

Teachers as collaborative professionals

A survey of the views of ATL members
written and researched by Dick Weindling



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FOREWORD	4
About the author	5
Acknowledgments	5
SUMMARY	6
INTRODUCTION	7
Background and context	7
Methodology	9
RESULTS OVERVIEW	10
Working collaboratively with other people	10
Responses received from primary teachers	10
Responses received from secondary teachers	10
The extent of collaborative working	11
Responses received from primary teachers	11
Responses received from secondary teachers	11
Teacher's views on what is needed to improve their collaborative work	11
Responses received from primary teachers	11
Responses received from secondary teachers	11
The perceived impact of working collaboratively	12
Teacher's suggestions about collaborative working	12
DETAILED ANALYSIS OF EACH QUESTION	14
CONCLUSIONS	20
REFERENCES	22
APPENDIX	24
SAMPLE QUESTIONNAIRE	25

The Association of Teachers and Lecturers (ATL) welcomes this exploration, by Dick Weindling, of members' views on collaboration. Working collaboratively underpins many of the changes that are taking place in today's education system. Workforce remodeling is bringing more adults into schools to support children's learning, and there is an increasing focus on collaborative professional development, mentoring and coaching. Collaboration between schools is being promoted through networked learning and Education Improvement Partnerships. *Every Child Matters*, and the development of extended schools, will need multi-professional collaboration (DfES, 2004b).

The needs of children and young people cannot be met by schools and teachers working alone. Complex needs require collaborative solutions. But there is more to collaborative professionalism than bringing together a range of professionals to support children, important though that is. ATL believes that the *collective intellectual power of the teaching force should be recognised as a major national asset and utilised to create a more vibrant education system, one which is more attractive and therefore more successful for learners.* (New Professionalism, ATL 2005)

This is not new. We have known for years that the best teaching and the best learning happen where professionals work, learn and reflect together. What is new is the focus from policymakers on collaborative professionalism. As with many new government initiatives, the apparent simplicity of the proposals belies the complexity of the practice and conflicts with other policy priorities. Collaboration is difficult in a climate that encourages competition between schools. And developing sustained collaboration takes time, a commodity which is still in short supply for teachers.

Policymakers should be heartened that teachers support the aims of collaborative professionalism. Although teachers in our survey raise a number of concerns, they also offer suggestions for improving collaboration. For many of the changes in the education system to work, policymakers and politicians must face up to the challenges raised in this research.

Dr Mary Bousted

ATL General Secretary



About the Author

Dick Weindling is an educational researcher and Director of Create Consultants. He was previously a Principal Research Officer at the National Foundation for Educational Research where he conducted research at both national and local levels. Recent projects were entitled: *Leadership Development in Practice: Trends and Innovations* and *Innovation in Headteacher Induction*, both for the National College for School Leadership (NCSL). Other projects have included an evaluation of the Doncaster mentoring project and an evaluation of the London Leadership Strategy, produced jointly for the NCSL and the Department for Education and Skills. With Professor Ray Bolam, he is currently undertaking a project jointly commissioned by the General Teaching Council (England) and ATL to evaluate the policy implications of 15 projects on teachers' continuing professional development.

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- Teachers were generally open to working with a range of professional groups.
- Both primary and secondary teachers were most keen to work with teachers in their school, teachers in other schools and parents.
- Primary teachers also wanted to work with social work, health and childcare professionals.
- Secondary teachers were naturally more likely to want to work with youth services, local business and industry.
- Teachers claimed to work collaboratively with colleagues in their school. This was particularly so for female primary teachers.
- It was not common to work collaboratively with teachers in other schools. About one quarter of secondary teachers and approximately one in eight primary teachers said they did not work with teachers from other schools at present.
- It was also not common to work with other professionals.
- The major obstacle to collaborative work was the lack of time.
- To overcome this obstacle teachers wanted more administrative support, more classroom assistants, and less classroom contact time.
- Other suggestions included: better use of INSET days; cluster meetings for groups of local primary schools; subject based groups for secondary teachers across the local education authority (LEA); and the use of the internet for networking.
- Teachers were more interested in joint training with other professionals, than training in how to work with other adults.

This report provides the results of a survey of ATL members which examined their attitudes to and opinions on collaboration. The first section looks at the background and previous work in this area. This is followed by an outline of the methodology used. The results are presented in two ways: mean scores on a five-point scale are first used to provide an overview, which is then followed by a detailed distribution of teachers' views for each item in the survey. Statistical results are shown for the differences between groups, particularly primary and secondary teachers, which proved to be the main explanatory variable. A short conclusion is given at the end of the report, while an appendix shows the complete questionnaire and further details of the sample of teachers.

Background and context


The terms collaboration, collegiality and congeniality have all been used to describe how teachers work with their colleagues and various other groups. Collaboration also appears in the literature on teacher professionalism.

