



University  
of Glasgow | Robert Owen Centre  
for Educational Change

# Building a Networked Learning System: *leadership, collaboration and networking*

26<sup>th</sup> May 2023

Professor Chris Chapman







# Agenda

- Building a Networked Learning System: A rationale
- Building a Networked Learning System: Principles and practice
- Building a Networked Learning System: Implications for leadership, collaboration and networking

# A rationale for collaboration and networking

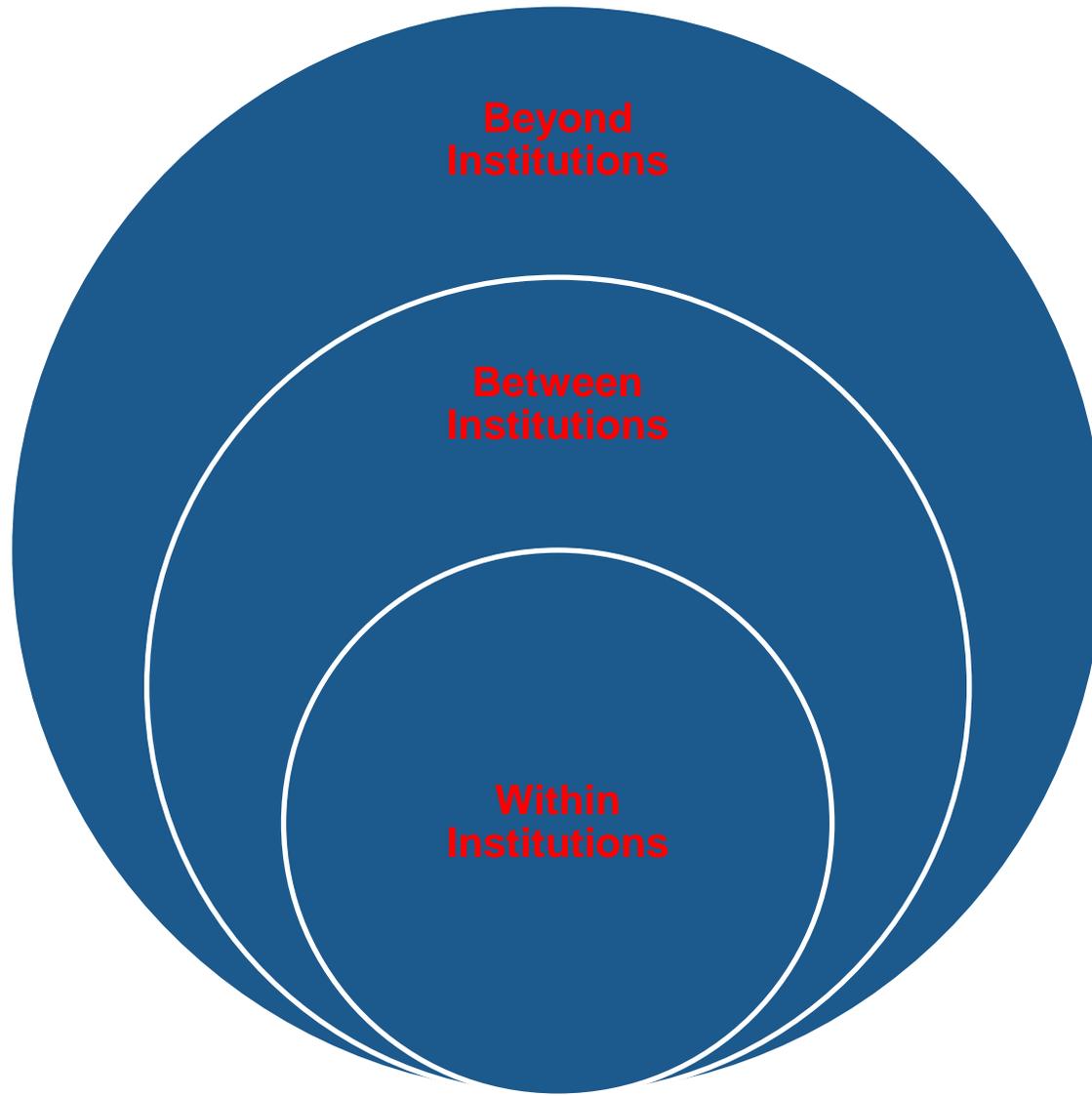
- Organisations and systems have untapped capacity to improve themselves
- Moving knowledge, ideas and expertise around within, between and beyond organisations is key to untapping potential
- Evidence and inquiry can be used to bring a critical edge to these new arrangements
- Action has to be focused on specific curriculum-related issues, adapted to and owned by local context
- Some co-ordination of effort is needed to optimise impact
- To do this effectively requires moving beyond traditional notions of leadership, collaboration and networking

