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Community-University Interorganizational Collaboration: A Case Study of the Important
Factors for Success

by

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Abstract

This qualitative case study was an effort to determine the important factors involved in the success of a community-university collaboration. Specifically, the purpose of this research was 1) to describe, and 2) to explore and further develop existing theory regarding the key factors influencing successful collaboration. An inter-organizational collaboration to provide demonstration research in community development with seniors was studied for over two years. Data consisted of individual interviews with the organizational collaboration steering committee (the Elder Friendly Communities Program Collaboration), participant observation and transcripts of 18 monthly Elder Friendly Communities Program (EFCP) Collaboration meetings, six years of archived materials, Wilder Collaboration Factors Inventory comparison, and four member check meetings over the two year analysis period to check the accuracy of the emerging observations. Data were analyzed in the context of the factors determined by Mattessich, Murray-Close, and Monsey (2001) in the *Wilder Collaboration Factors Inventory*. Many of the Mattessich et al. (2001) factors for successful collaboration, and others identified in the literature, were evident. Two new factors were identified. Although many aspects of collaboration were inter-related, some factors appeared to be more important than others. The six themes emerging as more important for the Elder Friendly Communities Program case were (a) *established informal relationships and communication links*, (b) *mutual respect, understanding, and trust*, (c) *flexibility*, (d) *development of clear roles and policy guidelines*, (e) *shared leadership*, and (f) *a learning purpose*. These important factors related to relationships among collaboration members, and the process and values of the group. The Relational Framework of practice that is proposed by this author arose from this study's findings and is presented with a discussion of the implications for social work practice.

Research Outline

Chapter One Introduction	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Overview• Interorganizational collaboration background• Introduction of case
Chapter Two Literature Review	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Review of theoretical literature• Review of empirical literature• Response to the literature
Chapter Three Methodology	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Research approach• Case study research method• Research limitations
Chapter Four Findings	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Context findings• Main research question findings• Secondary questions findings
Chapter Five Discussion	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Comparison to previous literature and discussion of findings• Relational Framework proposed• Suggestions for further research

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Dedication

To my three sons, Josh, Murray, and Evan for your love and patience

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Epigraph

Without co-operation, individuals would have had greatly reduced chances for survival—indeed, it is questionable whether the human species would have survived at all without elaborate and steadily more complex forms of mutual support and reciprocal relationships.¹

“Collaboration is a mutually beneficial and well-defined relationship entered into by two or more organizations to achieve common goals.”²

¹ Emmanuel, J. & MacPherson, I. (Eds.) (2007). *Co-operatives and the pursuit of peace*. Victoria, B.C.: New Rochdale Press. P. 1.

² Mattessich, P., Murray-Close, M., & Monsey, B. (2001). *Collaboration: What makes it work* (2nd ed.). Saint Paul, MN: Amherst H. Wilder Foundation. P. 4.

Chapter One: Introduction

Intertext

Arriving before my research participants, I sit alone in room 801 and wait to observe the Elder Friendly Communities Program Steering Committee's collaborating world. As the meeting draws to a beginning, the 10 soft business chairs around the round table fill. I notice the welcoming sociability (in my experience rare in other groups) that bookends the beginning and end of these meetings. Talk is warm. People share their pleasure in re-connecting after a month. Joking and personal stories connect each participant to a cohesive and pleasurable group experience, based in trust and authenticity. The warmth binding the group continues as the Chairperson begins the formal meeting.

The meeting brings the room to its highest potential. A beautiful orchestration of leadership and group skill begins to play. Here is the monthly dimension of collaborative life, separated from program and practice by the walls of this room, unfolding flexibly—with roles being clarified, common language crafted, and leadership flowing among the members. Laughter resonates, learning is thoughtfully considered, and the agenda components are articulated clearly. Here is the manifestation of the participants' four years of reflective experience with the struggling pursuit of elusive vision. The room a vivid illustration of the dynamic process of this community-university collaborating group, with which I hold the title of Research Coordinator, and which forms the life of my PhD studies. I feel honoured to be in this position and trusted to understand this experience.

Introduction: Significance of Subject and Contextual Overview

The focus of this dissertation is interorganizational community-university collaboration in the field of social service community development. Descriptive qualitative case study research is used to explore the key factors influencing the success of one regional interorganizational university-community research consortium. The purpose of this research is first to describe, and second to examine and further develop existing theory regarding the key factors influencing successful collaboration.

This chapter will introduce the context for my study and introduce the specific case chosen for study. Some context in community collaboration will set the stage.

Collaboration Context

Interorganizational relationships have a growing role in all sectors of our society. Human service organizations, defined as “those organizations that assist in the growth and development of individuals and families” (Gilbelman, 2000, p. 114), are embarking on a new collaborative era of service provision. *Collaboration* can be defined as “exchanging information, altering activities, sharing resources and enhancing the capacity of another for mutual benefit and to achieve a common purpose” (Himmelman, 1996, p. 28).

The act of collaboration can be particularly useful when more than one organization is required to achieve a goal (Huxham, 1996). Specifically, interorganizational collaboration among human service organizations can be defined as “a mutually beneficial and well-defined relationship entered into by two or more organizations to achieve common goals” (Mattessich, Murray-Close, & Monsey, 2001).

Gardner adds that “Collaboration in public services implies much more, the ability of diverse individuals to agree, plan, resource and accomplish a medium or long-term goal on behalf of their agencies and service users” (p. 138).

Why Collaborate?

Historically, social service systems generally reflected a single organization focus, and failed to integrate organizations effectively at a larger system level. Over the past several decades, social service and health organizations have been increasingly viewed as *open systems* which respond to their environment and are expected to exchange and link to the other systems in their environment in an attempt to integrate service (Berman, 2006). Agencies have become aware that in order to reduce duplication and fill gaps in service at the broader system level, they must collaborate with outside organizations (CAFRP, 2004). Currently, collaborative approaches are often implemented in order to reduce fragmentation of the delivery system and to meet human needs (Roussos & Fawcett, 2000; Zizys, 2007). The underlying assumption is that social needs are many-sided and require a coordinated approach, involving a variety of professionals with different skills, working together through interorganizational collaboration for a larger impact (Daka-Mulwanda, Thornburg, Filbert, & Klein, 1995). Therefore, collaborations between organizations in a community context are becoming more prevalent in social service.

This societal shift is evidenced in government, non-profit, and for-profit human service organizations (Einbinder, Robertson, Garcia, Vuckovic, & Patti, 2000). Social service funders (federal, provincial, foundations and other funding organizations) have also led the collaborating trend by developing funding policies that require fund

recipients to join together in demonstrations of collaborative service provision (Abramson & Rosenthal, 1995). Many are tending towards larger initiatives, requiring collaborative proposals. Governments are more readily supporting the development of these networks through public goals, funding, and regulation in hopes of resolving social and economic issues (Twombly, 2003; Zizys, 2007).

Huxham (1993) reminds us that “the distinctive task of management in any public organisation is getting things done through other organisations” (p. 22). By engaging in collaboration efforts, individual organizations can remain responsive and at the same time draw on the resources in the surrounding environment in order to deal with the complex needs of each client (CAFRP, 2004). Human service organizations may also become involved in collaborations in order to access resources, to integrate their services with others, and to learn, among other reasons (Huxham & Vangen, 2005). Of course, organizations that receive government funding for the purpose of collaboration are more likely to participate in collaboration activities (Evans, Armstrong, Beckstead, & Lee, 2007; Guo & Acar, 2005).

Structure of Collaborations

Collaborations are most often developed when a fluid organizational structure is required, rather than a permanent structure such as a special district or authority (Berman, 2006). Collaborations are generally not intended to be long-term ventures. Although not all collaborations are necessarily temporary, when a stable, long-term institutional structure is required a collaboration is probably not the best organizational choice (Berman, 2006).

Any social service community collaboration would likely have one of the following as a purpose: (a) improving social policy or governance; (b) improving the service system (Harbert, Finnegan, & Tyler, 1997); or (c) increasing social capital, equality, and community resilience (Nyden, Figert, Shibley, & Burrows, 1997). A collaboration would likely choose to fulfill one of these purposes through action focused on either research, providing service, or social action (Alter, 2000). Membership would reflect the purpose and action. The purpose, focus of collaborative activity, and membership then determine the level of formality and integration of the collaborative structure (Bailey & Koney, 2000; Zizys, 2007).

Challenges of Collaboration

Collaboration does not always happen successfully, because it contains several challenges (for example see Haig-Brown, 2001; Waddock & Walsh, 1999), not the least of which is the time and patience required (Huxham, 1996; Metzler et al., 2003; Pitt, 1998; van Eyk, 2002). Collaboration is costly and must include sensitivity to organizational territorial tensions and differences in aims (Huxham, 1996; Pitt, 1998). Determining what is required overall to build and sustain successful initiatives is also challenging, because each collaboration will require unique considerations and elements to achieve a successful endeavour. Changes in membership, external context, and collaborative purpose will lead to changes in what is required to sustain each collaboration (Foster-Fishman, Berkowitz, Lounsbury, Jacobson, & Allen, 2001).

Outcomes of Collaborations

Collaborations can impact their constituent systems in a variety of ways. Impact or effectiveness is complex to measure, nevertheless can be determined by gathering the

perspectives of the collaborators, outside stakeholders, and/or the community (Gray et al., 2003; Roussel, Fan, & Fulmer, 2002). Some collaborations can be considered successful and have a positive effect, assisting organizations in better meeting client needs (Ragan, 2003; Selden et al., 2006). On the other hand, evaluation of the macro effect of collaboration, and collaborations' impact on improving communities is complex, and empirical collaboration outcome evaluation is in an infancy stage, just beginning to catch up with practice (Backer, 2003; Gray et al., 2003; Roussos & Fawcett, 2000)

There is specific evidence that university-community initiatives can be effective. Collaborations between universities and communities have resulted in many positive outcomes (Dotolo & Noftsinger, 2002; Mayfield, 2001; Pew Partnership for Civic Change, 2003; Seifer & Maurana, 1999). According to Wandersman (2003), university-community research-driven community collaboration interventions “have shown results in areas such as substance abuse prevention and heart disease prevention” (p. xiii).

Research Background

I have selected the interorganizational collaboration topic because of the increased need for understanding collaborative practice, and also for personal reasons. In my generalist social work practice journey, the most satisfying—and most challenging—times in my 20-year career occurred during attempts at interorganizational community projects. In studying a successful regional interorganizational university-community collaboration, I wanted to further increase my knowledge of this important social work intervention strategy and contribute to the growing professional knowledge base.

This study focuses, conveniently, on a collaboration at a comprehensive university with a Social Work Faculty, where I hope to complete my PhD studies. With previous research experience, I was hired by the Research Committee of the Elder Friendly Communities Program Steering Committee (EFCP Collaboration) as the Research Coordinator of their two-year research project. The Elder Friendly Communities Program (EFCP) Collaboration oversaw a demonstration research project that focussed on furthering understanding of 1) collaboration, and 2) capacity building through community development with seniors. I was drawn to apply to the Research Coordinator position because of the EFCP Collaboration's track record as a successful collaboration. We agreed that as Research Coordinator I would also conduct an embedded case study of their research consortium for my Ph.D. dissertation.

Next I will introduce the case I selected for study.

Background to the Case

Case Setting Environment

Calgary is a growing city of just over one million people, located in the prairie buttressing the Rocky Mountains of southern Alberta, Canada. With only 17 percent of the population labelled as visible minority, Calgary residents are predominantly white and English speaking, although over 65 per cent of Calgarians have an ethnic background other than Canadian. The 40-year-old University of Calgary, with more than 28,000 students, is one of the major post-secondary institutions in Alberta. Calgary is demographically younger than other Canadian cities with nine per cent of the Calgary population over the age of 65 (Statistics Canada, Census of Population, 2006).

Canada is a federation with a single payer health care system. Although most health care for senior citizens is funded by governments in both Canada and the United States, Canada does not have large, established aging planning, funding, and service networks, such as the Area Agencies on Aging in the United States. The U.S. funding networks require organizations to integrate, coordinate, and collaborate as conditions of funding. In Canada, where fewer established funding networks require it, organizations are less often involved in collaborative activities with other organizations. Advocacy for seniors in Canada is more difficult because of the lack of a strong planning and advocacy vehicle, and also because of the broad geographical service delivery system fragmented by provincial and federal jurisdictions. Therefore, Canada has less developed seniors' funding and advocacy organizations, and fewer established professional networks than the United States. This Canadian health care context has implications for organizations serving seniors, requiring them to create ways to work together, out of their silos, and to serve this under-coordinated sector. Collaboration has emerged more frequently as a response to community issues, such as seniors' ability to stay longer in their own homes and to experience vital involvement in their communities.

Introduction of the Elder Friendly Communities Program (EFCP) Collaboration

In early 2000, three social workers gathered voluntarily at a comprehensive university to discuss their social service system integration concerns regarding older adults in Calgary. After a couple of meetings, two health professionals voluntarily joined in the discussions. These members were from larger organizations: the local health region, the city, and the university faculty. All were interested in improving the quality of life of seniors and supporting the aging-in-place of seniors in their own communities.

They shared ideas and attempted to apply for available funding through their organizations to create “an integrated system that supports elder friendly communities” and opportunities for research.

The group grew to about ten health, social work, and human service professionals by the end of 2000 and maintained a fairly stable membership until the Elder Friendly Communities Program (EFCP) Collaboration ended in 2007. Participating organizations included the University, the main municipal organization, the non-profit fiscal agent agency, and a regional governmental health organization. Early on, a community needs assessment was initiated through the funding of three of the EFCP Collaboration organizations and in-kind support from the rest.

As a response to the community needs assessment, the effort supported senior-led community development. The group hired a Program Manager to coordinate both the community development initiative and the Collaboration. A research and demonstration component of the Collaboration continued and was strengthened by a two-year grant from the Alberta Heritage Foundation for Medical Research (AHFMR) to study the community development and collaboration components of the program. The group secured financial support and leadership for the capacity building of seniors within several neighbourhoods. The senior-driven community development effort continued past the ending of the Collaboration. For further history and details please see Chapter Four: Findings.

The Selection of a Successful Case

There are a variety of indicators for determining whether a collaboration is successful. Any variety of these indicators can be used to determine whether or not an

initiative is successful. The case presented here for study conforms to many indicators of a successful collaboration and was considered a successful collaboration.

The Elder Friendly Communities Program (EFCP) Collaboration members often described their community-university collaboration as a successful one and demonstrated pride in being participants. The member organizations of the EFCP have also indicated that they believe that this collaboration was successful. Funders also demonstrated confidence that the EFCP Collaboration was effective; although resources were scarce, the group was able to garner funding from credible external sources for program and research.

As well as financial resources, the group also attained public recognition from outside sources for its success. For example, in 2004 the Elder Friendly Communities Program (EFCP) Collaboration received an award from the Alberta College of Social Workers for the “best group of the year” in an annual regional recognition event called the Pulse of Social Work. The group was recognized by their peers for their ability to work together.

Other indications of external recognition included requests for Elder Friendly Communities Program (EFCP) members to present to the Canadian National Advisory Council on Aging, a Calgary United Way request for a report on seniors from an EFCP group member, and many national and international conference presentations. The Collaboration was also selected to represent the province at a regional aging conference.

The Elder Friendly Communities Program (EFCP) university-community collaborative raised international attention, and other countries have attempted to replicate the group. For example, a community research collaboration and program

modelled on the EFCP demonstration was undertaken in Adelaide, Australia. These researchers, Gursansky and Feist (2005) state in their report on the first stage of their replication consortium, “The West Adelaide Elder Friendly Communities Project is a replication of a successful Canadian project initiated by the University of Calgary's Faculty of Social Work in 2000” (p. 4).

The longevity of the collaboration could also be viewed as a success indicator (Mizrahi & Rosenthal, 2001; Roussel et al., 2002). The EFCP group was still in operation seven years after its initiation, a long period for a collaborative consortium (El Ansari & Phillips, 2004; Roussos & Fawcett, 2000)

On the whole, human service collaborations can be deemed successful if they have a positive impact on their systems and achieve their goals (Backer, 2003; Gray, 2000; Roussel et al., 2002; Wiewel & Guerrero, 1997). The EFCP Collaboration was able to launch a sustainable service through its research program. Organizations participating in the EFCP demonstration attained positive outcomes as a result of their involvement, increasing their collaborative potential.

The benefits must outweigh the costs for a successful collaboration (El Ansari & Phillips, 2004) and the EFCP Collaboration members saw their organizations benefiting overall from this long-term venture. The Collaboration was successful because all collaborators and their organizations benefited (Wiewel & Guerrero, 1997).

Finally, a collaboration could be seen as successful if it has created social capital or collaboration networks within its environment (Gray, 2000; Roussos & Fawcett, 2000), and if there are good working relationships among collaborators (Roussel et al., 2002; Wiewel & Guerrero, 1997). Good working relationships among Elder Friendly

Communities Program (EFCP) Collaboration members led to the building of organizational social capital and networks demonstrated through trust building, reciprocity, and relationships built between organizations (Roussos & Fawcett, 2000). As a result, the group enjoyed surprisingly consistent membership.

The Elder Friendly Communities Program (EFCP) Collaboration has several indicators of success: not only did the seven-year-long group describe themselves as successful, but their organizations benefited from their involvement and recognized the positive outcomes resulting from this group. Even external organizations recognized the group as a successful community-university collaboration, for example, other Australian researchers also believed the EFCP Collaboration was successful—so much so that they attempted replication of the EFCP. The social capital and committed relationships developed were also important indicators of the group's success. These combined indicators confirm that the EFCP consortium was a successful interorganizational community collaboration, and therefore a worthy organization for examination as a collaboration effort.

Social Work and Collaboration in Context

Social workers, Bailey and Koney (2000), suggest that “the essence of our profession is a commitment to rally whatever best forces and resources are available to serve those in need effectively” (p. 181). In one demonstration of emphasis on collaboration in social work, the English General Social Care Council promotes the advancement of social work and offers opportunities for registered social workers to participate in programs to advance their social work abilities. One of the main items in

their recent post-qualifying framework states that social workers must have a proficiency in interorganizational collaboration in order to work at an advanced level of social work. According to the 2007 post-qualifying framework, in order to achieve a post-qualifying award in specialist social work and to be deemed to be working at an advanced level of professional competence, a social worker must be able to:

Take a leading role in the development and implementation of effective ways of working in networks across organisational, sectoral and professional boundaries, taking a lead responsibility for identifying, analysing and resolving complex issues, problems and barriers, promoting partnership, collaboration, inter-professional teamwork, multi-agency and multi-disciplinary communication and ensuring the delivery of integrated and person-centred services. (p. 20, General Social Care Council, 2007).

The history and mission of social work revolves around the practice of collaboration (Bailey & Koney, 2000). As we move toward more constructivist and relational models of social work practice, collaboration becomes more important (Folgheraiter, 2004). Cooperative service delivery is generally replacing competitive models of social service delivery; therefore social workers are also required to work more cooperatively and collaboratively (Whittington, 2003).

Social workers are often involved in collaborations through their work with communities, their activity in organizations, and their efforts to encourage healthy, streamlined, and resourceful social environments for their clients. Throughout their daily work, most social workers are required to participate in various forms of interprofessional and interagency exchanges (Whittington, 2003). Collaboration is a technique and basic skill for practice at all levels (DuBois & Miley, 2002; Fountain, 2002; Kok, 2003; Schriver, 2001; Sheafor & Horejsi, 2003). An evidence-based practice model would be an invaluable tool for those attempting interorganizational collaboration.

Calls for Further Research in this Area

Social work scholars in Canada (Brown, 1997; Dunlop, 2002; Lai, 2002) and worldwide recommend further research on collaboration. As I will explore in the next chapter, more knowledge is needed about what is required to determine collaborations' essential characteristics and factors (Rubin, 2000) and what is required to build and sustain collaborations (Brown, 1997; Dunlop, 2002; Lai, 2002).

The increasing amount of literature regarding implementing collaborations is beginning to inform our practice with theory and research. Reflecting a broad collection of empirical, conceptual, and prescriptive works, contributors to the community collaboration field include professional researchers and various policy-makers, governments, organizations, groups, and individuals from a variety of disciplines (Barnes et al., 2000; Buckeridge et al., 2002; Summers et al., 2001; Taylor-Powell, 1999).

The paucity of research to understand community-university collaborations for the purpose of research in community development, as well as the insurgence of collaborative approaches, has shaped my interest in investigating the process of collaboration as partners work together on a joint research project. Inquiry regarding the key conditions involved in successful interorganizational community collaboration is required. In an effort to fill these conceptual gaps, I have conducted this qualitative case study to uncover the characteristics contributing to the success of that type of collaboration.

Research Summary

My Primary Research Question asked:

What are the important factors for successful community-university collaboration demonstrated and reported by the Elder Friendly Communities Program (EFCP) Collaboration?

Two secondary questions were also posed in examining a framework for understanding from the literature called the Wilder Collaboration Factors Inventory (WCFI):

What important success factors in the Elder Friendly Communities Program (EFCP) Collaboration are comparable to those identified in the Wilder Collaboration Factors Inventory (WCFI)?

And: Are there other important success factors for the Elder Friendly Communities Program (EFCP) Collaboration that are not identified in the Wilder Collaboration Factors Inventory (WCFI)? If so, what are these?

Using case study research over a two-year and four-month period (February 2004 to June 2006), I interviewed each of the nine partners in the Elder Friendly Communities Program (EFCP) Collaboration individually on two occasions, collected data from them using a collaboration factors inventory, observed 18 monthly EFCP Collaboration meetings, facilitated four group member check discussions, and performed a historical document review. A systematic data analysis strategy, using case study database retrieval through ATLAS/ti, was implemented to study the transcribed interview, observation, and other text data in-depth. Case study pattern-matching, identification of additional themes, and theoretical model making was performed for analysis. Mattessich et al.'s (2001) review of research, a rigorous and comprehensive attempt at consolidation of the empirical community collaboration literature, was used as an initial guiding conceptual framework for criteria related to successful community collaboration. The use of

triangulation and participant review assisted in confirming the integrity of the data analysis.

Although admittedly a modest contribution, my research into this program collaboration begins to reveal the key conditions unique to this type of interorganizational community research consortium. I am pleased to report that this study has richly contributed to my own learning about what is required to implement successful collaboration.

Dissertation Roadmap

My dissertation is composed of the following five chapters: Chapter One, Introduction; Chapter Two, Literature Review; Chapter Three, Methodology: Research Design and Limitations; Chapter Four, Findings; and Chapter 5, Discussion.

Chapter One sets the context for my study. It discusses the significance of research on collaboration and describes the focus for this dissertation. It provides an overview of community-university collaboration, and introduces the case for study, the Elder Friendly Communities Program Collaboration (EFCP Collaboration).

Chapter Two is a literature review of the theoretical and empirical literature on collaboration. Relevant collaboration theory is outlined. Previous research in the area of community collaboration is critically examined. Empirical studies specific to university-community collaboration are reviewed. The chapter concludes with a summary of the gaps in current research.

Chapter Three responds to the literature review and describes the case study method I have chosen to address the research questions. First a description of case study

and the paradigm chosen for my study is presented. Then the main research question and its secondary questions are presented. A systematic data collection and analysis plan flows from the questions. Information including case selection, analysis methods, ethical considerations, and limitations is discussed.

Chapter Four reports the qualitative findings from this study. The chapter begins with the detailed description of the background and history of the Elder Friendly Communities (EFCP) Collaboration. Then context findings for the case are discussed. The chapter progresses to a presentation of the findings for each of the questions. The findings throughout the chapter include the reoccurring themes matching my data from interview transcripts, meeting transcripts, meeting observation notes, group member check transcripts, inventory results, and collaboration documentation collected during the study. By providing quotations directly from the data, I hope to engage the reader in his or her own analysis process, and ensure that the presentation of findings is connected to the data.

Chapter Five provides a discussion of the study's findings in relation to literature specific to the important factors, and to the framework for collaboration that was examined. Relationships among emerged themes are discussed. A new theoretical model of collaboration is presented for further study. The final chapter also includes further discussion on insights and social work implications from the study, and then concludes with suggestions for further research.

Chapter Two: Literature Review

Introduction

The purpose of this chapter is to provide conceptual context for the research questions, methodology, and purpose of my PhD research project. This review of literature related to community-university interorganizational collaboration for research and human services includes an overview of theory and current research. This chapter begins more generally with a discussion of the theoretical literature for understanding collaboration, and includes the theories of context and process which relate more broadly to interorganizational community collaboration. Then I present a summary of the empirical literature for interorganizational community collaboration, and conclude by highlighting the research literature more specific to community-university collaboration. The intent is to provide relevant conceptual frameworks, to introduce concepts and criteria used in my research study, and to provide background information to justify my methodological choice. Responding to the need for more practical knowledge in the community collaboration field, my case study research will be situated within the discipline of social work, the theory of interorganizational relations, and the practice of community-university social service research.

Search Strategy

The information included in this review was synthesized from books and journal articles gathered through a physical and electronic search of University of Calgary (U. of C.) library materials and all U. of C. social work key and additional electronic journal indexes and abstracts. All dates were considered, with closest attention to the most recent

materials. Various databases such as Dissertations Abstracts, Ovid, EbscoHost, Proquest, Sociological Abstracts, and Expanded Academic ASAP were searched. A library instruction session was attended with the social work librarian to receive further tips for electronic search. Book stores and web pages were also searched. Some of the key words for electronic searches included: collaboration, interorganizational, community research, community-university, alliance, joint working, joined-up working, community partnership, social service integration, cooperation, interprofessional, and community development. Empirical literature was most highly sought; however theoretical and prescriptive materials were also examined. Well over 150 relevant articles, 20 dissertations, 10 chapters, and 60 books were reviewed with only the most pertinent research and guiding documents included as reference here. Personal practice knowledge and discussion with academics working in the area of collaboration also aided the review.

Interorganizational Relationships and Social Work

The social work literature reports mostly on alliances among service provider and client (Bishop, Woll & Arrango, 1993; Chavis, Speer, Resnick, & Zippay, 1993; Dinnebeil & Hale, 1999). Many social workers have studied coalitions for the purpose of advocacy and social reform (Croteau & Hicks, 2003; Mizrahi & Rosenthal, 1993, 2001; Miller & Tomaskovic-Devey, 1983; Whitaker, 1982). As well, social workers have studied interdisciplinary or inter-professional partnering (Barnes, Carpenter, & Dickenson, 2000; Bronstein, 2003; Payne, 2000; Smith & Mogro-Wilson, 2007). A few have studied university-community cooperation for practice innovation with agencies and practitioners (McCartt-Hess & Mullen, 1995). Finally, social work researchers are

increasingly beginning to study community interorganizational collaborations (Brown, 1997; Bailey & Koney, 1996; Dunlop, 2002; Fountain, 2002; Lai, 2002; Provan, Fish, & Sydow, 2007; Schopler, 1994; Zlotnik, 1998). However, as yet, there is no comprehensive understanding of interorganizational collaboration for the purpose of community development.

Social workers within universities also need to be proficient and skillful in building relationships and creating collaborative mechanisms (Mizrahi & Rosenthal, 1993). Universities are focusing on collaborative activity in this era of increasing emphasis on integration of services (Meszaros, 1993; Taylor-Powell, 1999). Due to the growing interorganizational community collaboration efforts across universities, there is a strong need for better understanding of university-community organizational collaboration (Buckeridge et al., 2002).

This review also focuses on interorganizational community collaboration involving researchers from universities. Interorganizational collaborative community-university relationships can involve external public organizations, non-governmental organizations, or private organizations (Green, Daniel, & Novick, 2001). Academia and practice are represented in these collaborations that reach across several disciplines and professions including sociology, business, education, health, justice, and social work.

Defining Interorganizational Community Collaboration

As collaborations between organizations in a community context are becoming more prevalent in social service, a common language and definition about that phenomenon becomes particularly important. Collaboration's generic definition of "to

cooperate with an agency or instrumentality with which one is not immediately connected” (Merriam-Webster Online Dictionary, 2005) is useful for an expansive understanding of the collaboration term. However, as we work towards a deeper and more practical understanding of the variety and nuances of community collaboration, we require more specific description of different types of collaboration.

In social work, unfortunately, the term collaboration is used in a variety of ways, creating confusion. For example, in their book *Collaboration in Social Work Practice*, Weinstein (2003) and others cover interdisciplinary practice, work with clients, and policy work among sectors, all under the umbrella term of collaboration. The *Social Work Dictionary* (Barker, 2003) ignores the interorganizational aspect of collaboration and defines a collaboration as “The procedure in which two or more professionals work together to serve a given client (individual, family, group, community, or population). In another example, in their chapter summarizing community practice models in the *Social Workers’ Desk Reference*, Overby Weil and Gamble (2002) do not make a clear distinction between interorganizational collaboration and coalition.

A common language and definition about the increasing collaborative phenomena is particularly important. However, the main challenge in reviewing the inter-organizational literature is the difficulty deciphering and then comparing the unique constructs used by each separate author. Among the seminal literature in this area, different authors describe interorganizational relationships differently. As Alter (2000) states: “No agreement exists in the literature about standard definition of these terms” (p. 284). Collaborative concepts have been evolving simultaneously within separate fields, leading to disintegration of a common approach. Although it is important before

reviewing the research to have a lucid definition of the construct of study, this is made very difficult by authors from diverse fields not using the same dialect (Bailey & Koney, 2000). As the boundaries between disciplines blur, we may be more likely to categorize concepts similarly within a common broad interorganizational model. In the meantime, the divergence among the use of terms also leads to difficulty studying a phenomenon that has not yet been clearly categorized (Aristotle, n.d.).

The use of the term *collaboration* becomes more convoluted the deeper one probes the literature. For example, Alter (2000) uses the term collaboration as a verb rather than a noun. She creates differentiation among interorganizational associations, not by using the term collaboration, but by referring to *partnerships* as involving fewer numbers of organizations and *networks* referring to situations where larger numbers are involved. So she views *collaborating* as the strategy for creating these partnerships or networks.

As well, collaboration definitions range from including all broad inter-organizational relationships within one definition, to describing only a very specific type of interorganizational relationship as *collaboration*. The term *service integration* is often used as a more comprehensive term (than collaboration) and has been used to describe alliances among service providers to increase connections between services for ease of use by clients. Collaboration's generic definition has led to a plethora of uses for the collaboration term within the social service field.

The umbrella continuum of interorganizational relationships has been labelled *collaboration* by some authors, such as Huxam and Vangen (2005). However, several other terms are used to describe the same broad concept of two or more entities working

together and joining resources to accomplish similar goals. Others argue that they are observing what could be labelled as *consortia*, *cooperation*, *partnering*, *coalition*, *inter-organizational relationship*, *alliance*, *joint working*, and *joined-up working*. Several examples occur throughout the literature. Bailey and Koney (2000) use the term *strategic alliances* to describe broad interorganizational relationships. However, Alexander (1995) uses the term *coordination* to broadly describe any type of interorganizational relationship and avoids the use of the term collaboration. Rosenkoetter et al. (1995) uses the term collaboration in a broad way to describe coordinating and increasing community resources through a community-based infrastructure. Roberts (2004) and Cummings (1984) use the term *trans-organizational system*. More recently, *network* has been used interchangeably for the term collaboration (Grabher & Powell, 2004; Kilduff & Tsai, 2003; Provan, Fish, & Sydow, 2007). For example, Provan, Fish, and Sydow (2007) define a network as “a group of three or more organizations connected in ways that facilitate achievement of a common goal” (p. 482) which many scholars would view as a definition of interorganizational collaboration.

Although some researchers look more broadly and do not identify specific types of interorganizational relationships, using *collaboration* as an umbrella term, collaboration can also be located as a point on the continuum representing a certain type of interorganizational association. For example, organizational *community collaboration* has been viewed differently than *network*, *coordination*, *cooperation*, or *coalition* (Aubry, 1996; Bailey & Koney, 2000; Bardach, 1998; Barker, 2003; Kagan, 1991; National Network for Collaboration, 2003; Schopler, 1994; Sheafor & Horejsi, 2003). The continuum/dichotomy is typically bounded by informal collections with autonomous

organizations requiring little commitment on one pole; on the other are interorganizational associations with formal, tightly linked, interdependent or integrated relationships requiring substantial investment (Alter, 2000; Bailey & Koney, 2000; Corbett & Noyes, 2008).

Alter (2000) differentiates between broad interorganizational associations, categorizing them into *Obligational*, *Promotional*, and *Systematic* collaborative forms. Obligational collaboratives exchange resources, such as information, in an informal, reciprocal arrangement. Promotional collaboratives join together to accomplish a common objective that they could not accomplish on their own. Systemic collaboratives join together, in the most formal and integrated way, to provide a product or service in an integrated, seamless manner. Several taxonomies such as this exist that categorize a variety of types of interorganizational relationships within the interorganizational literature; however none have been universally adopted.

In the meantime, several authors have assisted with clarifying the collaboration construct, providing useful guiding definitions. A common definition of *collaboration* is used by Konrad (1996) who describes it as a formal arrangement when two organizations or programs come together with the same goals to provide a common service. *Community collaboration* can be defined as “a process of participation through which people, groups, and organizations work together on the strengths of the community to achieve desired results” (National Network for Collaboration Framework, 1995, p. 1). As opposed to mixing together the for-profit and the non-profit structures (e.g. Provan, Fish, & Sydow, 2007), which vary substantially, *Nonprofit collaboration*, as defined by Guo and Acar (2005) is “what occurs when different nonprofit organizations work together to address

problems through joint effort, resources, and decision making and share ownership of the final product or service” (p. 342-343).

Interorganizational community collaboration occurs when two or more organizations come together for the purpose of community improvement (Bailey & Koney, 2000). Interorganizational community collaboration has been defined by Bardach (1998) as “any joint activity by two or more agencies that is intended to increase public value by their working together rather than separately” (p. 8). Interorganizational community collaborations are most often distinguished through attention to variation around focus of concern, sectors involved, purpose, and level of integration.

For my study, and the purpose of this review, social workers Bailey and Koney (2000), present the clearest taxonomy for defining and comparing various types of interorganizational community collaboration. Borrowing from business (*Harvard Business Review on strategic alliances*, 2002; Shenkar & Reuer, 2006; Schaan & Kelly, 2007), they use the term *strategic alliances* as a broader term for interorganizational relationships and *collaboration* being one specific, more formalized, type of strategic alliance for human service organizations. A collaboration includes organizations coming together to create something new, wanting “to develop a joint strategy or common set of strategies for working collectively toward a shared purpose” (p. 101) with a “relatively high degree of structural complexity.” In a collaboration, “member organizations develop a formal plan for working together on a regular basis” and recognize “the need for interdependence in order to achieve individual organization effectiveness” (p. 102).

The uniqueness of collaborations can be further refined. The collaboration term can be further categorized into particular types of collaborations. Bailey and Koney

(2000) identify three models of collaborations: *Consortia*, *Networks*, and *Joint ventures*. Consortia best identifies the collaboration studied in my research. Not a legal entity but a group of organizations that have a formal agreement “to combine its resources for a project that is beyond the members’ individual capacities” (p. 105). A Consortia “is an alliance of organizations that identifies with a particular community or interest domain and wherein member organizations provide their resources collectively to achieve common, often long-term, goals within that domain” (p. 105). Related collaborations, but not exactly what I am studying here could be termed, Networks, which according to Bailey and Koney, are “integrated service systems that seek to improve service delivery by deepening or broadening the scope of services available to their consumers” (p. 120). And Joint Ventures are distinguished from other collaborations in the formation of a “new, legally defined entity.”

Although joint ventures are more often seen as containing a more formal structural arrangement, Bailey and Koney (2000) also acknowledge that “consortia and networks could be considered forms of joint ventures” (p. 133). Therefore, a reviewer must carefully determine the type of collaborative activity referred to by each author in order to classify and compare the breadth of this literature.

For the purpose of this study, and this review, *collaboration* requires that organizations have a commonly defined mission, structure, or planning effort. It is a durable relationship bringing previously separate organizations into a new structure with commitment to a common mission; each organization contributing its own resource to pooled resources and a shared product or service (Mattessich et al., 2001). These interorganizational community collaborations can be identified by a collection of

government and non-profit service providers coming together to integrate service, build community capacity, or address collective problems through research, service delivery, or policy development.

Process and Context Theories for Understanding Collaboration

An extensive and complex literature base is developing as a result of the increased prevalence of collaboration among human service organizations. Theoretical perspectives relevant to collaboration tend to focus on either process or context (Dowling, Powell, & Glendinning, 2004; National Network for Collaboration Framework, 1995; Taylor-Powell, 1999). Taylor-Powell (1999) and the National Network for Collaboration Framework (1995) highlight two kinds of factors for collaboration: *Process factors* and *context factors*.

Process factors prescribe the specific skills, actions, and components necessary in order to develop and sustain collaborations. For example, process research focuses on uncovering variables of collaboration dynamics. Collaboration dynamics are those behaviours, criteria, and components that exist during collaboration activity. Examples of collaborative processes include behaviours, leadership, communication, evaluation, decision-making, and participation (Centre for Collaborative Planning, 2004; Mattessich et al., 2001).

Context factors (also known as environmental factors) are components of an organizational environment that have the potential to influence collaboration (National Network for Collaboration Framework, 1995). Context factors are the components of a collaborative environment necessary for the collaborations. Examples of context factors

include social capital, community characteristics, community influence, connectedness, political climate, social policy, and external resources (Taylor-Powell, 1999).

A few scholars attempt to provide a broader model of collaboration, combining attention to both process and context. For example, Mattessich et al. (2001) attempted to incorporate both process and context factors for human service organizations in their presentation of factors influencing successful collaboration. Their presentation would be described as a framework, not necessarily a theoretical *perspective*, and they do provide a listing of factors influencing success within six categories:

1. Environment (or those factors that reflect the community climate for the collaboration).
2. Resources (described as funds, staff, materials, time, and skilled leadership).
3. Membership (including cross-sectional representation, members' ability to compromise, trust, respect, and attention to members' self-interest).
4. Mutual Purpose (such as goals, vision, and unique purpose).
5. Communication (is open and frequent within informal channels).
6. Process and structure (referring to multiple layers of participation, flexibility, clear roles and responsibilities, adaptability, and appropriate pace).

Another presentation useful for understanding collaboration is Huxham and Vangen's (2005) "themes in collaboration practice." From their action research with various interorganizational initiatives, they identified several themes across a broad range of interorganizational collaborations: *common aims, power, trust, risk, working processes, resources, communication and language, commitment and determination,*

culture, compromise, accountability, and the importance of democracy and equality.

Important recurring themes generated from policy-oriented research included *learning, success, and leadership issues*. Two themes identified by the researchers themselves were the importance of a *collaborative identity* and the concept of *social capital*. Cutting across all the identifiers was the importance of adequate *membership* structures for the collaboration. This work provides a useful broad model for assessing collaborative properties, however it is only descriptive, and does not offer an integrated conceptual framework for collaboration process.

Lasker, Weiss, and Miller (2001), and Lasker and Weiss (2003), provide a unique process oriented framework. From their own community health experience and a review of the literature, they attempt to explain how broad-based community collaborations work. They emphasize the importance of leadership and management of the process; an understanding of critical characteristics of the collaboration process; a focus on individual empowerment, bridging social ties, and synergy; and effective collaborative problem solving.

At times, narrow theories from various fields have been applied to the process of collaboration. For example, trust theory (Ostrom & Walker, 2003) can begin to provide insights into the between-member relationships, and perhaps the between-organization relationships in a collaboration. Trust can apply to the motivations of individual collaborators, the structures within the group that may facilitate trust, and the external context's impact on trust between the members. Trust theory has indicated the importance of reciprocity between members, behaviours that indicate trustworthiness, external possibilities for members, and the level of connection between members (Ostrom

& Walker, 2003). Although it provides some insights, trust theory is not comprehensive enough to be considered a broad theory for collaboration process.

Because collaborations are constantly changing over time, discussion of collaboration requires attention to phases and group process stages. Several developmental models for collaboration are presented in the interorganizational literature. For example McMorris, Gottlieb, and Sneden (2005) applied Tuckman's forming, storming, norming, and performing model to their own public health collaboration. They discussed this phase model's usefulness in collaboration practice and found the Tuckman stages overlapped, and therefore were not easily delineated. However, they found the stages useful for anticipating the potential of conflict at some points, and for expectations of performing at other points. They also identified that the phases may re-occur and be repeated throughout the long-term of the partnership.

Therefore, on one hand, theories to explain and predict broad interorganizational collaboration processes are scant. The best that the body of collaboration process literature offers is a description of the component parts required for collaboration. As yet, only a few theoretical frameworks have evolved to aid in understanding the multiple dimensions of collaboration process.

On the other hand, theories related to context factors are more common perhaps due to the influence of an open systems perspective (Katz & Kahn, 1966; von Bertalanffy, 1950). These organizational-environmental theories were groundbreaking in their highlighting of organizational context and external processes (Pfeffer & Salancik, 2003). A few organizational-environmental theories have been used to explain why human service organizations engage in collaborative behaviours (Alter & Hage, 1993;

Bardach, 1998; Gray & Wood, 1991; Schmid, 2004). Most of these theories emphasize the organization of interest's organizational structure, survival, and the external environmental influences in the organization's development. Generally, they explain the benefits of collaboration to a single organization, which includes improved organizational outcomes, an increased influence on external environment, and an increased ability to acquire and manage needed resources.

One organizational-environmental theory, *institutional theory* (Meyer & Rowan, 1977), is sometimes applied to explain why an organization would collaborate (Gray & Wood, 1991; Guo & Acar, 2005). Institutional theory emphasizes the organization's need to conform to internal and external structural influences. For example, an organization would participate in collaboration to meet a structural, funding, or policy requirement.

Acknowledgement of the importance of the relationships involved in collaborations has fuelled further study of the strength and frequency of collaborative relationships. Another perspective, *network theory* (Alter & Hage, 1993), is used to explain collaborative practice. Each organization would have a set of linkages and relationships to other organizations. The study of these relational networks can provide insights into organizational collaborative activities (Alexander, 1995; Galaskiewicz, 1989; Guo & Acar, 2005). Network analysis has proliferated in the past few years in attempts to further understand collective organizational collaboration behaviour (Cross & Parker, 2004; Gloor, 2006; Provan, Fish, & Sydow, 2007).

Collaboration scholars attempting to draw on theoretical frameworks relevant to their work have also employed *resource dependency* theory (Bardach, 1998; Gray, 1999; Guo & Acar, 2005; Pfeffer & Salancik, 2003) which attempts to describe the importance

of context, environment, and resources in understanding organizations (White, 1974; Yuchtman & Seashore, 1967). Resource dependency theory assists with understanding why organizations may, or may not, engage in collaboration as a strategy (Pfeffer & Salancik, 2003), advancing that organizations aspire toward autonomy and stability, as well as control over their resources (Bardach, 1998; Pfeffer & Salancik, 2003). The balance of tension between an organization's quest for autonomy and the organization's requirement for external resources can predict the likelihood of an organization to collaborate (Bardach, 1998; Gray & Wood, 1991; Pfeffer & Salancik, 2003).

Unfortunately this theory focuses on organizational-environmental relations and is not a comprehensive interorganizational theory. It can provide understanding regarding the variables of organizational impact and response to resource availability, contextual constraints, and focal organizational autonomy. However, it does not help us accurately assess the process of collaboration. Once organizations engage in collaboration, resource dependency theory fails to answer: What is the process of collaboration? What influences a successful process?

Organizational collaboration theory is in the early phases of development, mostly reflecting themes developed in attempts to predict the success of collaborations. Although there are theoretical models of collaboration which *describe* its dimensions, as yet, no theoretical framework has come forward to *explain* the multi-dimensions of collaboration. General frameworks are required to integrate these themes. One framework on its own may limit understanding. Therefore, several frameworks are required to look through different lenses at the process of collaboration. Being able to reflect, through

various perspectives, assists in understanding the complexity of practice in various situations.

Literature on Success Factors for Interorganizational Community Collaboration

The increasing amount of literature regarding implementing successful collaborations is beginning to inform our practice with theory and research. In the broader community collaboration literature, most theoretical literature focuses on conditions influencing success from practice experience, or on collaboration practice guidance in the form of how-to manuals. These materials often support the empirical literature and include factors related to developing common goals, building trust, ensuring clear communication, acquiring resources, and providing adequate leadership. Compilations of researched criteria that influence success are beginning to emerge (Chrislip & Larson, 1994; Einbinder, Robertson, Garcia, Vuckovic, & Patti, 2000; Huxham & Vangen, 2005). These models suggest certain areas of focus for building and sustaining community collaboration, such as the collaborative environment, membership, process, communication, purpose, and resources (Mattessich, Murray-Close, & Monsey, 2001). Other collections of themes are provided for consideration that include topics such as aim negotiation, membership structures, trust building, power dynamics, identity formation, and leadership (Huxham & Vangen, 2005).

Theoretical Literature on Interorganizational Community Collaboration

An extensive and complex literature base is developing as a result of the emerging prevalence of collaborative efforts in the social services. Collaboration is a multi-

disciplinary concept. Reflecting a broad collection of empirical, conceptual, and prescriptive works, contributors to the community collaboration field include professional researchers and various policy-makers, governments, organizations, groups, and individuals from a variety of disciplines (Barnes et al., 2000; Buckeridge et al., 2002; Summers et al., 2001; Taylor-Powell, 1999), such as nursing (Casey, 2008; Karmaliani, 2000). This section will present a brief review of the interorganizational collaboration literature, beginning with relevant theory, and then the next section will cover available research.

The bulk of the literature on interorganizational collaboration is made up of observational discussion, not defined as research. There is a broad range of non-empirical literature reporting best practice advice from experiences in community collaborations, and encouraging awareness of certain factors for collaborative efforts (Cardell, 2002; Gray et al., 2003; Hesselbein, Goldsmith, & Somerville, 1999; Mariotti, 2001; Reback, Cohen, Freese, & Shoptaw, 2002; Sheafor & Horejsi, 2003).

Overall, most of the theoretical literature focuses on (a) factors influencing success from practice experience, or (b) collaboration practice guidance in the form of how-to manuals. These will be summarized in the following sections:

Impressions from Authors' Own Experience

Hundreds of articles (most of the literature on collaboration) have been developed from "subjective impressions" (Backer, 2003, p. 13) and not from systematic research. There is a broad range of prescriptive literature reporting on best practice advice from the authors' own experiences in collaborations. University deans, non-profit CEOs, practitioners, bureaucrats, and policy-makers make numerous comments of how they

believe, from their own experience, collaborations can be developed and sustained. These articulate best practices and encourage awareness of certain factors for collaborative efforts (Reback et al., 2002; Cardell, 2002; Gray et al., 2003; Hesselbein et al., 1999; Mariotti, 2001).

As one example, Tomkins, Shank, Tromanhauser, Rupp, and Mahoney (2005) present reflections from their collaboration for community needs assessments and human services planning. In Lincoln/Lancaster County, Nebraska, their collaboration was composed of the United Way of Lincoln/Lancaster County, the University of Nebraska, government entities (e.g., City Council, County Board), and community foundations. They assessed the group with the Wilder Collaboration Factors Inventory (WCFI) in order to improve the collaboration. They found that the collaboration process was expensive, and required the commitment of time early on. The benefits of the collaboration were the opportunities to build relationships among members which then led to an improved community funding process and comprehensive community planning efforts.

Many of these descriptions of collaborations from the authors' anecdotal and own experience include a discussion of the factors, or characteristics and elements, of the collaboration process. Some authors identify dimensions to consider for successful collaboration. Préfontain et al. (2000) present six dimensions for consideration when considering critical factors of collaboration for public service delivery 1) political, social, economic, and cultural environment, 2) institutional, business, and technological environment, 3) partners' objectives and characteristics, 4) the collaboration process 5) modes of collaboration, and 6) project and collaboration performance.

In a review of literature, study of client groups, and consultation with an expert panel, Lambert et al. (2001) identified five requirements for successful collaboration: 1) clearly defined, mutually valued, shared goals, 2) measuring progress towards goals, 3) adequate resources, 4) good leadership and 5) working well together with relationships based on mutual support and trust, acknowledging their differences and sharing information openly.

A few authors identify strategies that are generally required for successful university-community collaboration. For example, Edleson and Bible (1998), in their conceptual work, identify approaches such as providing equal access to funding, involving community participants in research projects from the beginning, identifying incentives for all parties involved, and establishing communication between research partners that includes understanding roles of partners, being flexible regarding problem solving, and spending time in each others' domains and in neutral settings.

Although the increasing number of alliances between universities and community organizations has enhanced connection between theory and practice, there are many discussions in the literature about the gap between social service practitioners and researchers (Brown, 1997). Sheafor and Horejsi (2003) argue there are difficulties in collaboration because each collaborator "has its own special mission and constituency, its own policies and procedures, and its own restrictions on how its funds and staff time may be used" (p. 370). Specific barriers to university-community collaboration have also been identified, such as differences in objectives, roles, priority of research, and funding sources between community and university partners (Blum, Biegel, Tracy, & Cole, 1995). Researchers and community service providers are likely to have different

socioeconomic status, values, epistemology, and communication styles (Hughes, 2002; Myers-Walls, 2000). Differences also exist between the academic need to uncover global theoretical conditions (Haig-Brown, 2001) and the communities' need to focus on their own context. These differences require reconciliation in order to conduct collaborative research between universities and communities.

In a relevant discussion of their community-based participatory research, drawing on their own experience, and works of others, Strand et al. (2003) report on the process of collaboration among communities and university organizations attempting to provide community development. Providing ten principles of successful community-campus partnerships, they suggest collaborators emphasize the sharing of a worldview, agreement about goals and strategies, and having mutual trust and respect while entering into a collaborative venture. They provide four process principles, prescribing the following patterns of interaction among members of a collaboration: (a) sharing of power, (b) communicating clearly and listening carefully, (c) understanding and empathizing with each other's circumstances, and (d) flexibility. Unfortunately, these authors do not provide discussion on how their prescriptions relate to other collaboration literature.

In another example of a discussion of the factors important for a community-university collaboration for the purpose of community development, Williams (2003) provides a brief description of a community development endeavour undertaken by a university-college-community collaboration. He suggested having equal roles among collaborating members in regards to leadership to prevent "academic snobbery". He also suggests that organizations resist the temptation to be self-centred, and attempt to consider the other organizations as equally strong contributing members. Insufficient

description of all the collaborating members and the lack of description of methodology limit the analysis of this description to a prescriptive piece only.

Manuals for the Practice of Collaboration

Another area of this literature is the preponderance of how-to manuals for general community collaboration. Most practitioners writing about their involvement in collaborations develop a list of principles to guide their process, however many also develop a workbook guide to collaboration. A good example, among the plethora of manuals, is the result of an initiative between 21 American universities and an American federal government service, who then developed an on-line resource, “The Collaboration Framework,” targeted to assist community developers and others attempting to collaborate (National Network for Collaboration, 1995). It provides suggestions for collaborative phases from start-up to evaluation, identifies criteria for successful collaboration, and assists with defining outcomes. A similar organization, the Centre for Collaborative Planning (2004) identifies five dynamics for studying collaboration process: communication, decision-making, facilitative leadership, inclusivity and participation, and maintaining a shared vision. In yet another example, Winer and Ray (1994) provide a helpful resource for community collaborators through their manual for developing community collaborations. Similar collaborative values arise in each manual, such as equality among participants to influence the process, respect, and having a clear vision for research conducted. As well, characteristics include integrity, common values, relationship, time, and responsibility (Taylor-Powell, Rossing, & Geran, 1998). Although gathered anecdotally, these materials often support the empirical literature and include

conditions related to common goals, building trust, clear communication, acquiring resources, and adequate leadership.

Through practice experience, many authors have uncovered factors and principles of collaboration at a conceptual level. Few research studies have set out to confirm these models. Dluhy (1990) proclaims that “we now need to turn our attention to improving our knowledge base about the dynamics” (p. 112) of collaborations. I will now move away from the theoretical literature to review the research regarding interorganizational collaboration, and this is the focus of the following section.

Empirical Literature for Interorganizational Community Collaboration

Inclusion Criteria for Review

Due to its vastness and lack of integration, a literature search of collaboration must be narrowed. The Elder Friendly Communities Program (EFCP) Collaboration was located at the intersection of three kinds of collaboration, as depicted in Figure 1. It included elements of all three, interorganizational community collaboration, collaboration formed for the purpose of community development, and community-university research collaboration. It was an interorganizational community collaboration for the purpose of conducting community-university research on community development.

These three areas formed the parameters of my study, and were not mutually exclusive. Therefore the literature review will be focussed on only these areas: interorganizational collaborations for the purpose of community development, interorganizational community collaborations, and interorganizational community-university human services research collaborations. (See Figure 1.) The area of literature

most sought is empirical literature regarding interorganizational community collaboration for the purpose of community university research on community development (Figure 1, the darkest spot in the middle):

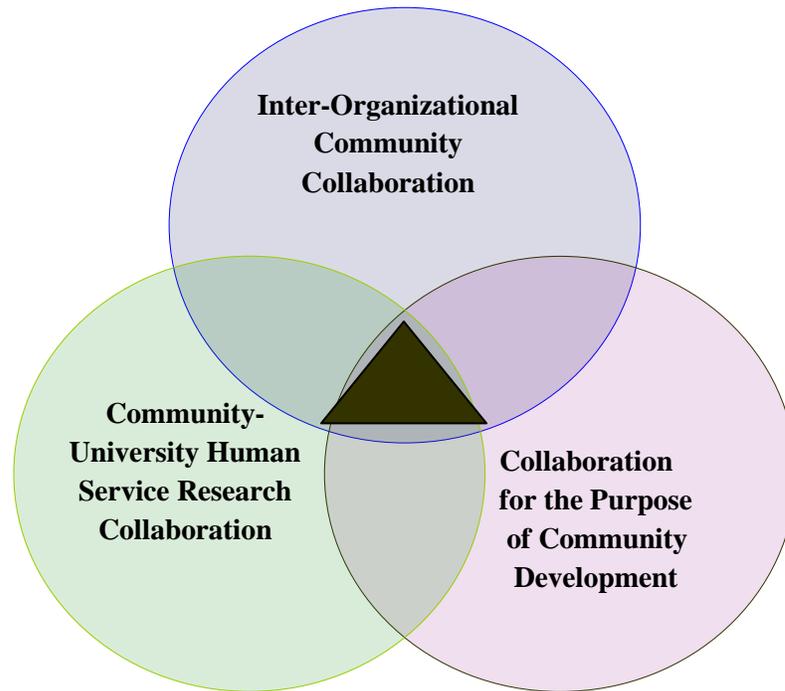


Figure 1. Three domains of relevance for my study's literature review. Preferred area of focus is the dark triangular area in centre.

The scope of my review includes collaborations occurring among human service, government, and other non-profit organizations; preference was given for references to social work or social welfare. Screened out materials included studies:

1. That fell outside health, social science, education, and public affairs, for example the preponderance of literature from business, computing, or geology.
2. Using Participatory Action Research (PAR) with community residents only, rather than involving other organizations.

3. Of interorganizational relationships including a majority of for-profit organizations.
4. That did not meet the selected definition of organizational collaboration (see page 26).

The empirical literature in this area of community collaboration consists mostly of independent, exploratory case studies. Although they vary in the degree of rigor, a few more rigorous studies in these areas of relevance do exist, and will be summarized below.

Collaborations for Community Development

There are few published examinations of interorganizational collaborations that have the purpose of providing and researching effective community development. Three empirical works (CAFRP, 2004; Gilbert & Specht, 1977; Pitt, 1998) provide a basic foundation for further study. However, common to the broad literature in this area, a serious limitation of these studies is their lack of description of the collaborative venture. Due to limited information provided, it is difficult to be confident that the types of networks described are truly collaborations and not some other forms of interorganizational relationship. Therefore acknowledgment of this caution is required of this particular research.

In the first study, Gilbert & Specht (1977) provide an ambitious cross-case case study with mixed methods (structured interviews, questionnaire survey of 76% of 147 Lead City Demonstration Agencies, and content analysis of final reports). They studied three types of independent variables: community context, organizational characteristics, and coordinating staff characteristics. Their dependent variable was “success of coordination.” Public and non-profit organizations, coordinated through federal funds and

guidance, developed a community development plan. In their study of 54 strategic alliances, they found a negative association between the number of agencies participating in coordination efforts and success. They “suggest that coordination efforts may begin to approach the saturation point within the approximate range of 12 participating agencies” (p. 42). Not often discussed in this interorganizational literature, they also identified variations in the role of leadership in different phases of the collaboration. For example, during the planning phases, process-oriented role behaviour of the leadership was associated with more success. During the implementation phase, process-oriented role behaviour was associated with less success, however task-oriented behaviour was more successful.

Second, Pitt (1998) provides a qualitative grounded study of seven community-based “collaboratives” to address poverty in a neighbourhood. Although the description of collaboration and research conducted was vague, she appears to have interviewed 70 individuals leading neighbourhood agencies. While finding many challenges, her findings also indicated conditions influencing success: organizations paying attention to funding, providing enough time, and practicing the principle of inclusiveness within the community.

