students: either the entire population of students, which was the case in the majority of projects, or a particular group of students (i.e. students with special needs, Aboriginal students). It is recognized that TLLP is one of many factors affecting students learning and development and establishing a direct relationship to the TLLP activities is problematic. Indeed, measuring the relationship between TLLP project activities and outcomes for student learning is complex: while many of the projects involve changes in instruction, assessment, or other teaching strategies, not all of the projects are directly focused on achievement measures. Indeed, provincial partners have been careful to caution against teachers attempting to make direct causal claims about changed practice and increases in standard provincial assessment scores through EQAO testing. Following Cohort 1, the TLLP Final Reports no longer have a specific section requiring teachers to identify student learning and achievement measures.

**Table 20: Sample Projects: Student Benefits (Rank Order)**

Student Benefits	Projects	
	#	%
Improved engagement and attitude	14	42%
Improved learning skills and experiences	13	39%
Improved achievement	5	15%
Character development	5	15%
Student leadership	4	12%

In the absence of the specific section on student learning in the Final Report form, not all projects in the sample reported on student benefits. Among those that did, improved student engagement, motivation, and attitude, and improved learning skills and experiences were most common, as indicated in Table 20. Student achievement was claimed to be improved in five (out of 33) projects. In most of these projects, teachers focused on improving their instructional strategies and closely monitored data on student achievement to monitor the effects of those strategies. In one project on student assessment in the elementary panel, the Final Report stated:

*Student achievement data has validated our efforts. It is important to note when considering the data, that we have been very aware of the difference between 'progress' and 'acceleration'. We had many students who were below benchmark, as defined by our Board. Our goal was to have students not just progress at a rate that might be expected, given good teaching, but to 'accelerate'. In other words, they had to move faster than their peers, to catch up and maintain the gains.*

Five projects reported development in student character: in particular, in global and digital citizenship as well as in improved discipline, self-control and self-confidence. For example, in a project on social justice, the Final Report included:

*Through activities, lessons and discussions, our students developed a genuine care and concern for issues and identity and identity safety, were able to see themselves as contributing members of society, and were able to see and utilize the diversity in the classroom community as an asset...*



In four projects, Final Reports commented on development of student leadership as a result of TLLP project activities. For example:

*Our classrooms look very different, more student generated and less teacher controlled. Our students are more self-directed, able to talk about their goals and the steps they need to get there, working independently and with peers.*

*The leadership that was fostered in our own students was a key element to the success of this project. These senior students honed their leadership skills to the benefit of our grade 9 classes.*

Almost half of the projects in the sample (16 out of 33) reported utilizing some formal measure to monitor student learning and development as well as validate implementation of new strategies/tools. In most of those projects (11 projects), pre and post student surveys measuring changes in student attitude, knowledge, and skills were used. In nine projects, student achievement data was used for to examine changes in student learning. 12 projects reported relying on informal measures such as teacher observations and anecdotal records. Considering the results for all six Cohorts, the use of the formal measures increased in Cohort 5 and 6; nevertheless, TLLP teacher leaders should continue receiving advice and support for developing *appropriate* methods for monitoring student learning and development, especially during the initial Leadership Skills for Classroom Teachers training session.

#### **1.1.2.7 Challenges**

As with all initiatives – particularly those intended to initiate profound change – challenges were encountered by TLLP participants. While in some cases (36% of projects in the sample), TLLP project leaders found a way to deal with those challenges and accomplish their goals *fully*; in the rest of the projects leaders reported that they *mostly* achieved their goals for the project due to one or more of the challenges presented below. Encouragingly, not a single Final Report reviewed had “partially” or “not at all” marked when reporting on the degree of the goal accomplishment.

### **Time**

By far the largest challenge for TLLP teacher leaders relates to time, as cited in 58% of the projects in the sample. In many cases, TLLP leaders commented on realizing only after the project commenced how time-consuming the project management was, how much time collaborating efforts took, how long it took for TLLP team members to learn something new or to trust each other. Although not fully overcoming these time concerns, TLLP teacher leaders found a range of ways to address them. Mainly, teachers volunteered personal time and tried to be more effective and creative in time and resource management (e.g. using online communication and collaboration tools to substitute face-to-face meetings). In some cases, TLLP teacher leaders also had to adjust project expectations, scope, and/or processes. Another challenge related to time was balancing classroom work and project work; many teachers were concerned about being away from their classrooms and students or from the project for an extended period of time. A leader of one TLLP project found the following solution to maintaining an optimum classroom-project balance:

*I found scheduling my project days in advance to be an easy way to ensure that I would not be away from the project for too long. In addition, it allowed me to plan my school commitments around my project.*

Not everyone was able to overcome time-related challenges. Eight (out of 33) projects reported failing to accomplish all of their goals due to the shortage of time or underestimation of the required release time.

More positively, 42% of projects did not report any time-related challenges. In fact, many TLLP project leaders appreciated the extra time that TLLP provided them with to focus on the area of their interest, to collaborate with other teachers, and to learn and try something new. For example, a leader of a project on instruction and assessment commented:

*The project allowed us to maintain a focus for our work over the year. It was refreshing to be able to concentrate on what we felt was most urgent for our students, and then have time to do the work that we need to meet those needs.*

### **Technology-Related Challenges**

As the number of TLLP technology-related projects has grown recently, so have the number of technology-related challenges, which was the second most cited

challenge in the sample of the Final Reports (39%). There were three types of technology problems reported:

1. Issues with technology such as purchasing equipment and software, issues with connectivity, maintenance, and access to technology;
2. Insufficient technology skills on the part of teachers which prevented many teachers from trying new strategies and participating in online discussion and collaboration; and
3. Students' mishandling equipment.

In most cases, TLLP project leaders found a way to successfully deal with those challenges. They collaborated with an IT department to address connectivity and maintenance issues; creatively used existing technology to mitigate the access issue; asked the support team to help develop teachers' technology skills and model sharing in online format; sent frequent emails to participants to encourage them to visit the online collaboration environment; and educated students on technology and developed protocols for using it. Still, about a third of the projects that reported experiencing technology-related issues stated that some of those issues remained unsolved. Among the unsolved issues were insufficient student access to technology in school and at home, and purchasing the necessary equipment.

### ***Project Scope***

The scope of the project appeared to cause difficulties in at least 10 projects. It turned out to be either too ambitious for the given time and/or budget frame, or too small for an increasing unanticipated level of interest, or requiring adjustments due to changes in the TLLP project team composition. When the project scope appeared to be too large/wide, TLLP participants reduced it by narrowing the focus of the project and/or decreasing the level of sharing. On the other hand, when the project scope was too narrow, TLLP participants devoted more hours and/or sought additional funding to accommodate new unanticipated expenses. Whatever the challenges were, however, TLLP project members managed to adjust the project scope to address them and to accomplish learning their goals:

*The scope of our project grew tremendously as we began to explore the application of our goals in our school and network... and this created a bit of a work load issue. We do feel that the payoff was worth it.*

### ***Gaining Commitment and Overcoming Resistance from Those Outside the TLLP Team***

The fourth main area of challenge was gaining commitment and overcoming resistance in the wider group of teachers and other partners to be engaged with or affected by the TLLP project. Such challenges were reported in at least nine projects (27%). TLLP projects promote innovation and sharing of learning; this can be threatening or risky for people who are used to their existing practices, routines and privatized practice. Indeed, several Final Reports described lack of interest, reluctance or even resistance on the part of teachers. Our analysis of the Final Reports identified four strategies used by TLLP members to deal with this challenge:

- focusing on those who were interested;
- accepting all levels of commitment;
- listening to those who resisted and addressing their concerns; and
- demonstrating a positive effect of the innovation to increase interest and change minds.

For example, one project sought to facilitate the use of a Teaching-Learning Critical Pathway approach among the school staff and had to deal with some teacher resistance:

*Prior to this school year there has been some resistance by some teaching staff to embrace TLCP cycles [the innovation]... through careful observation, the TLLP team determined that this resistance was possibly due to lack of understanding. In an attempt to obtain greater teacher support, we designed "lunch and learns"... At this session, open dialogue was encouraged and teachers had the opportunity to question the team and express their concerns and challenges. This professional dialogue allowed the team and each PLC group to establish a greater level of understanding and comfort with critical literacies in their classrooms.*

In addition, some projects struggled with gaining support from school administrators or from the school board. For example, in one case, the board administration was reluctant to support promoting the TLLP project's idea further within the board. Gaining teacher and particularly administration support proved to be unsuccessful in four projects in the sample. While some of these projects adjusted their expectations and goals, others remained hopeful to get more interest and support the following year.