However, teacher collaboration is not that common. Some 30 years ago Dan Lortie (1975), in his classic study of American teachers, characterised schools as 'egg crates' which kept teachers apart so that they predominantly worked in isolation. Later, the importance of collaboration was linked to school effectiveness and school reform. Judith Warren Little (1982) conducted research beginning in the 1980s which showed the benefits of teachers working together collegially. Similarly, Susan Rosenholtz (1989) described schools in which teachers worked collaboratively, sharing ideas and solutions to problems and sharing learning about their educational practice. Importantly, she found that these collaborative schools correlated with higher levels of student achievement. But these schools were not the norm.

In this country, detailed case studies by Jennifer Nias, Geoff Southworth and Robin Yeomans (1989) examined the importance of collaboration for the staff in five primary schools. In a very influential article in 1994 David Hargreaves argued for a 'new professionalism' for teachers which called for new forms of relationships with colleagues, other professionals, parents and students. These needed to be closer, more intense and collaborative. Pam Sammons, Sally Thomas and Peter Mortimore (1997) showed the importance of the links between departments in their large-scale study of secondary school effectiveness.

Working in Australia, Bill Mulford and his colleagues (Salins *et al* 1998) used a survey of 2,000 teachers and principals to show that a 'collaborative climate' was one of the factors linked to higher student achievement in secondary schools.

Andy Hargreaves (2000) provided an interesting overview and suggested that there had been four ages of teacher professionalism. He traced the changes in America and England and called the historical phases: pre-professional, autonomous, collegial and post-professional. He dated the




collegial phase, which involves working collaboratively, from the mid-1980s in the United States.

The majority of work on collaboration has looked at how teachers could work with other teachers in their own school. Working with teachers in other schools is even more difficult as the following quotation from Michael Fullan makes clear:

It is one of life's great ironies: schools are in the business of teaching and learning, yet they are terrible at learning from each other. If they ever discover how to do this, their future is assured (Fullan, 2001 p92).

Many of the Government's recent policy initiatives are underpinned by an assumption that, both now and in the future, teachers will need to work more collaboratively, not only within and across schools, but with people from other occupational groups. This is already the case in the early years sector where, for example, the Sure Start initiative has been underway since 1998. However, expectations regarding collaboration both between educational institutions and with professionals other than teachers are not confined to early years settings. An emphasis on partnership and collaborative working is a theme underpinning the *Five Year Strategy for Children and Learners*, published by the Department for Education and Skills (DfES, 2004a), and networks and collaboration are very much at the heart of the Government's *Every Child Matters* agenda (DfES, 2004b). The specialist school system, intended by policymakers to 'transform' secondary education, depends in part for its success on individual schools working more collaboratively with other schools in the secondary sector (DfES, 2003b). The final report of the Working Group on 14–19 reform (DfES, 2004c) proposed a unified framework for 14–19 learning, with closer links between schools, colleges and employers, and with teachers, lecturers and trainers working more collaboratively. More recently, the Government's White Paper, *14–19 Education and Skills* (DfES, 2005) re-affirmed this expectation. The announcement by the Government in March 2005 that it expected all secondary schools to join Education Improvement Partnerships by 2007 was a significant step in altering the balance between collaboration and independence.

A development designed to bring about collaboration across education, health and social services was the 'full service extended school'. These schools have received additional funding as part of the Government's response to the report on the tragic death of Victoria Climbié, which found that individuals and agencies across the system were not working together well enough. *Schools Out*, a report by John Craig (2004), said there were 106 extended schools in operation, which received additional funding to provide 'childcare, health and social care, study support, lifelong learning, family learning, parenting support, access to ICT and sports and arts facilities'. The Government has since pledged £680 million up to 2008, to develop extended schools, and has made a commitment to providing extended services for all children by 2010 (DfES, 2005b). A review of the



literature on extended schools was conducted by the National Foundation for Educational Research (Wilkin, White and Kinder, 2003). An evaluation of the DfES pathfinder projects was also published (Cummings, Dyson and Todd, 2004). There were over 200 schools in the 25 project local authorities funded in 2002–2003. The researchers found that extended schools impacted on pupils, families and communities in a range of ways and generated positive outcomes for these groups.

It was with this background that ATL decided to commission an independent survey to explore teachers' views of collaboration. ATL took the view that if collaboration was to underpin the new education policy agenda, it was essential to seek out the views of the practitioners who would be largely responsible for translating policy into practice on the ground. With growing concerns regarding the retention of teachers relatively new to the profession ATL focused on early career teachers for the purpose of this survey.

Methodology

From the ATL membership database, 1,000 teachers (500 primary and 500 secondary) registered as teaching in English schools, with up to ten years teaching experience, were sampled at random. A two-page questionnaire was sent out to those selected in January 2005. Most questions used a five-point Likert scale ranging from 'strongly agree' to 'strongly disagree' to obtain the teachers' views on a set of statements. An open-ended question was provided at the end of the survey for any suggestions they may have had for encouraging more collaborative professionalism. The last section of the questionnaire asked for basic background information regarding their length of service as a teacher and their present teaching status. The questionnaire is shown in the Appendix.