Finally, the Canadian Association of Family Resources Programs (CAFRP, 2004) undertook a one year study of six different collaborations across Canada. Members from health, social service, and health organizations joined together in order to integrate services through community development, for children and families in each community. Researchers observed the collaborators and family resource centre processes as well as collected collaborator data via survey and interviews. 67 partner organization informants

across the six communities were interviewed about what factors they believed contributed to making collaboration work. The factors most frequently cited as important for collaboration were: (a) clear goals, (b) respect for all members during the process and positive personal relationships, (c) the willingness of members to forgo agendas centred on protecting their own interests, and (d) available funds for staff time and other costs.

Even fewer studies have been published for collaborations working for seniors. Although there is a rich array of illustrative case material (e.g. Bolda, Lowe, Maddox, & Patnaik, 2005), only previous Elder Friendly Communities Program (EFCP) reports were found for providing research on collaborative community development services to the aging population. The closest work comes from Cotter, Welleford, Vesley-Massey, and Thurston (2003), who conduct a gerontological study of a community-university strategic alliance for research regarding front-line health service for seniors. This qualitative study reviewed written monthly logs from three “collaborators”—one gerontological university researcher and two community administration staff. Although mixing the idea of organizational collaboration and teamwork among front-line service providers, the factors they identify as influencing the success of their venture are similar to those that other interorganizational collaboration studies identify: (a) The importance of having a strong commitment to the project, (b) cooperation between the university researcher and the agency, (c) a long history of cooperative working relationship between the university researcher and the agency representative, and (d) the fact that the university partner gave appropriate support (funding and involvement).

As shown, caution must be applied when interpreting studies of collaboration for the purpose of community development because descriptions of the group and research

methods were scant. With a paucity of studies related to collaboration for the purpose of community development, the following section will expand the focus to inter-organizational community collaboration for the broader purpose of social service.

Interorganizational Community Collaboration for the Purpose of Service

Distilling the factors involved in collaboration is a common activity among community collaboration researchers. For example, Huxham and Vangen (2005) call factors of collaboration “themes in collaboration practice.” Their book provides a compendium of several of their research articles. From their action research over 15 years with various interorganizational collaborations, they identified several themes as important factors across a broad range of interorganizational collaborations. Aside from the fact that they may overlook possibilities of differences among types of inter-organizational relationships by including different types of interorganizational associations within a broad stroke, and that they lack a clear identification of their research methods, the themes they generated from researching collaborating practitioners included: *common aims, power, trust, risk, working processes, resources, communication and language, commitment and determination, culture, compromise, accountability, and the importance of democracy and equality*. Important recurring themes generated from policy-oriented research included *learning, success, and leadership issues*. Two themes identified by the researchers themselves were the importance of a *collaborative identity* and the concept of *social capital*. Cutting across all the identifiers was the importance of adequate *membership* structures for the collaboration. They acknowledged that the themes, although presented separately, often overlap and “cross relate.” This work provides a useful broad model for assessing collaborative properties.

In another study, more specifically focused on community collaboratives, Chrislip and Larsen (1994) conducted a mostly qualitative study of six cases deemed “exemplars of collaboration.” The collaborations studied had the purpose of community renewal or planning. In addition to 90-120 interviews (15-20 interviews for each case) with collaborators and “observers,” they also completed a document review. To test their findings, individuals from 46 additional cases across the USA were selected for 92 structured phone interviews to confirm each finding. From Chrislip and Larsen’s (1994) published 1994 research, Chrislip (2002) refined categories through additional “research or experience” that “corroborates, negates, or extends our earlier research” (p. 248), including research developments in the field since 1994. Chrislip (2002) identifies three key elements for collaboration:

1. *Inclusion* (broad-based involvement and strong stakeholders groups).
2. *Constructive process* (credibility and openness of the process, interim success, overcoming mistrust and scepticism, focus on broad concerns, and good information).
3. *Critical roles* (stakeholder commitment; involvement of high-level visible leaders; support of established authorities; process experts; content experts; and strong, facilitative leaders for leadership of the process).

He also distilled two main characteristics for potential to collaborate: *Contextual factors* and *convening leadership*; eventually concluding that the more favourable the environment and the more skilled the initial leadership, the more likely the collaboration would be to succeed. His theory building of organizational impacts provides perceptions and findings which can be further tested.

In another important study, Einbinder et al. (2000) (several social workers) conducted a quantitative survey within a case study research design. They administered a survey to family services collaboratives in eight different California counties. Collaboratives included a local county child abuse agency, public, private and non-profit institutions, and businesspeople. It is curious that they completed data collection for case studies of these collaboratives (meetings observed, focus groups held), however only reported on the survey data. In any event, from a review of the interorganizational collaboration literature, they hypothesized that *Incentive*, *Willingness*, *Ability*, and *Capacity* will show “a positive relationship with collaboration effectiveness” (p. 127). Their survey findings confirmed that these were four “prerequisites to effective interorganizational collaboration.” First, *Incentive* is based on the organization’s self-interest, where “their organization is able to influence the collaboration’s goals and when the collaboration is important for the achievement of their organization’s objectives” (p. 131).

Second, *Willingness* is based on the benefits being greater than the costs, as well as the interpersonal and interorganizational trust level among participants:

The organizations involved get a fair share of the benefits of the collaboration, when there is greater similarity in the values and norms of the participating organizations, when collaboration is viewed as the best method for addressing the target population’s needs, and when the individual organizations are more fully involved in the collaboration. (p. 132)

Third, *Ability* is reflected mostly in the participants’ knowledge and skills for collaborative behaviour, or “the extent to which the members of the collaboration collectively have the knowledge and skills needed to accomplish its objectives and the

extent to which they have the authority needed to carry out required responsibilities” (p. 132).

Finally, *Capacity* is the adequacy of the group structure, whether they have a committed, responsible facilitator or “broker,” mechanisms for effective information sharing, adequate rules, agreements, and norms, as well as “the presence of an effective capacity-building mechanism through which administration of the collaboration takes place” (p. 133). In their cross-case survey, Incentive demonstrated the strongest relationship with effectiveness. They concluded that collaborating agencies must have sufficient reason to collaborate and the group’s goals must also converge with each collaborator’s organizational goals. This study is significant for its confirmation of existing interorganizational theory.

Ivery (2007), yet another social worker, describes the study of a large, diverse group of social service organizations in a collaboration aimed at reducing homelessness. Using organizational ecological theory, the connections between the 117 organizations within a collaborative were examined using key informant interviews and a survey at two points in time. In identifying the motivation to participate and the perceptions of organizational participants, Ivery found that not all organizations within that collaborative had the time to contribute to a collaboration and that a barrier for some to participating was being unaware of what role to play in the project. The boundaries of the studied group were not clear for participants; some organizations were more loosely connected and others were more committed to the implementation of the collaborative. Therefore the core of the group could be identified as the true collaboration.

Mulroy (1997), another social worker, conducted a more rigorous case study of a demonstration project to develop an integrated network of services for at risk families. Data collection included a 2.5 year field study, interviews with the collaboration and project staff, direct observation of 32 meetings, and document review. Grounded Theory was applied for collection and analysis. The collaborative was made up of several groups: the collaboration (3 executive directors) that “made decisions on governance, policy, and membership,” an 18-member advisory board, and a 37-member task force for planning and implementation. This research again demonstrates a common problem in interorganizational research, in that it is limited by the mixture of different organizational levels of practice in analysis and discussion. The concept of interorganizational collaboration was not separated clearly from inter-disciplinary teams for service provision. Clarity would be enhanced if these levels of practice were studied as separate cases within the case (using an embedded case study design). It appears that Mulroy studied the three member Steering Committee and front-line staff as the main focus of the study. Otherwise it was a study of a large collaborative group, perhaps better labelled *cooperation*, and the findings may only be relevant in a broad sense to interorganizational relationships. Putting these limitations aside, Mulroy found several criteria influencing success of that collaborative group: Developing a culture of mutual trust, maintaining role flexibility, relationship building and “building cooperative relationships,” including residents as partners, having a full-time project director, having a funded administrative infrastructure, and all partner agencies having non-profit status (which facilitates mutual trust). These factors reflect much of the other literature in this area.

In a unique study attempting to confirm or refute a previous theoretical model, Wells and Weiner (2007) conducted a qualitative case study comparison of five matched pairs of community health collaborations (ten collaborations with seven to ten organizations in each) which confirmed Doz's (1996) business model of inter-organizational collaboration. Doz's four factors for learning in networked projects were confirmed by this study: 1) collaborators define the project task accurately, 2) the collaborators have pre-existing cooperative working routines, 3) the practitioners have informal, trusting ties and communication among member organizations, and 4) collaborators have positive expectations of success and of other collaborators' behaviour. Wells and Weiner added that environmental and internal process dynamics are important to collaboration networks. Wells and Weiner interviewed the individuals in each collaborative project at the initiation of the project and again two years later. Meeting minutes, organizational charts, and progress reports were also reviewed. Wells and Weiner, as Doz had previously, noticed that the successful collaborators cycled through learning, reevaluation, and readjustment in a continuous circular fashion. Wells and Weiner highlight that even though the collaborations that they studied had different environmental contexts and different goals from Doz's, the model remained applicable and seemed transferable.

In another attempt to test a theoretical collaboration model, Prefontaine et al.'s (2001) collaboration process model, Dawes and Eglene (2004) provide a comparative case study of 12 collaborations selected from Canada, US, and Western Europe. An international network of field researchers prepared case studies of apparently successful efforts in their countries, in order to identify challenges and factors for success. Each case

had a collaboration agreement between public sector agencies and public and non-profit organizations to deliver government services with an information services component. These formal agreements specified the purpose of the collaboration for the delivery of a public service such as health care, economic development, or public access to government information, and specified the sharing or allocation of associated responsibilities, risks, benefits, and resources. After collaborator interviews and document review for each case, data were coded, and selected from the preliminary model to see how well it fit the experiences represented in these 12 cases. New codes or factors were added as they appeared in the data. The model did not fit with the new cases in two ways: 1) some themes identified in the case data were not present in the model, and 2) some of the model themes were not found in the case data. The newly presented model introduced the importance of cultural influences, adaptation, and informal factors such as the shifting of roles and responsibilities and the gradual expansion of trust and learning.

In a more recent description of this research, presenting the findings over a two-year study of 11 of these cases, Dawes and Préfontaine (2003) found that each collaboration had unique underlying normative structures, and resulted in various work styles (structured vs. informal and/or equality vs. hierarchy) among the 11 collaborations they studied. They also found that roles and responsibilities among collaborating members shifted, depending on the stage of the project. When the organizations involved perceived legitimacy for the project, the collaboration was more successful. This study was unique in its inclusion of the impacts of informational technologies on collaboration. They concluded that communication and resulting services worked best when the

technology tools used by the project were appropriate and flexible. In a further analysis of those data (Center for Technology in Government, 2004), four success factors were found across all developmental stages: 1) leadership that took a variety of forms, 2) interpersonal trust in the motives and competence of the participants, 3) risk management, and 4) a variety of information sharing such as formal governance and informal problem-solving. Dawes and Préfontaine (2003) added that informal relationships were key to the success of the collaborations, and found that a collaboration agreement or similar formal structure aided the relationship development. The study has been disseminated with presentation of separate cases, a practitioner-oriented management guide, and an international colloquium.

Harrison, Lynch, Rosander, and Borton (1990) performed a qualitative 3-year evaluation, conducting critical incident interviewing with 49 individuals involved in a collaboration to increase coordination among handicapped children's service organizations in San Diego. Although this was an attempt to evaluate the program, they found more of their findings related to process: they concluded that "the number of incidents concerning the general process issue of collaboration indicates that the type and quality of process interactions are relatively more important than the actual products created by and events sponsored by the project" (p. 75). Unfortunately they compounded two types of dimensions within their evaluation: evaluation components talking about "How will we know when we are successful?" (Patton, 2002) and the process factor assessment which indicates "What do we do to be a successful collaboration?" Nevertheless, they uncovered important process factors and behaviour critical to the success of this particular consortium, which were: (a) "developing new ways to meet

community needs,” (b) communicating or “the information flow—the speed, clarity, and accuracy of information provided and the manner in which it is communicated—is central to the effectiveness of interagency coordination and collaboration efforts” (p. 73), (c) networking and increasing awareness, (d) being responsive, and (e) “neutralizing territory issues” (p. 69) such as “competitiveness, parochial interests, and consideration of political bases” (p. 75).

Several studies have come forward as a result of the progression towards integration of social service in North America. Several rigorous case studies have been completed to study the interagency collaborations in the field of early intervention (for example, Dunlop, 2002; Fountain, 2002; Starr, 2001; Tseng, 2004). Others have performed case-comparisons, for example, Page (2003) reports on his document analysis and 40 interviews with participants in the social service integration and collaborative efforts that have occurred in the States of Vermont and Georgia. Page listed five main components of collaborative practice that he developed from a review of theoretical collaboration manuals and his own data: “Agreeing to work together... Planning... Assessing progress... Improving performance... Allocating and mobilizing resources” (p. 317-318). He also noted apparent improvements in health and well-being indicators corresponding to the duration and intensity of collaborative efforts in various communities.

In a similar study to Page (2003), Ragan (2003) reports on an analysis of service integrations at 60 sites in 12 U.S. states. Seven collaborations were identified in this qualitative study, with organizations including income support programs, employment and training programs, child care programs, child welfare programs, and other human

service organizations. After interviews with more than 200 managers, staff, and political leaders, across several sites attempting to integrate services strategies, the findings were combined with all the integration sites, not only the collaborations, therefore again limiting the ability to specify findings particular to collaborations. With that caution, Ragan found the following factors important for collaborating successfully:

Effective leadership; skillful management; community involvement; strong political support; simple governance structures; a clear mission that is regularly reinforced; adequate resources; a willingness to experiment, take chances, and occasionally fail; open communication processes; and plenty of teams, meetings, patience, and time. (p. 3)

Yet another type of strategic alliance, the coalition, also has a body of specific research and is not intended to be covered within this review. The coalition is focused on advocacy and cooperation, rather than true collaboration (Bailey & Koney, 2000). However, the state of the leading research in the broad interorganizational area is demonstrated by the examination of coalitions by Mizrahi and Rosenthal (2001) and Derose, Beatty, and Jackson (2004) and their examination of successful factors within community coalitions—therefore these are relevant studies.

Mizrahi and Rosenthal (2001) describe a comparative qualitative study using interview methodology with coalition-builders. They take the literature farther than others by attempting to define criteria for success in collaborative coalitions, and also suggest who would best evaluate the coalition. Most saliently, this study takes into consideration more than a few projects. They studied forty collaborative coalitions working toward social reform in the New York/New Jersey area. They held three focus groups to assist them in developing a 600-item questionnaire that included mostly closed-

ended questions with some open-ended questions about what participants had learned from collaborative coalition participation. Some questions included specific reference to collaboration. The administration of this survey instrument was through forty interviews with coalition participants. Grounded theory methodology was used to analyze the open-ended question responses. Although factor analysis of the survey resulted in no significant patterns emerging, their qualitative analysis of the focus group data assisted the authors in finding four important components for successful coalition building. These included (a) favourable environmental conditions; (b) members committed to achieving the common goal through coalition; (c) members making necessary contributions (resource, ideology, power); and (d) the group having the competence to achieve the goals, maintain leadership, and sustain the membership. They also found strong indication of the importance of leadership characteristics in the initiation and maintenance of collaborative coalitions. Therefore, this study indicates that certain preconditions and process may be predictors of successful coalitions. We know more research is required to clarify the differences and similarities between coalitions and collaborations (Beatrice, 1990). Arguably, this study is not transferable to collaboration because it studies coalitions, not collaborations; however it is looking at the factors required for successful coalitions, and a similar inquiry guides my research.

In another very relevant study, Derosé, Beatty, and Jackson (2004) conducted a study of a United States Community Voices coalition. This initiative included many organizations in the Miami-Dade community which were funded and recruited for advocacy to improve access to health care. Coalition members included a non-profit social service agency, a health care provider for the homeless, the local United Way of

Miami-Dade, the RAND Health organization, among others. The researchers studied the group through site visits, stakeholder interviews, document review, and the administration of the Wilder Collaboration Factors Inventory (WCFI). The results of the WCFI indicated the group had strengths in the area of “favorable political and social climate”. The group demonstrated challenges for having “sufficient funds, staff, materials and time” and “history of collaboration or cooperation in the community” as well as lacking “trust, reluctance to compromise, and low levels of participation among partners” (p. 65). This study is a significant for the purpose of my review due to its use of the WCFI, and the attempt to provide scale reliability data for those WCFI items with more than one factor. Importantly, the researchers found the WCFI to be a useful tool for assessing their coalition.

In one final diversion to relevant outside literature, “business” provides some good examples of what may be possible for further social service research in collaboration. Collaboration has become a recent trend in corporate strategy, where businesses come together to provide a service to their customers that they could not have on their own. Hamel, Doz, and Prahalad (1989) spent several years researching 15 corporate alliances around the world through observations of collaborative interactions. Kanter (2002) studied 37 companies in alliance from 11 countries conducting more than 500 interviews with collaborators. Both of these studies uncovered common criteria for successful business collaboration. For example, the human relationships within collaborations must be attended to in order for them to succeed. At the early stages, when common needs and visions bring collaborators together, and then when organizations develop more formal plans for collaboration, it is important to develop and maintain good

personal relationships between organizational leaders. Once the group becomes more stable and sustained, communication must continue for collaborative actions. If the collaboration continues over a long period, the participating organizations are internally changed. Also, conflict is expected and harmony is not necessarily analogous with collaboration. Successful collaborations respect the individual collaborator's identifying boundaries. In the realm of for-profit organizations, these findings seem to match the findings within the non-profit collaboration literature, and may provide useful theory for further examination of non-profit social service collaborations.

A range of factors influencing successful collaboration have been identified through this previous research. These independent studies have provided a depth of understanding for these particular cases and have begun to uncover criteria and principles of collaboration at a conceptual level. Many studies suggest potential conditions or tenets for collaboration process. More recently, some authors have reviewed or meta-analyzed these existing studies to develop theory for collaboration (Centre for Collaborative Planning, 2005; Mizrahi & Rosenthal, 2001; Wildridge, Childs, Cawthra, & Madge, 2004). These attempts to consolidate the literature provide introductory frameworks for understanding of factors influencing successful collaboration.

Perhaps the most rigorous and comprehensive attempt at consolidation of the empirical community collaboration literature is offered by Mattessich, Murray-Close, and Monsey (2001). They make a significant contribution through their review of research literature and meta-analysis of factors for successful community collaboration.

From the factors uncovered by Mattessich et al., the *Wilder Collaboration Factors Inventory* (WCFI) was developed (Mattessich et al., 2001). Although Mattessich et al.

included a few community-university demonstrations in their development of the Wilder Collaboration Factors Inventory (WCFI), they attempted to provide a broader focus on all “human services, government, and other nonprofit fields” (p. 63) in their development of successful collaboration conditions. They identified collaborative skills and approaches and categorized factors influencing success into 20 factors separated into six categories as follows:

1. Environment (those factors that reflect the community climate for the collaboration);
2. Resources (funds, staff, materials, time, and skilled leadership);
3. Membership (cross-sectional representation, members demonstrate ability to compromise, trust, respect, at the same time members see the collaboration as in their self-interest);
4. Purpose (goals, vision, unique purpose);
5. Communication (open, frequent communication within informal channels); and
6. Process and structure (ownership, multiple layers of participation, flexibility, clear roles and responsibilities, adaptability, appropriate pace).

This framework for understanding, with its categories and factors, can be used to guide future research. Townsend and Shelley (2008) provide a validation of the Wilder Collaboration Factor Inventory (WCFI) using 572 employment security staff in various locations including community colleges in the USA. Their factor analysis supports the constructs found in the WCFI. Also, Derose, Beatty, and Jackson (2004), reporting on their study with 60 health care collaborator respondents, included reliability measures which indicated support for most of the WCFI constructs.

Several of the general interorganizational community collaboration success factors are also identified by other community-university projects; however adding

university researchers to interorganizational community collaboration creates an added dimension for study. The following section will review the most relevant empirical materials specific to community-university human service research collaboration.

Empirical Literature for Community-University Collaboration

Researchers are calling for more university-community collaboration (Greenwood & Levin, 2003). While there is considerable literature describing collaborations among universities and communities, Buckeridge et al. (2002) note that “relatively little research has examined the actual process of collaborative research” (p. 1193). Most studies specifically conducted on university-community collaborations provide beginning exploratory theory building (Buckeridge et al., 2002; Maurrasse, 2001; Metzler et al., 2003; Nahemow et al., 1999).

Studies of collaborative process in community-researcher strategic alliances commonly tend to suggest potential criteria or tenets for a successful collaboration. Therefore, there exists a beginning base of literature on potential university-community factors that influence collaborations for human service research. Generally these studies observe that the collaborative process takes time, and that leadership, the equal sharing of decision-making, building trust, and respect for differences among community-university collaborators is important (Bickel & Hatstrup, 1991; Corse & Hirschinger, 1996; Gilling, 1994; Peterson, 1993; Rovegno & Bandhauer, 1998; Somekh, 1994; Strand et al., 2003). However, each study identifies slightly different factors, providing different lenses for looking through when examining each unique collaboration.

A few recent studies illustrate the prominent forms of process research in community-university collaboration. As a first example, in a Canadian study of community-university research efforts, Buckeridge et al. (2002) report on their qualitative study of the collaborative process in the relationship between community-university partners to implement and research a computerized health-tracking system in Toronto. Buckeridge et al. used a case study approach with an external researcher for participant observation, review of historical written data, and interviews with collaborators. “Interviews focused on the interviewee’s history of involvement with the project, experiences of working with the other partners and perceptions of facilitators and barriers to collaboration” (p. 1199). They found that the collaborative process took more time than expected, that leadership was important, that uncertainty and ambiguity is a factor in these efforts, and that universities must incorporate the value of university-community collaboration as the core of their academic policy in order for these ventures to be properly facilitated.

In a related study, Metzler et al. (2003) conducted a tri-site qualitative cross-case study in which they collected documentation on three community-university participatory research collaboratives and conducted 51 interviews with participants (half academic and half community “partners”). After qualitative data analysis, they prepared three separate reports for each site, and identified common themes after comparing the three sites. Although a post hoc comparison, they found that common factors for the three sites in the successful development of collaborations included “sharing decision-making, defining principles of collaboration, establishing research priorities, and securing funding” (p. 804). Principles of collaboration were developed “from scratch” within each site. Similar

to many others reporting in this area, a review of the literature on collaborative factors was not evident. Metzler et al. concluded by stating that “time, patience, commitment, and willingness to compromise were necessary for growing trust and building partnerships” (p. 806). They also emphasized the importance of building trust with the researched community and having the “community-as-full-partner” (p. 809).

In multi-method research on a large Connecticut academic-community collaborative consortia, Nahemow et al. (1999) also found that before successful research could be conducted, the researchers needed to develop trust with the collaborators and community. Trust was developed by including all consortia members in the research planning, creating bylaws, and asking each collaborator to contribute equally and partake in shared ownership of the project. Four campuses of the University of Connecticut and two colleges were members of this on-going consortia. Two research projects were completed, one with a single researcher evaluating staff learning needs, and the second with a large team of researchers evaluating the community collaborator facility environment through observation, client interviews, questionnaires, and secondary data analysis. Collaboration among academic institutions was exemplified by students performing research often under supervision from other academic institutions. Nahemow et al. described how “research meant different things to different people” (p. 299), therefore academic institutions involved in the collaboration found it useful to pursue research questions posed by the practitioners in the field. In addition, students found they were developing new skills, and the community collaborators found that they could use the program research for improving their service as well as for promoting their service in the community (Nahemow et al., 1999). As I previously mentioned, many of the reports

on community-university initiatives provide suggestions for factors involved in the collaborative process, and Nahemow et al. are no different. They conclude in their discussion that underlying criteria for successful collaborative research are: (a) clear roles, (b) attention to development, (c) clear expectations, and (d) attention to ethics.

Studying the construct of collaboration at a more general, environmental level, Maurrasse (2001) describes his construct for study broadly as “higher education/ community partnerships,” defined as “any of a range of initiatives based at an institution of higher education, designed to enhance local neighborhood through some working relationship with residents and institutions in those areas” (p. 197). He reports on his qualitative study of four higher education campuses and their system for partnership with communities in need. He interviewed 90 individuals and reviewed the relevant literature. Maurrasse’s multiple-case study of university demonstrations with their communities and the impacts of university missions on community collaboration attempts, found the following interesting process and contextual factors influenced the collaborations: the type of university, the historical relationship between the partners, power relationships between the university and the community, the availability of external funding, the relative support of the public sector, the capacity of community-based institutions and governing structures, the institutional culture of the university, the historical mission of the university, the backgrounds of the university representatives, and demographics (in both community and university). He suggested that the higher education institution clearly define a mission “so that service becomes a higher priority” (p. 193). His study, as well as these other studies mentioned, add to the literature and advance understanding of

the issues involved in creating a system that encourages collaboration for higher education institutions with community.

In another relevant study, Bell-Elkins (2002) provides a qualitative case study with 22 individual interviews, document review, and participant observation of three meetings of university researchers, police officers, businesspeople, public, and non-profit organizational representatives. Going further than most others studying collaboration, she tested existing collaboration theory. She used the Community-Campus Partnerships for Health (CCPH)'s "Nine Principles of Good Practice" (1998) for a theoretical frame to examine the factors influencing the studied collaboration. These nine principles are the importance of

1. Having a common mission, goals, values and measurable outcomes.
2. Relationships with mutual trust, respect, genuineness and commitment.
3. Building on identified strengths and assets—also addressing areas that need improvement.
4. Balancing power among partners and share resources.
5. Clear, open, accessible communication between partners, making a priority to listen to each need, develop a common language, and clarify the meaning of terms.
6. Establishing roles, norms, and processes for the partnership with the input and agreement of all partners.
7. Providing feedback to, among, and from all stakeholders in the partnership, with the goal of continuously improving the partnership and its outcomes.
8. Partners sharing the credit for the partnership's accomplishments.
9. Partnerships taking time to develop and evolve over time.

Unfortunately, the Principles of Good Practice (CCPH) were developed mostly by a group of practitioners at a conference in 1998, and not necessarily based on research. From studying this 11-year-old collaboration, she identified that all the nine CCPH principles applied to this case and added a new theme. She also noticed that the project requires attention be paid to emphasizing community within relationships. For example, “Community and University leaders need to allocate resources in the form of personnel, policies, and procedures to support the goals of the partnership...the partnership should be regarded as a community-based committee,” and “leaders within the community need to share leadership with the University...Partnership meetings should be held in the community, at off-campus sites” (p. v). She also comments on the importance of a common theme among many of these studies—the importance of trust-building activities between collaborators.

Similar to Bell-Elkins (2002), Reiniger (2003) also used the Community-Campus Partnerships for Health (CCPH)’s theoretical “Nine Principles of Good Practice” (1998) as a theoretical frame to examine the conditions influencing success within her studied collaboration. The simple qualitative study involved interviewing the senior staff from three not-for-profit organizations, which comprised the collaborating group governing a regional Best Beginnings program in New York. She compared the CCPH’s nine principles to the collaborating groups to determine her findings. Her findings confirmed the previous identified factors, and identified another principle not articulated in the CCPH principles—the presence of a strong, trusted leader.

Summary

In summary, the most rigorous research on community-university research collaborations is comprised of qualitative studies of university community collaborating groups. Only a few studies included cross-case comparisons (Maurrasse, 2001; Metzler et al., 2003; Nahemow et al., 1999) and other researchers studied singular cases. The findings from these studies indicate that factors influencing success of university-community collaboration include: trust building, shared/strong leadership, commitment of time, clear roles, shared contributions, shared power, and inclusion of the community perspective. Also, many of these studies recommend that universities must incorporate the value of university-community collaboration into their institutional mission. Table 1, below, provides a summary of these community-university research collaboration studies and commonly identified success factors.

Table 1. Community-University Research Collaboration Studies and Commonly Identified Success Factors

Collaboration Factor	Buckeridge et al. (2002)	Metzler et al. (2003)	Nahemow et al. (1999)	Maurrasse (2001)	Bell-Elkins (2002)	Reiniger (2003)
Building trust		✓	✓		✓	✓
Time/attention to collaboration development	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Development of clear roles			✓		✓	✓
Attention to leadership	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓
University is inclusive to community	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓

The factors identified for community collaborations appear to fit with the literature for interorganizational community-university research collaboratives, particularly: attention to trust and relationship building, sharing the credit for the group's accomplishments, the need for shared leadership, the time available, adequate resources, and home organizations committed to the act of community collaboration (Bell-Elkins, 2002; Buckeridge et al., 2002; Connors & Seifer, 2000; Metzler et al., 2003; Nahemow et al., 1999; Reiniger, 2003). A fit between the academic need to uncover global theoretical factors and the communities' need to focus on their own context is required in order to conduct collaborative research between universities and communities (Haig-Brown, 2001). Similar collaborative values arise, such as a guiding principle of inclusion, equality among participants to influence the process, respect and clear communication, and having a vision for research that is conducted with respect for the community.

Gaps in the Literature

Although common factors for successful community-university partnerships surface consistently throughout the array of case studies and reflective literature, in general, the literature on interorganizational collaboration is at a beginning stage of theory formation. There is opportunity to build on this existing literature. The current state of research literature throws some light on the process of collaboration and sets the stage for future research.

For future research, conceptual improvements could be made in four main areas. First, researchers could use the existing literature as a platform from which to extend their own research. Unfortunately, apart from Mattessich et al. (2001), Chrislip (2002),

Roussel, Fan, and Fulmer (2002), Zizys (2007), or Huxham and Vangen (2005), an inadequate review of literature on successful collaborative factors was common across most studies of collaboration (Einbinder et al., 2000). Second, the possible impact on relevant factors due to stage or phase of the group could be more adequately considered. Third, researchers could intentionally make comparisons between similar types of collaboratives, or choose to compare diverse types of collaboratives, rather than studying them in combination. The elusiveness of the categorization of collaboration was demonstrated in most empirical work that studied more than one case. Further researchers could not only clarify their conceptualizations of collaboration, but could also avoid mixing teamwork at the front-line service delivery and interorganizational collaboration within case analysis (for examples, see Cotter et al., 2003; Mulroy, 1997; Schmitz, 1999; Summers et al., 2001). Fourth, report writing could be clearer. The transferability of the current body of literature is generally weak—particularly for those studies screened out for the purpose of this review—and the extent to which a reader can transfer research findings to their own context depends on the degree to which the research can fit with the reader's own scenario. For example, I found it difficult to compare many of the related research articles to my research case because of inadequate description of many of the cases presented. I hope that this study will respond adequately to these gaps.

Although some questions have been answered (for example: How can we define collaboration? and What are factors involved in collaboration? or What might be some characteristics of community-university collaboration?), glaringly unanswered questions remain, such as: Which factors seem to be more important? Mattessich et al., (2001) call for more research into the relative importance of such factors, and they state that “we lack

sufficiently precise research findings to assert the relative importance of one factor over another” (p. 55).

Other questions include: Do the existing compilations of factors influencing success of collaborations fit all cases? Are there any other as-yet-unidentified factors or explanations for a group’s successful collaboration? Are there differences in the success factors depending on the type of collaborative? To begin to answer these questions we need to continue to build an empirical base from study of specific cases, while specifying clearly their type and stage of collaboration.

Therefore, many questions remain regarding interorganizational community collaboration. Kegler, Steckler, McLeroy, and Malek (1998) note that, given the major role of collaborations in community services, “it is surprising how little is known empirically about this approach” (p. 338). People are expected to collaborate without the knowledge or skills required to carry out successful collaborations. More empirical attention is required to clarify these process factors. Einbinder et al. (2000) agree that “much more needs to be learned about the steps needed to facilitate effective interorganizational collaboration” (p. 138).

More specifically, researchers are calling for further clarification of the conditions involved in collaborations. Einbinder et al. (2000) state: “research about specific factors that influence collaborative success—or failure—is limited” (p. 121). They go on to conclude:

Much has yet to be learned about the organizational and managerial factors needed to harness effective collaboration. It is imperative that we develop a better understanding of these requirements, so that policy makers, administrators, and community members can work together to

create collaborative systems that truly enhance the quality of life of those with the greatest needs. (p. 120)

We need more empirical inquiry into the characteristics required for success. As Mattessich (1999) states, “additional research can clarify: which factors may be most critical; which factors, if any, can be combined (as equivalent concepts); and whether any other success factors exist, which research has not yet identified” (p. 21-22). Validation of the WCFI has recently begun (Townsend & Kyna, 2008), suggesting that the use of the inventory would also be useful for future quantitative studies. We need to further understand the organizing elements of the collaborative process in interorganizational community collaboratives to advance the knowledge base in this area.

And although collaborations studied in the literature included membership from inter-sectoral government departments, and community service organizations, few empirical studies were found that included public, non-profit, and university joined in working toward client-led community development. Because community development has become one of the missions of many universities (Williams, 2003) we can anticipate some empirical studies occurring soon. Buckeridge et al. (2002) comment on the gap in the community-university collaboration literature when they state, “while the existing literature provides broad descriptions of issues in collaborative research, there has been, to date, no rich, detailed study of the process of collaboration between the partners as they work together on a joint research project” (p. 1194). We need to know how these collaborations work.

To summarize, conceptually, (a) there are few published examinations of interorganizational collaborations that have the purpose of providing and researching

effective community development (even fewer studies have been published for collaborations working for seniors); (b) As well, due to the increasing interorganizational community collaboration efforts across universities, there is a strong need for better understanding of how university-community partners collaborate; and (c) there is a paucity of research to confirm or compare existing collaboration factor models.

The literature also holds opportunity for more rigorous methodology. Existing literature in collaboration reveals the need to study individual cases in order to illuminate their individual collaborative processes and idiosyncrasies. The interorganizational community collaboration research literature mostly comprises studying individual collaborations. But a substantial amount of this literature lacks rigor, as demonstrated by the absence of the use of previous research, the confusion of collaboration concepts, the lack of detail in the case description, and inadequate case study methodology. A good case study is difficult to do (Yin, 2003). Many, perhaps most, studies do not follow best practice qualitative research tenets. Some do not represent thorough, systematic, thoughtful, trustworthy, and well-articulated research. We can do better. Respectfully, I hope to address some of these deficits.

My Research Response to the Literature

My study of a regional tripartite collaboration is an effort to build on theory, to pay attention to the type of collaboration, and to begin to fill these conceptual and methodological gaps identified in the literature.

Interorganizational community-university collaboration practice lacks credible situation-specific research. My case study begins to address four of the gaps in the

literature: 1) Examination of interorganizational collaborations that have the purpose of providing and researching effective community development, 2) Examination of the relative importance of contributing factors, 3) Examination of previously developed frameworks for successful collaboration, and 4) Indication of how the research contributes to relevant theory.

The individual case study offers the opportunity to study important characteristics and dynamic processes of collaboration in resonant depth (Creswell, 1998; Cromwell, Howe, & O'Rear, 1988; Feagin, et al., 1991; Gillham, 2003; Roberts-Degennaro, 1987, 1988; Weisner, 1983; Yin, 2003). Several research authorities encourage further systematic case studies of university-community collaboration (Page, 2003; Corrigan, 2000; Jensen, Hoagwood & Trickett, 1999). Due to a need for further understanding of the dynamics and behaviours in facilitating community-university collaborations, it is appropriate to conduct a qualitative case study that would attempt to uncover the experience of those involved in that type of collaboration.

Therefore, I employed case study research to study a regional interorganizational university-community research collaboration with the Social Work Faculty at Calgary's comprehensive university, entitled The Elder Friendly Communities Program Collaboration (EFCP Collaboration). The EFCP Collaboration was an interorganizational community demonstration at a later phase of collaborative development.

To establish parameters and initially guide my research I developed a few beginning questions for my dissertation research. These were

- What are the factors for successful community collaboration demonstrated and reported by the Elder Friendly Communities Program (EFCP) Collaboration?
- What are the more important factors influencing successful collaboration for this Collaboration?
- How do the important factors identified for the EFCP Collaboration compare to the Wilder Collaboration Factors Inventory (WCFI)?

Therefore, for the purpose of this study, the Primary Question I am asking is:

What are the important factors for successful community-university collaboration demonstrated and reported by the Elder Friendly Communities Program (EFCP) Collaboration?

This question was refined as I began my study, to include two more specific, Secondary Questions:

- A) What important success factors in the Elder Friendly Communities Program (EFCP) Collaboration are comparable to those identified in the Wilder Collaboration Factors Inventory (WCFI)?
- B) Are there other important success factors for the Elder Friendly Communities Program (EFCP) Collaboration not identified in the Wilder Collaboration Factors Inventory (WCFI)? If so, what are these?

My study provided an in-depth examination of the collaborative dynamics of a community-university collaboration. In doing so, it may initiate new avenues or consolidate previous findings for theoretical perspectives for collaboration. The aim of

my study is to add a modest piece of credible research to the puzzle of this form of collaboration, and to add to the knowledge base in this important area.

Conclusion

In general, unfortunately, the collaboration as a focus of research is fragmented and not fully defined. Clarity of reporting is often lacking regarding the description of context, levels of practice, purpose, and stakeholders. Only a few empirical case studies, most of which were dissertations, included the context and case description in their reporting necessary for any transferability or between-case comparison. Most empirical work studying more than one case combined several types of collaboratives.

Consequently, readers are cautioned in their review of this literature to ensure that the terminology reflects clear understanding and that the level of collaboration is defined clearly.

A range of factors influencing collaboration has been identified through existing research. Through practice experience, many authors have uncovered factors and principles of collaboration at an anecdotal and conceptual level. Prescriptive and theoretical works are very common in the interorganizational collaboration literature. The empirical literature on this area of community collaboration consists mostly of independent, exploratory case studies. These independent studies have provided a depth of understanding for these particular cases and have begun to uncover factors and principles of collaboration at a conceptual level. Each study identifies slightly different factors, providing different lenses for looking through when examining each unique

consortium. The studies suggest potential factors or tenets for a successful collaboration process.

Common themes among all the literature emerged. To summarize, interorganizational community collaboration is most successful when attention is given to trust building, leadership, communication, ensuring a unique purpose, having adequate resources, and a supportive environment for the collaboration.

The factors that influence community-university interorganizational community collaboration are similar and include: the requirement of time and patience; the need for adequate leadership; attention to trust; respect for differences, equal decision-making and power among community and university members; time and attention to collaboration development; and the support of the university organizational vision for community collaboration.

There is a growing foundation of research identifying factors involved in successful interorganizational collaboration but these factors have not been adequately tested across contexts. For example, few studies researched interorganizational university-community collaboration for the purpose of community development. We require more research on success factors to understand collaboration at the community level.

In my review of the literature, although researchers presented factors for success in their researched collaborations, not many intentionally determined the relative importance of their success factors.

We are accumulating a wealth of various lists of success factors suggested by researchers. We even have compilations of researched conditions that influence success.

Confirmation efforts to examine these developing models of collaboration practice would be useful. However, one commonality of the research literature on collaboration is the lack of synthesis of previous research and literature. An inadequate review of literature on successful collaborative factors is common across most collaboration studies. Most try to develop an original list of collaborative principles to guide their research process.

Only a few researchers draw on previous literature by comparing their case to existing frameworks for understanding. Two studies used the Community-Campus Partnerships for Health (CCPH)'s theoretical "Nine Principles of Good Practice" as a theoretical frame to examine the conditions influencing success within their studied collaboration. One coalition study used an existing empirical framework for understanding, the Wilder Collaboration Factors Inventory (WCFI), for comparison (Derose, Beatty, & Jackson, 2004). I used the WCFI in my study, which was the best framework of understanding available, for a grounding to the empirical literature. We must begin to examine the uniqueness of each collaboration against the backdrop of existing theory.

Therefore, the selection of the Elder Friendly Communities Program (EFCP) Collaboration was made to substantiate and expand existing collaboration theory. Admittedly, I am simply adding another case to the extensive case study literature in this area. However, in addition to examining relevant factors in a unique case context, which many studies have done, I am also a) comparing this case to the factors uncovered by Mattessich et al.'s (2001) review of research and b) identifying the more important factors in this case. This will provide additional theory about collaboration which future replication can test.

Finally, apart from broad frameworks of understanding for success factors, we lack theoretical frameworks relevant to understanding the process of collaboration. Theoretical collaboration frameworks are required that can include the multiple models of collaboration arising from the existing relevant theory, how-to manuals, and research findings. I present a theoretical framework for the process of collaboration in my last chapter derived from my review of the literature and my application of an empirically-derived framework of understanding.

All in all, four main gaps in the literature are responded to by my exploratory research:

- 1) Examination of interorganizational collaborations that have the purpose of providing and researching effective community development,
- 2) Examination of the relative importance of contributing factors,
- 3) Examination of previously developed frameworks for successful collaboration, and,
- 4) Theoretical frameworks specifically for collaboration process.

The next chapter discusses the methodological approach used in this research and explores relevant supporting literature.

Chapter Three: Methodology

My research is an effort to build on theory, to examine a type of collaboration, and to fill identified gaps in the literature as described in the previous chapter. This chapter describes the methodology used to perform my research. First, the chapter begins with the underlying philosophical approaches, choice of research method, and ethical considerations. The chapter continues with my questions, data collection, management, and analysis. The chapter concludes with a description of methodological integrity and the limitations of the study.

Research Approach

The research traditions informing this study were the qualitative paradigm (Miles & Huberman, 1984) and the case study research methodology (Stake, 1995; Yin, 2003). The next two sections of this chapter will provide a brief overview of these two approaches.

Qualitative Approach

Wells and Weiner (2007) recommend the qualitative approach for the study of collaboration and for testing current models. A qualitative approach to research best fits the aim of my research which is to gain an in-depth picture of the EFCP collaborative phenomenon. Four common general characteristics are evident in the qualitative research literature:

1. Qualitative approaches use a naturalistic setting (Creswell, 1998; Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Marshall & Rossman, 1999; Patton, 2002; Stake, 1995; Yin, 2003). I collected data from the naturally occurring group of

interorganizational partnering members *within their natural setting* with me, the researcher, being the main research instrument.

2. Qualitative approaches reflect the importance of participant's perspectives (Creswell, 1998; Gall, Borg, & Gall, 2003; Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Marshall & Rossman, 1999; Patton, 2002; Popay, Rogers, & Williams, 1998; Rubin & Babbie, 2005). My research relied on words and behaviour for data, through interviews, archival document review, and participant observation—attempting to know and collect *participants' perspectives*.
3. Qualitative approaches use a flexible problem formulation and emergence of findings (Eisenhardt, 1989; Gall et al., 2003; Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Patton, 2002). As new data were collected, new *directions for my data collection emerged*. The research questions evolved and new theory emerged.
4. Attention to context (Feagin, Orum, & Sjoberg, 1991; Gall et al., 2003; Gilgun, 1994; Jacob, 1998; Marshall & Rossman, 1999; Popay et al., 1998; Tutty, Rothery, & Grinnell, 1996). Lastly, including *context and historical description* allowed me to better address the unique interorganizational environment that led to the EFCP Collaboration.

Fitting with all four criteria, my study would be viewed as qualitative and exploratory research. The qualitative paradigm that guided this study is best described as *interpretive* (Denzin and Lincoln, 2003). More specifically, the *constructivist* paradigm (Denzin and Lincoln, 2003) structured my qualitative research because I assumed a relativist ontology accepting many realities. I believed that I would co-create

understanding with my participants (not necessarily coming to a complete consensus) within a subjectivist epistemology.

My qualitative research attempted to integrate the components of credible research: professional, ethical, thoughtful, authentic, rigorous, systematic, and properly articulated (Gall, Borg, & Gall, 2003; Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Yin, 2003). The next section introduces the case study research employed in this study.

Single Case Study Research Design

Case study in this paper refers to case study *research*, not to be confused with casework or the study of cases for reflective practice. Case study research has been described as *a tradition of inquiry* (Creswell, 1998) with roots in social work, sociology, and anthropology. Condensing several authors of case study (e.g. Scholz & Tietje, 2002; Stake, 1995; Yin, 2003), a case study can be defined as a research strategy integrating a triangulated variety of evidence including some personal observation, to understand activity of an entity within its environment.

The case study research strategy can be distinguished from other qualitative research on the basis of several methodological features: a) the selection of a bounded unit of analysis, b) the variety of data collection methods, c) the integration of data from a case study database, and d) the versatility of approach and flexibility of analytical method (Creswell, 1998; Feagin, Orum, & Sjoberg, 1991; Gillham, 2003; Gomm, Hammersley, & Foster, 2000; Stark & Torrance, 2005; Yin, 2003).

Case studies often include sources of evidence such as interviews, observation, focus groups, artefacts, and document review. Because of the multiple data collection methods, consideration must be given to integration of data in the analysis. Also because

of the multiple sources of data, the case study is known for its triangulated research strategy (Tellis, 1997).

Robert Stake (2000) observes that, “as a form of research, case study is defined by interest in individual cases, not by the methods of inquiry used” (p. 435). Selecting a case requires attention to its boundaries. Social workers often use the case study research method when they have the opportunity to investigate a single system with the potential to inform and respond to the researcher’s inquiry (Rubin & Babbie, 2005).

Due to the complex across-system problems addressed, case studies are most often used in the social sciences, particularly in local communities, for descriptive, exploratory, and evaluation research into organizational phenomena (Creswell, 1998; Yin, 2003). The case study method has been adding to theory generation (Feagin et al., 1991), as well as nurturing the integration of research and practice in the social services fields (Moon & Trepper, 1996).

The case study can be an appropriate inquiry method for social workers. Through a case study, we can examine decision-making processes, changes over time, social patterns, and complexities of humanness (Feagin et al., 1991). The case study research strategy is valuable when the subject of research is extremely complex or multi-faceted (Scholz & Tietje, 2002; Yin, 2003). Social workers can integrate many perspectives at various system levels within a case through an effective case study (Scholz & Tietje, 2002; Stake, 1995; Yin, 2003). We are gaining a further holistic understanding of social work practice through praxis-oriented case study research.

Case study research also appears to be increasing in recent years (Gomm, Hammersley, & Foster, 2000; Yin, 2003). Therefore, case study scholars have begun to

provide guidance for specific case study methodology, particularly for design (Scholz & Tietje, 2002), data collection (Merriam, 1998), and data analysis (Scholz & Tietje, 2002; Yin, 2003). However, because case study research is characterized by a versatility of approach and flexibility of analytical method, each case study researcher should specify their approach within the research continuum. The following section describes my approach against the backdrop of other case study research.

Research Approach on the Continuum of Qualitative Research

This section places my study on a continuum of constructivist qualitative case study research. A comparison of Robert Stake's subjective constructivist inquiry paradigm and Robert Yin's postpositivist paradigm leads to increased clarity regarding the definition of case study and the constructivist approach used here.

Case study is a unique qualitative strategy of inquiry (Creswell, 2003; Stake, 1995). The case study can include diverse inquiry paradigms and diverse methodology. Many qualitative researchers present the case study strategy fitting best within the qualitative field of research (Denzin & Lincoln, 2003). At the same time, due to its multifaceted lenses in method and yet singular observational nature, the case study cannot always be defined as qualitative, as some case study research includes additional quantitative tenets and mixed methods. However, as a PhD student learning about the case study, it is difficult to pull from the literature a complete picture of the parameters of case study research, and to be clear about how to place the case study in the realm of research, therefore a discussion of background and approach is warranted here.

When we consider the traditional choices for inquiry paradigms, the case study tradition of inquiry may not fit clearly into one. Lincoln and Guba (2003) present a

continuum of five inquiry paradigms for qualitative research, with constructivism and postpositivism presented as separate inquiry paradigms, along with positivism, participatory, and critical theory et al. as demonstrated in Figure 2:

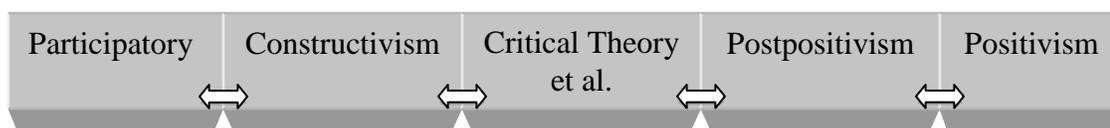


Figure 2. Lincoln and Guba's (2003) five inquiry paradigms.

Case study research can fit within any of these paradigms, depending on the inquiry question and the required research tenets. Variation in case study research can be illustrated by a comparison of two distinct approaches to case study research: the *postpositivist* approach reflected in Yin's (2003) work and the *constructivist* approach as adopted by Stake (1995). These two different prominent case study researchers, Yin (2003) and Stake (1995), were chosen because of their unparalleled contributions to the case study literature. Stake's (1995) experience in teaching educational research and doing case study research has him lauded as "the most prominent representative of qualitative case study research" (p. 338) by Scholz and Tietje, (2002). And other authors clearly associate Yin's work with the case study inquiry strategy (Gillham, 2003).

Examination of their methods and criteria for quality research provides evidence of their underpinning philosophical paradigms, as summarized in Table 2. To begin, I present an introduction of the three *inquiry paradigms* (Lincoln & Guba, 2003), postpositivism, constructivism, and pragmatism:

Postpositivism

The postpositivist accepts the scientific method where the researcher starts with a theory, then collects data to corroborate that theory (Creswell, 2003). Patterns or descriptions emerge which provide opportunity for further testing of this approximate reality in future studies (Hatch, 2002). Postpositivism adheres to a deterministic philosophy, which leads to propositions that “a given factor, when present, will increase the likelihood of a specified outcome” (Lieberson, 2002, p. 209). The postpositivist paradigm (Lincoln & Guba, 2003; Creswell, 2003) can be described as reductionistic, with the intent of studying a small set of ideas for testing, rather than considering a broader range of concepts (Rubin & Babbie, 2005). Phillips and Burbules (2000) and Creswell (2003) assist in providing key assumptions for the postpositivist position:

- 1) Knowledge is conjectural so absolute truth is never found. Researchers therefore indicate a failure to reject rather than try to prove hypotheses.
- 2) Usually starts with the test of a theory. Deductive logic is common.
- 3) The researcher collects information from participants or by observation and this data, evidence and rational consideration shapes knowledge.
- 4) Research seeks to develop “true” statements that can explain or describe the causal relationships of interest (causality).
- 5) Researchers attempt to be objective through amelioration of bias. Standards of validity and reliability are important.

Constructivism

A constructivist paradigm holds that reality is relative (relativism) and is specific to participants and researchers (Lincoln & Guba, 2003). Constructivism adheres to a subjectivist epistemology and its aim is understanding (Denzin & Lincoln, 2003).

Constructivists hold the following assumptions as identified by Lincoln and Guba (2003), Crotty (1998), Schwandt (2003), and Creswell (2003):

- 1) Meaning is constructed by researchers as they engage and interpret their world. “The mind is active in the construction of knowledge” (Schwandt, 2003, p. 305).
- 2) Interpretations include an attempt to understand context, and are based on the researcher’s own experience.
- 3) The participants’ views of the situation being studied are paramount in adding to the complexity of views (Creswell, 2003).
- 4) Knowledge is seen as “individual reconstructions coalescing around consensus” (Lincoln & Guba, p. 257).
- 5) Inductive inquiry is most common (Creswell, 2003).

A case study can reflect the paradigms of postpositivism or constructivism, or other paradigms. Unfortunately, many case study researchers do not clearly state the assumptions underlying their research process. This is reflective of the larger case study strategy literature, which is more practically oriented, and less philosophically oriented (Platt, 1992). Case study research, including my study, is frequently underpinned with some elements of pragmatism (Gomm, Hammersley, & Foster, 2000; Scholz & Tietje, 2002), so next, I briefly introduce pragmatism.

Pragmatism

Pragmatism is another inquiry paradigm that is reflected in case study methodology. Whereas a postpositivist epistemology is objectivist and tries to identify findings that are probably true (Lincoln & Guba, 2003, p. 258), pragmatists try to determine solutions to problems or build knowledge in whatever manner seems to fit (Biesta & Burbules, 2003).

Creswell (2003, p. 12) draws on Cherryholmes (1992) and Murphy (1990) to describe the pragmatist position:

- 1) Research does not require commitment to one epistemology or strategy of inquiry.
- 2) Researchers have individual freedom to choose whichever process of research that best fits their purpose.
- 3) Truth is what works in the situation, and reality is whatever actions or consequences solve problems, therefore philosophical discussion may not be required.
- 4) What is researched and the process of research is determined by what is needed to understand a research problem.
- 5) Context (social, historical, political) often requires consideration.

Pragmatists see benefits to using either qualitative approaches or quantitative approaches depending on the purpose of the research (Tashakkori & Teddlie, 1998). Rather than taking a singular epistemological stance in the quantitative versus qualitative debate, they would prefer to consider both as being compatible depending on the situation. According to the mixed methodologists, Tahakkori and Teddlie (1998),

“pragmatists consider the research question to be more important than either the method they use or the worldview that is supposed to underlie the method” (p. 21). Often the case study is used for applied purposes (Yin, 2003). Knowledge is practical and quality research can be successfully applied to practice (Patton, 2002).

Above I have outlined the main paradigms influencing the case study tradition. To further describe my approach in the current study, we require some further comparison among case study scholars as in the following section.

Comparison of Case Study Researchers

The following section compares my case study strategy with Robert Yin’s and Robert Stake’s case study strategies. See pages 93-97, Table 2: Case Study Strategy Comparison of Current Study with Two Established Case Study Strategies, for a visual summary of this section.

Although Yin (2003) does not clearly address his choice of theoretical framework or paradigm guiding his process, Stake (1995) is more helpful, providing some epistemological reflection throughout the *Art of Case Study*. Stake gives hints of his more interpretivist stance, as he says he “draws from naturalistic, holistic, ethnographic, phenomenological, and biographic research methods” (p. xi). He views his epistemology as “existential (nondeterminist) and constructivist” (p. 43). Scholz and Tietje (2002) agree and go as far as to call Stake’s (1995) version “radical constructivist” (p. 21). Stake (1995) is also helpful to identify Yin’s approach, calling Yin “an excellent guide for a more quantitative approach” (p. xii). Fortunately, we can infer Yin’s philosophy, and confirm Stake’s, from consideration of the presentations of their method and examination of their standards for evaluating case studies.

Authors of introductory research literature commonly introduce three types of research purposes: exploratory, descriptive, and explanatory (Creswell, 1998; Grinnell & Unrau, 2005; Rubin & Babbie, 2005). Although case studies are typically placed on the exploratory end of the purpose continuum (Scholz & Tietje, 2002; Yin, 2003), case study research may be used for all three purposes (Scholz & Tietje, 2002). Yin defends the case study strategy as being capable of descriptive and explanatory purposes. Whereas, a thorough review of Stake's 1995 work indicates a preference for exploratory and descriptive purposes. Understanding is the purpose of Stake's case study strategy, not "explanation" (p. 16). My study's purpose is to describe and explore. I am describing and exploring the Elder Friendly Communities Program (EFCP) Collaboration and comparing it to existing theory regarding the key factors influencing successful collaboration.

Stake's (1995) typology for case study purpose highlights another, closely related, main difference. He distinguishes between two types of single case study, intrinsic and instrumental. Stake's preferred type, the *intrinsic* case study, arises from an intrinsic interest in the case, such as a program to evaluate or a group of interest. The researcher decides what is interesting about the *particular case* (Stake, 1995). The paramount criteria for case selection, Stake argues, is the "opportunity to learn" (p. 6) and understand, from the study of a holistic, unique case.

The second type of case study, the *instrumental study*, proceeds in order to create further understanding about the particular *issue* raised by the case. Yin (2003) can be described as more often pursuing instrumental case study. Yin focuses on the issues apparent in the case (which are derived more often by categorical aggregation as also proposed by Stake (1995)).

Although my study has an interest in the particular case, the Elder Friendly Communities Program (EFCP) Collaboration, my study would more closely resemble an instrumental study. As shown in Chapter One, the EFCP Collaboration is a successful collaboration and therefore of unique interest. However, the primary question of my study relates to the factors for successful collaboration demonstrated by this case. Therefore, the issue raised by the case (factors contributing to successful collaboration) is of primary importance for this study; however the opportunity was also seized for understanding from the study of this unique case.

The difference between Yin and Stake in their purpose preferences is also reflected in their polarities of logic in development of knowledge. Yin (2003) prefers a *deductive* procedure, whereas Stake (1995) advocates for an *inductive* design. Stake (1995) first immerses himself in data collection and then emerges with categories and theories. Questions can be reformulated, Stake argues, as the case becomes more understood throughout the inquiry. Stake suggests a general description of the practical aspects of the research in a “data gathering plan” which provides scaffolding for interpreting. Stake’s plan includes the definition of the case, list of research questions, identification of helpers, data sources, allocation of time, expenses, and intended reporting (1995, p. 51). He finds that the more useful questions are constructed once into the research process. Theory is not predominating in Stake’s case study reporting; he prefers to describe the complexity of the case.