### ***Budget issues***

Budget issues were reported to be a problem in eight (out of 33) projects. Examples included dealing with unanticipated costs (e.g. deciding to purchase more technology, accommodating an increasing number of schools wanting to participate in the project), inflexibility of funding, and budget balancing. TLLP teacher leaders managed to solve the budget issues by seeking financial support from their school or board and/or by being more creative with using the existing budget.

### ***Managing TLLP Team Dynamics***

Five projects reported issues related TLLP team dynamics. Most of the reported issues were caused by conditions not controlled by TLLP project leaders, such as teachers moving to another school and labour unrest. This is a significant decrease from the previous years where issues with team dynamics were reported in more than a third of projects in the sample. This improvement can be partially attributed to TLLP participant training and support provided by the program. To address problems, TLLP leaders substituted team member who had to leave the team by other interested teachers in some cases, while in others they readjusted the project scope to the decreased amount of people on the team. Developing trusting relationship and persistence was important for bringing team members on board with taking risks and attempting to new practices.

### ***Logistical Issues***

Logistical issues, mostly related to scheduling meetings and workshops, were reported in three cases. Managing to work within existing limits or negotiating the limitations with administration were approaches used to resolve these problems.

To sum up, even though TLLP participants came across a lot of challenges during the course of their project, they managed to find ways to deal with most of them. These challenges can also be considered new learning and leadership development experiences for TLLP participants. The issues that remained unsolved in several cases were allocating insufficient release time, some technology-related difficulties, and gaining support from colleagues and administration. Training and continued support in the above mentioned areas of challenges is crucial to the success of the project.

### 1.1.2.8 Project Sustainability

Even though it is not a requirement for participating in the TLLP program, there is an expectation, or at least a hope, that the learning and sharing happening during the course of the project will continue beyond the TLLP project implementation period. To learn about TLLP participants' plans on sustaining the projects' learning and practices, starting with Cohort 5, the Final Report form includes a section on project extended learning.

Our analysis of 33 Final Reports revealed that those expectations and hopes for sustained learning and sharing were not ungrounded (see Table 21). At least 73% of the projects stated that they intend to continue implementing the teaching and learning practices they developed during the course of project. For example, in one project that focused on teaching mathematics and included at least 50 people, the Final Report stated:

*TLLP participants indicated in their end-of-year reflection that they will continue to implement their learnings....They were sincere in their commitment to these approaches that the project highlighted as important components of an effective, engaging mathematical learning environment. TLLP participants built their teacher efficacy and their students' efficacy!*

In another project that focused on instruction, the TLLP had changed the entire way of teaching for the participants:

*Participation in this project has changed how we approach our work as colleagues, and with students in very real, fundamental ways. We will use our new understanding of the role of action research, and continue to consolidate our learning from this year. It is our new 'way of doing business'!*

**Table 21: Sample Projects: Project Sustainability (Rank Order)**

Project Sustainability	Projects	
	#	%
Continued innovation implementation	24	73%
Networking (online and in-person)	9	27%
Expanding the area of innovation implementation	5	15%
Acting on board encouragement/support	5	15%
Responding to interest from others	4	12%
Presenting at conferences	4	12%
Forthcoming Publications	3	9%

More than a quarter of the projects in the sample planned to continue knowledge exchange via networking both in-person and online (blogs, school and project websites, online communities, etc.). TLLP teacher leaders of five (of 33) projects intended to take their innovative practice to a new setting (another school or board) or a new level (rolling out the innovation within the entire school, school community, family of schools, or even board). Expanding the level of sharing by presenting at board, provincial, and international conferences and publishing in professional journals was also on the to-do list for several projects.

In the previous section on challenges, we said that several projects failed to gain support from their boards or colleagues. Encouragingly however, there were projects that received important support. At least five projects in the sample stated that their boards were enthusiastic about their innovative practices and provided support (including financial) and encouragement to help facilitate the implementation of the innovation across the board. In four other projects, TLLP project leaders received invitations to conduct consultations, presentations, or trainings in other schools or boards.

It is undoubtedly more challenging to continue all the learning, collaborating, and/or sharing when there is no longer dedicated funding available. Six projects in our sample raised similar concerns in their Final Reports:

*During our sharing, we did encounter teaching colleagues that were reluctant to consider using iPad technology in a Math classroom. Through our in-class sharing sessions, we were able to show these colleagues how we were able to use this technology, with positive results. Going forward, we wonder how we will be able to continue to help colleagues to overcome their reluctance to use technology in the classroom when opportunities to invite others to share in our learning end with the conclusion of this TLLP project.*

*We feel that funding contributed to our ability to share the experience on a larger scale. The time spent in network days was purposeful and had the most impact for those involved. We have set up an online source to continue networking, but feel that face to face collaborative inquiry is most ideal. We wonder how to keep the momentum of this project going when network funds are no longer available?*

Opportunities such as the Provincial Knowledge Exchange (PKE) have been established to provide funding supports for TLLP projects to move to a larger scale of sharing practices within and across school boards. Furthermore, while funding and support are important in sustaining the project's activities, teachers' passion about the matter and their love for teaching is what keeps ideas and practices resulting from a TLLP project alive and thriving. The following comments from two Final Reports speak to that:

*We will continue to seek opportunities to present and to share the learning. We are happy to be leaders in this field.*

*This project has motivated me to continue as a leader in the area of Restorative Practices. I will be coordinating a network of educators interested in learning more about the practice and this invitation will be extended to the entire school board. I am motivated to continue learning in the area and more importantly, keep practicing my learning in the classroom.*

#### **1.1.2.9 Conclusions from Analysis of TLLP Applications and Final Reports**

Our analysis of the data on approved projects and Final Reports for Cohorts 5 and 6 (and its comparison to the Cohorts 1-4 data) result in some interesting conclusions. The emerging trends observed in the recent Cohorts are the following:



*Collaboration* – TLLP members used various methods of collaborating to learn, teach, and share. They discussed and shared their practices with other TLLP project members (there were more team projects than single-person projects) and with their colleagues across schools, boards, the province or even internationally. They built partnerships with community organizations and engaged parents in their journey. Even though they stumbled across some reluctance and resistance on their way, they managed to find a way to deal with those challenges. We recommend continuing to provide training and support in the area of managing team dynamics and conflict resolution.

*Research* – Research orientation was evident in many project activities. TLLP participants tried to improve their practice by engaging in research and/or reviewing practices proven to be effective. They developed and applied an array of research tools to measure their own, their students', and other teachers' learning. We recommend continue offering training and support to help teachers develop appropriate research and data approaches to measuring the impact of their TLLP projects.

*Leadership* – With the majority of projects reporting improvements in leadership and management skills and experiences, TLLP's influence on teacher leadership is clear. We recommend continuing to provide teacher leadership training and support.

*Technology* – Increase in the interest and use of technology among TLLP members reflects the broader expansion of technology in education and society. The number of projects focusing on technology has increased as has the number of challenges associated with technology. Furthermore the uses of technology for communicating, collaborating, networking, and sharing purposes have grown substantially. With the help of technology, TLLP members are able to reach wider audiences and collaborate more effectively.

*Sustainability* – Adding a section in the Final Report about TLLP project's extended learning is a good way to make teachers think about their project as something for more than just a one-year endeavor. Introducing the PKE initiative provides further opportunities for TLLP teacher leaders to take their project to a new level.

## 1.2 Vignettes by TLLP Teacher Leaders

In order to get at the nuances of a complete year of a TLLP teacher and to provide additional data on leadership and knowledge exchange, we asked TLLP teacher leaders to volunteer to write about their year. We had originally proposed to create a video for the NING as a mechanism to solicit teachers to write vignettes. However, in practice, establishing personal contact with TLLP teacher leaders at the Sharing the Learning Summit in November 2013 and through making connections with TLLP teacher networks proved to be a preferable approach to gaining access, trust and engagement with teacher leaders. Therefore, rather than creating a video prior to the TLLP vignettes, we are now proposing that we can provide resources for the NING about the process and results from the vignettes provided and analyzed.