After one follow-up letter, 430 returns were received by the specified date, providing a 43 per cent response rate. Responses were received from 232 primary teachers (46.4 per cent response) and 198 secondary teachers (39.6 per cent response). Sampling theory indicates that approximately 280 returns would be required from the 1,000 teachers contacted in order to obtain a 95 per cent confidence interval. With 430 completed questionnaires we could therefore be reasonably certain that the results gave an accurate representation of the views of the 1,000 teachers, and, furthermore, reflected the views of those ATL members new to the teaching profession.

Approximately three quarters of the sample were women and one quarter were men. The large majority of the women who responded were located in primary schools (200) compared with 124 women in secondary schools. There were 29 men in the primary sector compared with 72 in the secondary. Just over half of those who responded were class teachers with no additional responsibilities. Full details of the sample are given in the Appendix.

To provide an overview of the data the mean scores for each question were used to gauge primary and secondary teachers' views on collaboration. The detailed distributions and the statistical tests are provided in a later section.

Working collaboratively with other people

The first question asked was: 'To do my job as a teacher more effectively I need to work closely with' and 10 options describing different groups of people were provided. Teachers indicated the strength of their agreement for each group. The following table shows the results in rank order of the mean scores (the higher the score the more strongly they agreed).

Responses received from primary teachers

	Mean score	Rank order
Teachers in my school	4.77	1
Parents	4.52	2
Teachers in other schools	4.20	3
Social work professionals	3.96	4
Health professionals	3.94	5
Local community	3.85	6
Childcare professionals	3.85	6
Youth services	3.43	8
The police	3.34	9
Local business and industry	3.33	10

Responses received from secondary teachers

	Mean score	Rank order
Teachers in my school	4.73	1
Parents	4.36	2
Teachers in other schools	4.15	3
Youth services	3.60	4
Local business and industry	3.57	5
Social work professionals	3.48	6
Local community	3.45	7
The police	3.29	8
Childcare professionals	3.26	9
Health professionals	3.22	10

It is clear that most teachers principally wanted to work more collaboratively with teachers in their own school, then came parents and then teachers in other schools. These three groups were each given agreement ratings of over 4.00 and appeared in the same rank order for both primary and secondary teachers. However, the mean scores and rank order for the remaining groups of professionals were dependent on the age range of the pupils taught in the school. For example, the primary teachers gave higher agreement ratings to working collaboratively with social work and health professionals, the local community and childcare professionals; whilst the youth service, local business and industry were rated higher by secondary teachers.

The extent of collaborative working

We then asked teachers to indicate the extent to which they currently worked collaboratively. This time the five-point scale ranged from 1 = 'not at all' to 5 = 'to a large extent'.

Responses received from primary teachers

	Mean score	Rank order
Other colleagues in your own school	4.58	1
Professionals other than teachers	3.09	2
Teachers in other schools	2.92	3

Responses received from secondary teachers

	Mean score	Rank order
Other colleagues in your own school	4.22	1
Professionals other than teachers	2.43	2
Teachers in other schools	2.43	2

More primary teachers claimed to work collaboratively with colleagues in their own school than the secondary teachers did, although the mean scores for both groups were high. It is clear that working collaboratively with teachers in other schools is an uncommon practice amongst teachers, as is working with other professionals.

Teachers' views on what is needed to improve their collaborative work


Teachers were then asked for their views on how to improve collaborative working. The majority of teachers agreed that more administrative support, more classroom assistants, and less classroom contact time was needed in order to help them work collaboratively. A comparison of the mean scores shows that the need for additional classroom assistants was rated more highly by primary teachers, whilst reduced classroom contact received the highest rating from secondary teachers.

Responses received from primary teachers

	Mean score	Rank order
More administrative support	4.10	1
More classroom assistants	3.84	2
Less classroom contact time	3.71	3
Joint training with other professionals	3.48	4
Training in working with other adults	3.10	5

Responses received from secondary teachers

	Mean score	Rank order
More administrative support	4.08	1
Less classroom contact time	3.94	2
More classroom assistants	3.52	3
Joint training with other professionals	3.29	4
Training in working with other adults	2.93	5



There was less agreement about the need for joint training, although some teachers felt this would be valuable. Training to work with other adults was given the lowest rating.

The perceived impact of working collaboratively

The next question asked what they thought the impact of collaborative working would be. Both primary and secondary teachers believed that working collaboratively would improve their teaching, cause them to reflect on their professional practice and improve pupils' learning. These items were all given strong levels of agreement and all mean scores were over 4.00. As was often the case, the primary teachers gave higher ratings than the secondary teachers.

Teachers' suggestions about collaborative working

A selection of quotations from the questionnaires is given in this section to illustrate the points made by individual teachers. Not surprisingly, the most common response concerned the issue of the lack of time available to work collaboratively. Some teachers just wrote 'Time', or even 'Time, time, time' for this open-ended question.

