



CODE OF CONDUCT FOR EFFECTIVE COLLABORATION IN EUROPEAN PROJECTS

BECOMING A COLLABORATIVE LEARNING ENVIRONMENT



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CO-LAB (<http://colab.eun.org/>) is a forward-looking project funded by the European Commission's Erasmus+ Programme, focused on making collaborative teaching and learning a reality in the classroom. Being able to collaborate effectively is a valuable 21st century skill, yet teaching about or through collaboration remains rare in schools because of a lack of understanding of what real collaboration in an educational setting means, and because existing policy and regulatory conditions do not always enable it to flourish. Practitioners and policy makers need a dedicated space and time to experiment and better understand what collaborative teaching and learning means in terms of policy and practice. CO-LAB provides these stakeholders with that opportunity.

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1. Introduction

CO-LAB (<http://colab.eun.org>) is a KA3 Forward-Looking Cooperation Project,¹ which focuses on making collaborative teaching and learning a reality in the classroom.²

Teaching and learning about or through collaboration remains rare in the school system because of a lack of understanding of what real collaboration in an educational setting means, and because existing policy and regulatory conditions do not always enable it to flourish. Practitioners and policy makers need a dedicated space and time to experiment and better understand what collaborative teaching and learning means in terms of policy and practice.

CO-LAB has provided these stakeholders with that opportunity and has succeeded in promoting several of the key skills or competences, as laid down in international guidelines, such as the New Skills Agenda for Europe (2016),³ the framework of key competences for lifelong learning launched in 2017,⁴ the 21st century skills framework,⁵ which includes “Being able to collaborate effectively”, and the Council Recommendation on Key Competences for Lifelong Learning.⁶

European cooperation projects within the framework of the Erasmus+ programme, such as CO-LAB, are unique opportunities to create and set up lasting European collaborative learning environments to bring about better and more innovative education (systems), in Europe and beyond. Forward-looking policy projects and strategic partnerships may have a stronger systemic impact if they are built on true collaborative environments. By becoming collaborative learning environments, they can strengthen education strategies at local, regional, national, European or international level.

For European projects or networks to be sustainable collaborative learning environments, they may agree upon and implement some key characteristics, which the present Code of Conduct tries to outline. This Code of Conduct was written from the perspective of KA3 project experience, but it may be also easily applicable and useful for any other type of network and strategic partnership in education.

The present Code of Conduct’s version is based on a more detailed background working paper⁷ drafted by Educonsult and it summarises it.

¹ KA3 Forward-Looking cooperation project Erasmus Plus; further information see:

https://eacea.ec.europa.eu/erasmus-plus/funding/forward-looking-cooperation-projects-2017-eacea412016_en

² For an overview of the project activities and results, please, consult the Final Evaluation Report and the CO-LAB project recommendations available here: colab.eun.org/outcomes.

³ Further information on the New Skills agenda see: <http://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?catId=1223> and <https://ec.europa.eu/jrc/en/news/competence-frameworks-european-approach-teach-and-learn-21st-century-skills>

⁴ For further information on the Review of the 8 Key competences of 2006 see: https://ec.europa.eu/education/sites/education/files/key-competences-consultation-2017-strategy_en.pdf

⁵ For an exhaustive list of 21st century skills see: <http://edglossary.org/21st-century-skills/>

⁶ Council Recommendation on Key Competences for Lifelong Learning (2018), <https://ec.europa.eu/education/sites/education/files/recommendation-key-competences-lifelong-learning.pdf>

⁷ The Code of Conduct and its working paper can be found here: <http://colab.eun.org/projects-collaboration>

2. Key features of European projects and networks as collaborative learning environments

In addition to the lessons learned directly from the CO-LAB experience, this Code of Conduct is also inspired by six research studies or reports.

- Essential features of effective networks in education (Rincón-Gallardo and Fullan, 2016)⁸
- Schools as collaborative learning communities (Cooper and Boyd, 1993)⁹
- What makes a school a learning organisation? (OECD, 2017)¹⁰
- Teachers and school leaders in schools as learning organisations (European Commission, 2017a)¹¹
- The Construct of the Learning Organization: Dimensions, Measurement, and Validation (Yang, Watkins & Marsick, 2004)¹²
- An International Perspective on Teaching and Learning (OECD, TALIS, 2014)¹³

In Annex 1, detailed information is given about these studies or reports and their analysis.