## And then the pandemic...

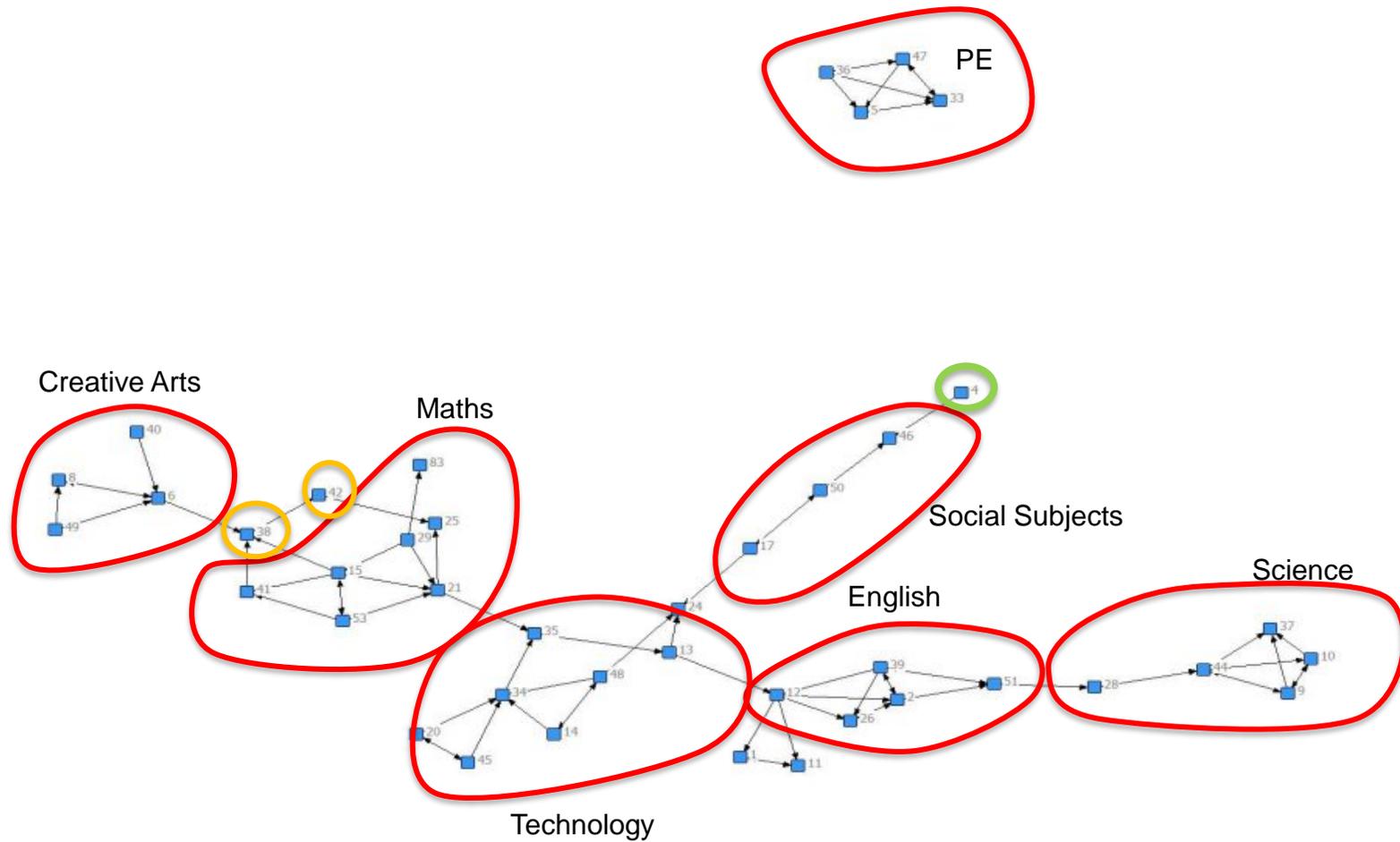
- The pandemic stress tested education systems at every level...
- Current arrangements have been found wanting
- This reenforces the imperative for **new** ways of working and **new** forms of leadership to support collaboration and networking
- And climate change and AI...
- Paradigm shift required



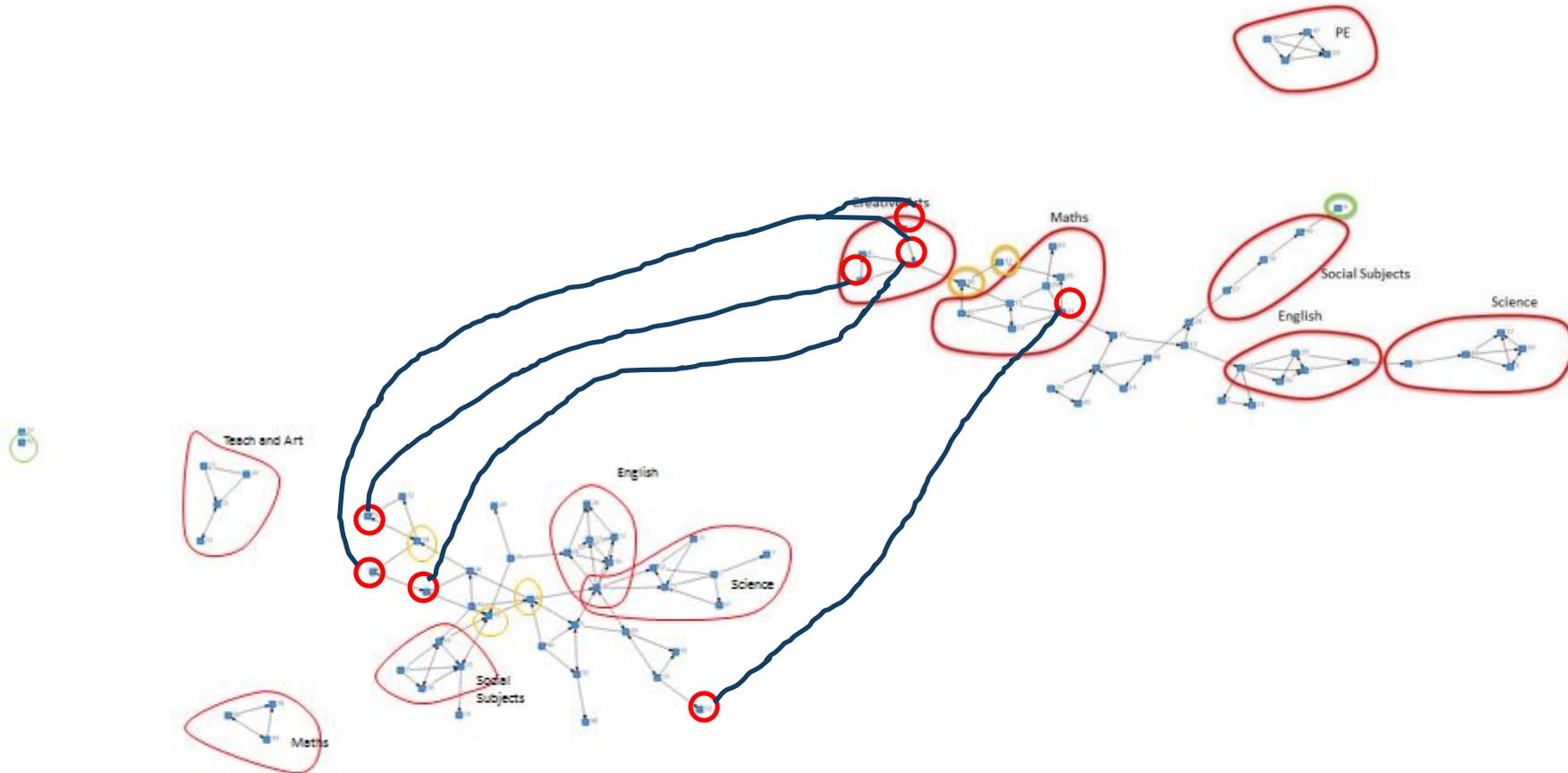
# Crossing boundaries



# Within institution collaboration



# Between institution collaboration

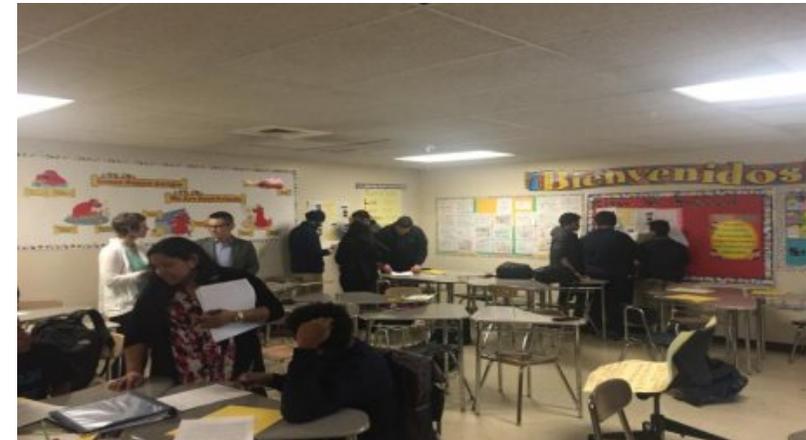




# What is a Networked Learning System (NLS)?

## A research-practice partnership that:

(a) is connected through networks across different types of boundaries. These may be physical (eg. classroom, organisational, geographical) and/or professional (eg. phase, sector, curricula)



and

(b) is driven by design-based research and collaborative inquiry to innovate, test and refine practice and to build leadership capacity through practice-based professional learning.