Collaborative professionalism is impossible in the primary sector without more non-contact time. (Primary teacher with two years' experience)

A number of teachers were concerned that working in this way might take time away from their teaching. One teacher who thought she already worked with other professionals said:

We already work closely with other professionals – not sure we need to do more – without having a negative impact on teaching time in the classroom. (Primary teacher with three years' experience)


A frequent response from both primary and secondary teachers was the desire to be able to work more collaboratively with their colleagues in the same school. A secondary teacher made a plea just to be able to talk with colleagues in other departments.

There is never an occasion at my school to sit and chat with teachers from other departments. I would like to see more communication between departments. (Secondary teacher with five years' experience)

Many people suggested that INSET days could be used for more collaboration. This was mentioned in terms of colleagues within their school, and also for collaboration with teachers from other schools and other professionals.

For primary schools the value of local area cluster groups was raised several times. The secondary teachers favoured meetings of subject teachers within the LEA.

I have recently been on twilight sessions with other history teachers in the



LEA (organised by the LEA inspector). Excellent resource sharing and ideas on good practice in areas such as revision, assessment, use of resources, ICT etc. All excellent stuff. (Secondary teacher with two years' experience)

Several teachers also suggested various forms of internet use to encourage collaboration.

I am currently a member of an online discussion group for all members of my PGCE class. We keep in contact and exchange ideas and offer help. (Secondary teacher with one year's experience)

A website discussion forum. Perhaps teachers from each school could publicise a particular strength of theirs. (Secondary teacher with three years' experience)

An example of the value of an existing partnership scheme was mentioned by one teacher:

I am the Creative Partnership Coordinator (an Arts Council project) for my school and I spend a lot of time either with or organising artists to come into the school. The benefits of this partnership need to be more widely addressed so that everybody knows about it. (Secondary teacher with five years' experience)

A few teachers who already work with other professionals expressed the following concerns:

As a Special Educational Needs (SEN) teacher I have to work closely with parents, colleagues and other agencies. However, multi-agency work is hard because of a lack of communication, funding and knowledge. (Secondary teacher with five years' experience)

Having had to try to contact and speak to a social worker this term I have found it impossible. The only access to a phone is at lunch or after school and social workers are very stressed people. Likewise support services such as speech therapists (if we had one locally). I don't know how you could work closer together if you can't speak to each other. (Primary teacher with five years' experience)

I would like the opportunity of having more time with professionals such as educational psychologists (EP) to help with the teaching of SEN children. At present our school is allocated two mornings per term with the EP for a school with 420 pupils – not enough! (Primary teacher with three years' experience)

A small number of teachers made it clear that they did not want to work collaboratively with other professionals.

I do not think that we need to work more collaboratively with anyone. My job is to teach children not to spend time in endless meetings discussing the children. (Primary teacher with five years' experience)

Detailed analysis of each question

Each of the following tables gives the ratings of the primary and secondary teachers as percentages, together with the five-point scale mean score, which shows the overall strength of their agreement with the statement (the higher the score the more they agree).

Statistical tests (chi-square and t-tests) were carried out to examine the differences between the primary and secondary teachers. By convention, a statistically significant difference is said to occur if the probability is less than 0.05 (five per cent). This indicates the result was likely to occur by chance less than one in 20 times. A highly significant result exists where the probability was 0.00.

Significant differences are highlighted where these occurred.

Q1. To do my job as a teacher more effectively I need to work closely with:

Parents

	STRONGLY AGREE	AGREE	DON'T KNOW	DISAGREE	STRONGLY DISAGREE	MEAN
Primary	58.0	37.7	2.6	1.7	0.0	4.52
Secondary	48.2	45.2	1.5	4.1	1.0	4.36

School type differences are not significant

The results show that the large majority of teachers agreed that they need to work closely with parents. More primary teachers strongly agreed with the statement, but the difference is not statistically significant.

The local community

	STRONGLY AGREE	AGREE	DON'T KNOW	DISAGREE	STRONGLY DISAGREE	MEAN
Primary	10.0	71.3	12.6	5.7	0.4	3.85
Secondary	5.1	49.7	30.3	14.4	0.5	3.45

Chi-square 0.00 Highly significant

For this item most teachers tended to agree, rather than strongly agree, that they needed to work with the local community. The difference was highly significant, with primary teachers showing a stronger level of agreement than the secondary teachers, of whom 30 per cent said they did not know, and 15 per cent said they disagreed.

Social work professionals

	STRONGLY AGREE	AGREE	DON'T KNOW	DISAGREE	STRONGLY DISAGREE	MEAN
Primary	21.6	59.1	13.4	6.0	0.0	3.96
Secondary	6.1	53.8	22.8	16.8	0.5	3.48

Chi-square 0.00 Highly significant

The large majority of primary teachers (over 80 per cent) agreed or strongly agreed that they needed to work with social work professionals. This compared with an approximate 60 per cent agreement from the secondary teachers, and showed a highly significant statistical difference.