To design this Code of Conduct, eight key features of collaborative learning networks emerging from the comparison of the six studies were distilled and two more features were added, which are specific for policy European cooperation projects, i.e.:

- systemic efforts to be promoted through networks as European collaborative learning environments;
- promotion of the European dimension through and in networks as European collaborative learning environments.

The final Code envisages a network (or project) as a collaborative learning environment model based on ten key features:

- 1. Sharing a common vision**
- 2. Building on trust and internal accountability**
- 3. Promoting networking as Continuous Professional Development**
- 4. Favouring collaborative inquiry**
- 5. Enhancing structural elements supporting collaborative learning environments**
- 6. Creating new partnerships**
- 7. Promoting systemic efforts and changes**
- 8. Strengthening the cooperation dimension in education**
- 9. Investing in finding the adequate and appropriate resources to sustain the work**
- 10. Evaluating their activities internally and externally**

The importance to be given to each of these ten key features in European networks or projects as collaborative learning environments will depend on needs and context. They can be detailed as follows.

⁸ Santiago Rincón-Gallardo, Michael Fullan (2016) Essential features of effective networks in education, *Journal of Professional Capital and Community*, Vol. 1 Issue 1, pp.5-22, <https://doi.org/10.1108/JPC-09-2015-0007> - www.emeraldinsight.com/doi/full/10.1108/JPC-09-2015-0007 (accessed 22/01/2018).

⁹ Carole Cooper, Julie Boyd (1993, updated 2010), Schools as collaborative learning communities www.vision.net.au/~globallearning/pages/lfs/clc_article.html (accessed 22/01/2018).

¹⁰ Marco Kools, Louise Stoll, What makes a school a learning organisation? (2017) Education Working Paper no. 137, Directorate for Education and Skills, OECD. [www.oecd.org/officialdocuments/publicdisplaydocumentpdf/?cote=EDU/WKP\(2016\)11&docLanguage=En](http://www.oecd.org/officialdocuments/publicdisplaydocumentpdf/?cote=EDU/WKP(2016)11&docLanguage=En) (accessed 22/01/2018).

¹¹ Teachers and school leaders in schools as learning organisations, Guiding Principles for policy development in school education (2017), European Commission, ET 2020 Working Group Schools 2016-18. https://ec.europa.eu/education/sites/education/files/teachers-school-leaders-wg-0917_en.pdf (accessed 22/01/2018).

¹² Baiyin Yang, Karen E. Watkins, Victoria J. Marsick, The Construct of the Learning Organization: Dimensions, Measurement, and Validation, *Human Resource Development Quarterly*, Vol., No. 1, Spring 2004 - <http://assets.csom.umn.edu/assets/21929.pdf> (accessed 22/01/2018).

¹³ TALIS 2013 Results, An International Perspective on Teaching and Learning, OECD 2014 <http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/9789264196261-en> (accessed 22/01/2018).

2.1. Sharing a common vision

Developing a network as a collaborative European environment aiming at a systemic impact in innovation requires a common vision within the network.

- The willingness to create a common vision and a collaborative effort is to be engaged to achieve this shared and common vision gradually.
- The network or project expresses this motivating and inspiring vision through common goals and objectives agreed upon by all the partners right from the beginning of the initiative.
- To develop the vision, members of collaborative learning networks also need to be able to use various sources of research data and information in relation with innovative practices and approaches.
- Specific space and time is dedicated to exchange within the European network partnerships to reflect on the common vision that will support the activities throughout the lifetime of the project and beyond.
- The impact of the way in which this common vision is reflected in the activities and deliverables is measured, while the progress of the project and its outputs is evaluated.
- European projects and networks as collaborative learning environments focus during their meetings and activities on the topics or issues that seem to be key challenges for many educational systems to promote and integrate systemic innovation into education. Working on topics that are relevant to all the partners of the network, such as enhancing the school climate and the well-being of the pupils at school, the role of school heads, differentiation of learning, collaborative learning, the development of 21st century skills, the relations with the world outside the school, etc., can facilitate the development of a common vision.
- Collaborative learning communities promote (and themselves apply) active and collaborative learning approaches in their own activities, and organise quality tailored CPD (Continuous Professional Development) to their needs.
- The development of a common vision also includes external stakeholders outside the formal (and possibly informal) education system.