## What does *Networked Learning* look like?

- Learning occurs through authentic collaboration and networking- Learning is primarily a social process- ***Relational trust and cohesion***
- Everyone has something to learn- ***Reciprocity and respect***
- Learning is outcome focussed- ***Innovation and improvement***
- Learning occurs at all levels- ***A systems perspective***
- Learning is underpinned by systematic collaborative inquiry- ***Evidence-based decision-making***

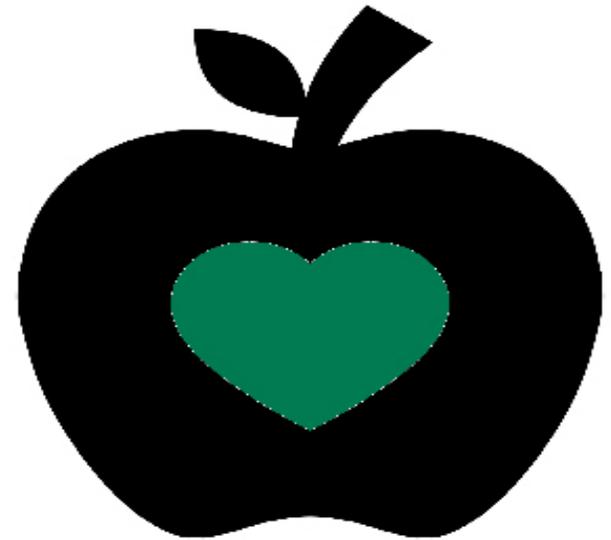
*And*

- Learning takes a critical and action-orientated stance- ***Solutions-focused***

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**EVERY DUNDEE  
LEARNER  
EMATTERS**

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Working on this agenda for 30 years with:

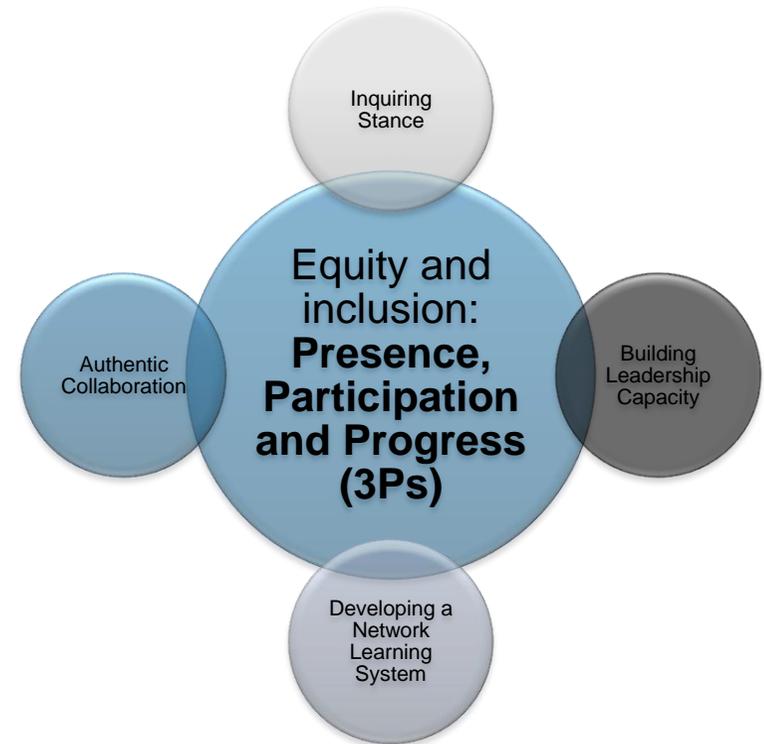
- Large urban schools
- Small rural schools
- Early years/primary and/or secondary schools
- Small/large networks
- Diverse systems

# What is EDLM and why matters?

## Guiding vision

- High performing system that find effective ways of ensuring the progress of all pupils, specially those from disadvantaged background
- The system is driven collectively by school leaders and practitioners taking share responsibility
- There is expertise in the schools, their communities and stakeholders. ----> moving knowledge around.
- The strategy involves developmental and research activities to generate evidence relevant to other contexts

## Conceptual framework



# EDLM Conceptual Framework

How can a system change strategy support the development of a more equitable education system?



## INQUIRING STANCE

- Collaborative learning
- Systematic cycles of inquiry
- Collaborative knowledge production
- Increased knowledge mobilization*



## BUILDING LEADERSHIP CAPACITY

- Informal leadership opportunities
- Formal leadership opportunities
- Enhancing leadership practices
- Increased capacity across all levels of the system*



## FOCUSING ON EQUITY AND INCLUSION

- Inquiry cycles are developed with a specific focus on students' Presence, Participation, and/or Progress



## AUTHENTIC COLLABORATION

- New interactions and relationships
- New ways of thinking
- New ways or working [roles, responsibilities]
- The emergence of new structures and processes*