On the other hand, Yin (2003) takes a more *etic* view of case study. Yin suggests reviewing the literature thoroughly in order to develop a theory for study. Theory is either tested or developed, Yin argues, therefore the researcher adds to the research literature

from their best attempt to know both the empirical and theoretical literature. Yin begins with propositions and then collects data to test the propositions. He follows a postpositivist tenet that research should indicate a failure to reject rather than try to prove hypotheses. Yin's reporting intends to clarify the initial theoretical statement against the study's findings, with suggestions for further research required to build further theory.

Following Yin's (2003) guidance, I used a framework for understanding from the research literature as a preliminary code list in order to build on existing literature. My secondary questions emerged as Stake recommended. And in a more inductive manner, categories also emerged from my unique case.

Some similarities exist between Yin (2003) and Stake (1995), which are true to the case study strategy of inquiry, and therefore followed by me as well. Both stress the importance of developing research questions for conceptual organization of the case study. Both recommend two or more data collection methods. They both find three sources important: interviews, observation, and document review. These were also particularly important for my study.

Rather than practice open-ended questions which are a characteristic data collection method of constructivists (Creswell, 2003), both methodologists promote a semi-structured interview format, including our most self-defined constructivist, Stake. This is just one example of the difficulty in exactly pinning each of these researchers to one specific established paradigm.

Yin (2003) is certainly more concerned than Stake with using multiple sources of evidence, and demands that the researcher is competent in the procedures associated with each data collection technique. I noticed that completing a proper case study required

competence and understanding for all the data collection techniques employed. Yin more often stresses organization and systematic procedure during data collection, insisting that the researcher compile a case study database during collection to allow analysis of convergence. In my study, I followed more closely Yin's recommendations, because my research question asked about the relative importance of each collaboration factor, and therefore I required the use of database convergence of evidence techniques to determine the relative importance of each factor.

Both authors suggest analysis concurrent with data collection. However, Yin (2003) and Stake (1995) identify two different methods of case study analysis. Yin's type of analysis is more *structural* whereas Stake's analysis is more *responsive* (Stake, 1975). According to Yin, when analyzing data we are "examining, categorizing, tabulating, testing, or otherwise recombining both quantitative and qualitative evidence to address the initial propositions of a study" (p. 109). In order to more confidently conclude that a causal relationship may exist, Yin suggests data analysis incorporates: pattern-matching, explanation building, addressing rival explanations, and using logic models. He also provides a fairly clear description of these techniques, therefore providing practical strategies for analyzing case study data. In order to answer my research question, I incorporated Yin's pattern matching technique for comparing the framework of understanding (the Wilder Collaboration Factors Inventory) to my data.

In contrast, Stake (1995) has difficulty explaining the data analysis process, or what he calls the "logical path to assertions from observation", relying mostly on references to well-known qualitative researchers (for example, Stake, 2000; and Miles & Huberman, 1984) for analysis recommendations. He broadly describes data analysis as

the use of interpretation and categorical aggregation. For Stake (1995), one arrives at “assertions” through “an ordinary process of interpretation” (p. 9). He recommends the researcher “concentrates on the instances, trying to pull it apart and put it back together again more meaningfully—analysis and synthesis in direct interpretation” (p. 75), and describes a “mystical side of analysis” (p. 72). Being an uncertain student I was drawn to the more prescriptive approach of Yin, however I attempted to use interpretation and I did use categorical aggregation, in addition to Yin’s pattern matching process.

Discussion of what both researchers consider criteria for judging adequacy (Denzin & Lincoln, 2003) and rigour for case study research provides further evidence of their differences. Implying a belief in rigour, Stake (1995) describes his approach: “I seek to make sense of certain observations of the case by watching as closely as I can and by thinking about it as deeply as I can” (p. 76-77). Stake acknowledges the inevitability of the researcher’s perspective having the most influence; he wants the researcher to aim for preservation of “the *multiple realities*, the different and even contradictory views of what is happening” (p. 12). I also fall within a constructivist position, considering quality to be based on trustworthiness and authenticity (Lincoln & Guba, 2003).

Yin (2003) clearly wants to improve case study’s reputation within the social sciences and asks researchers to conduct careful case studies with systematic procedures and attention to rigour to reduce influential bias. Yin views the tests of *validity* and *reliability* relevant to case studies, fitting with a postpositivist position. Yin recommends that case study designs pay particular attention to *external validity* through using existing theory for developing the research design and using *explanation building* in order to make significant contributions to existing theory. Yin recommends attention to *internal*

validity and reliability when completing explanatory case research. I struggle with Yin's use of the terms *external validity* and *internal validity* and *reliability*, because through examination of his work, I believe there are other terms which better describe his intention, such as dependability, transferability, and credibility (Guba, 1981).

Yin (2003) describes five characteristics of an exemplary case study: The case must be significant, complete, consider alternative perspectives, display sufficient evidence, and include an engaging report. When considering quality criteria, Stake (1995) states, "good case study is patient, reflective, willing to see another view of the case" (p. 12). With regard to what makes a case study a piece of quality research, Stake posits that a case study must be holistic, empirical, interpretive, and empathetic (p. 47-48). All case study researchers try to promote the enhancement of credibility through triangulation. As mentioned above, I aim for a case study which is professional, ethical, thoughtful, authentic, rigorous, systematic, and properly articulated.

In journeying through a comparison of Yin's (2003) and Stake's (1995) methods and recommendations, evidence is developed to identify their underlying philosophy. Yin uses a more *objective* researcher stance. For example, Yin provides guidance for aiding to keep "biases" in check. Alternatively, Stake uses a more *subjective* way of viewing the social world (Sheppard, 2004). Stake (2003) mentions that "subjectivity is not seen as a failing needing to be eliminated but as an essential element of understanding" (p. 45). In comparing Stake's version and Yin's version, on a subjectivity-objectivity continuum (Patton, 1997), within qualitative case study research, Yin's postpositivism paradigm sits towards the objectivism side of the continuum; whereas Stake's constructivist paradigm sits closer to the subjectivism end. My constructivist paradigm, with pragmatist

underpinnings, sits between the two on Patton's continuum, as shown below in Figure 3:

Subjectivism Objectivism Placement on a Continuum.

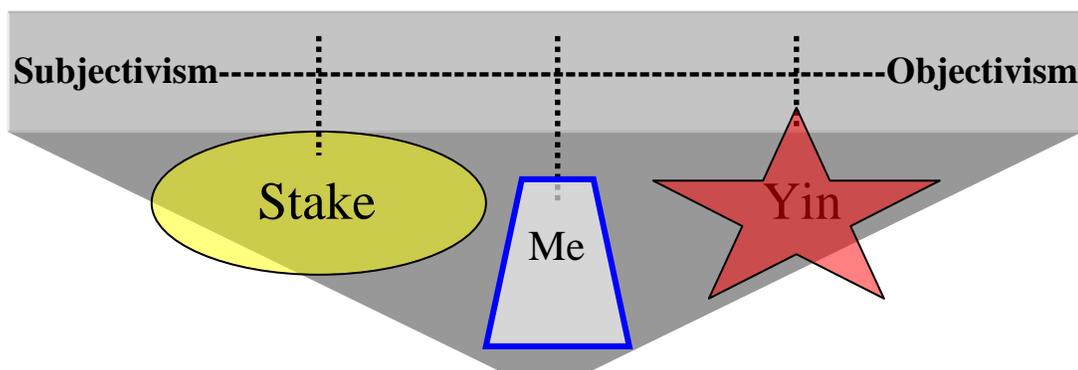


Figure 3. Subjectivism objectivism placement on a continuum.

From the evidence presented, Yin's case study methods reflect the epistemological lens of *postpositivism*, whereas Stake's methods reflect a *constructivist* epistemology. Yin's quest for precision, objectivity, and generalizability place him squarely in the postpositivist camp (Rubin & Babbie, 2005). Yin's rigorously defined qualitative methods reflect a postpositivist belief that a researcher seeks to develop "true" statements that can explain or describe the causal relationships within a study. A constructivist paradigm (Denzin & Lincoln, 2003) is more evident in Stake's qualitative research because he demonstrates a relativist ontology, accepting many realities and believing that the researcher will co-create understanding with their participants (not necessarily coming to a complete consensus). Stake's (1995) constructivist underpinnings

become apparent in statements such as, “the world we know is a particularly human construction” (p. 99-100) and “the reality we seek is of our own making” (p. 102).

To summarize, two epistemological lenses, constructivism and postpositivism, are the best fits for these two diverse case study approaches. After a comparison of this nature, I was tempted to take a stand with my research and follow one *side* or the other. However, the contribution of recent qualitative debates, particularly regarding perspectives (Denzin & Lincoln, 2003), has created a new realm of awareness in research discussions. Scholars are more likely to realize that pluralistic perspectives can assist in developing understanding. See Table 2 below for a further summary.

Table 2. Case Study Strategy Comparison of Current Study with Two Established Case Study Strategies

<i>Item</i>	<i>Case Study Strategy as Described by Stake (1995)</i>	<i>Case Study Strategy Used in My Study</i>	<i>Case Study Strategy as Described by Yin (2003)</i>
Purpose of Case Study	Purpose is exploratory understanding, possibly descriptive. Includes an understanding of context.	Purpose is descriptive and exploratory. Includes an understanding of context and compares the categories of interest. 	Purpose can be exploratory, descriptive, or explanatory. Explain or describe the causal relationships of interest.
	Particular study—to learn from the particular case. Researcher has an intrinsic interest in the unique case.	Mostly Instrumental—an opportunity to learn from a particular case, but more so to further understand the particular issue raised by the case. 	Instrumental study—to understand the issue raised by the case.

<i>Item</i>	<i>Case Study Strategy as Described by Stake (1995)</i>	<i>Case Study Strategy Used in My Study</i>	<i>Case Study Strategy as Described by Yin (2003)</i>
Method	Develop research questions for conceptual organization of the case study. The selection of a bounded unit of analysis. Triangulation of data.		
	Theory is not predominating, preference is to describe the complexity of the case.	Theory development is not prominent prior to data collection, however use empirical framework from the literature to compare with case.	Develop a theory for study. Theory is either tested or developed.
	Logic of design is inductive inquiry.	Logic of design is deductive reasoning from the use of theory. And inductive reasoning, interpretation, and comparison to further advance theory.	Logic of design is a deductive approach. Usually starts with the test of a theory.
	The more useful questions are constructed once into the research process.	Begins with a primary question that evolved to more specifically compare the framework for understanding employed.	Propositions are tested. Research should indicate a failure to reject rather than try to prove hypotheses.

<i>Item</i>	<i>Case Study Strategy as Described by Stake (1995)</i>	<i>Case Study Strategy Used in My Study</i>	<i>Case Study Strategy as Described by Yin (2003)</i>
Data Collection	<p>A variety of data collection methods is required. Interviews, observation, and document review are important. All use semi-structured interviews.</p>		
	<p>Unstructured apart from the list of research questions, data sources, allocation of time, and a record of data collection events.</p>	<p>Organized yet evolving data collection procedure (See Chapter 3, Data Collection section).</p> <p style="text-align: center;">↔</p>	<p>Structured data collection with organization and systematic procedure.</p>
	<p>Researcher has a full participant observer role.</p>	<p>Researcher is a limited participant observer.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">↔</p>	<p>Researcher is a distanced observer.</p>

<i>Item</i>	<i>Case Study Strategy as Described by Stake (1995)</i>	<i>Case Study Strategy Used in My Study</i>	<i>Case Study Strategy as Described by Yin (2003)</i>
Data Analysis	Analysis concurrent with data collection.		
	Responsive data analysis. No structure imposed. Use of art-like interpretation and categorical aggregation. Continuous interpretation while data collecting.	Semi-structured data analysis comparing data to an existing framework for understanding. Uses interpretation and categorical aggregation, in addition to Yin's pattern matching process.	Structured data analysis incorporates: pattern-matching, explanation building, addressing rival explanations, and using logic models.
			
	Integrate data from a case as the researcher decides—can use a database.	Database convergence of evidence technique to determine the relative importance of each factor.	Convergence of evidence—Integration of data from a case study database.
			
No theoretical guidance employed. Researcher is immersed in data collection and then emerges with categories and theories.	Uses a framework for understanding from the research literature as a preliminary code list. Categories also emerge from the unique case.	Heavily tied to existing literature and using prior knowledge through a review of the literature and proposition testing.	
			
Reporting describes the complexity of the case.	Reporting describes the case, and compares the initial framework for understanding with the study's findings.	Reporting clarifies the initial theoretical statement against the study's findings.	
			

<i>Item</i>	<i>Case Study Strategy as Described by Stake (1995)</i>	<i>Case Study Strategy Used in My Study</i>	<i>Case Study Strategy as Described by Yin (2003)</i>
Standards for Evaluating Qualitative Studies	Enhancement of credibility through triangulation.		
	Attempt to use interpretive methods with reflexivity.	Attempt for authenticity and including participants views. 	Attempt to be objective. Concerned with researcher bias.
	Preservation of multiple realities with the researcher's perspective having the most influence.	Aims for trustworthiness and dependability. 	Concepts of external validity, internal validity, and reliability are relevant.
Inquiry Paradigm	<i>Constructivism</i> Meaning is constructed.	<i>Pragmatism</i> with Constructivism and Postpositivism underpinnings. Reality is specific to participants and researcher. Aim is to understand a concept for practice.	<i>Postpositivism</i> Knowledge is conjectural so absolute truth is never found.

The two approaches used by Stake (1995) and Yin (2003) are within the realm of *case study research*. The case study tradition is appropriate for my study's purpose: an examination of factors influencing the success of a community-university collaboration phenomenon.

The case study is a demanding research strategy. A case study researcher must have understanding enough to choose from the possible traditions, theoretical paradigms, strategies of inquiry, data collection methods, and criteria for judging adequacy available to a case study. Consideration of my own assumptions, background, and experience is paramount. The divergence in the case study literature informs a broader inquiry view. I appreciate Platt's (1992) description of Robert Yin's definition of case study as "a logic of design, seeing it as a strategy to be preferred when circumstances and research problems are appropriate rather than an ideological commitment to be followed whatever the circumstances" (p. 46). A rational strategy to increase understanding of my inquiry question led me to a pragmatist approach.

The research question guides my selection of theoretical paradigm and perspective, my research strategy, my design, and method. I agree with Yin's (in press) statement that "the complexity is not necessarily with the analytic techniques or their mechanical operations—but rather with the logical thinking that is needed" (p. 25). Increasing awareness of the question and its place in the continuum of research possibilities is crucial. For example, although I would be tempted to follow Stake's constructivist inquiry, or have Yin's technical instructions guide me along easily, my current research inquiry fits better between the two. Since I am comparing existing theory, a completely interpretive approach, such as proposed by Stake (1995) does not fit

my aims. My research question requires that I use a more structured design than Stake's (1995), yet Yin (2003) goes too far with the attempt to match quantitative concepts to a single case study. My questions require that I do something more than Stake's exploratory approach, and move more to the descriptive-explanatory as Yin proposes, but my design is not about testing existing theory.

I require a paradigm that allows for both deductive reasoning from the use of theory I am comparing with my data, as well as the flexibility to permit inductive reasoning, interpretation, and insight to further advance existing theory. Therefore, my research questions are best studied through a research design reflecting pragmatism. The underpinnings of social science case study research usually reflect a constructivist epistemology, and draw on qualitative data. However, a case study is often done in a pragmatic manner (Platt, 1992), using a constructivist qualitative framework *with* post-positivist overtones (Gall, Borg, & Gall, 2003). For the purpose of this inquiry, the pragmatic approach as described above best portrays my epistemology.

The following describes the case study methodology employed in my study.

Case Boundaries: Unit of Analysis

The unit of analysis for my research was the collaborative system that oversaw the Elder Friendly Communities Program in Calgary, Alberta. My dissertation case was this Steering Committee collaborative group within the larger Elder Friendly Communities Program (EFCP) that I will call the *EFCP Collaboration*. The EFCP Collaboration was my unit of study. The people, systems, and processes outside this group made up the context for my case study (Yin, 2003). The active period of this study extended over more than a two-year period during the calendar years of 2004, 2005, and

the first half of 2006. Please see Table 4: Data Collection Timeline, page 113, for more detail.

Selection of My Case: The EFCP Collaboration

The Elder Friendly Communities Program (EFCP) Collaboration was selected as my case for five main reasons. First, the EFCP group was identified as a collaboration, and more specifically a consortium, and not some other type of entity. A collaboration or consortium requires that organizations have a commonly defined mission, structure, or planning effort (Bailey & Koney, 2000). Collaboration also requires that resources are pooled separately from any one organization, and the EFCP consortium had its own budget and its own Program Manager. All members committed substantial resources to this research demonstration effort, including staffing, funding, and consultation. Mattessich et al. (2001) and Starr (2001) provide guidance for the identification of a collaboration. Table 3 illustrates that the EFCP group closely matches the key features of community collaboration put forth by these authors.

Table 3. Collaboration Query for this Elder Friendly Communities Program (EFCP) Case³

Collaboration Feature	EFCP Group?
Discrete entity created with clearly defined and inter-related roles	Yes
Commitment of the organizations and their leaders	Yes
Balances ownership by individual organizations by determining authority with expediency to accomplish purpose	Yes
Equal risk is shared by all organizations	Yes
More is accomplished jointly than could have been individually	Yes
Distributed leadership and shared control	Yes
Common new goals and mission	Yes
Comprehensive joint planning and evaluation	Yes
Many levels of communication for clear information	Yes
Purpose of project(s) is to increase comprehensiveness and coherence for longer-term results	Yes
Resources are jointly secured for longer-term effort that is managed by the collaborative structure	Yes
Ability to influence other systems	Yes
Improved community as product	Yes

Second, this case was selected in order to fill gaps in the empirical literature regarding the unique type of collaboration represented by the Elder Friendly

³ Adapted from:
 Mattessich et al. (2001) Mattessich, P., Murray-Close, M., & Monsey, B. (2001). *Collaboration: What makes it work* (2nd ed.), and
 Starr, J. (2001). *Leadership and the local context*.

Communities Program (EFCP) group. The EFCP Collaboration was developed with the purpose of engaging community organizations in research and collaborative resource-sharing strategies to promote neighbourhood work with seniors. University researchers, municipal managers, health region managers, and not-for-profit organizations came together with a common vision of facilitating research into (a) senior-led community development, and (b) their own collaboration dynamics. Over six years, they conducted a large case study of their own community-university alliance while jointly initiating and then supporting a community development program targeting older adults. Because more research on the relationship between university and community is required in order to facilitate its community building potential (Maurrasse, 2001), the EFCP had the opportunity to be informative, particularly due to the lack of examination of interorganizational collaborations for the purpose of providing community development, and the lack of studies reporting on collaborations to promote senior-led community engagement and capacity building.

The third reason to select this case was that few studies reported on collaboration in later phases, and the EFCP group was at a longer-standing stage than many other collaborations reviewed in the literature. Most of the studies in the literature report on the early development of collaborations. More research was required to further understand the subsequent stages of collaborations and how we can enhance existing efforts. Therefore I selected a collaboration at a later phase of group development to begin to fill this gap in the body of collaboration knowledge.

A fourth reason that the EFCP Collaboration was selected was because it was determined to be a successful community collaboration by all participants and external

stakeholders as discussed in Chapter One: Introduction. I wanted to study a successful group that could help me describe the important factors of collaboration. With this case I was able to explore and expand existing collaboration theory regarding the factors influencing success in community collaborations.

A final reason for the selection of this case was that the Elder Friendly Communities Program (EFCP) offered to support my research through my employment as a research assistant. The Collaboration received a two-year grant from the Alberta Heritage Foundation for Medical Research (AHFMR) to conduct a study of both the EFCP Collaboration's community development process and the nature of the collaboration. The Research Committee of the EFCP Collaboration hired me to assist in conducting this research project and provided support in carrying out my dissertation research. I began working with the EFCP research project February 1, 2004 and completed the data collection of this embedded case study of the EFCP Collaboration for my PhD dissertation February 1, 2006 (final member check March 21, 2007). Therefore I was a participant-observer within the context of my case (Gillham, 2003; Yin, 2003).

Research Questions Posed

My research questions remained somewhat flexible and evolved as my research progressed (Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Marshall & Rossman, 1999; Stake, 1995). Although I did not want to constrain my focus so that other possibilities were hindered, I developed a few preliminary questions to establish parameters for my dissertation research. To very broadly guide my inquiry a guiding question was:

- What are the key factors of successful interorganizational community-university collaborations?

And in applying this question to the case of the EFCP Collaboration, I broadly asked:

What are the important factors for successful community-university collaboration demonstrated and reported by the Elder Friendly Communities Program (EFCP) Collaboration?”

As I embarked on my research, I decided to look more closely at the literature for guidance, and chose to compare the Wilder Collaboration Factors Inventory (WCFI) framework of understanding to the Elder Friendly Communities Program (EFCP) Collaboration. I began to more specifically ask: How do the collaboration success factors identified by the EFCP compare with an existing framework for understanding, the Wilder Collaboration Factors Inventory (WCFI)?

Consequently, these are my Secondary research questions that arose for this study:

- A) What important success factors in the Elder Friendly Communities Program (EFCP) Collaboration are comparable to those identified in the Wilder Collaboration Factors Inventory (WCFI)?
- B) Are there other important success factors for the EFCP Collaboration not identified in the WCFI? If so, what are these?

Figure 4 illustrates the hierarchy of my research questions.

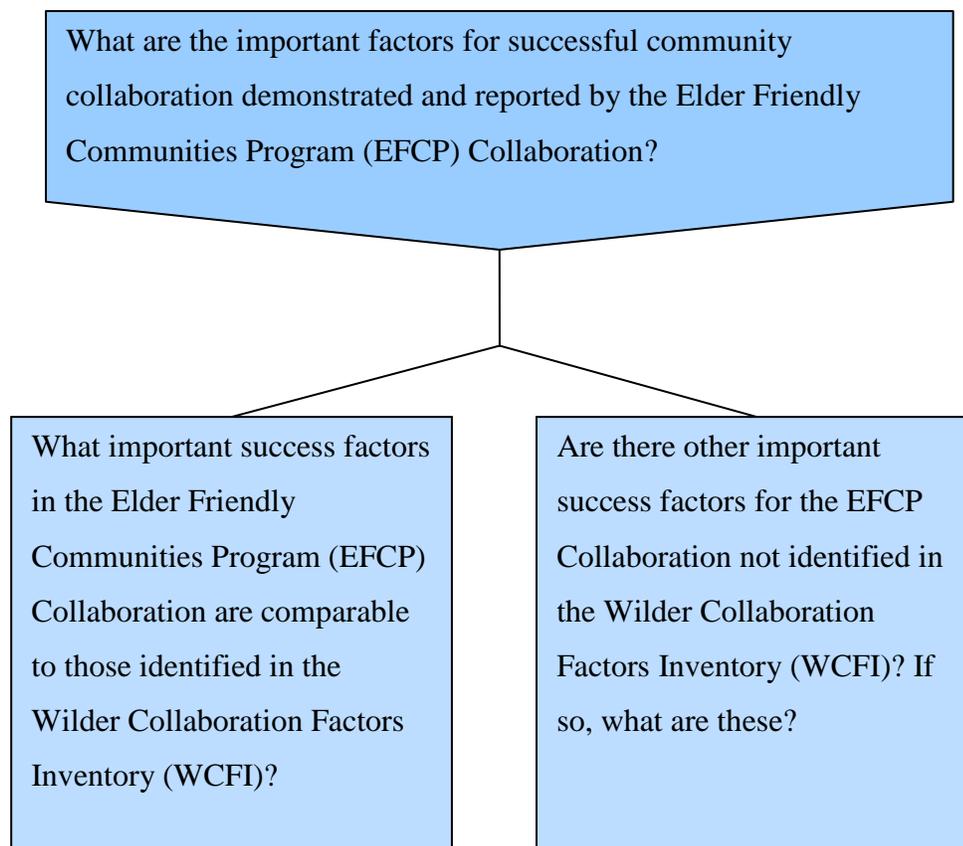


Figure 4. The Primary Research Question and its Secondary Questions.

These questions set the stage for my data collection and analysis, however first I considered ethical issues.

Ethical Considerations

Ethical principles such as confidentiality, informed consent, voluntary participation, transparency, maximum participant participation, and proper storage of research materials guided my research process. My study protected the anonymity of the participants and their roles in their organizations by ensuring that identifying information

was removed during the coding and recording process. All participant responses and identifying information was kept confidential. The data were stored in a secure double-locked file cabinet with access only by the researcher for a period of seven years from the project completion date.

On June 3, 2004, I received approval for my PhD research by the Conjoint Faculties Research Ethics Board of the University of Calgary which required many ethical components to be in place (see approval letter, Appendix A). The social work code of ethics and standards of practice also guided my research ethics. Although the members steering the Elder Friendly Communities Program (respondents in study) were not a vulnerable population, and my project involved issues of only minimal risk to the participants, ethical concerns raised did include power of the researcher, protection of participants' privacy, proper collection and storage of data, and trustworthiness of the final product.

Before data collection with the Elder Friendly Communities Program (EFCP) Collaboration began, each participant was asked to sign an informed consent form that included their right to voluntarily participate, the purpose of the study, and their right to have their privacy protected (see Appendix B). As well, participants were informed of their right to withdraw from the study at the beginning of each interview, in their informed consent form, and each time they were contacted for collection of data. I also informed participants of the Alberta Heritage Foundation for Medical Research sponsor for my study. The Research Committee for the EFCP program was also responsible for their research regarding the dynamics of their own collaboration. All were informed that

the EFCP Research Committee would have access to their transcripts before consent was collected.

Finally, the collection of sensitive material was attended to. Some of the information collected could have influenced the direction of the program. However, the intent of this research was not to provide information to assist with the consortium's functioning, but rather the purpose of the research was to further understand the collaborative dynamics. Therefore, attention was paid to maintaining confidentiality among participants as much as possible.

Data Collection

My case study data collection utilized many of the recommended sources of case study evidence: individual interviews, group member check discussions, assessment tool, documents, records, and direct observation (Creswell, 1998; Gillham, 2003; Stake, 1995; Yin, 2003). The core of the data was composed of the observation and recording of 18 Collaboration meetings and 19 transcribed individual interviews. Four EFCP Collaboration group member check discussions were held over the period of my study. A collaboration assessment tool was administered to the group, and finally, Collaboration documents and records were electronically collected. My data collection continued for over two years, past the time when my data had been coded. Data collection ended once I had exhausted my sources, had regularities emerge, and no new significant information related to my categories (Gall et al., 2003; Lincoln & Guba, 1985). For a visual overview of the data collection timetable please see Table 4, p. 113. To further clarify, I will describe each data collection method:

Individual Interviews and Their Administration

Within the case study method, I individually interviewed eight Elder Friendly Communities Program (EFCP) Collaboration members twice using a semi-structured interview format, and two EFCP members once (due to their exchange in membership). A one-year interval passed between the two interviews with each Collaboration member. In total, 10 different EFCP Collaboration members participated in 18 individual interviews and four group member check interviews. Member check topics included results from (a) the Wilder Collaboration Factors Inventory (WCFI), (b) Time 1 interviews, (c) Time 2 interviews, and (d) final observations.

Four of the respondents had been with the Collaboration from its early stages several years before. Three respondents had been involved between one to two years. One new respondent had joined the group in the past year, and one joined during this study. Respondents included three Social Work Faculty members, three public agency representatives from the municipal organization and the regional health organization, one community senior (the newest member), one non-profit manager from the non-profit agency used for the Collaboration's fiduciary responsibilities, and the staff person responsible for the collaborative program.

The first interview with each of the nine Collaboration members was semi-structured, asking about critical incidents, context, and what the participants saw as most important to their collaboration process. A scripted interview protocol was developed to guide the interview (see Appendix C for introduction and interview questions). The interview questions were open-ended to elicit relevant information and possible critical incidents. Using a semi-structured interview allowed further comparison of participants

and understanding of each individual's experience of the success factors involved in their group.

Researchers experienced in research methodology, including the faculty members comprising the Research committee for the project and the Faculty's Director of Research, reviewed the initial interview protocol draft and provided feedback and modification. The interview guide was revised and then piloted with a previous Collaboration member who was no longer a part of the group. Piloting my research questions proved important to ensure clarity and usefulness of these interview guides for my further data collection.

For the second interview the following year, the questions were revised in order to gather further data that helped to fill a few gaps in the emerging findings. These second set of interviews were in-depth interviews with the guiding question of: "What factors make the Elder Friendly Communities collaboration successful?" Prompts related to the additional factors requiring further clarification from the analysis of the first set of interviews included questions about the phases of the group process, as well as a comparison between the EFCP Collaboration and other collaborative groups the participant was involved in.

Meeting Observation

The Collaboration met on a monthly basis and had adopted a fund raising, problem-solving, and planning orientation. I observed and audio-recorded each of the 18 monthly EFCP Collaboration meetings over a 21-month period. Although piloted and then refined several times, my observation protocol guided my observation note taking, however due to its detailed content, I abandoned it once I memorized the codes. Please

see Appendix D for this observation protocol. Due to cost, only six regularly scheduled meetings were transcribed for a complete analysis. These six meetings were chosen based upon attention to spaced intervals as well as my perception of demonstrated variety, depth, and examples of factors influencing success. Observation notes were included in the database for those meetings which were not transcribed.

Inventory Instrument and its Administration

Individual members' identification of success factors for their collaboration was also measured through the *Wilder Collaboration Factors Inventory* (WCFI) (Mattessich et al., 2001). The WCFI framework of understanding was chosen because it is the only identified inventory that is based on a rigorous meta-analysis of previous empirical research in the area of community collaboration among organizations. From their review, Mattessich et al. (2001) identified twenty factors that influence the success of a collaboration. As noted in my literature review, Chapter 2, the Wilder Collaboration Factors Inventory (WCFI) contains forty questions used to rate the existence of 20 factors, within the following six categories: (a) Environment, (b) Resources, (c) Membership, (d) Purpose, (e) Communication, and (f) Process and structure.

The Wilder Collaboration Factors Inventory (WCFI) does not provide a single numerical score for a group and is not intended for comparison between collaborations. Some validity and reliability verification of the WCFI measure has been completed (Townsend & Shelley, 2008; Derose, Beatty, & Jackson, 2004). In this study, the tool was used to gather the extent to which the EFCP members agreed that their group fit with each of the WCFI factors and to enhance depth of the qualitative database. The

completion of the WCFI provided a catalyst to member check discussion and added to triangulation of other collected data.

After written permission was received from the Wilder Foundation to administer the Wilder Collaboration Factors Inventory (WCFI), I administered the assessment tool to all members of the Collaboration at the midpoint of my study. Seven of the nine respondents completed the inventory within approximately 15 minutes during a regularly scheduled Collaboration meeting. (Two members were absent during that meeting, therefore surveys were completed and collected through mailing for those two absent members.) All respondents were instructed to rate agreement by circling on the inventory's five-point Likert scale the degree to which they agreed whether their Collaboration reflected the factor identified in each question. All participants were informed that their individual responses would not be identified. Participants did not include their name or other identifying information on their completed surveys.

Member Checks

Member checking is a common strategy among case study methodologists (Scholz & Tietje, 2002; Stake, 1995; Yin, 2003). Before each member check, an interim findings summary was created and distributed to the Collaboration members. This summary provided a catalyst for discussion during their member check. After the administration of the Wilder Collaboration Factors Inventory (WCFI), a member check was held at a regularly scheduled Collaboration meeting to discuss the inventory responses. Then I led an open-ended group interview with the Collaboration after the first round of interviews were analyzed to do member checking on data collected as of Time 1. This member check indicated gaps in the current data, providing focus for the Time 2

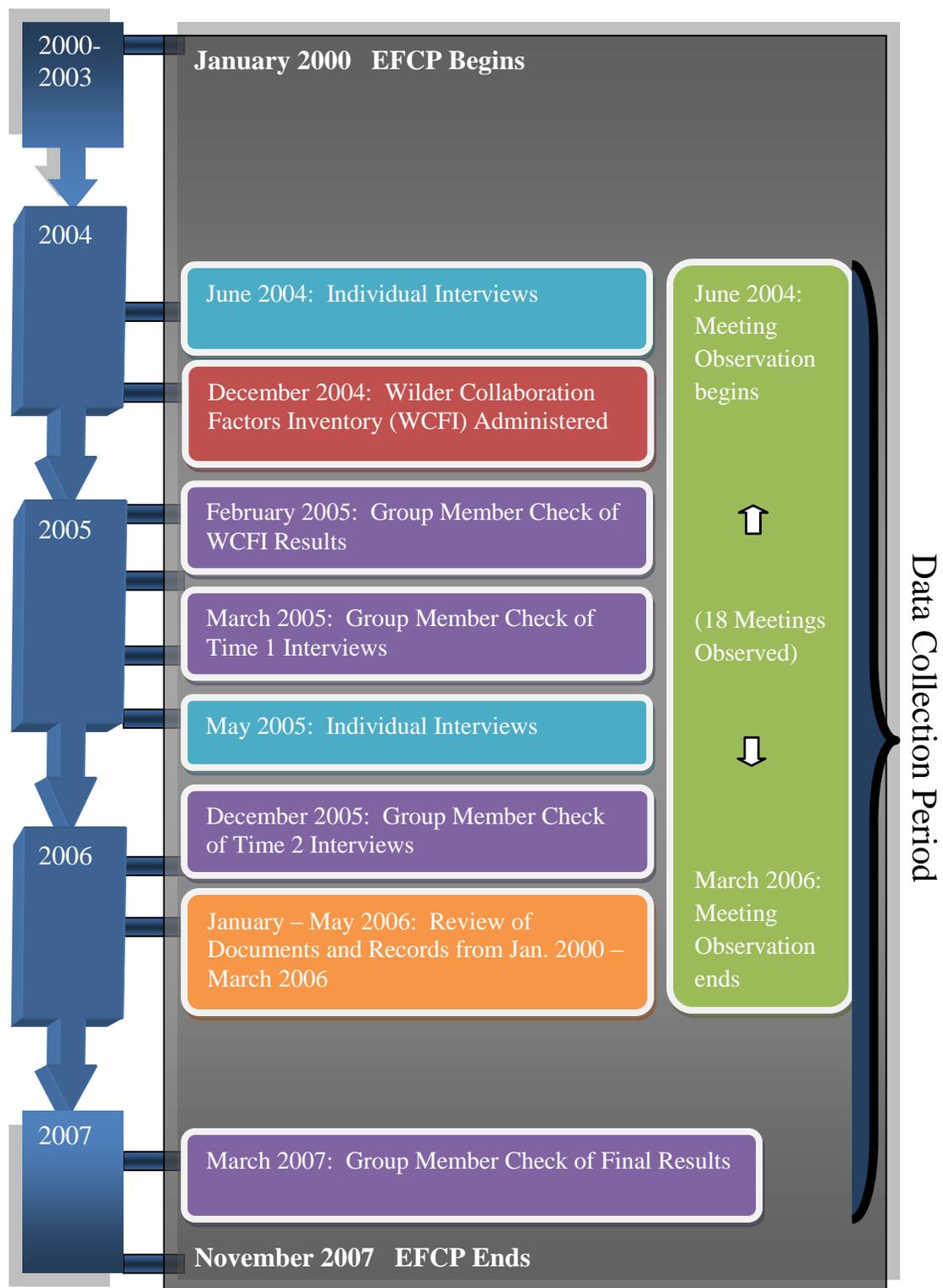
interview questions. Then, another group member check was held after analysis of the Time 2 interviews. Collaboration members were also asked to discuss the importance of each factor found to contribute to the success of the collaboration. Another member check discussion was held (March 21, 2007) once all case study data were analyzed and my findings draft was circulated, not only to collect any final data, but also to receive final clearance for the use of their data in my dissertation. These member checks offered opportunities for filling in gaps and revising to more closely reflect participants' perspectives.

Document and Historical Data

I reviewed all relevant available textual document sources from the formation of the collaboration in 2000. This included correspondence, meeting minutes, proposals, research reports, previous formal evaluations of the program activities, and related organizational documents. Certain select historical documents also assisted in developing an accurate description of my case.

Data Collection Timeline and Contents

The Data Collection Timeline (Table 4) below provides a summary:

Table 4. Data Collection Timeline (June 2004 to March 2007)

A case study database was created and maintained from the collected data. For a list of the database components please see Table 5 below:

Table 5. Annotated Bibliography of Case Study Database

Source of Evidence	Database Component	
Interview Transcripts	1 Pilot interview 9 Time One Interview transcripts 9 Time Two Interview transcripts	
Meeting Transcripts	June 11, 2004 August 3, 2004 Sept. 1, 2004 October 18, 2004 November 3, 2004 Dec 1, 2004 Jan 5, 2005 Feb 2, 2005 March 2, 2005	April 6, 2005 May 4, 2005 June 1, 2005 August 30, 2005 September 7, 2005 November 2, 2005 December 7, 2005 February 1, 2006 March 1, 2006
Meeting Observation Notes	18 Meetings Observed/Audiotaped – Notes	
Group Member check transcripts	February 2, 2005 March 18, 2005 December 7, 2005 March 21, 2007	
Inventory and results	9 completed WCFI (Inventories) Summary of WCFI results document	
Documentation	Contractual Collaboration Agreement Meeting agendas and minutes Funding proposals Research reports Correspondence through email and letters	
Archival Documentation	Computer files of meeting minutes, correspondence, and Collaboration reports.	

The audio recorded data from all the individual interviews, six selected EFCP Collaboration meetings, and the four member check group interviews were transcribed and then the audio data destroyed. All electronic transcription was placed in secure storage on a locked computer. Any hard-copy (paper) documents, and compact disk backups, were kept in a locked file cabinet in a secure office. Observation notes, analytic notes, and completed inventories and consents were also held in the same secure storage. Filing systems with directories were created in order to easily access the data when desired. Confidentiality of the data was maintained as specified in the Ethics section above.

Data Analysis

A systematic data analysis strategy was implemented to study the case study database in-depth. The general framework used for analysis was guided by Miles and Huberman's (1994) suggested activities for qualitative data: data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing and verification. Thematic analysis and pattern-matching (Yin, 2003) helped to determine how the EFCP Collaboration compared with the Wilder Collaboration Factors Inventory (WCFI) factors for successful community collaboration. I followed "linking data to propositions" (Yin, 2003, p. 26) by using an existing collaboration factors index (the WCFI) as the basis for EFCP Collaboration meeting observations and coding schemes. Effort was made throughout this study to include evidence for the rival explanation that each Wilder Collaboration Factors Inventory (WCFI) factor may not be considered an important success factor for this case. Evidence was also gathered for the rival explanation that the success of the group was the result of

other factors besides a WCFI factor. Also, because there was also a call for further inquiry into the relative importance of each of identified factors in relation to collaborations, I identified which factors were demonstrated and perceived to be most important for the EFCP group by verification through identifying evidence, considering the frequency of factors, and determining the convergence of evidence for each factor. Conclusions were drawn only once all data were analyzed.

Frameworks for Analysis

Ensuring that the analysis process is tied to appropriate theory is a component of credible research (Gall et al., 2003; Marshall & Rossman, 1999; Westgren & Zering, 1998). My analytic choice to use existing literature themes was based on a desire to add to the literature, rather than create another study that offered a new preliminary pattern. Yin (2003) provides further guidance: “For case studies, theory development as part of the design phase is essential, whether the ensuing case study’s purpose is to develop or test theory” (p. 28).

Following Yin’s (2003) recommendations for research design, my main proposition was that the Collaboration members in my case study would demonstrate specific, pre-identified characteristics, dynamics, and processes that I initially understood, from my review of the literature, to be collaborative factors. Therefore, data reduction in my study was assisted through use of a framework offered in the literature.

I continued to remain open to the emergence of new factors at the same time as using this confirmatory approach and previous conceptualization. I suspected factors would emerge that were unique to this particular type of collaboration. Miles and Huberman (1994) support this approach:

to describe and analyze a pattern of relationships...requires a set of analytic categories...Starting with them (deductively) or getting gradually to them (inductively) are both possible. In the life of a conceptualization, we need both approaches—and may well need them from several field researchers—to pull a mass of facts and findings into a wide-ranging, coherent set of generalizations ...Not to ‘lead’ with your conceptual strength can be simply self-defeating.” (p. 17)

Rather than adding to the profusion of studies that present a new cluster of success factors for their individual study, I tightened my design and used existing collaboration literature as a guiding conceptual framework for the development of my coding scheme. Creating a preliminary code list prior to analysis was also recommended by Miles and Huberman (1994): “One method of creating codes—the one we prefer—is that of creating a provisional ‘start list’ of codes prior to fieldwork” (p. 58).

My provisional code list drew on the Wilder Collaboration Factors Inventory (WCFI) which provided an initial list of 20 codes for comparison with my data. This comparison Yin (2003) calls a pattern-matching technique: “For case study analysis, one of the most desirable techniques is using a pattern-matching logic” (p.116). Using the pattern-matching analytic technique allowed for comparison of the empirically-based WCFI to the EFCP Collaboration. Other themes unique to this case, not described within the WCFI framework for understanding, also emerged from the data.

This coding scheme was built on the factors that had already been uncovered and identified by Mattessich et al.’s (2001) rigorous review of the related literature and their Wilder Collaboration Factors Inventory (WCFI). The WCFI identified 20 factors influencing success. These 20 factors were used to guide my initial coding with other themes arising as necessary through the analysis: see Table 6, below, for a list of the WCFI factors within each category.

Table 6. Wilder Collaboration Factors Inventory (WCFI) Categories and Factors (Mattessich et al., 2001)

Environment Category
<i>Favorable political and social climate</i>
<i>History of collaboration or cooperation in the community</i>
<i>Collaborative group seen as a legitimate leader in the (City Seniors)community</i>
Membership Characteristics Category
<i>Mutual respect, understanding, and trust</i>
<i>Appropriate cross section of members</i>
<i>Ability to compromise</i>
<i>Members see collaboration as in their self-interest</i>
Process/Structure Category
<i>Members share a stake in both process and outcome</i>
<i>Multiple layers of participation</i>
<i>Flexibility</i>
<i>Development of clear roles and policy guidelines</i>
<i>Adaptability</i>
<i>Appropriate pace of development</i>
Communication Category
<i>Open and frequent communication</i>
<i>Established informal relationships and communication links</i>
Purpose Category
<i>Concrete, attainable goals and objectives</i>
<i>Shared Vision</i>
<i>Unique purpose</i>
Resources
<i>Sufficient funds, staff, materials, and time</i>
<i>Skilled leadership</i>

Case Study Database Storage

As mentioned, all data collected for analysis were maintained in my case study database. Thematic and interpretational analysis was aided by the use of a qualitative research computer program which held the entire database. Use of computer-aided qualitative data analysis software (CAQDAS) has become commonplace for qualitative researchers (Weitzman, 2003). Although further scholarship on this topic is required, debates are active about the effect of the CAQDAS on the researcher's closeness to the data, the influence on the researcher's choice of methodology, and the rigor of the research (Weitzman, 2003). Some claim that researchers are farther away from their data when they are not surrounded by the physical presence of their piles of text data, at the same time others claim that the ability to link several pieces of data increases the researcher's ability to be more familiar with the data. Some are concerned that the researcher may choose to fashion methodology around the opportunities and constraints of CAQDAS, which would have an impact on analysis. Those countering believe the programs can be modified to the researcher's purpose and the researcher must select the program that best serves the method (Weitzman, 2003). At the same time, many researchers believe that CAQDAS provides the opportunity for more consistency and thoroughness within their research. Miles and Huberman (1994) argue that CAQDAS is beneficial: "computer-aided analysis can reduce analysis time, cut out much drudgery, make procedures more systematic and explicit, ensure completeness and refinement, and permit flexibility and revision in analysis procedures" (p. 44).

ATLAS.ti (4.1 for Windows 95) was selected as a tool for storing and coding the case study database because of its applicability as a code-based theory builder as well as

its availability through my Faculty. All case study materials were entered into the ATLAS.ti database and then analyzed using the codes and networks I stored in the program. My codes and themes were used to label and cross-reference the data. In addition to ATLAS.ti, a word processing program with graph and table capabilities was used for additional case description, data displays, and theoretical model making.

Text Based Data Preparation

A similar process was used to analyze all the text based data within this project. For audio recorded data, I gained familiarity with this data by reviewing to double-check that the transcripts matched the audio recording for each interview, member check, and meeting observation. Transcripts and document texts were entered into the case study database and analyzed starting with the database code list. The uniqueness of the documentation text was assisted by context definition guidance from Hodder (2003) and his support for my pattern-matching technique and the use of collaboration theory. Analysis of the six meeting transcripts and the 18 sets of meeting observation notes provided “real time” data and additional depth and examples of process.

The Collaboration members’ responses to the Wilder Collaboration Factors Inventory (WCFI) were transferred to a score sheet and each question average, range, and mode were calculated for the purpose of gathering the participants’ agreement of various potential factors for successful collaboration. A factor average was calculated for each of the 20 WCFI factors. Finally, the narrative analysis of each of the 40 WCFI item’s result was included within each matching code’s memo in the case study database.

Database Analysis Process

As data were collected it was placed in the database. Once I had the text data from my Time 1 interview transcripts, and the two recorded meeting observations from 2004, I implemented my systematic data analysis strategy to study the text data in-depth (Eisenhardt, 1989; Yin, 2003). I used a multi-phase coding and interpretational analysis process through pattern-matching (Yin, 2003), analytic induction (Merriam, 1998), and categorical aggregation (Stake, 1995).

Data reduction began with coding with “labels for assigning units of meaning” (Miles and Huberman, 1994, p. 56) to chunks of data text by concepts indicating factors related to collaboration success and other categorical data. These chunks were various lengths, and were comprised of words, phrases, quotations, or sections of data. With help from ATLAS.ti for data analysis, I started my first level coding process by looking for these meaning units. Using the Wilder Collaboration Factors Inventory (WCFI), a code list was developed and refined with several passes through the data ensuring that the new codes created as I went were also used for those that I coded at the beginning. I looked for codes that overlapped with others, merged some codes as necessary, and split codes that represented separate meaning units.

As data reduction continued, new themes arose, patterns were identified, and factors were further confirmed with subsequent passes through the data. Categorical themes were confirmed and discovered from further second-level coding of the meaning units.

ATLAS.ti also assisted in counting the frequency of themes within the data. The frequency of themes was displayed for each factor within each source of evidence

component of the database. Once the frequency of each factor for each database component was analyzed, then an assessment of the convergence of evidence for each factor was completed.

Convergence of evidence was calculated using the frequencies within each database source of evidence for each factor. Consideration was given to each factors frequency across all forms of data collection, including interviews, Wilder Collaboration Factors Inventory (WCFI), observation, archival documents, and member checks. If a factor showed high frequency across all sources of evidence, then convergence of evidence would be higher. If a factor showed low frequency within some sources of evidence then convergence of evidence would be lower.

Frequencies and convergence of evidence for each factor was used to determine the relative importance of each factor. When a factor's frequency and convergence of evidence was high, the factor was considered important. When frequency and convergence of evidence was lower than other factors, then the factor was considered less important than other factors. When frequency was high and convergence of evidence was low, the factor was considered moderately important. When frequency was low and convergence of evidence was high, the factor had the potential to be considered of moderate importance. For example, the code for the *Resources – Sufficient Funds, Staff, Materials, and Time* factor occurred 186 times within the database, which was relatively frequent in comparison with the other factors, however, its convergence of evidence was low, therefore it was determined to be of moderate importance. Whereas our factor *Communication – Open and Frequent Communication* occurred at a lower level of frequency (127 times), however demonstrated better convergence among data sources

therefore would be considered more of an important factor. Please see Chapter 4, Table 7 for further clarification.

Data Display and Conclusion Drawing

Miles and Hubermans' (1994) suggested activities of data display and conclusion drawing and verification required pulling together my case study database in a creative, reflective process. Case study analysis across all data collection methods was completed through case study pattern-matching, theoretical model making, and case description (Creswell, 1998; Hegarty & Evans, 1985; Yin, 2003). Building theory was the stage where I used visual displays and matrixes, as well as continued to note contradictory evidence (Gall et al., 2003; Miles & Huberman, 1994; Yin, 2003).

I used a strategy suggested by Yin (2003). First, I compared my findings with my initial theory propositions (Gillham, 2003; Stake, 1995; Trochim, 1989; Yin, 2003) by “linking data to propositions” (Yin, 2003, p. 26) through comparing the Wilder Collaboration Factors Inventory (WCFI) factors with the actual data. I proceeded under the assumption that the participants within my case study would demonstrate the WCFI characteristics and compared my data in order to begin to answer my research questions. I then revised my propositions, comparing, revising propositions, and repeating in a categorical confirmation process that Yin (2003) calls “Explanation Building”, and Scholz and Tietje (2002) call “conceptualizing and representing the system model” (p. 133).

In the cases where certain Wilder Collaboration Factors Inventory (WCFI) factors matched the data, then I had a stronger conclusion about the patterns (Yin, 2003). I made

a concerted effort to disprove my own propositions, looking for information that would disconfirm them (Gillham, 2003; Yin, 2003). Although the use of an established framework provided a diversion to reductionism and deduction, a search for discrepant data that did not fit my initial propositions enhanced the trustworthiness of my study (Gall et al., 2003; Gillham, 2003; Yin, 2003).

Consistency and dependability were increased by simultaneously drawing on all forms of data collection to uncover the common themes (Charmaz, 1983; Eisenhardt, 1989; Plummer, 1983). I analyzed all data continuously and together to give the “convergence of evidence” required for triangulation (Yin, 2003) thus synthesizing a new conceptualization from all my case study findings.

Following recent serious attempts to provide techniques and strategies for analyzing case study data (Miles & Huberman, 1994; Yin, 2003), I used careful thinking, logical presentation of data, and pursuit of alternative possibilities to initial theoretical propositions. I attempted to develop explanatory data displays and visual arrays (Miles & Huberman, 1984) and logic models (Yin, 2003) with my data over the two years. Curiosity mixed with systematic discipline led me to find some patterns that arose from clustering and comparing. I uncovered important dynamics, behaviours, and influential incidents. I also found certain factors to be particularly important.

This study began with a deductive approach, using a literature-based analyzing framework, the Wilder Collaboration Factors Inventory (WCFI) factor framework, and then moved to a more inductive approach allowing further categories of analysis to emerge as the data were analyzed. With this overall combination of induction and

deduction (Haytin, 1988), I was able to answer my research questions and develop a theoretical framework for practice.

Methodological Integrity

In addition to ethics, in order to examine my research in further depth, I needed to think about the core of thoughtful research—trustworthiness. I wanted my qualitative research process to be sufficiently robust and trustworthy in order to gain the confidence of my audience. I attempted to create a rigorous, systematic, credible, and authentic study in order to increase its trustworthiness (Eisenhart & Howe, 1992; Lincoln & Guba, 1985).

Using systematic methods increased the likelihood that my research was methodologically sound. Using thoughtfulness, I hoped to obtain a research product that could “foster deeper theoretical understanding” (Hirsch 2002, ¶ 9). Credibility, or whether the final products of my research reflect the data, was enhanced through triangulation, faculty supervision, persistent engagement with the Collaboration, and the member checks.

By drawing on several sources for the distillation of findings, the findings can be seen to be more credible. Case study is known for its triangulated research strategy (Tellis, 1997). Triangulation is using more than one source of data to enhance credibility (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). When “multiple sources of evidence” are used, the researcher has the ability to develop a manner of triangulating that Yin (2003) calls the “converging lines of inquiry” or “convergence of evidence” where the researcher can simultaneously draw on all forms of data collection to uncover the common facts or themes.

Triangulation assists with credibility (as well as confirmability and dependability) if each

different point of collection confirms each finding (Creswell, 1998; Gall et al., 2003; Tashakkori & Teddlie, 2003; Williamson, 2000; Yin, 2003).

Rather than embracing subjectivity completely, as Stake (1995) might, I preferred to acknowledge the potential for investigator subjectivity in my case study, and to try to increase the fit of my study with the current literature. In developing my dissertation case study data collection instruments I chose the credible Wilder Collaboration Factors Inventory (WCFI) for the basis of my data collection instruments, increasing my chance of having construct validity by using interview questions, surveys, observational protocols, and historical document analysis protocols that are more likely to be measuring what I intend to measure (collaboration).

Faculty supervision also supported credibility. I met with the three research faculty involved in the consortium every two weeks to discuss research issues. This provided opportunity for discussion of research issues, input on design and analysis of my study, and additional perspectives for development of codes.

Observing 18 monthly meetings and spending over two years in data collection provided “persistent observation” to re-check my problem formulation over time. Persistent engagement allowed enough time to gather perspectives and to have a clearer understanding of the findings (Bassegy, 1999; Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Prolonged engagement was important to engage the participants, build trust, and capture what was occurring (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). A qualitative case study requires that the study continues until a level of saturation is met. A level of saturation became evident during the twelfth month of the data collection after the survey, Time 1 interviews, and member

check was analyzed. Extending the observation to over two years likely increased credibility and authenticity (Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Mertens, 1998).

A systematic rigorous approach using member checks also likely increased my credibility. Participants' views were the heart of my research. Sharing my report drafts and performing member checks with the participants' helped to ensure I had collected what they had said (Bassegy, 1999; Stake, 1995; Mertens, 1998; Yin, 2003). Gathering multiple perspectives in my research through triangulation, using quotes of those I interviewed, and having the participants and my co-researchers review the data and findings, enabled gathering as much of others' perspectives as was possible (rather than just my own perspective) to increase authenticity (Mertens, 1998).

Research Limitations

The transferability of my study is limited by using a single case for research. I hoped to increase transferability by using enough description of the case and success factors to help the reader reflect on what might be parallel in their own experience (Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Mertens, 1998). In another attempt to improve the transferability of my case I also draw on the factors accumulated from a meta-analysis of other research cases in my topic area (the Wilder Collaboration Factors Inventory) and previous theory.

My research was part of a larger case study demonstration research project. My decision to participate in an existing larger research agenda limited the scope of my study to fit within the larger study. Expectations of the larger study funders and other investigators provided pre-set parameters which limited my study design. At the same

time the opportunity was created by those same funders and investigators for a richly educational and rewarding PhD research project.

Nevertheless, in conducting an embedded case study of a larger case study, I was constrained to a previously constructed research agenda. Alberta Heritage Foundation for Medical Research (AHFMR) funding had been acquired, before I began, for the EFCP Collaboration research design, which limited the parameters of my study. The larger project research questions were:

- What are the best practices for community development with older adults?
- What are the dynamics of the Elder Friendly Communities program collaboration?
- How do these dynamics impact inter- and intra-organizational changes in the delivery of services to seniors?

An evolution of my questions occurred as I began to proceed through the research process. My questions needed to fit within the larger project question of “What are the dynamics of the Elder Friendly Communities program collaboration?” So I developed a question of my own, this initial question asked: What were the important factors for the EFCP Collaboration? Therefore my question was framed broadly at the very beginning of the process, and because of the length of the research I had time to formulate two more specific secondary questions that related to the main question. Over time, I started to ask more specifically, which of these important factors are Wilder Collaboration Factors Inventory (WCFI) items, and which are not represented in the WCFI?

The WCFI was not my primary focus of research—it became a tool to assist with structuring observations and organizing the coding process in the analysis. And then I realized I could more specifically use the WCFI for comparison. Incorporating the WCFI

was an effective way to tie to the literature and to frame my research—not because I was trying to test out a particular hypothesis. If I had the resources at the time, and started out testing WCFI in the context of the EFCP Collaboration, then I would have attended to the external factors as identified in the WCFI.

Therefore, another limitation of this research is the focus on the internal factors related to collaboration. I observed the process of the group for over two years, so my focus was mostly on the process of the group. Because I did not include interviews of external stakeholders or external observers, I was limited in my ability to analyze all the contextual factors that might have led to the Elder Friendly Communities Program (EFCP) Collaboration's success. For example, to determine whether outside community leaders viewed the EFCP Collaboration as having the right membership, gathering perspectives from those outside the Collaboration would be preferred. However, due to the larger research parameters, and time and resource constraints, that was not a component of my study. Therefore, my observations reflect themes which likely result from studying the group in ways that mostly looked at the process factors.

At least two frameworks also limited my data: my interview questions and the factors identified in the Wilder Collaboration Factors Inventory (WCFI). The questions I asked influenced my findings and framed and limited what data I collected. In order to embed my research in the literature, I used the concepts identified in Wilder Collaboration Factors Inventory (WCFI) to help organize my thinking. Being heavily influenced by the literature has influenced what I attended to and likely constrained my thinking. The Wilder Collaboration Factors Inventory (WCFI) framework for understanding framed and limited to some extent my observations and influenced my

thinking throughout the process. To counter, I attempted to include only what the participants demonstrated and communicated. Thus, I have strayed from tenets proposed by Glaser and Strauss (1967) and the grounded theory approach which recommends that the findings emerge from the data, not the literature. My examination is more structured. My research questions connected to the literature, in an attempt to be more theoretically-grounded, with the long-term intention of adding to the literature base in this area and tying the process and problem formulation to appropriate theory (Gall et al., 2003; Marshall & Rossman, 1995; Westgren & Zering, 1998). Miles and Huberman (1994) also recommend the use of previous theory and developing a preliminary code list prior to analysis.