Health professionals

	STRONGLY AGREE	AGREE	DON'T KNOW	DISAGREE	STRONGLY DISAGREE	MEAN
Primary	17.2	64.2	13.8	4.7	0.0	3.94
Secondary	5.6	33.3	39.4	20.7	1.0	3.22

Chi-square 0.00 Highly significant

The results for working with health professionals were similar to those for the social work professionals. The results indicate that primary teachers are much more likely to agree that they need to work with health professionals than secondary teachers – although nearly 40 per cent of secondary teachers responded that they did not know.

The police

	STRONGLY AGREE	AGREE	DON'T KNOW	DISAGREE	STRONGLY DISAGREE	MEAN
Primary	6.1	42.8	30.1	20.5	0.4	3.34
Secondary	4.6	42.1	32.5	19.8	1.0	3.29

School type differences are not significant

The primary and secondary patterns were very similar regarding closer working ties with the police. Whilst just under 50 per cent agreed, approximately 20 per cent responded that they disagreed and 30 per cent responded that they did not know.

Local business and industry

	STRONGLY AGREE	AGREE	DON'T KNOW	DISAGREE	STRONGLY DISAGREE	MEAN
Primary	5.2	42.7	33.2	17.7	1.3	3.33
Secondary	12.6	49.0	23.2	13.1	2.0	3.57

Chi-square 0.01 Significant difference

A greater proportion of secondary teachers, compared with primary staff, agreed or strongly agreed that they need to work closely with local business and industry. This was the only item resulting in a statistically significant difference in favour of secondary teachers, which is to be expected as their students prepare for employment.

Childcare professionals

	STRONGLY AGREE	AGREE	DON'T KNOW	DISAGREE	STRONGLY DISAGREE	MEAN
Primary	18.6	55.0	19.0	7.4	0.0	3.85
Secondary	4.1	41.1	32.5	21.8	0.5	3.26

Chi-square 0.00 Highly significant

Once again a higher number of the primary teachers (almost three-quarters) responded that they would welcome closer collaboration with childcare professionals. The percentage of the primary sector who strongly agreed was considerably larger than in the secondary sector, and the difference was highly significant. This can obviously be explained by the age difference of the children.

Youth services

	STRONGLY AGREE	AGREE	DON'T KNOW	DISAGREE	STRONGLY DISAGREE	MEAN
Primary	8.7	40.3	36.8	13.9	0.4	3.43
Secondary	10.6	52.0	24.7	12.1	0.5	3.60

School type differences are not significant

Although a higher percentage of secondary teachers (over 60 per cent) compared with 49 per cent of primary teachers said they needed to work with the youth service, the difference is not statistically significant.

Q2. To do my job as a teacher more effectively I also need to work closely with:

Teachers in other schools

	STRONGLY AGREE	AGREE	DON'T KNOW	DISAGREE	STRONGLY DISAGREE	MEAN
Primary	32.9	58.4	4.3	4.3	0.0	4.20
Secondary	32.8	55.1	6.1	6.1	0.0	4.15

School type differences are not significant

The pattern of responses by school sector is very similar, with approximately 90 per cent of teachers in agreement that they need to work closely with teachers from other schools.

Other teachers in my school

	STRONGLY AGREE	AGREE	DON'T KNOW	DISAGREE	STRONGLY DISAGREE	MEAN
Primary	78.8	20.3	0.0	0.9	0.0	4.77
Secondary	75.3	23.7	0.5	0.0	0.5	4.73

School type differences are not significant

This question showed the highest mean scores (4.77 and 4.73).

Overwhelmingly, both primary and secondary school teachers expressed a strong need to work closely with teachers in their own school.

The following questions gauge the extent to which teachers felt they currently worked collaboratively with three groups: other colleagues in their school; teachers in other schools; and other professionals.

Q3. To what extent do you already work collaboratively with:

Other colleagues in your own school

	LARGE EXTENT	SOME EXTENT	DON'T KNOW	LIMITED EXTENT	NOT AT ALL	MEAN
Primary	63.2	34.2	0.4	2.2	0.0	4.58
Secondary	40.4	50.5	0.5	8.1	0.5	4.22

Chi-square 0.00 Highly significant

The results of this question show an interesting difference between teachers' perceptions. The mean scores for both groups were high, indicating that both groups considered that they did work collaboratively; however, significantly more primary teachers said that they worked collaboratively to 'a large extent' when compared with those in secondary

schools. Further analysis of the responses received from the primary teachers showed a gender difference in that female primary teachers had a higher level of statistical significance for working collaboratively with colleagues in their school than male primary teachers. There was, however, no difference observed between male and female secondary teachers.