2.2. Building on trust and internal accountability

Networks as European collaborative learning environments are built on trust among the partners and are able to implement a clearly defined agenda of work agreed upon by all partners. It is a shared responsibility to implement the work programme and all the partners in the network or project are together and individually accountable for the outcomes.

- Internal cooperation and conflict resolution are managed through frank, open and honest discussions; trust and confidence are built up amongst the partners, as one of the key elements that hold the partnership together in a sustainability perspective (long-lasting networks, beyond a one-shot initiative).
- Partners with diverse levels of experience and expertise are included; the opportunity to grow and learn from one another and together is offered to all partners with respect for their competences, skills, attitudes, expertise and knowledge. Trust and respect support such a learning process.
- Attention and interest for the input of all partners is shown while 'daring' ideas and debate on them are put forward with respect and openness as a way to stimulate a productive network or project. Partners feeling at ease within a project dare to come out of their comfort zones or expose themselves during discussions or debates. They feel free to share their ideas, convictions and proposals (sometimes even their misconceptions).
- Time and effort are dedicated to developing trust and internal accountability, in particular when partners did not know one another in advance. Each managing process and activity of the network is designed to support building trust and accountability, for example on meeting deadlines, delivering quality work and content, respecting one another's point of view, etc.
- Trust also has an important effect on the leadership of the network or project.
- Trust and accountability are the basis for the possibility or willingness of the education community at large (including the stakeholders outside of the network) to learn and grow.

2.3 Promoting networking as Continuous Professional Development

Participating in a European collaborative network or project is a unique opportunity for Continuous Professional Development (CPD) of all partners and stakeholders involved. Supporting such processes allows the network to become a true collaborative learning environment. CPD supports the networking process and taking part in networks can be seen as CPD in itself.

- The main approach for this professional development is the creation of a collaborative learning environment, aiming at sharing expertise and experiences, on one hand, and creating together new expertise and experiences together with all partners, on the other.
- An overview of partners' interests, activities, research and publications is drawn up as a preparatory step. The development of a literature review for the topic of the project also proves to be a very useful exercise. Furthermore, a mapping of partners' expertise and potential contribution (at all levels: pedagogical, didactical, ICT, linguistic, administrative, management potential, etc.) is undertaken before starting a new initiative.
- CPD actions are implemented on collaborative networking, based on the principles of this Code.
- Discussions at partner meetings go beyond the topic of the project and address broader educational issues, which are either common or specific to the partners of a project.
- Collaborative learning environments advocate for quality CPD, appropriately tailored to the needs of the members of the network, for all staff (educational, administrative and technical) and all levels (including the management level).
- This collaborative learning process also involves the wider education community, including educational organisations, expert groups and policy makers, as a basis for evidence-based policymaking.¹⁴ Connection is made with network(s) of schools, which support the feedback cycle and further collaboration among schools. The involvement of teacher educators, teachers, heads of school and other staff is also part of their personal development plan or portfolio and possibly recognised with credits.
- European networks reach out to learn from other networks or projects involved in similar activities and members of the partner institutions join peer learning communities or communities of practice with practitioners outside the network. External stakeholders in the network are involved, such as representatives of civil society organisations, industry, research institutes, parents, social profit and non-profit organisations, etc.; representatives of other European networks or projects are invited to partners' meetings, in particular at crucial stages (such as when new approaches are tested or implemented).
- The role of ICT tools is considered, such as learning platforms, distance-learning activities, hybrid learning approaches, etc. Therefore, within the creation and management of collaborative learning communities, specific attention is paid to the relevance and support these tools offer to CPD.