Using the Wilder Collaboration Factors Inventory (WCFI) framework also led me to see the Collaboration from a more general perspective rather than dynamics specific to university-community collaboration or unique to a population-specific initiative. In retrospect, the aging focus of the EFCP Collaboration powerfully influenced the motivation of the respondents. To counter, comparing conflicting and supporting literature through a preliminary literature review raised the theoretical level, assisted me in formulating insightful research questions, helped to focus my constructs, and provided insights for my design (Eisenhardt, 1989; Gall et al., 2003). And based on a detailed examination of this Collaboration, this research may contribute to the existing matrix, for the reason that some of the themes emerging from the EFCP data were not covered adequately in the Wilder Collaboration Factors Inventory (WCFI) framework. Therefore, this influence on the collection and analysis of the participants' perspectives was countered through the important opportunity to build on the literature, go more in-depth

into my data, and enhance existing frameworks. Comparison of the Elder Friendly Communities Program (EFCP) Collaboration case with existing literature substantially contributed to my ability to add to the existing knowledge base in this complex phenomenon.

Another limitation relates to the age of the EFCP group. This was a collaboration at a later stage of development. The factors influencing the success of a group at this stage of development may have been considerably different than the factors at an earlier phase. For example, the success of the EFCP Collaboration could have been due to factors such as the dropping out of previous members. Other factors related to group process at this stage may have impacted the dynamics of the group. For example, the group may have demonstrated closer relationships and more trust because of their previous experience and time in the group. To counter, I paid attention to those factors that may relate to group process at later stages of group development. The fact that this group is at a later stage is also a unique contribution of my research because of the current gaps regarding research of collaborative groups at later stages (as mentioned earlier).

Another limitation of this study is that there are some components involved in collaboration I was not able to study. I did collect information about the early years but could not observe those directly. I relied on respondent's memories of events, rather than observing the early stages of the group directly. As well, the interview data was limited by the reliance on participant memory of past events rather than contemporaneous observation of such events. This focus on discrete versus continuous time is a limitation of this study. Each dynamic discussed would be impacted by the time of its occurrence

within the life-cycle of the collaboration. I was only actively engaged in the research for two years out of the seven-year life of the group. However, I was able to review the archived documents from the beginning of the group, which aided dependability. As well, I was able to observe the group meetings for over two years. Because of the timing of the research, the final phase of the collaboration occurred after my study ended.

Three final forms of potential bias may have also been limitations unique to my research situation. First, the EFCP Research Committee reviewed my interview transcripts, which was a limitation as well as a benefit to my study. These researchers were also participants in the research study because they were members of the EFCP Collaboration that was the focus of my research. Because these three respondents were a key part of the research process, other respondents may have responded with a tendency toward social desirability. For example, mid-way through my pilot individual interview with a non-researcher Collaboration member, before answering my question “Can you tell me of an incident that challenged the group... and what behaviours seemed ineffective?” the interviewee paused and asked “Who will be listening to this tape or reviewing the transcripts?” When I told the interviewee of the other three researchers that would have access to the data, the interviewee replied, “Okay, so I won’t bring up that incident... let me think of another.” As indicated, some data was lost by including the other researchers in my data analysis process. Nonetheless, before conducting any of my post-pilot interviews, I was diligent about informing all interviewees that the Research Committee was reviewing the transcripts. More importantly, the data lost because of their association with the other respondents was far outweighed by the benefits of the Research Committee’s supervision and research participation. The Research Committee helped to

improve credibility in my coding during data analysis: they not only assisted in providing three more perspectives on the data in addition to my own, they were also my study respondents, and therefore they provided a continuous member check mechanism (Yin, 2003). All the other EFCP Collaboration members also reviewed the evolving findings which helped to confirm the integrity of the data analysis. As I am a student with limited case study research experience, the rigor of my research was also much enhanced by the opportunity to receive training and supervision from the experienced EFCP Research Committee.

A second form of potential bias, therefore another limitation, related to social desirability effects, is the component of researching my research supervisor. There seemed to be effects on my supervisor being researched by a student. As an example, this individual generated much longer interviews than other respondents. In addition, my level of transparency was affected by my role as a student. Not only did my concern for a positive personal evaluation influence to what degree I shared my ideas, learning, and findings with the respondents, it also impacted my interpretation and my reporting. I know I wanted to have more positive conclusions because I was being evaluated by those I was studying. Being a student wanting to “pass,” I couldn’t be too critically reflective of my evaluators. The effect on my research of this dilemma cannot be underestimated. For example, without awareness, during data analysis I coded my advisor’s data first, and paid close attention to understanding his transcript, perhaps more than others. To counter this potential bias, I used the Wilder Collaboration Factors Inventory (WCFI) factors as my initial coding framework. My data were also coded by two other team members to confirm reliability. Having used reflexivity to increase my awareness of this bias, I

continuously paid attention to accounting for *all* the Collaboration members' perspectives. I re-coded the database with this new awareness to limit this desirability effect. I have also presented evidence in my reporting; in doing so I have provided the reader with the ability to further judge credibility.

Third, being a participant observer, I must acknowledge participant observer bias limitations as well. For example, I may have had a stronger tendency to want to have more positive conclusions than someone with a more distant stance. I recognized that I had a capacity to influence and impact the process. During the research process, I sometimes shared my thoughts and findings with the group. However, I consistently attempted to maintain confidentiality in the face of requests for information. To counter, I did not expect that I was neutral, and I attempted to consider my own reactions. As well, the closeness generated an important level of trust that contributes to the credibility of the data.

For these three potential sources of bias, describing my preconceptions and my personal perspective in my memos and dissertation assisted me in tracking what reflexivity I used and what I did to control my bias (Gillham, 2003; Yin, 2003). An audit trail, including my process notes, memos, and a general personal journal, is available to interested reviewers (Gall et al., 2003; Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Yin, 2003). I created an annotated bibliography (Yin, 2003) of the case study database elements, so that the data could be easily retrieved and shared with other researchers who may have an interest in the data (see Table 5, p. 115).

Although it has limitations, this research provides valuable insight for future research of university-community collaboration in the context of community

development with older adults. Many of these limitations arise from the qualitative nature of this research and may be offset by the benefits of qualitative research, such as relevance and the unfolding of multiple complex realities. In comparison with other research efforts in the collaboration field, this study adds more than anecdote. However, it does not add as much as a cross-case comparison might. Unfortunately a comparison to other consortia was out of the resource range of my research. My study's findings do contribute by indicating the success factors unique to this type of university-community collaborative effort. Future research can scrutinize the Relational model suggested in Chapter Five: Discussion.

Summary

In summary, using case study research over a two-year period, I individually interviewed the nine-member EFCP Collaboration using a semi-structured format on two occasions at a one-year interval. I assessed the same group with a collaboration factors inventory. I observed and documented 18 monthly EFCP Collaboration meetings. I facilitated four group member check discussions. I also performed a document review of all relevant historical materials. These approaches gave me a six-year period of examination for the EFCP Collaboration. A systematic data analysis strategy, using case study database retrieval through ATLAS.ti, was implemented to study the transcribed interview, observation, and other text data in-depth. Analysis was completed through case factor description, case study pattern-matching using factors drawn from a collaboration framework derived from a meta-analysis of empirical literature, and theoretical model making. Other important factors, not included in the selected framework, were identified.

Certain collaboration factors appeared to be more important to the success of the EFCP community-university collaboration than others. The use of triangulation and participant review assists in confirming the integrity of the data analysis. My aim was to reveal the key success factors unique to this community research collaboration, attempting to determine the more important or relevant factors for the EFCP Collaboration, and comparing the case to a proposed framework for understanding collaboration (the WCFI).

The next chapter presents my findings.

Chapter Four: Findings

Introduction

This chapter presents the findings from the study of the Elder Friendly Communities Program (EFCP) Collaboration. First the EFCP Collaboration is described and placed in historical context. The findings related to case context and environment follow. Then the three research questions are addressed with the presentation of findings for each question. This chapter ends with a summary of the most important factors for the success of the EFCP Collaboration.

The research questions that guided my inquiry are:

1) What are the important factors for successful community-university collaboration demonstrated and reported by the Elder Friendly Communities Program (EFCP) Collaboration?

2) What important success factors in the Elder Friendly Communities Program (EFCP) Collaboration are comparable to those identified in the Wilder Collaboration Factors Inventory (WCFI)?

3) Are there other important success factors for the Elder Friendly Communities Program (EFCP) Collaboration not identified in the Wilder Collaboration Factors Inventory (WCFI)? If so, what are these?

Background and History

The Elder Friendly Communities Collaboration began as a small group of social work professionals who spontaneously gathered to discuss the experience of the aging in Calgary. This group formed to generate support for individuals who were charged with

addressing aging related concerns in their respective organizations. A needs assessment was the first collaboration effort by this group. The EFCP Collaboration subsequently became the programmatic response. It consisted of a collection of government and non-profit service providers who came together specifically for the purpose of researching and facilitating community development with older adults. The following describes the historical stages of the EFCP Collaboration:

Stages of the EFCP Collaboration

The EFCP group progressed through four phases in its development:

1) Group development, in which a community needs assessment was conducted and initial community development efforts began (two years);

2) Formalization and quest for sustainability, in which sub-committees were structured, a long-term fiscal agent was established, and collaboration agreements were signed (two years);

3) Alberta Heritage Foundation for Medical Research (AHFMR) research, which was the 2004-2006 period during which I studied the EFCP Collaboration, and was the AHFMR research phase of their EFCP demonstration (two years); and

4) Program delivery maturation, which is the ongoing maintenance of the program developed through the Collaboration, and provided the boundary at the other end of my studied phase (to present).

The following section provides the stages of the EFCP Collaboration in further detail.

Group Development Phase

The founding group formed in early 2000 because the members were frustrated with their home organizations' lack of attention to aging issues. They wanted more

attention paid to future community demographics, noting the trend toward significant increases in older populations nationally and locally. As well, they hoped to alter the pervasive ageist misperception of seniors as dependent and frail. The group formed out of the desire to shift the thinking of their organizations to the importance of attending to a wider senior population. It is significant that the founders were all educated as social workers, and most of the subsequent members were registered social workers, with the exception of a few professional nurses. The EFCP Collaboration grew out of the initiating professionals' desire to combine forces with others who shared an interest in aging and the well-being of older adults. The founding group organized a community needs assessment of independent living older adults in five Calgary neighbourhoods as a way to raise awareness of this population (Austin et al., 2001).

The needs assessment set out to examine the lives of independent-living older adults in five Calgary neighbourhoods, ranging in size from 6600 to 12,600 total residents (Austin et al., 2001). The initiators were from the Faculty of Social Work, the regional health organization, and the municipal organization. They accessed discretionary funds within their organizations that were pooled for their first collaborative effort, the needs assessment. In-kind contributions were received from each member as well.

By the fall of 2000, attendance at the Elder Friendly Communities (EFC) meetings had grown to include between 10-15 trained social workers, human service, and health-trained professionals from the University, the main municipal organization, several non-profit agencies, and a regional governmental health organization. The needs assessment proved to be a useful test of the group's capacity to collaborate and contributed to the subsequent research and demonstration effort. This needs assessment

project fostered continuing commitment and trust, and assisted in developing a common language among the Committee members. The time limited nature of the needs assessment provided an opportunity for potential collaborators to become familiar with one another without making a long term commitment.

After the needs assessment, the focus of the Elder Friendly Communities Program (EFCP) Collaboration shifted toward facilitating senior-led community development. The neighbourhood-based initiative was intended to begin to address the needs assessment findings through grassroots community building and research (Austin et al., 2005). In May 2001, the group hired their first Program Manager to implement the recommendations of the needs assessment through community development. In September 2001, two new organizational representatives joined the group, one from the largest non-profit agency providing seniors' counselling and caregiving services in the city, and the other from the United Way of Calgary and Area. A year later, the United Way member withdrew, after determining that funding conflicts of interest could arise and therefore they did not fit with the Elder Friendly Communities Program (EFCP) Collaboration membership.

Formalization and Quest for Sustainability Phase

2002 saw the group focus more closely on fundraising and clarifying strategies, mission, and roles. The community development program was underway in five different neighbourhoods and attempted to engage seniors in the selected communities in identifying and addressing particular needs relating to seniors in their area. Seniors were recruited to lead this effort, with the assistance of community development specialists assigned to assist the seniors in the process of defining the unique needs of their

neighbourhood, in acquiring funding required to implement programs to respond to those needs, and in attempts to develop senior-run programs and events to increase community engagement. This effort resulted in the development of several initiatives led by community seniors, for example a snow removal program for seniors, a yard care program for seniors, multicultural events and activities, and an initiative where trained seniors provided support to other seniors in applying for public benefits. The EFCP Collaboration provided leadership, support, and fundraising for the demonstration community development program. In June 2002, after one year in the position, the first Program Manager left for another opportunity.

In August 2002, when the second Program Manager began, the group was guided toward increased formalization, with a focus on community development, program development, learning, and research. Relying on the Manager and the founding community development worker for a link to front-line operations reality, the Elder Friendly Communities Program (EFCP) Collaboration monitored the research project, managed the project resources, and developed funding strategies and evaluation plans. Community development specialists were contributed from each of the service providing organizations in the EFCP Collaboration.

In 2003, the focus transitioned to program delivery, while attempting to maintain the research demonstration objective. Effort was made to acquire Community-University Research Alliances (CURA), Canada Sciences and Humanities Research Council (SSHRC) financial support, but was unsuccessful. At the end of 2003, membership in the EFCP group was formalized through the signing of a Collaboration Agreement. Once the Collaboration Agreement was signed, the Collaboration settled into a stable membership

of eight. Most of the stable members were registered social workers. Those members whose attendance fluctuated were the funding representatives, the older adult representatives, and a few nursing professionals.

The Elder Friendly Communities Program (EFCP) Collaboration sought sustainable, long term program-related funding and realized that this funding was better housed in a non-profit agency. Therefore, the fiscal agent responsibility for the EFCP was transferred from the university to the partnering non-profit agency. The Program Manager became an employee of this agency.

AHFMR Research Phase

In January 2004, Alberta Heritage Foundation for Medical Research (AHFMR) funded research to better understand the capacity building process of seniors in their communities and the collaborative effort overseeing the Elder Friendly Communities Program (EFCP), further formalizing the qualitative research demonstration project. The AHFMR project studied the EFCP community development and organizational collaborative process, and three research questions were examined:

- What are the best practices for community development with older adults?
- What are the dynamics of the Elder Friendly Communities program collaboration?
- How do these dynamics impact inter- and intra-organizational changes in the delivery of services to seniors?

Research data for this AHFMR project were collected during 2004 and 2005. These data included both retrospective, as well as current, observations from respondents. The EFCP Collaboration members were active participants in the research and adopted an action inquiry approach in an attempt to study the collaborative and community development

purpose in a participative manner to derive insights and theory (Armistead, Pettigrew, & Aves, 2007). The AHFMR Research Phase was the period of study for my case study research, and I served as Research Coordinator for the project.

Program Delivery Maturation Phase

The EFCP project entered on a long-term *program delivery maturation* phase, which I have learned continues today. The current program delivery and maturation phase began with the consolidation of the demonstration project into an on-going service delivery program held within the fiscal agent agency. As the research demonstration project was drawing to a close, during the end of my observation, the EFCP Collaboration began to struggle with the purpose of their group. Members wanted to continue because the members found the group valuable for support and learning from each other. On the other hand, their research mission had been completed, and the program no longer needed a large steering committee. At that point the collaborative group metamorphosed into a support group with no further academic research or programmatic component. The EFCP program was absorbed as a regular program within the capable fiscal agency. However, the Collaboration took some time to realize that their mandate was complete. Clearly, the close relationships made it hard to disband.

Unfortunately, I did not have a chance to observe the ending of the EFCP Collaboration. Subsequent to my leaving, I have learned that the EFCP Collaboration found a way to maintain its relationships but redefine its mission. In 2007, the group moved beyond the focus on community development with older adults and relinquished their role with the EFCP program. The group is somewhat smaller and meets as a community of practice referred to as “the Hatchery”. The group now meets quarterly

instead of monthly, with no immediate intention of expanding or securing another joint project. The Collaboration essentially returned to its original form, a support group.

Case Context and Environment

A review of the environmental context is essential for the analysis of findings. Therefore this section will continue to summarize the environmental and contextual findings of this case in order to provide background for the case study research.

Context and environment influenced the EFCP Collaboration in unique ways. Relevant community features included political climate, initiating motivations, membership selection, funding considerations, university-community influences, and impacts of the Collaboration. These context factors will be discussed in relation to the EFCP data the following section:

Social and Political Climate

The Elder Friendly Communities Program (EFCP) Collaboration was developed within a distinct political and service delivery context. The absence of a coordinating body to address seniors' needs in the region led to a gap in attention and fewer resources for to addressing seniors' issues. This context challenged the EFCP Collaboration in its implementation and promotion of a seniors' initiative. On the other hand, this inattentive context also set the stage for more opportunities for flexibility and innovation because of the lack of a predetermined or rigid system for seniors.

Although the research literature generally indicates the need for a supportive environment, this was not necessarily the case for the Elder Friendly Communities Program (EFCP) Collaboration. In general, the EFCP members reported that community

climate at the beginning of the Collaboration was not supportive of their Collaboration. However, it could not be described as hostile to the group, as one EFCP member described: “Not a really huge amount of support from the environments, however funding has been garnered from several different sources. If it was a hostile environment we wouldn’t have any funding.” Basically, although the group was able to secure temporary funding for a needs assessment project, the political and social atmosphere was not overall encouraging.

Although the environmental context of the EFCP Collaboration was not very supportive, it had clearly influenced the collaboration. The EFCP group perceived the environment as providing inadequate attention and interest in the aging of the population and wanted to do something about that. As one member described about the senior population in the city

...we have... an environment that is very focused on youth...so I think the ethos of the city is about the young and productive and being active and being entrepreneurial and growth oriented ...and as a consequence, I think there is not as much attention and also it is only 10% of the population right at the moment and as a group they are not very vocal...or the voice that they have is not heard very often or paid attention to.

Another member comments on the increased awareness of the seniors population in the region, and said, “over the last four or five years, there has been a growing awareness of the importance of demographics and the need to deal with seniors’ issues.” Another explained

There has been a slow but steady increase in awareness of seniors’ demographics, the impending seniors’ bulge, and some of the issues relating to that. So I think that the whole Elder Friendly Communities Project played out against a backdrop of increasing awareness of seniors’ issues.

The EFCP Collaborators tried to be responsive to their external environment and increased interest, as one member described, “I would say Elder Friendly didn’t create that increased awareness but in some respects I think we are capitalizing on that as we should.”

In addition to the perceptible increase in attention to senior’s issues, community development and collaboration had also gathered interest as intervention methods. This preliminary interest in addressing senior’s issues, community development, and collaboration provided the impetus needed for the EFCP to attain program and research funding. Over time, the community began to recognize the EFCP Collaboration as worthwhile. Through interaction with its environment, the collaboration was able to acquire necessary resources.

Membership Motivation and Purpose

Each of the EFCP Collaboration home organizations responded to a change in the political and social climate by beginning to emphasize interventions that encouraged community-based natural helping systems. The non-profit organization in the EFCP Collaboration began to change its mandate to better parallel that of the Collaboration. As one member explained, the non-profit organization was “changing its focus from primarily families and children and clinical focus to a broader agenda including seniors and working with natural helping systems.” Similarly, another EFCP home organization, the city, was described as making motions towards more congruent goals. One member elaborated that the development of the EFCP Collaboration “was against the backdrop of the city deciding that it wanted to take a more serious in-depth look at seniors. Part of that increasing awareness and desire organizationally to do something and be responsive to

seniors.” And the participating regional health authority also indicated a similar shift—perhaps another sign that the EFCP group was started at the right time, as one member described: “it fits so well with what we’re trying to do overall in health: where possible move services to the community, move upstream, try and build on strengths as opposed to only focusing on deficit fixing which has been our history.” And one member summed up this integrative turn from their home organization:

We are being urged and encouraged in our organization by all levels to work in a collaborative manner. Funders insist on collaboration way more currently than they used to, so by doing this kind of work successfully, you are able to demonstrate to funders that in fact, yeah, we can collaborate, we need how to do this work. We know how to do this, we can participate with other folks at the table, that is a positive thing. In my organization there is a clear expectation that we collaborate internally with some very diverse players, and that we do not work in silos.

Although each of the participating organizations seemed to be starting to embrace a more senior-friendly and community development approach, the group aimed to add even more of an integrated senior focus to their own home organizations’ vision. Previous to the EFCP Collaboration, the organizations involved were autonomously organized for their small contributions to these community development services. Community-university relationships among these players existed only in an inexplicit way prior to the EFCP Collaboration. The initiating members sensed alienation among their home organizations. It would have been difficult for one organization to be able to achieve the same level of research, combined generation of knowledge, and to integrate a change in the system level through impacting many various stakeholders. One member elaborated, “We did this because we thought that what we were going to create was going to be greater than if any of us individually, any of our organizations tried to do this on our own.”

The members were motivated to gather because they had an interest about the wellbeing of older adults, and frustrations that their organizations were indifferent and uncoordinated. As one member explained, “People came together around sharing a vision and hoping to learn from that and hoping it would impact organizations as well as do some good.” The aging focus and the sense of community of practice developed by the members increased the motivation for the members to remain involved.

They considered trying to implement a coalition at a senior level in the home organizations, but were concerned with possible resistance to this venture by their home organizations and other stakeholders. They concluded that a demonstration would best achieve their objectives. A neighbourhood-based collaborative research project was a way to demonstrate to policy makers and service leaders the value of working together across organizations. The group chose to improve social policy, the service delivery system, and community capacity for seniors by demonstrating how their organizations could integrate their community development through community-university collaboration.

Membership in the group reflected the purpose of community development activity. The EFCP Collaboration included the government and community agencies involved in community development with seniors. The EFCP developed as a *consortium*, as defined by Bailey and Koney (2000), rather than a permanent structure, in order to be flexible and fluid in response to the purpose of the group.

Although many collaborations develop in response to government policy and funding that requires collaboration, the EFCP Collaboration was unusual in that the group did not arise from funder incentive to participate in collaboration. The group did not

gather because they were mandated by some top-down authority, or as a requirement of funding. In fact, the first needs assessment project was jointly funded by the initial three EFCP Collaboration's founding organizations. Members voluntarily formed to influence their own organizations and to improve the lives of seniors. As one member explained, "People came and they had a particular interest or they needed to be at the table." So members volunteered, as one member stated: "People who came to the table by and large weren't assigned to be there by somebody else saying 'You really need to care about this, this is really important.'"

The EFCP Collaboration sought to undertake the challenge of transforming ageist stereotypic attitudes about dependence and frailty of older adults. The EFCP tried to encourage a cultural shift towards viewing older adults as competent, able-bodied, and generously contributing to their neighbourhoods. The EFCP civic engagement and productive aging promotion was grounded in a belief that older adults are talented, capable untapped resources with valuable expertise and experience.

The EFCP program promoted an empowering capacity-building approach by ascribing older adults as the main contributors of their own neighbourhood development efforts. Because community development promotes the recognition, acquisition, maturation and connection of community assets, this affects the power structures and dynamics of the collaborative work. The EFCP Collaboration attempted to build capacity of older adult by encouraging that the responsibility for decision making rested with the community members, rather than being directed by the EFCP Collaboration.

External Benefits to Participating

Members were motivated to be a part of the Elder Friendly Communities Program (EFCP) Collaboration and demonstrated commitment because it was viewed as a success, as one member claimed, “The collaboration has been extremely successful.” Another stated, “I see the [EFCP Collaboration] as very positive, and that collaboration as the only really effective collaboration I know of in the senior world.” One member indicated pride in being part of a successful group: “We have a number of indicators that it is successful—we can point to a number of things that make it successful.”

Another clear reason members remained involved was that EFCP members were involved in other collaborations that they viewed as unsuccessful when compared to the EFCP Collaboration. Most members agreed that the EFCP Collaboration was working better than other collaboratives that they are involved in:

I sit on other collaborative groups with sometimes the same people sitting around the table and we don't seem to be as effective in other contexts as we have been here. (Collaboration Member)

Members asked, “Why is this EF collaboration working?” when other similar collaborative efforts they were involved with were not working so well. One of the respondents chaired the meetings of another collaborative group and commented that it did not work nearly as well as the EFCP Collaboration:

It was different in the sense that it didn't have the same spirit of collaboration and it didn't have the same set of relationships that we've seen develop in Elder Friendly. We struggled...there wasn't a clear sense about what we were trying to achieve. The process wasn't clear. ...rather than showing up and automatically naming a chair and jumping into the work, we might have spent the time developing a common language, relationship with one another, a sense about what we were trying to accomplish together, develop some norms about how to behave with one another, norms around communication: all of the things that we've seen develop in Elder Friendly.

Although the EFCP members experienced the challenges of the extensive time and resources required for collaboration, members of the EFCP group experienced increased personal credibility within their home organization, and in the broader community. They noted that their organizations' credibility was enhanced by being involved. As one member explained

I think other people are learning from what we are doing. One of the reasons our home organizations are willing to have us put time into this effort, is that it is viewed as putting the organization in a good light. It is viewed as opening opportunities, looking good.

Other agencies approached the group asking to participate; as one member stated, "Other agencies saw it as a positive thing and wanted to become involved, so they were knocking at the door to participate." This may have been due in part to the credibility earned by the group. One member described it: "Outside, I work on a lot of interagency groups and it is very often that people talk about Elder Friendly and mention Elder Friendly as being significant in the field of community development with seniors." The group also had several invitations to speak about their collaboration, one member provided an example:

CIHR (Canadian Institutes for Health Research) has been tending to issues that will affect seniors lives, and so on the second day [of the CIHR regional conference] there is one research program from each of the three prairie provinces going to be highlighted; so ours has been selected as the one from Alberta.

Program Separate from Any Organization

The EFCP Collaboration was a newly created entity, a separate program, apart from any one of the organizations. "Elder Friendly started with a few who said let's join forces." Members felt they were working together, outside their organizations, toward a

common program. As one member stated, “We’ve left our home organizations when we are in that room and we are more part of the [EFCP Collaboration], from a perspective approach.” The shared ownership was facilitated through the creation of a separate and autonomous budget for the EFCP program, separate from any of the collaborating organizations. Pooled funds provided the program, and hired the Program Manager. As one member stated, “I think the Program Manager’s role is a key to the shared leadership. It is important to have [a Program Manager] who is separate from all agencies; money has to be pooled to hire this person.”

The EFCP Collaboration valued the distribution of ownership among the collaborating organizations. The group was reluctant to place the EFCP program within the control of one organization as they felt it “would lose creative possibilities.” They were able to be more flexible because it was not owned by any one organization. “The power of our effort is that we aren’t owned by any one organization.” Another member agreed that EFCP “organizations are able to deal with that whole concept of maybe there doesn’t have to be a primary organization.” This is not to say that distribution of ownership was not a challenge, as one member stated: “This is inter-sectoral in health, social service and education. You have three different cultures around the table with varying experience in working outside of their own organizational boundaries.” Likely contributing to their success, each of the partners had some history of collaborative problem-solving in the local city and had been involved in other collaborative initiatives.

Participating organizations contributed credibility, infrastructure, resources, and procedures that nurtured the collaboration. All EFCP member organizations contributed money to the EFCP consortium. Because each of the organizations contributed financial

resources, each could claim some ownership of the program. All the initiators of the consortium worked to garner funding from their home organizations. Membership selection was based to some extent on the member's ability to contribute some of their organizational funding to the project. Shared ownership was enhanced with each member contributing these resources.

Organizations indicated comfort with their participation in the demonstration. They did not perceive a threat to their own mandates from their employees' membership in the EFCP Collaboration and supported this new collaboration. As one member explained, "It doesn't seem to me that any of us were relinquishing our organizational autonomy. We have always maintained our autonomy. You can still have individual organizational autonomy, but give up control over for the purpose of a new initiative." The membership, by their efforts toward understanding each organization, demonstrated enough respect for each organization during the creation of this new consortium that the home organizations did not perceive a challenge to their own operation. As one member explained, "I don't think we are doing anything that challenges any of the core organizations' missions. It is complementary, not challenging." As a result, organizations were able to flexibly relinquish enough control to support the independent functioning of the EFCP. As one member stated,

When I talk about collaborative planning, there is concern that someone has given me the mandate to exert control over my organization, like decision-making... I am very careful when I am explaining what I am doing. Part of what has made us successful is that.

Flexibility in Response to the External Context

As the external context of the EFCP Collaboration changed, the EFCP group changed; the group could respond to changing external forces. The group morphed, as needed, depending on who they were trying to influence externally, and how they wanted to highlight the group to their audience. Like a shift-shaper, the group changed their appearance to the system around them according to their advantage, to be more attractive.

As one member described, “It was an amorphous entity that was sometimes in the university, sometimes in the non-profit, sometimes in health care, sometimes in the city, depending on how we wanted to articulate to other people who we were and what we were.” The group had a unique ability to wear multiple hats or take on different roles. Not only did the individual members wear multiple hats, but the group itself wore multiple hats. In order to be able to do this, members remained open to different approaches on how they could do the work. One member further elaborated, “Depending on who we are talking to, we sometimes frame it as education and other times we frame it as research. It depends really on who our audience is, how we describe ourselves.”

In approaching different potential funders, they could be a research group, a community development group, or a group supporting seniors. To the United Way they could be seen as doing innovative program delivery and breaking new ground. To the University, they could interact as a research demonstration effort. One member described the approach with the University:

When we have an objective in mind, we describe ourselves in a certain way and we put forth the person who makes the strongest case. When we are trying to get research money, we are a demonstration; we put forth faculty members trying to get research money.

To the city municipal department they were seen as a stable program that needed stable funding. As one member explained,

When we need staffing from the city, we are an organization that the City helped initiate, so we talk to some of the folks there around the fact they were the founders. They were part of that initial Needs Assessment and that they are having an influence on our organization by contributing staff to the essential mission of our organization.

As one member sums up, the group was able to “keep bumping along, morphing, being flexible, like an ongoing improvisational theatre group, experimenting. If we can attract some money that is great, maybe some people change.”

Influential-level Members of Organizations Included

The EFCP Collaboration attempted to include members with influence and authority in their home organization and with the ability to speak for their home organization with some degree of independence. Members of the group held high-ranking positions in each of their home organizations and speculated that this contributed to their risk taking and relative autonomy in decision making regarding the program. EFCP members were drawn from higher-level managerial or academic positions and were department directors, program managers, influential community development workers, and tenured academics. These individuals were able to garner financial and in-kind resources for the ongoing collaborative effort, as one member described: “the reason we had certain people on the Steering Committee was that they could go back to their home organizations and either mobilize resources or influence something that needed to be accomplished.”

As higher-ranking organizational professionals, they were also able to carve out the time required for relationship development within the collaboration. Members were at

a level in their organization that generally prevented them from getting pulled out of the group by a higher authority. As one member puts it:

There is trust, we are all at a level in our organizations, that we are not going to violate the organization's core missions. We can be described as flying under the radar of our organizations—we were within the realm but not trying to get higher level approval for what we were doing from the highest levels. We did not get approval from our organizations from the higher levels, we had the authority to operate with some degree of independence. If we were all from front-line levels, at some point someone will say 'don't put your energies here, put them there.' The higher up you get in organizations, the less of the real discrete micro-management there is, and it is that we are at higher levels.

Members were high enough up in the organizations to be able to determine that they would remain involved. One member noted that this autonomy and its effect on the cohesion of the group: "People are pretty high up generally. They're pretty well established in their own organizations and so I think it gives them a safe place to talk as they built more trusting relationships." The members had the trust of their organizations to do good work, and to hold true to the core mission of their home organization, at the same time as participating in the shared ownership of the EFCP group.

The level of independence of the members was a significant influence in the formation of the EFCP Collaboration. The members had enough autonomy within their own organization to be able to collaborate with other organizations to develop a new initiative. Therefore the motivation of the members was not only at a high level, they also had the opportunity, due to their status within their own organizations, to form the EFCP collaboration voluntarily, which was important to the success of this group.

Representation of Other Stakeholders

Leadership in the overall EFCP initiative was located in two distinct spheres. The Collaboration consisted of professionals, while the neighbourhood initiatives were senior-led. The EFCP Collaboration often attempted to find roles for other stakeholders within the Collaboration, including senior community representatives, funders, or for-profit members. However, the group seemed most in equilibrium when non-profit and governmentally-based organizational members were the entirety of the group.

The group attempted to include senior aged representatives within the EFCP Collaboration structure but found this difficult to achieve. Membership regarding the senior representative was challenged during a community conference presentation, as one member mentioned: “At one of our presentations someone pointed out that we are working with seniors and you don’t have one senior on the [Collaboration]. It is an optical problem.” In response, the group attempted to recruit senior membership. But finding a role for consumer representatives was a struggle for the group, as indicated by one member:

We still have an issue to grapple with and that is, Can we find a reasonable role for seniors in this group? What expertise do they bring? It may be wise to ask each of the neighbourhoods to send somebody to this meeting. Rely on them and their expertise on what is going on in these neighbourhoods. It may be worth asking them what role they want.

For example, one senior member recruited seemed dissatisfied with the assigned role in the group, and left the Collaboration after a few meetings, after being asked to participate in a fundraising effort, saying, “I hate fundraising. I can think about it, not do it. I don’t have a lot of time. This would be a thinking committee, not a doing committee.” As the Collaboration attempted to recruit and include senior representative

members, it became more evident that a role for senior representatives in the group was not clear. As one member stated, “It seemed that what was learned is that new members must have a clear role.” The lack of a clear role for these representatives may have contributed to the difficulty retaining them as members. In a final member check one member shared their thoughts on trying to include consumers within this type of organizational group, saying, “I have changed my mind about having a representational model. Previously I had thought all our collaborations required a representational model, now I think that may only be necessary in some cases.”

Time Spent Attaining Funding

A substantial amount of the Elder Friendly Communities Program (EFCP) Collaboration time was spent in garnering money by writing grants. The group operated on approximately \$180,000 per year for both the program and research. The group realized that if they were able to attain larger longer-term grants, the annual applications and reporting would be less onerous, as one member claimed, “It would really help if we got some sense of sustainable funding.” The submission of funding applications was an important part of how they spent their time.

Throughout the life of the Elder Friendly Communities Program (EFCP) Collaboration, the Collaboration found it frustratingly difficult to find combined program and research funding. Group efforts to receive combined funding for program and research from traditional sources was unsuccessful. Program funders would not fund an embedded research component, and research grants would not allocate funds for demonstration program activities. So the group worked around that, as one member explained, “What we have to do is get the program funding from one place, get the

research funding for the other part, and knit them together.” There was interdependence between the program and the research, which created a tension to ensure both streams received funding, as one member explained:

It would have been devastating if we had lost program funding in the middle of the research. The fact that we have program funding to the end of the research is a big gift. The research was entirely dependent on the program existing, and if that wasn't there we would have no research.

The joint efforts of the EFCP organizations in 2003 to seek Community-University Research Alliances (CURA) program funding would have seen the group receive federal Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council (SSHRC) financial support for developing the capacity for the university and community organizations to work together for both research and learning in the humanities and social sciences. However, the Collaboration's application was unsuccessful. As one member explained, that resulted in a restriction of further planning, “Since we didn't get the CURA we have had to pare down to what we could do.”

Over the life of the Collaboration, the group was able to acquire established program funding, and established research funding. It did receive program funding for the community development initiative from: the City of Calgary Family and Community Social Services, United Way of Calgary and Area, Alberta Community Lottery Fund, Canada Heritage, Mann Family Foundation, and the Wild Rose Foundation. Until 2004, funding for research aspects of the Elder Friendly Communities Program (EFCP) was garnered by: the Faculty of Social Work, University of Calgary; Calgary Health Region; City of Calgary; Centre for Health and Policy Studies; and the Faculty of Medicine, University of Calgary. Many applications were submitted, as well as many annual

reports. In total approximately 40 grants were generated for program and research funding in excess of one million dollars.

The Collaboration had consistently concerned itself with acquiring funds to accomplish its objectives. A significant time at each monthly meeting, and sometimes the entire meeting, was spent discussing funding acquisition. The group's purpose seemed to be to ensure resources for the program and the research, and not necessarily to organize the program or a service. Basically the Collaboration provided resources so that the program and community seniors could do what they chose to do. One member summed up the funding role of the group: "We are helping to make sure we have the funds to support it and to try to provide some guidance to it."

At times, funders' priorities shifted away from seniors' issues and community development. Continuous funding of the EFCP initiative became more difficult at times when other organizations began competing for similar funding and other social issues became priorities. By 2004, the group was disappointed with the trouble acquiring long-term funding and considered other options for the initiative, one member said, "We had hoped that by this time we would have been successful in nailing down longer-term funding." So the group decided to wrap up the demonstration project:

Anything beyond dissemination and finishing up in the neighbourhoods would require additional funding. At our planning meeting we decided to return to our core mission and focus on dissemination and the demonstration effort. We looked at other things to do and made no decisions about taking anything else on.

Funding determined the group's ability to accomplish its goals. The group was restricted in its actions by the amount of funding acquired. As one member elaborated, "One of the

challenges we are constantly facing is being able to match the resources with everything we could conceivably be doing.”

Fiscal Agent

Another contextual factor that proved important in the Elder Friendly Communities Program (EFCP) Collaboration was the implementation of a non-profit organization as fiscal agent for the Collaboration. The Collaboration’s program “evolved over time into something that is in fact a program within a non-profit fiscal organization but with other contributors.” Having a non-profit organization as fiscal agent assisted the group in raising funds targeted for charitable organizations (e.g. the City’s Social Service Funding, and the United Way). As the fiscal agency representative stated, “the university can generate [funding] in terms of research, but we can be helpful when it comes to getting funding where you are needing the charitable name.”

The fiscal agent non-profit organization was highly regarded in the community, which also helped EFCP fundraising efforts, as one member stated, “When we are talking to the United Way, we are a non-profit, and we are pursuing stabilized funding for long-term community development effort and we are part of a well-established non-profit organization that the United Way knows well.” Another member echoed

[The fiscal organization] has been around forever so they have a lot of history and credibility and have been funded for a long time through United Way funds as well as lots of others. From our perspective, it will be very, very valuable if we can become part of the umbrella of [the fiscal organization] from the viewpoint of the United Way, because that allows us to apply for agency funding, the more established funding rather than the innovative funding. And it allows us to apply for funding that would be longer term rather than short term.

Although the EFCP became a program of the fiscal agent non-profit organization in order to apply for longer-term agency funding from the United Way, this did not occur and the other forms of sustainable funding mentioned earlier were secured instead.

Each EFCP Collaboration member wanted to influence the program through their participation, and “that is the tricky thing” says one member; other contributors “also want to have a say about how the program gets run.” The fiscal agent non-profit organization was an exemplary fiscal agent, in that it allowed other EFCP members to determine the future, make the major decisions about the program, and share ownership; while at the same time taking responsibility for negotiating with current funders, holding accountability of the group, and taking legal responsibility. There was a high level of trust in the group, and the Collaboration was eager to assist the fiscal organization when required. As one member stated, “The [EFCP Collaboration] does the hiring and the support of the Program Manager, to help out [the agency] with their employee.”

As the group’s research phase ended, the EFCP Collaboration evolved into less of a research mission than a program service mission. The group considered for over a year whether to end the program entirely, as exemplified when one member stated, “the research agenda is gone... Is this a program that would continue on into the future? ...Does it end; will we pull the plug on it?” When the group decided to transition from a research program to a service program, the fiscal organization stepped up and took care of the program as needed. Although the power for the group shifted, the dynamics of the group remained consistent. For two years after this transition, the Collaboration remained an entity separate from the fiscal organization, and the fiscal agent remained open to encouraging the influence of the group. One member voiced appreciation that the fiscal

organization did not “control everything,” confirming the fiscal agent’s skill in the “hands-off” shared ownership required for collaboration support.

Community University Context

The EFCP Collaboration fit into another category of collaboration, the community-university research collaboration. The intent of including the community and university organizations in the collaboration was to develop practical knowledge. The EFCP demonstration research project was a model of a university-community research-driven community collaboration intervention. Knowledge developed in the community could be relevant to practice. One member described the dual purpose of the project:

This is not just a service project. It is a demonstration project. A demonstration project has two agendas. One is to package and deliver services and the other is to learn from the observation and reflection of those services and do a better job....the research agenda has always been a piece of the effort but rather than make it as the primary focus it is always run in the background. It is kind of an observational activity, coupled with some periodic interviews, to capture insight and understanding, which is quite different from many research projects where the research agenda is up front and everything becomes secondary to that research agenda.

The EFCP initiative was ignited by faculty members and seed funding from the university Social Work department. Universities often fail to incorporate the value of service and community collaborations into their academic policies, however this is starting to change (Buckeridge et al., 2002; Maurrasse, 2001). The EFCP community-based collaboration was a reflection of the trend to more community service within academic institutions. The program office and collaboration meetings were held mostly at the university.

The beginning at the university had the effect of providing early stability, and decreased the sense of competition for program funds and power common to community-

only based interorganizational collaboration. Because of the diversity of the mandates of organizations involved, member organizations were not usually competing for organizational funding. The membership of the Collaboration was diverse enough that each organization had a separate role in the service system; these roles did not conflict perceptibly. One member commented,

There hasn't been a really been a lot of tension between offering programs, doing community development, doing research—you know, one at the expense of the other—I haven't really detected that to any great degree... Everybody believes all aspects are important it seems...there wasn't really a sense of competing for the dollars.

Each partner's funding sources differed, so members' organizations were not often competing for the same scarce resources to operate their organization. The university attendance in the Collaboration also helped with reducing the competitive feel, as one member explained, "there was at least one organization represented sitting at the table that wasn't about trying to compete for service delivery dollars and that was the university." Therefore competition among members was lower than perhaps other similar collaborations. As one member noted, "This collaboration is a successful collaboration and differs from non-successful ones in that members are not competing for funding with their budgets." This contributed to the sense that the group members were "really trying to make sure we are collaborating rather than competing." Another member added

It may be easier to be in a researcher-agency partnership than an agency-agency partnership because you can avoid the turf issues, it is cleaner. It can be very challenging if you are two similar organizations serving a similar population in a similar way but with different goals and philosophies.

The university representatives wanted to uncover theoretical and generalizable knowledge, and the practitioners wanted to provide neighbourhood service delivery, which sometimes created tensions. One member summed it up:

There were practice and value tensions apparent between the community development program and the research attached to the program. . . .an on-going tension. If we are just going to do a program we do a program, like if we were just going to do standard research, we just do standard research. If we are trying to do both, it is challenging.

And yet members reported that the inclusion of research and a learning orientation was beneficial to the collaboration. One community member expressed their satisfaction with adding the research component: "I've not been involved with community collaboratives that have had as strong a research orientation as Elder Friendly and I personally and professionally really value that. I think it really adds strength."

Participating organizations were aware that the Collaboration brought value to their organization, as one member reflected, "Something about this is working, more than just we love going to meetings. . . .all of us in our organizations have been really looking critically over the last year or two, trying to look at where is value added." Confirming that *value added*, one member commented, "We feel we are learning something and as organizations that is really important too."

The university partners benefited as well. The Faculty of Social Work's profile within the University improved because EFCP was seen as a model for collaboration within the University's "Return to Community" model. In addition, students had increased opportunities within the Faculty of Social Work with the advent of new field education practica in EFCP organizations and the introduction of a Graduate Specialization in Gerontology.

Although practice and value tensions between the program and research arose, the research helped to provide a boundary and helped to clarify the group purpose. Strength was added through the boundaries imposed by trying to research the community development activity. One member explained:

I think a good reason for our ability to put boundaries around it has been the research. Without a research design that's present and continuing this would have been like many other program development experiences where people say "Gee, that's a good idea, I want to get on board", and they're off and running. Before you have a real good idea of what it is that we're doing that works or doesn't work, what there is to learn about it; people think that they want to just get on the new idea and ride it. I think we've been really successful because we've been able to put some boundaries around that.

Despite the tensions between research and practice, members reported that there was a significant benefit to the inclusion of research and a learning orientation in the Collaboration. So both research and practice perspectives found a compromise, through which each member was able to expand their knowledge. As one member added,

You truly start to build synergy and your one project will feed off of another and you continue to learn and ask new questions and find new ways to answer. I think that that still is where I think we would get our biggest benefit. The challenge is how to get that recognized by a system that often values more bench research, in health, more randomized clinical control trials—that whole thing.

The implementation of a research demonstration meant that the research agenda was all-encompassing. One member commented on the reflective nature of this research demonstration effort: "It's been an interesting process in that we're doing a research project and then we're doing a research project about doing a research project so it's the ultimate in navel gazing in some ways." Another commented on the impact the research focus had on the process of the initiative:

Maybe we are more focused on process, less on an outside task. The outcomes associated with this project was “finding” which is different. Although there has been periodic tension about the research constraining, it has bought us some latitude in not having to produce certain things by certain deadlines.

In sum, research was one of the mandates of the EFCP study, and this case shed some light on how to collaborate successfully for the purposes of research. For example, as one members stated, “This kind of social research requires the researcher invest time, energy and builds the necessary relationships over time.”

Impacts on service system

Through its seven-year life, the EFCP organizations shared vision, information, and relationships. The group knew that they needed all the organizations contributing to the Collaboration in order to meet their system changing objectives. Not one of the organizations involved could have accomplished these on their own. Positive outcomes were achieved for the mutual benefit of the Collaboration participants and the communities they were serving. The group achieved its purpose by fostering a more senior-friendly collaborative era of community development practice within their city. The Collaboration was able to provide a voice for the challenges seniors’ faced.

The role of the EFCP Collaboration grew over the seven years to impact the service organizations and funders involved in their initiative. Funders had direct influence on the structure and process of this collaborative initiative because they expected familiar approaches to program operations. The group attempted to teach funders that some flexibility was required to support collaborations, however this was difficult, as one member explained:

If you take the funders...they have a pretty definite view of what an organization should look like. How it is funded, over what period of time, all those kinds of

things. We are really different. We are still in many ways, a virtual organization even though we have obviously got a fiscal agent in the community now, and structure, and so on. But we are still in many ways a virtual organization and our funders don't really understand that still. I would like to keep that but it is going to be hard. There is constant pressure to do things the way that people normally do.

The EFCP group impacted the funding policies of their local funders, having taught them about what might be required to financially support a flexible consortium. The EFCP had a reputation for collecting the resources in the organisational environment to deal with the complex issue of senior capacity building and community development. By participating in the EFCP Collaboration, organizations could access other resources, better integrate their own service, and were able to learn. Because of this success, those organizations represented within the EFCP were more responsive to the development of further collaborations to solve human service issues.

One member commented on the impact of the EFCP on the service system, "One of the impacts of the collaboration was the ripple effects and other groups using the model, sharing at conferences. We challenged the dominant paradigm of service delivery." Because the EFCP was considered a model for others, it had the potential to have some community influence on other collaboration efforts. One member explained how the Collaboration held influence in the community: "We could be doing the same program but without the [EFCP Collaboration] and it would be a much more difficult program to be influential. It would be much less influential."

Although a common factor for success identified in the literature was the support of the home organizations of the collaborating members, this was not reported by the

EFCP members at the beginning of the initiative. After the EFCP consortium, the organizations were better able to integrate at a community system level:

There are ripple effects from this collaboration that are broader than inter-organizational capacity. We share info and experience that we can bring to other places. It is systemic, rather just the organizations involved. Just in terms of other groups working together with volunteers, extending our reach in a way that we couldn't do as individual organizations.

The EFCP community development capacity building and research demonstrated that the organizations had a larger impact when they used a collaboration intervention. The EFCP Collaboration of organizations was able to engage various professionals who worked together in a coordinated approach for community development.

Increased likelihood of participating in collaborative activity

After their EFCP experience, collaborators were more likely to participate in other collaborative activities. Collaboration members had a better understanding of when collaboration could be effective, and planned to incorporate their acquired knowledge about collaboration in other collaborative activities. For example, each EFCP organization learned more about the process of effective collaboration. Then their knowledge helped to create projects that adopted a similar collaborative model. As one member explained, "We are learning something out of this and that a piece of what we are learning is to work collaboratively in other arenas."

From their experience with shared ownership in the Collaboration, the members developed a tendency to work more collaboratively with other initiatives. The group was more likely to view other projects as something that could be shared and integrated with the other organizations. As one member stated, "I don't think of any project now without kind of considering, is there a connection and might there be a mutual interest there?"

Organizations have learned skills necessary to make such collaborations more successful.

One member explained,

There are ripple effects from this collaboration that are broader than inter-organizational capacity. We share info and experience that we can bring to other places. It is systemic, rather just the organizations involved. Just in terms of other groups working together with volunteers, extending our reach in a way that we couldn't do as individual organizations.

Through the members' learning, the members' organizations increased knowledge of collaboration. Organizations knew more, and the boundaries of organizations were opened. The research learning enhanced organizational social capital through the relationships that continued outside of the EFCP. All organizations involved increased their collaborative potential. This means that the organizations valued collaborations more deeply, were more likely to engage in collaborations, and had learned skills necessary to effectively collaborate.

The experience and history of the Collaboration members with each other created valuable relationships that promoted further innovation within the larger service system. As one person illustrated, "You get very trusting relationships with people in other organizations through a collaborative like this one and then there are good benefits that come from that." Another provides a specific example:

We have formed good relationships with the United Way and the city and we know the key people there and we have got relationships going with them so if there are any concerns they would let us know very quickly. Then we can also keep them having good information.

Because many positive outcomes had been reported for the intervention program supported by the Collaboration, members of the EFCP group reported that as a result of their collaborative effort they experienced increased credibility within their home

organization, and with the broader community. One example was that the credibility of the researchers was increased within the university because they had engaged community agencies with the research. And this engagement aligned well with the University of Calgary's governing principle of "return to community." This increased the Faculty's profile and credibility within the University. Another member provided a fuller explanation of the reputation of this group:

There is some organization pay-off for people to continue to be a part of what we are doing. Some of it may be educational, other parts may be reputation, and other parts might be wanting to have a hand in something that may grow and so wanting to be able to influence the direction of something that could grow.

In sum, many collaboration studies have indicated that the context and environmental factors are key for successful collaboration. For example, a favourable political and social environment is often seen as a factor for sustainable collaborative efforts (Chrislip, 2002; Mattessich et al., 2001; Mizrahi & Rosenthal, 2001). However, environmental factors were not relatively important factors for the EFCP Collaboration. This could be due to other factors within the group that were more dominant, and the perseverance of the group even in times of scarcity.

Introduction of Questions

Three research questions were the focus for this study. These three questions were closely related and within the primary question of:

What are the important factors for successful community-university collaboration demonstrated and reported by the Elder Friendly Communities Program (EFCP) Collaboration?

Two secondary questions arising from the first question were also posed:

- A) What important success factors in the Elder Friendly Communities Program (EFCP) Collaboration are comparable to those identified in the Wilder Collaboration Factors Inventory (WCFI)?
- B) Are there other important success factors for the Elder Friendly Communities Program (EFCP) Collaboration not identified in the Wilder Collaboration Factors Inventory (WCFI)? If so, what are these?

The next section introduces my primary question and provides the main findings and evidence for this question.

Primary Question Findings

The first question was the main question for this study: What are the important factors for successful community-university collaboration demonstrated and reported by the Elder Friendly Communities Program (EFCP) Collaboration? Although factors were inter-related, distinct themes did emerge clearly from the data. Using the method for determining theme importance as described in Chapter Three: Methodology, the identifying of relative patterns, frequency of factors, and convergence of evidence was used to determine the more important factors. As expected, the data did not indicate equal weighting for each theme, so it was possible to make a determination on which were the more important factors. Therefore, those identified patterns (factors) with a high convergence of evidence and higher relative frequencies within the case study database were considered the more important factors for the EFCP case.

Six important factors were uncovered for the EFCP Collaboration. Two of these six were original factors which emerged from the EFCP data. And the remaining four of these important factors were factors previously identified in the Wilder Collaboration Factors Inventory (WCFI). Detailed convergence of evidence results for these six important factors can be found in Table 7. Convergence of Evidence Determining the Important Factors for the EFCP Collaboration which follows:

Table 7. Convergence of Evidence Determining the Important Factors for the EFCP Collaboration

FACTOR (Category)	EVIDENCE Interview Transcripts (Individual Collaboration Members' Quotations)	EVIDENCE Meeting Transcripts (Example of dialogue from Member Meetings)	EVIDENCE Meeting Observation Notes (Segments of meeting notes)	EVIDENCE Group Member check Transcripts (Segment of transcript)	EVIDENCE Documentation and Archived Documentation (emails, minutes, etc. since 2000)	EVIDENCE WCFI Item Results 1=Strongly Disagree 5=Strongly Agree	CONVERGENCE OF EVIDENCE?	FREQUENCY WITHIN DATABASE	IMPORTANCE (ESTIMATE)
Established Informal Relationships and Communication Links (Communication)	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	4.2 Agree	Yes	264	High
Mutual Respect, Understanding, and Trust (Membership)	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	4.2 Agree	Yes	248	High
Flexibility (Process and Structure)	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	4.39 Agree-Strongly agree	Yes	237	High
Development of Clear Roles and Policy Guidelines (Process and Structure)	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	3.9 Agree	Yes	199	High
Shared Leadership*	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	N/A	Yes	177	High
Purpose-Learning*	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	N/A	Yes	158	High

For a listing of all subfactors identified in the EFCP Collaboration data, with convergence of evidence, frequency, and relative importance results, see Appendix E. A summary is found in Table 8, Convergence of Evidence for All Themes (Includes all WCFI subfactors and new themes).

The following two sections will expand the presentation of the Primary Question by providing supporting data related to the two secondary research questions:

- A) What important success factors in the Elder Friendly Communities Program (EFCP) Collaboration are comparable to those identified in the Wilder Collaboration Factors Inventory (WCFI)? And,
- B) Are there other important success factors for the Elder Friendly Communities Program (EFCP) Collaboration that are not identified in the Wilder Collaboration Factors Inventory (WCFI)? If so, what are these?

Secondary Research Question A Findings

Secondary Research Question A asked what Wilder Collaboration Factors Inventory (WCFI) items were important for the Elder Friendly Communities Program (EFCP) Collaboration as follows:

What important success factors in the Elder Friendly Communities Program (EFCP) Collaboration are comparable to those identified in the Wilder Collaboration Factors Inventory (WCFI)?

As mentioned in Chapter Three: Methodology, I found the most important themes by simultaneously drawing on all forms of data collection (interviews, meeting observation, administration of the WCFI, member checks, archival data review) to

uncover the common themes. I used the factors identified within the Wilder Collaboration Factors Inventory (WCFI) as a beginning coding framework. Therefore, I was able to determine which of the WCFI items fit the EFCP Collaboration and which ones were less important.

As shown in Table 8, four of the 20 factors for successful collaboration identified by Mattessich et al. (2001) in the Wilder Collaboration Factors Inventory (WCFI) were confirmed to be important, and five were moderately important in this case. The four Wilder Collaboration Factors Inventory (WCFI) factors were confirmed to be important for the success of the Elder Friendly Communities Program (EFCP) Collaboration were:

- Established informal relationships and communication links
- Mutual respect, understanding, and trust
- Flexibility
- Development of clear roles and policy guidelines

Table 8 below summarizes the Wilder Collaboration Factors Inventory (WCFI) Factors that were most important to the EFCP Collaboration. Factors were determined to be important, moderately important, or not as important, as presented in Table 8:

Overview of Convergence and Importance for Wilder Collaboration Factors Inventory (WCFI) Factors.

