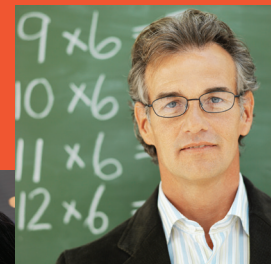Ontario OTF FEO

The Teacher Learning and Leadership Program: Research Project

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THE TEACHER LEARNING AND LEADERSHIP PROGRAM: EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

INTRODUCTION

If experienced teachers were supported to be leaders of learning – their own learning, the professional learning of other teachers, and their students' learning – what would these teacher leaders do and what would be the challenges and benefits? These questions are central to the Teacher Learning and Leadership Program (TLLP) in Ontario, Canada. Launched in 2007, the TLLP is a joint initiative through partnership between the Ontario Teachers' Federation (OTF) and the Ontario Ministry of Education with shared goals to: support experienced teachers to undertake self-directed advanced professional development; develop teachers' leadership skills for sharing their professional learning and exemplary practices; and facilitate knowledge exchange for spread and sustainability of effective and innovative practices. Each year, experienced classroom teachers can apply individually or in a team to conduct a TLLP project.

Our overarching research questions were:
1. What is the value of TLLP for teachers?
2. To what extent have the overall goals of TLLP been realized?
3. What lessons can be learned so far?

Our research involved: analysis of TLLP documents; observations and evaluations of provincial events for TLLP participants; interviews with TLLP provincial committee members (OTF and Ministry); review of descriptive data for the first four cohorts of the TLLP (during 2007 – 2011, 302 TLLP projects were conducted) plus in-depth analysis of a sample of 20% (N=60) of TLLP Teacher Participant Final Reports and interviews with a sample of teacher leaders.

RESEARCH FINDINGS

TLLP PROJECTS

Consistent with the TLLP's philosophy of there is "no one size fits all" professional development approach or teacher professional learning and career trajectory, TLLP projects vary considerably in scale, focus and activities. The "average" TLLP project has a budget of $13,991 and a core team of two to four people, who use the project to share learning with a much wider audience to spread changes in practice. TLLP projects include a diversity of topics including teachers' professional learning, improvements in instructional and assessment practices, supporting students' learning, and practices to advance commitments to equity. While TLLP projects can focus on particular students' learning or acheivement, the majority of projects are seeking to support learning and improvement for all students.

The most prevalent TLLP project topic priorities are:

1) differentiated instruction;
2) literacy;
3) technology; and
4) professional learning communities.

Other project topics included initiating new teaching practices in math, the arts, French language instruction, media literacy and/or attention to specific student groups, for example special needs, gender and/or student success in high school. The main goals of TLLP projects are to develop and improve teachers' understanding, knowledge, skills and instructional practices. Other project goals include: developing resources for professional learning and/or for student learning; using new technologies for learning; developing professional collaboration; and building community relationships. The activities undertaken through TLLP projects focus strongly on developing, sharing and spreading learning among and between professionals, students and the wider community. TLLP projects provide a potentially fertile source of leading edge innovation for the wider province (and beyond) to learn with and from.

SUPPORTS FOR TLLP TEACHER LEADERS

The OTF and Ministry recognized from the outset that if the goals of TLLP were to be achieved, TLLP participants would require support. Teachers generally focus on students' learning, whereas TLLP requires them also to think about their own professional learning, their leadership, developing the learning of other adults, sharing knowledge and managing a substantial project. TLLP teacher leaders attend a Leadership Skills for Classroom Teachers training in advance of beginning their project. The training is a high quality event with expert facilitation and a range of experienced, credible presenters and workshops. The major focus is preparing teachers to take on the professional learning, project management and leadership expectations of a TLLP project. Participants expressed very high levels of satisfaction with these events: for example, 98% of participants were satisfied or very satisfied in 2012. At the end of a TLLP project, TLLP teacher leaders attend the TLLP Sharing the Learning Summit to showcase completed projects and to strengthen further sharing, spread and sustainability of practices. In each year (2008 – 2012), over 95% of participants reported being satisfied or very satisfied. No participant has reported being not satisfied. When asked about "suggestions for future Summits", responses were to continue providing the Summit and included thanking the organizers for the "best professional development ever".

TLLP GOALS

The TLLP is designed to offer professional learning for instructional innovation through teacher initiated and led sharing of successful practices. This can be contrasted with the more routine professional development for instructional implementation through system initiated training for all teachers to implement changes in practice. Both are necessary for system level capacity building, but they differ considerably. Our research indicates the importance of the variety of approaches to professional learning generated through the TLLP.

PROFESSIONAL LEARNING

A key goal of TLLP is to support experienced teachers to undertake self-directed advanced professional development for improving their practices and supporting students' learning. Teacher interviewees were universally enthusiastic about the TLLP professional learning experience. The teacher-led, self-directed nature of TLLP was considered to be unique and vital, particularly for experienced teachers looking for new ways of developing their professional learning. The opportunity for genuine teacher collaborative learning contributes to new ways of working together that can be empowering through increasing teacher voice and transparency of practice. Having to focus on teachers' professional learning as well as students' learning is a considerable broadening of experience and opportunity for TLLP teacher leaders. TLLP participants benefited also from the development of new resources to support teachers' and students' learning. The main professional learning benefits identified were: improvements in teachers' knowledge, understanding and instructional practices; growth in teachers' leadership skills, sense of energy and efficacy; and collaborative professional learning.

TEACHER LEADERSHIP

The second goal of TLLP is to help classroom teachers develop leadership skills for sharing learning and spreading exemplary practices. The opportunity for teachers to be or become leaders is a major benefit of TLLP. In the words of one TLLP teacher leader: "This is grass roots leadership at its finest…This has been some of the best and most rewarding work in my career." Interviewees commented on developing as leaders and building leadership skills for leading a project, developing and sharing their expertise, presenting within their school and a wider community, and dealing with change processes and interpersonal dynamics.

SHARING LEARNING AND SPREADING EXEMPLARY PRACTICES

The third priority goal of TLLP is to facilitate knowledge exchange by sharing professional learning and spreading innovative and effective practices. A key role of TLLP is to empower teachers to open up and share classroom practices in ways that can encourage and sustain exemplary practices.

TLLP projects share their learning and spread practices within their own school(s) and with other schools; for example, by speaking at staff meetings, working collaboratively with teachers and teacher teams for professional learning, and supporting changes in classroom practices. TLLP practices can become school-wide. In the majority of TLLP projects, professional learning and practices spread to other schools within the board, for example across teachers in the same grade/panel or subject area or across families of schools or being taken up as a board-wide initiative. These practices sometimes extend to other school boards. The majority of methods of sharing focus on professional learning activities and communication strategies. The reach of innovative and effective practices was also supported by TLLP projects developing resources for student and/or professional learning, including creating instructional and assessment materials. There are inspiring approaches to sharing learning and practices with communities locally and at provincial, national and/or international levels, including presenting at conferences, making resources and materials available online or through professional networks, as well as TLLP teacher leaders being asked to participate in provincial and international organizations. The main benefits of sharing learning and knowledge exchange are, first, development of new knowledge and understanding, and, second, changes in practice.

STUDENT LEARNING

While the TLLP is primarily focused on teachers' learning and leadership, improvements in teachers' professional knowledge, skills and practice are anticipated to benefit student learning. The majority of projects identified benefits for students' improved learning in specific areas related to the project foci, for example literacy, math or arts, and for broader learning and skills development, for example through the use of technology and development of higher order thinking skills. Benefits for students' engagement through participating in innovative practices were also identified in the majority of projects. TLLP projects are contributing to improvements in students' development as learners and as leaders.

CHALLENGES EXPERIENCED BY TLLP PARTICIPANTS

Nevertheless, as with all innovations, challenges were encountered. By far the largest challenge is time and time management for teachers leading and delivering TLLP projects. Ways to mitigate time challenges include reaching out to others for support and/or integrating TLLP activities with classroom or school processes, such as professional learning community activities. A second significant area of challenge - as well as of leadership growth - is managing the dynamics of the TLLP project team and of gaining commitment or overcoming resistance from a wider group of people affected by the TLLP. TLLP projects promote innovation and sharing of learning; this can be perceived as a risk for people who are uncomfortable with changing their routines or becoming more public in sharing their practices. Part of the TLLP learning is teachers' leadership growth as they initiate and deliver innovative projects, build relationships, navigate systems and manage change.

THE BENEFITS AND VALUE OF TLLP

There are many substantial benefits of TLLP – for teachers' learning; for teacher leadership; for changing knowledge, understanding and practice; for student learning; for knowledge exchange, sharing learning and spreading practices beyond individual classrooms and schools. The fact that the TLLP is teacher-led professional learning and collaboration is valuable and powerful. With relatively small budgets, projects have innovated, implemented and spread effective practices. For teachers, the importance of being professionally valued, respected and empowered is a very strong value of TLLP. TLLP embodies the benefits and value of respectful relationships and collaboration, including the very important ongoing strong partnership between OTF and the Ministry in sharing commitment and support to the TLLP. Our conclusion is that the TLLP is a professionally, educationally and financially valuable initiative that should continue.

CONCLUSIONS AND CONSIDERATIONS FOR FUTURE

We introduced this report by asking if experienced teachers were supported to be leaders of learning, what would these teacher leaders do and with what benefits? The evidence

is clear: these teacher leaders will do amazing things; they will initiate, innovate, implement and share a wide range of projects which can develop collaborative professional learning, improve practice and support student learning; they will experience success in tangible outcomes – such as changes in professional practice for instruction and assessment - and also importantly in the sometimes immeasurable benefits of being empowered, enabled and valued; they will navigate personal, interpersonal and practical challenges as their leadership is tested and grows; they will learn how to collaborate and share to spread knowledge and sustain improvements in practices; and they will demonstrate the professional, educational and financial value of self-directed, teacher-led innovative and effective practices. We are struck by how the values of respectful relationships, partnership and collaboration underpin all aspects of the TLLP and how the work at all levels (teachers, projects, OTF and Ministry) demonstrates learning and leadership. We turn to the three priority goals for TLLP to offer some conclusions and further considerations.

To support experienced teachers who undertake self-directed advanced professional development

TLLP has advanced this goal considerably and effectively. Our research supports the continued development of self-directed professional learning for experienced teachers, particularly with an emphasis on teams of teachers collaborating. We offer three considerations for future development. First, we encourage further guidance and support to TLLP participants for approaches to monitoring and reporting evidence of TLLP project activities, outputs and outcomes. Second, to support identification and spread of practices, a meta-analysis of effective practices across all TLLP projects and case studies of particularly effective and/or innovative practices could be conducted. Third, it is important to continue to ensure that administrators and system leaders are aware of the nature, purpose, value and benefit of TLLP.

To help classroom teachers develop leadership skills for sharing learning and exemplary practices

This goal has been advanced considerably. We encourage the TLLP to continue to enable and empower teacher leadership and learning. We offer three practical considerations. First,

we suggest that the TLLP Final Report template be revised to include a section specifically for evidence about teacher leadership. Second, we propose that the TLLP training include an increased focus on how teachers can develop their leadership practices. Third, further research specifically on teacher leadership for and by TLLP participants could be conducted.

To facilitate knowledge exchange for shared professional learning and spread of effective and innovative practices
The goal of knowledge exchange has also been advanced. All TLLP projects consider teachers to be a main audience and involve sharing within their school, across the TLLP community and can spread practices to other schools, boards, communities and/or at provincial, national and even international levels. We offer three potential considerations for future development. First, for OTF and the Ministry to continue to develop the online presence, profile and sharing of knowledge from and about TLLP. Second, we suggest providing TLLP leaders with examples of effective strategies for knowledge exchange to spread practices. Third, OTF and the Ministry could assist further sharing of learning by making all TLLP participants aware of key provincial opportunities, such as invites to speak or participate at relevant conferences, meetings and events.

Our overall conclusion is to continue this outstanding way of leveraging and developing professional learning for experienced teachers.

THE TEACHER LEARNING AND LEADERSHIP PROGRAM: RESEARCH REPORT

1. INTRODUCTION

If experienced teachers were supported to become leaders of learning – their own learning, the professional learning of other teachers and partners, and their students' learning – what would these teacher leaders do, how would they develop their learning and practices, what would be the successes and challenges, what would be learned and with what benefit for students, teachers and other partners? These questions are at the heart of the development of the Teacher Learning and Leadership Program (TLLP) in Ontario, Canada; an innovative initiative developed through a strong and continuing partnership between the Ontario Teachers' Federation (OTF) and the Ontario Ministry of Education (Ministry).

The Teacher Learning and Leadership Program (TLLP) is a project-based activity for selected experienced teachers whose choice of career is the classroom. It is intended to create opportunities for experienced teachers to enhance their professionalism and skills, extend their learning and share their expertise with others for the broader benefit of Ontario's students. Teachers can apply, as individuals or as a group, to undertake a project. (Ontario Ministry of Education, n.d., p.3).

Three goals for the TLLP have been collaboratively identified and agreed upon by OTF and the Ministry:

1. To support experienced teachers who undertake self-directed advanced professional development related to improved student learning and development.
2.   To help classroom teachers develop leadership skills for sharing learning and exemplary practices on a board-wide and/or provincial basis.

3. To facilitate knowledge exchange to spread the use and sustainability of innovative and effective practices.

To date there has been no independent research study of the impact of the TLLP in terms of the goals outlined above and, more broadly, as a form of professional learning and teacher leadership to improve practice. This research report focuses on the supports provided, as well as the experiences of, and outcomes for, teachers involved with the TLLP. At the start of this research, four cohorts of teachers (2007-08, 2008-09, 2009-10, 2010-11) had completed TLLP projects with funding for professional development as per their proposals. A fifth cohort in 2011-12 has since completed their projects and a sixth cohort for 2012-13 is currently in process.

This report includes an outline of our research questions, design and methods. Findings are presented relating to: the origins and vision for TLLP; the TLLP application and approval process; the nature of TLLP projects; supports for TLLP teacher leaders including the Leadership Skills for Classroom Teachers training and the TLLP Sharing the Learning Summit; evidence of experiences and impacts concerning the three goals of teacher professional learning to improve student learning, teacher leadership and knowledge exchange; the overall value of TLLP; benefits and challenges encountered; conclusions and considerations for future development.

2. RESEARCH DESIGN, QUESTIONS AND METHODS

The research for this report was conducted from May 2012 to December 2012.

2.1 Research Questions

Our overarching research questions were:

1. What is the value of TLLP for teachers? And what can we learn about professional development organized in the TLLP way?
   Sub-Questions:
   a) What supports have been provided for teachers participating in TLLP?
   b) What professional learning topics and approaches have been chosen?
   c) With whom do teachers work (partner, team, etc.)?

d) How have the ideas and practices from TLLP spread (in school and beyond)?
e) What challenges have been encountered in leading professional development?

2. To what extent have the overall goals of TLLP been realized?
   Sub-Questions:
   GOAL 1:
   To support experienced teachers who undertake self-directed advanced professional development related to improved student learning and development.
   a) How have experienced teachers been supported to undertake self-directed professional development?
   b) How have the projects undertaken related to improved practices for student learning and development?
   c) To what extent have the Leadership Skills for Classroom Teachers and Sharing the Learning Summit contributed to the above goals and to helping classroom teachers to overcome challenges they encounter in implementing their TLLP projects?

   GOAL 2:
   To help classroom teachers develop leadership skills for sharing learning and exemplary practices on a board-wide and/or provincial basis.
   d) How have classroom teachers developed their leadership skills?
   e) What examples of successful sharing of practices at the school board and/or provincial level can be identified? And what challenges have been encountered?
   f) How have the Leadership Skills for Classroom Teachers and Sharing the Learning Summit supported the development of teachers' leadership skills and sharing of professional learning?