2.4. Favouring collaborative inquiry

European networks and projects are unique opportunities to continuously improve practices and systems, through cycles of collaborative and reflective inquiry. European projects or networks very often bring together what is happening in different countries and try to develop a new, more innovative or more effective approach for sustainable changes.

- European projects or networks are natural environments to develop and test new approaches, as a way to understand whether the new approach may be efficient and effective in another cultural environment. Part of the testing phase is to critically reflect on what effects innovative approaches may have in the various countries.
- Critical reflection is a key element of collaborative inquiry processes and structuring such cycles of collaborative inquiry within the activities of the European network or project is advised. The partners also learn how they can stimulate such activities within their own country and promote them once the European project or network's original funding ends, to enhance the sustainability of the outcomes.

¹⁴ More information about evidence-based policymaking in the EU can be found here:
https://ec.europa.eu/youth/policy/implementation/policy-making_en

2.5. Enhancing structural elements supporting collaborative learning environments

Networks or projects as European collaborative learning environments have a clear and deliberate leadership and appropriate flat power structures.

- Clear leadership is required, which may be taken on by an individual, a group of colleagues or partners involved. In large networks, shared leadership among a group/team of colleagues may be particularly efficient and effective.
- Successful implementation of the project is the joint responsibility of all partners. Flat power structures with shared responsibilities for all partners contribute to creating a true collaborative learning environment.
- The leadership and structure of the network or project is addressed during the preparatory phase of the activities, with a clear description of roles and responsibilities of the coordination and the partners, agreed by all.
- The coordinator shows expertise in the education areas addressed by the network or project as well as having expertise concerning the administrative and financial management of the project; support from experts on specific topics or processes is envisaged.
- The coordination facilitates and stimulates interaction among the partners and makes sure that the expertise of all the partners is harnessed to the benefit of the project and that the common vision of the network or project is agreed upon and respected throughout the lifetime of the network or project.
- A joint Code of Conduct (such as this) is developed to strengthen the functioning of collaborative learning networks. The Code of Conduct is concretely used as a way to ensure the effective and efficient management of the network.
- The overall coordination role covers the implementation of the work programme, ensures the quality of the deliverables, inspires and motivates partners, resolves potential conflicts and verifies and supports the link between activities and objectives.
- Sound administrative and financial management is agreed upon by all partners, as well as a joint communication strategy (internal and external) and a shared dissemination and valorisation plan. Collaborative learning communities aim for their deliverables or products to be implemented in new educational initiatives.

2.6. Creating new partnerships

European networks or projects make constant efforts to involve and create new partnerships with various systemic stakeholders in education, addressing shared educational challenges, at local, regional, national or European level.

- The stakeholders are members of the communities representing formal, informal and non-formal education and represent the world of business and industry and the larger civil society.
- Potential partners are the key actors of the system, such as pupils (student's organisations), parents, teachers, career advisors, psychological services supporting youngsters, etc. and specific attention is given to partners representing the various groups of disadvantaged youngsters.
- For actions such as KA3 forward-looking policy projects or networks, Ministries of Education are part of the collaborative learning community, from their conception, for the project to be able to contribute positively to future policy developments.
- Ministries of Education are informed about all the initiatives in which various education stakeholders (schools, universities, university colleges, pre-service Teacher Education and Continuous Professional Development institutions) are involved in as coordinators or as partners, to support potential integration in the systemic effort to promote innovation in education.
- The partnerships to carry projects differ according to the educational challenge or topic addressed, for example: projects focusing on citizenship issues involve civil society organisations; cultural education projects involve arts and creativity organisations; STEM projects focusing on the promotion of science, technology, engineering and mathematics involve companies (profit and non-profit) and research institutions, etc.

- A clear link is made with the systemic needs of each of the partners of the partnership taking into account the concrete needs perceived at local, regional or national level and the policies that are being developed to respond to these needs.

2.7. Promoting systemic efforts and changes

European policy projects or networks invest efforts to integrate what has been achieved into local, regional or national education strategies or policies. Networks and projects involve and inform policy and decision makers of the project activities, to support the valorisation of the outcomes so that systemic change and impact are enhanced.