We provided TLLP teacher leaders with a few prompts to help order their narratives. The prompts were:

- What did you do?
- Who did you do it with?
- What happened as a result?
- How are you sharing your knowledge?
- What did you learn? About leadership?

Of 39 volunteers, 19 actually wrote vignettes. The vignettes ranged from 4 pages to 23 pages with some including photos of the various stages of the process, while others included the growth of their students and their own progress over the year.

### 1.2.1 Topics Chosen for Vignette Writing

The highest number of vignettes was written about technology and math. Interestingly, the technology vignettes were overwhelmingly about iPads and focused mainly on early childhood and /or primary grades. There was also attention to use of technology in special education. The approaches were primarily in finding Apps that were concerned with learning and using iPads as learning tools. In all cases, both teachers and students were enthusiastic about the use and found iPads a very exciting entry into learning. It was clear from these vignettes that disengaged students benefitted from the use of technology as well as younger students. In Math, teachers were interested in improving math teaching, for example in grades 3, 6 and 8, as well as using “balanced math”. Others were

involved in higher order thinking in senior math. The approaches included improving math learning as well as building tools for math understanding. Other vignettes included changing Civics teaching in high school, using graphic texts, learning inquiry based teaching in High School Science as well as learning about assessment tools. In one vignette, the authors reached out to learning about indigenous people and creating a new course to better understand First Nation, Métis and Inuit peoples.

### **1.2.2 Teams, Colleagues or Solo**

Of the 19 teachers who wrote vignettes, eight worked in a team, seven worked with one colleague, and four worked on their own. Therefore, most of the teachers worked with someone else; doing so could change not only *what* they were doing, but *how* they were going to do it.

### **1.2.3 On Leadership in the TLLP**

*The opportunity to participate in the TLLP was an amazing experience that has forever changed our practice and how we function as a team. Our daily conversations are immediately deep and meaningful... It is all thanks to the wonderful group of people at TLLP who worked to support us. This narrative was a wonderful way to reflect on our learning.*

*I have experienced how to manage conflict of opinions, budgeting, release time, and how to navigate issues within the changing school environment.*

*I feel that I have gained valuable experience dealing with keeping my colleagues moving forward on a project with time and budget restraints, while maintaining a strong working relationship based on respect, trust, and acknowledgements of each other's contributions.*

*I strongly encourage mid-career teachers to participate in a TLLP project. The opportunity to think deeply and intentionally about your teaching practice through self-directed learning as an experienced teacher is an excellent way to update your pedagogy to meet the needs of today's learners while enriching your own passion for teaching.*

When asked “What did you learn about leadership?” teachers were very expansive as they described what they had learned by themselves as well as with their team. They were passionate about their learning, but also clear about the challenges they faced. Interestingly, although they described challenges, they faced them and mostly overcame them.

- **Learning and Leadership**

Many TLLP teacher leaders claimed that they learned how to communicate with others – sometimes for the first time as here they were asking teachers to open up to learning something new. They all described that they learned how to plan and implement effective teacher friendly professional development. After they created action plans together, many learned to implement new ideas. Some talked about using teacher strengths to push their plans forward. How to organize and support each other’s strengths was the biggest learning for most of the vignette writers.

- **Collaboration**

Moving from working alone or maybe with one friend/colleague, to working in a team was huge leadership learning. How do you keep people involved? How do you use others’ strengths? How, and in what ways, do you build the collective ideas so that people feel important, trusted and respected for their contributions? Many learned that collaboration was complicated, but well worth it and this was perhaps their biggest learning about their growing potential for leadership.

- **Learning New Behaviors and Building Relationships**

Several people wrote about how they learned to let go of holding all of the controls (with other adults as well as with their students). Teachers learned to speak in front of large groups, with other Boards and/or with parents. In doing so, they learned the importance of building relationships as a part of what it means to be a good leader. Some learned to use social media to enlarge their networks as they became articulate about their projects. Networking was a new learned skill and taught people to reach way beyond their classroom. Increased professional dialogue encouraged sharing of knowledge and coordinating professional dialogue which many said was a *first*.

- **Building a New Vision and Sharing Leadership**

For some, learning leadership was having a vision, learning about how to make it real, planning for it, encouraging others to share in it, helping shape it and fight for it when it was sometimes difficult. Most of the writers talked about learning how to share leadership, build trust, and acknowledge the strengths of team members. This in turn helped create knowledge about, and skills of, facilitating collaborative work.

- **Going Public with Teaching Practice**

Discussing one's own practice encouraged openness and an acceptance of the processes of change. For teacher leaders, discussing and showing their practice and thinking about improving it led to *professional dialogue* that many had never had previously.

- **Learning New Technology**

Since a fifth of the vignette writers used technology of some kind, it became an important aspect of their leadership. It meant looking at the research, starting as a novice, making mistakes, learning from them, taking risks, and being persistent. All those who learned some kind of technological tool felt that it became a part of their understanding of facilitating leadership for others as well as learning how to use technology in their classroom.

- **Using "Learning Stories" to Understand New Ideas**

Teachers felt that writing down their learning and leadership narratives helped them better articulate what they were learning. It also helped them not only think more deeply, but elevates their professional talk to a higher level. And the more they talked about their new work, the more engaged and interested they became about their new learning.

- **Sharing with Others and Leadership**

As teachers began to give workshops, create materials, put their learning online, they realized that they were learning new skills of how to share with their peers. As

they planned and led workshops, they realized that they were learning different ways of facilitating new knowledge with their colleagues.

- **Challenges of Leadership**

One major challenge of several of the TLLP projects was that they found that there were bureaucratic rules that hindered their progress, for example when iPads first came out, some district administrators thought that buying iPads was definitely not worth the money. For others breaking down the walls of isolation took more time than people thought; for example, how do you get people to talk about their work especially if it has not been very successful? For some their ideas were way beyond what many people were willing to entertain. For others, budgets and schedules sometimes did not get the support from administration that they needed. Those in bureaucratic positions were sometimes unwilling to let the teachers proceed with their projects, but the TLLP teacher leaders all waited it out and eventually got their money and proceeded with plans – albeit some had to start later than they had planned.

- **The Power of Learning Leadership**

Despite the challenges that some participants had, they all maintained that they learned to deal with the challenges and the learning that ensued was well worth the struggle. Leadership they learned was “messy” and it was their job to figure out how to plan the activities, engage all members of their team, acknowledge the problems, stay the course and build the knowledge and skills of the team to implement and learn about the improvement goals of the project.

#### **1.2.4 Exchanging Knowledge with Other Teachers**

One of the original and important ideas in the TLLP was not only providing the conditions for learning and leadership, but including the idea that knowledge that was created was to be shared somehow with others. In this regard, teachers knew when they first received their TLLP funding that they were also responsible for finding ways to make their knowledge public so others could gain from their experience. Teachers did this in different ways:

- Many teachers used *social networks* to spread the ideas that they had created including Google plus and Twitter.
- Some teachers created *videotapes* to share with others.
- One group created a *training manual* with assessment materials.
- A team designed an *Interactive Early Learning Portal* to make professional learning visible.
- The “Backward Planning” team developed *two units for Grade 2 and 3 in Science and Social Studies*.
- A *Resource Book* for special needs instruction was created.
- “Big Ideas in Civics” created *disks with materials on Civics*.
- “Inspiring teachers to learn about their communities” created a *documentary* as well as *training sessions*.
- An “Inquiry Based Science” group created a *website* ([www.educatingthinkers.wordpress.com](http://www.educatingthinkers.wordpress.com)).
- “Literacy through graphic texts” in High School created a *DVD of graphic novels across Ontario*.
- A TLLP for iPads with teenagers as well as primary students used *newsletters, training sessions, and blogs of the journey*.
- One team created *math video clips*. One clip was created every three weeks. Over 1,000 people have accessed these resources.

All the vignettes described not only the TLLP participants’ journey to organize and support professional development, but how TLLP teacher leaders were creating ways to share their knowledge in their school, board and beyond. Knowledge sharing took the form of training sessions, online teaching and learning, blogs and websites, as well as materials of all kinds that they could share. This turned out to be a major contribution of TLLP and extends significantly who benefits from individuals and teams of teachers working on professional development where they are the initiators, developers, and implementers.