GOAL 3:

To facilitate knowledge exchange.

g) How has knowledge exchange been facilitated for individual projects, across teachers, schools, boards and at the provincial level?

h) What strategies appear to be successful? And what challenges need to be overcome?

i) How have the Leadership Skills for Classroom Teachers and Sharing the Learning Summit supported knowledge exchange?

3. What lessons can be learned so far?

Sub-Questions:

a) What has been the benefit for experienced teachers' professional development?

b) What has been the benefit for experienced teachers' professional practice?

c) How is teacher leadership being supported and developed?

d) Is sharing of learning, knowledge and exemplary practices occurring and benefiting improvements for teachers and students?

e) Overall what are the main strengths of TLLP and what areas require attention going forward?

f) What areas of further research are required?

2.2   Research Methods

Our research design involved conducting and combining five main methods.

2.2.1   Policy Documents and Professional Materials

A scan was conducted of policy and professional materials associated with the launch and delivery of the TLLP initiative by the Ontario Ministry of Education and OTF. This included, for example, descriptions of the TLLP and guidance resources for applicants and project leaders on the Ministry's website. The purpose of this scan was to describe the actual TLLP initiative, the TLLP's purpose, the goals to be achieved and the processes used each year to seek, fund and complete projects.

2.2.2   Teacher Development Supports: Leadership Skills for Classroom Teachers Training and TLLP Sharing the Learning Summit

At the launch of each TLLP cohort, a professional learning event - Leadership Skills for Classroom Teachers – is held for all teachers receiving TLLP funding for the coming year. Subsequently, a culminating event is held for each TLLP cohort at the end of their year of funding; this is the TLLP Sharing the Learning Summit, generally held in November of each year.

Our research included analysis of the content, role and benefits of these events and the work of OTF and the Ministry to provide professional supports to teachers through learning at these events. Specifically, the research team attended the May 2012 Leadership Skills for Classroom Teachers and the November 2012 Sharing the Learning Summit to observe the professional learning opportunities, exchanges and resources available for participating teachers.

The research also included review and analysis of agenda, resources and other relevant materials for the Leadership Skills training and culminating Summits for previous cohorts throughout the TLLP. In particular, we analyzed evaluation forms and feedback for each event.

Specifically, for the Leadership Skills for Classroom Teachers events, we analyzed the following:

- Cohort 1 (March 2008) – one evaluation document
- Cohort 2 (June 2008) – one evaluation document and one recommendations document
- Cohort 3 (May 2009) – one evaluation document and one recommendations document
- Cohort 4 (May 2010) – one combined evaluation and recommendations document
- Cohort 5 (May 2011) – one combined evaluation and recommendations document
- Cohort 6 (May 2012) – one preliminary evaluation document

For the TLLP Sharing the Learning Summit, the following documents were analyzed:

- Cohorts 1 and 2 (November 2009) – one evaluation document (Summit evaluation form) and materials in the Summit folder (agenda, presentation powerpoints and other Summit resources)
- Cohort 3 (November 2010) – one evaluation document (Summit evaluation form and *What Ministry Needs to Know* form) and materials in the Summit folder (agenda, presentation powerpoints, etc.)
- Cohort 4 (November 2011) – one evaluation document (Summit evaluation form and *What Ministry Needs to Know* form) and materials in the Summit folder (agenda, presentation powerpoints, etc.)
- Cohort 5 (November 2012) – one evaluation document (Summit evaluation form and *What Ministry Needs to Know* form) and materials in the Summit folder (agenda, presentation powerpoints, etc.)

2.2.3 **TLLP Teacher Participant Final Report Form**

All teachers receiving funding for a TLLP proposal must complete a TLLP Teacher Participant Final Report Form using a standard template format plus supporting evidence. We conducted a descriptive analysis of all TLLP final reports from the first four cohorts (2007-2011), involving a total of 302 projects.

Table 1: Total Number of TLLP Final Reports (2007-2011)

Cohort	Eng. Pub.	Eng. Cath.	Fre. Pub.	Fre. Cath.	Eng./ Fre.	Pub./ Cath.	School Auth.	Total
1	42	30	1	3	72/4	43/33	3	79
2	35	28	1	5	62/6	36/32	0	69
3	32	31	3	6	63/9	35/37	2	74
4	41	28	4	4	69/8	45/32	3	80
Total	150	117	9	18	266/27	159/134	8	302

In consultation with OTF and the Ministry, we developed a purposive sample of 20% of the final reports (total of 60 projects) for more in-depth analysis of the projects undertaken and the reported successes, challenges and overall impacts. A detailed coding structure was developed 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; range in the size of the projects; in terms of dollar amounts and also in terms of the number of people on the team; range of project themes; and variations in volume and quality of final reports.

Table 2: Sample of 60 TLLP Project Final Reports by Board Type

Cohort	Eng. Pub.	Eng. Cath.	Fre. Pub.	Fre. Cath.	School Auth.	Total
1	8	5	1	1	0	15
2	6	7	1	1	0	15
3	6	6	1	1	1	15
4	6	6	1	1	1	15
Total	25	24	4	4	2	60

Table 2 outlines the distribution of sample TLLP projects by board type. Other features of the sample are as follows:

Total Sample and cohorts:	60 projects/15 per cohort
Region:	Per cohort: at least 1 board per region, usually 2 per region. In total: 13 from Ottawa, 11 from Barrie, 11 from London, 10 from GTA, 9 from Sudbury, 6 from Thunder Bay.
Project size:	Number of people (ranging from 1 to 90) and budget (low, average, and high)
Number of People:	Cohort 1: from 1 to 4, Cohort 2: from 1 to 66, Cohort 3: from 1 to 68, Cohort 4: from 1 to 90; Total: 14 one-person projects, 34 2-4 people projects, 5 5-10 people projects, 3 11-20 people projects, 4 more than 20 people projects. Average: 8 people

Budget:	Cohort 1: $3,300 - $34,867, Cohort 2: $5,425 - $103,384, Cohort 3: $5,500 - $37,400, Cohort 4: $7,865 - $83,455. Total: 21 - ≤$10,000, 35 - $10,000<X>$50,000, 4 - ≥$50,000. Average: $11,122
Panel:	37 elementary, 17 secondary, 6 elementary and secondary. All three levels are represented in all cohorts
Length of Report	Majority is 2-to-3-page reports: 28 2-page reports, 18 3-page reports, 13 4 to 10-page reports, and one 68-page report

2.2.4 **Teacher Participant Interviews**

Drawing from the above sample of TLLP final reports, we developed a sample of TLLP teacher leaders from each cohort as potential interview participants. In discussion with OTF and the Ministry, we proposed a purposive sample to include a range of criteria to capture the diversity and experience of TLLP projects, for example:

- Distribution of sample across each of previous four TLLP cohorts
- Projects being conducted by a single teacher, groups of teachers within one school, across more than one school, and/or including school board team members
- Projects focused on instruction and student achievement in specific areas, such as literacy and numeracy
- Projects intended to innovate new teaching and learning practices, such as use of technology
- Projects focused on equity goals and reducing performance gaps, such as special education and/or boys' literacy

- Projects with a strong focus on teachers' professional learning and leadership strategies, such as building professional learning communities

A total of 18 TLLP teacher leaders were contacted to request their contribution to the TLLP research. Nine TLLP teacher leaders agreed to participate. This sample of nine teachers included three teachers from each of Cohorts 2, 3 and 4. Four teachers were from the English Public system, four from the English Catholic system and one from the French Public system.

The TLLP teacher leaders were given the choice of whether to respond to our interview questions in writing through a survey or in conversation through an interview. Five responded in writing through the survey and four participated in an interview.

2.2.5 **Provincial Teacher Leadership and Learning Committee (TLLC)**

In addition, interviews were conducted with individuals at the provincial level responsible for the development and delivery of the TLLP. Two people from OTF and three people from the Ministry were interviewed.

3. RESEARCH FINDINGS

3.1 **TLLP: Origins and Vision**

In 2003, a new government was elected to Ontario with a priority focus on education, including attention to building the professional capacity of teachers. In 2004, the government released a discussion paper "Teacher Excellence – Unlocking Student Potential through Continuing Professional Development". This was followed, in 2005, by the establishment of the Working Table

on Teacher Development to bring together education partners – including OTF and the Ministry – to provide recommendations on teachers' professional development. The first phase of the Working Table's deliberations focused on recommending the development and implementation of the New Teacher Induction Program (NTIP). Having started with a focus on new teachers, the second phase of the Working Table's focus turned to experienced teachers. This involved two specific areas of foci: "1) a revised Teacher Performance Appraisal program for experienced teachers and 2) professional development for experienced teachers and their ongoing learning" (*Working Table on Teacher Development*, 2007, p.1).

The Working Table on Teacher Development grounded their recommendations in the underpinning rationale that: "The quality of teaching is the largest, single variable in a school's impact on student learning" (Working Table on Teacher Development, 2007, p.3). Therefore, supports for teachers' professional learning and practice are paramount. The Working Table concluded that there should be no one size fits all approach to professional learning in recognition of the variety of needs, experiences, interests, contexts and career stages of teachers and the variety of their students, classrooms and practices. Professional learning came to be defined as encompassing three distinct, overarching – and not mutually exclusive – approaches:

- Training: content knowledge required for the job by the employer or other agency (e.g. Workplace Hazardous Materials Information System training, reporting and data management)

- Staff Development: usually system-wide professional learning activities that are not chosen by the teacher, but are job-embedded and driven by the broader community and education system needs (e.g. early literacy for groupings of primary teachers, anti-bullying programs)
- Professional Development: self-chosen learning activities that teachers investigate individually or as part of a professional learning community (e.g. action research, lesson study, graduate work, additional qualification courses, writing).   (Working Table on Teacher Development, 2007, p.3)

Going forward, five characteristics were recommended for the design and provision of professional learning for Ontario's teachers:

1. Coherent
Teacher professional learning is ultimately about best practices for student learning and development and occurs in the context of the Ministry/board/school and parent/community/classroom continuum. Coherence is also built on the "three R's" of respect, responsibility and results, recognizing teacher professionalism and the complexity of teacher learning. …

2.   Attentive to Adult Learning Styles
Teachers come to each professional learning experience with a wide variety of skills, knowledge, education, teaching, and training background. As a result, when planning professional learning, adult learning principles should be addressed by:
- Considering the role of choice. Research supports the importance of choice and self-direction in personalizing the learning.

- Providing programming that is viewed as meaningful, relevant and substantive.
- Providing differentiation in the content and delivery models.
- Considering "best fit" within a culture of collaborative learning. The "one size fits all" approach may prove problematic in many circumstances. Effective learning must recognize and include the participants' understanding and perspective in order to bring about a culture of reflection and transformation.
- Providing appropriate recognition for the successful completion of professional learning.

3. Goal-oriented
Professional learning is enhanced when it is goal oriented and is clearly:
- Connected to improved student learning and achievement.
- Connected to daily practice (job embedded), both directly and indirectly.
- Situated within and respectful of varied contexts (i.e. relevant to Ministry, board, school/community, classroom).

4. Sustainable
Professional learning that will have impact in the classroom must:
- Be planned and progress over time (i.e. it is a process).
- Be supported by appropriate resources focused on its success.
- Involve the learners and allow time for practice (job embedded).
- Include time for self-assessment through reflection (construct/de-construct/re-construct thinking about practice) within its processes.
- Include, wherever possible, congruency in professional learning for other staff who support student learning.…

5. Evidence-informed
Professional learning should be considered and be built upon current research as well as both formal and informal data…. (Working Table on Teacher Development, 2007, pp.4-5).

Two further considerations emerged from the Working Table's deliberations. First, building on the conclusions that there is no one size fits all professional learning model; there is also no single pathway or career trajectory for teachers. Therefore, there is a need for a variety of professional learning opportunities differentiated for individual teachers' needs. Second, those teachers whose professional needs may have been least supported – at that time – were "excellent experienced teachers for who their choice of career is the classroom… yet who seek a peer leadership role in areas such as curriculum, instructional practice or supporting other teachers" (*Working Table for Teacher Development,* 2007, p.5). Reflecting back on the Working Table and related deliberations, one of our interviewees commented:

… what we realized was that in our system, there was staff development that came down from above, and there was learning or progression or leadership that meant becoming a consultant or a principal. That was the one leadership pathway, and what was missing was for these thousands of teachers we had out there at the time who had 15-20 years of experience, who enjoyed teaching, who were very good teachers

The Working Table concluded with three recommendations. First, to endorse the five characteristics of effective professional learning (see above). Second, to enhance

the coordination of professional learning. And third, to develop opportunities for experienced teachers to share exemplary practice, with the recommendation:

That the government develop with education partners a structure which enhances opportunities for teachers to expand their knowledge and skill, and share exemplary practice with other teachers. Ontario has many fine teachers whose choice of career is in the classroom and who have expertise to offer to other teachers, boards and regions. They are a valuable resource that must be encouraged, developed and utilized to enhance the educational experience of our students. A structure is needed that would facilitate opportunities for teachers to extend their learning and share their expertise for the broader benefit of Ontario's students. (Working Table on Teacher Development, 2007, p.6).

The stage was set for the development of the TLLP. As an interviewee commented, there was a "joining of the practical and political will" to do something different to support the professional learning of teachers. Central to this joining of will was also the development of a joint commitment and a strong, shared partnership of working together involving OTF, its affiliates and the Ministry. People from OTF and the Ministry worked together on developing the recommendations of the Working Table and on following up with developing a shared proposal for a solution to the third recommendation of creating opportunities for experienced teachers to share exemplary practices. There was a sense of shared commitment, joint ownership and partnership from the outset.

This moment provided an opportunity to build on a shared vision of teachers' professional learning by OTF and the Ministry and to draw on the findings of a needs assessment conducted with teachers about forms of meaningful professional learning in 2006. An interviewee commented:

What we found in the survey… there were some findings that were atypical of the kind of professional learning that mostly teachers were getting, and what they identified was the most meaningful for them. What they identified was that they most liked stuff that was most relevant and applicable in their classrooms, but that allowed them opportunities to interact with other teachers; they wanted more opportunities to observe other teachers, and they weren't afraid… everybody asked us if they were afraid of other people coming into their classrooms to *observe them, and they weren't. They wanted more opportunities to share what they knew with other teachers. So all of these things came out, and was quite consistent about what was in the research literature about meaningful professional learning. So there was this whole notion of finding professional learning that was meaningful…. So, this came out of: A) OTF's desire to find something that was in keeping with the needs assessment, and then the work that we did at the Working Table on professional development where, with the Government… we developed what meaningful professional development would look like for teachers…That process of working with the Government on what constituted meaningful professional learning, in keeping with the needs assessment that we had done, really provided a frame for what the*

experiences would be like and what the project would have. We were in high agreement…

The development of professional learning that was meaningful for teachers became a major part of the vision for TLLP.