Teachers in other schools

	LARGE EXTENT	SOME EXTENT	DON'T KNOW	LIMITED EXTENT	NOT AT ALL	MEAN
Primary	0.9	50.6	1.3	33.8	13.5	2.92
Secondary	1.5	29.8	4.5	38.9	25.3	2.43

Chi-square 0.00 Highly significant

Once again this question revealed an interesting pattern of responses. Firstly, the mean scores, which were below 3.00, indicated that the amount of collaborative work currently undertaken with teachers from other schools was limited. Secondly, the differences between the school sectors were highly significant: approximately 50 per cent of primary and approximately 30 per cent of secondary teachers indicated some collaborative work across schools. This contrasted with 25 per cent of secondary teachers and 13.5 per cent of primary teachers who said that they do not work collaboratively with teachers from other schools at all.

Female primary teachers had a statistically significant higher level of collaborative work with teachers from other schools.

Professionals other than teachers

	LARGE EXTENT	SOME EXTENT	DON'T KNOW	LIMITED EXTENT	NOT AT ALL	MEAN
Primary	5.2	47.4	6.9	32.3	8.2	3.09
Secondary	4.5	25.8	3.5	40.9	25.3	2.43

Chi-square 0.00 Highly significant

It is surprising that the results of working with professionals other than teachers demonstrated similar mean scores to working with teachers from other schools. It was again the female primary teachers who had a higher level of statistical significance with regard to collaborative work with other professionals.

Q4. Working more collaboratively will:

Improve pupils' learning in school

	STRONGLY AGREE	AGREE	DON'T KNOW	DISAGREE	STRONGLY DISAGREE	MEAN
Primary	45.2	46.3	6.9	1.3	0.4	4.34
Secondary	36.4	48.0	13.6	1.5	0.5	4.18

School type differences are not significant

There were high mean scores for this question, with the large majority of teachers (91 per cent primary and 84 per cent secondary) believing that working collaboratively would improve pupils' learning.

Improve my teaching

	STRONGLY AGREE	AGREE	DON'T KNOW	DISAGREE	STRONGLY DISAGREE	MEAN
Primary	51.9	42.0	4.8	0.9	0.4	4.44
Secondary	42.4	49.5	5.1	2.0	1.0	4.30

School type differences are not significant

The results show that the majority of teachers felt that working collaboratively would improve their own teaching, with over 50 per cent of the primary teachers expressing strong agreement.

Cause me to reflect on my professional practice

	STRONGLY AGREE	AGREE	DON'T KNOW	DISAGREE	STRONGLY DISAGREE	MEAN
Primary	51.3	42.6	3.5	2.6	0.0	4.43
Secondary	37.4	50.0	7.6	4.0	1.0	4.19

Chi-square 0.02 Significant difference

These findings are similar to the results of the previous question and show across the board agreement that many teachers believe collaborative working would prompt them to reflect on their own professional practice. There is, however, a statistically significant difference between the school sectors as primary teachers responded with higher levels of agreement.

The next set of questions asked teachers which factors would assist their collaborative work.

Q5. To improve my work as a collaborative professional I need:

Less classroom contact time

	STRONGLY AGREE	AGREE	DON'T KNOW	DISAGREE	STRONGLY DISAGREE	MEAN
Primary	30.9	35.2	14.3	13.5	6.1	3.71
Secondary	36.4	39.4	8.6	13.6	2.0	3.94

School type differences are not significant

Approximately one third of teachers strongly agreed and one third agreed that they would require less classroom contact in order to improve their work as a collaborative professional. Primary teachers were more reluctant than secondary teachers to opt for less classroom contact, although the differences were not significant.

More classroom assistants

	STRONGLY AGREE	AGREE	DON'T KNOW	DISAGREE	STRONGLY DISAGREE	MEAN
Primary	37.2	32.9	7.8	20.8	1.3	3.84
Secondary	21.0	37.9	14.4	25.1	1.5	3.52

Chi-square 0.04 Significant difference

A significant difference was found between primary and secondary teachers regarding the issue of more classroom assistants, with a larger number of primary teachers responding that they strongly agreed that there

should be more. However, it is interesting to note that approximately one fifth of primary teachers and one quarter of secondary teachers did not want more classroom assistants. This question appears to have prompted a polarised response.

More administrative support

	STRONGLY AGREE	AGREE	DON'T KNOW	DISAGREE	STRONGLY DISAGREE	MEAN
Primary	36.4	46.8	7.8	8.7	0.4	4.10
Secondary	34.8	48.0	7.6	9.6	0.0	4.08

School type differences are not significant

With high mean scores it is clear that a large percentage of teachers wanted more administrative support, although there were a high number who stated that they didn't know.

Training in working with other adults

	STRONGLY AGREE	AGREE	DON'T KNOW	DISAGREE	STRONGLY DISAGREE	MEAN
Primary	10.4	28.7	23.5	34.8	2.6	3.10
Secondary	9.6	21.3	26.9	37.1	5.1	2.93

School type differences are not significant

The teachers were evenly divided in their views concerning the need for training in working with other adults.