### **1.3 Sharing the Learning Summit (November 2013)**

The purpose of the TLLP Sharing the Learning Summit is to celebrate completed projects, to strengthen networking within the TLLP community and beyond, and to inspire teachers to take the next step and share their learning and success even further (with other schools, boards and a larger educational community). The

Summit is held annually in November. During the Summit participants are invited to display their TLLP projects and to share their projects with their colleagues during the Marketplace sessions (where participants visit each other's displays and talk with project team members).

The 2013 Summit consisted of a wide range of projects on various themes including: the arts (1), differentiated instruction (6), early childhood education (5), French Language (11), Literacy (16), professional learning community (5), numeracy (16), transition years (3), special needs students (10), student assessment (7), and technology (22). A large number of projects involved the use of iPad and iPod touch (over 10). As in 2011-2012, several educational motivational speakers were invited to attend. This 2013 Summit included Executive Director of People for Education Annie Kidder, Minister of Education Hon. Liz Sandals, senior scholar at Stanford University Dr. Ann Lieberman and Associate Professor OISE/UT Dr. Carol Campbell. Several resources and handouts were provided during the 2013 Summit, including the fall 2013 edition of Education Forum magazine, a summary of research findings by our research team about the value, goals and lessons of TLLP in previous years, and handouts on professional development. Participants also distributed postcards about their projects that listed title, general description information, name(s) of team member(s), contact info and what was learned.

The evaluation summary for the Sharing the Learning Summit 2013, as in previous years, continues to report high satisfaction ratings, with 97% of respondents either "Very Satisfied" or "Satisfied" with the 2013 Summit. No participants have ever been "Not Satisfied" with the Summit. 2013 has the highest number of participant evaluation forms submitted, with 161 (143 English, 18 French) evaluation forms received. 98% percent of English Language participants were "Very Satisfied" (74%) or "Satisfied". Relatively, the French responses were not as strongly satisfied (61% were "Very Satisfied"). Several changes made to the Summit this year reflected positively in the evaluation forms, for instance, in allowing more time for the Marketplace sharing session, changing to a Friday/Saturday schedule, and inviting more guests. When asked to select the three most valuable aspects of the Summit, the highest selections included: networking with colleagues (67 respondents or 42% of responses); learning about other TLLP projects (57 respondents or 35% of responses); and presenting and receiving feedback on projects (57 respondents or 35% of responses). This suggests that participants considered the interactive component of the Summit to be the most valuable. Other components valued included inspirational keynote speakers (35 respondents or 22% of responses) and developing new classroom/school ideas by learning. This is largely consistent with the number of 'valuable aspects of the summit' reported in 2012. In the recent



years (2011 and 2012), responding to feedback, the summit invited educational rather than non-educational motivational speakers; this change is positively reflected in feedback about the keynotes as a valuable part of the 2013 Summit.

In the evaluation forms, participants were also asked to select features of the event for a more valuable Summit experience. The highest selections included more time for marketplace visits (37 respondents or 23% of responses; this was also increased by 30 minutes from 2012), to hold the event on weekdays only (15 respondents or 9% of responses) and to re-organize the tables by projects (16 respondents or 10% of responses). However, for over 50 suggested improvements listed, most were only selected by one or two participants suggesting that there was not a large body of concern about each item. These listed improvements ranged from improvements to scheduling, display set-up/locations, food, guest speakers, and many others. When asked about suggestions for future Summits, 24 of the 161 (15%) participants selected to continue with the current program. A number of new suggestions were made with just one or two mentions each, for example providing a list of project websites, social media promotion, fitness breaks and a virtual summit, to name a few suggestions. In response to the evaluation reports, the Summit planners are recommending moving Dr. Campbell's summary of research findings earlier to the May Leadership Skills for Classroom Teachers session and adding in an educational speaker to conclude the session Saturday. A number of other minor changes were recommended based on the evaluation, including the implementation of NING for those looking for more electronic links to the Summit. The Summit has a history of collecting evaluation feedback from participants; our research team continues to be impressed with the effort and thoughtfulness in collecting and considering evaluation feedback for improvement of the Summit and putting into place those recommendations.

## **2. RESEARCH IN PROCESS**

### **2.1 Case Study of Provincial Knowledge Exchange (PKE) Project**

With advice from the Ministry's TLLP team, the research team has selected a Balanced Math Provincial Knowledge Exchange (PKE) project in the Simcoe County District School Board (SCDSB) to be the focus of case study work for the 2013-2014 year. We approached the TLLP/PKE lead for this project at the Sharing the Learning Summit in November 2013 and she agreed to becoming involved in our TLLP

research. To date, we have: reviewed two TLLP/PKE proposals submitted relating to this project, attended two professional learning days for teachers from 15 schools involved in the PKE (including opportunities to meet with the PKE/TLLP core team, gather resources about the PKE project, talk to teachers involved and to observe classrooms where the PKE practices were being implemented); interviewed three members of the core TLLP/PKE team, five teachers and one Superintendent of Education; and are in the process of reviewing the resources on a Wiki developed for the PKE sharing of learning. We plan to conduct interviews with two relevant school principals during the 2013-14 school year and to conduct further follow up with the case study PKE during 2014-15. As the case study is still in process, the description below is preliminary and will be expanded and refined through detailed analysis of interview transcripts and PKE materials and further case study research.

### **2.1.1 Context**

The Balanced Math program began as part of a TLLP project at Fieldcrest Elementary School, a school located in the municipality of Bradford, in the Simcoe County District School Board (SCDSB). Located in south-central Ontario, the SCDSB is a mix of urban and rural schools within a geographic span of 4,800 kilometers. The SCDSB is comprised of 87 elementary schools, 16 secondary schools, seven learning centres, over 6,000 employees and approximately 50,000 students (SCDSB, 2012).

Kristen Muscatt-Fennell led the TLLP project in 2012 while she was a primary-junior teacher at Fieldcrest Elementary School. Kristen's passion for math encouraged her to bring the Balanced Math program to her classroom and the school. This particular interest may be traced back to 2005/2006 when she was teaching at Terry Fox Elementary School and drew inspiration from Lee Sparling's Balanced Math program. Starting as a TLLP in one school, the Balanced Math program has become a PKE involving 15 schools across SCDSB in 2013-14. The PKE team, led by Kristen Muscatt-Fennell, includes also her colleagues Darryl Bax, a Special Education Resource Teacher, and Stephanie Skelton, a grade 8 teacher at Fieldcrest Elementary School. Each team member brings complementary skills to the program combining leadership, project management, technological, and pedagogical knowledge and skills. Importantly, the project has experienced strong support from current and past school principals as well as the relevant Superintendent of Education, Anita Simpson. Since the TLLP Balanced Math program at Fieldcrest Elementary School, Kristen has been seconded to the board office as a Kindergarten to Grade 8 (K-8) Math Facilitator. However, Fieldcrest Elementary School continues

to act as ‘home base’ for professional development workshops, including demonstration classrooms. The demonstration classrooms serve as examples where teachers share their learning with other teachers, showing Balanced Math lessons in action.

### **2.1.2 Description of Project/Program**

Balanced Math provides opportunities for modeled, guided, shared, and independent math experiences in an engaging, interactive learning community. The three-part lesson model follows the following format:

#### **1. Whole group instruction (60-70 min.)**

New concepts taught in a 3-part lesson (using open questions and parallel tasks)

Consolidation task assigned and/or completed

#### **2. Balanced math rotation (20-30 min.)**

Students are directed to their next Balanced Math rotation and proceed independently

#### **3. Optional follow-up work time (15-20 min.)**

Students begin work independently on lesson consolidation task if not completed during 3-part lesson

Teachers have the option of incorporating Balanced Math rotations in their weekly lesson plans. These rotations include the following six components as part of a differentiated instruction program:

- Guided Math/Problem Solving
- Shared Problem Solving
- Independent Problem Solving
- Math Journal
- Math Games
- Math Facts

Plus “Share the Wealth” – whole group consolidation

The key learning goals of this PKE include growth in numeracy instruction and assessment using technology, strategies to enhance student achievement in the mathematical processes, and enhanced differentiation of instruction and assessment through a 3-part lesson, open questions and parallel tasks from K-8. The SCDSB Board Numeracy goals focus on reaching every student through differentiated instruction and assessment, and on student achievement in numeracy through the mathematical processes. The SCDSB School Improvement Plan (SIP) goals include the use of technology to enable and enhance student learning as well as a focus on consistency in problem-solving models and teaching through the math processes.