## DEVELOPING A NETWORK LEARNING SYSTEM

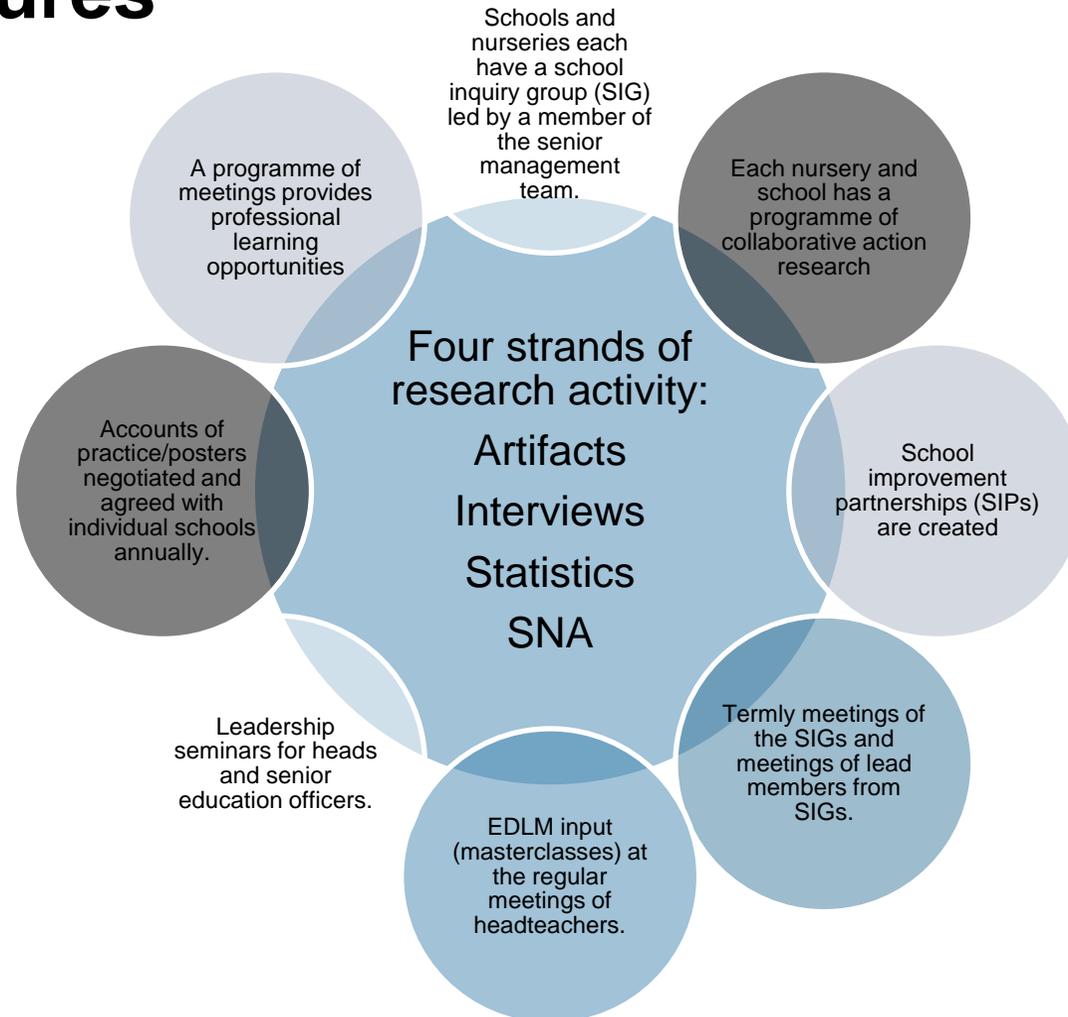
- Increased collaborative agency
- Strengthening social and professional capital
- Enhanced system performance
- Improved outcomes for all learners*



The four core principles of DBIR are:

- 1. a focus on persistent problems of practice from multiple stakeholders' perspectives;***
- 2. a commitment to iterative, collaborative design;***
- 3. a concern with developing theory and knowledge related to both classroom learning and implementation through systematic inquiry; and***
- 4. a concern with developing capacity for sustaining change in systems.***

# Design Features

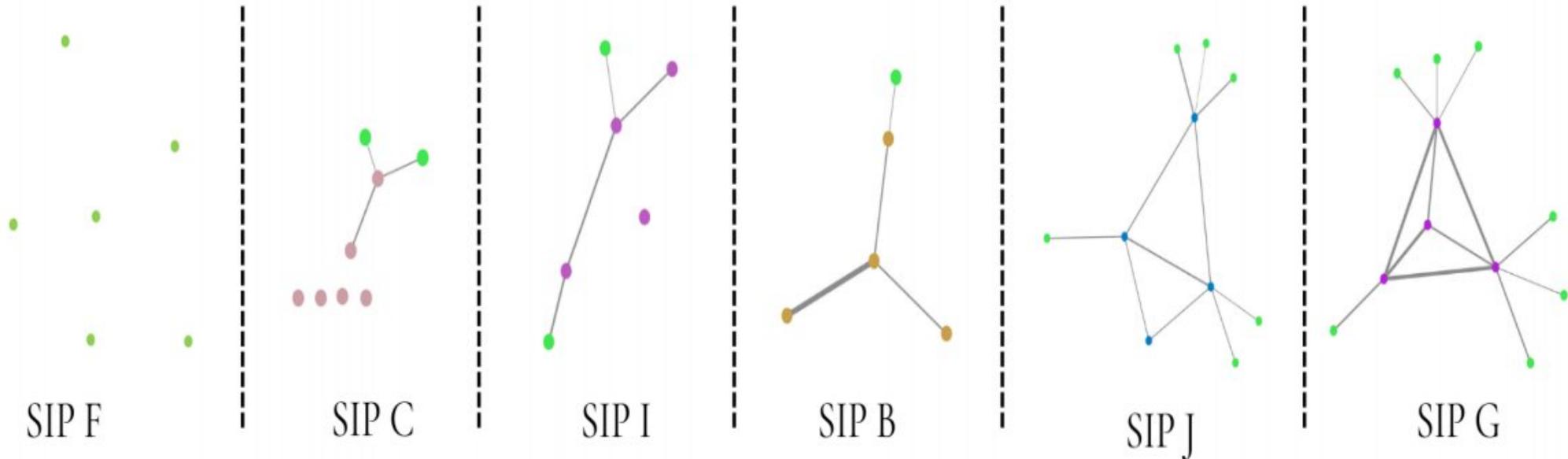


## Research Strategy

1. Very few tools to provide visual representations of Network Learning Systems or high performing systems and has the power to inform the focus of further research
2. Relatively new method that requires identifying individuals- can be perceived as sensitive but not personal or judgement-based. High response rate and ethics are key
3. Longitudinal- can track developments and progress over time