A second major part of the vision was to create an opportunity for the actual sharing, spread and sustainability of teacher-led innovative and effective practices. For example, one interviewee commented on their own experience of working with individual teachers or principals who introduced highly effective practice but of these practices not continuing after the individual left the school or retired, recounting:

I was so impressed with it (new effective practice for boys' literacy), and when she (individual who initiated practice) retired, that was the end of it; we had no way to spread out, we had no way of … I mean, we made sure people were aware, but there wasn't really a vehicle to get a bunch of people to go there and watch it, or for her to bring her staff and make presentations… She retired and that was the end of it, and that always stuck in the back of my mind that there's something wrong that … here's very practical, on the ground, successful strategies, and we can't get it out there. So that was the one that nagged for me in the back of our minds. And then through the partnership table…we got talking about professional learning a lot, and it was quite disjointed in terms of people's understanding of what it was and what was professional learning vs. professional development vs. staff development? (staff development, for the most part, being what we do, because the system is so huge), and where was the role for professional development, teacher choice…

And so it kind of evolved out of there, and we started working with OTF, and… it kept evolving, and people were obviously very keen and very thrilled to have this opportunity…

Another interviewee spoke also of the importance of developing a way to share innovative teacher-led practice, recounting a discussion with an international educator working to develop networked learning communities:

He said to me, and I remember this so well, and this is, for me, what really characterized the TLLP, that's why I'm sharing it with you. He said to me, "every day in classrooms, there are miracles happening. Absolute miracles. Teachers are doing fantastic things. And the teacher in the classroom next door has no idea about the miraculous things that the teacher next to him/her is doing; the teacher in the next school doesn't know it, and the teacher in the next district certainly doesn't know it. How do we take those miracles and share them?" What they had done was this notion of networked learning communities, and in what he showed me, they had taken teachers and allowed them to go into each other's schools. What a concept – imagine going into another teacher's school? … So, this whole concept of sort of coming out of your classroom, and the fact that you've done fantastic work that has worked really well with your students, how do you then share it in a non-threatening way, but in a really good way with other teachers? That, for me, was very key in what we sort of had in our heads as we thought about what the TLLP would be.

A third aspect of the developing vision for TLLP was the emphasis on teacher leadership and learning. As an interviewee commented, previously:

So there wasn't that other path where leadership could be internal, could be within the school, and that's where TLLP came in – where you could take the staff development, but you could push it further, or you could take other needs that weren't covered by staff development (because staff development cannot cover all of the needs, or all of my needs as a professional) and really push it further, and feel worthy of this research, of this learning that I'm doing, and then help share with others, and therefore develop a certain leadership, which always existed. There was always this informal leadership in a school where new teachers who had questions or would go to the experienced teachers and ask them, but this wasn't recognized; TLLP recognized this leadership that existed and raised it from just that informal sort of "kitchen table" type leadership to something very, very present and something very knowledgeable and actually province-wide. Now this leadership is not only known within the school – that such and such teacher is good – but it's within the board, and often throughout the province.

From these evolving visions – enabling experienced teachers to have choice, flexibility and meaningful professional learning; facilitating the sharing and spread of teacher-led innovative and effective practice; and developing teachers' leadership – the establishment of TLLP's three priority goals developed:

1. To support experienced teachers who undertake self-directed advanced professional development related to improved student learning and development.
2. To help classroom teachers develop leadership skills for sharing learning and

exemplary practices on a board-wide and/or provincial basis.

3. To facilitate knowledge exchange.

And integral to this work from the outset have been the values, principles and practices of "trust and relationships, collaborative thinking; cooperation". Interviewees spoke strongly and supportively of the partnerships and trust developed between OTF and the Ministry and with teachers and other partners that have resulted in shared ownership in, and commitment to, the TLLP.

3.2   Proposal Criteria, Process and Approval

3.2.1   Eligible Applicants

The primary applicant for a TLLP must be an experienced teacher. Originally, there were criteria for years of experience but this became problematic in practice:

…initially we were thinking one of our things was you could have ten years' experience or more to apply, and that one went down almost right away, basically through the teams and… people saying it's not that easy. So, ten years teaching that subject? Or ten years in the role? Or ten years teaching, but new to the role? Like…? And we also had people actually saying to us as part of the teams, "You know, this is a brand new teacher, but he or she is bringing this knowledge, sometimes from other workplaces, too…."

Consequently, the 'experienced' criteria was defined as: "Teachers who are beyond the induction stage and whose primary assignment is teaching students" (TLLP Program Guidelines, p. 4). Such experienced teachers from all publicly funded school boards, school authorities and provincial schools are eligible to apply for a TLLP project. The focus is on teacher leaders who have selected to remain in classroom positions and who want to deepen their learning and expertise

and to share that with others. Therefore, current or former teachers who are currently working in system or administrative positions (e.g. principals, coordinators, consultants) are not eligible to apply to lead a TLLP project; although they can be included – as can other individuals – as a team member in a proposal initiated and led by an experienced teacher. A defining feature of the TLLP is that it is teacher-led. TLLP proposals may be from an individual teacher or may involve a group. There is a view that a group approach – provided it is led by a teacher – may be preferable as the goal is sharing professional learning. Nevertheless, projects with only one individual teacher are funded and have been successful.

3.2.2 Types of Projects

The essence of a TLLP project is that it is initiated and led by an experienced teacher and that it connects to the goals of professional learning and practice, developing teacher leadership and sharing knowledge. As will be discussed further in section 4, a vast array of types of projects has been funded. In the TLLP Program Guidelines for people interested in applying for a TLLP project, for example, the following are suggested:

Professional learning topics of interest could include, but would not be limited to:

- Equity of outcome (e.g. innovative strategies to address the needs of a targeted student population)
- Teaching and learning strategies in and across content areas (e.g. innovative strategies to support student achievement in literacy and numeracy)
- Competencies and strategies for teaching in a minority context (e.g. innovative strategies to help foster increased capacity to work in a minority setting to support the academic learning and identity building of every student)
- integrated curriculum (e.g. innovative approaches to the use of interdisciplinary studies or integration of subjects)
- Community partnerships (e.g. innovative strategies to help develop school-community projects that serve as practical applications of students' learning, developing their sense of belonging to a community, and provide them with opportunities for self-affirmation outside of school)
- Integrating technology to enhance curriculum delivery and pedagogy in order to address a specific learning need (e.g. innovative approaches to the use of communications technology)
- Impact of professional learning communities/networks (e.g. school/board teams – including staff in educational support roles – share skills/knowledge on any of the above topics). (p.5)

Initially, the TLLP projects were not to include funding for physical resources – such as technology, books, instructional materials – but it soon became apparent that some teachers did not have access to resources that they needed within their school or board and did not have other sources of funding to purchase these resources. Consequently, TLLP proposals can now include budget for the purchase of technology and other resources; however, the proposals must demonstrate the pedagogical and learning value of such purchases. As the TLLP Program Guidelines specify:

Technological equipment could be included in a budget on the condition that:

- It is not already available at the school or through the board
- It is not already funded by the Ministry
- It is a necessary resource for the project's learning activity

- it will benefit the learning of other teachers or other educational workers
- it demonstrates clearly that learning needs are determining the specific technology requested rather than the technology leading the learning… (p.6)

The level of funding requested for individual projects can vary.

3.2.3   ***Application and Approval Process***

Experienced teachers interested in submitting a TLLP proposal are advised to review the guideline materials and application support videos available on the Ministry's TLLP website. They are also encouraged to talk to previous TLLP participants, other teachers, their principal and their school board. In practice, often future TLLP applicants hear about the TLLP from previous participants or have had an opportunity to experience or be involved with a former TLLP project.

Teacher leads are required to develop a project proposal and complete an application form, including:

- Applicant(s) Information
- Project Proposal (title; brief description; rationale for pursuing this learning project; describe how project outcomes will contribute to student learning and development; and describe background and experience of each group member)
- Plan for Your Professional Learning (goals; activities; measurement; and budget)
- Plan for Sharing (goals; activities; measurement; and budget)
- Total Project Budget
- Declarations (signatures of applicant(s) and principal).

TLLP applications are submitted to an applicant's director of education or supervisory officer of a school authority. A school board committee – either existing or created for the TLLP – comprising teacher Federation representatives and board staff review the proposals from teachers in their board. Each school board can select up to two TLLP proposals to put forward to the Provincial Teacher Learning and Leadership Committee (TLLC). Interviewees expressed some concerns about how effective the process of teacher-led proposals being filtered through a board level process was. There were concerns that perhaps some of the more innovative proposals did not get approval and some TLLP interviewees did provide examples where either their original proposal had been rejected or had to be very carefully and strategically adapted to align with board priorities. There were also concerns when sometimes a board did not submit a TLLP proposal or only submitted one (including very large boards) to the Provincial TLLC. On the other hand, it was acknowledged that the engagement and buy-in of school board leaders is important for gaining support for TLLP and recognition for the teachers involved. A partial solution has been to ask for the boards to submit a list of all the TLLP applications received, alongside those that they recommend for approval.

The Provincial TLLC makes the final decision about which projects are approved. The Committee is comprised of teacher Federation representatives and Ministry staff. Each proposal is read and evaluated by a pair of reviewers (one teacher Federation, one Ministry) who then make recommendations to the larger Committee.

At both the board and provincial review levels, the criteria for selecting and approving proposals include:

- The extent to which the proposal is guided by the five characteristics of effective professional learning (recommended by the Working Table, as outlined previously)
- The quality of the proposal
- The background and experience the teacher/group brings to the subject matter of the project
- The potential impact for the learning of participating teachers
- The extent to which the topic would have an impact on student learning and development and reflect ministry/board/school goals
- The potential of the plan for sharing with others in the school, board and/or other boards
- The potential impact for the learning of other teachers
- The extent to which the learning and sharing outcomes can be measured. (see TLLP Program Guidelines, pp.5-6).

The Provincial TLLC decides whether a proposal is approved in full, whether it is approved with conditions, whether a proposal needs to be revised to include additional information, or whether a proposal is declined. Interviewees involved in this process indicated that often the area where a proposal needs to be revised is to ensure that the focus is on the teachers' own professional learning and sharing that learning, not just on an expert teacher demonstrating their work with students. As illustrated by quotes from three interviewees:

I've seen projects where the applicant was, you know… "I've got this great lesson plan for this project and I just want to write it up and distribute it to all the other teachers," and our question… "This is good, but what are you learning?" "Oh, well I've got the plan." "Yeah, but what are you learning? You've got to push your learning;" so that first part of it is, you have to push your learning and then share…

…your application's here because we know you're good with your students; it's, what's your learning going to be? How are you going to push it? … how do you transfer that learning to other adults? And that's where the training comes in as well, because a lot of them would be so focused on their kids and their class that they'd say, "I can do a way better job!" Well that's great, but we're asking you how you're going to transfer that to other adults. That's a different thing.

The ones that are asked to rewrite are usually ones that have a focus just on student learning, and not enough on teacher learning. So the tendency of the teachers is to really focus in on what my students will learn, which is great, but not always enough… the objective is really, "what you will learn." The other ones that I sometimes come down hard on are the ones which are by the teachers who are already the expert: "I'm the expert in this area and I'm going to teach everybody… I'm bringing my brilliance to the world, but I haven't really focused on what me and the people on my team are going to be learning through the process." So, as much as we do want them to share their brilliance, we also want them to be engaged in a learning experience. So, just getting them to rephrase and reframe their own learning, as the main objective, is sometimes a lot of work for them… but we do make them do it.

Part of the process of project proposal development, review and approval is to ensure the TLLP is a high quality professional experience. The application and approval process have been refined over time in light of experience. There is also a constant learning and seeking to improve built into the TLLP design and approach. For example, recently concerns with challenges in knowledge exchange within and across boards has resulted in a new TLLP Provincial Knowledge Exchange initiative to fund school boards to draw on previous TLLP participants to share their learning and spread their practices within their own board and/or with another board or boards.

3.2.4   *Successful Proposals: Expectations of TLLP Teacher Leaders*

For the successful proposals, a contract is issued and funding for the proposal flows from the Ministry of Education to the school board. The board is responsible for administering the project funding on behalf of the TLLP participant. Participants begin their TLLP experience by attending a training session – Leadership Skills for Classroom Teachers – in the May prior to the academic year in which they will conduct their TLLP project. They then work on their TLLP project during the following academic year and participate in a culminating TLLP Sharing the Learning Summit the following November. Therefore, the TLLP process generally involves participants for 18 months – spanning across three school academic years from beginning to end - although the actual projects are usually conducted within a single school year.

The TLLP teacher leaders are expected to commit to the following expectations:

- Attend the Leadership Skills for Classroom Teachers professional development session to strengthen facilitation skills and explore effective strategies in communicating with adult learners and budget management
- Carry out the activities described in their proposal application
- Comply with the board's accounting and procurement practices and collaborate with the board staff managing the budget
- Agree to be contacted/surveyed, for evaluation purposes, by ministry representatives throughout the duration of the project
- Participate in building a community of practice through a province-wide TLLP teacher networking site
- Post at least two artifacts on the TLLP networking site
- Participate in knowledge exchange opportunities in order to share their learning and promising practices with colleagues and other education stakeholders
- Document and conduct an analysis of their project and their learning
- Complete the TLLP Teacher Participant Final Report Form and submit it, along with any additional project artifacts, to the board's director of education/ supervisory officer of school authority
- Present and share results of their learning at the TLLP Sharing the Learning Summit and within the context of a growing TLLP community of practice.

(see *TLLP Program Guidelines*, p.8)

Although there are a set of expectations and requirements, the hallmark of TLLP is the building of relationships to support and connect experienced teachers. As one interviewee commented:

…another unique thing about it (TLLP), and the reason why it so epitomizes what happened in education over the past 8-10 years within the specific way we ran it here in Ontario is that the TLLP epitomizes the trust that was created… First of all, it says to the teachers, "We're going to give you money, and we trust that you're going to do something great with it and use it in a really good way."

3.3   TLLP Projects

3.3.1   All Projects in Cohorts 1-4 (2007-2011)

At the start of this research, four cohorts of TLLP projects had been completed (from 2007 – 2011). Each of these projects had 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 302 Final Reports from Cohorts 1 to 4 to examine how many projects were undertaken and in which education system, what the project size (in terms of the project team and the budget) was, and what the main themes were.

As indicated in Table 3, a total of 302 projects were conducted during the first four TLLP Cohorts. Although there has been a slight fluctuation, an average of 75 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 language projects is smaller, although they have increased in number compared to Cohort 1.

Table 4: Number of TLLP Participant Team Members and Budget

Cohort	Part. Sum	Part. Avg.	$ Sum	$ Average
1	158	2	$982,051	$12,341
2	406	5.9	$818, 006	$11,855
3	350	4.7	$1,125,308	$15,207
4	342	4.3	$1,257,925	$15,724
TOTAL	1,256	4.2	$4,183,290	$13,991

The projects range considerably in the number of people involved in the project team. As outlined in Table 4, the average number of people in the project team is approximately four. The majority of projects (210 out of 302) involved a range of two to four people in the TLLP team. The range of people involved in the TLLP team has increased over time. In Cohort 1, the range of TLLP members was from 1 to 4 people; in Cohort 2, from 1 to 66 team members; in Cohort 3, from 1 to 68 team members; and in Cohort 4, from 1 to 90 team members. This is an encouraging development given the interest in increasing group applications and knowledge spread through TLLP projects. Nevertheless, single person projects are also an important feature of TLLP. In total, 53 out of 302 projects were one-person projects. At the other end of the scale, 10 projects involved more than 10 people and 29 projects involved 5 to 10 team members. It

Table 3: Cohort 1-4: Total Approved Projects by Board Type

Cohort	Eng. Pub.	Eng. Cath.	Fre. Pub.	Fre. Cath.	Eng./ Fre.	Pub./ Cath.	School Auth.	Total
1	42	30	1	3	72/4	43/33	3	79
2	35	28	1	5	62/6	36/32	0	69
3	32	31	3	6	63/9	35/37	2	74
4	41	28	4	4	69/8	45/32	3	80
Total	150	117	9	18	266/27	159/134	8	302

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.

The average overall expenditure on TLLP projects is $1,045,822 per cohort; although the figure has increased between Cohorts 1 and 2 and cohorts 3 and 4. As indicated in Table 4, the average budget per project is $13,991. However, there is a considerable range in per project budgets with 109 projects receiving less than $10,000 contrasted with four projects receiving over $50,000. The majority of projects (184 projects) received between $10,000 and $50,000.