### **2.1.3 How Learning is Being Shared**

The PKE shares and develops the Balanced Math approach with SCDSB teachers through a three-part series (2.5 days) of professional development (PD) that align the School Improvement Plan goals with the project's goals. The first session introduced teachers, coaches and administrators to the TLLP project and learning goals that may culminate into a plan for implementation. The second PD session included opportunities for sharing successes and challenges, a focus on the use of technology to support Balanced Math, visits to demonstration classrooms and sharing of student work, and professional collaboration on additional strategies. The final PD involved a culmination of the project including moderation of student work, a survey to measure the project's success and plans for further sharing. As part of the final session, each teacher is asked to bring a sample lesson plan for the collective Balanced Math resource binder.

The sessions are based on the premise that teacher learning comes through collaboration. As such, each session builds in time for the exchange of ideas, and the co-planning of lessons. The project team values these opportunities, as they recognize that teachers often lack opportunities to discuss ideas with their colleagues amidst their daily routines. Teachers act as leaders, facilitators and resources, sharing the knowledge with other staff at their school. The project team shares their learning using a Wiki space designed to highlight a variety of instructional strategies and resources linked to the Board's Essential Practices. The Balanced Math Wiki space is available at: [tllpbalancedmath.wikispaces.com](http://tllpbalancedmath.wikispaces.com). The TLLP team states that they have had much success with their TLLP Wiki space, currently being accessed by some 100 teachers and administrators across the

province. Project resources such as lessons, assessment resources, tip sheets, student work will be made available on the new site. The teachers are encouraged to upload their documents on the Wiki Space for resource exchange. In addition, all teachers participating in the PKE receive a resource binder, books and materials for their own use in their classrooms and schools. The PKE operates on the basis of collaborative learning where the PKE team tell and show teachers about the Balanced Math program, they provide practical resources for use, teacher participants observe the resources in use (through demonstration classrooms and modeled by the PKE team), there are opportunities for teachers to co-plan and co-learn for their own use of the Balanced Math strategies, and teachers are supported to apply Balanced Math and share their learning within and across the schools.

#### **2.1.4 Potential Impact of the PKE**

The impact of this project can be seen from a classroom and board-wide perspective. Reported classroom impacts include improved student engagement in Math, strengthened differentiated instruction practice, greater confidence and capacity for teacher math instruction, and a wider integration of technology in the classroom. The project leader cites successes such as the widespread use of practical resources such as the “Bump it Up” boards, a strategy for encouraging students to move up a level as part of the four assessment stages (i.e. levels 1-4). Furthermore, the project team points to the three-part lesson as being essential to teaching practice, where Balanced Math supplements the existing math program. Many teachers expressed feeling more comfortable with their three-part lessons because of Balanced Math. The project team believes that the impact lies in seeing evidence that the Balanced Math program is strengthening existing teaching practice and student learning outcomes. They point to the project’s ability to build teacher capacity through the gradual release of responsibility, and an increased sense of ownership over classroom resources and practice.

Teacher participants revealed an overwhelming appreciation for the practical nature of the Balanced Math PD sessions. Teachers point to the immediate applicability and usefulness of resources provided. These resources include a binder with rubrics and Blackline Masters (handouts that can be reproduced), links to Apps, Pinterest and the Wiki Space. The majority of teachers have especially enjoyed the success of Balanced Math in supporting their special needs students. Some have worked with gifted students in the classroom to help with planning

math rotations. Some teachers identified other contributing success factors as the project team's ability to be approachable, accessible and available to support teachers whenever they need it.

However, one challenge has been that some teachers experienced limitations in the availability of technology resources in their classrooms and schools (e.g. student to iPad ratio). The project team is considering next steps to help teachers to address technological limitations. Time was also cited as another challenge faced by many teachers trying to balance their math program with regular instruction.

The superintendent distinguishes the kinds of PD offered by the Balanced Math program from other board PD because it encourages innovation and is teacher-driven. The program fills a need, where math is known to be a huge area of development in the province. Members of the project team expressed an interest in seeing Balanced Math develop into a regular part of the board's math program. The PKE project team anticipates the results of their survey, as well as the results of their PD feedback from participating teachers in order to learn further about impacts and to inform next steps.

### **2.1.5 Plans for Next Steps**

By the end of the 2014 school year, the PKE team plans to upload math tutorials as short video clips on the Ministry of Education "Mathies" website. The senior administration recognizes that this Balanced Math program is an interesting model of collaboration. They are looking into how to embed technology-enabled innovation for schools ready, interested and open to being involved.

## **2.2 Mentoring Moments NING**

An important development for TLLP has been the creation of the *Mentoring Moments* NING <http://mentoringmoments.ning.com>. This report provides a preliminary, descriptive analysis of the interactions and materials shared on the NING, based on Google Analytics data from April 2013 – March 2014. This initial analysis will contribute to an ongoing investigation of approaches to knowledge exchange and sharing of practice.

Contained within the Mentoring Moments online community of practice are three general groups: the New Teacher Induction Program (NTIP); the Teacher Learning and Leadership Program (TLLP); and the Annual Learning Plan and Teacher

Performance Appraisal (ALP/TPA). Members may participate in a variety of discussion forums, join groups, and post blog entries to share knowledge under these broad categories. As of March 21, 2014, across the three general groups, there were 57 Discussions covering a wide range of topics, for example: *Using Guided Math to Move Student Thinking into Numeracy*, *Creating Partnerships with Parents*, *Blended Learning: Engaging the Student in Math Using D2L*, and technology-related topics such as *Google Apps for Education and Authentic Multimedia Texts*; *SMART Board and Active board*; and *Developing Online PD*. In total, there were 46 Groups, including *Inquiry-Based Teaching and Learning*; *Mentoring*; *Technology in the Classroom*; and *Drawing Children into Reading*. There were 151 Blog posts, covering a vast range of topics within broad categories such as: differentiated instruction, character education, and mentoring.

### **2.2.1 How is TLLP Learning Being Shared?**

Based on an analysis of NING (Google Analytics) data for 2013-14, overall, October 2013 and November 2013 had the highest volume of visitors and visits. Achieving 4,334 visits from 3,351 unique visitors in October 2013 is a remarkable accomplishment. Perhaps unsurprisingly, this coincides with the timing of the TLLP Sharing the Learning Summit when participants are expected to engage with the NING. Also perhaps unsurprisingly, the website had the lowest traffic in the summer months. Encouragingly, data for 2014 continues to indicate over 1000 unique visitors in each of January and February with almost 2000 site visits in January.

### NING Use Data – Monthly Visits Overall

Month	Visits	Unique Visitors	Page Views	Pages/visit	Average Visit Duration
Feb 2014	1,661	1,008	6,350	3.82	3 min 50 sec
Jan 2014	1,999	1,323	8,553	4.27	4 min 31 sec
Dec 2013	1,336	820	8,560	6.27	6 min 53 sec
<b>Nov 2013</b>	<b>3,608</b>	<b>2,548</b>	11,407	3.16	3 min 26 sec
<b>Oct 2013</b>	<b>4,334</b>	<b>3,351</b>	12,201	2.77	2 min 47 sec
Sept 2013	1,555	1,042	7,509	4.83	5 min 32 sec
Aug 2013	475	267	2,308	4.86	4 min 45 sec
July 2013	500	298	1,920	3.84	3 min 24 sec
June 2013	822	407	3,761	4.58	4 min 37 sec
May 2013	1,910	801	16,602	8.69	9 min 19 sec
April 2013	458	300	1,852	4.04	4 min 4 sec

On the *Mentoring Moments* NING, TLLP members have the opportunity to initiate and participate in groups, discussions and blog posts. The three most active groups within the TLLP (as of March 21, 2014) are:



- Co-teaching 3-part lessons in Numeracy;
- TLLP: Communicating Without Borders; and
- SHS Accountable Talk Inquiry

The purpose of the *TLLP: Communicating Without Borders* group, for example, is:

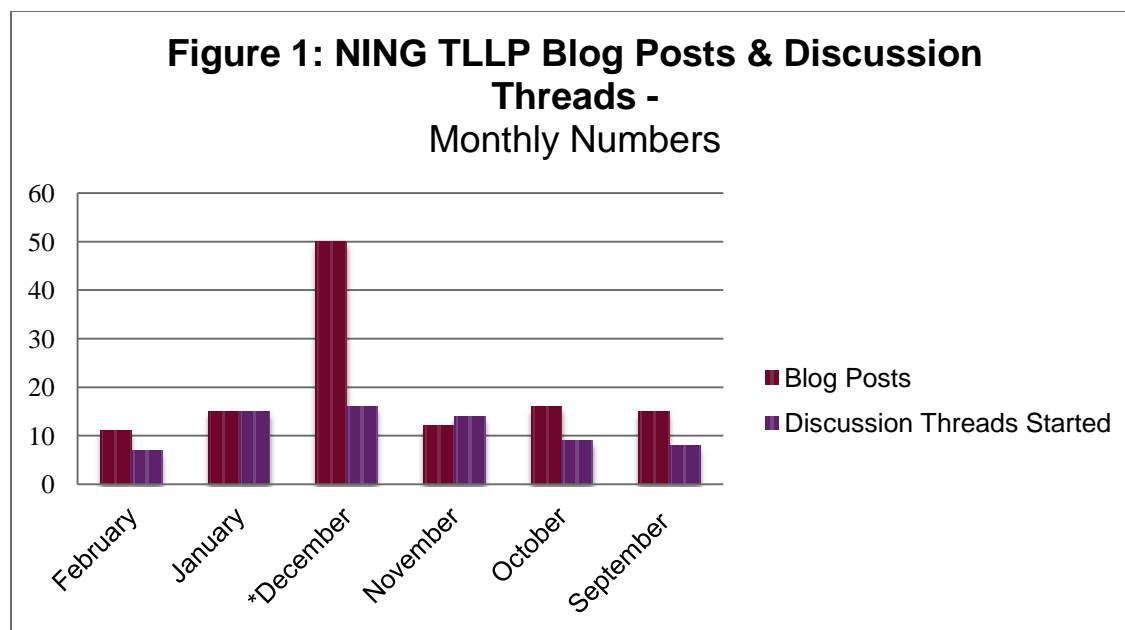
*...to use voice-recordings and video technology for instruction, assessment, and evaluation in Core French and Science. We want to develop student listening and communication skills and differentiate instruction. At the same time, we hope that incorporating interactive technologies will increase student participation.*

Group members participate by uploading their comments on discussion topics, sharing their knowledge and experiences, and pose questions to their colleagues for feedback.

The top three most frequently viewed TLLP web pages (based on monthly Google Analytics data) were:

- **The TLLP Launch Page** – with 1,745 and 1,309 page views in October and November respectively;
- **The TLLP Group** – with 1,557 page views in May - June; and
- **The Discussion Forum** – with over two hundred page views each month for five months (from October - February).

From September 2013 – February 2014, the number of TLLP blog posts each month were consistent, with the exception of December 2013. In December, the significantly higher number of posts (50) is attributed to the reminder sent to participants to post a project artifact. November 2013, December 2013 and January 2014 had the highest number of discussion threads started at 14, 16 and 15, respectively.



*\*In December, participants were sent a 'reminder' to post a project artifact*

The most popular discussions are related to technology in the classroom. The top three discussions in terms of number of replies are:

- ***Google Apps for Education and Authentic Multimedia Texts*** (posted on March 5, 2014) garnered the most interest to date, with 21 replies;
- ***SMART Board and Active board***- 13 replies; and
- ***Developing Online PD*** – 5 replies.

Thus far, this online community of practice is engaging a significant amount of educators across Ontario in professional sharing—particularly those interested in the NTIP and the TLLP. As of March 2014, there were 518 official members, with substantially higher numbers of visitors to this NING, as evidenced by Google analytics data on monthly visits.

There are numerous resources available to educators in a variety of user-friendly formats, such as modules, video examples and summaries of information. The 'Latest Activity' section shows that members are consistently participating in the NING in numerous ways, such as uploading comments on group discussions, posting pictures, updating their profile status, and posing questions to their colleagues for discussion. It is apparent that the *Mentoring Moments* NING provides a valuable online medium through which educators in Ontario can

collaborate with colleagues in different contexts, as well as access and share knowledge and resources for professional learning and practice. By having resources for TLLP, NTIP and ALP on the one site, there is also the opportunity for collaboration and cross-fertilization of ideas and learning across these initiatives and teachers involved.

## **2.3 Focus Groups with Provincial TLLP Teams**

On April 25, 2014, two separate focus group interviews were held with people at the provincial level involved with the TLLP. The two groups were: two individuals who are part of the OTF team supporting TLLP; and six individuals who are part of the Ministry of Education's Teaching Policy Standards Branch's team supporting the TLLP. Transcription and analysis of the interview material is in process and a full report will be included in the next research report update. A summary of emerging findings is provided below. This will be elaborated on in more detail following full analysis of the transcripts.

### **2.3.1 Developments in the TLLP: Changes and Improvements Since 2012**

The research team last conducted provincial focus groups during 2012 to inform our previous research report (Campbell, Lieberman & Yashkina, 2013b). Therefore, a starting point for the current research was to identify key developments concerning the TLLP since 2012. A large volume of developments were identified by the provincial interviewees. Broadly, these can be summarized as:

- **Increased Recognition of the TLLP**

Interviewees spoke of a growing awareness of the TLLP overall and of TLLP projects and participants. TLLP projects are seen as “a source of energy and innovation” when organizations and people are looking for examples of teaching practice and/or approaches to particular education needs. For example, the Ministry's Student Achievement Division has sought examples concerning math through TLLP projects. Subject Associations have also drawn on TLLP teacher leaders and their projects to provide input to conferences and events. A recently formed partnership with TVO is engaging with TLLP teacher leaders to inform the development of TVO's initiatives to provide resources and supports “by teachers, for teachers”. These

developments have the potential for the awareness, spread and impact of TLLP to grow exponentially. Furthermore, such developments are also increasing internationally with other countries becoming aware of, and interested, in the TLLP and potential adaptations for their own contexts. This international recognition is contributing to Ontario being considered “as a leader in good practice” concerning teachers’ learning and teaching. Increases in research and writing about TLLP have also supported this growing provincial and international awareness of, and interest in, TLLP.

- **Increased Sharing of TLLP Learning and Practices**

Connected to increasing awareness about TLLP, there have been improvements in both the quantity and quality of sharing from, by and across TLLP projects. One area for improvement in our previous research was the e-community site. This site has now been replaced by the Mentoring Moments NING, which is considered to be a “dramatic improvement” for enabling online sharing, dialogue, activity and engagement. A TLLP “e-book” is currently being developed to provide interactive profiles and resources concerning all TLLP projects. A further new development to support sharing of TLLP learning and practices has been the introduction of voluntary Adobe Connect sessions for TLLP participants this year on priority topics identified through the Ministry’s needs analysis, for example measuring impact of TLLP projects.

- **Expanding and Refining Supports for TLLP projects**

Both the NING and the Adobe Connect sessions are new initiatives to further expand a “web of supports” for TLLP teacher leaders. The Ministry conducts “needs surveys” which identify areas for priority support. Furthermore, the Ministry is also increasingly integrating support for TLLP throughout the work of the Teaching Policy and Standards Branch. For example, TLLP is discussed as part of the regional supports and board visits provided by the Ministry. The TLLP benefits also from the ongoing work of OTF for the design, development and delivery of the Leadership Skills for Classroom Teachers sessions at the start of TLLP cohorts and the Sharing the Learning Summit as a culminating celebration for TLLP projects. Both the Leadership Skills for Classroom Teachers session and the Summit are high quality events which are continuously improved based on evaluation feedback from participants, partners and the research team.

- **Cultivating and Sustaining Partnerships between OTF and the Ministry**

A unique and defining feature of TLLP is that it is a joint initiative between OTF and the Ministry. This has been true from the origins of TLLP in the Working Table on Teacher Development almost a decade ago to current and planned work. Interviewees spoke of the “unprecedented partnership” which contributed to “shared ownership” and “relational trust”. Two overarching benefits were identified. First, the TLLP project and TLLP participants benefited from the contributions and support of both the OTF and affiliates and the Ministry resulting in an initiative supporting “very progressive teacher learning”. Second, there are “value added benefits” for a provincial partnership bringing together government, federations and teachers focused on positively supporting teachers and teaching. The fact that TLLP had continued to be supported throughout a period of collective bargaining is testament to the strength of ownership and commitment to the TLLP. Continuing to cultivate a mutually appropriate partnership will be important throughout all stages of the TLLP.