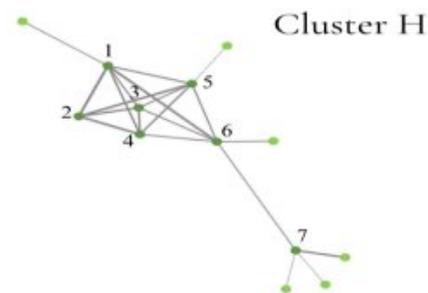
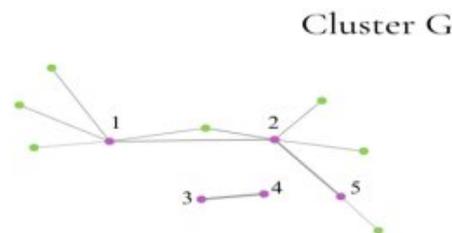
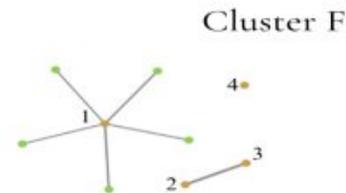
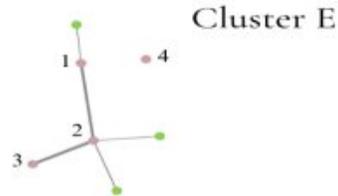
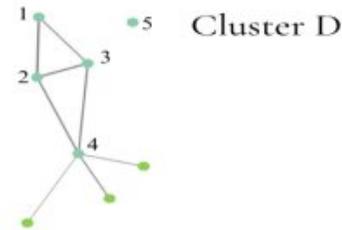
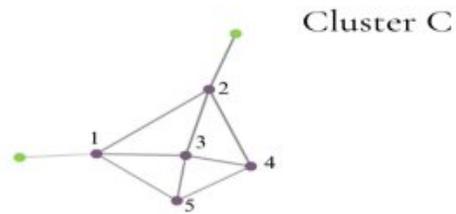
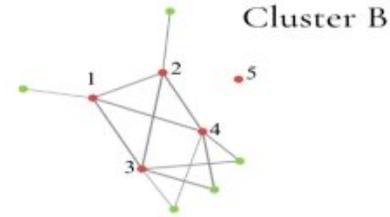
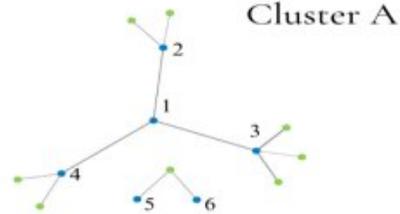
*“Select the names of other schools or other organisations within the City that you regularly turn to for support in thinking through a challenge or problem that arises as toy attempt to improve learning and teaching?”*

# Continuum of Relational Cohesion for School Improvement

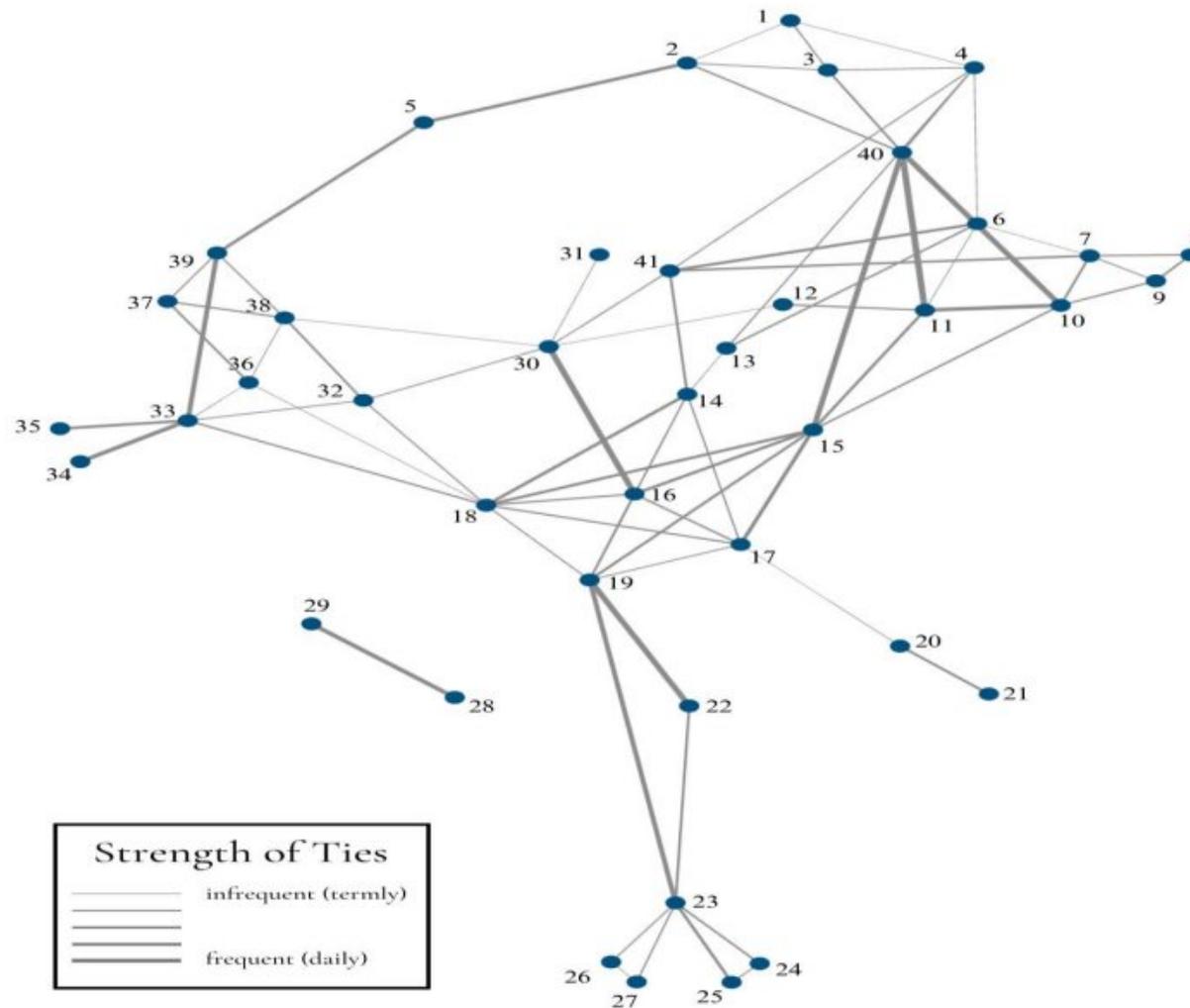




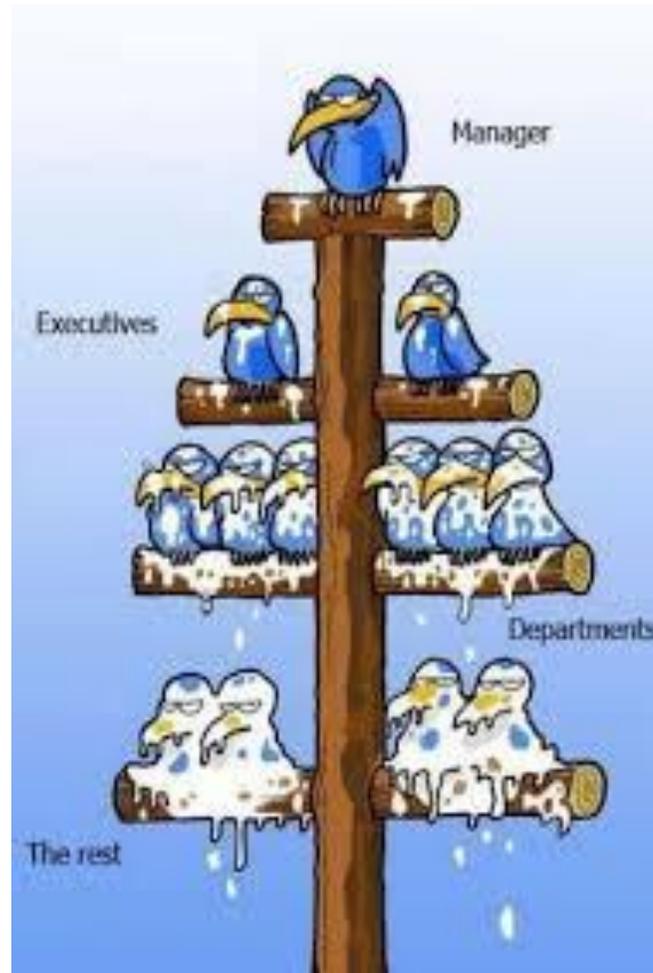
# Understanding the power of collaboration and networking