Table 5: Project Themes (Rank Order)

Theme	Cohort1	Cohort2	Cohort3	Cohort4	Total
Diff. Inst.	26	17	34	33	110
Literacy	38	22	21	15	96
Tech.	22	19	29	23	93
Prof. Learning Comm.	27	25	20	16	88
Student Assess.	18	14	20	13	65
Math Literacy	11	15	11	14	51
Student with Special Needs	10	9	9	7	35
Student Success/ Trans. Years	5	6	13	10	34
Gender-Based Learning	4	5	5	7	21
French (Core & Immersion)	3	7	5	2	17
Media Literacy	4	5	2	5	16
The Arts	1	5	6	6	12

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 5 indicates the most prevalent project topic themes. Overall, differentiated instruction, literacy, technology and professional learning communities have been the most prevalent areas of foci. Nevertheless, there have been some shifts over the cohorts. Literacy was by far the most common topic in Cohort 1, whereas fewer projects are now focused mainly or exclusively on literacy. By contrast, differentiated instruction and – to a lesser extent – student success/transition years support has increased as a priority focus. While the original concept of TLLP did not include funding to purchase technology, the use of technology to develop innovative approaches to teaching and learning has proven to be an area with high demand and interest. Within the broad themes identified in Table 5, there is an incredible diversity of project foci; for example, projects advancing a strong commitment to social justice and equity by working with particular student groups or communities.

 While they are teacher initiated and led, TLLP projects generally are also aligned with school, board and Ministry priorities, so it is to be expected and encouraged that there will be evolving priority needs for innovation. Our observations of the recent TLLP Sharing the Learning Summit

(November 2012) would suggest that Cohort 5 (not included in the above analysis) has also included a strong focus on differentiated instruction, use of new technologies/digital literacy and 21st Century teaching and learning skills. As TLLP projects focus on priority needs and generate teacher expertise for professional learning and practice, they provide a potentially fertile source of leading edge innovation for the wider province (and beyond) to learn with and from.

3.3.2   Sample Projects from Cohorts 1 – 4

In addition to our descriptive analysis across all 302 projects in Cohorts 1-4, we identified a sample of 20% of projects (total of 60 projects, 15 projects per cohort) for further analysis. Table 6 outlines the sample projects by board type. In addition, features of the sample included:

Panel:	37 elementary, 17 secondary, 6 elementary and secondary. All three levels are represented in all cohorts
Length of Report	Majority is 2-to-3-page reports: 28 2-page reports, 18 3-page reports, 13 4 to 10-page reports, and one 68-page report

Table 6: Sample of 60 TLLP Project Final Reports by Board Type

Cohort	Eng. Pub.	Eng. Cath.	Fre. Pub.	Fre. Cath.	School Auth.	Total
1	8	5	1	1	0	15
2	6	7	1	1	0	15
3	6	6	1	1	1	15
4	6	6	1	1	1	15
Total	25	24	4	4	2	60

Total Sample and cohorts:	60 projects/15 per cohort
Region:	Per cohort: at least 1 board per region, usually 2 per region. In total: 13 from Ottawa, 11 from Barrie, 11 from London, 10 from GTA, 9 from Sudbury, 6 from Thunder Bay
Project size:	Number of people (ranging from 1 to 90) and budget (low, average, and high)
Number of People:	Number of People – Cohort 1: from 1 to 4, Cohort 2: from 1 to 66, Cohort 3: from 1 to 68, Cohort 4: from 1 to 90; Total: 14 one-person projects, 34 2-4 people projects, 5 5-10 people projects, 3 11-20 people projects, 4 more than 20 people projects. Average: 8 people.
Budget:	Cohort 1: $3,300 - $34,867, Cohort 2: $5,425 - $103,384, Cohort 3: $5,500 - $37,400, Cohort 4: $7,865 - $83,455. Total: 21 - ≤$10,000, 35 - $10,000<X>$50,000, 4 - ≥$50,000. Average: $11,122.

For these projects, we coded and analyzed the TLLP Teacher Participant Final Report to examine project themes, goals, activities, audiences, successes, challenges and overall impact. It should be noted that the length and quality of Final Reports varies considerably. For example, the majority (46 out of 60) of Final Reports analyzed were 2 to 3 page reports; however, 13 reports were 4 to 10 pages in length and one report was 68 pages long.

Table 7: Sample Projects: Theme of Projects

Project Theme	Number of Projects
Literacy	24
Technology	23
Differentiated Instruction	20
Professional Learning Communities	18
Math Literacy	11
Student Assessment	10
Student Success/Transition Years	10
Students with Special Needs	7
French-language	6
Media Literacy	5
Arts	4
Gender-Based learning	4

As indicated in Table 7, the sample projects involved a range of project foci ranging from subject/curricular areas, to teaching and learning strategies and resources, to supports for students with specific needs or at transition points in education, to supports for professional learning and sharing, and to developing broader arts and media literacies. The predominant themes were literacy, technology, differentiated instruction and professional learning communities.

Table 8: Sample Projects: Stated Project Goals

Project Goals	Number of Projects
Improve understanding/ knowledge	46
Develop strategies	36
Develop/improve skills	29
Develop resources	22
Develop a new learning tool	15
Develop professional learning community/networking/ collaboration	10
Establish relationship with community	9

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. By far, the main goals were to develop and improve understanding and knowledge, strategies and skills. These areas included goals for improving teaching and learning – such as teaching strategies or use of assessments – and also to improve professional learning and teacher leadership – such as strategies for delivering professional development or approaches to project management. Goals for developing resources included purchasing or creating resources for professional training sessions, for parental use, for learning resources and use within classrooms and/or for use of assessments. This connects to the goals for new learning tools which include use of new technologies for learning, such as SMARTBoards, use of video and other resources. Although developing professional learning communities or networking or collaboration was only an explicitly stated goal of ten projects, in practice this goal was likely advanced within a larger number of projects (as evident by the project themes in Table 7 and the project activities in Table 9). Examples of goals for collaboration included professionals working together to develop assessment strategies, to improve instruction and learning, and to support transitions from elementary to secondary schools. Finally, nine 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, supporting parents in teaching literacy, and developing community outreach and service learning projects involving students.

Table 9: Sample Projects: Project Activities for TLLP Participants' Own Learning

Project Activities	Number of Projects	Percentage of Projects
Teacher collaborative learning	34	57%
Workshops/training	22	37%
Networking	18	30%
Action Research	13	22%
Literature/Research Review	12	20%
Collaborate with the Community	11	18%
Conferences	7	12%

Consistent with the TLLP goals of professional learning and knowledge exchange and the underpinning values of co-operation and relationship building, the activities undertaken by projects focus strongly on developing, sharing and spreading learning among and between professionals, students and – in some cases – the wider community. Within the theme of collaborative learning, examples included teacher collaboration and shared learning for assessment and data use, for creating learning resources such as rubrics, for discussing instructional strategies, and for co-planning lessons and co-teaching opportunities. TLLP projects aimed to be highly collaborative. For example, one project on teaching measurement in the elementary panel involved a 15 person TLLP team and undertook a range of activities to develop learning communities:

We created a PLC for teachers on different levels: - Full staff - big ideas, three part lesson, student data, strengths and needs in teaching measurement; Division - identified areas of learning difficulty for the students, used EQAO and ONAP, used measurement continuum based on ministry expectations for each grade; Teacher Math Quest Planning Teams - work with teachers from other divisions to develop rich tasks designed for the whole school (Measurement Quest); Teacher Math Buddies - teachers had an opportunity to observe and work with students at different grade levels. We also created a PLC for students. We paired Junior classes with Primary classes. Students had the opportunity to experience and investigate a wide variety of activities with a peer. They had the opportunity to work with each other, either as a student expert, articulating their thinking, or as the less experienced learner, observing and learning from their buddies in a variety of ways.

Workshops and training opportunities were provided by TLLP participants as another way to develop professional learning on particular instructional techniques or tools or strategies. TLLP projects also involved activities to support professional inquiry and research; for example, researching the use and outcomes of new teaching strategies or conducting needs analysis for teachers' professional development. To support knowledge exchange beyond individual project teams and their schools, networking activities were an important feature of TLLP activities – both in-person networking and online through social media. Examples of networking included use of online conferencing, email and social media interchanges and also in-person meetings with staff across schools, field trips and

use of interactive projects. And to support developing relationships and connections with the wider community, some TLLP projects involved outreach activities such as projects where students participated in community service learning or projects to engage parents.

While TLLP projects can focus on particular student needs – such as low achieving students or those with special educational needs or Aboriginal students – the majority of projects in our sample were seeking to support learning and improvement for all students.

Table 10: Sample Projects: Target Student Audience

Specified Target Student Audience	Number of Projects	Percentage of Projects
All students	44	73%
Low achieving/at-risk students	9	15%
Gender (boys)	5	8%
Students with special education needs	4	7%
Aboriginal students	3	5%

3.4   Supports for TLLP Teacher Leaders

The provincial TLLP team at OTF and the Ministry recognized from the outset that if the goals of self-directed professional learning, teacher leadership and knowledge exchange were to be achieved, TLLP participants would require support. The exact content and nature of support has evolved over time in light of feedback and experience. However, as discussed further below, a common feature is the recognition that teachers are generally focused on their students' learning, whereas TLLP requires them also to think about their

own professional learning, their leadership, developing the learning of other adults, sharing knowledge and managing a substantial project.

3.4.1   Leadership Skill for Classroom Teachers Training

When a TLLP proposal is approved by the Provincial TLLC, teachers who are new TLLP project leaders attend a Leadership Skills for Classroom Teachers training in advance of beginning their project. The training is a high quality event with expert facilitation and a range of experienced, credible presenters and workshop facilitators. Details of the content have changed over time in light of feedback; however an ongoing feature is a focus on preparing teachers to take on the professional learning, project management and leadership expectations of a TLLP project.

The Provincial TLLP team responsible for the training involves members from OTF and its affiliates and from the Ministry. As members of this team commented:

…we really wanted to design the training in a way that was going to provide information that we knew teachers typically would not have or be familiar with… So there were several things that we knew had to go into the training in order to help them to be successful. So the one thing is project management, and we often felt that it was too bad that we couldn't give them the training before they submitted their applications, but of course there's no way to do it. But, it's an interesting thing to say, teachers are doing a lot of project management, but not in a very formal way; they're not used to thinking about the work that they're doing as "managing projects."

So the project management part was really important. The collecting data and recording what you're doing, and keeping track of what the impact is and how you might go about that in the way… that's really research, but teachers don't necessarily think of it as research, and what are your options when you're trying to collect data in that way and record what is going on and then summarize what you've found? …

…the communications was a big issue; budget was a big issue. It was interesting because it was a blank slate when we started; it was just, "what are we going to do? We think we have to get them ready," and that has evolved over the times…

We did a lot on presentation skills, because we knew that, again, they were used to presenting to their classes but not necessarily to colleagues.

…we did quite a bit on facilitation skills, because they were going to need to work with their team which has now evolved into a conflict-resolution…

Our analysis of the Leadership Skills for Classroom Teachers feedback evaluation forms from participants indicates a very high level of satisfaction with these events. The return rate for participant evaluation forms for the TLLP sessions is high - ranging between 87% and 94% - for all but one year. The participants expressed high levels of satisfaction with the entire session - ranging from 86% who were very satisfied and satisfied in 2008 to 99% and 98% who were very satisfied and satisfied in 2009 and 2012. This high level of satisfaction is associated with two main factors: first, a thoughtfully

designed and delivered program with useful information and knowledgeable speakers; and second, the OTF and Ministry's responsiveness to the participants' suggestions, resulting in changes in the format of the session overall and particular sections of the agenda, including adding more useful content and presentation approaches. In their general comments and recommendations, the participants provided a number of constructive suggestions to which the TLLP Leadership Skills for Classroom Teachers event organizers responded quickly and positively. For example:

- Suggestions of decreasing the amount of information delivered in the first day and adding another day resulted in moving some of the Thursday sections of the program to Wednesday afternoon starting in 2010
- Requests for more handouts/ summaries/examples resulted in enhanced and expanded information binders that were provided to the participants including advice on suggested further resources to support TLLP participants
- Suggestions for less information delivery time and for more information application time resulted in changing the format of carousel workshops from more lecture-oriented to more hands-on workshop styles;
- The participants appreciated time allocated for collaboration/networking with others and/or work on their own projects and the program was adjusted to allow more time for such activities
- The participants also expressed interest in learning from the previous cohorts

about their successes and challenges. The OTF and Ministry TLLP teams responded by organizing a panel of previous participants. This addition to the program was found to be useful but there was still interest in learning more details and personal stories. These requests resulted in a change in the format of this section of the program. In 2012, previous TLLP participants shared their stories at four different locations while the current participants were divided into four groups and were able to go to all four locations and listen to all four stories and ask questions

• Another recommendation that resulted in higher satisfaction rates was a suggestion to break the technology workshop into two: one for beginners and one for advanced. The recommendation has been implemented since 2009 and the participants seem to be satisfied with this arrangement.

Our TLLP teacher leader interviewees also indicated their appreciation and support for the Leadership Skills for Classroom Teachers training. The importance of support for project management, for gathering project data, for preparing for TLLP monitoring and reporting, for technology and social media use, and for exposing teachers to a range of expert presenters and resources were all indicated as beneficial. One of the intended benefits of the training – as expressed by a member of the organizing committee – is to "open up professional learning opportunities that would probably not be available" to the majority of classroom teachers. And this was certainly the case, as one interviewee commented:

For the training, for the first workshop that we attended in Toronto, I found that the workshops were of superb quality. Some of the guest speakers were wonderful – at the training and at the summit. I felt that the training session was wonderfully organized, and also a great example of how to run workshops. It was so good. We felt inspired to go home and to start our project; we felt that we had very good materials. Up here in (Northern Ontario school board), I didn't have a lot of contacts…

While the training has already been extended to two and a half days, interviewees spoke of wanting even more training and recognized that within the initial session most of the topics could only be introductory. One interviewee spoke also of the importance of modeling adult learning for the TLLP teachers and encouraged the training to become even more interactive, experiential and hands on, particularly in enabling opportunities for collaborative working within and among TLLP teams and for integrating social media and new technologies throughout the training rather than as a separate aspect of the program. Another suggestion for the training content was to provide further advance preparation for participants about the expectations of the culminating TLLP Sharing the Learning Summit. The initial training already includes a video showing a previous Summit to provide participants with some orientation; however, it was suggested that further attention and support could be given to getting teacher leaders to think from the beginning about developing a poster or display of their project and learning as this was not necessarily something that the teachers had previously done.

One further area that was suggested for development was a specific focus on teacher leadership. While the current content of the training supports teachers to manage their projects and aspects of leading people and teams, there was considered to be a need to explicitly support teachers to develop their self-conception, reflection and action as leaders:

I think that people need … the term "leadership" needs to be defined for people, because I think that, still, people have a very traditional view of what leadership is, and not realizing that often they're doing things… they are already leaders in organizations or in their schools, but because they're seen as classroom teachers versus a consultant, or a principal, or even in a faculty; they don't necessarily attribute the word "leader" to their name. I think that defining the types of leaderships that are out there for people, and then having people reflect on their own experiences of what they're already doing as leaders, so that they can think, … Or that they can clearly state what about their practice has made them a leader, because I think that all teachers, in a sense – we're all leaders. We're leading students, we're leading teachers… there should be leading and understanding in our practice. So, to me, I think that if I was to recommend where we were to go next in a leadership program, it would reflect on that.