Table 8. Overview of Convergence and Importance for Wilder Collaboration Factors Inventory (WCFI) Factors

WCFI Categories and Factors	Frequency within my case study database	Convergence of evidence?	Is WCFI factor important in the EFCP case?
Environment Category			
<i>Favourable political and social climate</i>	MODERATE	NO	NO
<i>History of collaboration or cooperation in the (City Seniors) community</i>	LOW	NO	NO
<i>Collaborative group seen as a legitimate leader in the community</i>	LOW	NO	NO
Membership Characteristics Category			
<i>Mutual respect, understanding, and trust</i>	HIGH	YES	YES
<i>Appropriate cross section of members</i>	HIGH	NO	NO
<i>Members see collaboration as in their self-interest</i>	MODERATE	YES	MODERATE
<i>Ability to compromise</i>	LOW	NO	NO
Process/Structure Category			
<i>Members share a stake in both process and outcome</i>	HIGH	NO	NO
<i>Multiple layers of participation</i>	LOW	NO	NO
<i>Flexibility</i>	HIGH	YES	YES
<i>Development of clear roles and policy guidelines</i>	HIGH	YES	YES
<i>Adaptability</i>	LOW	NO	NO
<i>Appropriate pace of development</i>	LOW	NO	NO
Communication Category			
<i>Open and frequent communication</i>	HIGH	MODERATE	MODERATE
<i>Established informal relationships and communication links</i>	HIGH	YES	YES
Purpose Category			
<i>Concrete, attainable goals and objectives</i>	HIGH	NO	NO
<i>Shared Vision</i>	HIGH	MODERATE	MODERATE
<i>Unique purpose</i>	MODERATE	PARTIAL	MODERATE
Resources			
<i>Sufficient funds, staff, materials, and time</i>	HIGH	NO	NO
<i>Skilled leadership</i>	LOW	PARTIAL	MODERATE

Five Wilder Collaboration Factors Inventory (WCFI) factors were determined to be moderately important in the EFCP case. These were:

1. *Open and frequent communication*—Mattessich et al. (2001) describe as “Collaborative group members interact often, update one another, discuss issues openly, and convey all necessary information to one another and to people outside the group” (p. 9).

2. *Members see collaboration as in their self-interest*—Mattessich et al. (2001) describe this as “Collaborating partners believe that they will benefit from their involvement in the collaboration and that the advantages of membership will offset costs such as loss of autonomy and turf” (p. 8).

3. *Shared vision*—Mattessich et al. (2001) describe as “Collaborating partners have the same vision, with clearly agreed-upon mission, objectives, and strategy. The shared vision may exist at the outset of collaboration, or the partners may develop a vision as they work together” (p. 10).

4. *Unique purpose*—Mattessich et al. (2001) describe as “The mission and goals, or approach, of the collaborative group differ, at least in part, from the mission and goals, or approach, of the members organizations” (p. 10).

5. *Skilled leadership*—Mattessich et al. (2001) describe as “The individual who provides leadership for the collaborative group has organizing and interpersonal skill, and carries out the role with fairness. Because of these characteristics (and others), the leader is granted respect or ‘legitimacy’ by the collaborative partners” (p. 10).

See Table 9, below, for further detail of the convergence of evidence for the moderately important factors.

Table 9. Convergence of Evidence for the Moderately Important WCFI Factors

FACTOR (Category)	EVIDENCE Interview Transcripts (Individual Collaboration Members' Quotations)	EVIDENCE Meeting Transcripts (Example of dialogue from Member Meetings)	EVIDENCE Meeting Observation Notes (Segments of meeting notes)	EVIDENCE Group Member check Transcripts (Segment of transcript)	EVIDENCE Documentation and Archived Documentation (emails, minutes, etc. since 2000)	EVIDENCE WCFI Results 1=Strongly Disagree & 5=Strongly Agree	CONVERGENCE OF EVIDENCE?	FREQUENCY WITHIN DATABASE	IMPORTANCE (ESTIMATE)
Open and Frequent Communication	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	4.3 Agree-Strongly agree	Yes	127	Moderate
Shared Vision (Purpose)	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	3.8 Agree	Yes	113	Moderate
Members See Collaboration as in Their Self-interest (Membership) Benefit (Membership)	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Strongly agree-Agree	Yes	95	Moderate
Unique Purpose (Purpose)	Yes	Low	Yes	Yes	Yes	4.6 Strongly agree-Agree	Partial	99	Moderate
Skilled Leadership (Resources)	Yes	Yes	Yes	Low	Low	4.3 Agree-Strongly agree	Partial	70	Moderate

Also indicated in Table 8, the remaining 11 Wilder Collaboration Factors

Inventory (WCFI) factors were not as evident or as apparent for the EFCP group. These were:

- Favourable political and social climate

- History of collaboration or cooperation in the community
- Collaborative group seen as a legitimate leader in the community
- Appropriate cross section of members
- Ability to compromise
- Members share a stake in both process and outcome
- Multiple layers of participation
- Adaptability (adjusting vision, fundamental goals, or philosophies when needed)
- Appropriate pace of development
- Concrete, attainable goals and objectives
- Having sufficient funds, staff, materials, and time

These remaining 11 Wilder Collaboration Factors Inventory (WCFI) factors were not the prominent important factors in my data. Of course, although these factors were less important, they may still have influenced the success of the EFCP Collaboration to some extent.

The WCFI factors found to be not as important, or moderately important, for the EFCP Collaboration can also be illuminating. As one example, three of the less important factors for this case were Environmental Category WCFI factors. EFCP members saw the group as external support and validation in a service environment that ranged from indifferent to hostile which conflicts with the WCFI environmental factors. The EFCP Collaboration had membership that were motivated by the hope of changing the status quo and enjoyed a degree of autonomy that allowed the initiative to mature. Consequently, the collaboration succeeded in a generally unsupportive environment. Indeed, it was the motivating force behind the EFCP Collaboration. This explains the

clear incongruity between the stress in most of the literature on having environmental support and the perceptions of the EFCP Collaboration.

As another example, having sufficient funds, staff, materials, and time may have been somewhat important to the group; however the interviews and observations mostly indicated that the group did not have these resources in sufficient amounts. Funds, staff, materials and time were difficult to attain for the EFCP group, and at no time appeared sufficient. Collaboration members did not have sufficient time to contribute to the effort, and program staff were scarce. However, the group worked hard to secure the resources they required to keep the program and research operating. Fortunately, the Program Manager's efforts ameliorated these shortages. Soliciting funding and grant writing was a common activity for the group and the Program Manager, in order to secure the basic resources required. In sum, the funding for this kind of initiative was not readily available, but the Collaboration was able to continue through persistent effort.

The following chapter sections will further describe each of the most important factors for the Elder Friendly Communities Program (EFCP) case, drawing from the full range of data sources. Most quotations are from the interview and meeting transcripts, which were the richest sources of data. The first section describes the most important Wilder Collaboration Factors Inventory (WCFI) Factors found in the EFCP data:

1. Established informal relationships and communication links
2. Mutual respect, understanding, and trust
3. Flexibility
4. Development of clear roles and policy guidelines

I will start with the most important factor, the Wilder Collaboration Factors Inventory (WCFI) factor: Established informal relationships and communication links.

Established Informal Relationships and Communication Links

The theme with the highest frequency and the most convergence within the database was the *Established informal relationships and communication links*, which describes communication within the relationships among members.

Relationship refers to “the connection between two or more people or groups and their involvement with one another, especially as regards the way they behave toward and feel about one another” (Online Encarta World English Dictionary, 2007). The Wilder Collaboration Factors Inventory (WCFI) categorizes this factor within their Communication dimension and describes the factor as follows: “In addition to formal channels of communication, members establish personal connections—producing a better, more informed, and cohesive group working on a common project” (Mattessich et al., 2001, p. 24). This was found to be the most recurring code matching my data from interviews transcripts, meeting transcripts, meeting observation notes, group member check transcripts, inventory results, and collaboration documentation.

The EFCP Collaboration data confirmed the importance of the Wilder Collaboration Factors Inventory (WCFI) factor, *Established informal relationships and communication links*. Often, there is a mixture of informal and formal communication through established informal relationships and communication links (Mattessich et al., 2001). This factor is demonstrated by members establishing personal connections to create a cohesive, informed collaboration.

The *Established informal relationships and communication links* factor can be traced to two questions on the 40-item Wilder Collaboration Factors Inventory (WCFI). See below Table 10: Subfactors of the WCFI Established Informal Relationships and Communication Links. Unfortunately these two subfactor questions do not adequately encompass the entire factor, particularly the creation of personal connections. The first item, “communication among the people in this collaborative group happens both at formal meetings and in informal ways” and the second item, “I personally have informal conversations about the project with others who are involved in this collaborative group,” overlook the personal connection aspect of this WCFI factor.

Table 10. Subfactors of the WCFI Established Informal Relationships and Communication Links

Established Informal Relationships and Communication Links (WCFI Factor: within the Communication Category)	High importance for the EFCP Case
Informal Ways (WCFI Subfactor)	High Importance
Informal Conversation about Program (WCFI Subfactor)	Low Importance

Four sub-themes emerged from the data in regards to the Wilder Collaboration Factors Inventory (WCFI) Factor, Established Informal Relationships and Communication Links. These subfactors were *building relationships with each other*, *communication in informal and formal ways*, *quality of experience*, and *building relational networks*. Table 11: Themes Related to the Established Informal Relationships

and Communication Links summarizes these subfactors and a discussion of each of these follows.

Table 11. Themes Related to the Established Informal Relationships and Communication Links

Wilder Collaboration Factors Inventory (WCFI) Factor Established Informal Relationships and Communication Links	
Building Relationships with Each Other	Themes that Emerged from the EFCP Data for this Factor
Communication in Informal and Formal Ways	
Quality of Experience	
Building Relational Networks	

Next I will describe the findings for each of these related sub-themes:

Building Relationships with Each Other

A very prominent aspect of this theme described by Mattessich et al. (2001), which seemed very important to the Elder Friendly Communities Program (EFCP) group, was attending to the developing of personal connections and the building of informal relationships. The developing of personal connections was clearly viewed as an important factor for the EFCP members. As one member clearly stated, “you have to build relationships.” Another member was emphatic: “Really, it’s all about relationships!” Yet another member reiterated, “It is important to develop and maintain good personal

relationships among organizational leaders, particularly in the early stages, when common needs and visions bring the members together, and the organizations develop more formal plans for collaboration.” Another member expanded,

The important thing is, it is all about relationships. I really believe that. You cannot command a collaboration from on high. You can't say, 'Okay, folks, the university, health region, and the city, will collaborate. Therefore, I am going to assign the following staff and you are going to go out and collaborate.' I don't think it works that way. I really do think people build relationships that allow them to sort through the difficult things and feel good about the stuff that is being accomplished.

Many members commented that relationship building takes time, and that the group must take the time to build the personal connections among members. One member stated, “In collaboration, getting to know the individuals, spending the time to build the relationships, to get to know the individuals is just really critical.” In another example, a member explained the importance of taking the time to build the relationships with each other:

These aren't relationships that came together five minutes ago because we have to write a proposal. These are very powerful. That means you are willing to take time and it is not just about the task and the instrumental work that needs to be done....The importance of building relationships, that all our ability to work together is based on the relationships that we have, maintaining those, strengthening those—and that it takes time. The Collaboration is strengthened because you take time to develop the relationships. So those of us who sit around the table, I think, by and large, understand that, value it, know that it may be different in other kinds of efforts at collaboration and that it is the relationships in the [EFCP Collaboration], it is the relationships with the [community development] staff, it is the relationships in the communities with the seniors. This is bedrock relationship building.

The relationship building appeared to build trust among members and contribute to an effective collaborative process, even in times of potential conflict. As one EFCP member further explained,

You can call it relationship building. That is just critical because you have to be able... to trust where the other people are coming from in order to be able to listen through ideas and not put on judgments... After that, you can negotiate some of the more difficult things—that in some cases may be power things from different organizations—but you have a basis to work to find out if that is what they are. So relationship building is just critical, I think, on all levels in this program. Not necessarily personal stories but just relationship building.

Attention to developing the connections among members also led to a cohesive group. Members wanted to remain as a group and wanted to maintain the relationships developed within the EFCP consortium. This sense of cohesiveness seemed to create an environment where conflict could more easily be resolved. One member stated, “I think it’s very clear that the relationships on this committee have been really positive and they’ve held the group together and helped propel it forward during the tough times.”

And another echoed

That is a benefit of this group but also, and particularly when there is a conflict, that is when you need to really ramp up the level of professionalism....we have been able to work as well as we have together and been able to disagree on things, hash things out, maintain positive relations, make some hard decisions.

Communication in Informal and Formal Ways

The group used both formal and informal communication, highlighting the importance of attending to a mixture of formal and informal ways of building and sustaining relationships. One member mentioned that “it has been a strange mixture of formality and informality—a lot of mutual respect.” The informal nature of communication is balanced by an ability to communicate openly and effectively about formal, professional issues. The group was also able to maintain the norm of professionalism, and “Keep it professional.”

Although formal communication occurred consistently throughout the EFCP meetings, ample data supported the consistent occurrence and importance of informal communication and relationship building during the meetings as well. Informal communication, although at times personal, was more often related to the work process of the Collaboration; as one member explained, it was “not the type of informal like having a beer and watching a game. This is informal with a work purpose attached.”

Informal communication promoted the connectedness crucial for successful collaborative work. One member stated, “That informality, mutual engagement of the [EFCP Collaboration] is what has made it successful.” The EFCP Collaboration members demonstrated and indicated that they had an open level of communication through discussions that included emotional as well as cognitive content. This resulted in a sense of knowing the other members of the group. As one member stated

You will see a lot of good natured humour, kidding each other, people really relating to each other, not just as professionals but as people who have much more depth than their role in their home organization. I think that has been very important for the quality of the Collaboration.

These relationships more closely resembled close supportive ties rather than businesslike connections. The informality seemed to build even more respect for each other as EFCP members communicated with a caring connectedness in formal meetings, emails, and informal celebratory events. The more time the members intentionally spent getting to know each other and building the informal relationships, the more they noticed they “were speaking more with ‘let’s’, ‘we’, and ‘us’ -type language.”

Group members contributed their own personal thoughts, and did not seem overly constrained by their organization’s perspective. In communicating at an informal and

personal level, the members did not simply act as representatives of their organization, and went beyond acting solely in a professional role. One member believed this to be very important to the success of the EFCP collaboration, and thought it was useful to consider: “Are people representing organizational self or are they representing their own selves? That makes a difference.”

This type of informal communication was facilitated at times in the EFCP Collaboration. For example, when beginning in her new role as Program Manager, the chair of the meetings at that time orchestrated the increase of informal communication. She stated

When I first started working with the Collaboration, the group was really tense and I think that one of the things that helped to change that was to initiate some personal sharing at the beginning of groups....I tried to move on, starting by something not very deep, and then increased it and then we ended up not doing it anymore and that seemed right.

Setting aside time to get to know each other was important to the group. The members seemed aware that getting to know each other facilitated developing personal connections. As one member reflected, “Sharing personal stories has also been a very important part of creating/moving from a sense of us and them and otherness to a sense of unity.” Another member affirmed an intentional effort to know the other member’s personally as well: “we don’t necessarily only relate to each other about this common work we are involved in together but for example, I know something about [EFCP member]’s family and I know something about [EFCP member]’s vacation.”

The development of bonds and connections between members, and of getting to know one another, was facilitated by attempts to know people in a multidimensional manner. As one member further described

That's where the multidimensional comes in. It's not just 'that guy at that meeting that takes care about the communications part'... We see each other in many different ways at different times, not just related to work, it's knowing people in a multidimensional way.

Knowing people in a multidimensional way seemed to build relationship connections through the building of further respect, understanding, and personal knowledge of each other. One member gets to the essence of the personal connection:

When you start to relate to each other at a lot of different levels, it is not just task focused, there is more of a sense of connectedness, and being able to relate to people on those kinds of levels strengthens the collaborative work. There is more depth to it... you become more real to each other as human beings and less viewed as an instrumental person that helps you attain some kind of goal. My knowing that, for example, somebody on the [EFCP Collaboration]'s family member is having surgery really has no bearing on what we are collaborating about, but it does make the fact that we view each other on multiple levels as human beings rather than just as kind of instrumentalities to be nice to once a month so that we can get on with that kind of stuff. Like last summer before I had hip surgery I had lunch with [EFCP member] and she brought me this big stack of books that I might read. I think that is an indicator that people are connected to each other on more than this kind of superficial work stuff. I think that is part of what holds us together, in addition to the common vision or our understanding of working together on an effort that requires collaboration. There are all these other levels of connection. I think the people who may have been working with us at some point of time but aren't at the moment, and this is not universal across the group, I am sure there are people that feel less connected to each other and there are people that feel more connected to each other, but the fact that some of us are relating to each other on other than the pure instrumentality of it all creates a different kind of sense of connectedness.

This informal nature indicated a concern for the members beyond the work. The members' behaviour reflected a level of friendship in addition to their professional relationships. One member confirmed that "we are sort of friends as well." Another member reflected on the personal nature of the conversations before and after the formal meetings:

There is a lot of talk going on before the meeting and after the meeting. A lot of relationships that I was hearing that people were having, coffee and tea together at conferences they went to, or on occasion going out for a drink.

An email demonstrated the personal nature of the relationship in this professional collaboration. One member sent this email correspondence to their group:

[Collaborator]'s mother died last week on Thursday morning. The funeral was on Monday afternoon. Sorry I was unable to let you know in a more timely way.

On special occasions, members held their meetings in people's homes. For example, one of the newer Collaboration members had picked up on the informal nature of the group and offered to host a farewell party at her home for the exiting Program Manager in this email excerpt:

It looks like June 14th is the best date for most—dinner will be at my place—[address provided]. My home phone number is [provided]. Let's say 6 PM. I'll bar-b-q. We'll hope for nice weather!

Quality of Experience

One component of establishing informal relationships and communication links was ensuring a positive quality of experience for those involved in the meetings. An informal, fun atmosphere is not necessarily naturally occurring, and this group took the effort to try to make the process enjoyable. As one member stated, "The most important is that attending to process, congeniality, enjoyable connections is key." The EFCP members indicated that they "enjoyed each other's company" and appeared to like being together. As one member described "we look forward to seeing each other. We laugh a lot, we are good natured." Another added, "Coming to an [EFCP Collaboration] meeting is a pleasant experience." Meetings were filled with members relating to each other

respectfully thus increasing the quality of the experience for EFCP Collaboration members. Another member mentioned that they enjoyed that the process was “interpersonal—and cooperation creates more endorphins than cocaine.”

The characteristics of the people selected for the EFCP group appeared to support the collaborative process and relationship building, as one member describes the early phase of this Collaboration: “In the early stages, you got together for coffee, there would be laughter. There was a receptivity in the individuals to the topic that you couldn’t design.” The group members sensed receptivity, compatibility, and interest within the group early on. To this end, the Collaboration members demonstrated exceptional relational skills. The connectedness that developed may also have been a result of the characteristics of members, as one member reflected, “The people who started this were interested, curious, dynamic, fun-loving, high energy, highly skilled people to begin with.”

Sharing food was part of the enjoyable process. The meetings were often arranged to have lunch provided, or members brought in cookies or candies. One member indicated their belief in the importance of food in the collaborative process, when they stated, “You never sit down with anyone unless you feed them”, and another mentioned “the kind of info shared with food is different than if there is no food, so it is worth having lunch with people.” The group had potluck meetings at times in members’ homes and went to restaurants together to celebrate.

Having fun was a key finding for this group. As one members said, “It is possible to get things done when you are having fun.” Fun was part of the process, and one

member went on to say that “One part of our vision is an interest in fun.” Several others confirmed the importance of a quality, fun experience for the EFCP Collaboration:

- “We actually have fun.”
- “Why would you want to be there three, four, five years if there was no fun? Take the time to have some fun.”
- “The Elder Friendly Community experience has definitely confirmed that you build the relationship. You have fun together... We go out for meals, meet for lunch, have barbeques, goof around.”
- “We said right from the beginning we thought one of the reasons this partnership worked was that we did enjoy, we had a certain commonality, we were all fairly easy going, we all liked to laugh.”
- “It has always been very important for us to enjoy what we are doing, to have some fun out of this.”
- “In terms of dynamics, it was a good place to be—it was fun!”
- “We really enjoyed the meetings. They were fun.”

An informal, fun atmosphere was nurtured by the group, as one member confirmed, “we make a very intentional effort to lighten the atmosphere.”

Throughout the meetings, members often smiled, and group members joked with each other. The fun and humour appeared to increase the quality of the members’ involvement with one another. There was often a seamless intermingling of humour with business. The humour did not seem to distract from tasks, rather, provided brief relief and

then an immediate return to task. The follow excerpt from a meeting illustrated this point:

Chairperson: “Do we have somebody who will take notes on the meeting part of the meeting here?”

Member 2: “I can.”

Chairperson: “Thank you very much [Member 2]. I have got to keep track of that because we have got to start rotating.”

Member 3: “[Member 2], your resistance must be low after a trip to Australia, usually there is silence for a bit longer than that.”

[Group laughter]

Member 2: “When the minutes come out as drawings of little kangaroos, you’ll know I haven’t quite recovered.”

[Group laughter]

Chairperson: “Yes, or little planes flying away.”

[Then the meeting continues with the next agenda item.]

Another example at a different meeting also illustrated the intermingling of humour with the meeting task process. When the meeting chair asked if anyone had any further items to add to the agenda, a member responded with humour:

Chairperson: “Any further agenda items?”

Member 1: “Another agenda item is that we need better cookies.”

Member 2: “I’ve tried to find those ginger cookies from the meeting a couple of months ago.”

Member 3: “Those were just from Safeway, and they are not there all the time.”

Member 1: “OK, this meeting has already been worth it for me since I’ve got the information that I wanted.”

One member sums up the importance of the enjoyable process to the group, in explaining why he believed the Collaboration was successful:

Interpersonal comfort...I enjoyed it. So like any person, you like to go where you enjoy yourself with people you respect and appreciate...you bring in some of the things I mentioned, the skill, the integrity, the sense of humour, and all those things, and you throw in a healthy dose of commitment. I think that is a very good recipe to start something that is going to work and be healthy...I would have no hesitation to phone any of those people and meet with them and talk with them and work with them. We can laugh and joke and enjoy ourselves and that is great.

Building Relational Networks

Members clearly viewed the increased connections as beneficial, as one member stated “It’s been great to have all those people really get to know each other very well.”

Other benefits to the connections created through participation in the EFCP Collaboration included networking, as one member stated

Each one of us brings a different part of the environmental scan to the table and one of the real benefits that we have had on the [EFCP Collaboration] is straight out of information sharing. You know, being able to tell each other about opportunities that we might not know about, around changes of staffing, that we might not know about, all that kind of stuff that comes with networking. It is a very rich networking.

Another member noted the benefits of the network among members:

As we build partnerships we build relationships that can help us in dealing with issues more quickly. An issue that might have taken months before can be cleared up in a phone call to a partner. Creating partnerships enables us to make good use of our resources.

EFCP Collaboration members agreed that they have informal conversations about the project with other members outside of meetings. When individuals happened to meet outside the program meetings, they often talked about the program. Some individuals would telephone or email each other about program issues. As one member stated,

Now I can call people and invite them to a meeting, or ask them questions, or they might phone me or they might tell someone else to call [Member A] or [Member B] or [Member C] to say “What do you think about this?” We have developed a lot of connections through Elder Friendly.

For the EFCP case, EFCP members described the outcome of relationship building that occurred in this group as “social capital.” Ansley and Gaventa (1997) describe “Social capital” as the connections built between and among people that facilitate the flow of information and resources (p. 51). Social capital is illustrated by “social networks, norms of reciprocity, mutual assistance, and trustworthiness” (Putnam & Feldstein, 2003, p. 2). As one member reflected, “Thinking about social capital and how it is commonly used, reciprocity, relationship, trust—it is exemplified in our group.” Linking happened through relationship building and information sharing at many levels. As one member asked, “Aren’t relationships critical to social capital because you’re talking about building relationship connections?” Another member explained,

Relationships are critical to social capital because you are talking about building two-way connections. You need relationships as a foundational piece to the social capital. Connectedness plus trust equals relationship. It is a different quality; you see and relate to people in a different way.

The members also used the term “organizational capital” to more specifically describe the social capital developed between the people and organizations involved in the EFCP Collaboration. Through linking with each other, the members built ties to the others’ organizations. One member explains, “So I think that the term social capital or community capital in terms of building up that store of goodwill and good positive things—there is also a kind of organizational capital.” One member added that “We developed some organizational capital over the past number of years.” One member reflected, “There are two kinds of relationships here. One is the personal connections; the other is the organizational or structural relationships.” Another member concluded that, “With respect to relationship, the developing organizational social capital is also very

important.” So the members believed that the organizations participating in the EFCP Collaboration were building organizational capital.

Due to the strong relational ties, there was an openness and a commitment to support each other in a variety of other activities outside the EFCP Collaboration. Members acknowledged that because they have developed relationships with other EFCP members, they are more likely to consider working together in the future:

I don't think of any project now without kind of considering, 'is there a connection, and might there be a mutual interest there?' That is certainly relatively new for me over the last four or five years so that is a real plus for me.

The Collaboration appeared to meet an emotional need for the members as well. During the transition from a research mandate to a service mandate, the members seemed concerned with the option of ending the group when that was considered. The members seemed to have a bond to the group and resisted disbanding. And even if the EFCP Collaboration terminated, it is likely that group members would continue to participate in other initiatives together because the group members are prepared to support each other in other domains.

Mutual Respect, Understanding, and Trust

Mattessich et al. (2001) describe the factor *Mutual respect, understanding, and trust* as an important theme influencing successful collaboration. Mattessich further describes this Wilder Collaboration Factors Inventory (WCFI) factor as “Members of the collaborative group share an understanding and respect for each other and their respective organizations: how they operate, their cultural norms and values, their limitations, and their expectations” (Mattessich et al., 2001, p. 14).

The Wilder Collaboration Factors Inventory (WCFI) factor *Mutual respect, understanding, and trust* was confirmed by the EFCP consortium. In the EFCP Collaboration, the level of significance of each of the factors of mutual respect, trust, and understanding was high, suggesting that each of these would be better served as a separate item in a framework fitting the EFCP Collaboration. (See Table 12).

Table 12. Subfactors of the WCFI Mutual Respect, Understanding, and Trust Factor

Mutual Respect, Understanding, and Trust (WCFI Factor: within the Membership Category)	High Importance for the EFCP case
Respect (WCFI Subfactor)	High Importance
Trust (WCFI Subfactor)	High Importance
Understanding (WCFI Subfactor but not an item in the WCFI)	High Importance

Not surprisingly, as demonstrated below in Table 13, and as found in the Wilder Collaboration Factors Inventory (WCFI), *mutual respect, trust, and understanding* were the separate themes found within this factor. The group demonstrated attention to the core values underlying successful collaborations, including trust, respect, and understanding. Time and effort was spent in clarifying values for each participant, for the group, and for each of the participating organizations.

Table 13. Themes Related to Mutual Respect, Understanding, and Trust

Wilder Collaboration Factors Inventory (WCFI) Factor Mutual Respect, Understanding, and Trust	
Mutual Respect	Themes that were Identified in the WCFI and also that Emerged from the EFCP Data for this Factor
Trust	
Understanding	

Consequently, findings regarding respect, understanding, and trust will be presented separately in the following section.

Respect

A consistent theme from the data was the importance of respect among the EFCP group members. As one member stated, “it really takes mutual respect”, and another claimed, “I have a lot of respect for other people.” As further confirmation, when completing the Wilder Collaboration Factors Inventory (WCFI), the EFCP Collaboration members strongly agreed with the item, “I have a lot of respect for the other people involved in this collaboration.”

While establishing informal relationships, the EFCP members took time to demonstrate respect through their interactions and attention. Each member seemed genuinely interested in the other member’s well-being within, as well as outside of, their work on the EFCP. Members demonstrated consideration of each other’s needs. For example, when one member in the group said she needed to be excused from an EFCP

Collaboration meeting due to a headache, every member in the meeting offered to give her a ride home.

Respect was evident from the beginning of the EFCP group. As one member stated, “there was a lot of respect, right from the get-go.” For example, in speaking of other members in the group during its formation, one member demonstrated their appreciation and respect when commenting, “These folks were clearly intelligent, very well informed, with lots of knowledge, skills and education about the area we were talking about.”

Members spoke politely during their meetings. One member stated, “We have always been very polite to each other.” People were not only polite to each other; they also seemed to honour and value each other. As one member echoed, the environment the members created was respectful: “There is real respect around the table to hear each other’s opinions...there again was a lot of respect for each other’s ideas,” and another confirmed, “we respected each other’s abilities.” The appreciation of other’s contributions signalled respect among the members. One member suggested that each member was adept at “valuing what other people have to bring.”

EFCP group members demonstrated respect by their consistent attention to the perspectives and concerns of the other members. The underlying values of inclusiveness and equality among members seemed to foster, as well as demonstrate, respect within these relationships.

When contrasting their experience in the EFCP Collaboration to other collaborative groups they are involved in, the members were able to identify respectfulness as a core value that might have differed from the less successful

collaborations. For example, one member stated, the EFCP group had “a willingness to work together towards solutions rather than placing blame, or saying you are not measuring up.” Another commented that “nobody on the [EFCP Collaboration] is trying to make me or anyone else belittled, or trying to get something done around us.” A third mentioned, “I think one of the secrets of the group is that nobody feels the victim of the tyranny of the majority. We all come from different perspectives and I think we respect that.”

Listening also was an indication of the demonstration of respect. Through their listening skills, people demonstrated a continuous attention in the meetings. As one member stated, “everyone’s viewpoint is allowed to be heard and expressed and people have a responsibility to listen to that and to try to understand.” This belief in respectful attention and listening to all group members was reiterated by another member, “People, for whatever reason, have been respectful of each other and willing to listen.” They continuously contributed, indicating that they were present and paying attention through continuous participation. As one person stated, “There is real respecting of the contributions that happen.”

In dealing with conflict, members also demonstrated respect in their postures or stances. In dealing with a conflict in which there was a member who ended their membership in the group, people maintained the respect and thereby retained a working relationship. As one person reflected, “people maintained certainly a professional sort of respect, politeness, and dignity during the process and that was good. So I think for example, I could approach any and all of those parties and work with them again.” When one conflict arose in a meeting regarding a conflict among parties within one

organization, people from outside this organization suggested that they chose to demonstrate respect by behaving in a manner that accomplished a respectful, amicable resolution: “If the whole thing happened again in the same way, I would probably do the same thing which is kind of sit back and try to make some helpful comments and listen, be positive, and see what came out of it.”

Trust

Although Mattessich et al. (2001) did not define trust in their framework; Dawes (2003) provides a good definition of trust related to collaboration as “to have faith in the honesty, integrity, reliability, and competence of another” (p. 1). A belief in the trustworthiness among members of the EFCP Collaboration had a significant impact on their ability to work together. Members reported that they trusted each other, not in every single instance, but overall. One member claimed, “There was a lot of trust. You knew where people were coming from; we knew their philosophical take on this.”

The group relied on its sub-committees for communication, finance, and research to get most of the EFCP work done. Members noted that these sub-committees had earned their trust. The research committee was highly regarded and trusted, as one member stated:

At different points different people had to get things done and something that we have learned to do in the [EFCP Collaboration] is just trust one another and if a research proposal is due, others in the [EFCP Collaboration] know that the research [committee] are going to get it done.

Another EFCP member explained their confidence in the EFCP sub-committees:

I know that [the communications committee] do good work. I don't have to check over my shoulder to see what kinds of messages are out in the community...the same is true for the other committees, the finance committee. I don't check budgets regularly. I trust them to come back to the [EFCP Collaboration] and let

me know how we are financially and what challenges we have got and what proposals need to be written for the program.

The EFCP Collaboration members intentionally worked to build trust among members in the group. As the relationships were intentionally built, the quality of trust was also enhanced. As one member stated, “we had built a trusting set of relationships.” In addition, they believed that the accomplishments of the Collaboration required continuous trust building or “building trust over time.” Therefore, members indicated in their communication that the trust building was done in an intentional and continuous manner, for example one member stated, “Trust was developed by keeping multiple stakeholders informed, connected, and involved.” Trust was also built through each member contributing resources as required and as they were able, as one member explained:

How do people learn to trust each other? What do they do? I think it comes through being clear about what people bring to the table, bring to the Collaboration, and when it is needed, it is delivered. With some partners, the expectation is they can't bring very much but they deliver on that little bit as well. It is not as if they are there trying to boost their credibility for being there and in the end, can't come through on it. So I think that is part of it, seeing what people do deliver compared to what they have said they would deliver.

The EFCP group was successful because they built the trust early on. The early members knew, through their other past collaborative ventures, the importance of consciously building “the trust around the table” from the beginning of the venture. A time-limited needs assessment project aided in the development of trust and “tested the waters” with a smaller venture initially. The act of coming together to write a grant for the needs assessment funding helped to establish trusting relationships, as one member indicated, “Writing a grant to pool money to achieve a certain end was all we really

needed to do in order to establish our collaboration and build the kind of trusting relationships that we needed over time.” And another added, “We were able to build the trust and relationships because there wasn’t as much to lose by starting small scale.” And another concluded,

The most important thing I have learned about collaboration—it is probably more of a reminder than a new learning, but it was the importance of establishing trust among the members of the [EFCP Collaboration], and respect, and how that has to be done first.

After the needs assessment the group entered a new phase. The trusting relationships that they had developed helped to further the formalization process. Formalization occurred with “clarification of commitment levels, contributions from partners, roles, how to work together (support each other, learn together), organizational structure and supervision relationships” which helped to further the trust building process. Members thought that formalizing too quickly might have led to people feeling “threatened,” as one member explained: “After a year and a half of working together around a common task, it was no longer threatening.” Instead, the EFCP Collaboration members felt trust.

Therefore, the time taken helped to build knowledge of each other and trust. One member was surprised by this and stated, “I would never have guessed it would take years to develop the relationships, the trust and so on in, in the way that we have.” Time was required to clarify roles, clarify language, and understand each organization, in order to develop personal connections and build trust. One member confirmed, “Some people were thinking others need to spend more time. When people don’t invest enough time, that can decrease the trust.” It took time to establish the trust within the informal

relationships that were the key to the group's collaboration, as one member clearly described:

I think most of the other people understood right from the beginning that if they were going to have some influence it was going to be because they were there building that relationship with people and contributing their time and effort...It takes time and you have to build relationships...put in the time to sit down and to get information and to learn the facts but also to build the relationships. We have done that and I think it is absolutely key.

Relationship development was important, and building trust among members was key to relationship building. The trust was built alongside the relationships within the collaborating group. This building of trust through the building of relationships was clearly evident. As one member stated, "Collaborations are all about relationships, is my feeling, and trust." Another explained, "Relationship is important, but it may be less important once you have established trust." Another concluded,

In Elder Friendly we're five years into this, and that's a long time to build relationships and get to know one another, know a little bit about one another's organizations. It changes the very nature of the discussion that you have with somebody. It creates trust.

EFCP Collaboration members commented frequently on the importance of trust within their group, and this was demonstrated in the mechanisms that they used to build trust. These mechanisms included the demonstration of integrity, curiosity for knowing other members' values, a sense that others were honest and open, and attempting to ensure others' perceptions and beliefs were known. One member added, "There was a lot of trust. You knew where people were coming from; we knew their philosophical take on this...People are willing to be quite honest." The development of trust led to further open communication, commitment, and conflict prevention.

Trust was also demonstrated through the openness and honesty of the members within the group. Members believed that the sensitive information that they provided in the Collaboration would remain in the group, as one member explained: “Trust around the table ... I am struck that there is a sense of being able to be quite open and honest at the table without fear that it is going to go past that table.” Trust was established and maintained through respectful and open communication that kept group members informed, connected, and involved. This promoted more in-depth understanding of each member’s organizational circumstances and contributed to members’ perception of mutual trustworthiness.

Informal personal communication also increased trust among members, as one member explained, “Informal lunches seem to improve trust, and seem to assist with personal relationship and connection. For example, how much are we getting to know about each other’s family?” Members shared personal details so others could get to know them and trust them, as one member claimed, “I think it’s knowing who you’re working with and having a level of, *trust* is the word; respect for people’s judgment.”

In order to build trust, some understanding of the others’ positions was garnered, and openness maintained. Members demonstrated boundaries that were open to others’ views. An open boundary, with personal and organizational transparency, assisted in building the trust among members. One member explained further,

When I do try to influence the outcome, I say, “This is my point of view.” I like to be really clear and not like it is the only one. I think that has been extremely important, and I have learned the more I can do that, the more relaxed people are.

Facilitation helped the trust building process through ground rule setting, encouraging honesty, facilitating personal sharing, understanding among members,

relationship building techniques, and ensuring that respect was continuously demonstrated. One member described how this type of facilitation had the effect of building trust among members: “Trust and engagement is also to do with comfort around a process that is going on.” Once members felt safety within the group rules and process guideline, and perceived others to be engaged and okay with the agreed upon process, then trust was reinforced. As one member described it,

The same purpose, the same end goal but a different way of getting there so maybe that is what builds the trust and engagement—you can trust people to be working that way—not suddenly come in and say I think we should vote on this by majority rules. You know how people work so you can relax.

Trust was enhanced when members shared a trustworthy mission and sense of goodwill, as one member stated, they had “enough experience with each other to know that we are all operating from a base of goodwill” and that “there is a shared goal in mind.” Trust was also related to commitment and conflict resolution as one member explained that “Once that trust is established then there is more comfort in knowing that even if there are issues that arise, we will work through them because we are all that committed.”

Another echoed,

It really takes time to build that trust and that respect and really that sense that people are there for the right reasons and that you are all there for that same reason. So it is the right reason and it is the same reason and then you can allow conflict to arise because you know it is healthy, it is inevitable, it is important because if we all thought the same we wouldn't be together.

Another member suggested “You can often find you are closer to and more aligned than you think you are when you get at the underlying value and interest that is there.” With these good intentions, trust also related to a shared purpose and the perception that each

member held a similar agenda, and not an agenda that would move members further from their own goals. One member explained,

I think that tentativeness at the beginning is again because you are trying to figure out where people are coming from and that their heart is really there for the right reason. There isn't some other agenda that they are bringing and so once that is revealed among everyone then you feel okay to disagree and then talk about that.

Each EFCP group member reported confidence in the other members of the Collaboration, particularly their confidence that other members were committed to the Collaboration. Commitment was demonstrated by each organization contributing money, time, and effort; and this enhanced group cohesion and trust.

Group cohesion appeared strong perhaps as a result of the trust between group members. Trust among members also contributed to the sustainability of the Collaboration because the mutual trust enhanced continued participation by members. Frank discussions frequently occurred regarding what was required for the Collaboration's sustainability. Relationships based on trust, respect, and fun increased each member's commitment to the Collaboration.

Once that trust is established there is more comfort in revealing the interest that you have behind things, sharing your views even if they are different—and that leads to increased understanding of one another and a deeper understanding of what people value personally, professionally and how those values influence their participation, their contribution to the collaborative. The bottom line is once the respect and trust is established, then there is more confidence that when contentious issues arise they can be effectively resolved. Like we started out as relative strangers and I think we are now collaborators.

Also contributing to the development of trust were (a) the lack of territoriality among the organizations for the program, (b) the seniority of the members in their organizations, and (c) the opportunity to learn together. First, the lack of competition

among organizations within the Collaboration facilitated trust. One member concluded that not only had the group taken time to develop trust, but that trust was also enhanced by the lack of territoriality in the work:

There are a lot of things I think that contribute to that sort of level of transparency and trust that I think just greases the wheels to get work done. So those two issues are important, the time we took and then the lack of turf issues.

Second, the level of seniority of the members within their own organization increased the level of respect and trust, as one member explained, “People are pretty high up generally. I mean they’re pretty well established in their own organizations and so I think it gives them a safe place to talk as they built more trusting relationships.” Confidence in other members extended to the group’s ability to deal with issues that arise, as well as to other members’ competence and ability to make effective judgments. And finally, learning together may also increase the trust; as one member stated, “There has been enormous value in trusting, learning together.”

Along with establishing connections among members and respect, trust was clearly an important component of the success and sustainability of the EFCP Collaboration.

Understanding

Although not among the specific items measured in the Wilder Collaboration Factors Inventory (WCFI), *Understanding* was confirmed as an important theme for the Elder Friendly Communities Program (EFCP) Collaboration. Mattessich et al. (2001) did not create a separate survey item for *Understanding*, however they mentioned *Understanding* within the Membership Characteristics category “Mutual respect, understanding, and trust.” This item is described as “Members of the collaborative group

share an understanding and respect for each other and their respective organizations” (p. 14).

Understanding, like trust and respect, occurs in the relationship among the members, as shown in Figure 5:

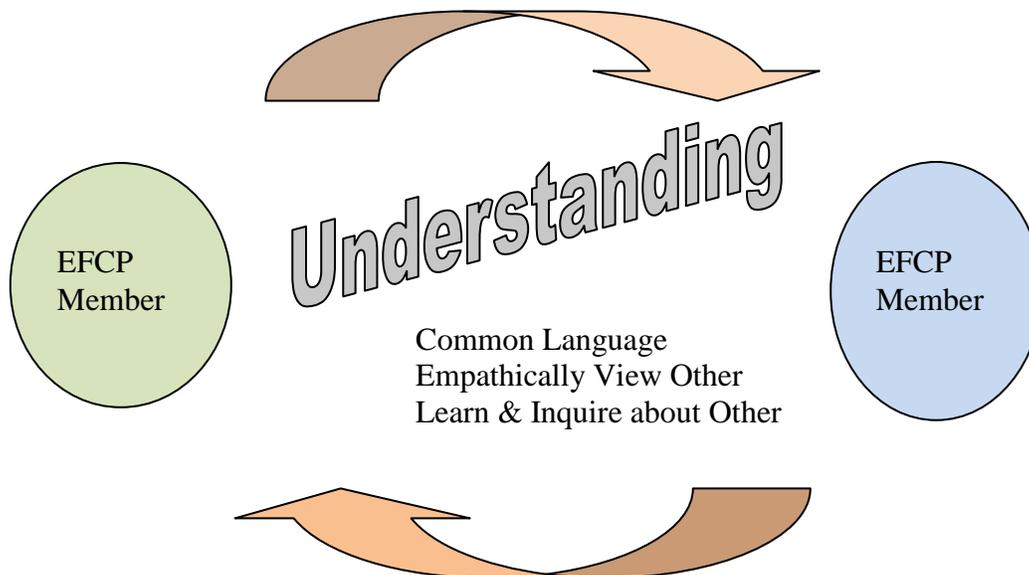


Figure 5. Understanding: Occurs in the relationship between collaborating members.

Members described an attempt to increase understanding early on in the formation of the group. This related to developing informal connections with others and attempting to clarify what other members viewed as important. The group “got to know each other and what was important to each other.” Understanding can include: the development of a common language, the act of empathically viewing the other members in the group, and the intentional learning and inquiring about the other members. To understand each other and the demands from the others’ organizations, the members worked to empathically

view the position of the other members, develop common terminology, and show interest in learning and inquiring about the other members.

Understanding was evident in the relationships among members, and was aided by members making the effort to know more about each other's organizations. Understanding in this form might also be termed organizational empathy, where the members strive to "put themselves in the other's shoes" in order to understand the constraints of others. As one member mentioned, "Organizational empathy was important." Naturally the members' primary allegiance was to their own home organization; for example, "You protect the core, your work, with your people and go back to that first." At the same time, group members appeared to make an effort to consider and follow other member's agendas as much as possible, while remaining true to their own agenda when appropriate. As one member confirmed, "I've never felt like I needed to get in there and say 'wait a minute, we're going down a path that has nothing to do with my work or my accountabilities.'" Therefore, each member understood that they were guided by the mandates, restrictions, and guidelines of their home organization, at the same time they tried to understand the perspective of the other EFCP Collaboration members while continuing to attend to their own organizational commitments.

The group appeared to intentionally develop understanding of each other's experience in relation to their home organizations. Understanding or empathy was built through people communicating their constraints and sharing the expectations within their organizations, one member described, "We come together and we can talk about our experiences within our own organizations." Another explained, "Each organization has

their way of doing things. You can't anticipate all perspectives or resources, so you need to be flexible and open." Members communicated their organizational perspective in order to help others understand what outcomes their organization expected. "It is bringing that organizational perspective to the table rather than people presuming they understand what that organization's perspective is." Understanding is related to trust. As one member expanded, "When you do develop trust then that also enhances our ability to be a little more transparent. For example we often talk about our home organizations and with some humour and some things that don't work."

Understanding also involved respecting that each member is influenced by their home organization, and may have limitations placed on them by their home organization. One member explained, "We try to be respectful of the basic needs and concerns of the various organizations that are part of the collective." Another member confirmed this from personal experience: "like anybody from a large organization I have some limitations placed upon me by my organization. I am not just representing myself. That has been respected right from the start." And one member recommended,

Respect the limitations of people representing organizations that aren't able to speak as just individuals, to respect those limitations—but then the flip side of that is to expect them to work on their organizations to deliver whatever they can from their organizations.

So, understanding required that respect occurred in relationships between members, as well as in relationships between organizations. When members behaved respectfully, it appeared that they were also trying to understand the other's perspective. With this noted co-occurrence, understanding was likely evidence of respect.

Effort was made to “work on understanding what other members require for outcomes” and to understand why each organization wanted to be involved. Additional consideration was required from members in order to create this understanding, as one member explained:

There is an acceptance of the multiple agendas around a single product. It gets more complex as you begin to build program. And to still articulate what are the multiple agendas, what is the singular product, and what are the multiple agendas that are all being served.

Listening was a way the EFCP Collaboration members facilitated understanding. As one member put it, “Everyone’s viewpoint is allowed to be heard and expressed and people have a responsibility to listen to that and to try to understand.” Another described the process:

People will listen first and try to make sense of it before getting reactive or defensive or listening to it from the perspective of my home organization. We have left our home organizations when we are in that room and we are more part of the EFCP [Collaboration], from a perspective approach.

The effort to listen and understand involved talking through the challenges of each member’s perspective. As one member expressed it,

We have been very good at talking or talking through the different perspectives that the university brings to it, that non-profits bring to it, that the city brings, and that Health Care brings—and I think that is part of our genuine strength.

In this manner, the group valued understanding other members’ perceptions and paid attention to increasing awareness of each organization’s context and challenges. As one member stated,

You may have to bite your teeth and say, no, I can’t support that or I don’t know if my organization can, or I would like to but I don’t think those will back in my home organization. That wasn’t viewed negatively and I wasn’t personally viewed negatively, nor were other members when they struggled with their

organizations. There was an acknowledgement we were all there to do the best thing and as much as we could we would push our home organizations.

Members seemed to be aware that each person's role outside the Collaboration likely impacted what happened in the EFCP group: “We all play different roles beyond this particular group and those roles impinge on what happens here.” The demonstration of this understanding appeared to facilitate the prevention and resolution of conflict. As one member said,

When you don't realize somebody else's culture and you accidentally walk into just trying to be open and think things through, you walk into something—and in a way that really sets somebody off—is not helpful, so just remembering and trying to know as much about the different cultures of the people that people are in it as possible I think really helps.

Competition was not evident among EFCP Collaboration members as all members contributed to the development of a common program, and were encouraged by their home organizations to work in a collaborative manner. All wanted the collaborative initiative to be effective, which created more willingness to have the patience and to contribute the respectful, understanding process that was required for success.

More than an understanding of the other's organizational perspective was required. An understanding of the personal perspective of members was also required. As one member expressed, “Understanding can be increased by relating on more levels than just the task at hand.” As one member mentioned, “It makes it much easier to have grace for someone if you know more about them rather than less.” Another member recommended that,

In order to encourage more of an inquiry and you might even say curiosity and patience with people, it helps if you get a sense of who that person is outside of the kind of role you are seeing them in.

Empathy towards others was also a component contributing towards understanding. While discussing the possibility of putting in a funding application proposal with a short deadline, people demonstrated concern for other peoples' workload, "It is putting it on your shoulders and workload. If it was me I would be comfortable to say 'no.'"

The members indicated that valuing the perspective of others led to further understanding of others. In this way, an intentional valuing of the perspectives of others provided the base for further understanding. "The quality of the [EFCP Collaboration] is what it is because I think we value the perspectives that people bring." Some challenge was expressed with the amount of diversity in the group, though. For example, one member highlighted, "You have three different cultures around the table with varying experience in working outside of their own organizational boundaries." This challenge was taken up through a valuing of the diverse perspectives, as one member suggested, "We need to look at the world views and philosophies of the different disciplines involved in the partnership so that we can work more collaboratively and effectively." Another mentioned, "The role of facilitation for really truly intersectoral work is to just be committed to intersectoral perspectives as a richness, as a mine that needs to be tapped, and not as a threat, and I think that really forms the best solutions." The group demonstrated an attempt to consider several points of view; as one member stated, "There was a real concerted effort to express a number of points of view, a number of different angles on the issue."

As the group progressed, understanding also developed, partly as a result of the clarification of language. One member stated that in the beginning stages of the group there was

...a fundamental difference in views about how to work together, about how to do research, about community development. It went far beyond having just different language, different terminology. It was a fundamentally different way of looking at how to get things done.

Members of the group realized early on that members were not always clear about what each other was trying to communicate. The EFCP Collaboration learned that clarification was required to further understand other member's perspectives. As one member described, "Each person came in with a private agenda, their own private understanding of what it was about and thought, well, we must be talking about the same thing because we are using the same words." A difference among the members in their way of working was recognized, and that further unification was required.

Therefore, in addition to the time taken to develop personal connections and trust, group members indicated they believed that to develop understanding, time needed to be spent on building a common language for communication. "We spent a good part of that first year as a Steering Committee working through some very basic things like developing common language." For example, time was taken early on to clarify the term *community development* at all levels. Developing a common language about community development also resulted in further clarity of roles and responsibilities and further trust among members. A clear definition of community development was needed for the group's vision, goals, roles, contribution, communication, and understanding of each

other's point of view. Common terminology seemed to be an important component of building understanding:

Because we come from different contexts; we do different things for a living, academic, and running programs, and there were some funders involved initially. Sometimes we speak different languages and we think in different ways so we took the time to understand each other's perspectives and learn to value those. We're quite patient to spend meeting after meeting clarifying, haggling, questioning, searching for further clarification 'What do you mean, why is that important.'

At the same time, most of the members were from similar professional disciplines and at similar levels within their organizations, and this likely made the process of developing common language and understanding easier. Having several members from similar professions also likely aided in valuing and understanding the perspectives of others. As one person explained, "It was important, the fact that we were professionals and had similar values."

Other member characteristics likely helped to facilitate the understanding in the group. For example, when all members were representing an organization, and were at a senior level within their organization, the group seemed to progress the most smoothly. It helped the ability to understand when each member was at a fairly senior level in their large organization, so experienced similar challenges, and this similarity facilitated further understanding of others. Understanding was not as evident towards the junior staff members sent by organizations to temporarily replace the senior members, or to the new senior consumer member who did not have an organizational affiliation. Some of the members provided possible reasons for the preference for senior-level professional participants, for example, "One of the reasons why we think we may be successful is that most of the people here probably aren't in this to advance their careers." And another

stated, “We are not here to meet organizational imperatives and impress bosses. In fact, some of us don’t really care about that stuff. We thought that would be one of the things that helped this group be somewhat successful as you get away from those turf issues and individual, careerist kind of things.”

The learning purpose of the EFCP Collaboration also helped develop understanding. One member explained that the learning purpose “helped to contribute to a deeper understanding of each other’s interests and their agendas in the Collaboration and I think as a result of that it was a mutual learning process.” The stance developed on the part of members due to being in a group with a learning purpose seemed to be more open and understanding than traditional groups.

Members demonstrated interest in learning from the other members by consistently taking the time to listen, to reflect, and to consider others’ perspectives, ideas, and goals to understand, respect, and learn from each other. Because a main purpose of the group was to discover and learn about the process, the group was more likely to attempt to understand others, as one member stated, “Everybody is there for the purposes of gaining mutual understanding.” Learning about each other’s organizations also assisted in building organizational empathy and organizational social capital.

In sum, the EFCP Collaboration group reported the importance of mutual understanding among members. Understanding developed in this group through trust, respect, empathic listening, common language development, informal personal connections, senior level of organizational members, recognizing diverse perspectives to reduce conflict, and having a learning purpose. Understanding also influenced other group dynamics. The members valued the understanding of others in the group and

demonstrated an understanding stance through the practice of organizational empathy and openness to learning about others' organizations.

Flexibility

The Wilder Collaboration Factors Inventory (WCFI) factor, *Flexibility*, was confirmed to be an important theme for the EFCP Collaboration. This speaks to the flexibility of the group in regards to their structure and their methods. Mattessich et al. (2001) describe flexibility as “The collaborative group remains open to varied ways of organizing itself and accomplishing its work” (p. 9). Table 14 presents the subfactors of flexibility as follows:

Table 14. Subfactors of the WCFI Flexibility Factor

Flexibility (WCFI Factor: within the Process and Structure Category)	High Importance
Open/flexible to Different Work Approaches (WCFI Subfactor)	High Importance
Open/ flexible to Decision Options (WCFI Subfactor)	Moderate Importance

Particularly important for the EFCP group was the WCFI flexibility item, “People in this collaborative group are open to different approaches to how we can do our work. They are willing to consider different ways of working.” Moderately important was the subfactor described in the WCFI as, “There is a lot of flexibility when decisions are made; people are open to discussing different options.” The group appeared flexible in its openness to change and indicated a belief in the importance of staying flexible. Members

agreed that, “Being open and flexible to different ways of working is important to collaboration.” As one member described, “It was a group open to all suggestions.” Members strove to “adopt a spirit of consensus and an openness to future change.”

Creativity and flexibility were important. Because the consortium was new, and the program was continuously being created, the group found that being flexible was required. The creativity and flexibility required to develop the new program was an enjoyable challenge for the members. One member said, “We were creating kind of new stuff...we have no precedents for this. We were coming up with new things so it was exciting, it was creative and we enjoyed each other’s company.” Another member explained that the group was “trying to be creative and trying to bring some innovation,” and that “we are creative, and that creative process is what energizes a lot of us.”

Five sub-themes emerged from the data in regards to the Wilder Collaboration Factors Inventory (WCFI) Factor, flexibility. These subfactors were *decision-making and flexibility*, *responsiveness*, *ground rules*, and *no formal structure*. Table 15: Themes Related to Flexibility, summarizes these subfactors and a discussion of each of these follows.

Table 15. Themes Related to Flexibility

Wilder Collaboration Factors Inventory (WCFI) Factor Flexibility	
Decision-Making and Flexibility	Themes that Emerged from the EFCP Data for this Factor
Responsiveness	
Ground Rules	
No Formal Structure	

Decision-Making and Flexibility

The other sub-item in the Wilder Collaboration Factors Inventory (WCFI) item for Flexibility, although not as important, was moderately important for the EFCP Collaboration. The EFCP group agreed to the item described as, “There is lots of flexibility when decisions are made; people are open to discussing different options.” This also speaks to the flexibility of the group in regards to their structure and their methods. Generally, they tended to adopt a spirit of consensus and openness to other views and future change. “It just demonstrated a real collaborative problem solving approach in trying to really decide what would work best for this kind of an initiative.”

The group demonstrated what one member described as

Good brainstorming... an openness to consider very different approaches... And playing off each other's ideas, so I think I see that a lot in that group where there is a synergy of someone will bring up an idea and then people will start to build on that idea.

Responsiveness

The Elder Friendly Communities Program (EFCP) Collaboration demonstrated the ability to change direction when a change was required in methods or process. The EFCP consortium had a responsive and amorphous nature which reflected the group's flexibility. Although the group did not alter their initial vision, they were open to the possibility of change, as one member agreed by saying that the group would consider being "new—or moult, or change our skin." And another member explained that "The group shared a vision, and could change the identity when a change in identity was needed." Adding new members was considered, and one member provided an example: "We are going into the third phase where we are beginning to say, 'Hey, there are people not at the table that need to be here, let us add them.'" Although the core EFCP membership actually remained stable, the group considered ways of being responsive. For example, one member indicated that the mission was also open to change as needed:

What we could do was focus on the Collaboration because we had some money for that... over time the health care component became less important... the next challenge will be expanding... adding new members... rethinking to some extent—what is the mission of the EFCP Collaboration group?

As an example of flexibility and using different methods to meet the demands of their vision, the Collaboration began as a work group developing a needs assessment, then developed a new goal of providing a demonstration:

From 2000 to the finishing of that Needs Assessment, we simply operated as a committee of the whole, contributing money and our own time, and corralling some staff resources as well to try to get that accomplished. After that we began moving into a process of more formalization that was led by [the Program Manager].

One member explained that it was necessary for the group to adjust the mission as required:

The flexibility of the group and the amorphous nature of the group has the challenge of creating a vision continuously. Why are we here? If it's not advocacy, what are new members bringing to the group? We can define ourselves according to what the funders wanted us to be. We hung on to the ability to change. Poverty reduction one moment, crime prevention next.

Part of the success of the group evolved from the ability to access the resources of the various organizations involved. The group's tenacity towards securing funding for their program and research also required some responsiveness in order to continue the effort. As an example, one member strategically described a possible plan to include fewer collaborating organizations as needed:

When you seek funding from multiple sources, you have to be accountable to multiple agendas. It is possible down the road, the research agenda could disappear, and this becomes an interesting service program lodged in (the fiscal agent agency) that is done in collaboration with the city.

Not only was the group amorphous to the outside systems, but also to their own organizations. The home organizations seemed to allow the flexibility with the group as long as the members were able to match the group activities to their home organization's vision and goals, as one member explains: "I am sure when (EFCP members) go home and talk to other people in their organization, they describe what we do in terms that are more compatible to the vision and the goals of their home organization."