# Building a Networked Learning System



# Implications for leadership, collaboration and networking



- Skilled communicators
- Excellent networkers
- Strategic in orientation
- Contextually astute
- Problem solvers
- Self-managing



# Implications for leadership, collaboration and networking

**Collegiality-** Long term commitment to a shared enterprise underpinned by shared long-term vision and set of common values with a focus on sharing and developing new knowledge, resources and practice

**Collaboration-** more sustainable ways of working underpinned by a set of common values and commitment to share knowledge, resources and practice with some development of new practices

**Cooperation-** Short-term task focused activity around a specific issue incidental sharing of knowledge or resources on specific issues

**Association-** Traditional pattern of working with incidental meetings often initiated through a hierarchy. Very little or no sharing of knowledge or resources

**Illusion of association-** Passive buy-in as a ‘sleeping partner’

**Fabricated cooperation-** Pursue your own agenda often at the expense of others

**Collaboration with the ‘enemy’-** Engage to control damage limitation but often turns into collusion, become trapped by the discourse and taken in by it

**Contrived collegiality-** False public expression of values and belief systems, particularly prevalent where unequal power relationships

# Implications for building a Networked Learning System

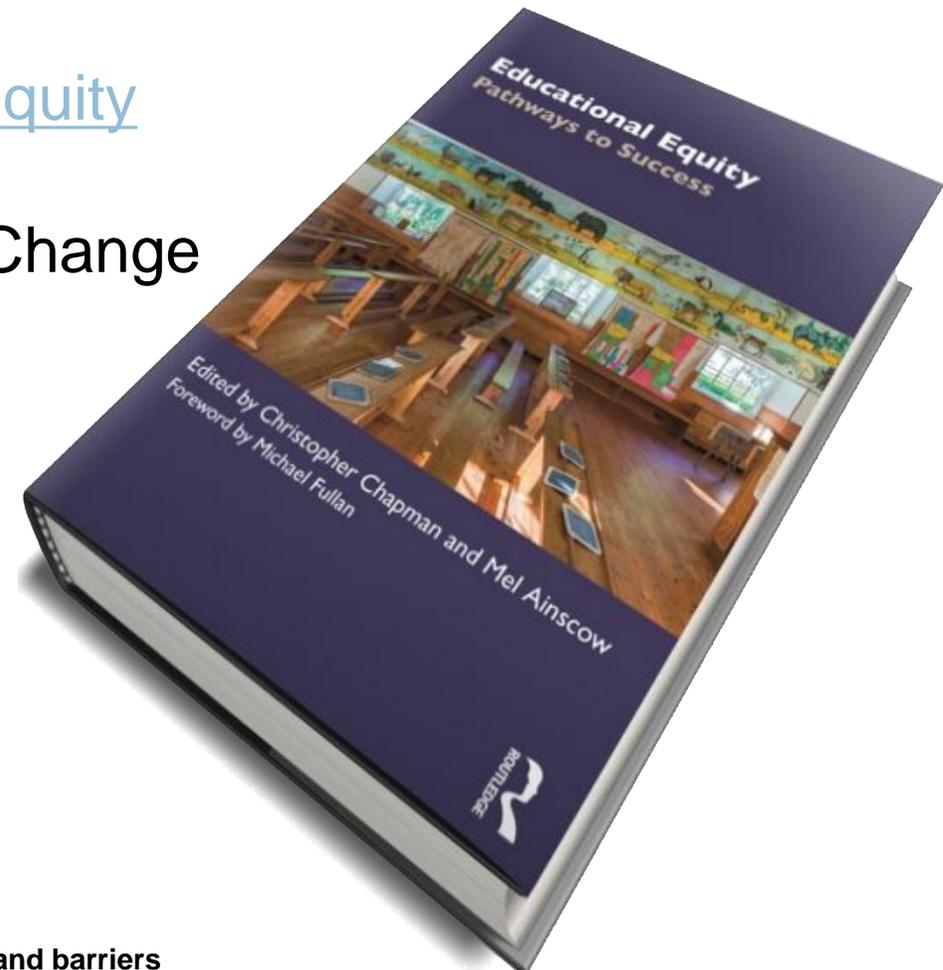
- Technically simple and socially complex
- Focus on relational trust and cohesion
- Leadership development and professional learning are not non-negotiable
- Evidence and inquiry to build knowledge and inform understanding and decision-making in all areas
- Invest in design features with temporary, flexible structures and processes
- An inquiring stance underpins sustainability of a Networked Learning system- Without this...

# Thank you

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[Network for Social and Educational Equity](#)