- **Supporting Teacher-led Innovation through a Province-wide Approach**

The TLLP provides support for teacher-led innovation and inquiry-based leadership practices to develop, implement, adapt, share and apply improvements in teaching and learning practices. Interviewees commented enthusiastically about the importance of this “innovation mode” – alongside but not instead of “implementation mode” – professional development led “by teachers, for teachers”. The support for teachers to identify areas of need – potentially ones not being met by current practices or training – and then put in place projects to address these is highly valuable. The wide variety of project foci is testament to the potential of teacher-led innovation approaches. Through participating in the TLLP and shared experiences across TLLP projects, for example participating in the TLLP Leadership Skills for Classroom Teachers and Sharing the Learning Summit, TLLP was developing and supporting a “community of teachers”. While each TLLP project is unique, the potential for TLLP participants to see and participate beyond their classrooms and schools was developing a collective of teachers with shared “passion” and “moral purpose”. While the TLLP is fundamentally about teacher-led practice, the overall provincial support and partnership is important also. For example, by extending a province-wide initiative, teachers across Ontario – whichever geographical location or school board or school panel – had the opportunity to participate and benefit.

- **Recognizing and Growing Teacher Leaders**

Through the TLLP, “a regular teacher becomes a star”. TLLP provides teachers – particularly those leading TLLP projects – with the opportunity to learn, to contribute to the learning of teachers, other adults and students, to change and improve practices, and to become leaders for educational improvement. TLLP teachers learn by doing. According to interviewees, “teacher leadership” is an outcome from the experiences of learning and leading a TLLP project. Furthermore, in contrast to formal leadership in administrative roles, this is about valuing “small ‘I’ leadership” through the informal – yet influential – leadership of TLLP participants.

- **An Intentional Approach Combined with Learning as You Go**

The TLLP is a highly thoughtful program. Provincial partners at OTF and in the Ministry are highly attentive to both the overarching purpose and the ongoing details of the TLLP. All aspects of the TLLP are reviewed and continue to be refined, for example in light of our previous research recommendations, changes have already been made to the Leadership Skills for Classroom Teachers and Summit agenda and to the TLLP Application Form, Final Report Form and Ministry survey. TLLP embodies and advances the philosophy of “adapt to what people need” with a focus on teacher learning to support student learning. As important as the details of impact in terms of number of projects, participants, foci and outcomes, is the finding that TLLP is becoming a “flagship for a cultural shift” for approaches to professional learning which start with a focus on the learners’ needs and adapts approaches to meet those needs. The “TLLP approach” – grounded in a philosophy and principles of adult learning and professional development – has implications beyond the specific TLLP initiative.

- **Expanding and/or Embedding the TLLP Approach?**

A potential dilemma for the TLLP is with increasing recognition of the benefits of the TLLP, there may be increased demand for more TLLP projects. At present, school boards can identify up to two TLLP proposals to put forward to the provincial TLLP Committee for consideration for funding. The TLLP selection process is diligent about selecting projects with the potential to be high quality. Nevertheless, there remains debate about which projects to fund, what to do about individuals who re-apply rather than spreading TLLP to new teachers in each cohort, and those projects that do not get supported by school principals and/or the board selection committee. While provincial partners are supportive of a large number of teachers being involved, there are practical challenges for funding, training and supporting a larger number of projects. For example, the initial TLLP Leadership Skills for Classroom Teachers is an interactive event focused on approaches to effective individualized professional learning. The uniqueness of the TLLP needs to remain its hallmark and therefore resist pressures to “slip into implementation mode” of training by workshop and expectations for all teachers to participate. There appears to be four promising ways forward for sustaining the “TLLP approach” while expanding and deepening its influence. First, the continued funding of TLLP cohorts and the expansion of the PKE intended to fund increased sharing within and across school boards. Second, for funded projects, to continue to increase awareness and support amongst school board and school administrators about the “TLLP approach” including appreciation that it is intended to be teacher-led innovation and therefore differ from board and school training. Third, to maintain and promote the “special” features of TLLP in order to encourage enthusiastic teachers to apply at some stage in their career and to emphasize the importance of teacher-led learning alongside other forms of professional learning and development. Fourth, while the funding and TLLP “program” are not intended to become universal, the philosophy and principles informing the TLLP – drawn from principles about adult learning and professional development – are increasingly becoming embedded and interconnected through other initiatives for teachers and teaching. For example, both the TLLP and the NTIP are grounded in the same principles from the Working Table on Teacher Development with joint membership from OTF and affiliates and the Ministry. More currently, the Teaching Policy and Standards Branch is piloting new approaches to teachers’ Annual Learning Plans which they hope will be grounded in the “TLLP approach [of] authentic learning led by the learner”. Relatedly, OTF is building on its TLLP experiences as it develops professional learning opportunities for teachers, for example in math and technology currently.

## 2.4 Ministry Mini Survey

We proposed to add questions to each of the Ministry mini surveys implemented during the year of each TLLP cohort. Our intention is to establish a ‘baseline’ about each TLLP project at the start of the year and then monitor changes in learning, leadership and practices over the course of the year.

We developed survey items and scale and administered the first survey in October 2013. The responses indicated a rather high confidence level in all areas, especially in being a teacher leader. The table below presents the distribution of the responses and the percentage of the responses with over 70% confidence (column of the right).

	0-10 %	11-20%	21-30%	31-40%	41-50%	51-60%	61-70%	71-80%	81-90%	91-100%	Total	>70%
Implementing TLLP practices	0	0	1	2	2	4	11	27	26	28	101	80%
Sharing knowledge	0	1	1	2	3	6	15	23	28	22	101	72%
Leading prof learning	0	1	1	1	2	6	11	29	30	20	101	78%
Leading TLLP team	0	3	0	0	0	4	7	24	29	31	98	86%
Managing TLLP project	0	1	1	1	1	5	12	27	31	22	101	79%
Being a teacher leader	0	0	1	0	2	2	5	26	34	30	100	90%



The same items were included in the survey administered in April. The deadline for responses to the second survey was April 25, 2014. We will include analysis of this survey and comparison with the first survey in our next TLLP research report. We also collaborated with the OTF to include these items on the survey to be administered during the TLLP Leadership Skills for Classroom Teachers training in May 2014. We plan to include the same items on the survey administered during the TLLP Summit in November 2014. The relevant data from both of these surveys will be analyzed during the proposed research for 2014-2015.

## **2.5 Provincial Knowledge Exchange (PKE) Logs**

We requested all previous and current PKE project leaders to fill out a log of all PKE-related sharing activities. A suggested log entry template was designed and attached to the request letter (see Appendix 1). We received filled out logs from both projects completed in 2013. At this time, leaders of seven (out of 10) current PKE projects have committed to send us the log information. We expect the logs to be submitted at the end of the project cycle (around the time when the PKE final reports are submitted). PKE logs and final reports for 2012-2013 and 2013-2014 will be analyzed during our 2014-2015 research work.

## **2.6 Provincial TLLP Survey**

We proposed to design and conduct a survey of all TLLP project leaders from Cohorts 1-6 to investigate the research questions, particularly questions about sharing of learning and practice and about longer-term impacts. This survey is currently being designed with the intention of administering and analyzing the survey during 2014-15. We are collaborating with the OTF and Ministry on developing a final version of the survey. We seek both OTF and the Ministry's advice also on the best approach to administering the survey, for example the use of an online survey and appropriate timing for distribution. In addition, we will require contact information for all TLLP project leaders. The purpose of the survey is to examine the experience, impact, spread and sustainability of TLLP projects and changes in practice provincially. The current draft of the proposed survey is attached as Appendix 2.

### 3. CONCLUSIONS

This report presents the TLLP research completed and in process from October, 2013 – April, 2014. Work completed includes: analysis of application and Final Report data for Cohorts 5 and 6; TLLP teacher leader vignettes; and evaluation of Sharing the Learning Summit 2013. Research in process includes: PKE case study; analysis of Mentoring Moments NING; analysis of interview transcripts for focus groups with OTF and Ministry provincial partners in TLLP; data from Ministry TLLP surveys; PKE logs; and a proposed provincial survey of TLLP teacher leaders.