As indicated above, the training has evolved and taken account of specific feedback to introduce changes to the content, length and processes used within the event. Beyond these specifics, a vital aspect of the Leadership Skills for Classroom Teachers is to welcome teachers to the TLLP and to establish the TLLP's core values of

partnership, respect and collaboration. For example, as one teacher commented:

… I have to say, the trainers and the people there, all of them…I did find that they were extremely welcoming; I found that there was a real sense of empowerment, even just that, in constantly encouraging… I think it was also very important to have the Ministry and ETFO there together, and it showed the teachers who don't normally see that… they see them working for the same goal, and I think that I really noticed that when I was first there; I thought, "Wow!" and I think that that kept coming up over and over – that partnership – and I really like that as well.

Overall, the research team is impressed with how much effort has been put into collecting and considering evaluation feedback, turning this feedback into recommendations and actually implementing those recommendations. A very important part of the success of the TLLP sessions and the high participant satisfaction rates are due to this responsiveness to the participants' suggestions and to the quality of the facilitation, presentations, content and materials at the training.

3.4.2   ***TLLP Sharing the Learning Summit***
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, larger educational community). The Summit is held every year (except for the first year when one Summit was held for the first two

cohorts) in November on a Sunday night and Monday. The participants get a chance to have recognition for what they have accomplished and to share their projects with each other during the Marketplace sessions, to be inspired by listening to keynote speakers, and to learn how they can share their learning further.

Our analysis of the evaluation feedback and Summit materials indicate that the participants expressed high levels of satisfaction with the Summit in all four years. 95% to 96.5% of evaluation form respondents indicated being very satisfied or satisfied with the Summit during the four years from 2008 – 2012. Significantly, no participant has ever been "not satisfied" with the Sharing the Learning Summit.

A key reason for participant satisfaction is the organizing team in OTF and the Ministry's willingness to improve the participants' experiences by responding to their suggestions and evaluations. This responsiveness resulted in the following changes:

- Timing of the event - Some participants felt that the Summit took place too long after the projects were finished and the Summit conflicted with other work priorities in the school year. The OTF and Ministry responded to this concern by organizing the Summit a week earlier each following year. While the 2009 Summit was held at the end of November, the 2012 Summit was held at the very beginning of November, which seemed to work for most participants.
- Number of participants – Some participants felt it would be beneficial to allow more teachers on their TLLP

team to participate in the Summit. Inviting teachers not involved in TLLP to attend the Summit was also suggested as a way to bring many more teachers into the TLLP community and open learning opportunities. In 2011, the OTF and Ministry responded by allowing individual project participants to invite one other staff member from the school so that there are at least two people per project in attendance. Teams of two or more are allowed to bring three people. OTF and the Ministry also invite guests to the Summit, such as the Minister of Education, Ministry staff, guests from affiliates and from universities. Opening the Summit to others helps promote the program and establish its significance.

- Type of speakers/presenters – At the 2009 and 2010 Summits, the keynote speakers were non-educational motivational speakers. While the majority of teachers enjoyed those speakers, some mentioned that the content of their speeches was not very relevant. At the 2011 and 2012 Summits, the OTF and Ministry invited educational motivational speakers and the participants appreciated these changes. Inviting speakers who are experts in the field of education and teacher learning helps promote the program in the academic and education-related community. Also, some participants mentioned inviting past TLLP participants to the Summit. In 2012, such participants were not only invited to attend the Summit, they also discussed their TLLP experiences and how they were able to share their projects with a wide educational community, for example,

via conferences, publications, blogs and social media networks. The sessions with former TLLP teacher leaders received positive feedback from the participants.
• Take home resources – Participants requested more resources to take home. As a result, several resources were introduced: postcards briefly describing each project, project leaders were encouraged to develop handouts related to their projects, and draw prizes such as books on teacher learning and leadership.

The evaluation feedback forms indicate that participants appreciated that the Summit is a thoughtfully designed and delivered program with opportunities for networking, sharing, and learning. For example, in the 2012 feedback, participants provided a large number of responses about "valuable aspects of the Summit". The following aspects were most frequently mentioned (in rank order):
1) Networking/connections with colleagues across the province
2) Learning from others about their TLLP projects
3) Sharing our TLLP projects and learning
4) The Marketplace sessions and their organization
5) Dynamic, inspirational keynote speakers
6) New ideas for our school from others' projects

When asked on the evaluation form about "suggestions for future Summits", many responses were to continue with the current program and thanking the organizers for "best PD ever". Indeed, our teacher interviewees were also very positive about the Summit:

End of year Summit… when we are presenting to other people… I absolutely adore that part of TLLP because that's when you see how great people are and there are so many people that are great. I find that very valuable. I would like that to be more than a day. It's probably the most important part of what we do.

Honestly, the sharing at the end was the most amazing PD; I think that other models, other schools, like in other areas of … districts – that's how PD should be run for everybody, because it was completely differentiated and customized. I went to what I needed. Say if I was a primary teacher and I needed help with my literacy, then I can go there. It was just the most authentic PD, and it was teachers talking to teachers; there was no sense of … you know, consultants often get the reputation of talking down on teachers, and sometimes they do. I don't think they mean to, but I think that comes across and it wasn't like that because people were all on equal playing fields. When you do that … I guess, I was thinking of… what's it called… Distributing your leadership… I just want to find a way to be invited every time… Because I learned so much.

Two main themes emerge from our analysis of the Summit evaluations forms and materials, and from our interviews: first, the participants highly value and appreciate the Summit; and second, they want more – more time at the Summit, more sharing, more people involved! Some specific recommendations are:
• Extending time for Marketplace sessions – Participants consistently suggested more time allocated to Marketplace sessions to be able to learn about a larger number of projects.

- Extending the Summit to two full days – Some participants would have preferred a two full day Summit that would allow more time for networking and sharing.
- Inviting other people to attend – Every year participants consistently recommended inviting board representatives and principals to the Summit to make them aware of the significance of the TLLP program. Some of our interviewees spoke also of other teachers, teacher candidates, faculties of education and researchers. There is a balance to be struck between widening the audience to share and champion the TLLP learning while also ensuring this remains a special space for teacher leaders.

A further specific logistical recommendation was widely indicated:

- Not holding the Summit on Sunday – Participants prefer to spend weekends with their families. Friday-Saturday and two-weekday alternatives were mentioned in recommendations.

Overall, the responses to the Summit are incredibly positive. The Summit agenda, content, presentations and process are very thoughtfully designed and delivered. High profile engaging educational speakers, such as Andy Hargreaves, Ann Lieberman and Annie Kidder, raise the profile of TLLP and also encourage wider championing of TLLP. Most of all, TLLP participants enjoyed the celebration, recognition and inspiration of sharing their own project and from learning about other projects including ideas for their own work. Therefore, we encourage OTF and the Ministry to continue with similar content and format for the Summit. It allows teachers to celebrate their accomplishments

and inspires them to share their successes with a wider audience. If feasible, however, we encourage considering ways to expand the sharing of learning. Specifically, to extend time for Marketplace sessions by either reducing the number of speakers or turning the Summit into a two full day event, if possible. And also to further promote the value and sharing of the TLLP by inviting board representatives, educational researchers and other guests to the Summit. Inviting local media to the Marketplace or sharing a video/press release with the media might also help in marketing the program.

3.4.3 Other Support Systems

In addition to the formal training and events, TLLP teacher leaders benefited from online and in-person support. At the provincial level, TLLP is continually evolving and highly adaptive and responsive to teachers' needs. For example, a provincial interviewee commented:

So I think we're learning a lot by listening through our surveys, through our research, listening to our participants – what's working, what's not working – and then sort of brainstorming as to how we can address this and still fit within the limits that politically and financially we have to work with.

One area of learning was the need to develop an infrastructure to facilitate networking during and beyond the TLLP projects:

…we realized after our first year where we came to the summit and people said, "This was a great experience, but we sort of felt like we were left out there alone for a year, and now suddenly you're asking us how the project went." So we realized that we had to

put something in place so that we could follow them more closely and give them a place where they could communicate, ask questions and feel that there is somebody there all the time. That networking site played a huge role in that.

Our research did not specifically investigate the e-community site and its use. However, it was mentioned by our interviewees. The e-community site is an intranet for a TLLP Network site which enables TLLP participants to engage in online dialogue and to post artifacts and information from their projects for sharing across the TLLP community. TLLP teacher leaders indicated finding useful resources on the e-community site, as well as sharing their own resources. Nevertheless, there was a common theme that the site was not as user-friendly as it could be. The Ministry has developed the site over time, moving from FirstClass to the current e-community site, and is currently investigating alternatives that may be an enhancement. As well as the technical aspects of navigating the site, there was a concern that a closed site which is restricted to TLLP participants "doesn't promote a sense of transparency" especially when the TLLP is about knowledge exchange and learning. It may be worth considering both how to enhance a networking site for TLLP participants and how to expand a publicly accessible site that would allow for the sharing of TLLP projects, resources and discussions. While the Ministry website does include TLLP project profiles, interviewees felt that more could and should be available. Individual teachers were blogging, tweeting and posting about their projects and learning. The idea of a shared site with open access collectively and collaboratively profiling the TLLP was suggested.

An important system support was the individual commitment and interpersonal connections for TLLP teacher leaders with members of the OTF and Ministry provincial TLLP teams. Teacher interviewees spoke of being able to call or e-mail Ministry staff directly and ask for a wide range of advice – from budget details to dealing with conflict to issues concerning their principal or board. As a provincial interviewee commented:

In some cases, it's as simple as answering questions around, "How do I do this? Where do I do that?" and in other cases, it's almost handholding, especially with those who have not experienced this leadership role previously. Like, "My principal won't allow me to; can you call him and tell him to?" and then you have to work with this person and say, "Well, you know, that wouldn't really develop your leadership. How about you set up a meeting with your principal, and here are some of the questions you might want to ask, and then get back to us if you need help." So usually, this monitoring/support role is seen by many as very, very important, especially for those who don't have this habit of leadership.

The TLLP teacher leaders we interviewed had highly variable experiences of receiving support in their school and board – some had effectively cultivated strong and supportive relationships with their principals and school boards; whereas others experienced lack of support and sometimes even negative responses. They appreciated that they could call on the Ministry and OTF for advice and, if needed, the Ministry would respond directly to an issue involving senior administration at the school or board level.

3.5   **TLLP Goals**

The TLLP is a multi-faceted initiative with many potential benefits. Essentially, however, as an interviewee involved in developing the TLLP commented, the overarching goal is to innovate, share and spread effective practices. . A linked essential feature is to achieve this goal in a distinctive – more professionally meaningful way – than traditional top-down mandatory training. A description of the TLLP differentiates this as an "instructional innovation mode" contrasted with the more regular "instructional implementation mode" of staff development. Both are necessary for system level capacity building, but they differ considerably. As a description of the TLLP provided by the Ministry outlines:

The Teacher Learning and Leadership Program (TLLP) – How Is It Different?
Teaching has been recognized as a profession for probably 100 years in Ontario. Throughout that time there has been constant homage to teachers as professionals and as the people most directly able to impact the learning of their students. It has also been recognized in literature and research that teaching practice will change when teachers receive evidence that the suggested change works, is better for their students' learning, and can observe other teachers teach/model the strategy or desired change. However, the reality is that for most of those 100 years the professional learning of teachers has been single track - delivered to them by selected implementation experts in what we will refer to as the traditional Implementation mode, involving "all" teachers receiving the same required, basic input and direction in an effort to ensure consistent implementation of specific initiatives or strategies. The TLLP is planned to stimulate and support the Innovation mode
of instruction, in which all 125 000 active teachers in the province are asked if they have particular, proven successful, instructional expertise to share with colleagues. In this mode the ministry supports a teacher's (team's) further research and learning specific to that expertise, and then expects the teacher leader to share their successful strategies with colleagues who are looking to enhance their craft in that area.

Within this overarching purpose, three specific goals for TLLP have been identified:

1.   To support experienced teachers who undertake self-directed advanced professional development related to improved student learning and development.
2.   To help classroom teachers develop leadership skills for sharing learning and exemplary practices.
3.   To facilitate knowledge exchange to spread the use and sustainability of innovative and effective practices.

We investigate evidence relating to each of these goals below.

3.5.1   **Professional Learning**

The TLLP Program Guidelines state:

Teacher Professional Learning
This component of the TLLP will foster teacher learning and facilitate knowledge production by funding proposals from teachers for innovative, self-chosen learning activities that they undertake individually or as part of a community of practice. The proposals will occur in the context of ministry/board/school goals to enhance student learning. (p.3)

As an interviewee commented, the TLLP is intended to be an enabler of authentic professional learning:

I think there's a lot in the TLLP that enables teachers who ordinarily would not be able to exactly carry out their brilliant ideas, and so they are given some supports – both in terms of time and in terms of some of the technology that normally would not be available to them – and so it does really allow them to have a learning experience that maybe would have been harder for them to have without it.

Our TLLP teacher leader interviewees were universally enthusiastic about the TLLP opportunity and the professional learning experience. The teacher-led, self-directed nature of the professional development was considered to be unique and vital:

… the fact that the program itself seemed to be designed to empower… instead of the teachers being told what to do by perhaps other research or other consultants or whatever, that this project empowered me and my team to drive what we were doing; we had control of it. I think that was huge, that in this day and age … In the 21st century, professional development needs to be customized and driven by the people who want to learn, or hopefully, we're assuming they want to learn, rather than sitting in a room and being directed to or being instructed at. So, I think that this program was able to customize our leadership, customize our learning as we went along.

This was considered to be particularly important for experienced teachers looking for new learning opportunities and new ways of developing their professional learning, as another interviewee commented:

I think I was at a point in my career where I was looking for something where I could have some autonomy or independence… first off, I'd like to say that the experience over the year (or more than a year by the time the Summit came along) was such a hugely positive experience for me, as well as for members of my team…our project was about social justice… we found it – I think several of us on the team – to be quite life changing. It was a social consciousness and that personal kind of awareness of what happens/is happening in society around us… "it was the best PD we'd ever had." Nothing comes close to that, and it has continued after the end of the project…

The opportunity for collaborative professional learning was also an important feature:

I wanted to continue my own learning; I had already been involved in, I'd say, some more formal teacher action research, through funding through MISA, and I decided to continue that learning. But, beyond that, I would've been working to continue my own learning anyway, but really it was about trying to engage my colleagues so that I wasn't on the journey alone.

The experience of leading a project that involved focusing on teacher learning as well as student learning involved considerable professional development for TLLP teacher leaders:

But participating in TLLP, having to write the proposal, I think shifted my perception or my understanding or my view even of what professional development is. So if I think it had a significant impact on my understanding of the content level that I was researching around Math, elementary Math, around the pedagogy, familiarity with the research; also, the biggest shift that I would not have engaged in thinking about are issues related to teacher learning – other teachers' learning, related to the content. I think probably the biggest shift…

The opportunity for genuine teacher collaborative learning contributed to new ways of working together that could be empowering through increasing teacher voice and transparency of practice:

I think it was very empowering for them (TLLP teacher team members), and I think that they started having more confidence. The other thing is, all of them, initially… part of the TLLP was to effectively learn how to use this tool… But me, in what I do, part of the TLLP was to teach people how to network and how to be transparent; how to add what they're doing in a more public sense, instead of just hiding behind their classroom walls and doing their stuff, right? So I think that when I first started the TLLP and said, "OK, we're all going to blog" … huge learning curve for them to now put their words in a public setting and take that risk of having people read, can be pretty overwhelming at first, for people. But as the TLLP went on and we all agreed we'd blog once every two weeks… what happened was that the other TLLP members in our group became … they all opened up their own blogs, their own personal blogs.

Part of the professional learning has been increasing professional voice and dialogue to change practice. For example through professional conversations and collaboration:

This form of professional development encouraged rich professional conversations and greater understanding of formative assessment in Kindergarten. I built lasting professional friendships, got increased confidence, co-created an assessment booklet and planned multiple sessions for teachers and administrators…We built a real learning community.