RobertOwen Centre for Educational Change



**BERJ**



**BERA**

BRITISH EDUCATIONAL RESEARCH ASSOCIATION

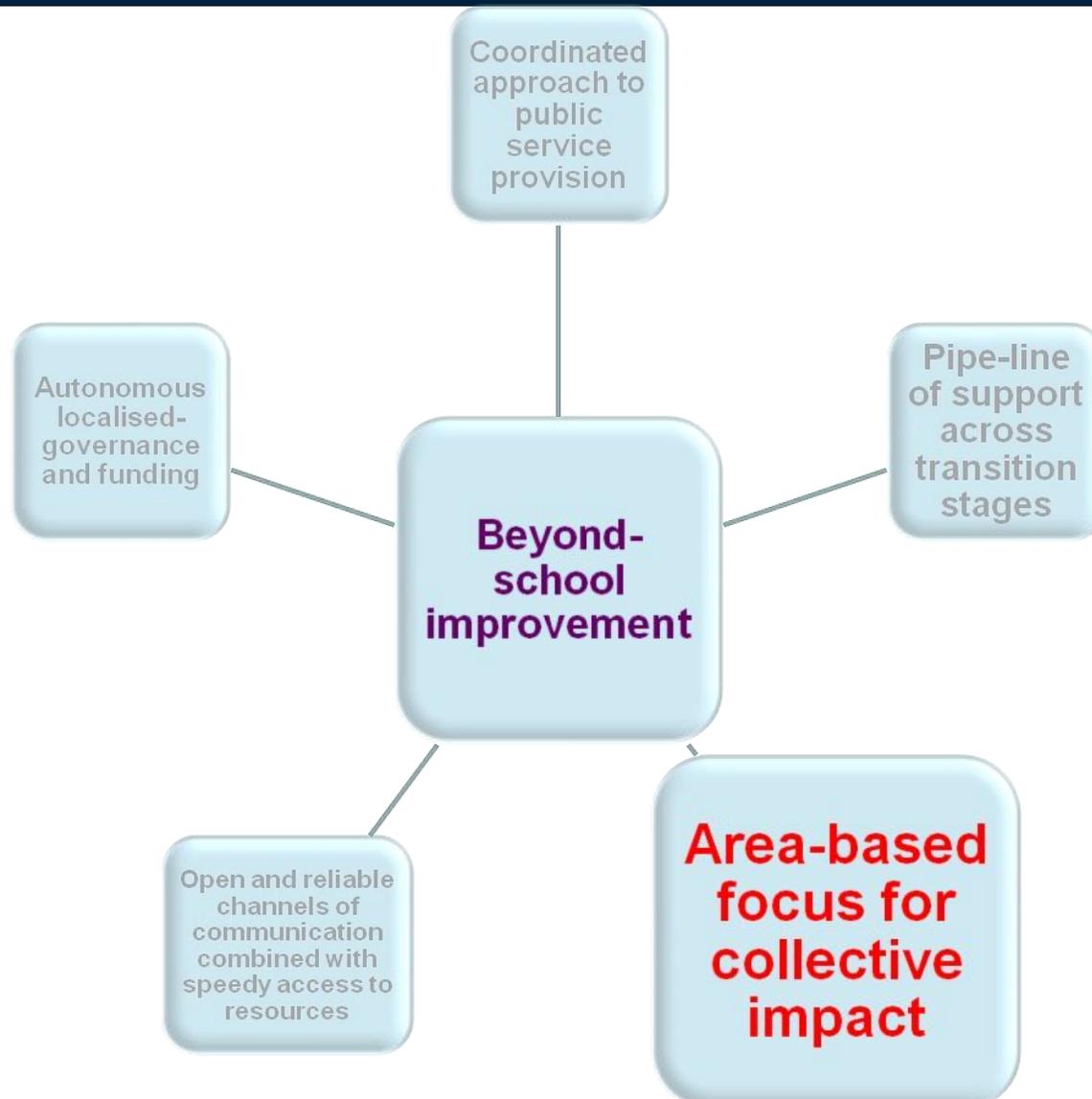
**British Educational Research Journal**