Although the research component limited the EFCP group's adaptability and ability to change vision or fundamental goals in response to the environment, the research also provided some parameters to the structure and flexibility of this group. As one

member stated, “I think we decided that we would stay the same for the next year because that is when the formal research is over.” Another member noted,

The research component of it can be restrictive but it provides a boundary... You might say ‘aw, let’s do such and such’, and then there is always that ‘Whoa. How does this affect the research?’ ...You just aren’t going to start something totally different.

Ground Rules

The group demonstrated flexibility around various approaches, and yet had a consistent foundation to their meeting process through the development of “ground rules for the discussion.” These ground rules were agreed on and reinforced at the beginning of their retreats and planning sessions and seemed to assist with the meeting process. As a demonstration, the group developed the following ground rules for a 2004 planning meeting:

- Set and live by time commitments;
- Self-monitor contributions to make sure they are contributing to meeting objectives;
- All should be heard and positions should be shared;
- Attempt to establish consensus;
- When in question, move ahead with straw polls;
- Speak and treat others with respect;
- Adopt a spirit of consensus and an openness to future change;
- When you leave the room, support the decisions made here.

These rules set parameters for flexibility and assisted the group in their effectiveness. As one member stated, “Once we had the ground rules in place, and... very firm facilitation of the process, [conflicts] didn’t happen and we were actually able to accomplish a huge amount on that particular day.” The members expressed that flexibility “plus some

ground rules I think made a big difference.” Another member confirmed that, “If you don’t lay that foundation when you start, the lack of that will jump up and bite you periodically throughout the whole project.”

No Initial Formal Structure

The Elder Friendly Communities Program (EFCP) members demonstrated an ability to maintain a level of flexible ambiguity within the group. Although the group created ground rules, they also demonstrated the ability generally to tolerate ambiguity and uncertainty within their process and structure. The program the EFCP Collaboration guided was not a traditional organization. They did not have non-profit status and had no formal leadership or organizational chart. One member elaborated, “One of the things that I think is really unusual about what we’ve done is our ability to have been flexible and not make premature decisions about structure and the way we’re going to work with each other.” Another member voiced their satisfaction with this lack of formal structure for this collaboration:

I hope the [EFCP Collaboration] continues to work in the way that it has. One of the dangers I think is inevitable in this kind of development is the danger that we become too formalized, too stable, too hierarchical, too traditional.

Some EFCP group members called it a “virtual organization” because there was no specific program space. An office at the University housed the Program Manager, and community development workers for the program were in various offices throughout the city.

Without a formal structure, this group was able to acquire funding, create a community service, involve service providers, and hire staff. One member explained,

“We have been able to set a direction, maintain a direction, hire staff, hire more staff, train, do this, do that—without any real formal structure.”

Some members felt it was risky to remain formally unstructured, and there was “the desire of members to structure EFCP so that becoming a ‘skinny non-profit’ remains a possibility,” but most felt the risk was worth the benefit. One person expressed, “We honoured the unfolding process and we didn’t try to prematurely force closure or prematurely impose structure until it became clear that it was something we really had to do.” As an illustration, to acquire charitable funding the group needed to restructure to include a non-profit organization, and that organization stepped in to fill that fiduciary need. Luckily, the new fiscal agency graciously allowed the group to continue in its flexible fashion, without imposing authority on the group’s other decisions.

The roles of the EFCP members could change and grow. One member described how the group drew on different members, as needed at different times, to flexibly respond to needs within the Collaboration: “At different times, people’s skills and expertise become dominant because of a particular need in the organization, but don’t remain dominant... somebody else takes over as having a bigger piece of the agenda.”

The group had the flexibility and willingness to reflect and then be open to change. One member described a specific example when the group was faced with hiring a new Program Manager, once the first Program Manager (initially titled Project Coordinator) resigned to take an advanced position with one of the collaborating organizations, “Our decision to hire a replacement precipitated a rethinking about how do we structure ourselves, what do we want out of the person who coordinates the effort, what are our obligations to staff.”

Because of the amorphous quality of the Collaboration and the resistance to formalization (for the sake of flexibility, creativity, and learning), the group members demonstrated comfort with structure unenforced, and with action unfolding without being overly directed. As one member stated for the group, “we are comfortable with ambiguity and always have been, we thought it was somewhat unique. We don’t need those firm organizational structures and boundaries to guide us.” Another member explained further how this was accomplished in the group, “We have tried to quite purposely work without the same boundaries around organizations that we have possibly had in other initiatives.” And another points out that, “I think there has to be a huge amount of comfort with ambiguity and with not having to have everything tied down all the time.” This was manifest not only within the structure of the group, but also the process, as one member extended, “Ideas were shared and tolerance for ambiguity was evident.”

The difficulty with being amorphous was that the Collaboration was not formalized to the level of a non-profit society; therefore they may have had fewer opportunities for fundraising. The Program Manager, whose role it was to write funding proposals and describe the Collaboration, often found it difficult to describe the group clearly, because it could take several different forms. She also wanted to see more structure to the Collaboration, so that she could more easily fulfill her role with funding proposals, and create a sustainable endeavour. The Program Manager stated, “I always feel not clear about what we are doing... as a program we need some high level broad strategic direction,” illustrating difficulty with the level of ambiguity observed in this continuous evolving, responsive structure. The Program Manger helped to establish

structure around roles and expectations, and also facilitated the development of the Collaboration Agreement.

Development of Clear Roles and Policy Guidelines

The Elder Friendly Communities Program (EFCP) participating agencies and members took time to develop and clarify their roles and responsibilities. The Wilder Collaboration Factors Inventory (WCFI) factor, *Development of Clear Roles and Policy Guidelines*, within their *Process and Structure* category, is described as, “The collaborating partners clearly understand their roles, rights, and responsibilities, and they understand how to carry out those responsibilities” (Mattessich et al., 2001, p. 20). This was another important theme for the EFCP Collaboration.

Table 16. Subfactors of the WCFI Development of Clear Roles and Policy Guidelines Factor

Development of Clear Roles and Policy Guidelines (WCFI Factor: within the Process and Structure Category)	High Importance
Roles and Responsibilities Clear (WCFI Subfactor)	High Importance
Clear Decision Making (WCFI Subfactor)	Moderate Importance

Table 16 presents the subfactors of the Wilder Collaboration Factors Inventory (WCFI) factor, the *development of clear roles and policy guidelines*. One of the subfactors in this WCFI factor proved to be important and the other only moderately important. The more important subfactor was described in the WCFI item: “People in this collaborating group have a clear sense of their roles and responsibilities.” Moderately less

important was the WCFI item, “There is a clear process for making decisions among the partners in this collaboration.” The concept that is of paramount importance in this factor is *role clarification*.

The University EFCP members contributed to the research consortium using their experience in gerontology, community development, organizational change, and program evaluation. Members from participating organizations were integral to the design and implementation of the project, as they contributed the knowledge and experience of those who deliver effective services to seniors. EFCP members reported that “together this group encompassed a rich mix of methodological and substantive expertise that facilitated research capacity building and knowledge exchange among researchers, service providers and decision makers.”

The EFCP members articulated the importance of clarifying roles and expectations of others. Members agreed that, “Having clear roles and responsibilities was important.” One member stated, “We wanted to get the roles straight.” Another member explained,

So there has to be a process of articulating who is doing what and why, and how it all fits together... They need to understand what is their role, what can they accomplish, what influence do they have, how do they influence, and what is expected of them.

Another member believed in the importance of role clarity to prevent conflicts and stated,

There’s this saying that if you look at personality conflicts and you look under the rocks that about 95 per cent of it really is about structure and role, and a disagreement about what the role should be. So the more you can get roles going that people agree on, the less that people have personality differences.... A lot of times when you have things happening in a group that are tense, it is a matter of roles being confused... I look at roles and structure and those kinds of things because I think that that tends to create a lot of tensions and dissolve a lot of them.

Table 17. Themes Related to the Development of Clear Roles and Policy Guidelines

Wilder Collaboration Factors Inventory (WCFI) Factor Development of Clear Roles and Policy Guidelines	
Role and Responsibility Clarification	Themes that Emerged from the EFCP Data for this Factor
Role Flexibility	
Sub-Committee Role	
Program Manager's Role	
Collaboration Agreement	

The Wilder Collaboration Factors Inventory (WCFI) Factor, Development of Clear Roles and Policy Guidelines, data were divisible into five sub-themes. These themes were *Role and responsibility clarification*, *role flexibility*, *sub-committee role*, *program manager's role*, and *collaboration agreement*. Table 17: Themes Related to the Development of Clear Roles and Policy Guidelines, above, summarizes the themes that are described in the following section.

Role and Responsibility Clarification

The EFCP members not only believed in the importance of role and responsibility clarification, they demonstrated the clarity of roles throughout their group process. From the beginning of their Collaboration, roles were determined for the members. Once the initial vision was in place for the consortium, then each organization's actual contributions, roles, and responsibilities were determined. Much of the EFCP group's

effort over time has been spent in defining roles and responsibilities. From the archived meeting minutes from early on in the group:

[The facilitator] asked for some clarification as to the role of each person on the Steering Committee. [Members] discussed their perceptions of [the facilitator]'s role. At this time, his role will be to assist and maintain quality control in the data collection process....[one member] has great expertise in Gerontology and views part of her role as liaising with individuals in the community on an ongoing basis. The future of the project will depend greatly on ongoing relationships with organizations and individuals in the community. She will be working with the Dean of the Faculty of Social Work to ensure her ongoing support of the project. [Another member] views his role as completing a lot of the background work for the project. He has completed the ethics review and will be very involved with the data analysis. He will be involved in writing future grant proposals. [Three members] will meet to review core mission, fiscal agent activities, funding applications, staff and manager balance, and review the manager's job description.

An early member described the initial differentiation into roles: "Initially, the internal partnership, [Member B], [Member A], and myself, carved out different roles depending on our backgrounds and expertise: [Member A] gerontology, [Member B] methodology, and me, community development." The following member also described how members were involved in various roles, and consideration of effective roles was ongoing for the EFCP Collaboration:

People had come to some kind of sense of roles. They have really divided up some of the tasks and then taken responsibility for those so there are people who are looking after finances and there are people who are looking after communication and so there are ways for people to be more involved. For a variety of people to be more involved in different places and I think that has helped. My sense is that when we are working as a steering committee as a whole and maybe the next step in that is to initiate some roles like Chairperson of the [EFCP Collaboration].

One member explained how roles were distinguished after attention to developing trusting relationships among members:

We needed I think to begin to separate out some of our roles, what is the research role, what is the supervision roles and supervision structure, what is the role of the community worker in doing the task and then reflecting on it and capturing what they are doing. I think that became important after the initial trusting relationships were built.

Therefore, role clarification was evident early on in the formation of the EFCP Collaboration although roles continued to be developed over the course of the group. Document review confirmed the attention to roles. Several charts had been developed, which described activities and presented the assigned members responsible for each task, in order to clarify the roles. Members suggested taking the time necessary to clarify roles. As one member cautioned,

Promising practices have limited use because a group can't learn something until they actually experience it. If we had gone in with set roles, that may have short circuited the trust building and other things that need to be built. People have a tendency to come too quickly to roles to get something done.

In taking time to determine roles, it seemed necessary to communicate expectations clearly. At some points during the process of clarifying roles and responsibilities, new members were not able to determine a satisfactory role within the Collaboration membership. In one instance, it became clear that a new member was not successful in determining a role agreed on for the group:

There was one person who came to the group for a while and I don't think quite understood collaboration (another academic), and over time, it became increasingly clear that her vision of her role and the committee's vision of her role were different. So she left and I think probably with some bitter feelings.

The process of developing a common language about community development also resulted in further clarity about roles and responsibilities. In a cyclical manner, as roles were clarified regarding "who does what" a clearer common vision and common

language was developed. Therefore, discussions of “what community development meant to each participant” helped not only to increase understanding, but also to clarify roles and structure:

We needed to have a process for getting at that... what is “community development” that we are trying to implement and who is doing it. Prior to that point people would say, “Oh, I am doing community work,” or “My staff is doing community work,” and we would say, “Oh, okay.” We would go on and we would describe some other things. We went through a process of talking about what is the nature of community work. People would say “Well, I am doing that,” but we never talked about the level of intensity, how much time is being committed to doing that. So that meeting clarified, at least for me, what was possible for one person to do versus another person to do.

The Collaboration paid attention to each member’s unique skills, interests, and expertise, so that each member could take a role that was congruent with their ability and background. The members brought a variety of resources and experience to the group as noted by the following EFCP member:

People obviously being skilled, intelligent ...there was a variety of skills and I could see that. We didn’t all come from the same place. There were researchers; there were program management service providers; there were people more interested in financial expertise involved. So right off the bat there was a group of people who had some ability to work in different areas bringing some concrete expertise to the table.

The Collaboration sought to “define a clear role for each member that includes responsibility outside of meetings.” For example, the researchers led the generating resources “to support community development, to get that going, and put in the effort to create resources. To see if this type of community development is worthwhile.” Each member appeared to have a role created and clarified for them by the group. One person, along with the Program Manager, was a “liaison between the participating organizations,” one was “the liaison to other kinds of research efforts and building a

research agenda,” someone else was a “community worker,” and some were “policy people.” At the same time, each member had a role in the research process, in the fund raising process, and in the supervision of the program.

Role Flexibility

In the EFCP Collaboration, role flexibility proved to be important. Members appeared to favour a change in role and flexibility with roles in the group:

It gets to be a problem if I show up in a room and everybody automatically points at me and says ‘He’s the researcher, that’s his role,’ period. I think when that happens we run into serious problems because it shuts down communication. It puts people into predefined roles that are always going to be traditional, it cuts down on creativity. For me what should happen is that there’s an actual discussion about roles. Do you want to be there as a researcher, is it something that you’re willing to do? Is it something that fits in terms of what this project needs at this point? Is there something else you’d like to contribute? That whole discussion is something that I think needs to happen in a collaboration.

The members also suggested that the EFCP program worked well because of the ability of the members to be flexible in their roles, and perform various roles as required. For example, one member who was a founding member of the EFCP Collaboration was also supervised in their home organization by another member of the group. As one member described,

It never caused any problems because people seemed to be quite comfortable with wearing multiple hats and serving in multiple roles all at the same time...there is some unique attribute of some of the members who are able to be very flexible in their roles and can change from being a front-line person to a strategic person to being a voice or a representative of a group, who’s pretty comfortable moving back and forth among those roles. Yeah, I think that is a piece of what has made this work. Having some people who are relatively flexible in their definition of what they are there to do.

That same EFCP Collaboration member was “used to connect to the CD [community development] staff when the Program Manager isn’t there.” As that member stated, “I

was a liaison between the community workers and the [EFCP Collaboration] although certainly [the Program Manager] would have been a liaison as well.” That member, like many of the other Collaboration members, clearly demonstrated the ability to perform a vast variety of roles in the process and structure of the group.

Sub-Committee Role

In the EFCP Collaboration, responsibility had been jointly delegated and entrusted to communication, research, and finance sub-committees. The role of the sub-committees was also clarified. As one member stated, “there are people who are looking after finances and there are people who are looking after communication.” Open communication between sub-committees and the main EFCP group helped to clarify the roles of each sub-committee. During the larger Collaboration meetings, often the group helped to clarify the role of each sub-committee. An illustration of this clarification occurred during a Collaboration meeting when one member asked, “Is this the Research Committee’s job? Is this an unassigned task?” Another member’s description demonstrated the communication between the Collaboration and one of the sub-committees:

We needed to look with the [EFCP Collaboration] at changing what our mandate is as a committee and bringing that back to the [EFCP Collaboration]. If the [EFCP Collaboration] would be open to having that Communications Committee, also do some additional workshops.

Program Manager’s Role

The Program Manager (project director or paid coordinator) role proved to be vital for sustaining this community-university collaboration. As one EFCP member stated, “The Program Manager is really the keeper of the vision and the program.” The

full-time staff Program Manager's duties included writing funding proposals, providing administrative support, providing additional leadership, and being central to the connective flow of communication within the entire EFCP. Therefore, the Program Manager required many competencies, such as the ability to be flexible yet take a large degree of the leadership, and having knowledge of collaboration, community development, and organizational development.

As one member explained, "We know that other collaborations didn't get off the ground without a staff person." The Program Manager agreed with the importance of a dedicated staff person to attend to the group because of the time restraints on the other Collaboration members,

...because everybody around the table except for me is working in a role that is already demanding their full time. So to be responsible for the communication or the management of the program plus obtaining dollars to run the program is beyond those members around the table.

Therefore the EFCP Collaboration raised funds for a staff Program Manager along with the other operating pieces of the collaboration, as one member explained, "We knew from the beginning that this wasn't something that could happen without a dedicated staff person. We went for external funding to hire a coordinator."

The Program Manager was accountable to the organization with the fiscal responsibility. At the initiation of the program, when the fiscal responsibility was held with the University, the principal faculty member provided supervision to the Program Manager. Then, when a member non-profit agency became the fiscal agent, supervision of the Program Manager became the responsibility of the non-profit agency. "She lives within the staffing rules of [the non-profit organization that was the fiscal agent]. We

don't set independent staffing rules. She abides by them. She gets things in return, like benefits." Although the Program Manager was legally employed by the fiscal agent agency, her office remained at the University.

While the research committee held much of the responsibility for the research implementation of the research when there was research activity, the Program Manager held much of the responsibility for the implementation of the program.

Other Program staff were continuously accountable to and supervised by the Program Manager, at the same time accountable to their home organizations, so as collaborative contributions, they reported dually to the various EFCP organizations as well as to the Program Manager. The Program Manager found some difficulty with having "no particular supervisory authority to ask [the other staff members] to participate more." So although flexibility provided opportunities, at times the lines of authority were not in place to support the Program Manager's role of coordinating staff. As one member recognized,

We ended up with this curious structure where she has direct supervisory authority over some staff. She has, in essence supervisory authority over the work that has to do with Elder Friendly Communities for some people but she has no direct authority over them because they are employed by somebody else. And then, she has a role in bringing people along so that the other people who do community work and can be of genuine help and support don't see Elder Friendly Community's Initiative as a threat but sees it as something that they can collaborate with...With [the Program Manager] being in this difficult position of trying to manage a number of people whose line of authority officially goes into an organization, it is not hers, but into an organization where a supervisor sits on the [EFCP Collaboration]. So it comes back into the [EFCP Collaboration] where virtually all of the people she is trying to keep on the same page have some link to the Steering Committee through their administrative structure and supervision. The [EFCP Collaboration] represents the organizations and the people who supervise the front-line staff.

In addition to supervision of the program staff, a major role for the Program Manager was that of fundraiser. The committee agreed that “We need staff to cover the fundraising.” The fundraising role was not easily passed to members of the EFCP Collaboration, although the Program Manager would also have liked more participation from the members of the group. The finance committee also took fund raising action although the Collaboration relied mostly on the Program Manager for fund raising. Exemplified within one of the EFCP Collaboration meetings, one member stated, “The Program Manager called this meeting to decide whether we can successfully develop a [funding] proposal by the end of the week.” On one occasion, when the Program Manager was absent for a meeting, the group did not discuss funding items because the Program Manager was not in attendance; as one member stated, “We need to look at the agenda and do some re-ordering because [the Program Manager] is not here today. I don’t want to talk too much about finances without her here.”

The group suggested that the Program Manager was an important leader for their collaboration. As one member stated, “You need a Program Manager who is going to lead the thing, someone to lead the operational work.” In fact, the Program Manager was the chairperson of the EFCP Collaboration meetings for much of the time. At one point, the Program Manager intentionally took the role of chairperson in order to improve the dynamics of the group. As the Program Manager stated, “I wanted to take control of the facilitation of the group...and I sensed that if I took control of facilitating the group, that people could relax into being members.”

In 2001, the Program Manager drafted the agenda for the meeting and chaired the meetings until the group reclaimed that role through their shared leadership model.

During one meeting, one member stated, “To date, [the Program Manager] has been chairing this meeting and we rotate the note-taking, but it is not like a normal kind of board where there is staffing or a chair.” When the Program Manager was absent from one meeting and no one volunteered to take minutes, one group member proposed that the Program Manager would be a good person to take the notes at each meeting:

If [the Program Manager] is not chairing, could she take the notes? I mean she is the staff person to the project. She ends up doing a lot of the talking. If you are really talking about a record of decisions and whatnot then it is manageable. That’s what we have been doing. She wants to have the best notes that are possible anyhow. Because it is her direction for what her next month is.

One other member noted the importance of the Program Manager as a leader in the group to help with clarification of roles:

...get to the point where we had more formalized the relationships. A significant part of that had to do with [the Program Manager] joining us as Coordinator. And she is now the manager so that would have been in August of 2002. She came on board and realized that we were operating far too loosely. We hadn’t created the major pieces that would constitute strategic plans, such as who we are and where we are going and what our relationship is and what our commitments are and all the rest of that...it was [the Program Manager]’s leadership that suggested to us that we needed to go through basically the development of a strategic plan...I think that [the Program Manager]’s leadership, coming on board and looking at how loose we were and saying you really can’t function this way. You have to tighten this up and the truth is none of us around the table either had the time to do that work.

By 2005, the agenda was drafted by an executive committee of the EFCP Collaboration (including the Program Manager), and member co-chairs chaired the meetings.

The Collaboration's direction and focus was influenced by the Program Manager’s beliefs and skills. Whereas the first Program Manager described herself as “a process thinker, structure and process are what is important.” The second Program

Manager seemed more attentive to operations details and outcomes, as one member recollected:

I think we actually moved from one stage with [the previous Program Manager] as an excellent coordinator who took us through a phase of our work together that was very critical and required huge organizational skills which she has, into the next phase where we were fortunate enough to have [the current Program Manager] come on and her skill set is really somewhat different than [the previous Program Manager]'s. She came on board and said, 'You really can't function in this loosey-goosey kind of fashion.'

The Program Manager orchestrated communications for the group. The Program Manager took on an internal communication facilitator role which was also important to keep all members informed and connected to the collaboration. The Program Manager's communication hub role was described by one member:

The organization part of things—calling a meeting, booking it, the finance committee, being sort of the common person between all of it so that things were done consistently. The consistency of accomplishing toward the same goal I think was part of her role.

Working very independently, she continuously determined which information needed to be brought to the group for their decisions, and what decisions the manager could proceed with on her own. As the Program Manager stated,

What I have done to support the [EFCP Collaboration] is to really try to do what they say. To sort through decisions that I would like to make myself in some instances and to be sure to put them out and to try to find the right balance between what's really I can just do, and what will help them keep their skin in the game.

The Program Manager also kept other stakeholders outside of the Collaboration informed and connected to the Collaboration. As members stated, "The Program Manager is important to connect community." Others outside the Collaboration commented on the Program Manager's ability to provide that stakeholder connection, for

example, an affiliated organizational representative (not an EFCP Collaboration member) stated, “I have been really pleased with the responsiveness of [the Program Manager] particularly. I feel she has really gone out of her way to make an effort to make this collaboration work.” At another time, an EFCP member commented on the importance of the program manager liaison role in a potentially conflicted process:

We have come to the point where we basically have parted ways with good feelings, with money in the right places and all credit to you [Program Manager] for having the ability to do that because it could have been much more negative.

The Program Manager found that members of EFCP Collaboration were busy and not always available to assist in program implementation, communication, and other potential group roles either, as the Program Manager reflected, “I think that when I have been able to move into taking more responsibility they’ve been very willing to let me do that.” For example, the group tended to rely on the Program Manager to take responsibility for that connection role for the EFCP Collaboration, as the Program Manager also stated,

Like on this communications committee, it isn’t a working committee, it’s an input committee; I do all the work. I’ve really tried to light a little fire under them a few months ago and it just didn’t work at all. Because it’s a huge amount of work that comes out but everybody just wants to give input...the research committee, when the research is on they work really hard but generally there isn’t a lot of work otherwise done by the [EFCP Collaboration].

In similar instances, the Collaboration demonstrated the building of dependence on the Program Manager. For example, between the termination of one Program Manager and the hiring of the next, no agenda was distributed to the group beforehand, which previously was one of the tasks of the Program Manager. One member warned that the

group sense ownership of the program could decrease if the Program Manager took on too much of the responsibility:

I honestly think it is like community development, there's such a high level of ownership in the program and if anybody gets in that role and starts doing a lot of that stuff the level of ownership will go right down.

The Program Manager was also aware of creating a shared responsibility among the group, as one member stated, “[the Program Manager] did a nice job of recognizing everyone and involving everyone.” The Program Manager facilitated others taking roles in the group. In one meeting the Program Manager said,

Right! Okay. So how about choosing a note taker? Do we have somebody who will take notes on the meeting part of the meeting here? Thank you very much, [Member]. I have got to keep track of that because we have got to start rotating.

The Program Manager tried to promote group control and tried to get members involved “to influence the outcome.” The program manager also tried to empower the group by standing back, “And when I do try to influence the outcome, I say, ‘This is my point of view.’” When the Program Manager was not available, the group stepped up to make some of the operational decisions previously made by the Program Manager, for example researching how to protect the name or trademark of EFCP and gathering details about buying a computer.

Collaboration Agreement Assisted in Clarifying Roles and Responsibilities

Much of the Elder Friendly Communities Program (EFCP) Collaboration's effort over time was spent in defining roles and responsibilities. The group became more formal through the development of guiding principles, clarifying the vision and mission, developing a formal collaboration agreement, and structuring sub-committees. The

process of developing the collaboration agreement, and the product, assisted in improving clarity around commitment, contribution, roles, and responsibilities.

The role of each member was determined by the member's agenda. For example, the researchers came into the group with the intent of doing research and having a role as a researcher. The more they contributed to the group, and the more they were able to collect funding to sustain the consortium, the more their role was clear. Similarly, some partners were able to contribute more front-line staff time than others, and fulfilled more of the program delivery roles.

The Program Manager had a role in facilitating the formalization, as she had perhaps the most to gain from clarity of structure, role, and responsibilities. "For [the Program Manager], [the Collaboration Agreement] was enormously important because it made it very clear who she was directly supervising, versus who she was facilitating through some other process."

After that we began moving into a process of more formalization that was led by [the Program Manager]. The key incident there is shifting of staff from who we were before, [previous Program Manager to current Program Manager]. [The current Program Manager] saying that formalization would be useful and as we began to talk more about who is doing what, I think that other incident that I just described, emerged as a piece of the process for trying to say What are our roles here, how do we structure ourselves, who is contributing what. How do we structure ourselves so we can support each other, learn from each other, and then from [the current Program Manager's perspective], provide appropriate supervision and structure to the effort?

The Collaboration identified three types of organizations involved in the EFCP general program: the Collaborating/Partnering organizations, the external organizations, and the funders. The Collaboration organizations: had representative membership in the EFCP Collaboration, contributed financially, provided a staff commitment to the

program, made decisions regarding the overall progress of the program, and participated in the hiring of the program staff. The other two types of organizations supported the program either by providing resources or funding to assist the consortium with its Program.

Although the EFCP Collaboration had avoided developing a formal terms of reference document with the argument that it is “not necessary for the group at this time,” they did develop a similar document that they called the Collaboration Agreement, which clarified the purpose, scope, and structure of the Collaboration. Members indicated that the Collaboration Agreement was an important step towards clarifying roles and responsibilities. One member stated,

We needed to be really, really clear about what each collaborating partner brought to the partnership, resources, money, office space, time commitment by staff, all of these things. Finally, we wrote it down and I think that has been really useful...So it clarified expectations and that is what you need...have that agreement in writing. It was good to make people accountable to the collaboration, to the partnership.

The Collaboration Agreement was a tool for role and responsibility clarification. As these roles and responsibilities were clarified, the shared vision was further developed. The Collaboration Agreement helped “to clarify the role of an affiliated organization with the EFCP program...[and to] work in an atmosphere of mutual respect and good communication.” As another member stated, the Collaboration Agreement helped to “clarify roles, responsibilities, organization’s interests in the partnerships; understand why each organization wants to be involved. What do various organizations expect as outcomes?” Another member added agreement:

We thought we knew what we were doing but we couldn’t articulate it well enough that everybody would get around it. When we went for this retreat day

with a very structured agenda, a very firm facilitation, then we were able to come out of that day with a much more coherent, on paper, set of commitments and relationships...creates a foundational consensus that we share and allows us to be responsive to various expectations from outside of the program that we otherwise might not handle as systematically and as smoothly as we have.

As one member of the EFCP Collaboration reported,

[The group tried] to move towards taking on the ultimate responsibility and authority to manage the affairs of the EFCP: set the strategic direction and make policy for the Project Manager, the financial responsibilities including adopting the budget, ensuring financial safeguards are in place, ensuring bills are paid... finances, fundraising, public relations, policies, personnel, and program at a strategic level... Collaborate on research design and implementation and collaborate on program design and implementation.

There was a role for each organization to make a contribution to the Collaboration because the group relied on the contributions from each organization and each member to continue their program. One member stated, “We needed to have some sense of who is contributing what, in order for us to go on to the more formalized stage of structuring, staff roles, and staff contribution.” The Collaboration Agreement also helped to clarify commitment levels. As another member stated, “The other thing that was important was negotiating who was going to put how much time in.” One member identified that the group had some difficulty with determining the contributions from each member, “there has often been this contention and this confusion around who is going to be able to contribute what in order to get certain things accomplished.” The role of each member was determined largely by the resources they contributed. When an organization contributed resources, they had a role in the Collaboration.

Some members seemed to expect that all partners would contribute equal amounts to the Collaborative consortium, however this was not happening. There was a “range of

capacity to contribute” which called into question some organization’s commitment and responsibility to contribute. What people were willing to contribute might have depended on what they saw as the role for their organization, and their time allotted to the project. The home organizations provided their own mandates and staff restrictions, therefore the influence of the home organization also needed consideration.

The Collaboration Agreement was a tool for clarifying group expectations of roles and responsibilities. To develop the Collaboration Agreement, one member explained, “We had a meeting. The [EFCP Collaboration], also other members of staff all sat down and really, we just kicked around what we did and what our involvement was in Elder Friendly.” As one member stated,

I have always known that you need to be clear about expectations, what people can expect of me and what I can expect of them but I realized after that and after we got the collaboration agreement, it was really clear...to have that agreement in writing. It was good. It was good to make people accountable to the collaboration.

The role of the EFCP Collaboration as a community organization was not fully clarified through the Collaboration Agreement, and some questions remained for some of the members of the group. For example, the group’s advocacy role was not satisfactorily clarified for all members. One member questioned:

Does the EFC take a role in lobbying and advocacy around the broader environment, around a particular issue? ...Does the EFC as an entity take on the role of lobbying for issues that arise for the seniors that we are engaged with?

And another member: “We are still struggling to find a role for ourselves. Do we advocate like that? Do we take a role versus other systems or are we going to take a kind of educational approach, more of a placatory approach?”

Another member recognized some benefit, that “the organizations that have signed our formalized Collaboration Agreement have more of a sense of a much tighter relationship... that we agreed to make a commitment to. That created a whole lot of cohesiveness.” Another member expressed their appreciation of the process leading to the Collaboration Agreement:

This initiative was different for all of us—we couldn’t have sat down to say these are the roles to choose from. It fostered commitment to the committee; it was also a process of building the common language and culture—the starting point to building those relationships that were formed.

Flexibility was required, to find a part for all interested organizations to play. Those that could contribute more had a role with the EFCP Collaboration. The process of developing the Collaboration Agreement, and the product, assisted in improving clarity around commitment, roles, and responsibilities. One member explained,

Various partners said, ‘Yeah, maybe our role in this is going to be limited. Maybe we are just here to consult occasionally. Or maybe we are just going to be involved in projects that more closely match our mandate in the community.’ So where it led, in fact, was that after that [the Program Manager] came up with the collaboration agreement. I think it came from that meeting, a real understanding that we needed to be really, really clear about what each collaborating partner brought to the partnership, resources, money, office space, time commitment by staff, all of these things. Finally, we wrote down and I think that has been really useful.

Human nature tends towards categorization and formalization, though—as one member stated, “I’m uncomfortable with this not being something more formalized.”

Another member reminded us that “it takes time to develop those collaborative proposals.” And relationships were built before formalization was attempted, as one member reflected, “Formalization, I think, was something that happened after we had built a sort of trusting set of relationships. I don’t think we would have done as well had

we formalized from day one.” Therefore, perhaps if the group had formalized too quickly early on, with committee structure and formally identifying roles for those involved, the collaboration would have been less successful.

Wilder Collaboration Factors Inventory (WCFI) Factors Confirmed and Challenged

To recap, four of the 20 Wilder Collaboration Factors Inventory (WCFI) factors were confirmed to be important for the EFCP case. These were (a) *established informal relationships and communication links*, (b) *mutual respect, understanding, and trust*, (c) *flexibility*, and (d) *development of clear roles and policy guidelines*. Five Wilder Collaboration Factors Inventory (WCFI) factors were found to be moderately important for this case: (a) *members see collaboration as in their self-interest*, (b) *open and frequent communication*, (c) *shared vision*, (d) *unique purpose*, and (e) *skilled leadership*. Eleven Wilder Collaboration Factors Inventory (WCFI) factors are challenged by the EFCP case. Please see Table 18: Determination of Importance of Wilder Collaboration Factors Inventory Factors for the EFCP Case (below).

Table 18. Determination of Importance of Wilder Collaboration Factors Inventory Factors for the EFCP Case

<i>Wilder Collaboration Factors Inventory Factor (Each WCFI subfactor used as code in database)</i>	<i>Factor is More Important in this Case</i>	<i>Factor is Somewhat Important in this case</i>	<i>Factor is Not As Important in this Case</i>
1. Factors Related to the Environment			
History of Collaboration or Cooperation in the Community <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • History of Working Together in Community • History of Coll. Problem Solving in Community 			√
Collaborative Group Seen as a Legitimate Leader in the Community <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Outsider Leader Hope • Outsiders Agree Right Membership 			√
Favourable Political and Social Climate <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Political and Social Climate Right • Right Time for Collaboration 			√
2. Factors Related to Membership Characteristics			
Mutual Respect, Understanding, and Trust <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Respect • Trust 	√		
Appropriate Cross Section of Members <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cross-section • Complete 			√
Members See Collaboration as in Their Self-interest <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Benefit 		√	
Ability to Compromise <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Compromise 			√
3. Factors Related to Process/Structure			
Members Share a Stake in Both Process and Outcome <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Organizations Invest the Right Time • All Want Program Success • Commitment Level 			√
Multiple Layers of Participation <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Time to Take Info Back to Organization • Can Speak for Organization 			√
Flexibility <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Open/ flexible to Decision Options • Open/flexible to Different Work Approaches 	√		
Development of Clear Roles and Policy Guidelines <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Roles and Responsibilities Clear • Clear Decision Making 	√		
Adaptability <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Adapt to Change • Survive thru Change in Plan/Member 			√
Appropriate Pace of Development <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Right Work Amount and Right Pace • Can Keep Up with the Work 			√

<i>Wilder Collaboration Factors Inventory Factor (Each WCFI subfactor used as code in database)Continued</i>	<i>Factor is More Important in this Case</i>	<i>Factor is Somewhat Important in this case</i>	<i>Factor is Not As Important in this Case</i>
4. Factors Related to Communication			
Open and Frequent Communication <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Open • Individuals Informed • Leaders and Members Communicate well 		√	
Established Informal Relationships and Communication Links <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Informal Ways • Informal Conversation about Program 	√		
5. Factors Related to Purpose			
Concrete, Attainable Goals and Objectives <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clear Understanding of Goals • Goals Known • Reasonable Goals 			√
Shared Vision <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We Can Make It Work • My Ideas Same as Others 		√	
Unique Purpose <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Difficult for Single Organization to Do Itself • Unique Purpose 		√	
6. Factors Related to Resources			
Sufficient Funds, Staff, Materials, and Time <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Adequate Funds • Adequate People Power 			√
Skilled Leadership <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Leaders with Working Together Skills 		√	

In summary, for Secondary Research Question A, four Wilder Collaboration Factors Inventory (WCFI) factors were confirmed by the EFCP data. Established informal relationships and communication links; Mutual respect, understanding, and trust; Flexibility; and Development of clear roles and policy guidelines were factors identified in the literature as important success factors for interorganizational community collaboration and were clearly important for the EFCP university-community collaboration. I discuss these four factors further in the next chapter, but first, I present the findings for Secondary Research Question B.

Secondary Research Question B Findings

Secondary Research Question B asked: Are there other important success factors for the Elder Friendly Communities Program (EFCP) Collaboration that are not identified in the Wilder Collaboration Factors Inventory (WCFI)? If so, what are these?

The methodology used in an attempt to answer this question was described in Chapter Three: Methodology. In sum, although I used the WCFI as an initial coding framework, I also expected other themes not found in the WCFI to emerge from this unique case. I conducted analysis with openness to emerging themes in order to determine whether this case demonstrated factors not identified in the Wilder Collaboration Factors Inventory (WCFI). As expected, some recurring themes in the database did not fit with any of the predefined Wilder Collaboration Factors Inventory (WCFI) success factors. *Shared Leadership* and a *Learning Purpose* were themes that emerged from the data as important new factors. Therefore these new factors arose from the EFCP case, and were in addition to the previously mentioned Wilder Collaboration Factors Inventory (WCFI) factors.

The following sections will further describe the two important new factors for the EFCP case, drawing from the case study database range of sources. Most quotations are from the interview and meeting transcripts. I will discuss Shared Leadership first:

Shared Leadership

Another basic element uncovered for successful collaboration with the Elder Friendly Communities Program (EFCP) group was *Shared Leadership*. The Wilder Collaboration Factors Inventory (WCFI) (Mattessich et al., 2001) did not include Shared Leadership as a factor. They did include a factor called *Skilled Leadership* referring to

one particular leader in the group holding “organizing and interpersonal skills” (p. 28), assuming a singular group leader. Kouzes and Posner (2002) define leadership as simply the process of enabling others. Applying their definition in the context of collaboration, leadership would refer to the process of enabling the collaboration to build and sustain mutually defined goals and tasks. Therefore, Shared Leadership in this context refers to the process evident among the group members enabling members to participate.

A definition of Shared Leadership can be developed from the definitions of distributed leadership or lateral leadership within organizations. Harris and Spillane (2008) describes distributed leadership as recognizing there are many leaders who interact through their practice, sharing activities and expertise between organizations. Fisher and Sharp (1998) coin the term *lateral leadership* to describe the process whereby all members are invited to share their learning, identify their understanding of problems, and invite others to also participate in the discussions.

Shared Leadership is a term described recently by organizational theorists. Pearce (2004) defines shared leadership as “a simultaneous, ongoing, mutual influence process within a team that is characterized by ‘serial emergence’ of official as well as unofficial leaders” (p. 2). Shared Leadership is most useful when the team is a knowledge-producing system (Uhl-Bien, Marion, & McKelvey, 2007), and fits best when the work requires the group to be interdependent, creative, and complex (Pearce, 2004).

The EFCP Collaboration worked diligently to create a shared direction for their group. The group demonstrated “a shared way of working together.” With the EFCP, the leadership of the group did not lie with one individual, rather leadership was shared. The representatives involved had leadership abilities and together facilitated the group. This

Shared Leadership developed during the first five years of the EFCP, and was consistently observed and commented on by EFCP Collaboration members in this study.

Table 19. Themes Related to Shared Leadership

New Factor (Not included in the Wilder Collaboration Factors Inventory) Shared Leadership	
Norm of Shared Leadership	Themes that Emerged from the EFCP Data for this Factor
Process for Shared Decision Making	
Shared Ownership Contributes to Shared Leadership	

Table 19 above indicates the three sub-themes related to Shared Leadership that were uncovered along with the Shared Leadership factor. Each of these sub-themes, *norm of shared leadership*, *process for shared decision making*, and *shared ownership*, are discussed in the following section.

Norm of Shared Leadership

The Collaboration developed a norm of shared leadership, and demonstrated a belief in the importance of shared leadership. A flexible shared leadership structure seemed to be important for the group, as one member reflected, “a difference at this group is that we were able to have a loosely-defined leadership structure.” Another member stated the shared leadership was “reflected in everything that we do.” This

shared working was integrated into the process of the group, one member explained, “We really play off of each other’s energies and insights.”

The EFCP Collaboration appeared to honour the importance and contribution of all members. Shared power was demonstrated in the group through the use of a unique form of consensus reflecting a value of equal power among participants.

Rather than one member taking a fixed leadership role in a hierarchical structure, the Collaboration was able to distribute that role more horizontally throughout the group. One member noted that, “In most groups there is some hierarchy, depending on who is controlling the budget, setting the agenda and who is chairing. The leadership in the [EFCP Collaboration] has been shared.” Another member commented, “Our form of collaboration... is built on mutual respect and shared contribution rather than a hierarchical command structure.” The potential to influence was spread fairly evenly throughout the group, as one member relayed: “I think we are in fact demonstrating the ability to work respectfully with each other without someone being the top dog.” Another stated, “One of the secrets of the group is that nobody feels the victim of the tyranny of the majority.” Yet another member agreed, “It’s very collaborative as opposed to authoritarian relationships and that’s been great.” And further,

It is not all about organizational development and hierarchy and who reports to who, because it is a shared leadership organization that does not reflect the older philosophies of organizational development... It’s this combination of organizational development and community development that you’re thinking about all the time.

All members demonstrated leadership knowledge and felt they had influence as a member. The Collaboration made efforts to “make everyone feel an essential piece of the action.”

Although individual leadership was important at certain points in time, the group demonstrated that over the life of this collaboration, leadership was shared. As one member stated, “it is shared work. Different people will take leadership in different ways but at some point the work has to come back and be shared and discussed and decided on as a group.” Another when reflecting on the life of the group noted,

When we did the needs assessment, there was no particular lead organization... No boss. ...It was shared leadership rather than no leadership. At different points different people had to get things done and something that we have learned to do in the [EFCP Collaboration] is just trust one another and if a research proposal is due, others in the [EFCP Collaboration] know that the research people are going to get it done. So I think shared leadership is probably a better term for that.

Given the complexity of such a collaboration, it was not surprising that leadership occurred at many levels and from all members over time, all sharing leadership depending on the situation. Leadership transitions depended on the purpose at the time. Rather than having an identified permanent leader, the group rotated the leadership role as required by the circumstance. In this way, leadership in the EFCP Collaboration was fluid.

The members agreed that “each member has the skills and capacity to lead or facilitate the group.” As one member stated, “Everyone brings these skills to this group. Anyone could lead this group at any point.” The EFCP Collaboration members agreed that “members in leadership positions for this collaboration have good skills for working with other people and organizations.”

Depending on the circumstances, one or a few Collaboration members came forward to provide more leadership than others; those individuals stepped back on other occasions, to be led by another member. “The support of one another, people stepping to

the fore where there was need for something.” Organizational representatives stepped up at times when their organization was a natural leader in the process. Regarding leadership for setting the atmosphere and tone, one member explained:

The role of making sure it is a pleasant environment so that people like being there is mutually shared...I do some of that but I think everyone there does it. It sort of comes out of the mutual camaraderie of the group...if somebody does seem a bit distracted or whatever, the other people sort of pick up the slack and run with that.

Another member commented, “In facilitation I use humour a lot and it is quite intentional... I always try and get the people loosened up and I think it just makes it a more pleasant place to be.”

Another member identified the sharing of a mediation leadership role:

I have seen various people move into a sort of mediating role if we do seem to start fragmenting a little bit around an issue. Various people on a given circumstance would try to build a bridge between the two points of view. I know I have done it. I can think about people around the table and I think from time-to-time I remember everybody doing that and I think that is really good because there is a sort of shared sense of ownership of the outcome of discussions.

As another example, during the research phases of the EFCP Collaboration, one research person seemed to be more often in the role of leader, and maintained the lead in most meetings. One member illustrated how the researchers were able to share leadership during the group development:

There was pretty strong informal leadership from the university at the beginning but it wasn't directive leadership or the way they wanted to go. It was on behalf of the group...they did provide some of that overall vigilance and directionalization but they did try to use their integrity to reflect what the group wanted....there has been informal leadership come up at different times.

As the group moved to implement less research and more community service, research leaders stepped away and other community service leaders materialized to provide the required implementation leadership.

Exemplifying shared leadership, each group member brought their own leadership abilities to jointly facilitate the group. Members contributed their own expertise and skills to the tasks that needed to be accomplished. Shared leadership allowed different individuals with specialized skills to come forward, as necessary, throughout the life cycle of the collaboration. For a fundraising role, as one example, someone within the group, most often the Program Manager, assumed leadership regarding the application for funding. One member commented on the ability of members to use their unique skills as the circumstance required:

People who are able to think more strategically are more able to set direction. In this group we really are able to play off each other. And how little attention there is about who's idea it is and how things get added on to, and there are certain people in this group who can think about the details.

At other times strengths of members were drawn upon:

I think it may be one of the things that, in a bigger sense, contributes to their success with each other and that's that ability to see each other's strengths and let people have them. Encourage them and let people have their strengths. I think about some of the meetings I saw [one EFCP Collaboration member] facilitate and she does such a beautiful job of stepping back. Nobody but a facilitator knows how damn hard that is. But there are lots of people on the committee who are able to step back and let people do things and I think that's a huge gift.

Even members who were less active in the leadership roles had a strong awareness of the process of leadership. One of the members who did not appear to participate in as much of the leadership activity of the group commented,

You need a long-term vision, hopefully something that captures people's attention and imagination and then there needs to be short-term and concrete products or deliverables that people can wrap their minds around and get hold of and feel good about the progress that has been made.

Some members felt that the leadership was more easily shared due to the emphasis on process rather than group outcomes. "This group has not been so focused on the outcome and that contributes to the shared leadership." The group worked hard to share the process and the leadership. As one member described, "we were willing to get very specific about the nature of our work together, how we were going to work together, write it down, come to some consensus about the language and all be on the same page." Attention to process was a key for this group. During one meeting the chair stated, "I need to do a process check—what do we want to do for the next half hour?" Another commented on that particular leadership for that meeting, saying "I was looking at how [the meeting chair] was facilitating our last meeting, so non-interventive. Really anybody in our group is capable of doing that kind of leadership and facilitation."

The group worked at the shared leadership from the beginning. One member stated, "We spent that first year working through language, learning how to speak to one another and so on, and learning how to process things together." The Collaboration Agreement clarified the roles and expectations for all members and underscored the value of shared ownership.

One of the ways the group identified that they shared leadership was to trust that the other members would do their part. As one member stated,

Leadership has nothing to do with somebody having a position or authority, taking charge. Leadership in many cases has a lot more to do with trusting other people to get their work done and stepping aside to let them do it. Get out of their way... The Communications Committee: I know that they do good work. I don't

have to check over my shoulder to see what kinds of messages are out in the community. I think the same is true for the other committees, the Finance Committee. I don't check budgets regularly. I trust them to come back to the [EFCP Collaboration] and let me know how we are financially and what challenges we have got and what proposals need to be written for the program. I think they do the same thing for the research group... leadership is simply a process of enabling others. And I think I have learned more about that through this program than I have in any other project that I have been part of. That is what I think shared leadership is all about.

Another member provides an example of the shared leadership process employed to accomplish the task of creating a group presentation:

We had to develop a slide show and a whole series of presentations that were coherent, consistent, flowed well and most of the time that means that you need to have everybody in the room and you lock the doors and you spend a day or two just kind of hammering this out and in some cases, arguing back and forth. That didn't happen here. Everybody did their piece and then kind of handed it over for kind of a final touch up; making it look the same within a PowerPoint slide show... everybody took their turn.

Providing continual updates and process checks seemed to assist with the shared leadership and helped to keep all members engaged. The member chairing the meeting often began the meeting by welcoming people and providing an overview of the accomplishments of the project to date and the organizational tasks ahead.

The Program Manager noted that it was useful to have an intentional effort to facilitate personal sharing and ground rules to decrease the tension and form social ties and social capital. She believed her facilitation was responsible for increased group comfort and increased informal communication. She believed that process is the task of the facilitator: "When I first started working with the collaboration, the group was really tense and I think that one of the things that helped to change that was to initiate some personal sharing at the beginning of groups."

Some of the personal discussion was facilitated by the Program Manager. The following is an excerpt from a meeting transcript illustrating a facilitated personal discussion at the beginning of a Collaboration meeting:

[Program Manager]: I thought it would be nice to do a warm-up that was around change....I am wondering if we could share one thing that we noticed that changed this summer and then what changed after that, and what else changed... So I was thinking about how one thing that changed in my life was that my youngest daughter, the only one home, went away and camped for six weeks and the other thing that changed which really surprised me was I started getting up at six in the morning and going for walks with my husband...[Other members took turns telling a personal story such as:]...[Member A]: I had some health challenges over the last six or seven months now but I am doing good now pretty much because it is under control but I have noticed a change in my view of the world ... including meeting [EFCP Program Manager] at the Folk Festival that I thought I should go to for years and never bothered...[Last member]: ... I have been sitting here thinking changes, what in the hell changed? Nothing changes. But a while back, the woman who lives across the street, we used to walk every day and we did it for 14-15 years. Every day after supper we would go for a walk. She decided to move away. I just couldn't imagine such a terrible thing that she decided to move to another district. Like how could that happen? Well, then she moved and I had to come up with another plan. Anyway we still walk every Saturday. So we meet. She comes my way and then I go her way. So then what happened is I decided to go to the gym. I decided to do weight lifting and I hurt my arm. And then I just went today to the physio and she asked when my arm still hurts and I said my arm hurts when I do housework and she told me I don't have to do housework anymore! [Group laughter.]

Another demonstration of shared leadership was the group's bringing in other leaders to assist them when required. The group found that a facilitator brought in for the purpose of norm and role clarification was useful:

...an effort on the part of the group to consolidate its norms and expectations and discuss those in a more formal way. Probably invite somebody to come in to facilitate a discussion around what are the norms around membership, who contributes what and why and what does our structure look like.

Another member reflects, "We had some process leadership right off the bat so that was something that happened and that was very helpful...we had [a contracted facilitator] who

was a fellow that I knew that led us through a beginning process to create some foundational material, who we were, what we were, how we would work together.”

Another suggested it was helpful when “somebody comes in and helps us facilitate our discussion about how are things going.” Another member explained, “We had a retreat meeting that [contracted facilitator] facilitated for us... we came up with mission statements, vision statements, objectives, and started putting in place the content that would be the Collaboration Agreements.”

Process for Shared Decision Making

Shared leadership was facilitated through a consensus process of decision making. Members believed that, “There is a clear process for making decisions among the partners in this collaboration” and “Decisions get made by a consensus here... We talk awhile, and we don’t always agree, but we end up knowing which direction to go, without ever taking a vote.” Another member expressed, “we really try to develop some sort of consensus that everyone can live with the decision...I remember feeling like we worked this one through. We cracked the nut. We ended up having consensus.”

Their Collaboration Agreement included the provision for a vote in the event that consensus was not achieved however a vote was rarely required. Members believed that the “process demonstrated effective problem solving.” Most often the group was able to work through to a consensus on any issue by implementing open communication and emphasizing the understanding of all members’ perspectives. There was “a willingness to work together towards solutions.” One member stated that the group was able to demonstrate “Reinforcing regularly the principle and the behaviour of bringing issues, challenges, successes back to the [EFCP Collaboration] and discussing them openly... we

did that to deal with potentially harmful issues as well as positive issues.” Another member felt

I don't feel the tension where there is in some groups where there is the driving idea. I think that people are not trying to use their minds and airspace to control or influence, it feels very collaborative, building and appreciating. We talk about things until everyone is on the same page. If we disagree at least the person has been heard. This is really a consensus model.

Although the consensus model “can be time consuming,” as one member stated their concern, “I am not convinced that consensus decision making is always appropriate unless you've got lots and lots of time.” But for the most part the members felt that this contributed to the shared leadership and shared ownership of the group. The group saw itself as “a committee that came, talked, decided and acted.” One member commented, “I think a consensual way of working together has really worked well.” As one member explained,

We all come from different perspectives and I think we respect that and go much more by consensus process whereby at the worst people can say, ‘I can't live with that. I am going have to withdraw,’ or whatever. Or, people say, ‘Well, I can live with that for now. It is not a hill to die on.’

Another stated, “There is some sense of agreement, developing consensus. There is trust that people would come forward if they disagreed with the decision.”

One illustration of shared leadership and decision-making occurred during one meeting called by the Program Manager to determine whether a funding proposal would be submitted within a short deadline. The discussion contained continuous clarification and each member added further comment to clarify the framework for common understanding. The group discussed various aspects of the proposal, and all provided input and comments such as their commitment, their role, and their opinions. Then it

came down to the leader at that meeting, who was the one to take responsibility for writing the proposal, and who did not want to adhere to the unrealistically short deadline because it would hinder a collaborative process among the group. After more than an hour into the meeting the group decided that they wouldn't attempt to submit for this short deadline, however would try for the next deadline.

The decision was made by the group that they could not have the kind of collaborative process where everyone contributes, if the deadline was too short. So they declined to complete the proposal. As one member explained, "This is a collaborative project and it takes time to develop those collaborative decisions and to get everyone's participation in this funding proposal takes time." Another echoed,

I'll have to say I feel that without a process, [a few members of the EFCP Collaboration] and I can write something up on our own, without the proper process, it makes me uneasy. It is not collaborative; it is not the way we work. We don't have the time to circulate it. We can get it in and tell them that we work as a collaborative.

Another adds, "We work differently than a traditional academic researcher who sits in their office and pops things out—this is different. We have to get everyone together and that takes time." The pace of the process in a collaboration may be slower, as one member noticed: "This isn't the hotbed of activity that we would see in a typical hierarchical structure."

The time taken for processing was of importance. The group concluded that they had a different process than the typical academic research proposal process "we work collaboratively." At the end of each session the group checked that all members were in agreement, one person asking, "Are people comfortable with this conversation?" One member indicated some pride about this process:

There was a lot of very thoughtful dialogue about the situation, the possible solutions and then... some consensus around our go-forward position. I think it was done very well and it could have, in another venue with different partners, gone quite differently with a very different outcome.

Another example of the decision making process was when a meeting chairperson proposed to the group the importance of having a longer-term chairperson. She urged the importance of a chair to represent the group when speaking to funders and other stakeholders who would be most comfortable speaking to the group's appointed representative. To encourage discussion she asked, "Would it be possible to just kind of dwell on this issue for a bit?" So the group dwelled, expressing various points that led to adoption of the idea, discussion of the role, and "the election of two co-chairs to represent both the research and the program." Illustrating how decisions often got made in the group: one member would bring up an issue, state their reasons, others discussed, and everyone voiced an opinion to provide input on the different aspects of the decision. Then, once all seem to be in agreement, the decision was summarized and articulated by a member. And then each member was expected to take action on behalf of the group. One member explained,

What we do is just simply reiterate the norm that the [EFCP Collaboration] is a working committee and that people need to be there in order to not only make decisions, but to agree to carry out some of those decisions.

The action taken for the group might have been immediate, or delayed. It seemed that the most effective process for the EFCP Collaboration was when the action was taken immediately; some of the decisions that relied on future task assignment did not materialize, (or took longer than expected at the time of the decision). When consensus was not reached on a decision, a process for further consideration was implemented. A

proposal was considered, some agreement was made on action; however, action on the decision was often postponed to future meetings. Members appeared to forget the item, tabling sometimes did not occur, and the item was sometimes neglected. For example, at one meeting the Program Manager suggested the adoption of a formal role and structure document. The subsequent decision was for the group to consider the issues of role and structure individually before the next meeting, and come prepared to make recommendations and a decision. This item was not transferred to the next meeting agenda. Perhaps this was the group's way of continuing to demonstrate respect for one member's ideas, however at the same time not following the suggestions. So, instead of voicing disagreement, the item was framed as something everyone was charged to think and develop further, however it was not revisited. Other examples include the agreement that a dissemination meeting would be held with local community politicians, applying for various funding, and changing the Collaboration's name—items that did not occur. Some members were aware of this process; as one member commented, "We are still struggling with that one, and it keeps getting put on the back burner because we aren't sure."

In sum, to assist with this shared decision-making and shared leadership, group members demonstrated skills in working together. Members worked diligently to create a shared direction for their group. EFCP Collaboration members identified the challenge associated with "keeping everyone on the same page." The process of clarifying the shared vision, the development of common goals, the development of a common language around their intervention, and gaining clarity of roles took time and effort.

Shared Ownership Contributes to Shared Leadership

All organizations and members contributed to the Collaboration. Shared leadership developed from the process chosen by the individuals participating in the consortium, and was also influenced by the organizations they represented. The organizations were supportive of shared ownership of the EFCP program, which facilitated the shared leadership for the collaborative group.