And, in another example, through peer coaching:

…my teaching practice shifted significantly because I think I was doing a lot of the things already fairly intuitively, but because our TLLP was focused on coaching each other, in a coaching role, I now had a coach to support me in my own practice, but more, she was supporting me in coaching. So, I've already talked about being meta-cognitive, but really, that's what it was – I started being aware of the decisions that I made that had an impact and maybe why they had an impact, and then once I knew that, then I could make the decisions more consciously, strategically and deliberately. I think it helped me in viewing others' practices, much like when you work with a student teacher and you think, "What are they doing?" and you can't figure out why they're not doing what you're doing and then you realize that you can't articulate to them what you're doing and why. So I think that that had the biggest impact on my practice…

Alongside such support for professional learning and changes in practice, TLLP participants benefited from the development of new resources to support teacher and student learning. For example in one project, the TLLP teacher leader commented:

I took it upon myself to provide each teacher with packages for each child in each grade with math problems every year we did a Math Fair… I went into classrooms and introduced the math problem of the day… And got people who were not comfortable to become comfortable…. We have over 700 students in our school, so I provided a lot of math puzzles…

Table 11: Teacher Learning Benefits Identified in Sample of Final Reports (in rank order)

Benefit	Rank Order
New knowledge/improved understanding	1st
Improved instructional practice	2nd
Improved technology skills	3rd
Increased self-efficacy	4th
Improved leadership skills	5th
Greater energy/inspiration	6th
Improved assessment skills	7th
Improved collaboration/ communication	8th =
Improved project management skills	8th =
Improved facilitation and presentation skills	8th=
Improved research skills	11th

The main themes of teacher learning benefits in our analysis of a sample of 60 Final Reports are outlined in Table 11. The top identified benefit was new knowledge and improved understanding. This was generally in relation to specific strategies, programs or practices. For example, a project concerning kindergarten coaching indicated:

The teachers have increased their capacity to program more effectively to meet individual student strengths, needs, interests, and abilities.

Consistent with the overarching goal of TLLP, benefits for improved instructional practice were identified. For example, the Final Report for a project on building instructional capacity for literacy for students at risk included:

We have strengthened our skills and knowledge in using a collaborative process to analyze student work samples for purpose of improving instruction, also learned how to act as peer mentors…. This has allowed us to develop a better understanding of effective ways to build instructional capacity within the professional learning community.

In a project concerning connecting with the Aboriginal community through technology, the Final Report stated:

I deepened my connection to my First Nations' students and became more effective in my direct student-learner interactions through being immersed in the collaborative sharing and learning of Aboriginal values and culture. I was able to apply sound pedagogical practice and the principle of Universal Design for Learning through the application of collaborative and communicative technologies within the framework of living cultural and value-laden meaning-making.

And, in a project concerning boys' literacy and SMARTBoards, the Final Report indicated:

The project changed our teaching practice because the focus on language gave us the opportunity to integrate technology into our literacy lessons. We created Smart Notebook interactive lessons where students were able to use the technology to improve reading and writing...The technology allowed us to make modeled, shared and independent reading more interactive, therefore engaging all of the students.

These quotes speak also to the third identified professional learning benefit of improving technology skills in the context of improving teaching practice and student learning. In another project, focused on inclusive technology in the classroom, the Final Report quoted one of the participating teachers as saying:

I am so much more comfortable with computers now, and my students had so many more opportunities to get exposure to technology. I believe my classroom teaching has improved since having exposure to these programs.

An enhanced professional confidence and sense of self-efficacy was also an important teacher learning benefit. In a *Train the Trainer* project, the Final Report explained:

Teachers were surveyed in October 2008. Overwhelmingly, teachers expressed a need for professional development, resources, and student intervention in the area of literacy. A follow-up survey was conducted following the three day training, and showed a dramatic difference in how equipped teachers felt about their own ability to address the literacy needs of their struggling students. Overwhelmingly, teachers felt that their three days of training provided them with a background in

literacy instruction that their professional development, teachers' courses of training and current resources have not provided.

Therefore, an array of professional learning benefits were identified – the importance of self-directed learning, of shared professional collaboration, of professional conversations and shared practices for improvement, of the development and use of new tools, resources and techniques, and importantly the development of new knowledge, understandings, skills and practices.

Nevertheless, actually monitoring and measuring changes in teachers' learning is challenging. 28 out of 60 of the sample Final Reports included formal feedback measures to attempt to measure changes in teacher learning; for example, surveys of teachers and/or of students, formal interviews, focus groups and/or observations. 25 of the projects used more informal feedback mechanisms, such as conversations with teachers or students or general observations. 17 of the projects relied mainly on self-reflection and self-monitoring strategies, such as written reflections, diaries, journals, blogging, discussion boards, and conversations. Other forms of monitoring and attempting to assess teacher learning included: use of critical friends; gathering online statistics for website and blog related activities; use of student assessments to measure changes in practice; and consideration of teachers' own grades in professional certification activities. While the variety of approaches to measuring teacher learning is commendable and attempting to do so – especially for softer skills of self-efficacy, reflective practice and professional value – is very complex, there is a need to further support approaches to appropriately

and professionally support the gathering of evidence about professional learning benefits, changes and outcomes.

3.5.2 **Teacher Leadership**

The second specific goal of TLLP is teacher leadership. The TLLP Program Guidelines propose:

Teacher Leadership

This component of the TLLP will foster teacher leadership by providing all participants in the program with a Leadership Skills for Classroom Teachers professional development session that will help them develop the skills needed to effectively manage their project and share their learning with colleagues. The participants will then apply these leadership skills as they share their expertise of exemplary practices with colleagues. (p.3)

One of the aims for developing teacher leadership is to increase the recognition and influence of expert teachers who are doing excellent things in their classrooms and with the potential to expand good practices to other teachers. As a provincial interviewee commented:

So our notion of leadership is exactly… when I said … in the successful ones we said that the teachers had been really given wings, or have found their wings. That's the leadership, when they become recognized as leaders in areas of teaching… they become experts in teaching – they're teacher experts. That's what a teacher leader is, they're recognized in their schools, by their peers, and then in other schools, and in other boards, and by companies and by other jurisdictions, as being leaders from the point of view that they are the experts in their area, and their area is, "How do you really teach numeracy? What really makes the difference?"

"Guess what? I tried this, and this part didn't work and this part worked fantastically well. I'm going to show you how you can do the same miraculous thing in your class." That's what we think teacher leadership really is, it's about, what does being a leader really mean in any field? It means that other people look at you and say, "Oh, I would like to be just like… she's excellent at …

This involves being looked to for your expertise and also being able to initiate and spread improvement. As another provincial interviewee commented:

There was a young teacher that I thought, it was so simple but so great that it was a new teaching strategy, she was the only one in the school that was using it, she did a lot of work on it and part of her display was, she was the only one using it at the beginning of the year, everybody on staff tried it, and after it was over, everybody except I think two people, were continuing to use it. That is real leadership. That is leadership.

Teacher leadership is grounded in "authentic teacher expertise".

The development of teacher leadership was one of the main benefits of teacher learning identified in the Final Reports and involved also related skills of project management, collaboration and communication; however, it was interesting to note that, given the importance of this goal, the Final Report template does not specifically ask about teacher leadership. We would suggest that the reporting template is revised to include a section for TLLP participants to reflect on how their TLLP project has contributed to developing their leadership practices.

The theme of teacher leadership was very strong in our interviews with TLLP teachers. As one interviewee commented, the "depth of leadership learning was phenomenal". This included specific leadership skills, as another interviewee said:

TLLP allowed me to develop professionally. I learned leadership skills like: team building; developing trust; collaborating with others; presentation skills; co-teaching; debriefing, reflecting. I learned and lived the experience of organizing collaboration.

Another teacher interviewee spoke of becoming more thoughtful about how to engage people in change and becoming engaged in learning about leadership from research. This informed her leadership practice to engage people in a non-threatening way, but also to act very "consciously, deliberately and strategically" in her leadership style.

The opportunity for teachers to be or become leaders was considered a major benefit of TLLP. As another TLLP teacher leader commented:

Teacher Leadership is the area that benefits most in TLLP. Great teachers who might otherwise never have a chance to share their tremendous work get to take on a macro-level leadership role. This is grass roots leadership at its finest…This has been some of the best and most rewarding work in my career.

TLLP teachers spoke of not holding formal leadership roles or previously considering themselves as leaders and now being motivated, recognized and inspired as teacher leaders:

Professionally, I don't have a leadership position within my school community. I'm not a chairperson, I'm not a vice principal; I'm a teacher. I felt that it was a way for me to become a specialist in a particular area in a short period of time. There is kind of a dichotomy in terms of the challenge within the practice, I guess, where there is this extra amount of work on top of your regular job. But on the other hand, we were trying to identify descriptive words that the work was, and the connection, the collaboration, the brainstorming, and the creative sort of outlet was rejuvenating for us. It was rewarding, enriching, inspiring, invigorating, captivating, so that the three of us on the core team would just sort of feed off one another and just dream big thoughts that normally we would never have the time to do, nor offered the opportunity.

Interviewees indicated that the experience of leading a project, of developing and sharing their expertise, of presenting within their school and – often – a much wider community, of dealing with change processes, interpersonal dynamics and both the strategic and detailed development of improving practices contributed to their improved confidence and strength as leaders. As one interviewee commented:

When I talk about math in a classroom or to a staff, I know I am being heard…as a leader, it just makes me want to lead more… Because of TLLP, I have become a go-to person!

And for another interviewee:

I felt that my leadership skills were improved, and my distinct talents were more appreciated. I feel like I have an increased knowledge bank of resources that we have put on a wiki for other teachers to access. I do find, from time to time, on a casual, more personal basis, people will come to me and ask about where they can go within the community – so I'm still able to share in that way. It was a huge task that we undertook, so I suppose a limitation is how do you change the world in a year? We tried to change our neighborhood, and I don't think it will end until I retire, or possibly afterwards. As a teacher I feel I have more confidence – I'm very proud of my work. I feel, like with my colleagues and younger teachers because in five years or so I can retire, I see myself as a role model and I feel that I have the practices and I feel like I have things to offer, to share and to inspire others.

Many of the TLLP teacher leaders were already informal leaders. They are self-starters who seek out and develop new opportunities and build relationships. While they may have further developed their leadership without TLLP, the TLLP enabled them to develop their leadership significantly and provided an infrastructure of resources and support and a culture of recognition, collaboration and professional respect.

It combined… The TLLP combined the leadership I was already doing with… more systematic support within the Ministry… I think it combined what we're already doing in giving us that validation as leaders, that what we're doing was ok and that they wanted to make progress… encourage collaboration amongst teacher leaders and so on….And so it

just gave us an opportunity to have those skills honed with supported direction that was more formal.

Of course, one of the perhaps unintended consequences of an initiative which is highly successful in supporting teacher leadership – with the intention of supporting teachers who have chosen to remain in the classroom – is that some of the TLLP teacher leader interviewees commented on themselves or other TLLP participants being recruited to system level leadership due to their strengthened expertise and sharing of practices. On the one hand, this is a success as expert teachers gain wider influences; on the other hand, it is important to continue also to maintain and spread the value of being a teacher leader based in and for classroom practices.

3.5.3 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)

An important part of the goal of TLLP is to empower teachers to open up and share classroom practices. As a provincial interviewee explained:

…when you talk of knowledge mobilization and this kind of catching fire of ideas and trying things out, which, again, part of what I think works against innovation is when people are afraid to take the risks. In ways, the TLLP says, "Not only are we encouraging you to take the risks, but we're going to give you money to do it, and we're going to encourage you to talk to other teachers about it." I mean, that is really not what was largely going on in our system for a long, long, long, long time; if you were taking risks, you were closing your door and not telling anybody about it. It's really that attitude of, "Get out of my way and let me teach; I'm closing my door so that nobody can actually see what I really am doing. But, oh, by the way – my students are doing fantastically well because I'm doing all these unusual things with them." What the TLLP does is, it says, "We're opening the doors, we're saying it's ok for you to do the stuff that's not just on the curriculum and not just on what is the prescribed way of teaching, and we're rewarding you for sharing it with other people." So that's pretty amazing.

Another provincial interviewee spoke about the vision for TLLP being:

For me, if we get to the stage where, if I'm up in Lakehead and I'm struggling with my Science class around, I don't know, chemical bonds or something, and I know that I can go to this TLLP site and search for somebody in the province who has had success teaching chemical bonds, for example … then I think that, to me, personally, that's where I'd be thrilled. And then that person I'm interacting with will say, "By the way, I have a really good way of teaching kids the Periodic Table," and now we're exchanging between Windsor and Lakehead, or something like that. That,

to me, is what it's about. Because although the projects, as you say, are only one year, they're built on who knows how many years of experience of the team and the teachers involved. So, for me, it's all about the sharing of those successful practices – which may or may not work in other locations, but at least you've got somewhere to get started with these roadblocks. Quite a few years ago there was a team of teachers down in Windsor, and they found that the kids hit the same walls in high school (this might have been in Calculus, or Trig., I don't know), and if you can get them over that, then they were good to go for a while – they didn't quit and they kept going. Basically, the kids were hitting the same walls, and they had fairly simple strategies for getting them by that, and then they were OK for a while. So how do you get that from Windsor to the rest of the province? And if we can get to that, and we're getting to that, then I'll be thrilled. Whether the person's been a TLLP participant or not, they know this help is available – that would be my measure.

It was recognized that while considerable progress was being made with the goal of knowledge exchange and spreading practice, further work was required to fully achieve the vision articulated in the above quote. Hence, the importance of the TLLP Provincial Knowledge Exchange initiative launched in 2012 to fund boards to connect with and learn from previous TLLP participants and to share their practices within and across boards.

Our analysis of a sample of 60 TLLP Final Reports indicated that the majority of TLLP projects share learning and spread practice within their own school(s) and with other schools. Our interviewees spoke of examples

within their schools, such as sharing of practices among school members, speaking at staff meetings, working collaboratively with teachers and teacher teams for professional learning and changes in classroom practices, and initiating school-wide projects and activities. In some cases, the TLLP practices became school-wide. Most TLLP projects spread their learning and practices to other schools within their board(s). For example, 45 of the 60 sample Final Reports reported sharing within and across school board level. Often this sharing across schools involved sharing with teachers in the same grade/panel or subject area or across families of schools within a board or boards. There were examples of sharing with board administrators and of projects where the practices were taken up and implemented as a board-wide initiative; for example, approaches to math instruction or the use of new learning technologies. These practices sometimes spread also to coterminous boards or to other boards across the province that became aware of the practice.

