

Using Personal Networks to Support Professional Inquiry

Working with Others

- ❖ Working with others is an important part of teacher professional development and building capacity in schools.
- ❖ Teachers learn from each other, building individual and collective knowledge
- ❖ Teachers work with other professionals (e.g., learning specialists, social workers, etc.) and families to support vulnerable children

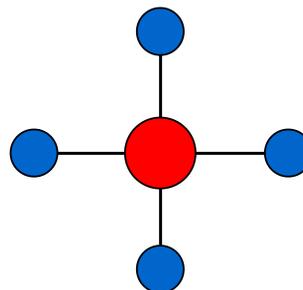
Teacher collaboration builds trust in schools and strengthens a supportive culture for professional learning.

“Collaboration is the new chorus line for innovation and improvement. The big questions are no longer about whether teachers should collaborate. The big questions, rather, are about how and how well teachers and other educators collaborate.”

- Hargreaves & O'Connor, 2017

Personal Networks

Personal networks are graphical representations that show teachers their social connections



Making Sense: Using personal networks for professional inquiry

- ❖ The Making Sense project at the University of Edinburgh uses a teacher log to create personal networks to help teachers enrich professional inquiry
- ❖ By looking at their personal networks teachers can analyse patterns in their interactions with others

The TRAC Tool

<https://reflective-teacher-net.edina.ac.uk/>

The log for Teacher Reflection on their Agency for Change (TRAC) is designed to help teachers reflect on how they use their social interactions with colleagues, families and other professionals to make a difference in their school.

The log can be used in individual and whole-school professional development. For more information please contact Dr. Natasa Pantic, Natasa.Pantic@ac.ed.uk

My Personal Network

[Return to your log page](#) Back

Type of Interaction

— Communication — Seeking/Giving Advice — Collaboration — Other

Questions for Reflection

1. How many people do I interact with?
2. Do I interact with different types of people?
3. What kinds of interactions do I engage in?

Using Social Networks to Support Collaboration and Learning

Learning in Networks

- ❖ Teachers learn from each other in social interactions, or networks, building individual and collective knowledge.
- ❖ Network learning promotes collaboration, which facilitates group learning
- ❖ Collaboration is an important part of professional learning and building organizational capacity for school-wide change.

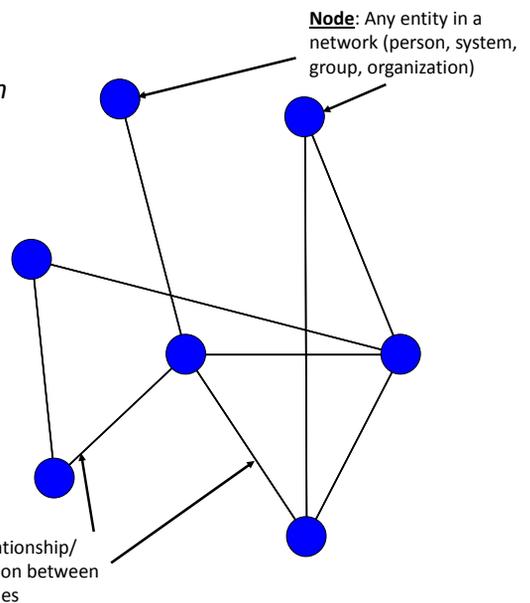
Networks facilitate individual collaboration and while letting teachers determine the content and form of knowledge sharing.

"People rely very heavily on their network of relationships to find information and solve problems – one of the most consistent findings in social science literature is that who you know often has a great deal to do with what you come to know"

- Cross, Borgatti, & Parker, 2002

Social Network Analysis

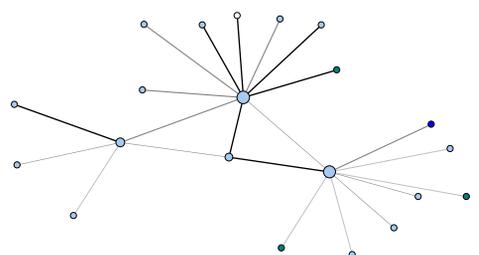
Social network analysis (SNA) focuses on the interactions between people/groups. SNA can be an invaluable tool for systematically assessing and collective knowledge-building in schools. Social network diagrams are graphical representations that show the social connections between people.



Network Learning: Using networks for teacher collaboration

- ❖ Network Learning uses social network analysis to help teacher Professional Learning Communities (PLCs) improve collaboration and learning
- ❖ Network analysis is used to help PLCs assess and shape collaborative problem-solving
- ❖ By examining their social networks, teacher PLCs can analyse patterns in their interactions, identify expertise, and collaborate strategically to achieve goals

Example of PLC network and reflection



Look at the overall shape of the network and the distribution of knowledge.

- Are there any central actors?
- Who has expertise in the network?
- How is expertise distributed?