One member described *shared ownership* in voicing their list of what has been successful for the shared leadership of the Collaboration: “that sense of shared outcome, shared goals, shared risk with the [EFCP Collaboration] members, trust, respect, and openness; then I think that all filters down through the whole project.” One member describes the sense within the process of shared leadership: “We took the opportunity to be together and create a better environment together. We can get together and do something, and laugh about it. There has been enormous value in trusting, learning together.” Another adds that collaboration requires “shared contribution and shared interests. Not the same interests, but shared interests.”

All members contributed to the final outcomes. The organizations benefited from participation in the Collaboration, and were able to proceed towards fulfilling their own organizational mandates through participation in the group. As one member stated, “The mandates of each of the organizations in fact have a way to be met by this collaboration, so there is a high level of ownership.” Therefore the organizations supported the members’ participation in the Collaboration.

One member clearly described a commonality among the organizations: “we are all shooting for the same outcomes.” Another stated that the organizations were “all with

the same core vision.” The group had a sense of solidarity and a sense of cohesion and connection towards a common purpose. The sense of ownership was distributed through the group as one member indicated: “we are all in this together.”

EFCP members perceived themselves to be contributors to the outcomes of the Collaboration. One person explained, “I believe that people feel that they can take credit for Elder Friendly and that is really good.” One member spoke of the feelings of the group members:

They could see themselves reflected in this product...nobody really owned the needs assessment and I think that made a real difference. It wasn't me showing up as a researcher saying 'All of you need to do this as service providers,' which again happens a lot. It had shared ownership as a product....with no lead organization.

As acknowledged contributors to the group's positive outcomes, the group also celebrated their accomplishments. They went for dinner as a group after they were awarded the Pulse of Social Work award. When reports were released, they gathered for a meal to acknowledge their work.

Also supporting the sense of shared leadership and group cohesion, the group attempted to demonstrate a sense of solidarity to others outside the EFCP Collaboration. The group norm was to ensure that each member was acting externally with the support of the group. As one member stated,

We do have a sense where no one of the organizations involved is likely to act autonomously and appear to be acting on behalf of the Collaboration. So pretty consistently we always have the ability to say if there is something that someone is bringing to us we have to take it to the [EFCP Collaboration].

The group demonstrated support of the decisions reached within the EFCP Collaboration—as one member stated, “We believe that when you leave the room,

support the decisions made here.” As well, the expectation in the group was that individuals would first gather authorization from the group before they spoke for the group. One person reported, “I can’t speak for the group. I have to take it to the [EFCP Collaboration].” Shared ownership was illustrated in the interactions of individual EFCP Collaboration members with outside organizations and media. For example, one member had been approached by the media for a brief news article and photo highlighting the EFCP Collaboration, and the member reported back to the group:

This was the premier issue of the new glossy that goes to all alumni and a whole bunch of organizations important to the university, like big donors. I got a phone call from a writer from this magazine wanting to pick up on the fact that the program had been highlighted both in the university newspaper and that glossy piece that they put out about research. The writer said 400 words. I said you can’t talk about this program in 400 words. It is too complex and there are too many players... Then they wanted to take a picture of me, and I said if you want to take a picture of anybody you have to take a picture of the [EFCP Collaboration]—not a picture of me—this is not MY project. You also have to understand that we have to honour the commitment that we have to the Collaboration and I need to bring this draft to this group to look at to see if it is acceptable... I am not in a position to speak for this group about whether they are willing to not have certain organizations listed in a very mass market publication like this... So they wanted 400 words, and I said if this is a very big distribution, we have to honour the fact that this is a big collaboration, and we have to be able to acknowledge who is involved in it... There is a list of collaborators, program funders, research funders... I was concerned about the fact that they were unwilling to acknowledge the large collaborative effort that we have going. On the one hand I think it would be a good way to let people know, on the other hand I think there is a large potential to effect our collaborators negatively... undermine the amount of work we have done to establish this partnership. What they do is to constantly want one person’s name and to make this ONE person’s deal... The multi-partner and complex one is a more interesting story. If they want to spend more time and more space we would be happy to have it published with the recognition of partners.

The member demonstrated a strong belief in the representation of the entire group as the entity of the EFCP Collaboration, rather just one member. This action supported the sense of shared ownership. Another member then agreed and stated,

It is a real challenge, I have had the same conversation with these newsletters for our organization. They don't understand... communications are a support to corporate entities... I won't have an article about a partnership that doesn't include the partners. Partnership is a strategy and it is devaluing to the strategy when communications doesn't value it that way.

In this way, shared ownership contributed to the shared leadership process, and included ensuring that each member considered the entire group when liaising with the outside.

The shared leadership occurred in a context of learning, another important factor for the EFCP Collaboration discussed next.

Learning Purpose

The Elder Friendly Communities Program (EFCP) Collaboration members agreed that they wanted to learn about collaboration, so they adopted a *learning* model for their initiative. The EFCP was initially conceived as a research and demonstration project. They developed understanding of collaboration and community development throughout their participation in the EFCP consortium and attempted to apply this learning to other similar situations. One member further explained the generalizing of learning, "it is all about our learning to do a better job of whatever we are engaged in." The purpose of the group was to *intentionally learn*. In this way, the group had a *learning purpose*.

The Collaboration's collective practice was shaped through mutual and ongoing learning. The learning purpose was clear in the initiation of the group. Initially, the group knew that it wanted to do something different, something to increase their knowledge. One member stated that they began "with the goal of learning to do better. That has always been imbedded in this effort and I think that has carried on into the subsequent phases." Another member echoes that the group formed "to answer some questions that we all had around collaboration and community development."

In the EFCP Collaboration, members continually explored innovative patterns of thinking within a process of shared intellectual and practical learning. The group process was oriented toward learning, as one member stated, “We are more focused on process, less on an outside task. The outcomes associated with this project was ‘finding’ which is different.” As they were learning, the members were attentive to the process and to their behaviours, as one member stated, it was “necessary to really pay attention.” Attention to learning was evident in the process of the meetings; for example, one member stated,

We have reached different points in our discussions where we say, that is a really important piece. We should remember that. It is a key learning that is new for all of us and we will sometimes get it down in minutes.

The group sometimes described themselves as a “learning organization.” One member stated, “We thought that a lot of what has been our success is that we set ourselves up as a learning organization, as an inquiry based organization.”

This learning purpose contributed to the success of the Collaboration “Having the learning purpose was important,” said one member; another stated, “Part of the glue that holds us all together is that we are trying to learn from our work.” With shared leadership and ownership, and the common purpose of learning, the members found it easier to collaborate: “If someone had an agenda to push, it would be much harder to learn from each other and have learning as part of the process.”

Group members would periodically say “what have we learned from this”. The EFCP Collaboration has become a best practice example of how to collaborate. As one member stated, “So what we are doing in essence, I think, is being a model of how you do it.” And another: “This particular partnership has become somewhat of a model within

our faculty and maybe elsewhere in the community about effective collaboration.”

Another provided a fuller explanation:

There is a sense of satisfaction, maybe pride, that we are associated with it because of the great things that are coming out of it, like the website, and the launch, and the linkage with the National Advisory Council on Aging. And just the actual grassroots work we are doing with the communities like the needs assessment and some of the rigour that is associated with it. It is seen as a viable project, very cutting edge, very important and we often use it as an example.

Taking this collaboration as a model, members were able to learn from their involvement in the EFCP and apply their learning to other collaboration attempts. As one member stated, “I have a better vision for good collaboration now. I know now, when I try to collaborate, where we are trying to end up, and how it can be.” Another added, “I found Elder Friendly to be a rewarding and successful collaboration so I have used it as a bit of a best practice template...it’s a pretty high-functioning group in terms of outcomes.”

Another stated,

It has been interesting to me in other partnerships—this has been a baseline for me, I refer to this group when I see some things in other groups that are lacking. It gets easier to point out that it is this piece and that piece that need to be developed. The predictions are pretty accurate—it has been useful for me in that regard, what works and what doesn’t work.

Members chose to join the EFCP Collaboration, they were not sent there from a higher authority. They were motivated to gather together to learn and to influence their home organizations. For the most part members remained committed to the Collaboration because they recognized the need to do things differently within their home organizations and used the EFCP as a training ground and learning experience. For example, one member applied his/her learning in the EFCP Collaboration to other collaborations that were not working in their own organization, with successful outcomes for the home

organization. This learning outcome from participation in the EFCP Collaboration was attended to by the members’ home organizations. Through this attention, EFCP members were able to create leverage in their home settings to increase visibility and credibility of community-university collaboration.

Table 20: Themes Related to Learning Purpose, below, indicates the three sub-themes related to Learning Purpose that were revealed along with the main factor. Each of these sub-themes, *research and learning purpose*, *community of practice*, and *transference of learning*, will be discussed in the following section.

Table 20. Themes Related to Learning Purpose

New Factor (Not included in the Wilder Collaboration Factors Inventory)	
Learning Purpose	
Research and a Learning Purpose	Themes that Emerged from the EFCP Data for this Factor
Community of Practice	
Transference of Learning	

Research and a Learning Purpose

The learning purpose of the Elder Friendly Communities Program (EFCP) Collaboration was enhanced by its research mandate, which produced unique benefits. The learning purpose increased the ability to be flexible and open, as one member stated, “I think there is a real atmosphere of learning and so with that comes an openness to

consider very different approaches than we might have normally.” As a result of the prominent role of learning through EFCP research, EFCP group members could be more patient, more open, and less defensive. Turf issues and competition were not as apparent. Another commented, “Although there has been periodic tension about the research constraining, it has bought us some latitude in not having to produce certain things by certain deadlines. We are trying to learn what this looks like because we don’t know.”

Another explained,

Because we created this, we could be more relaxed and tolerant. One of the things I like is the sense that ‘We don’t make mistakes, but we learn.’ To be able to reiterate our interest in learning, it doesn’t matter if it worked or not—then people can be less defensive and more open.

As another member stated, the research component helped with the learning:

The research part helps with that too. It is not about making mistakes, it is about learning... The [EFCP Collaboration] is committed to that kind of learning from each other...let’s all bring what we can to the table and learn from it.

Although critical thought, tension, and conflict were somewhat evident when building research into the EFCP Collaboration, most members more often expressed an appreciation of the research structure to assist with the learning purpose, for example,

The research agenda was good for us. When the final research report was written, that was an end point for us. Then we decided demonstration, and thought about ‘What would that bring to us?’ Before, we were guided by community development and collaboration and containing it as a unit of research so we could study it. What it needs is a type of frame or structure now that it is not a research effort. That is our current thing. We can now determine what is appropriate to support now. It is starting to look like neighbourhood services work. I prefer the previous model where we were learning and responding to learning.

As well, each member of the EFCP Collaboration reported learning about the importance of research and empirical knowledge, which shaped the collaborative experience.

According to the EFCP Collaboration members, the research component affected group process. Individual members could be more articulate, and yet not actively try to control or influence group dynamics. Members viewed the demonstration research effort as providing an opportunity for excelling at collaboration while learning together. As one stated,

We have created a new way of working together and have tried to study it at the same time. It takes a lot of time, and it is a unique opportunity. Other academics don't get it. It speaks to the power of the Community-University dynamic to fill a space that is created in the community. You have both this shared vision towards seniors, then you have the research component that keeps you reflective. This generates a lot of creative thinking and shared work in a way that is different.

EFCP members commented on the opportunity for learning through increased contact with the University academics involved. They appreciated the increased opportunities for assistance with research activity, as one member illustrated:

We benefited in several ways from educational opportunities through the University: [EFCP Collaboration member] has come here and talked, and [another academic] we have worked with on several kinds of things... We have had some research done by the University, done for us and that was kind of through connections.

The EFCP Collaboration researchers also reported learning to adapt research methods to better fit with the realities of community practice, developing more refined timing to match research activities with the natural flow of community development, and developing a stronger sense of the ways in which research contributes to reflective practice.

Once the group completed the research phase of their work, they needed to consider whether to maintain a learning purpose, as the shared learning appeared to be required for the sustainability of the shared leadership in this group.

Reflection and discussion about learning was a norm in the group. The group incorporated time for reflection because of the “learning nature” of this senior-led community development and collaboration demonstration. One member explained that in the group “There has always been this educational learning agenda.” One member described, “Learning, and even talking about How are we doing? It is kind of a group process piece, How are we doing as a collaborative?” Learning was not only a goal of the group through the research mandate, but also a part of the process of the group. Another mentioned that it was “important to have a willingness to share the learning.” The learning purpose also leads to a willingness and openness to consider alternative approaches.

The learning process took patience, as one member explained: “the learning nature of this project [required] reflecting, thinking harder on some things, taking a little longer.” However, members enjoyed the learning purpose and were more likely to remain committed to the Collaboration in order to answer their questions about collaboration and community development. Therefore, the learning activity led to more consistent attendance and commitment.

Community of Practice

The EFCP Collaboration could be seen as a community of practice. As one member stated, “I wonder how much this relates to the communities of practice literature, where there is shared interest, not a lot of structure, and one’s focus is learning from each other and dissemination.” As defined by Saint-Onge and Wallace (2003), communities of practice are “networks of people with a shared interest who come together for problem-solving, innovation, and learning—a means of facilitating knowledge creation, access,

and exchange as a basis for generating capabilities” (p. 12). Being a group taking action to learn together in order to try to solve a practice issue, this was a community of practice.

The sense of a community of practice crystallized for several members, as one stated, “Even though we have organized around funding and for providing a community development program, we are still coming together to support each other in our practice. It’s a self-help kind of group.” Members expressed that they learned about working together at a practical level. As one member explained,

One of the mandates of this group is to learn, pay attention, and reflect. Part of that is a reflection of the research, to examine what we are doing, to learn from it. The learning goes deeper than the research; it is also in the way that we interact with each other. There are points where we stop and say ‘what are we doing here, and what does it mean for us?’ and we reflect on it and discuss it—you don’t see that in a lot of initiatives.

Another described the learning as having a practical impact at a relational level:

One of the concepts that helps build these relationships is that we are learning, and that it is a learning process through reflection, data collection and through observation... whether it is the Collaboration, or whether it is the community work or whether it is the sustainability of seniors’ efforts at a neighbourhood level. This is accompanied by strong relationships among members that extend beyond the immediate work to be accomplished, by shared language and dialogue, and most importantly by a driving passion to learn how to work differently—together.

As indicated, the members appreciated the supportive learning environment of the group.

Transference of Learning

Capacity building and learned collaboration skills were apparent over the period of this collaboration. As a result of the learning purpose, the members demonstrated that they learned a significant amount about collaboration from being a member. As the group learned about collaboration, they were able to refine their ability to collaborate, in what

gave the impression of a practical laboratory for collaboration skills. At one point one member claimed, "Let's build on our previous learnings." People were eager for further learning at each opportunity arising, as one member stated, "we should have that discussion still and at least come to some better understanding about why this wasn't a good fit and what we could learn from the experience." The members indicated that the learning arising from the reflective process undertaken by the group was of a practical nature, informing their practice. As one member stated, "we already use some of the information we've learned from this research project to help guide our practice." Another found EFCP to be "a reflective organization."

Learning was not only about collaboration, but was also about community development, at the program level for the community development workers, as well as at the EFCP Collaboration level. As one member explained "We are a demonstration effort, we are a participant observation and we are learning from systematic observation of what we are doing in the [EFCP Collaboration] and with the community workers and with the seniors." While learning from each other, collaborators held the learning purpose within their group process:

Always, we have had as a piece of the agenda, learning from what we are doing. It is that reflective practice piece, learning from what we are doing in terms of better work with communities, better work with seniors, how to work across organizations better.

The members found that the learning purpose was fulfilled and that they had learned, as one member stated: "From participating in this collaboration, I have a process now in other collaborations for when the wheels come off the bus." Another mentioned

that “I have a better vision for good collaboration now. I now know when I try to collaborate, where we are trying to end up, and how it can be.”

As the group evolved, they learned things that they could share with others and disseminate. As one member explained, “Part of that focus is a shift from trying to say ‘Are we learning something?’ to saying ‘we have learned something, maybe we should think about communicating that.’” The group engaged in active dissemination, sharing what they have learned locally, nationally, and internationally. Presentations were viewed as critical incidents for reflection.

Many of the members shared what they learned as well, through providing workshops, conferences, and teaching. One of the academics noticed how their EFCP learning affected their teaching:

I know it has influenced the examples I give in my class. I am pretty sure that it has been used as an example in other classes, [other EFCP Collaboration members’] classes. I have been invited as a guest speaker to other courses. So I know there is an interest in hearing about what is happening. So it is being used as a teaching tool.

Overall, the learning purpose supported the collaboration. By facilitating a process of inquiry, the learning purpose opened opportunities for closer collaboration and a unity of purpose.

Therefore, two important factors emerged from the EFCP data. These two factors were not included in the Wilder Collaboration Factors Inventory (WCFI). Although not commonly found in the community-university collaboration literature, shared leadership and a learning purpose were clearly important for the EFCP Collaboration. Divergence between the Wilder Collaboration Factors Inventory (WCFI) categories and the EFCP data shed light on the potential for collaboration theory enhancement. The findings of

these two additional important factors indicate a potential need for further refinement of collaboration theory, particularly in the context of community-university initiatives.

These two factors are further discussed in the next chapter.

Summary

Six factors emerged as perceptibly more important for the Elder Friendly Communities Program (EFCP) Collaboration: (a) established informal relationships and communication links, (b) mutual respect, understanding, and trust, (c) flexibility, (d) development of clear roles and policy guidelines, (e) shared leadership, and (f) a learning purpose. Four important Wilder Collaboration Factors Inventory (WCFI) factors and two new factors were found. The final chapter discusses these factors in relation to current literature and collects these important factors into one relational model.

Chapter Five: Discussion

Introduction

This chapter provides a discussion of the findings, insights, and implications of this study. The discussion begins with a brief summary of findings for each research question. A discussion of implications of the research findings follows. A reflection back to the literature review presents the parallels between the EFCP findings and the literature. Themes common across all factors are offered. Then, the Relational Framework of Collaborative Practice which arose from this study's findings is presented, with implications for social work practice. This final chapter concludes with a discussion of insights and recommendations for further research.

Summary of Findings

First, I will start with a brief discussion of the factors for successful community collaboration demonstrated and reported by the EFCP Collaboration. The more important factors influencing successful collaboration for the EFCP case study were: 1) established informal relationships and communication links, 2) mutual respect, understanding, and trust, 3) flexibility, 4) development of clear roles and policy guidelines. Two themes not stressed in the Wilder Collaboration Factors Inventory (WCFI) which emerged were, 5) shared leadership, and 6) a learning purpose. These six factors combine into an important theoretical construct when examining university-community collaborative initiatives.

See Figure 6 below:

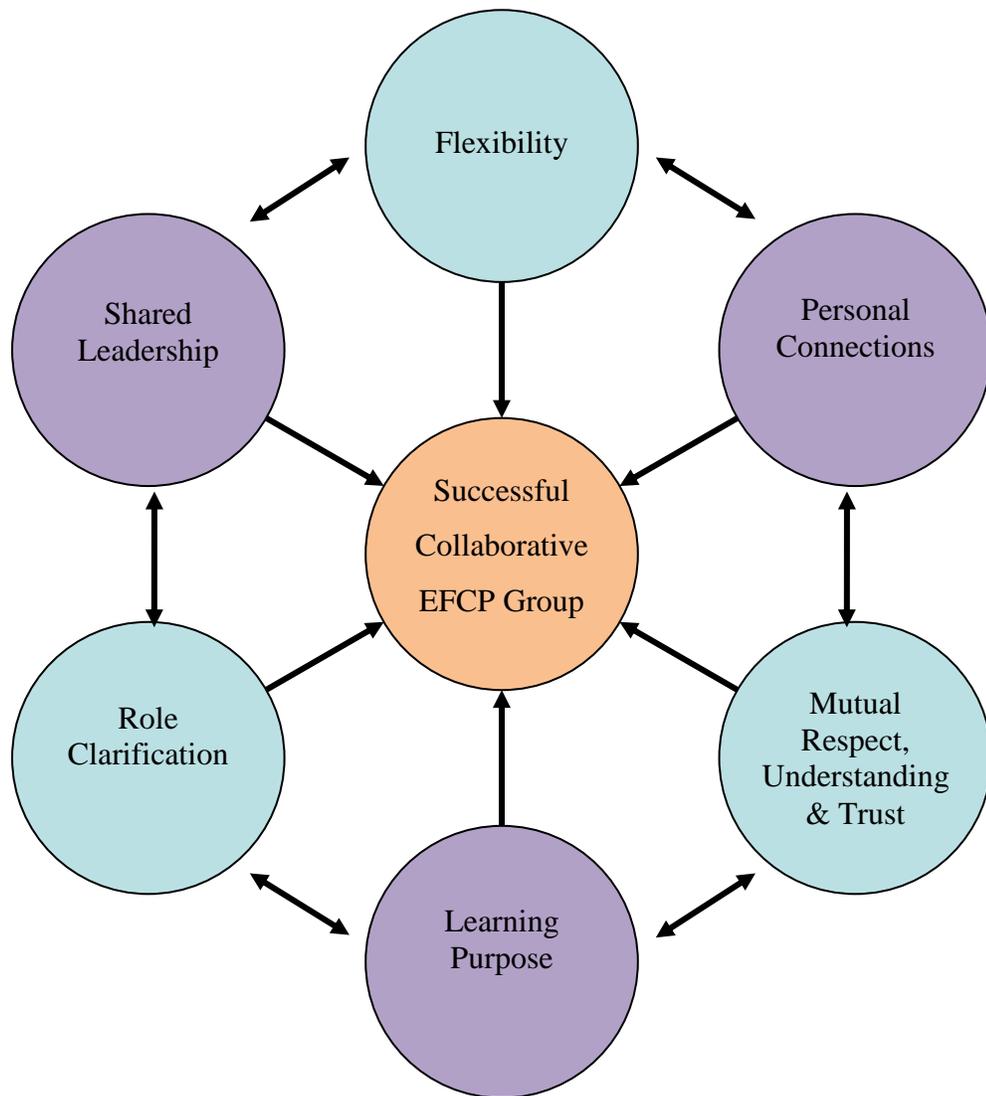


Figure 6. Important collaboration factors for the EFCP Collaboration.

In a nutshell, the most important factor for the EFFCP Collaboration was established informal relationships and communication links—personal connections. Related to these connections established, was the attention paid to the development of mutual respect, understanding, and trust. The group demonstrated flexibility in their process, yet attention to role clarification. The group was adept at the ability to share leadership and at incorporating a learning purpose. All of these factors were significant to the success of the EFCP Collaboration.

Parallels to Literature Review

Now I will move to a discussion of relevant literature and its relation to this study's findings. As mentioned in Chapter Two: Literature Review, very few studies reflected the exact parameters for my research, for example, literature within social work, interorganizational relations, and community-university social service research. The boundary I placed on the literature was more helpful because I then could include three different realms of literature to inform the discussion of my findings, these were those areas informing, (a) interorganizational collaborations for the purpose of community development or research, (b) interorganizational community collaborations, and (c) interorganizational community-university human services research collaborations. (See Chapter 2, Figure 1, p. 40.)

Through observation of the EFCP case, the factors for successful community-university collaboration demonstrated and reported by the EFCP members were determined, with particular attention to the important collaboration factors for this collaboration. Established informal relationships and communication links; mutual

respect, understanding and trust; flexibility; development of clear roles and policy guidelines; shared leadership; and a learning purpose were all found to be important factors in the success of the EFCP Collaboration.

A further reflection on the literature after the EFCP findings were determined reveals some interesting similarities. The unique context of university-community collaboration points to similar factors to attend to for collaboration success in these settings. In addition to determining whether or not the Wilder Collaboration Factors Inventory is a match or mismatch with the EFCP case, it is important to determine whether the EFCP case matches or mismatches with other university-community research.

Other community-university literature supports the EFCP data. For example, Strand et al. (2003) reflected on their experience with university-community collaborations for the purpose of community development, collaborations that were similar in composition and purpose to the EFCP group. The EFCP's collaborative work fits with Strand et al.'s description as "a vision of human relationships and social justice enmeshed in education and research and expressed in trust of self, others, and the learning process" (p. xiii). Strand et al. suggest that potential partners bring in with them a shared worldview and agreement about goals and strategies, and that they have trust and mutual respect. They suggest that the process of working on community campus partnerships includes sharing power, communicating clearly and listening carefully, understanding and empathizing with each other, and remaining flexible. Interestingly, the same process factors which have been found to be important for their collaborations were also important to the process of the EFCP Collaboration.

The findings of Foster-Fishman et al. (2001) were also very similar to the EFCP case. Their framework for core competencies and processes for successful collaborations includes: Member capacity (skills and knowledge of individual collaborators), Relational capacity (the climate, vision, and working process of the collaboration), Organizational capacity (the leadership, work procedures, communication style, resources, and improvement orientation of the collaboration), and Programmatic capacity (the objectives and goals of the collaboration, as they relate to defined community needs). These share elements with the EFCP findings.

And Zizys (2007), in a literature review, also identified similar key factors: clearly defined, measured, shared goals and clarifying the goals through a formal document; leadership to mobilize a collaborative approach; strong communication, effective coordination and positive working relationships with the ability of each partner to work well with each other through an interplay and conjunction of tasks; staff, resources, and time to allow the group to effectively do more; and trust is important at the outset and is also earned. After presenting these factors, in his summary Zizys goes on to present very similar findings to the EFCP Collaboration findings:

In addition to these primary factors, there are several other supporting elements that make these factors more likely to be present, namely: good management skills; staff who are trained in alliance relationship management capability; a governance structure for the partnership that enables problem-solving and decision-making, and that is sufficiently flexible; and stability. (Zizys, 2007, p. 86).

Another similarity in the literature is the phases experienced by the EFCP Collaboration over their endeavour. A few of the stage/phase models will be presented from the literature along with a comparison of the EFCP findings regarding phases.

Phases of a Collaboration

Bailey and Koney (2000) provide a model from their review of other developmental stage models. They proposed a four-phase model where each phase builds on the previous in an iterative manner. The first phase, *Assembling*, involves bringing the member organizations together to determine commitment and possibility for collaboration, as well as getting to know each other. The second phase, *Ordering*, entails putting the pieces of the collaboration into place such as structure, roles, trust, and shared leadership. Third, the interorganizational group enters the *Performing* phase where tasks, performance and activity are the focus. A focus on the initiative's outcomes prepares the collaboration for the fourth phase, *Transforming*, where a decision is made whether to end the collaboration, to continue on the same, or whether to change alliance components; therefore, this final phase is characterized by reflection and change. Bailey and Koney's phases are remarkably similar to the EFCP Collaboration's phases of (a) *group development*, (b) *formalization and quest for sustainability*, and (c) *AHFMR research*, and (d) *program delivery maturation*.

When we examine another model specific to university-community collaboration, similarities also arise in the experience of stages. Three phases were identified by Bell-Elkins (2002), these are: *Early years*, *Growth years*, and *Sustaining the Community-Campus Partnership*. Sustaining a collaboration requires influence, leadership, and maintenance through resolution of power issues (Norman, 2003). The Centre for Collaborative Planning (2004) recommends sustaining these types of efforts by focusing on marketing, institutionalization, impacting policy, and having community support. The EFCP Collaboration's life fits with Bell-Elkins' phases.

The similarities among these phase models for collaboration are remarkable. The EFCP Collaboration phases could simply be renamed to be the same as either Bell-Elkin's or Bailey and Koneys' phase models. Table 21 below highlights the similarities:

Table 21. EFCP Collaboration Phases Compare with Other Phase Models

EFCP Collaboration Phases	Bailey and Koney (2000) Phases	Bell-Elkins (2002) Phases
<i>Group development</i>	<i>Assembling</i>	<i>Early years</i>
<i>Formalization and quest for sustainability</i>	<i>Ordering</i>	<i>Growth years</i>
<i>AHFMR research</i>	<i>Performing</i>	
<i>Program delivery maturation</i>	<i>Transforming</i>	<i>Sustaining the Community-Campus Partnership</i>

Other related studies also confirm the importance of similar factors to the EFCP Collaboration; in the next section, I will discuss each of the most important factors separately, and more specifically in relation to previous literature.

Previous Literature and the Six Important Factors for the EFCP Collaboration

Each of these themes has been recognized to some degree in previous collaboration research. I will take a look at them one at a time:

Established Informal Relationships and Communication Links (Personal Connections)

Attending to the building of relationship among the members through informal relationship establishment was most important to the success of the EFCP Collaboration. Developing personal connections was particularly important, for these EFCP organizations to work together. Einbinder et al. (2000) also claimed that success was determined by “building cooperative relationships.” Hamel et al. (1989) remind us that in the early stages, when common needs and visions bring the collaborators together, and the organizations develop more formal plans for collaboration, it is important to develop and maintain good personal relationships between organizational leaders. Zizys (2007) also found that it was important for each partner to work well together. Organizational sociologists propose that friendly relations and communication are the fundamental structures on which to build interorganizational collaboration (Grandori & Soda, 1995; Medina-Garrido, Martinez-Fierro, & Ruiz-Navarro, 2006).

The EFCP Collaboration members met monthly for over seven years. Their relationships were also strengthened by routinely encountering one another in other settings, working together on separate but related initiatives, participating in social gatherings together, and by consciously striving to build humour and fun into shared work. Others also recommend that leaders in successful collaborations create opportunities for having fun and socializing (Roberts, 2004). As did the EFCP manager, Roberts (2004) suggested the use of icebreakers and introductory exercises to create a welcoming and safe climate for collaborative work. Exercises like these can facilitate informal communication and help people to get to know each other. These additional contacts served to build and maintain personal connections, congeniality, and effective

communication among EFCP members. As one respondent in Ragan's (2003) study noted, "Familiarity breeds respect."

Open communication is emphasized in the collaboration factor literature, and appears to be required to maintain relationships, goal focus, and commitment among collaborators (Bell-Elkins, 2002; CAFRP, 2004; Reiniger, 2003; Roussel et al., 2002). To sustain a collaboration, open communication must continue (Kanter, 2002). Communication includes taking time to listen to all members, clarifying the meaning of core terms, and developing a common language (CAFRP, 2004). This was evident in the EFCP group. For example, EFCP members devoted substantial time and energy to developing a common understanding and language regarding the nature and role of community development. This was essential because the collaboration was both multi-disciplinary and inter-sectoral.

The EFCP Collaboration demonstrated that openness is not the only important communication factor in building and sustaining successful collaborations; informal communication is also key. Often, there is a mixture of informal and formal communication through established informal relationships and communication links (Mattessich et al., 2001). Informal communication adds to the connectedness that is crucial for collaborative work, it must be balanced by an ability to communicate openly and effectively about formal, professional issues.

Sometimes individuals are reluctant to build relationships and might consider it a waste of time to let others know who they are and what their organizations are about (Roberts, 2004). However, "a getting-to-know-you process and an honest exploration of what we can do with and for each other is the first step in building the desire to work

together” (p. 77). Roberts considers this informal communication and relationship building to be a part of the trust building process, which requires emphasis in collaborations by setting aside time and a safe place to get acquainted. If professional stiffness and personal distrust prevent informal communication, then the result is likely distance and assumptions that restrict trust and synergetic openness. The EFCP manager (a registered social worker) was skilled and able to bring the personal components into the process. When issues arose, people were more willing to struggle with these issues because they had a personal relationship with the other members—members knew each other and liked each other so were more committed to work out any conflicts. Members mentioned that other collaborations that they were involved in were not as successful because there was not an emphasis in those groups for building personal connections.

As outlined in Chapter 2, CAFRP (2004) and Dawes and Préfontaine (2003) found that positive informal personal relationships among collaborators were key to the success of the collaborations they studied, results that are congruent with the observations of this study. Dawes and Préfontaine (2003) stated that “The formal structure also acts as the context for a rich array of complex, informal relationships. These informal relationships are the usual means for getting work done” (p. 42). CAFRP adds “warm and trusting relationships among the individuals involved in collaborations are often at the heart of their success” (p. 72) and suggests that organizations nurture these valuable relationships through hiring organizational representatives with collaboration skills, providing training in collaboration, and providing the time “to get to know their professional colleagues informally” (p. 72).

With the goal of increasing social capital in the community among seniors, an outcome was also the development of social capital for the EFCP collaboration itself, and among the members and organizations involved. Therefore, social capital was an outcome of the process of informal communication and relationship development among members, and also an indicator of success. Social capital was the result of the EFCP members, who have common goals, working together toward those goals, even if the goals are vague (Putnam & Feldstein, 2003, p. 10). The EFCP developed links among the collaborating members (a bonding social network) and at the same time worked to link community seniors. If a collaboration continues over a long period, the participating organizations are internally changed (Hamel et al., 1989; Kanter, 2002). The experience and history of the collaborators with each other created valuable relationships that promoted further innovation within the larger system. The collaboration produced significant added value for each collaboration member, enhancing organizational social capital.

Examining the Wilder Collaboration Factors Inventory (WCFI) as it relates to the conclusions from the EFCP case can assist in determining whether the WCFI is complete, useful, and accurate. As mentioned in Chapter Four: Findings (see Table 10), the *Established informal relationships and communication links* two WCFI subfactor questions fail to address intentional personal connection among members, which is the crux of the factor. Perhaps an item that states “I attempt to establish personal connections and strong links with others in this collaborative group” would more adequately assess this important factor. Therefore, a better title for this factor might be *Personal Connections*.

Drilling deeper into the subfactors within the *Established informal relationships and communication links* factor, only one Wilder Collaboration Factors Inventory subfactor was identified as important to the EFCP Collaboration: “communication among the people in this collaborative group happens both at formal meetings and in informal ways.” The second item, “I personally have informal conversations about the project with others who are involved in this collaborative group,” was not significant, so not confirmed for the EFCP case. Therefore the level of importance of this factor reflects the importance of the first subfactor.

Looking more broadly at the Wilder Collaboration Factors Inventory (WCFI) categories, the *Established informal relationships and communication links* factor has been placed as a subcategory within the Communication Category. However, I notice that informal relationships are not just a matter of communication, as categorized in the WCFI. More than communication, relationship-building is a larger part of the collaboration process. And it is more than just communication—it is also about atmosphere and impacts of communication. A framework that includes a broader concept of personal connections and relationships among members is warranted.

Mutual Respect, Understanding, and Trust

Previous research reported the significance of each member’s organizational self-interest for the collaboration’s success. In order to ensure that health and social care organizations working for older adults are free to focus on improved collaboration practice, collaborating members require that the consortium will respond to their own organization’s financial priorities (Lewis, 2001). Einbinder et al. (2000) state that success is more likely when each organization “is able to influence the collaboration’s goals and

when the collaboration is important for the achievement of their organization's objectives" (p. 131).

The ability to compromise and neutralize "territory issues" (p. 69) such as "competitiveness, parochial interests, and consideration of political bases" (Harrison, Lynch, Rosander, & Borton, 1990, p. 75), as well as respect for individual collaborator's boundaries (Hamel, Doz, & Prahalad, 1989) have been identified as factors contributing to successful collaboration.

Although *mutual respect* and *trust* were granted separated subcategories and items in the Wilder Collaboration Factors Inventory (WCFI), Mattessich et al. (2001) did not create a separate survey item for *understanding*, rather they included it within the item *Mutual respect, understanding, and trust*. This item is described as "Members of the collaborative group share an understanding and respect for each other and their respective organizations" (p. 14). Because understanding was confirmed as an important item for the EFCP Collaboration, and Mattessich et al. (2001) include it in their review of the literature as an important factor, perhaps this could be an addition for future versions of the WFCI. An item could be included that assesses the respondent's agreement with the level of understanding within the group, such as "I try to understand the pressures and constraints faced by other members of this collaboration."

Mutual respect, understanding, and trust are three separate concepts that relate closely to each other. Trust, understanding, and mutual respect are likely correlated in successful collaboration. Understanding is also in close relation to trust, and can be found within the definition of trust, as Cook, Hardin, and Levi (2005) explain: "Trust exists when one party to the relation believes the other party has incentive to act in his or her

interest or to take his or her interests to heart” (p. 2). Values of respect and trust are inter-related with understanding. They can be combined into one factor, or separated for deeper inquiry. The following section separates these three components and discusses each in light of other research specific to these concepts.

First, respect was shown to be a key to creating trust in the EFCP Collaboration. The CAFRP (2004) and Strand et al. (2003) also found respect to be important in their collaborations, as Strand et al. state: “When all members of a community-based research team recognize the value of each member’s knowledge, mutual respect prevails, and the partnership is far more likely to be successful” (p. 32). With the application of consistent respect and understanding, trust was developed as EFCP members built their relationship with each other.

Second, the EFCP group demonstrated the importance of understanding to the success of their collaboration. As other researchers have found, success is promoted by networking and increasing awareness of the others’ situations (Harrison et al., 1990). For example, Hasnain-Wynia et al. (2003) found that the collaborations they studied worked best when the members were able to consider the interests of others.

Building understanding may not come naturally. It takes a particular respectful, open stance on the part of members, and it takes time and effort to build an understanding of others’ expectations and agendas, and at the same time ensure that one’s own agenda is clear and understood by others. Understanding requires that organizational members are able to be outward-looking, and this can be difficult if emphasis is placed on the need for members to have an inward-looking posture due to limited resources and focus on

individual organizational survival. Charlesworth (2001) identifies a paradox for collaborators:

It is a paradox that just as the government is asking organizations to collaborate more and to be more outward-looking, they are also being forced to focus more on internal issues, particularly around monitoring and audit. (p. 283)

It can be a challenge for members to maintain empathy towards other members when they are concerned with the survival of their own organization (Weinstein, 2003). Strand et al. (2003) have also found the understanding of others to be important in effective collaborations, stating that partners need to “learn how to recognize and work around the various situational constraints that affect their partners and may stand in the way of accomplishing the group’s goals” (p. 36).

The EFCP Collaboration demonstrated that understanding relies on using common terms and developing a common professional language. Effective communication and conflict resolution both rely on members of a university-community collaboration speaking a common language, and using common terminology (McCartt-Hess & Mullen, 1995). Bell-Elkins (2002) found that a key to group progress was clear and open communication between partners, including taking time to develop a common language and to clarify the meaning of terms. In their case study of the East Scarborough Storefront program, Roche and Roberts (2007) also found that developing a common conceptual language was important for the success of that non-profit collaboration.

Similarity among collaborating members enhances that ability to understand. When all EFCP members were representing an organization, when most were from the social work profession, and were at a senior level within their organization, the EFCP group seemed to demonstrate the most understanding of each other. Strand et al. (2003)

found that sharing a worldview with the other partners was of particular importance. For example, if all partners believed that all group members could be trusted to share authority, then the group could “work more easily together to promote shared authority” (p. 28).

Finally, trust was also very important. The success of the EFCP Collaboration was based on developing a culture of mutual trust among members in community-university collaboration attempts, observations that are congruent with those of other studies of success (Armistead, Pettigrew, & Aves 2007; Child & Faulkner, 1998; Connors & Seifer, 2000; Dawes, 2003; Einbinder et al., 2000; Huxham & Vangen, 2005; Kanter, 2002; Morosini, 2006; Reiniger, 2003; Zizys, 2007; Zuckerman, 1995). Dawes (2003) claims, trust “is the glue that holds these kinds of projects together” (p. 5).

Strand et al. (2003) have also found trust to be a key principle of their successful community campus partnerships. They have found the collaborations are most successful when

each partner trusts that the other can be counted on to ‘do the right thing’—that the partner will know what that is and ultimately will make a genuine effort not to compromise the other’s interests....During the course of a successful collaboration, each partner comes to trust the other to act in good faith, keep in mind the interests of the other as well as their own interests, and refuse to sacrifice the other’s important objectives in favour of one’s own lesser ones. Successful partners trust not only each other but also the process of collaboration. They have confidence in the partnership: that it will produce meaningful results even as it faces hurdles of various kinds along the way. (p. 31)

One can find an entire field of research in the area of trust. Cook, Hardin, and Levi (2005) provide a research summary on interpersonal trust which helps to inform collaboration. They explain that in order to trust, we need knowledge of the other person. And they explain the reasons trust might develop: “We can suppose you are trustworthy

because we think you are morally committed to being so, because you have relevant character disposition, or because you encapsulate our interests” (Cook, Hardin, & Levi, 2005, p. 5). Finally, they inform us that those who are more similar tend to secure trust more quickly; and they explain that ongoing relationships facilitate increased trust among people (Cook, Hardin, & Levi, 2005).

The EFCP Collaboration indicated that prior relationships helped to provide the basis of trust for the development of collaboration, that small successful projects help with establishing relationships and trust, and that each member contributing tangible resources or money helps to develop positive and trusting relationships. Trust is crucial for positive practice relationship development and for collaboration.

Other researchers are also finding that community-university collaboration success factors often relate to trust; for example, Dawes (2003) found that informality and flexibility was greater when trust levels were high, and that formal protections were built into collaborations where trust levels were lower. Young-Ybarra and Wiersema (1999) found that the quality of communication among members of the strategic alliances that they studied was also positively related to the level of trust among group members. Similar to the EFCP case, trust was related to informal communication and relationship development. A collaboration agreement can decrease the time spent on trust development (Cook, Hardin, & Levi, 2005). Morosini (2006) suggests that trustful relationships between collaborators be developed before the collaboration contract is signed.

Several challenges to developing trust have been identified. In their study of several collaborations, Provan et al. (2003) found that trust took more time to develop

than anticipated. Competition for resources or recognition among organizations can have a corrosive effect on a collaboration, and can destroy trust (Young-Ybarra & Wiersema, 1999). Rather than competing for profit, non-profit organizations can compete for clients and government funding (Hardy, Phillips, & Lawrence, 2003). The development of trust must be ongoing in all collaboration interactions, as it can be fragile (Dawes, 2003) and mistrust initially is often the norm (Chrislip, 2002). Zizys (2007) found that trust needed to be earned continuously throughout a consortium, as well as expected from the beginning, both the continuous earning and the expectation of trust allowed the EFCP to escape many of these challenges to trust building.

In their study of strategic alliances, Young-Ybarra and Wiersema (1999) found that the more dependent the collaborators were on each other, the less trust existed among members. More trust was demonstrated in collaborations where members were independent of each other financially. Dependence is the basis of power in an exchange relation (Cook, Hardin, & Levi, 2005). Similar to the EFCP Collaboration, Einbinder et al. (2000) determined that collaborations demonstrate most success when all partner agencies have non-profit status, facilitating mutual trust.

Flexibility

Being open and flexible to different ways of working was important to the Elder Friendly Communities Program (EFCP) Collaboration. Demonstrating flexibility during its inception and continuation, the group adapted to change and was flexible both in structure and in methods. The group was able to have various members' "skills and expertise become dominant" as needed over the process of the collaboration.

Other collaboration researchers have indicated that uncertainty and ambiguity are factors in collaborative efforts; therefore, flexibility and responsiveness are vital (Buckeridge et al., 2002; Harrison, Lynch, Rosander, & Borton, 1990; Mattessich et al., 2001; Roussel et al., 2002; Strand et al., 2003; Zizys, 2007). As the CAFRP (2004) found, “A flexible attitude goes a long way to facilitating collaboration” (p. 52).

Review of vision, changing direction as needed, norms of flexibility, and transformative process promote flexibility within a collaboration. A continuous review process of the vision may help a collaboration adapt to external forces (Roussos & Fawcett, 2000). The EFCP Collaboration found that to contribute to its sustainability, the collaboration continuously re-shaped and re-affirmed their shared vision over time. A flexible group is willing to change direction if a new approach is unsuccessful (Ragan, 2003). Lasker, Weiss, and Miller (2001) introduce the concepts of synergy and transformative process within their framework of collaboration. As members collaborate, they change and learn from each other, creating the sense of transformation and flexibility.

Working philosophy, norms, and ground rules can set the stage for further flexibility in a collaboration (Dawes & Préfontaine, 2003). Success depends on maintaining role flexibility (Einbinder et al., 2000), and flexibility is also required to find a part for all interested organizations to play in a collaborative effort (Zizys, 2007). To create “an adaptive and participative” structure, Roberts (p. 54, 2004) suggests using a democratic organizational design for collaboration. Instead of a hierarchical top-down structure for the group, the group takes time to be more circular in structure, encouraging free communication flow and innovation when needed.

In the EFCP Collaboration, flexibility was facilitated by the home organizations supporting flexibility in the group. Organizations can provide the resources and supports that a collaboration needs in order to try new strategies and implement innovations (Ragan, 2003). On the other hand, collaboration is more difficult when the organizations involved have inflexible boundaries and mandates. Limitations, restraints, and other challenges can increase tension and reduce the likelihood of collaboration, unless the group can be flexible enough to ameliorate these tensions (Nyden & Wiewel, 1992).

Development of Clear Roles and Policy Guidelines (Role Clarification)

Attending to clarifying roles and responsibilities for members was found to be an important theme for the Elder Friendly Communities Program (EFCP) Collaboration. Building a collaboration required attention to clarifying roles and responsibilities early on. Forethought was necessary in order to establish clear roles and guidelines. Other researchers agree that success depends on establishing clear roles and guidelines for the partnership with the input and agreement of all partners (Bell-Elkins, 2002; Berman, 2006; Chrislip, 2002; Connors & Seifer, 2000; Einbinder et al., 2000; Mattessich et al., 2001; Nahemow et al., 1999; Reiniger, 2003; Roussel et al., 2002; Strand et al., 2003).

Formalization of the roles and policy guidelines was an important process for the EFCP Collaboration. The Wilder Collaboration Factors Inventory (WCFI) item, *development of clear roles and policy guidelines*, was composed of two sub-items, a clear sense of roles was more important than a clear process for decision-making. The policy guidelines are not a significant concept in the WCFI description of this item. However role clarification is the important item for the EFCP case; therefore I propose that the item title be simplified to *Role clarification*.

Chrislip (2002) found role clarity to be important for the collaborations they studied as well, and delineated four roles for group members which also fit the EFCP data: “stakeholders who do the work, process experts who facilitate the engagement, content experts who provide knowledge and information, and strong leaders of the process” (p. 252). Roberts (2004) also suggests written descriptions of members’ roles to aid in clarifying those roles in the collaboration, particularly in the event of new members or when conflict is looming. Similar to the EFCP group, Strand et al., (2003) confirm that “written agreements help clarify the roles and responsibilities of each of the key players” (p. 57). In a recent analysis of several public-private community service delivery collaborations, Gazley (2008) found that those groups with a collaboration agreement lasted longer and were more likely to share decision-making than those without a formal agreement.

The EFCP group unsuccessfully attempted to integrate consumers into their inter-organizational collaboration. The attempt to gain a consumer voice through incorporating elderly representatives to the Collaboration helped to highlight two main barriers to this type of representational membership. First, the seniors who were willing to consider participating in the EFCP Collaboration meetings found that they were not interested in the professional level of the discussion, and preferred serving through more hands-on contributions. And secondly, because the intent of the Collaboration was for organizations to come together through the meeting of organizational representatives, the potential seniors were not as focussed on professional service as were the organizational representative members. Barr and Huxham (1996) also reflected on the difficulty of mixing professionals and community representatives who do not necessarily have a

professional background. They found that when community representatives were not paid, they had fewer constraints on their opinions and behaviour in the group. Barr and Huxham also found a tendency to have less relative participation and activity from the community members, due to not being included, or having different ideological perspectives; this was mirrored by the seniors who tried to participate in the EFCP Collaboration.

The EFCP Collaboration identified the importance of a Program Manager as one important role within its collaboration. Gardner and Nunan (2007), Einbinder et al. (2000), Gilbert and Specht (1977), Zizys (2007), and Pitt (1998) also identified the importance of a paid staff coordinator or funded administrative infrastructure to assist with the coordination of the collaborative initiative. Roberts (2004) adds that this type of person helps to move the process forward and in this way is a key leader in the group, because the coordination activity is vital to the functioning of the collaboration. The program manager or coordinator role helps to integrate the function and operations of the collaboration (Bergquist, Betwee, & Meuel, 1995).

EFCP Collaboration roles and policy guidelines were clarified over time, including developing a collaboration agreement. Although there was a force drawing the group to formalize, there also was a force to stay flexible in the structure, function, and process of the EFCP Collaboration. This slightly dichotomous tug-of-war between formalization and flexibility ensured that the group did not become overly structured, rigid, or ineffectually elastic. The necessary flexibility and attention to roles was facilitated through shared leadership.

Shared leadership

Scholars generally underestimate the importance of *shared* leadership and are more likely to consider individual leadership as crucial. For example, researchers find that success depends on having a committed, responsible facilitator or “broker” (Einbinder et al., 2000) with leadership characteristics and competence to maintain leadership (Chrislip, 2002; Mattessich et al., 2001; Mizrahi & Rosenthal, 2001).

In many groups, there is a hierarchy that is dependent on who is controlling the budget, setting the agenda, and chairing the meetings. Leadership in interorganizational social service collaboration is more complex than leadership in single organizations (Armistead, Pettigrew, & Aves, 2007). Strong leadership is particularly important in community-university collaborations which have complex strategic approaches requiring the management of interdependent partners. Although individual leadership may be important at certain points in time, such as initially in the convening of the collaboration (Chrislip, 2002), over the life of the collaboration, the Elder Friendly Communities Program (EFCP) data indicate that in successful community-university consortia, leadership is shared. The representatives involved have leadership abilities and together facilitate the group. Personal qualities, such as honesty, integrity, decisiveness, risk taking, inspiring others and problem solving skills are important to leadership in collaborations (Alimo-Metcalfe & Alban-Metcalfe, 2005).

Sharing leadership was found to be an important theme for the EFCP group. Other writers agree that leadership and responsibilities need to be shared in effective inter-organizational collaboration (Armistead, Pettigrew, & Aves, 2007; Bryson & Crosby, 1992; Chrislip, 2002; Provan, Fish, & Sydow, 2007; Lasker & Weiss, 2003; Strand et al.,

2003). In their literature review of collaborations, Provan, Fish, and Sydow (2007) describe shared leadership as a shared governance structure in which collaborators “collectively work to make both strategic and operational decisions... There is no unique, formal governance structure other than through the collaborative interactions among members themselves” (p. 504). The EFCP Collaboration exemplified this shared leadership.

Shared or *lateral* leadership was demonstrated by the EFCP Collaboration. Roberts (2004) describes lateral leaders as collaborating members that know themselves, are comfortable with various emotions, can build trust, develop a common language, and demonstrate inclusion. Lasker and Weiss (2003) identify what is required for community collaboration leadership. Leaders in these collaborations must be able to “(1) promote broad and active participation, (2) ensure broad-based influence and control, (3) facilitate productive group dynamics, and (4) extend the scope of the process” (p. 31). They suggest that through this leadership process, synergy is ignited and ideas are created jointly, thereby facilitating further consensus problem solving. In their study, Alimo-Metcalfe and Alban-Metcalfe (2005) found that successful collaborative leaders were able to encourage, show concern to the others, build shared vision, and support a developmental culture.

Shared leadership allows different individuals with specialized skills to take the fore, as necessary, throughout the life of the group. For example, Gilbert and Specht (1977) find variations in the role of leadership in different phases of the collaboration: during planning phases, process-oriented leaders may be more successful; whereas, during implementation phases, task-oriented leadership may be more successful. In other

collaborations, because funding is important, there is a fundraising role, and someone within the collaborative, or the program manager, needs to take leadership regarding the application for funding. Many EFCP members had leadership positions within their own organizations and were able to bring those skills to the shared leadership of the EFCP group.

Shared decision-making within the EFCP group was based upon a number of related group processes. These included the presence of positive relationships among group members, effective communication strategies, stable group membership, and mutual respect. Metzler et al. (2003)'s study of three community-university collaborations, also found that the creation of "shared decision-making" within the collaboration (p. 804) was of paramount importance for these initiatives. Strand et al., (2003) also found that shared decision-making was vital to university-community collaborations, and further explained: "deciding which decisional points each party will control requires common sense as well as ongoing frank and friendly give and take about everyone's particular interests, strengths, and weaknesses" (p. 34).

Shared leadership is facilitated by a common vision and a process that supports shared leadership. As other researchers have noted, having a common purpose and vision is essential for building and ensuring the continued success of a collaboration (Bell-Elkins, 2002; CAFRP, 2004; Connors & Seifer, 2000; Huxham & Vangen, 2005; Mattessich et al., 2001; Reiniger, 2003; Roussel et al., 2002). Time and effort must be expended to create a foundation, looking at the vision, mission, and values of the group. In developing an effective shared vision, the collaboration requires a unique purpose (Mattessich et al., 2001) and the involvement of all the collaborators from the beginning

(Roussel et al., 2002; Roussos & Fawcett, 2000). Consideration must be given to articulating and serving multiple agendas within one shared vision. The shared vision is refined and clarified as the group develops shared objectives, shared language, a shared agenda, clear roles, and some common fundamental views.

Sharing goals is a reflection of shared vision. The collaborating agencies must have sufficient reason to collaborate and the collaboration's goals must also converge with each collaborator's organizational goals (Einbinder et al., 2000). As one EFCP collaboration group member stated, "people came together around sharing a vision and hoping to learn from that, and hoping it would impact organizations, as well as do some good." In setting goals, members must have the competence to achieve the goals and be committed to achieving the common goal through working together (Mizrahi & Rosenthal, 2001). The EFCP observations are congruent with these previous findings.

Power is shared within the various relationships of an effective collaboration (Huxham & Vangen, 2005; Lasker & Weiss, 2003). Power sharing may be of particular importance for the development of "mutually respectful relationships between university and community people and a fundamental sharing of authority" (Strand et al., 2003, p. 10). Shared leadership was enhanced, as described by Maurrasse (2001), by the relative seniority of the organizational representatives and the attention to levelling power relationships between the university and community members. In the EFCP Collaboration, power differences among members were minimal, facilitating an easier route to shared decision-making and leadership.

Members of the EFCP collaboration also developed relationships that were deeper and more complex than seen in typical projects, where members relate to one another on

the basis of their relative position, status, or authority. When all collaborators are viewed as equal partners, it is more likely that all will benefit from the collaboration (Roussel et al., 2002). Collaborations are more successful if they start out as groups with common interests and are not delegated by external authorities (Einbinder et al., 2000). All similar to the EFCP findings.

Learning purpose

The learning purpose was also important to the Elder Friendly Communities Program (EFCP). Many collaborations are only about sharing resources to generate program outcomes and members have instrumental objectives. However, some collaborations have learning as at least part of their purpose; collaborators may intend to learn about other organizations' operations and from others' skills (Huxham & Vangen, 2005). Or, some partners may have the dominant intent to learn about how to manage the process of collaboration (Child, Faulkner, Tallman, 2005; Reuer, 2004). Therefore, learning can include learning about practice in collaboration or learning about service delivery from both micro and macro-system perspectives (Finger & Brand, 1999). The EFCP Collaboration members demonstrated a passion to learn about collaboration from each other and by participating in the process. As a community of practice, the members learned with each other about how to collaborate effectively, and created new knowledge as they proceeded through the collaboration process. As a side benefit, they also learned about each other and each other's organizations.

Senge (1990) describes a generative learning process for organizational change which fits with the EFCP Collaboration process for learning. Generative learning results from continuous experimentation in changing the group's environment, creative problem

solving, and ongoing feedback. Shared visions are created and new paradigms are encouraged. EFCP group members were pleased with the generative and supportive learning environment provided by their collaboration.

The EFCP Collaboration displayed a pattern of dynamics that reflected a learning organization. Senge (1990) describes learning organizations as those characterized by mutuality, innovation, ongoing learning, and collective purpose. The concept of *learning organization* also implies that the organization develops a capacity for proactively anticipating and responding to change and uncertainty; new structures are created, and a new entity evolves that is distinct from participating organizations. The EFCP consortium exemplified a learning organization by developing a mutually-defined set of collaborative goals and a collective purpose, and moving beyond existing organizational structures.

The process within a collaboration with a learning purpose is likely different from those without that purpose. As confirmed by the EFCP Collaboration, Finger and Brand (1999) also corroborate that learning among organizations requires trust, shared leadership, and flexibility. Gould (2004) suggests that learning within organizations and collaborations can be seen as “more pervasive and distributed than that delivered through a specific, designated training or education event; learning incorporates the broad dynamics of adaptation, change and environmental alignment of organizations” (p. 4). Participants in a learning collaboration have opportunities to create mutually defined goals, have innovative thinking nurtured, and develop a new collective purpose shaped by mutual and ongoing learning. With a learning purpose, collaborators can “remain constantly open to new information and ideas, to thinking creatively about what would make services better, and willing to implement change” (p. 113, Gardner, 2005). The

learning purpose allowed the EFCP group the opportunity for critical reflection about how they were structured and how they would proceed and resulted in the ability to adapt to changing external forces as needed. Reflection and discussion was a norm in the EFCP group. When EFCP members were focused on learning, they were more attentive to the process and their own behaviours, therefore likely to be creating a more successful outcome through increased awareness. As information was gathered from the EFCP collaborating group, and potential barriers and possible enhancements were identified through the reflective learning process, the group could adjust towards more successful processes. Infusing evaluative thinking within the process of the collaborative tasks also facilitated shared learning (M. Q. Patton, personal conversation, June 13, 2008).