- European projects or networks set up strategies of valorisation to support decision makers in taking and implementing their key results. Such strategies aim to inform policy makers continuously and clearly about the achievements, focusing on the actions that can contribute to new innovative policy developments and supporting policy makers in their valorisation.
- Networks or projects in the area of education focus specifically on the valorisation of the outcomes for Initial Teacher Training (ITE) and Continuous Professional Development (CPD).
- Networks or projects help schools with implementing innovations, informing, proposing training and following-up on the process, involving heads of schools and teachers but also parents' associations.
- Networks or projects compare the way innovative outcomes are implemented in different countries by Ministries of Education and other key agents, such as teacher education organisations and schools. This process contributes to benchmarking at European level.
- Information and valorisation involve informal and non-formal education organisations and other external stakeholders (civil society, industries, etc.), which have a role with regard to employability, community-building and citizenship, strongly linked to the education system.
- These valorisation activities become the basis of research or action research that supports and strengthens the implementation of innovative education developments and tests the quality of the systemic impact.

2.8. Strengthening the cooperation dimension in education

European projects and networks play a major role in promoting cooperation in education, at European and international level.

- European networks are well informed about all the possibilities of enhancing and developing cooperation in education, at European level, and are aware of all relevant European documents and publications on this topic. Members of collaborative learning networks develop a strong and extensive knowledge of different education systems across Europe and inform one another on key developments or changes taking place within their education systems.
- The partners are well informed about recent research in education and share these resources with one another.
- The cooperation results in more cross-fertilisation among European projects and networks, in a multiplier effect at the level of the valorisation of outcomes and products and in facilitating European benchmarking exercises.
- Network and projects as collaborative learning environments strongly promote mobility of staff (teaching staff, administrative and technical staff, counselling staff, international office staff, etc.) and students (both student mobility for studies and student mobility with professional purposes in companies). The partners of the collaborative learning communities see to it that within staff mobility, peer teaching and peer assessment are promoted. These environments are excellent opportunities to set up peer review systems involving staff from several institutions.
- By promoting European cooperation and mobility at the level of staff and students, networks and projects strengthen European citizenship in parallel with national citizenship, also enhancing local, regional, national and international community-building.
- European collaborative learning environments open up to institutions and colleagues in developing countries. The transfer of systemic knowledge and expertise proves to be beneficial for all those involved.
- These networks also contribute to promoting understanding, preservation and promotion of both cultural heritage and diversity, to maintain and enrich community, common values and identity.

2.9. Investing in finding the adequate and appropriate resources to sustain the work

Networks as effective European collaborative learning environments need different types of resources to run their everyday activities: investment of time by the partners, support when it comes to communication or dissemination, financial support (direct or indirect), etc.

- European networks or projects consider the motivation, interest and expertise of the partners as key resources. Their work and activities contribute to improving the quality of learning and teaching in the school system.
- The networks have extensive knowledge of all programmes and funding opportunities and need to be able to assess the most suitable programmes based on their scope, objectives, area of intervention, etc. To apply for funding, the networks have defined a clear-cut project with concrete outcomes and deliverables.
- Beyond the funding for a specific initiative, the partners reflect from the very beginning on how the collaborative network can be made sustainable in the long run.
- Appropriate dissemination and valorisation plans enable the national or regional authorities to be aware of the impact of such networks and possibly to make resources available (in various forms).
- Partners use various forms of cooperation such as on-line virtual meetings and exchanges to maintain the activities of the network.
- European Continuous Professional Development courses on the topic of European networks as collaborative learning environments are organised as a way to develop their sustainability.

2.10. Evaluating their activities internally and externally

European networks or projects evaluate their activities, outcomes and impact on the beneficiaries on a regular basis, with particular attention to collaborative activities.