Vol. 45, No. 5, October 2019, pp. 899–917

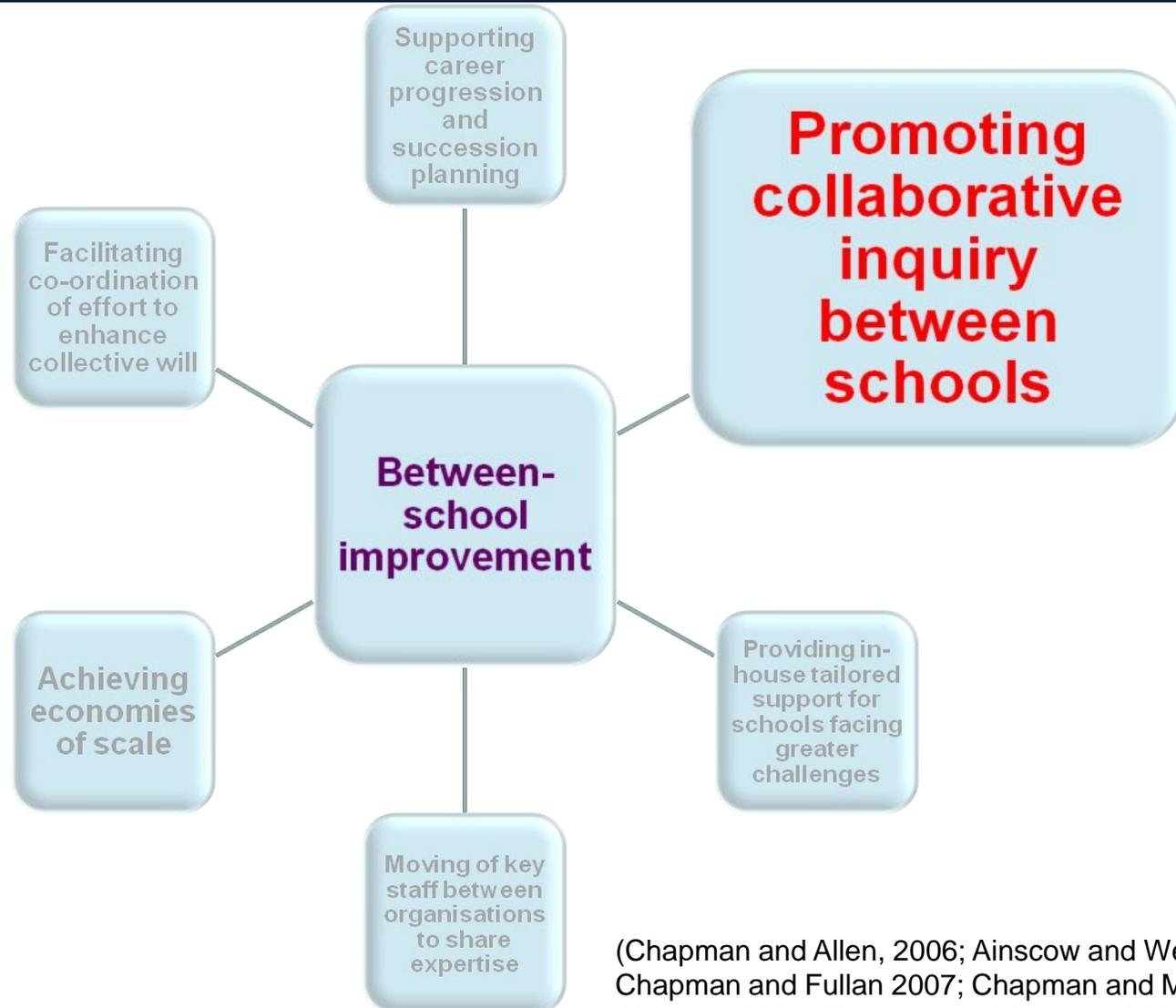
DOI: 10.1002/berj.3544

**Using research to promote equity within education systems: Possibilities and barriers**

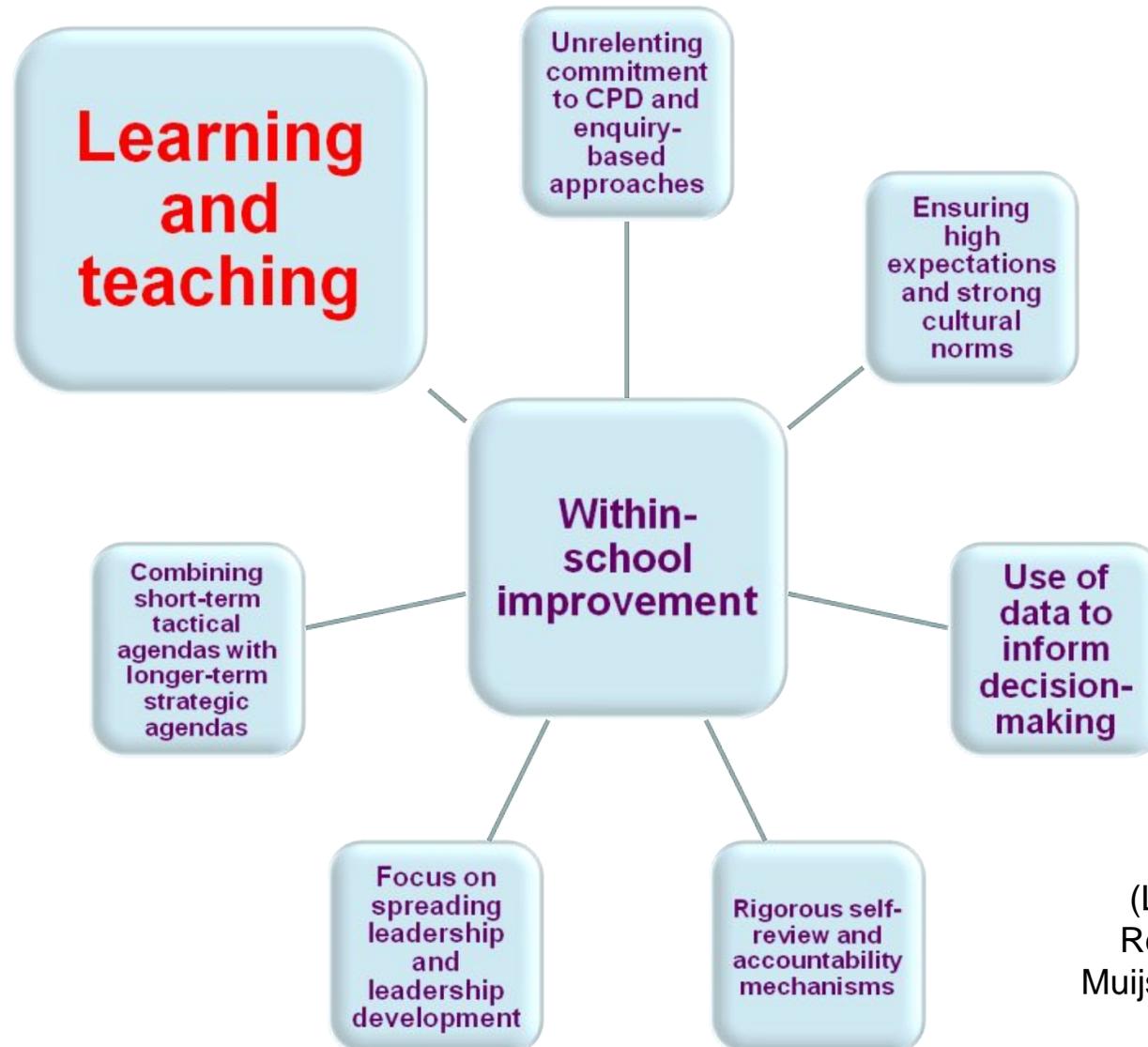
Christopher Chapman and Mel Ainscow University of Glasgow, UK



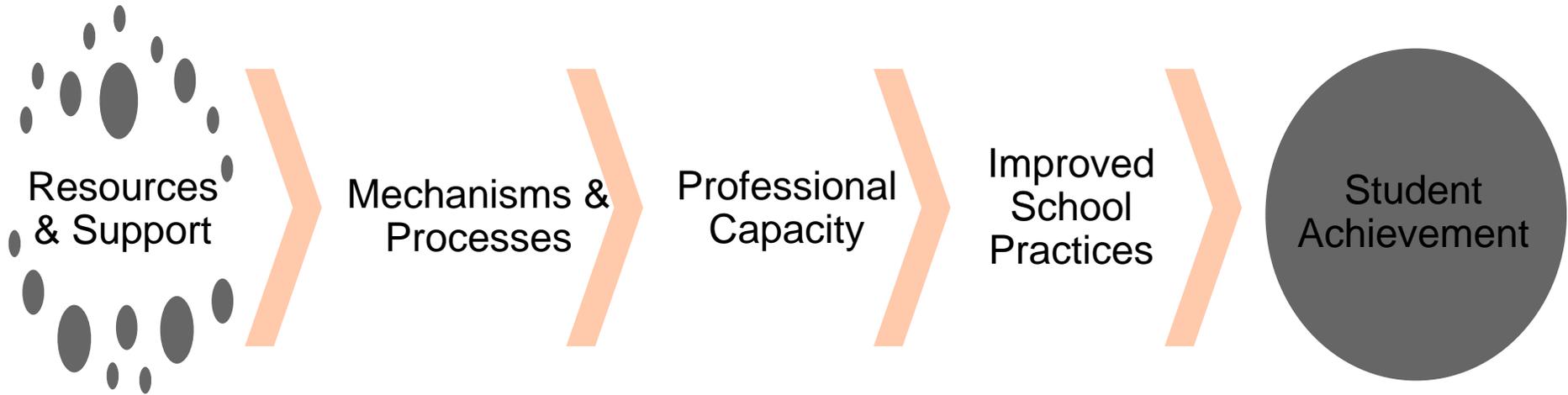
# Principles of between-school improvement



(Chapman and Allen, 2006; Ainscow and West, 2006; Chapman and Fullan 2007; Chapman and Muijs, 2014; Ainscow, 2015; Chapman and Ainscow 2022)



(Louis and Miles, 1985; Potter, Reynolds and Chapman, 2001; Muijs, Harris, Chapman, Stoll and Russ, 2004; Chapman 2006)



School networks  
Facilitation  
Time  
Funding  
Training

Needs analysis  
School team  
Inquiry process  
Inter-visitation  
responsibility  
Data

Adult learning  
Innovation  
Community  
Collective  
School structures  
New systems  
New arrangements

Instruction  
Curriculum  
Culture  
Behaviour

Millington, 2016