Joint training with people from other professions

	STRONGLY AGREE	AGREE	DON'T KNOW	DISAGREE	STRONGLY DISAGREE	MEAN
Primary	11.3	41.6	32.9	12.6	1.7	3.48
Secondary	12.1	30.8	34.3	19.2	3.5	3.29

School type differences are not significant

Over 50 per cent of primary teachers and 43 per cent of secondary teachers supported joint training, although 14 per cent of primary and 23 per cent of secondary teachers disagreed, and thirty per cent of both primary and secondary teachers replied that they did not know.

This survey has demonstrated that many teachers do not currently work collaboratively with teachers from other schools, or with other professionals. Approximately half of primary teachers and one third of secondary teachers replied that they worked with teachers from other schools and other professionals. However, over 90 per cent of both primary and secondary teachers reported that they currently worked collaboratively with colleagues in their own school. Female primary teachers seem to work most collaboratively.

The majority of teachers replied that they would be open to the concept of collaborative working, with particular focus on increased collaboration with teachers in their own school, teachers from other schools and parents. The age of the pupils further determined which other groups of professionals they wanted to work with.

Teachers strongly believed that increased collaborative working would prompt them to reflect on their own practice, improve their teaching and improve student learning.

Teachers were more interested in joint training with other professionals than training in how to work with other adults.

The main obstacle to collaborative working was viewed as lack of time. The ways of overcoming this were seen to be by more administrative support, more classroom assistants and less classroom contact time.

Less classroom contact time will be a statutory requirement when Planning, Preparation and Assessment (PPA) time is introduced by the Government in September 2005. The principles underpinning the allocation and use of guaranteed PPA time state that:


The amount of guaranteed PPA time should be set as a minimum of at least 10 per cent of a teacher's timetabled teaching time. Only teaching time within a teacher's 1,265 contracted hours counts for these purposes, not other forms of pupil contact. (Workforce Agreement Monitoring Group (WAMG), 2005).

Guidance produced for schools by WAMG (op cit) states that:

Guaranteed PPA time must be used for planning, preparation and assessment ... It is for the teacher to determine the particular PPA priorities for each block of guaranteed PPA time, although that does not preclude them from choosing to use some of the time to support collaborative activities.

So it will be for teachers together to decide how much of this time to devote to collaborative work.

The Teacher Training Agency (to be the Training and Development Agency for Schools from September 2005) now has responsibility for all Continuing Professional Development. This could provide a good




opportunity to re-examine how the five days of INSET may be used to offer more collaborative work with teachers in the school, across schools, and with other professionals.

The notion of extended schools is also to be welcomed, as it appears to be one way to bring the various agencies together and it will be interesting to see how this progresses.

This survey of ATL members shows that most of these early career teachers would welcome the opportunity to work more collaboratively. They see great benefits from this type of work, both for themselves and their pupils. If greater collaboration is to work successfully, and in the best interests of children and young people, the Government and its agencies, in partnership with local authorities and schools, will need to look more critically and more realistically at the time factor involved in collaboration. Collaborative work is not cost neutral; it takes time, expertise and commitment. It is therefore essential that the cost of collaboration, both in terms of time and other related resources, should be factored in to any policy initiatives whose success depends in part or in whole on greater collaboration.

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A total of 430 teachers from the 1,000 who were sent questionnaires responded, providing a response rate of 43 per cent. The following tables show their gender, the school type, and their positions of responsibility. A copy of the questionnaire is also attached.

School type and gender

	PRIMARY		SECONDARY		TOTAL	
	n	%	n	%	n	%
Male	29	28.7	72	71.3	101	23.8
Female	200	61.7	124	38.3	324	76.2
Totals	229	53.9	196	46.1	425	

Missing data 5 (3 primary and 2 secondary)

Additional responsibilities

	n	%
None	220	51.2
Position of responsibility	124	28.8
Head of dept/year/section	53	12.3
AST	1	0.2
Assistant head	2	0.5
Deputy head	1	0.2

As the leading education union, the Association of Teachers and Lecturers (ATL) promotes and protects the interests of its members – teachers, lecturers, support staff and other education professionals. ATL advances the debate and champions good practice, across the whole education sector. ATL campaigns and negotiates to achieve better pay, working conditions and terms of employment for its members.

We are a TUC affiliated trade union with over 160,000 members in pre-schools, schools and colleges throughout England, Wales, Northern Ireland, the Channel Islands and the Isle of Man.

ATL SURVEY OF TEACHERS AS COLLABORATIVE PROFESSIONALS

We need 10 minutes of your time.

We have designed this questionnaire so that you can complete it in ten minutes.

The information you provide is anonymous and we do not need your name or that of your school.

Government policy says that teachers should work more collaboratively with other professionals. We want to know your views.

For each of the following statements please circle the number which best represents the strength of your agreement or disagreement on the five-point scale.