- This evaluation is as much as possible formative (process-oriented) but also includes summative elements (result-oriented).
- Collaborative learning environments or networks implement both external and internal evaluation or self-evaluation activities. Both external and internal evaluation are agreed upon by all partners before the European project starts.
- Collaborative learning projects or networks heavily invest in documenting how they implement collaboration. Networks critically and reflectively describe their activities, focusing on both failures and successes. In other words, collaborative networks establish systems to capture and share learning within the network and beyond.
- Evaluation is grounded in and linked to the results of research on evaluation methodologies, focusing on the ones that have proven to be efficient and effective.
- The findings of an evaluation (external or internal) are compared with the results of research on similar topics or themes.
- Evaluation is the starting point for research activities parallel to and subsequent to European project activities.
- The external evaluation is done by a 'critical friend' who is part of another collaborative learning environment or network, with expertise in the same area. This is part of a structured cooperation between two or more collaborative networks working on similar or related topics. Cross-evaluation between similar collaborative learning environments is possible, in which one partner of one of the networks becomes the external evaluator of the other network and vice versa, aiming at very strong cross-evaluation and cross-fertilisation of both networks.
- European benchmarking is achieved through one European project comparing itself with another or to several other European projects. When a project chooses as an element of external evaluation a European benchmarking initiative involving a comparison with several similar or related activities, the external evaluation takes the form of a peer review by representatives of several projects.
- The internal evaluation is both formative and summative and takes different forms. Internal evaluation takes the form of peer assessment by which one partner involved in one Work Package (WP) assesses the quality of the work and activities of other partners involved in other WPs and vice versa. Collaborative learning networks are unique opportunities to put peer assessment into practice at various levels.

Annex 1. Key elements of the six research studies or reports referenced

Extract from “Essential features of effective networks in education”¹⁵

Eight essential features of effective networks in education are identified in this document.

1. Focusing on ambitious student learning outcomes linked to effective pedagogy;
2. Developing strong relationships of trust and internal accountability;
3. Continuously improving practice and systems through cycles of collaborative inquiry;
4. Using deliberate leadership and skilled facilitation within flat power structures;
5. Frequently interacting and learning inwards;
6. Connecting outwards to learn from others;
7. Forming new partnership among students, teachers, families, and communities;
8. Securing adequate resources to sustain the work.

Requirements for a collaborative learning community in “Schools as collaborative learning communities”¹⁶

According to Carole Cooper and Julie Boyd a collaborative learning community has:

- Shared vision and outcomes for students
- An open, trusting, caring culture that is manifested through stories, rituals, traditions as well as futuristic thinking and consistent community-building
- Procedures for acknowledging participation and contribution of members
- Supportive structures and policies to implement the vision and facilitate change
- A flexible design for change and for implementing research-based innovations
- Procedures for continual assessment and evaluation of school successes and failures
- Shared leadership that develops responsibility in all members of the community
- Opportunities for sustained professional development and collaborative reflective practices
- Time to work together to support change and learning
- Meaningful ways to work together and increase collegiality
- Communication procedures to allow for knowledgeable participation, conflict resolution, valuing difference, and cross-gender, cross-cultural, cross-generational dialogue
- Authentic partnerships expanding the network and increasing opportunities to learn
- Opportunities for learning in and with the wider community
- Classroom / school environments where all care about one another and help one another learn
- Curricular content and learning opportunities that help students to construct meaning and to take responsibility for their own learning
- Effective teaching and learning strategies motivating students, addressing various learning styles that promote lifelong processes, skills, attitudes and knowledge of learning
- Assessment procedures that continuously measure students' ability to use knowledge in various contexts, using various assessment methods and assessors, including self-assessment
- Practices in classrooms and throughout the school community that are aligned to a core philosophy and to the principles of living systems.

¹⁵ Santiago Rincón-Gallardo, Michael Fullan, op. cit.

¹⁶ Carole Cooper, Julie Boyd, op. cit.

Characteristics of the school as a learning organisation in the 2017 OECD Working Paper “What makes a school a learning organisation”¹⁷

The paper provides an in-depth analysis of the learning organisation literature in general, and within a school context. It identifies and operationalises the characteristics of the school as a learning organisation in an integrated model that consists of seven overarching ‘action-oriented’ dimensions.

1. Developing and sharing a vision centred on the learning of all students;
2. Creating and supporting continuous learning opportunities for all staff;
3. Promoting team learning and collaboration among staff;
4. Establishing a culture of inquiry, innovation and exploration;
5. Establishing embedded systems for collecting and exchanging knowledge and learning;
6. Learning with and from the external environment and larger learning system;
7. Modelling and growing learning leadership.