Table 12: Methods of Sharing Learning and Practices Identified in Sample Final Reports

Method of Sharing	Number of Final Reports	Percentage of Final Reports
Workshops and Professional Development Sessions	28	47%
Professional Learning Community Activities	28	47%
Staff Meetings	21	35%
Websites	20	33%
Modeling	5	8%
Community Events	5	8%
Newsletters	3	5%
Media	2	3%
Mentoring/tutoring	2	3%
Publication	1	2%

As indicated in Table 12, the majority of methods of sharing focused on professional learning, development and collaboration, for example, through professional development sessions, learning communities and staff meetings. Alongside professional sharing locally, the third major area of sharing learning and knowledge exchange involved a larger community (beyond the school or board), including at provincial, national and international levels. Table 12 includes examples such as websites, community events and writing about the projects (newsletters, media, publications). Our TLLP teacher interviewees provided a range of examples of extended sharing including presenting at conferences, making resources and materials available online or through professional networks, TLLP leaders being appointed to provincial or national/international bodies, use of blogging, and TLLP practices being picked up and used by the Ministry within Ontario or other education bodies. There were some innovative and effective approaches to sharing and engaging with local communities. For example, in one project which focused on social justice and working with disadvantaged communities, a community choir was established, poetry readings and other arts-based events were held, a Justice Fair engaged school, board and community partners, and partnerships with local charities and community organizations were forged. And there were inspiring examples of reaching out to, and connecting with, a wider global education community; for example in one project, all TLLP core team members blogged:

I mean, it's humbling to say (the project website) … alone has reached a cycle of counting hits… I mean, I think it's at like 12-13,000; but that's not including the amount

of conferences that we've presented at across the world and the kinds of emails, blog posts, the comments from people… the blog alone and the content of the blog has been reached by educators from all over the world. So it's incredible. But, I mean, what can be done… we extended the project beyond the school or the classroom and we're very transparent in presenting, using tools like Twitter and Facebook and that kind of thing as well…. It totally was by strategy. The more people I could get to blog … So we had our initial core group that would facilitate or mediate this blog, but everyone would talk to somebody… even on Twitter. Or I'd meet someone at a conference in California or whatever, and I'd ask them, "Hey, would you be a guest blogger?" and then they would sign up. Now I have, say, thirty guest bloggers on this blog, and they're all these high-end educators from around the world, and the blog is just this living entity that I don't think I've added anything in a while. And so I think that it was more that you just encouraged other people and saying, "Your voice matters, and that's amazing; what you have to say matters," because people don't think it matters. Teachers are doing amazing things and think nobody cares or that nobody wants to hear about it.

The above quote suggests that knowledge exchange needs to be a deliberate and proactive strategy. This is consistent with evidence about effective knowledge mobilization – it involves a range of mediating processes that are often through the development of interpersonal connections, social networks and highly interactive approaches rather than the passive dissemination of information. This is complex work. As well as learning about the content of TLLP projects – for example,

through instructional knowledge, skills and practices – it is suggested that effective processes for knowledge mobilization are also shared across the TLLP community and beyond. For example, as the above TLLP teacher leader proposed, their knowledge sharing success was not simply about the specific content of the project (a learning tool) but about the focus on teacher voice and transparency which could be adopted by other projects:

…five teachers, everybody has a role, you're all going to blog … and I guarantee you, within a year, we would have 20,000 hits because it's transparent and we talk about it, right?

The sharing of knowledge mobilization expertise – as well as professional practice and leadership – is an important feature to be fostered.

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. Table 13 identifies the main types of resource materials developed by TLLP projects in our sample of Final Reports. The development of actual instructional or project materials supported the sharing and spread of practices. For example, one project in a special education school focused on assessment of early reading for students. The team members consequently developed an assessment tool for use with children who have severe speech and physical impairments and this tool is being adopted by teachers across the school. In another project, the resource was focused on use by students themselves – in this case a graphic novel was written and published to engage

students in learning. And some of the resources not only provide specific materials to be used in classrooms, they also facilitate sharing of professional learning among teachers. One example was a project on teaching visual arts which involved creating the ArtSmart blog for sharing educational resources. A post-intervention survey of teachers in the ArtSmart project school included comments such as:

It has been EXTREMELY helpful. For the first time in my career I have work that I feel proud of putting on a bulletin board in the hallway. Students are accomplishing artwork of different levels and above what they are used to because I have the skill and the examples to show them how to improve their work.

Invaluable. I have shared with Intermediate colleagues who are also enduring the same pains I have in the past. Please keep the blog alive!

Table 13: Resource Materials Developed and Shared by TLLP Projects (as identified in sample of Final Reports)

Resource Materials Developed and Shared by TLLP Project	Rank Order (Based on the number of projects)
Sample lessons/lesson plans	1st
Providing list/advice on recommended resources	2nd
Communication tools (e.g., blogs, websites)	3rd
Assessment tools and methods	4th
Instructional materials for use in classrooms	5th=
Tutorials	5th=
Development of framework/ program materials	5th=
Research tools	8th
Book	9th

Knowledge exchange involves consideration of audience. Table 14 outlines the main audiences identified for learning sharing by the 60 sample Final Reports analyzed. Importantly and encouragingly, all the projects identified teachers as a main audience. If the overall goal is improving professional learning and teachers' leadership with a focus on instruction, the main audience should be teachers. A distinctive and positive feature of TLLP is that it is teacher-led innovative and effective practices by teachers working with teachers and for teachers. It may be curious that only 13 reports specifically identified students as their audience; however, this is because many of the projects first target adults (teachers, administrators, parents) to create changes in practice. In Table 13, identifying students as an audience refers to an explicit approach to sharing the TLLP project with students rather than students more generally experiencing and benefiting from changes in practices associated with the TLLP. A minority of projects considered their main audience to be wider than teachers. It is understandable within the short time scale of a TLLP project – within a school year – that projects will firstly focus on teachers. Nevertheless, support and encouragement to think about a wider audience could be beneficial – both for developing the TLLP teachers' leadership and practices and, importantly, for influencing and sharing learning and practices across schools, boards, provincially and beyond. As one TLLP teacher interviewee commented, part of the professional learning of TLLP can include learning to network, to use your voice and to affect change:

The other thing was networking and teaching them how to network with other educators across, not just across our district, but across Ontario districts. I mean, when you have a voice and you're able to go and present and you've never presented before and all of a sudden you're an expert at something new, it changes your way of thinking about yourself and your confidence and thinking, "Wow, I do know my stuff." We don't often get that as teachers in practice, right? We're so busy that … usually when somebody wants to hear from us, it's a negative; it's not a positive. I think that ability to go out and share what we know and say, "Here it is," I think that was very important in developing their leadership.

Table 14: Main Audience for TLLP Project Learning Sharing Identified by Sample Final Reports

Audience	Number of Final Reports (Total=60)
Teachers	60
School administration	22
District administration	14
Parents	13
Students	13
Community	8

It is challenging to measure the impact of knowledge exchange and sharing learning, particularly beyond the immediate TLLP project team and their school(s). In our analysis of sample Final Reports, 12 of the projects had sought to include formal measures of the impact of sharing learning; for example, use of teacher surveys, feedback or evaluation forms when providing learning sessions or events. More frequently, however, TLLP projects relied on informal assessments of the benefits and impact of sharing learning; for example from observations, conversations, correspondence or website hits. There is

a need to further consider how the wider sharing of learning can be monitored.

Table 15: Benefits of Shared Learning For People Beyond TLLP Project Team Identified in Sample Of Final Reports

Benefits of Shared Learning for People Beyond TLLP Team	Identified in % of Sample Reports
New knowledge/improved understanding	70%
Changes in practice	58%
Increased self-efficacy	17%
Inspired by the TLLP projects/practices	17%
Development of shared leadership	7%

Nevertheless, even with limitations to measuring wider learning, it is evident that such learning was occurring and having positive benefits. 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 15. It is important to note that Table 15 refers to explicitly listed benefits in the Final Reports. Of particular note, the main benefits identified are, first, development of new knowledge and understanding, and, second, changes in practice. These are very significant benefits and support the importance of TLLP sharing beyond project teams. Examples from the Final Reports included new knowledge and understanding for school and board administrators, such as in a kindergarten coaching initiative:

The individuals we shared our learning with [administrators] became increasingly aware of the need and desire for teacher professional learning opportunities that occur during the instructional day and that are focused and differentiated based on individual teacher

interest, need and strength. They also became aware of the large number of teachers interested in voluntarily participating in the Kindergarten Coaching Initiative.

And with parents, in this example from a project on engaging parents in teaching reading:

Perhaps the best way to measure the benefit of the learning acquired with this project is in the development and implementation of the training sessions for parent volunteers. This is most evident when observing the parent volunteers work with students and when speaking with them about their experiences.

Many commented on how they, "…wish I had more time to volunteer…" and how they, "wished I knew this information about reading sooner…" as their understanding had been greatly broadened.

Examples in changes in teachers' practice were also identified:

Majority of the teachers are now using their SMARTBoard in their classroom for teaching. They are using and suggesting websites that they discovered on their own, when using the SMARTBoard." (Project on effective use of SMARTBoards)

I felt that our goals were met and this was evident in their [teachers'] sharing with colleagues, through their lesson plans and the dialogue with each other. Teachers were using what we had explored in their classroom almost immediately… (Project on Mathematics in the Transition Years)

Alongside changes in knowledge, understanding and practice, there were also benefits in motivating and inspiring people to use and spread innovative and effective practices. For example, in a project on math skills:

Staff were extremely enthusiastic and administration is supporting our project by making math one of the next year's school-wide initiatives.

And with positive and purposeful improvement, there were also benefits of increased sense of efficacy and development of shared leadership. For example, in a project with Aboriginal families and organizations about early literacy:

Everyone in the various [community] groups was very happy to be provided with the learning and strategies because it affirmed much of what they believed about early childhood development in literacy. The parents were also very appreciative of the learning because they felt that it could be used to guide their parenting decisions. Parents will be able to help their children and also be more aware of the importance of the literacy and oral language in the home environment. As a result, it is the children… that will benefit the most.

Indeed, as discussed below, an aim of TLLP is to develop and share teachers' learning in order to support students.

3.5.4 **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'

learning – although it is recognized that TLLP is one of many factors affecting students' learning and establishing a direct relationship 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 and/or learning strategies, not all of the projects are directly focused on achievement measures. Part of the concern about expecting a quick and significant increase in achievement measures is that all of the projects are relatively short-term with TLLP project funding being for one year, although the innovation is hoped to sustain beyond the initial funding. Indeed, the Provincial TLLC has 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.

TLLP teacher leaders receive advice and support for developing appropriate monitoring strategies during the initial Leadership Skills for Classroom Teachers training session. Nevertheless, further supports for understanding how to understand student learning benefits – in the context of TLLP's priority focus on teachers' learning - would be beneficial. For example, cautions and considerations about the use of provincial standard assessments to measure TLLP impacts; consideration

of formative assessments that could be used or developed; and for projects that are not necessarily about academic achievement but instead other aspects of learning, engagement and development, consideration of forms of pre/post intervention data gathering (for example through surveys, examples of student work, observations and/or other artifacts).

In our analysis of a sample of Final Reports, 22 (of 60) projects involved formal measures of student learning, such as use of a range of student assessments including classroom and provincial assessments, and developing assessments of literacy skills, technological skills, student engagement and student work. Student surveys were also used to assess changes in attitude and experiences. Informal measures of assessing learning were used by 26 of the sample of projects, including teacher observations, student conferences and conversations, parent comments and other anecdotal evidence.

The majority of projects in our sample of Final Reports identified benefits for students' improved learning. Examples included learning and skills relating to literacy, math, technology, higher order thinking, arts and approaches to learning. For example, a project on effective SMARTBoard use concluded:

This project had an awesome impact on the students and their learning. Students that had difficulties focusing, writing test and interacting with their peers were showing positive results in their learning and assessments.

Over half of the projects identified benefits for student engagement. For example, a project using Math Fairs in elementary:

My own students' attitude toward math problems and math in general has drastically changed since September; from a class that sighed when math was mentioned to a class that ask first thing in the morning "When are we doing math?", and "Can we do math problems today?"

And a project using animation in a secondary school:

I really enjoyed sharing the techniques with the students. They were thrilled to attempt something different and the engagement was an incredible thing to behold. Students that were normally going through the paces of school were suddenly anxious to get started, proud to share what they made and keen to get started every day.

Improvements in students' development as learners and as leaders were also identified:

In addition to a PLC for teachers, we also created a PLC for students. We paired Junior classes with a Primary classes. Students had the opportunity to experience and investigate a wide variety of activities with a peer. They had the opportunity to work with each other, either as a student expert, articulating their thinking, or as the less experienced learner, observing and learning from their buddies in a variety of ways. (Project on teaching measurement).

As a result of gradual release of responsibility, students are much more accountable for their learning – the teacher is no longer a dictator

but a guide. (Project on network learning communities for assessment).

The benefit that I have found with sharing with students is that they then become the leaders. They generate the excitement for the technique. Everyone was uploading their creations to YouTube so that they could share their creations. The pride in their work was unmistakable. Once the sharing began in class, it was viral. Students were showing other students how to create a technique, how to perfect a concept and how to better plan out their storyboard. The learning did not stop there. The students wanted to use it in other classes instead of traditional projects. Once they showed their project; and many were begging to go first, then everyone else wanted to know how it was done. (Project on using animation in secondary schools)

From the 60 projects in our sample of Final Reports, 14 specified improvements in academic achievement. A project on teaching and assessing writing using critical pathways, for example, reported a range of ways of assessing achievement:

Students displayed growth the majority of the time when instruction was focused through the modeled, guided and shared model. To determine growth, we used the diagnostic, formative and summative assessment practices all the while posting their results on the data wall in the classroom so they can see their progress. Timely constructive feedback was given throughout the stages as well as using Gallery Walks where the students were given the opportunity to self-reflect and peer evaluate using the same rubric as the teacher in the diagnostic, formative and summative assessments. These practices prove extremely beneficial to the success of the students. The

students work was posted in classrooms, hallways and in the school newsletters.

Evidence of wider benefits for students' learning, engagement, development and leadership are encouraging. However, it is important to remain cautious about attempting to directly link TLLP innovations to achievement results without careful consideration of the range and complexity of processes and outcomes involved with changing instructional practices to benefit student learning.

3.6   Overall Benefits and Challenges of TLLP

3.6.1   The Value of TLLP

As detailed throughout this report, there are many substantial benefits of TLLP – for teachers' learning; for teacher leadership; for changing knowledge, understanding and practice; for student learning; for knowledge exchange and sharing learning beyond individual classrooms and schools.

One of our research questions was about the value of TLLP (and the value of professional learning organized in the 'TLLP way'). The evidence is clear that this is a highly valuable form of professional learning. As discussed previously, TLLP is intended to support experienced teachers in self-directed, teacher-led innovative practices and shared learning. This is contrasted with more standard forms of staff development. As an interviewee noted, you need both for different purposes, but you also need to appreciate the valuable addition and contribution of the TLLP:

I think there is a role for staff development in implementing big things where whatever your years of experience in the subject or in the profession or whatever, there is a new initiative coming out and we all have to learn about it and bring it into our classroom. So it's not exclusive of that. But once that's in place, I really think, the only way you're going to move beyond it and really, really enhance instruction, is to get away from direction by a single expert and draw in the expertise of potentially 130,000 other people. That's the only way you're going to move beyond it. Otherwise, you're stuck at whatever level that single expert, basically, can provide to you. So if you're ever going to move beyond that, you have to start drawing on all these people who are doing great things out here in their area of expertise.

The fact that the TLLP is for experienced teachers who are focused on classroom practice is important. As one interviewee noted:

… it's wonderful…we grew, we're so grateful to be able to select something that's dear to your heart or that you're passionate about, and to be offered the valuable, precious gift of time to spend with your colleagues…it was a wonderful time in our career to have that ability to kind of research or try new ideas in the classroom. It was just so rejuvenating.

And the fact that TLLP is self-directed teacher-led professional learning is valuable and powerful. In the words of one TLLP teacher interviewee:

First of all, how it empowers teachers – I don't think I've ever felt so professionally empowered and valued; the credibility that it gives people,

because of the formalization of it. I think you could do a TLLP and not have it really rigorous and really structured, but, the idea of measuring teacher learning was significant. How does it differ? Well, the fact that it's self-selected; it's not imposed; it's something that matters to the teachers… I don't think I've ever experienced or have seen anything since that genuinely allows for that the same way. I think our school-based PLCs can, but they're mandated.

And another TLLP teacher interviewee:

It's huge… because as teachers, we get ideas… before I applied for the project I had brewed the idea of doing something more with it for a couple of years but I thought how am I going to do that? It allowed me to let my idea flourish… because we get the funding we can really do what is in our heads… The impact of the TLLP is much greater than a regular professional development because you do something that you believe in and then you get to try and say well is it doing what I think it is, and when it does it's an unbelievable feeling.