1. To do my job as a teacher more effectively I need to work closely with:

	STRONGLY AGREE	AGREE	DON'T KNOW	DISAGREE	STRONGLY DISAGREE
Parents	5	4	3	2	1
The local community	5	4	3	2	1
Social work professionals	5	4	3	2	1
Health professionals	5	4	3	2	1
The police	5	4	3	2	1
Local business and industry	5	4	3	2	1
Childcare professionals	5	4	3	2	1
Youth services	5	4	3	2	1

2. To do my job as a teacher more effectively I also need to work closely with:

	STRONGLY AGREE	AGREE	DON'T KNOW	DISAGREE	STRONGLY DISAGREE
Teachers in other schools	5	4	3	2	1
Other teachers in my school	5	4	3	2	1

3. To what extent do you already work collaboratively with other colleagues:

	LARGE EXTENT	SOME EXTENT	DON'T KNOW	LIMITED EXTENT	NOT AT ALL
In your own school	5	4	3	2	1
Teachers in other schools	5	4	3	2	1
Professionals other than teachers	5	4	3	2	1

4. Working more collaboratively will:

	STRONGLY AGREE	AGREE	DON'T KNOW	DISAGREE	STRONGLY DISAGREE
Improve pupils' learning in school	5	4	3	2	1
Improve my teaching	5	4	3	2	1
Cause me to reflect on my professional practice	5	4	3	2	1

5. To improve my work as a collaborative professional I need:

	STRONGLY AGREE	AGREE	DON'T KNOW	DISAGREE	STRONGLY DISAGREE
Less classroom contact time	5	4	3	2	1
More classroom assistants	5	4	3	2	1
More administrative support	5	4	3	2	1
Training in working with other adults	5	4	3	2	1
Joint training with people from other professions	5	4	3	2	1

6. What other suggestions do you have to encourage more collaborative professionalism within your own school, with colleagues outside your school and/or with other professionals?

7. Background information:

Sex: (please circle) Male Female

For how many years have you taught?
Please round up to the nearest full year:

Type of school: (please circle) Primary Secondary

Are you a class teacher? (please circle) Yes No

Are you a supply teacher? (please circle) Yes No

Do you have other responsibilities? (please circle)

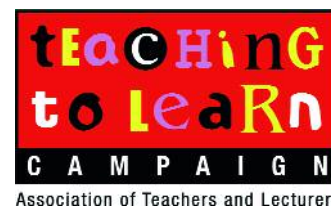
Post/s of responsibility Head of year, department or section

Advanced skills teacher Assistant head Deputy head

Other (please state):

Thank you for your help in this important survey of teachers' views. Please return it to Julie Coverdale, Education Policy & Research Department, in the pre-paid envelope provided, no later than **Friday 18 March 2005**.

TEACHING TO LEARN CAMPAIGN – a great success, a great achievement



WHAT WAS ATL'S TEACHING TO LEARN CAMPAIGN AND WHAT WERE ITS AIMS?

The Teaching to Learn campaign aimed to put learning back at the heart of education policy and shift the debate about schools and schooling away from targets, tests and league tables, and towards learning and the learner.

WHAT DID THE CAMPAIGN ACHIEVE?

ATL's 11 specially commissioned reports and several events have continued to provoke debate on the subject. Additionally, government education policy has begun to change in ways which reflect the aims of the campaign:

- teacher assessment at Key Stage 1 has gained greater importance
- the publication of the Primary National Strategy has begun to focus on the importance of breadth and depth in the curriculum
- the 14–19 White Paper casts doubt on the future of assessment for this age group.

WHAT NOW FOR ATL?

With the Government under pressure on assessment, particularly within the 'Tomlinson agenda', ATL will continue:

- to call for an end to relentless testing,
- to seek recognition that learning is not just for meeting targets and
- to insist that teachers are given the freedom to enthuse and inspire learners.

Work undertaken during the Teaching to Learn campaign will now lead on to projects which will address the future of the curriculum and accountability across the education system.

JOIN THE DEBATE

To order any of our titles or for a full list of ATL publications, call ATL Despatch on 0845 4500 009 quoting the appropriate order code or visit www.atl.org.uk to order online.

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Association of Teachers and Lecturers 2005

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Working collaboratively underpins many of the changes that are taking place in today's education system. We have known for years that the best teaching and the best learning happen where professionals work, learn and reflect together. What is new is the focus from policymakers on collaborative professionalism. Workforce remodeling has brought more adults into schools to support children's learning, and there is an increasing focus on collaborative professional development, mentoring and coaching. The needs of children and young people cannot be met by schools and teachers working alone; complex needs require collaborative solutions. However, as with many new government initiatives, the apparent simplicity of the proposals belies the complexity of the practice, and conflicts with other policy priorities. In *Collaborative Professionals* Dick Weindling explores ATL members' views on collaboration: who teachers view as a priority for collaborative working, and the factors that influence this, along with their concerns and suggestions for improving collaboration.

ASSOCIATION OF TEACHERS AND LECTURERS, 7 NORTHUMBERLAND STREET, LONDON WC2N 5RD

Tel 020 7930 6441 Fax 020 7930 1359 e-mail info@atl.org.uk website www.atl.org.uk

Publications despatch line: 0845 4500 009