The dimensions and underlying key characteristics are intended to provide practical guidance on how schools can transform themselves into a learning organisation and ultimately enhance student outcomes.

The nine Guiding Principles of the 2017 EU report “Teachers and school leaders in schools as learning organisations”¹⁸

The nine Guiding Principles on policies to support teachers and school leaders in schools as learning organisations are outlined below.

- **EDUCATION AS A LEARNING SYSTEM:** Education should be an inclusive learning system with a key role for teachers and school leaders.
- **COHERENCE OF POLICIES:** Policy makers should aim to achieve coherence across the system, aligning different policies directly affecting teachers and school leaders and embedding them in wider school policies, to serve the ultimate objective of ensuring high quality education for all learners.
- **SHARED VISION AND UNDERSTANDING:** Shared vision and understanding, which consider national, regional and local perspectives and priorities on school policy, give direction to the work of schools as learning organisations and to the systems by which they are supported.
- **SETTING EXPECTATIONS:** Clear expectations for the engagement of teachers and school leaders, that can be set through frameworks, such as standards, competence frameworks and curricula, help define roles within learning organisations.
- **SCHOOL LEADERS AND TEACHERS SHAPING LEARNING SYSTEMS:** Schools leaders and teachers should be acknowledged and respected for their expertise and their contribution to developing the education system at different levels.
- **PROFESSIONAL CULTURE:** Education systems can help schools develop professional working and learning cultures that motivate teachers and school leaders.
- **RESEARCH, REFLECTIVE PRACTICE AND ENQUIRY:** Policies should support a culture of research, reflective practice and enquiry-based learning at school.
- **PROFESSIONAL COMPETENCES, CAPACITY AND AUTONOMY:** Teachers and school leaders should be supported in their professional development, autonomy and growth in a continuum spanning all phases of their careers.
- **LEADERSHIP COMPETENCE:** Systems should provide opportunities for school leaders and teachers to develop leadership competences that support them in strategic thinking and planning.

¹⁷ Marco Kools, Louise Stoll, op. cit.

¹⁸ European Commission, op. cit.

The seven dimensions of a learning organisation in “The Construct of the Learning Organization: Dimensions, Measurement, and Validation”¹⁹

The seven interdependent dimensions concurring to become a learning organization are structured in two categories: people and structural level.

The first four dimensions are at ‘people’ level:

- Create continuous learning opportunities.
- Promote inquiry and dialogue.
- Encourage collaboration and team learning.
- Empower people toward a collective vision.

The following three dimensions are at ‘structural level’:

- Connect the organization to its environment.
- Establish systems to capture and share learning.
- Provide strategic leadership for learning.

The seven action-oriented dimensions should contribute, according to Yang, Marsick and Watkin, to:

- Gaining organizational knowledge
- Increasing organization financial performance

The last two elements are particularly important for European networks as they will be key elements to enhance sustainability at content level and at financial level.

Key aspects from “An International Perspective on Teaching and Learning”²⁰

The OECD TALIS report of 2014²¹ mentions that most teachers still work in isolation. More than half of teachers report team-teaching with colleagues very rarely or never, and two-thirds have never observed their colleagues teach.

However, teachers who work with their colleagues and participate in collaborative professional learning at least five times a year report greater self-efficacy according to the TALIS study (OECD, 2014). The OECD study refers to Cordingly et al. (2003) who indicated that collaborative professional development has a positive impact on teachers’ range of teaching practices and instructional strategies and adapts them to their students’ needs, which in turn leads to better student learning processes, motivation and outcomes. Teachers having participated in collaborative CPD also have greater self-esteem and self-efficacy according to the same authors.

The teachers surveyed in TALIS and who participated in collaborative learning (CPD, team-teaching, etc.) at least five times a year also reported greater job-satisfaction in almost all countries.

¹⁹ Baiyin Yang, Karen E. Watkins, Victoria J. Marsick, op. cit.

²⁰ OECD (2014), op. cit.

²¹ OECD (2014), op. cit.