As part of the TLLP Sharing the Learning Summit, TLLP teacher leaders complete a debriefing chart on "What the Ministry Needs to Know". Our analysis of over 100 charts collected from the 2010, 2011 and 2012 Summits identified the following as the main benefits of TLLP (in rank order):

The Best Thing about the TLLP is:
a. Freedom and autonomy to choose own topics; teacher-directed and teacher-driven ("grass roots")
b. Funding, release time and support for job-embedded professional learning
c. Networking and sharing ideas, projects with teachers across the province

d. Collaboration with colleagues – breaks down isolation
e. Developing professionally and taking leadership
f. Being valued as a teacher by Admin/Board/Ministry

As well as the practical benefits of TLLP, the sense of being valued, respected and empowered are very strong. As one interviewee commented:

…it's having a program to champion the teachers and the work of teachers, and we need that particularly in this day and age. So it's to make it very visible that we have that interest…

Indeed, the TLLP embodies and advances the benefits and value of respectful relationships and collaboration, including the noteworthy and very important strong and ongoing partnership between OTF and the Ministry supporting the TLLP.

Our research did not include a cost-effective analysis; however, our view is that the TLLP also offers financial value. The "average"'project receives a budget of $13,991 and involves a core team of approximately four people. From a small amount of resource, as indicated above, projects have innovated, implemented and spread effective practices within and across classrooms, schools, boards and, in some cases, at provincial, national and international levels through influencing policy, research, practitioner and community audiences and their actions.

Our conclusion is that the TLLP is a professionally, educationally and financially valuable initiative that should continue. Of

course, in education, it is difficult to quantify fully the benefits and the value added when the outcomes are – in the words of one TLLP teacher interviewee – *"Lives were changed, tears shed, friendships made, seeds were planted and walls were taken down".*

3.6.2 Challenges Experienced
Nevertheless, as with all initiatives – particularly those intended to innovate profound change – challenges were encountered by TLLP participants.

By far the largest challenge for TLLP teacher leaders relates to time. In our analysis of a sample of TLLP Final Reports, the time commitment required for leading a TLLP project was the most often cited challenge. Examples included: time demands to organize workshops, to prepare, to meet together, to manage the project, to develop resources, to travel to training and activities, and/or to establish professional learning communities; TLLP timeline is tight for completion of training; not enough time to complete student assessments; teachers' busy schedules delayed the start of the project in one case; poor time-management skills; and not estimating enough budget for release time. For some TLLP teacher leaders, while the use of release time was greatly appreciated, being away from their own school was viewed negatively by administrators. Closely linked to time concerns was the challenge of increased workload associated with taking on a TLLP project, particularly for full-time teachers. Consequences included challenges of balancing their TLLP work with other teaching priorities. Although not fully overcoming time concerns, TLLP teacher leaders found a range of ways to address

– or at least mitigate – time concerns. Mainly, teachers used personal time and tried to be more effective in time and resource management. TLLP teacher leaders also reached out to others for support; for example, other teachers or support from school or board administrators. An effective strategy was also, as the TLLP work developed, to integrate this with classroom or school processes, such as professional learning community activities, rather than TLLP work being an "add on". As with all the challenges identified, TLLP teacher leaders' strategies to address time and workload challenges resulted in development of their professional practices and leadership skills.

A second significant area of challenge – as well as of leadership growth – was managing the dynamics of the TLLP team itself. While core team members had all signed up to being part of the TLLP, individual commitments, availability, expertise, team working styles and expectations varied considerably. Conflict within the group could result. Strategies included developing teachers' own leadership skills and paying explicit attention to defining leadership responsibilities and roles within the team. Attention needed also to be paid to adult learning and collaboration styles to support a functional team.

The third 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. Several projects struggled with gaining support from school administrators or from the school board; while some projects received excellent support, in other cases, there was either lack of support or, even more

problematic, negative interference or resistance. There could also be resistance or reluctance from other teachers, students, parents or community members. 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. While the benefits of self-directed teacher-led innovation through TLLP are substantial, there is also the challenge of taking a "bottom-up" initiative and attempting to spread this. For example, in the case of a project that was led by only one teacher:

… there is some limitation in a "ground-up" approach when trying to organize something at the district level. A teacher-led initiative at the school level would be easier to manage, I suspect. But once a teacher is trying to implement a significant program at the district level, that requires someone at the board level with a grasp of the initiative to help ensure that the implementation is carried out and supported. I was able to present, on occasion, to the administrative council for the (district) and that provided for some worthwhile and meaningful dialogue, but a teacher-led initiative still requires clear direction from the school board regarding implementation strategy. Because of the nature of this initiative, it became difficult to co-ordinate its use within schools. We have now created an opportunity to pilot this program's use in high schools after much discussion.

As this quote reveals, though, part of the TLLP learning is also how teacher leaders build relationships, navigate systems and manage change. Strategies used to overcome resistance included: connecting with the people to be involved and understanding their needs and interests; taking the time to listen and communicate effectively; focusing on people who could support your changes; attending to ways to engage people and make activities attractive; and aligning with other activities when appropriate.

In addition, there were some practical, financial and logistical challenges indicating the importance of project management training within the TLLP. Some projects experienced technology problems – both in terms of equipment and in skills to use technology. Strategies to address this included training people, getting technical support and drawing on or sharing existing technology resources. For some TLLP teacher leaders, organizing meetings, managing a project, establishing and overseeing a budget, and developing communications were all new and challenging activities. But they were also learning and leadership experiences which they developed through the TLLP.

4. CONCLUSIONS AND CONSIDERATIONS FOR FUTURE

We introduced this report by asking if experienced teachers were supported to become genuine leaders of learning – their own learning, the professional learning of other teachers and partners, and their students' learning – what would these teacher leaders do, how would they develop their learning and practices, what would be the successes and challenges, what would be learned and with what benefit for students, teachers and other partners?

The evidence from our research and from the TLLP is clear: these teacher leaders will do amazing things;

they will initiate, innovate, implement and share a wide range of topics and activities which can develop professional learning, improve practice and support student learning; they will experience success in tangible outcomes – such as changes in professional practice for instruction and assessment - and also importantly in the sometimes immeasurable benefits of being empowered, enabled and valued; they will navigate personal, interpersonal and practical challenges as their leadership is tested and grows; they will learn how to collaborate and share to spread knowledge and sustain changes; and they will demonstrate the professional, educational and financial value of self-directed, teacher-led innovative and effective practices.

For example, when we reflected on the TLLP teacher leaders we interviewed for this research, we were impressed that involvement in TLLP supported the teachers in creating, embellishing and deepening ideas that they had and were responsible (and supported) for developing professional learning with their peers. The very act of supporting these projects gave the teachers live experience in organizing professional learning; working with their peers: co-creating materials; discussing innovative ideas; reaching beyond their school; and implementing new ideas in such a way that reached not only their school but, for the majority of these projects, other schools and boards. In the process these teachers developed all kinds of skills and abilities that they had not had opportunities to do before. Leadership evolved. They organized groups; modeled new ideas; co-constructed curricular ideas; created learning communities in the process of doing the work; learned to speak publicly to different audiences; developed ideas that were in their infancy; and confronted challenges that they had to negotiate, including budgets and measuring evidence of their projects. TLLP turns out to be a powerful and inexpensive strategy for supporting professional learning and providing real life experience for

teachers to learn leadership by doing it with their peers. For some teachers, it was a life changing experience. For all, it was an opportunity for them to learn to facilitate new ideas and practices for use with teachers and students.

We are struck by how the values of respectful relationships, partnership and collaboration underpin all aspects of the TLLP and how the work at all levels (teachers, projects, OTF and Ministry) demonstrates learning and leadership. The TLLP is an extremely thoughtful initiative. It builds on the research and expertise developed for the Working Table on Teacher Development and includes an approach of continual gathering, adapting and reflecting on evidence and learning as you go. As one provincial interviewee commented:

I just think that we…have to continue to be learners with these teachers. I mean, the moment we think we've got it right and this is it, and we'll do this for another ten years and never change anything, we've lost it because teaching, learning, society changes constantly – the needs change constantly – and we have to learn from what we're hearing. So that's why it's so great working with the Federations, working with the surveys that we're doing, the data collections that we're doing, and then listening and analyzing them and then acting upon them, is what is keeping this program fresh and growing.

In keeping with a learning approach, the successes of TLLP are to be celebrated while the need for continued improvement and refinement in the program are to be encouraged. As another provincial interviewee reflected:

I think, certainly before 2003, this is just unbelievable compared to what was going on then, and I think it's been incredibly successful, and it has met the goals; I think there's more to do, and I think everybody's aware of this – it needs more publicity, it needs more people

to be aware, to get involved. I think we're still working on the sharing and making their learning sustainable, the sharing part sustainable, and that we can't fall back into, "Well that was a great project and it's over." It has to be continued sharing.

We turn to the three priority goals for TLLP to offer some conclusions and further considerations.

4.1   To support experienced teachers who undertake self-directed advanced professional development related to improved student learning and development.
TLLP has advanced this goal considerably and effectively. Teachers' professional learning has been strengthened and this is contributing to the learning of other teachers, administrators, partners and students. Our research supports the continued development of self-directed professional learning for experienced teachers, particularly with an emphasis on teams of teachers collaborating and sharing their learning.

We offer three considerations for future development:

First, measuring the benefits of TLLP for teachers' learning, for a wider range of participants and audiences, and – importantly – for students is complex and challenging. This is particularly the case for TLLP teacher leaders who may have little prior experience of developing measurements and monitoring of complex project processes and outcomes. We encourage the Provincial TLLC to increase guidance and examples about a range of approaches to developing, monitoring and reporting evidence by and for TLLP projects.

Second, as a further area of research and evaluation, it could be interesting to conduct a meta-analysis of the effective practices demonstrated across all of the cohorts. For example, what has been collectively learned about Differentiated Instruction? Or about literacy? Or math? And how can those practices that TLLP teachers have developed be spread at scale on a more systematic basis? Alongside analyzing effective practices across all TLLP projects and cohorts, research could also be conducted to examine in-depth case studies of projects that demonstrate particularly effective and/or innovative practices.

Third, for the provincial TLLP team to continue to educate administrators and system leaders (school, board and province) about the nature, purpose, value and benefit of TLLP and, in particular, the importance of self-directed, teacher-led professional learning (in addition to, not instead of, provincial and board staff development initiatives). For some TLLP teacher leaders, unnecessary difficulties were encountered from lack of support or misunderstandings at the school or board levels. This research report has focused on teachers' experiences of TLLP; it would be of interest for future research to include consideration of administrators' (at board and school levels) perceptions, experiences and behaviors towards the TLLP.

4.2   To help classroom teachers develop leadership skills for sharing learning and exemplary practices.
Again, the research supports that this goal has been advanced considerably. Across our interviewees, the theme of teacher leadership was very strong. We encourage

the TLLP to continue to prioritize, model, enable and empower teacher leadership and learning.

We offer three practical considerations to further recognizing, measuring and advancing teacher leadership:

First, that the Final Report template is revised to include a section specifically on teacher leadership to enable a more thorough approach to gathering evidence of what leadership was developed, how and with what benefits, challenges and outcomes.

Second, that the TLLP training includes a specific and explicit section about defining, developing, reflecting on and advancing teachers' conceptions, vision, practices and approaches to leadership within and through their TLLP.

Third, to support the above clarification and investigation of teacher leadership, further research specifically on the conceptualizations, definitions and practices of teacher leadership could be conducted. An interesting feature of this research could be to co-construct the research and the resulting definitions of teacher leadership with TLLP participants.

4.3   *To facilitate knowledge exchange to spread the use and sustainability of innovative and effective practices.*
The goal of knowledge exchange has also been advanced. At a minimum, TLLP projects share their learning with teachers in the TLLP team and, through the e-community and Summit, with the wider TLLP community in Ontario. All TLLP projects consider teachers to be a main audience and most involve

sharing, at least, within their school, and can also include sharing across schools, boards, communities and/or at provincial, national and even international levels. Some TLLP teacher leaders have become recognized "stars" who are recruited to board and provincial leadership roles and responsibilities and/or who are sought after for provincial, national and international conferences, board/committee membership, social media exchanges and other networking opportunities. That said, not all TLLP projects are as active in their sharing and it may also be unreasonable or unfeasible to expect them to be – teacher leaders have busy lives and many demands on their times. The lesson from research on knowledge mobilization is to play close attention to develop mediating processes which support an infrastructure and culture of connecting knowledge to practice and vice versa. There is also a need to further promote the TLLP initiative itself and past projects as well as current and future learning. As one TLLP teacher leader commented:

This isn't really a negative thing about TLLP, but it's like the world's best-kept secret and I find that such a tragedy.

The provincial TLLC can continue to play important roles in supporting networking and knowledge exchange.

We offer three potential considerations for future development:

First, for OTF and the Ministry to continue to develop the online presence, profile and sharing of knowledge from and about TLLP. The TLLP site on the Ministry website (for public use) and the e-community for

TLLP teachers' use are both helpful. Yet, our research indicates there was an enthusiasm for these online resources to be enhanced – to be more user friendly, to have more open access and to contain more public sharing of TLLP projects, participants, practices and materials. This is an encouraging sign that TLLP teacher leaders have moved towards pushing for increased transparency of practice and sharing of knowledge – key elements of knowledge exchange!

Second, we suggest providing current and future TLLP leaders with examples of effective strategies for knowledge exchange from previous TLLP projects and from research on effective knowledge exchange both within the TLLP specifically and drawing on other relevant research and experiences. For some teachers, considering who is your audience, how to engage with them and how to develop sustained, interactive networks is a new practice and skill. Providing specific and proven examples may be useful.

Third, we were impressed by the capacity of TLLP teachers to grow their leadership skills of increasing communication and building networks. Nevertheless, individual TLLP teachers vary in their awareness of, and access to, opportunities to share their knowledge. One TLLP teacher leader suggested that if the provincial TLLP committee could make all TLLP participants aware of some key opportunities, such as other Ministry sponsored or OTF supported conferences and events (and continue to champion the TLLP to other partners), this would be an important mediating role to strengthen knowledge exchange opportunities.

4.4　　**TLLP and Professional Development Goals**

The TLLP goals above were developed from the principles of professional learning developed from research, experience and through the Working Table recommendations. Specifically, principles of Coherence, Adult Learning, Goal-Oriented, Sustainable and Evidence-Informed professional learning have informed the TLLP. The TLLP is strengthened by adhering to, and significantly, advancing these principles. We encourage the TLLP to continue to be foregrounded in these criteria. The professional learning is coherent, goal-oriented and attentive to adult learning styles. While also evidence-informed, further attention to building evidence to monitor and assess the impact, output and outcomes within and across TLLP projects is suggested. We would also support the need for focused attention and training for TLLP teacher leaders to consider how to develop sustainability from the outset of their projects. As one TLLP teacher leader reflected:

In terms of my experience at TLLP, anytime we do something new, even as a system, it's about, how do we structure things to facilitate those informal, collaborative learning communities, the ones that sustain the work, as opposed to just being part of the project?

The TLLP is a highly valuable initiative that has advanced the goals of professional learning, teacher leadership and knowledge exchange. It is vital, therefore, to continue to support TLLP projects and also to consider how the innovative and effective improvements can be spread and sustained to benefit professional and student learning at scale across the Ontario education system. This does not mean that all teachers "do'" TLLP; it is important that it remains a high

quality experience that is self-directed and teacher-led, rather than mandated or universal. The balance is to have the quality experience for those directly involved and, through knowledge exchange and other mechanisms, to spread the learning from the TLLP systemically. Our overall conclusion is to continue this outstanding way of leveraging and developing professional learning for experienced teachers.

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