While we remain at early stages with the current longitudinal TLLP research, a rich picture of the previous, current and developing TLLP and its impacts is emerging. We outline some emerging findings related to the overall goals of TLLP and our overarching research questions concerning impact of TLLP for learning and leadership, how learning is being shared, and overall benefits and challenges.

#### 3.1 Impact of TLLP for Learning and Leadership

Our analysis indicates that TLLP has considerable impact for **teachers' professional learning**. The “TLLP approach” is grounded in principles of adult learning and professional development and embodies the philosophy of “authentic learner led learning” “by teachers, for teachers”. For example, our analysis of a sample of Final Reports for Cohorts 5 and 6 indicates that:

- 94% of TLLP teacher leaders reported improvements in their knowledge and skills through participating in the TLLP;
- 76% of TLLP teacher leaders reported improvements in their instructional and assessment practices; and
- 55% of TLLP teacher leaders reported improved leadership skills.

In addition, improvements in communication and collaboration skills, technological skills and enhanced self-efficacy were important findings in the Final Report analyses. These developments in knowledge, skills, practices and self-concept were similarly evident in our vignettes, case study work and interviews. An important and interesting finding is that TLLP projects in Cohorts 5 and 6 have enhanced their approaches to monitoring and measuring impact for professional learning.

Our analysis suggests also important benefits of TLLP for developing **teachers' leadership skills and practices**. Based on recommendations from our previous research report (Campbell, Lieberman & Yashkina, 2013), future TLLP Final Reports

include a section about teacher leadership. However, although not explicitly included as a category in previous Final Report templates, it is interesting to note that our analysis of when teacher leadership was voluntarily cited as an impact has increased considerably between our previous and current analyses. Our analysis of the Cohort 1-4 Final Report identified teacher leadership as a reported benefit in 15% of our sample responses, whereas the new analyses of Cohorts 5-6 identified 55% of TLLP Final Reports indicating impact for teacher leadership. Our analyses of vignettes, case study and material speak even more strongly to the importance of TLLP for developing teacher leadership “by doing”. For example, the 19 TLLP teacher leaders providing vignettes discussed a vast array of leadership skills, practices and learnings including: communication, planning, implementation, leading professional learning, collaboration, team leadership, learning new behaviors, building relationships, networking (in person and online), increasing professional dialogue, building a vision, learning to share leadership, going public with their practice and learning how to share learning and knowledge, learning new technologies, developing their own leadership understanding and practices, and facilitating knowledge mobilization. This is an impressive array of practices, skills and knowledge to grow teachers as leaders of learning.

Our research did not seek to measure or test impact for **student learning**. However, analysis of Final Report data indicates that TLLP projects can have an impact for improving student engagement, developing learning skills and experiences, and for contributing to achievement, character development and student leadership. The specific projects described in the vignettes and in the case study provide evidence of impact where specific TLLP practices contributed to changes in pedagogy which benefited students’ engagement and learning. For example, in our PKE case study, the introduction of a Balanced Math program and accompanying technology was changing approaches to Math learning for elementary students and for transitions into secondary schools. Similarly, the areas of technology and math received particular attention in our vignettes, indicating benefits for students in general and for students identified as having special needs in particular.

### 3.2 Sharing Learning and Knowledge Exchange

In our previous research report, we commented on the importance of knowledge exchange and, while commenting positively on the sharing happening, strongly encouraged the further development of knowledge exchange as a goal and practice through TLLP. Our impression from our emerging findings, work in process and developments taking place in the TLLP is that the level and impact of TLLP sharing is growing considerably and has the potential for further exponential growth. As our provincial interviewees noted, there is increasing recognition of TLLP and consequently TLLP teacher leaders and TLLP projects are increasingly 'go to' people for advice, ideas, expertise and materials, for example by Ministry officials, subject associations and TVO.

At the level of TLLP projects, the majority of Cohort 5 and 6 Final Reports identified the use of teacher collaborative learning as a main approach (85% of respondents), engagement with research (52% of respondents) and participation in teacher inquiry and use of evidence (55% of respondents) as important strategies. Overall the twin strategies of developing professional collaboration – for example, through professional learning communities, online networks and other forms of networking/collaboration – and of developing practical resources for use by teachers appear to be both the most prevalent and impactful approaches to sharing learning through TLLPs. For example, in our case study PKE, teams of teachers from 15 schools came together for PKE professional learning sessions which involved provision, discussion, modeling, demonstration, planning and application of a Balanced Math program and linked resources. This combined developing professional learning communities within and across schools with tangible resources that were used to inform teaching and learning practices in classrooms. Similarly, vignette writers spoke of use of social media, video, websites, blogs and newsletters to communicate with and develop a network, plus creation of teaching units, resource books, DVD, assessment materials and training to inform and change practice. The cohort 5 and 6 Final Reports identify provision of workshops/professional learning (55% of respondents) as a main method of knowledge exchange and sharing learning. Equally predominant is the use of online methods of sharing and networking (55% of sample of Final Report respondents). Indeed, the use of social media and online methods for knowledge exchange has increased substantially. The introduction of the NING has also contributed significantly to the development and use of online professional learning, networking and sharing; for example, over the six months from September 2013 to

February 2014, there was a *per month* average of 2,415 visits to the NING site by an average of 1,695 unique visitors. Relatedly, as well as sharing within and across schools and boards, TLLP teacher leaders now report contributing to a “larger educational community”, which can include presentations at conferences, publications, and online contributions. More traditionally, the use of staff meetings, newsletters, modeling and mentoring as methods for sharing and developing professional learning are also identified. Benefits of sharing learning were considered to be predominantly improving knowledge and understanding (94% of sample of Final Report respondents) and equally both inspiring future change (30% of respondents) and already impacting current change (30% of respondents). Encouragingly, at the formal end of their TLLP funding, the majority of TLLP teacher leaders reported (73% of sample Final Reports) that they planned to continue the innovations and implementation from their TLLP project over the longer-term.

Nevertheless, there remain challenges to advancing knowledge exchange through TLLP. Consistent with our previous research, challenges included: planning and allocating sufficient time and balancing workload; introduction of new technology; project scope being too large to manage and/or too small to effect anticipated change; gaining commitment and overcoming resistance; budget allocation and management; managing TLLP team dynamics; and logistical issues. However, an encouraging finding across our research is that TLLP teacher leaders generally find a way and that the process of overcoming or navigating challenges contributed to their leadership learning, development and skills. Furthermore, interestingly the issue of managing TLLP team dynamics was less pronounced in recent cohorts than in our previous analyses. Perhaps a contributing factor has been increased attention in TLLP Leadership Skills for Classroom Teachers training on project management, conflict management and leadership development. Indeed, the feedback about the provincial TLLP Leadership Skills for Classroom Teachers and Summit continues to be extremely positive. For example, 97% of participants at the 2013 Sharing the Learning Summit were “very satisfied” or “satisfied” with the Summit. Opportunities for networking with colleagues, learning about other TLLP projects and presenting their own TLLP project were considered to be particularly valuable.

The research team continues to be impressed by the ongoing development, present impact and future potential of TLLP for enabling experienced teachers’ to develop their practices, to lead the learning of other teachers, to support improvements in teaching and learning, and to innovate and contribute to improvements in knowledge, skills, practices and outcomes across the larger education community

and beyond. The OTF and Ministry are to be highly commended for a continuing remarkable partnership to respect, advance and celebrate Ontario's teachers and teaching.

### **3.3 Next Steps**

This report presents emerging findings and work in process during October 2013 – April 2014. Research proposed for 2014-15 includes:

- Administer and analyze provincial survey of TLLP teacher leaders;
- Continue to contribute to Ministry and OTF surveys/evaluation forms;
- Continue analysis of Mentoring Moments NING;
- Further research on PKE, including complete current PKE case study and initiate a second case study and analyze PKE logs;
- Further analysis and reporting of vignettes.
- Further analysis of focus group interviews with OTF and Ministry TLLP partners for TLLP updates;
- Participate in Leadership Skills for Classroom Teachers (May, 2014) and Sharing the Learning Summit (November, 2015).

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