Taking the time and resources to integrate a learning purpose into the process of a collaboration can be a challenge (Cutcher-Gershenfeld & Ford, 2005). Gardner and Nunan (2007) note that most human services agencies participate “in a culture of productivity that at times operates in contradiction to the need to pause, reflect and discuss” (p. 349). A learning purpose in an alliance is likely more successful when partners demonstrate positive intention and ability to learn, and all are involved in learning for a mutual purpose (Child, Faulkner, Tallman, 2005). Competition may set up a defensive pattern and discourage learning from each other, even though learning opportunities may be greater among competitors (Child, Faulkner, Tallman, 2005, p. 283). Similar to the development of trust, a learning purpose is likely more easily accomplished in a collaboration where members are not directly competing for resources (Child, Faulkner, Tallman, 2005).

The learning purpose of the EFCP Collaboration was enhanced by the consortium's research component, leading to unique benefits. In their university-community collaborations, Strand et al. (2003) have also found the learning purpose to be key: "Everyone in the group is regarded as both a researcher and a learner. In this way, the research process itself becomes a means of change and growth for everyone involved in it" (p. 10). The EFCP Collaboration observations suggest that an innovative way to build and support a learning collaboration is to include a research component. The EFCP members could apply their learning to their other work and disseminate their learning to other practitioners. One EFCP member describes this as "knowledge earned through participation, not knowledge acquired through research." In a university-community collaboration, Gardner and Nunan (2007) found that integrating research and a "spirit of inquiry" (Senge, 1990) into the collaboration created more reflection on practice and a sense of a learning organization.

The learning purpose helped to guide the development of clear research goals for the EFCP Collaboration. A main goal was to learn together and from each other, and open communication was necessary to support this learning. Open communication resulted in more learning benefit to members, and led to a higher level of participation and commitment among EFCP members. As one EFCP Collaboration member described, the learning commitment was a "glue" which helped with the group's cohesion.

The research agenda and the learning purpose had set up an effective environment for the EFCP Collaboration. According to the EFCP respondents, members could be more articulate, and yet not actively try to control or influence of the group, due to the research component. As a result of the large role of the research within this consortium,

people could be more patient, more open, less defensive, and turf issues, and competition may not have been as apparent. Although practice and value tensions arose between the program and research, the group's research activity helped to maintain a scope for the group, and fortified the continuous learning. Relationships were enhanced through the joint learning activity. The research mandate assisted with the learning purpose, which assisted in building quality relationships (see Figure 7 below).

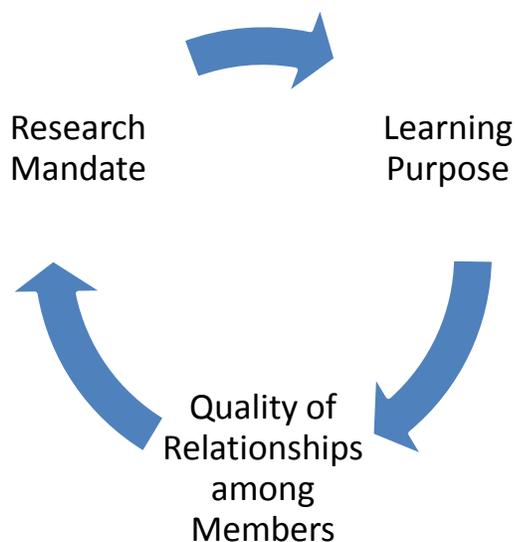


Figure 7. Research facilitates learning and quality of relationships among members.

Collaborations with a learning orientation may be more successful. Other writers have also recognized mutual individual and organizational learning as a valuable outcome of participating in a collaboration (Foster-Fishman et al., 2001; Hafford-Letchfield, Chick, Leonard, & Begum, 2008; Schaan & Kelly, 2007). Each EFCP group member's home organization viewed the learning in the collaboration as a benefit to the overall organization, so the organizations were also more committed. The EFCP research included attention to collaboration processes and outcomes which positively enabled

changes in practice, structures, roles, expectations, and resource allocation among the partner organizations (Canadian Health Services Research Foundation, 2002).

Commonalities across Factors

Although the themes in successful collaboration can be distilled to separate categories, it is unlikely that these themes can be completely understood by considering them separately from one another. The above themes all overlap and “cross relate” (Huxham & Vangen, 2005). For example, considering three components for the Elder Friendly Communities Program (EFCP) Collaboration success, when a collaboration has mutual respect, the members are more likely to build personal connections. More relationship connections then create an atmosphere leading to more opportunities for shared leadership, and further mutual respect, etc. Figure 8 illustrates the interconnectedness of all the important factors for the EFCP Collaboration (below):

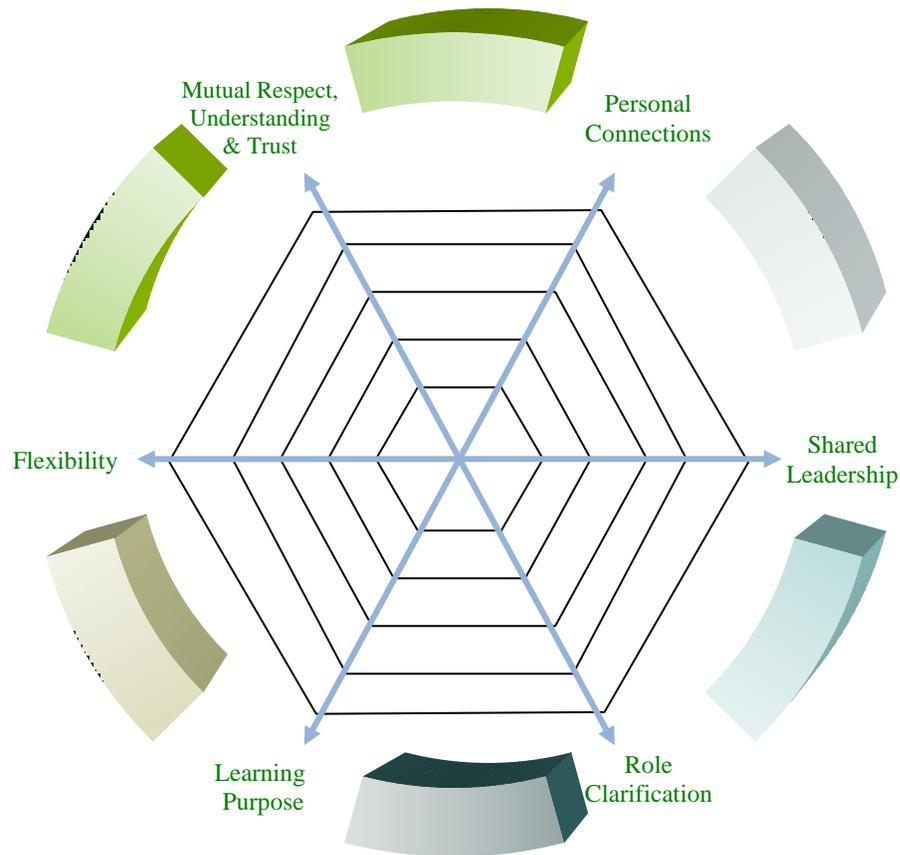


Figure 8. Important themes cross-relate creating an interdependent cluster. The lines in the centre are intended to illustrate the cross-relation of all factors.

Collaborations are complex systems and it is difficult to develop a model that incorporates the various collaboration dynamics. Considering just the six most important factors for the EFCP case, there could be up to 46,656 different relational interactions between these six factors at any one time. As one example, when collaborating members establish personal connections, they have more opportunities for mutual understanding, trust, and respect, which lead to more opportunities for shared leadership, clarification of roles, flexibility, and a learning purpose. As we progress through all the computations,

another example might be that when collaborating members clarify roles, they have more opportunities for mutual understanding, trust, and respect, which lead to more opportunities for shared leadership, personal connections, flexibility, and a learning purpose. And so on.

Practically, it makes sense to look at a broader level, to themes which cut across all factors. Four themes were evident across all identified factors, including the need to (a) take time to develop the collaboration, (b) attend to process, (c) continuously attempt to enhance the quality of experience for the group members, and (d) attend to the relationships among members.

One theme that linked with many other themes was the requirement for patience and taking the time to pursue a successful collaboration. This case provides strong evidence that time must be taken upfront to contribute to all of these success factors; for example, time was required for developing personal connections, building trust, developing a common language for understanding, and clarifying roles and responsibilities. Other interorganizational researchers have commented on the challenges of incorporating the time necessary to social service collaboration in an environment with scarce resources for provision of service (Armistead, Pettigrew, & Aves, 2007).

A second theme which cuts across all of the factors of importance to this case is attending to group process. One can conclude that attention to process factors was the most important action on the part of the committee members in this case. Combining the Mattessich et al. (2001) factors and other factors uncovered, the six most important factors all related to group process. In a study of a community collaboration (further described in Chapter Two) Harrison, Lynch, Rosander, and Borton (1990) found that the

type and quality of process interactions were relatively more important than the actual products created by the collaboration. The dimensions of process considered to be important were: (a) developing new solutions to meet community needs; (b) communicating, particularly the speed and clarity of information flow; (c) networking and increasing awareness; (d) being responsive; and (e) neutralizing issues related to competitiveness and parochial interests.

Third, all important factors support an emphasis on the quality of experience among the members. Establishing informal relationships and communication links requires a degree of fun and enjoyment. Mutual respect, understanding, and trust improve the quality of experience within any relationship. Role clarification and flexibility are two main component of conflict prevention, thus ensuring flexible role orientations which can increase member's optimism (Turner, Barling, Zacharatos, 2002). Participating in shared leadership allows all members to have a voice. A learning purpose opens the experience to enjoyable growth. Improving the quality of experience for the collaborators requires consideration of all these factors for increasing the likelihood of a successful collaboration.

Finally, although all the important factors cross-related to all the other important factors, the personal connections factor seemed to most clearly and evidently overlap with all. The factors important to the EFCP Collaboration all urge behaviours required to address relationship building. And crucially, these important factors occur within the relationships among the members.

Other authors studying collaboration are beginning to understand the importance of the development of personal connections and relationships for successful

collaboration. Whittington (2003) states that “the personal and inter-personal spheres are fundamental to our understanding and practice of collaboration” (p. 48). As Brown (1991) reminds us, collaborative members are human and have universal relational human needs including security, community, clarity, authority, and respect.

From the results of this study, further consideration of a *personal connections and relationships* dimension may be required for successful community-university collaboration. Therefore, the next section presents a framework of collaborative practice that considers the cross-relation of all important factors with reflection of the most important factor, *established informal relationships and communication links*.

Relational Framework of Collaborative Practice

Relationships were continually identified in the Elder Friendly Communities Program (EFCP) Collaboration as being of utmost importance to the success of this collaboration. As one EFCP member proclaimed, “It boils down to taking the time and the effort to build those relationships.” Another EFCP member said, “To me, it is connectedness plus trust equals relationship.” And another confirmed, “Collaborations are all about relationships!”

The EFCP findings suggest that the relationship factor is an umbrella factor for the others. Overall, attention to building relationships has an underlying connection to all of the important factors for this case. It is not surprising that attention to the relationship between members is seen as an overarching necessary factor. As one member stated: “This is an interactive process.” And at a fundamental level, it is individuals who collaborate, not organizations.

A dominant theme running through the literature's documented requirements for successful collaboration is the importance of attention to the relationships among the collaborators. Therefore, it is not surprising that the *established informal relationships and communication links* (personal connections) factor was the most important concept for this case of collaboration. Attention to relationship is required for all the important factors in this case. Because my research indicates that the success of the EFCP Collaboration has been largely influenced by characteristics relating to relationships, what we could coin as a *Relational Framework of Collaborative Practice* best fits the EFCP case.

Looking more closely at the emerged important factors, the inter-member relationship elements of these collaborative dimensions have also emerged with frequency and convergence. Collaborators and the collaborator-to-collaborator relationships are likely to be influenced by the overall set of relationships (Provan, Fish, & Sydow, 2007), as in any system. Adding to the collaboration field, this Relational Framework looks at the spaces between the system components to the ways of relating in collaborations. All of these factors identified to be important to the EFCP Collaboration exist in the relationships between group members. I will take trust, understanding, and respect, just as one example.

Therefore, in a relational model, relationships among collaborators would be considered the primary point from which actions materialize. How things are done, and who they are done with, would have more emphasis than what is collaborated on. Inter-organizational collaboration occurs through a process that requires the organizational representatives to work well as a group through their relationship with each other. The

EFCP data indicate that the personal connections in the group assisted with the development of shared leadership, which further developed relationships for the purpose of collaboration. Strong relationship connections mean the group has a common vision, shares leadership, facilitates information flow, and is able to plan, take action, and work together.

From my review of the literature and the observations of the EFCP case I have developed the Relational Framework of Collaborative Practice in order to build and sustain successful collaboration. (See Figure 9: Relational Framework, below.)

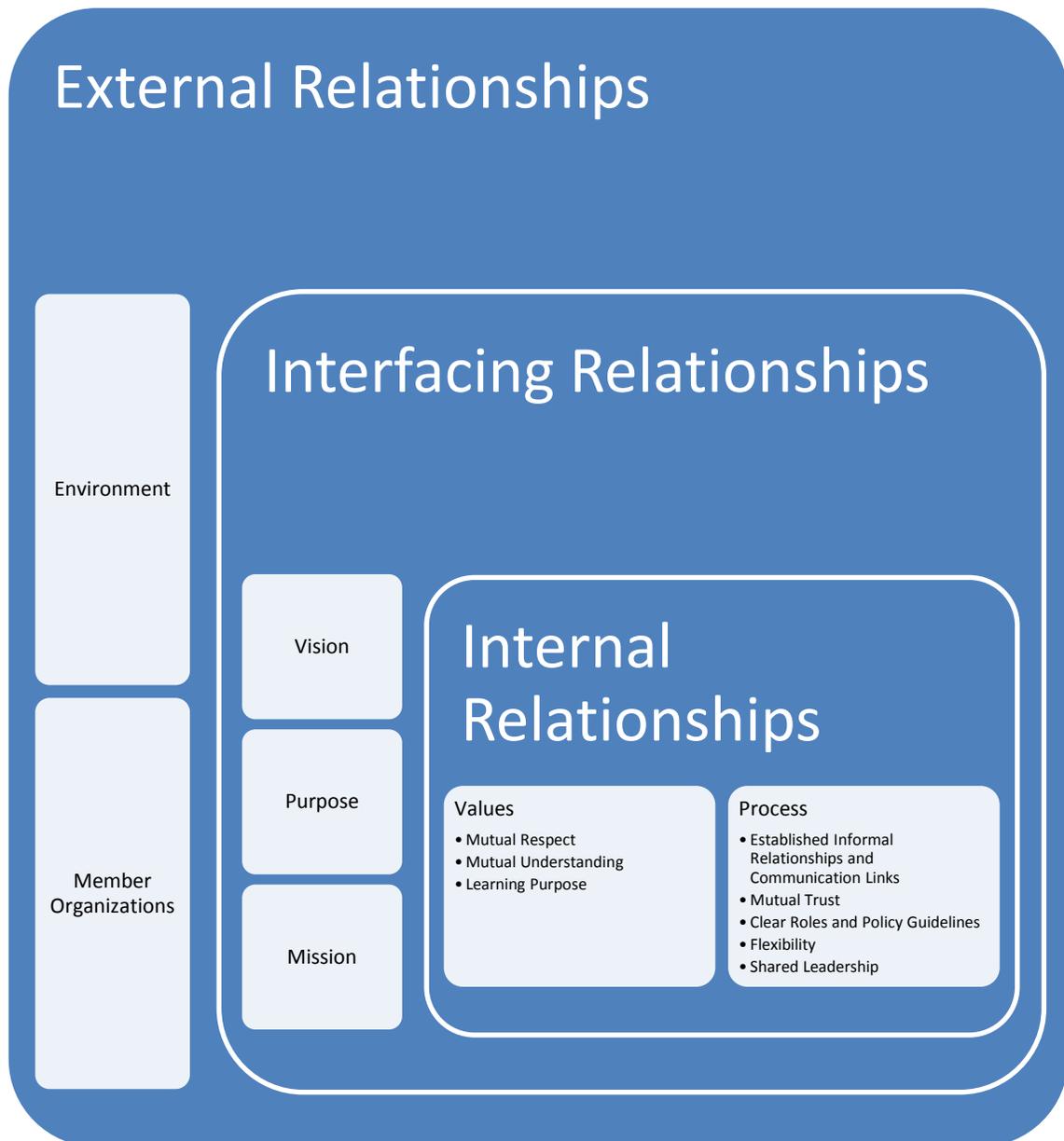


Figure 9. Relational Framework. Includes relationship factors separated in external, interfacing and internal to the collaborating group.

Several conditions are required:

External Relationships must be attended to between the collaboration and its environment and member organizations. Context for the collaboration requires

responding to political and social context, and acquiring sufficient resources for the collaborative purposes through external relationships.

Interfacing Relationships between the collaboration and its organizations and environment require attention regarding vision, purpose, and mission. Paying attention to relationships between organizations is required at the Interfacing Relationships level.

And finally, within these systems, *Internal Relationships* must also be attended to. *Values* and *Process* are the two main areas requiring attention for Internal Relationships. The Value stance of the collaborators within their various relationships can enhance a collaboration through demonstrations of mutual respect, understanding, and the valuing of a learning purpose. Finally, Process must also be considered in building successful collaboration (at least in the case of the EFCP Collaboration). Process must attend to establishing informal relationships and communication links, mutual trust, development of clear roles and policy guidelines, flexibility, and shared leadership. Considering these three levels of relationship (external, interfacing, and internal) creates a Relational Framework for guiding collaboration practice.

Social Work Practice Implications

Development of relationship and informal connection among members may be the most important consideration for developing successful community-university collaboration. Therefore, a collaboration practice model must focus on the relationships between the collaborative entities. The findings from the Elder Friendly Communities Program (EFCP) case and application of a Relational Framework informs social work practice by highlighting the importance of internal, interfacing, and external aspects of

collaboration between universities and communities. Because we know that positive relationships between collaborators, their organizations, and their environment create the foundation for successful collaboration, we can incorporate more attention to these relationships into collaborative efforts. Figure 10 offers an illustration of the overlap and connection between the community, university, social work practice, and the Relational Framework of Collaborative Practice.

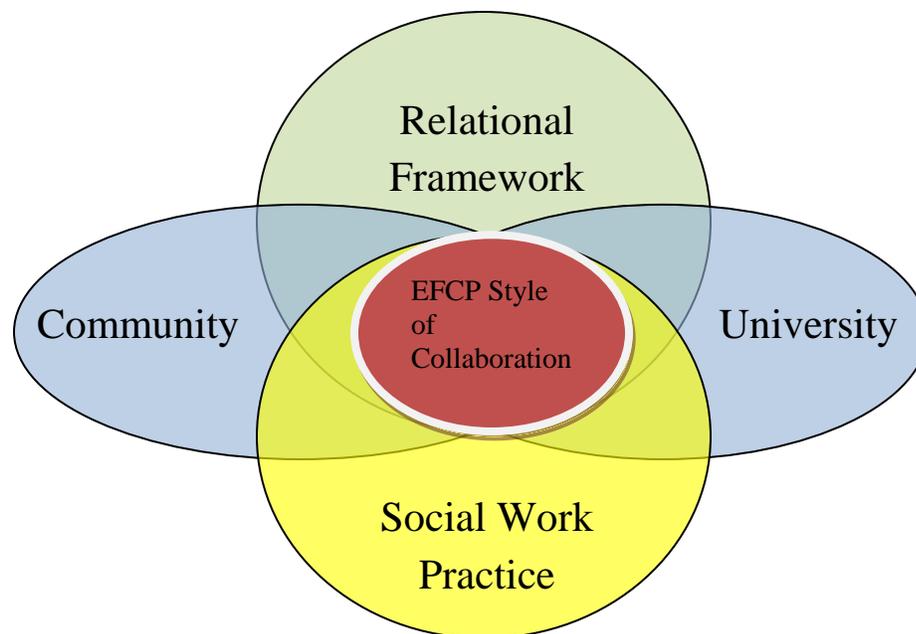


Figure 10. The Relational Framework and community-university collaboration. The Relational Framework can inform social workers attempting to practice in this area.

The EFCP Collaboration involves a university organization and therefore is a different combination of organizations participating than a typical community collaboration. University-community collaborations for the purpose of research are likely unique in comparison to community collaborations for service, or any other purpose. In

university-community consortia, the organizations involved are not exclusively community organizations. Therefore, social work faculty might want to attend to the dynamics of the university being a component of the group. Consortia established in schools of social work might benefit by attending to the learning purpose and the egalitarian values among members that facilitated success in the EFCP Collaboration.

The university members can promote the sharing of the commitment to learn from the collaborative experience. A research demonstration, where all members are interested in learning, could be an effective option. In addition, when a university researcher is interested in research within the community, a research demonstration may be an option to reduce the distance between practitioners and university researchers. Community organizations can be full co-researchers in ventures like these. The university members must acknowledge that the university is not the only organization with research expertise. As we work to encourage a learning purpose and successful collaboration, relationships among members must be constantly attended to. As well, service oriented collaborations may find it valuable to stress the learning process as they build working relationships.

Folgheraiter (2004) provides an important general theoretical approach to social work, *Relational Social Work*, which encompasses the importance of relationships and supports the Relational Framework that has emerged from this study of the EFCP Collaboration. He states that “networking—the authentic social relation with reciprocal learning among the parties involved in the helping process, not the unilateral application of some theory or some technique—is the real key to ‘success’ in social work” (p. 22). This study of the EFCP Collaboration supports further development of the Relational Social Work paradigm for social work practice.

The actions of collaborating members, including social workers, impact the relationships between members and the collaboration's success. To have a successful interorganizational community-university demonstration, each member must pay attention to how they and their organization relate and interact with others in the collaboration. From the EFCP case, we know that attention to relationship building means that members connect, trust, respect, understand, learn, share leadership, clarify roles, and be flexible. Members also likely need to see collaboration as in their self-interest, participate in enjoyable open and frequent communication, share a vision, have a unique purpose, and engage skilled leadership.

The Relational Framework informs collaboration practice at the Internal Relationships level. The important factors in the EFCP case identify the ways of working required for collaboration in this case. The Relational Framework provides a meta-level construct at the level of all system relationships. The Internal Relationship level (of the Relational Framework) informs the behaviours required for social work practice. These Relational Ways of Working (practice level) behaviours arise from attention to process and values. These then would lead to successful outcomes, such as organizational social capital; and service and learning impacts. See Figure 11: Practice Level Factors, which locates the important factors for the EFCP case in the Internal Relationship's Values and Process dimension as *Relational Ways of Working*. The EFCP case highlights the relational ways of working that led to successful collaboration and positive outcomes for both the group members and their organizations.

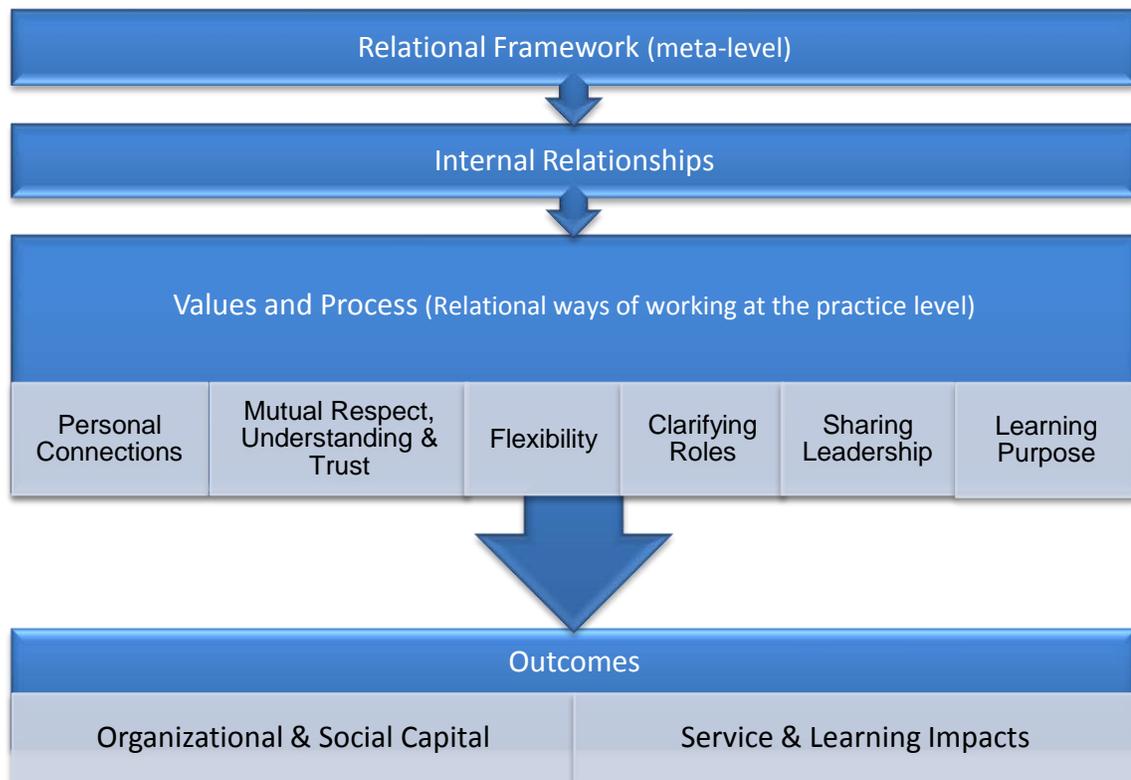


Figure 11. Practice level factors. Locates the important factors for the EFCP Case in the relational way of working dimension.

The six important factors for the EFCP Collaboration can be categorized not only as process factors, but also as outcomes for the group. A successful collaborating group might attempt to develop the important factors described within their process, and may also view these as outcomes. For example, understanding, respect, trust, flexibility, clear roles, shared leadership, learning, and personal connections can all be measured as outcomes for the group. Or, perhaps the important factors could be indicators of a successful collaborating group.

The Relational Framework of Collaborative Practice model suggests that to have a successful collaboration under the conditions of the EFCP Collaboration, the group dynamics must support a shared leadership that facilitates flexibility, development of personal connections, and meaningful learning discourse. The group must have patience with the process, clarifying roles and responsibilities while maintaining respect, trust, and understanding as they progress through the process. These actions require that the representatives have taken the time and made the effort to understand each other, and know each other. Developing quality relationships takes time, and is difficult to achieve. It requires that we engage with the flexibility to allow ourselves to change, to share leadership, to learn.

Successful collaborations attend to the process management of their group. The EFCP case suggests that rather than valuing outcomes, we need to focus on process and values for collaboration. For example, developing personal connections through humour and personal sharing were important to the EFCP Collaboration. As in any system, if a collaborating group pays attention to developing one of the important factors, then other important factors will likely be stronger. For example, if members focus on improving respect, then the personal connections among members will also be strengthened. Attention to the quality of the relationships within a collaboration also involves attention to the quality of experience.

The EFCP Collaboration was a social work initiative. The professional identity (social work) of the founders and of most of the ongoing membership of the EFCP Collaboration is important to note. I would speculate that the social work profession value base is highly congruent with the factors that contributed to the success of the

EFCP Collaboration. Therefore, the professional background and value base underpinning the group may have had a significant impact, and may be something important for future collaborations to attend to. Most of the members in the Elder Friendly Communities Program (EFCP) Collaboration were social workers, with the exception of one or two nurses. This was a social work enterprise.

So, how many registered social workers are competent in facilitating and practicing in ways that promote the six important factors identified by the EFCP case? This remains to be answered, and might make a good future research question. In the meantime, the EFCP case findings have implications for social work professional development. Service providers require skills training to create and sustain effective collaborations (Zizyz, 2007). We need to increase our attention to our ability to build relationships among professionals. Weinstein (2003) reminds social workers that effective interorganizational collaboration usually requires effective interprofessional collaboration. Collaborative practice requires attention in the processes of social work. Social workers' value base and skills may signify that social workers are naturally suited to facilitating collaboration.

Collaborative practice is an important component of social work and requires recognition as a professional requirement. Social worker educators must attend to including collaborative practice training within social work curriculum. Collaborative practice must be a core curriculum area, much like social justice, or communication. We can better prepare our social workers for social justice action if we educate them to focus on working *with* others rather than *for* others, and learning *from* others rather than learning *about* other people (Ife, 2007). To do this, we need to educate social workers in

practical methods of developing respectful, understanding, flexible, clear, mutually beneficial, and learning relationships. This new curriculum would include developing relationships, seeking to learn from each other, and then creating more powerful social change initiatives that we could not have achieved acting on our own. We need to teach social workers to be able to share leadership and how to build trusting bonds among collaborators (Goleman, McKee, & Boyatzis, 2002).

The insights I have gathered provide some implications for those who plan to conduct further research, and these will be discussed in the following sections.

Reflection on Case Study Method

Collaborations are complex and a categorical framework may not work across all collaborations. Therefore, I am reluctant to provide a one-size-fits-all proclamation of what is required to build and sustain successful collaborations. The findings from the EFCP and the Relational Framework of Collaborative Practice presented are not intended to be read as universal laws of any kind, and cannot take into account all the complexity of collaborations. Each venture will likely have different dimensions that are perceived to be more important for the success of that particular collaboration (Préfontain et al., 2000).

Dominance of the use of case study in the study of collaboration is likely due to collaboration's complexity which does not favour a statistically oriented approach. Due to the singular case design of this study, the ability to use the model developed for the EFCP case to make assumptions about other collaborations is limited. The model presented is not meant to be prescriptive for other collaborations. Behaviour patterns that appeared to be successful for the EFCP case may not lead to successful collaboration

when applied to another group. Although the EFCP case seemed to rely most on the Relational Framework factors, another collaboration, for example, might reflect more reliance on social or economic environment critical success factors or the stage in the collaboration process.

Reflecting back on the criteria for constructivist research presented in Chapter Three: Methodology, this case study effort contained the above challenges and limitations. I would argue, however, that my research could be viewed as credible and trustworthy. Prolonged engagement and interviewing allowed me to attend to the specifics of the case and to generate findings that arise from being close to the participants. The interviews and meeting observations were the richest sources of data for my inquiry questions. By using dialectical data collection methods, I better able to honour the EFCP Collaboration members' experience and ground my findings in authentic inquiry (Denzin and Lincoln, 2003; Hamel, Dufour & Fortin, 1993). Choosing a theoretical foundation grounded in the literature increased the likelihood that my research will contribute to theory. The use of the WCFI had some impact on how I ended up framing the discussion and the findings. But I also remained free to identify and include new factors. Trustworthiness was enhanced through using systematic methods, triangulation, faculty supervision, persistent engagement with the Collaboration, and the member checks.

Case studies are not generalizable. My study's findings could however inform reflective collaboration practitioners in a theoretical, analytical, or naturalistic way (Gomm et al., 2000; Marshall & Rossman, 1999; Yin, 2003). Needless to say, this study has richly contributed to my own learning about what is required to implement successful

collaboration. I hope that the themes characterizing this community-university collaboration may help inform the development of other collaborations.

Next Steps for Further Research

I presented many of the gaps in the community-university collaboration literature in Chapter 2: Literature Review. I have responded to the call for more research in the context of community-university collaborations that have the purpose of providing and researching effective community development for seniors and the gap in the literature of comparing existing collaboration factor models. However, from my findings I also have some new suggestions for future research. These are not areas I have examined in detail, however I would like to if the research opportunities arise. First I present the research questions arising from the uniqueness of the EFCP case, and then I suggest a few other possible areas for future research.

Questions Arising from the Uniqueness of the EFCP Collaboration

The uniqueness of the membership, the attention to seniors as a subject matter, and the uniqueness of the structural and organizational context of that time all contributed to the distinctiveness of the EFCP Collaboration. These unique features require further examination. Perhaps further research can identify whether these unique features impact what is required for successful collaboration.

For example, a unique condition of the EFCP Collaboration was that most of the members in the group were trained social workers, and the remainder were human service or health trained professionals. Each of these professionals represents long standing values of their professions. Young-Ybarra and Wiersema (1999) found that the existence

of shared values was positively related to trust among collaborating members; therefore the existence of shared values likely has a profound impact in this case. Developing a common vision is easier when the common values are present. Therefore working together towards a common vision, through shared leadership, may be easier when members come from a common value system and common perspectives. Other collaborations reported in the literature, where more diversity among members exists, would likely have a more difficult experience in coming to a common vision through common values, and these processes may require more time and intentional effort.

A future research design that looks at the professional backgrounds of membership may be useful. Perhaps the shared social work value base of the professionals in the EFCP group contributed to the members' willingness to commit to the group over a long period, and likely contributed to their success. One of the capacities that social workers have is being able to work in a collaborative fashion because of their value base. An interesting question for future research might be: What is the value-base of the members as it contributes to the collaboration? Unsuccessful collaborations may arise due to overly diverse professional membership and an inability to merge the various professional mindsets. Therefore, further research could inquire into the influence of professional background of members on collaborations. One hypothesis would be the more similar the professional backgrounds, the more easily the group collaboration process proceeds. Another question to ask might be: Does professional education and background contribute to the collaboration dynamics?

As well, the collaboration focused on older adults which bonded the members by a common concern for a specific population. The group was also interested in community

development approaches. It is important to remember the context of the EFCP case and its focus on aging and community development. However, my study did not address the impact from the service context of the group. The group's attention to seniors may have impacted the group dynamics in ways different than those collaborations focusing on children, women, or the homeless. In comparing this case to other consortia, perhaps the aging focus would lead to different dynamics in a group. However a comparative design would have required more resources than available for my project. The collaboration does share a similar purpose to other human service contexts by addressing community health issues. Therefore, it is unclear how the service context of aging and the mission of working with seniors have influenced the EFCP findings in comparison with other collaborations with different target populations. To what degree service context has an impact is not yet known. Further comparative research could take the service context into account.

Another uniqueness of the EFCP group was their approach to learning. The EFCP group was a unique group of very competent learners who had the interest and ability to *intentionally learn*. This is high order learning—asking “What are we going to learn and discover in this collaboration?” The group members had the courage to risk and learn and to be observed, and to observe themselves. These people not only wanted to learn, they also had the courage to learn, which may not be as readily available in every university-community collaboration attempt with other players. I would agree that most community-university collaborations have reasons to adopt a learning purpose. A learning purpose might be something that collaborations want to experiment with to see if it works to

smooth some of the challenges of participating in a collaboration. Further examination of the value of a learning purpose would be helpful.

Also, this group was unique in that it was composed mostly of voluntary members—those who decided to be there. And throughout the life of the Collaboration those few who had been delegated to come from their organizations did not attend more than just a few meetings. Another question arising from this data is the question of the importance of internally motivated rather than externally motivated community-university collaborations. For example, the Elder Friendly Communities Program (EFCP) Collaboration formed as a group of members who chose to come together. Those who volunteered to attend felt that they would benefit from the experience and also believed that they had something to offer the group. Other collaborations have formed from external influences, such as funding requirements or higher-level organizational decision-making. A review of the literature specific to this question to guide further research to examine the influence toward forming the collaboration effort might be useful. One could ask, Is there a difference between a collaboration formed from the top-down in the organizations, created by the higher management or the board, or are these people acting of their own volition? The EFCP experience indicates that when members are at a level of their organization that allows them to function autonomously, they might be more successful in their community-university collaboration effort and further research could attempt confirmation. Other collaborations, where membership is less voluntary, may have more difficulties in retaining members, and in being so successful.

Therefore, further hypotheses could explore whether a collaboration has a greater chance of success if it is composed of members who share a common passion, of

members who have a high order ability to learn, of members with a similar professional value base, or of members who are voluntary. In any event, due to their professional backgrounds, unique interest in learning, and voluntary motivation, this case is unique, and provides a different emphasis than previously studied collaborations. Each collaboration is unique and merits separate study (Bolda, Lowe, Maddox, & Patnaik, 2005).

Other Suggestions for Further Research

One of the EFCP members' comments prompted a further research question. The member stated that "this collaborative experience does not reflect a typical experience for collaboration attempts. Successful collaboration is not a common experience." It would be valuable to assess to what degree community-university collaborations are perceived to be successful. One question for study could be: What percentage of collaboration work is perceived as successful?

Although there has been a tendency to report on successes in the collaboration literature, more description of community-university collaborations that were unsuccessful may also be useful. Studying the awkward subject of failed collaboratives would contribute valuable insights. A study of failed collaborations could try to determine what led to collaboration failure. Lessons learned from those experiences that did not result in success could inform best practices and factors for success in future collaborations.

Future model development should include some consideration of themes necessary for the successful life-cycle of a community-university collaboration. A researcher may find value in performing case study research from the beginning of the

group to the end. This would begin to increase understanding of the dynamics required at different stages of a group, as the importance of different success factors will likely change as a collaboration matures. For example, a group at an early stage of group formation would require attention to different issues than if the group is terminating. Although studying the entire life of a collaboration would be time and resource intensive, clarification of these differences would be valuable to practitioners.

Another related question that may be useful to ask is: How do collaborations end? Few research efforts have examined the full-life of a collaboration to further understand the later stages and the sustainability of mature community-university collaborations. In particular, close examination of the ending phase of a collaboration would contribute valuable insights. Some practice guidance about ending would be helpful. One could hypothesize that collaborations end because funding expires or because members lose interest and send staff delegates with less influence. Whatever the cause may be, more empirical inquiry is required into the interesting ending phase of a collaboration.

Due to the increasing interorganizational community collaboration efforts across universities, there is a strong need for better understanding of how university-community partners collaborate. We need to have a deeper understanding of what constitutes effective community-university collaboration.

While considerable progress has been made in identifying the characteristics that are found in successful community-university collaborations, much work remains to be done. Further research into the importance of factors could help to develop the Wilder Collaboration Factors Inventory (WCFI) framework and the Relational Framework of Collaborative Practice developed from this case. It would be helpful for collaboration

practice if the following question could be clarified: What are necessary and sufficient factors? To begin to clarify, it may be helpful to reconsider the subcategories of each factor for further research. In this study, for example, instead of matching all 40 sub-WCFI factors, I found that 20 of the 40 were considered *least important* to the success of the EFCP Collaboration. It would be useful to see if these same factors remain unconfirmed for other community-university collaborations and to try to explain why.

More research is required to determine the unique factors involved in a community-university collaboration. The EFCP collaboration may have been different from the other collaborations reported on by Mattessich et al. (2001). Mattessich et al. included only a few community-university collaborations in their development of the WCFI collaboration factors, attempting to provide a broader focus on all “human services, government, and other nonprofit fields” (p. 63). Maybe the EFCP group, as a community-university collaboration specifically, presents different dynamics.

Mattessich et al. (2002) took a broad base of collaborations in the development of their WCFI inventory. Because of the more generic nature of the WCFI framework it may have a lesser degree of fit when applying it to a specific context like a university-community collaboration. For those interested in university-community collaborations for working with seniors, or those working with community development, other factors may be more prominent. As I found in my study, the learning focus and shared leadership may be more prominent for university-community collaborations in particular. As I mentioned in Chapter Two: Literature Review, many community-university collaboration find that sharing influence and intentional sharing of leadership between universality members and community members is important for success.

It would also be interesting to look further at the interaction of the six important factors from my findings: (a) *established informal relationships and communication links*, (b) *mutual respect, understanding, and trust*, (c) *flexibility*, (d) *development of clear roles and policy guidelines*, (e) *shared leadership*, and (f) *a learning purpose*. As Dawes and Eglene (2004) suggest in the discussion of their study which uncovered four success factors (leadership, trust, risk management, and communication):

Further research could assess the ways in which these four factors combine to influence results. This might be carried out in additional case studies, in surveys that operationalize the key variables and allow us to quantify their relationships, or through dynamic system modeling to test hypotheses about the changing effects of these variables at various points in time. (p. 10)

Another review including the recent studies may help to confirm or refute the importance of the current Wilder Collaboration Factors Inventory factors. Several new studies have come out since 2001 when Mattessich et al. (2001) compiled their research review (for example, Bell-Elkins, 2002; Buckeridge et al., 2002; CAFRP, 2004; Chrislip, 2002; Dawes & Eglene, 2004; Dawes & Préfontaine, 2003; Dunlop, 2002; Fountain, 2002; Huxham & Vangen, 2005; Metzler et al., 2003; Page, 2003; Reiniger, 2003; Tomkins et al., 2005; Tseng, 2004; Zizys, 2007). The current focus remains on the success factors for collaboration, and fortunately with more of a tendency to review past literature. A review similar to Mattessich et al.'s would now be appropriate specific to university-community collaborations. An initial review of literature reporting on demonstrations similar to the EFCP Collaboration suggests that there may be common important process themes among these interorganizational university-community collaborations. Although not the aim of this study, a rigorous meta-analysis of previous research would be a useful next step.

More research is required to determine the cultural transferability of the identified success factors. The Wilder Collaboration Factors Inventory (WCFI) collaboration categories under-emphasize the importance of the construct of relationship and the process of connection among collaborating representatives. The WCFI may be guided by a Western paradigm, rather than a more relational Eastern paradigm. It would be useful to test this further in cultures where more emphasis is placed on connection and relationships than is common in individualist North America. As Ife (2007) summarizes, “We need to be defining knowledge, competencies and skills in such a way that deconstructs the privilege built into both the discourse of professionalism, and the discourse of the west” (p. 23).

The past decade has seen information technology advances, such as electronic conferencing or other groupware, which have revolutionized communication options for community-university collaborations (Medina-Garrido, Martinez-Fierro, & Ruiz-Navarro, 2006). In the future more partnerships will be done virtually, on-line. Computerized support for this type of collaborative activity will be required. Greater understanding of the importance of human relationships will be vital, for these virtual collaborations to work. Further study of the transference of the factors for successful collaboration to the electronic environment is required.

Social workers are clearly involved in some of the significant research in the area of interorganizational community collaboration. However, an increased demand for best practice guidance on community-university collaboration requires additional contributions to the research literature in this area, in order to conduct our practice in an evidence-based manner. Huxham and Vangen (2005) are also concerned about the gaps

in the collaboration research, noting that “only a very small amount of this research explicitly addresses the practice of collaborating” (p. 10). If collaborative relationships are in truth the vehicle for positive service outcomes, then more insights into these collaborative relationships will positively affect service outcomes. Therefore, further research must dovetail with the needs of collaboration practice. Research associated with collaboration in varying contexts will impact the support that services receive, and will likely guide social service policy development.

This case study may help to answer a part of the question of “what works, for whom, in what ways, under what conditions?” (Patton, 2008); however, this model must be further researched to determine its applicability to other initiatives. A simulation or demonstration consortium with a different project may provide further insights into the success factors determined to be important for this case. Taking the theoretical categories found to be successful for this EFCP case and confirming the importance of these factors for other community-university collaborations would help to determine how the identified success factors might operate under different circumstances. Current models incorporate factors influencing the success of a collaboration into a theme chart or list of items.

Further tracking of what happens during the community-university collaboration process is required. With advances in computer technology, this research may become more technically feasible. Gathering more contingency information would provide additional information to create a more generic model for successful collaboration. If reproduced observations are inconsistent with this model, and its ability to explain or predict is limited, then the model could be modified or rejected.

Acknowledgement of the importance of the relationships involved in community-university collaborations has fuelled further study of the strength and frequency of collaborative relationships. A systems evaluation of various collaborations might be useful (Gray et al., 2003; Patton, 2008). Posch (1994) writes that “the essential feature of dynamic networks is the autonomous and flexible establishment of relationships to assist responsible action in the face of complexity and uncertainty” (p. 68), therefore further marriage between network research and collaboration research is likely required.

The collaboration literature requires further integration. The current literature provides an incomplete theoretical foundation for understanding community-university collaboration. Currently, most human service practitioners use collaboration theory implicitly through various acquired models of practice, professional frameworks, and personal perspectives. Explicit theories could guide practitioners when faced with new collaborative situations, helping in the consideration of context; and could also help in assessing each collaboration by bringing insights formulated through a variety of other experiences. Empirical and theoretical inquiries must be woven together to build a conceptual framework for collaboration. As a reminder, in future research we must be more attentive to the terminology we use to describe different modes working together. Corbett and Noyes (2008) or Bailey and Koney (2000) provide clear taxonomies that further research could draw from in order to clarify terms.

More integrated theory can also help to guide further research questions. Further research can examine contested elements among the diverse interorganizational and collaboration models, in the process aiding in the development of coherent frameworks

for collaboration process among human service organizations. Social workers require more relevant broad frameworks to guide successful collaborations in the future.

Currently we have pockets of research that add relatively modest amounts to our broader understanding. Over time, that understanding will develop across studies in order to fully understand this human process. This area of study involves a wide range of disciplines and therefore requires a collaborative effort of inter-professionally oriented researchers. Disciplines must come together and form a multidisciplinary *collaborative* effort. A fit between the academic need to uncover global theoretical factors (Haig-Brown, 2001) and the communities' need to focus on their own context is required in order to conduct collaborative research between universities and communities. To resolve this dilemma, what may be necessary is the development of a new discipline: *collaborative practice studies*. This new discipline would draw from a host of disciplines to deepen the knowledge base of collaboration. Developing a common theory base may help to address the elusiveness of the constructs in this body of literature.

Conclusion

My thesis discusses what is required to build and sustain successful collaborations between university, non-profit, and governmental social service organizations. I studied a particular case to highlight this issue. In attempting to determine the more important factors for this case, I found that the Elder Friendly Communities Program (EFCP) worked well for several reasons, the most important reasons related to the relational values and process of the group. The group's success could be attributed to attention to six foundational themes during their process:

1. Building relational connections among members
2. Maintaining respect, trust, and understanding
3. Clarifying roles and responsibilities
4. Encouraging flexibility
5. Sharing leadership, and
6. Continuing to learn through a learning purpose.

Four of these important factors were contained in the Wilder Collaboration Factors Inventory (WCFI), and sharing leadership and a learning purpose emerged from the EFCP Collaboration data, providing some comparison and possible addition to existing theory.

Most important, the EFCP Collaboration found that successful university-community collaboration must attend to the building of relationships throughout the collaborative process. These could also be the key elements that contribute to the success of other similar efforts. I am hopeful that this study can show promise in providing additional theoretical insights into interorganizational collaboration.

These factors are highly congruent with the social work value base, and EFCP Collaboration participants were largely social workers. Further emphasis on collaboration is required for the advancement of the social work profession.

This research contributes to the knowledge base by: (a) examining collaboration in the context of a university-community initiative, (b) adding to existing literature and extending the Wilder Collaboration Factors Inventory (WCFI) framework, and (c) adding a model that expands the literature to include the important and previously neglected theme of attention to relationship. The Elder Friendly Communities Program (EFCP)

case study provides empirically-established conclusions about a successful community-university collaboration.

Implementing collaborations is not easy. We have much to learn about this complex form of interrelatedness. A Relational Framework of Collaborative Practice could help practitioners in their collaborative accomplishments and researchers in targeting their questions. I have a wish for the future: that everyone involved in collaborative endeavours would be able to review the existing literature and find clear, well-researched, applicable information to guide their efforts towards success. The increasing demands for evidence-based practice demand more empirical examination of social work practice approaches.

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APPENDIX A: ETHICS APPROVAL



UNIVERSITY OF
CALGARY

CERTIFICATION OF INSTITUTIONAL ETHICS REVIEW

This is to certify that the Conjoint Faculties Research Ethics Board at the University of Calgary has examined the following research proposal and found the proposed research involving human subjects to be in accordance with University of Calgary Guidelines and the Tri-Council Policy Statement on *"Ethical Conduct in Research Using Human Subjects"*. This form and accompanying letter constitute the Certification of Institutional Ethics Review.

File no: **4006**
 Applicant(s): **Ellen Louise Perrault**
 Department: **Social Work, Faculty of**
 Project Title: **The Elder Friendly Communities Program: Understanding
Community Development and Service Collaboration**
 Sponsor (if applicable): **AHFMR**

Restrictions:

This Certification is subject to the following conditions:

1. Approval is granted only for the project and purposes described in the application.
2. Any modifications to the authorized protocol must be submitted to the Chair, Conjoint Faculties Research Ethics Board for approval.
3. A progress report must be submitted 12 months from the date of this Certification, and should provide the expected completion date for the project.
4. Written notification must be sent to the Board when the project is complete or terminated,

Janice Dickin, Ph.D, LLB,
Chair
Conjoint Faculties Research Ethics Board

3 June 2004
Date:

Distribution: (1) Applicant, (2) Supervisor (if applicable), (3) Chair, Department/Faculty Research Ethics Committee, (4) Sponsor, (5) Conjoint Faculties Research Ethics Board (6) Research Services.

APPENDIX B: CONSENT FORM



FACULTY OF SOCIAL WORK
 ELDER FRIENDLY COMMUNITIES PROGRAM
 Professional Faculties Building, Room 3216,
 University of Calgary

Name of Researcher, Faculty, Department, Telephone & Email:

Carol D. Austin, Ph.D., Faculty of Social Work
 Robert W. McClelland, Ph.D., Faculty of Social Work
 Jackie Sieppert, Ph.D., Faculty of Social Work
 Ellen Perrault, MSW, Graduate Student, Faculty of Social Work

Title of Project: The Elder Friendly Communities Program

Sponsor: Alberta Heritage Foundation for Medical Research

Interview Informed Consent for Collaborators with the Elder Friendly Communities Program

This consent form, a copy of which has been given to you, is only part of the process of informed consent. If you want more details about something mentioned here, or information not included here, you should feel free to ask. Please take the time to read this carefully and to understand any accompanying information.

The University of Calgary Conjoint Faculties Research Ethics Board has approved this research study.

PURPOSE OF THE STUDY:

The purpose of the study is to focus on developing further understanding of the Elder Friendly Communities Program's community development process with seniors, as well as to understand the dynamics and impacts of collaboration among the many organizations involved in delivering services to seniors. You have been chosen because you are a collaborating partner involved with the Elder Friendly Communities Program. The researchers would like to learn from you what you think is working well and what you think is not working well within the collaboration of the Elder Friendly Communities Program.

WHAT WILL I BE ASKED TO DO?

Over the next two years, you will be asked to have your Steering Committee meetings observed, for the purpose of structured observation recording, by Ellen Perrault, Research Coordinator, Elder Friendly Communities Program, Faculty of Social Work, University of Calgary. You will also be asked to participate in interviews conducted by the Research Coordinator on two occasions yearly, individually at your office, or at the University of Calgary, at a mutually agreed on time to discuss your experience. The two individual interviews will last approximately 1.5 hours where you will first be asked to sign an informed consent form, then you will be asked to comment on dynamics and incidents involved in the Elder Friendly Communities Program collaboration process. In approximately six month's time the researcher will ask that you complete a collaboration factors inventory questionnaire. Finally, you will be asked to attend a special Steering Committee focus group interview in approximately 1.5 years time.

With your permission, your individual and group interviews and/or meetings will be audio recorded. If you would prefer not to have the discussions audio recorded please tell the researcher and no audio recording will be done.

You will be expected to respect the confidentiality of other individuals taking part in the focus group interview by not discussing what is said in that interview outside of the group interview setting.

If you consent to it, the individual interviews and/or group interviews and/or observations will be audio recorded and later transcribed into text. After reviewing all the individual interview and meeting transcripts, the Steering Committee focus group interview will be arranged to answer any questions that may have arisen while reviewing the transcripts or to clarify any information. This will also give you an opportunity to add any additional information.

You should know that the information you give the researcher in individual and group settings will be kept confidential. Specific comments you make will not be attributed to you. Furthermore, any specific comments that you make, although not attributed to you, will be subject to your review before being published.

Your participation in the study is completely voluntary, you may refuse to participate altogether, or you may refuse to participate in parts of the study, or you may refuse to answer any questions, or you may withdraw from the study at any time without penalty or loss of benefits to which you are otherwise entitled.

WHAT TYPE OF PERSONAL INFORMATION WILL BE COLLECTED?

No personal identifying information will be collected in this study. No information that discloses your identity will be released or published without your consent to disclosure. After you finish the interviews or questionnaires, the audio recording of your discussion, questionnaires and any notes taken during those times, will be kept in a locked file at the University of Calgary. You will be given a number code and will not be identified by name.

There are several options for you to consider if you decide to take part in this research. You can choose all, some or none of them. Please put a check mark on the corresponding line(s) that grants me your permission to:

I grant permission to be audio recorded: Yes: ___ No: ___

I grant permission to have my organization's name used: Yes: ___ No: ___

I wish to remain anonymous: Yes: ___ No: ___

I wish to remain anonymous, but you may refer to me by a pseudonym: Yes: ___ No: ___

The pseudonym I choose for myself is:

You may quote me without using my name: Yes: ___ No: ___

ARE THERE RISKS OR BENEFITS IF I PARTICIPATE?

Participating in this study does not pose any risks or discomfort other than any sensitivity you may have about some of the questions. You might benefit in that your comments will be used to further evaluate the current Elder Friendly Communities Program collaboration. The interviews and data collected from the members of the collaboration may lead to changes within the Program and the collaboration. This interview provides you with the opportunity to have a voice in the process of the Program. There will be no financial cost or reward to you for participating in the interview.

WHAT HAPPENS TO THE INFORMATION I PROVIDE?

Participation is completely voluntary and confidential. You are free to discontinue participation at any time during the study. No one except the researchers will be allowed to see or hear any of the answers to the questionnaire or the interview recordings. There are no names required on the questionnaire. Only group information will be summarized for any presentation or publication of results. The questionnaires, and meeting and interview texts, are kept in a locked cabinet only accessible by the researchers. The recordings and notes will be destroyed after seven years.

SIGNATURES (WRITTEN CONSENT)

Your signature on this form indicates that you 1) understand to your satisfaction the information provided to you about your participation in this research project, and 2) agree to participate as a research subject.

In no way does this waive your legal rights nor release the investigators, sponsors, or involved institutions from their legal and professional responsibilities. You are free to withdraw from this research project at any time. You should feel free to ask for clarification or new information throughout your participation.

Participant's Name: (please print) _____

Participant's Signature: _____ Date: _____

Researcher's Name: (please print) _____

Researcher's Signature: _____ Date: _____

QUESTIONS/CONCERNS

If you have any further questions or want clarification regarding this research and/or your participation, please contact: Elder Friendly Communities Program Research Coordinator, Ellen Perrault, University of Calgary

Or, Dr. Carol Austin at the Faculty of Social Work If you have any concerns about the way you've been treated as a participant, please contact Patricia Evans, Associate Director, Research Services Office, University of Calgary at (403) 220-3782; email plevans@ucalgary.ca

A copy of this consent form has been given to you to keep for your records and reference. The investigator has kept a copy of the consent form.

APPENDIX C: EFCP INTERVIEW PROTOCOL

Interviews with EFCP Collaborators

Interview 1

Introduction to Interview

My name is Ellen Perrault. Thank you for your willingness to participate in this research project. To assist the Elder Friendly Communities Program research, the Alberta Heritage Foundation for Medical Research has funded a two-year research project to look further at understanding the community development process with seniors and to increase understanding of the dynamics and impacts of the Elder Friendly Communities collaboration. To understand the *best practices for community development with seniors*, I will be interviewing seniors involved in the Elder Friendly community development process, community development workers and community experts and leaders. To understand the *dynamics and impacts of collaboration* I will be interviewing and surveying the Steering Committee partner representatives as well as observing the Steering Committee meetings. I am the Research Coordinator of this project. I am also completing a PhD with the University of Calgary that will explore a variety of related factors involving the Elder Friendly collaboration.

I would like to reassure you that this interview will be confidential and that the tape and transcripts will be only available to the researchers and kept in a safe place. Excerpts from this interview may be part of the final research reports, but under no circumstances will the information you provide be attributed to you personally in these reports. Only if you agree to it, I may want to identify you in some of the reports by way of thanking you for your participation.

When taking part in the final Steering Committee group interview, you will be expected to respect the confidentiality of other individuals taking part in the group interview by not discussing what is said in this interview outside of the group interview setting.

Before we begin the interview I need to ask you to sign an “informed consent form”, indicating that you are aware of the nature of this research project and how your information will be handled. By signing this form you are acknowledging that you understand what this discussion is about and that you agree to participate. If you agree to be interviewed for this project, please be aware that you may stop the interview at any time. Do you still wish to continue with this interview?

I have two copies of the consent form – one for you to keep and one for you to sign and hand back to me. I will give you a few minutes to read the form. Please let me know if you have any questions.

Before we begin, I need to explain that, although you may have some questions of me as we proceed with the interview, I would appreciate it if you would hold your questions until we complete the formal part of the interview. Once the interview is completed, I will be glad to answer any questions that you might have.

Interviews with EFCP Collaboration Members Questions

Date: _____ Time: _____ Contact number: _____

Name: _____ Role and affiliation: _____

1) For the first few questions, I will be asking you about your collaboration experience with the Elder Friendly Steering Committee. Please think of an occasion or specific incident when you or other partners in your Elder Friendly Steering Committee did something that had a noticeably positive influence on your collaboration. Please describe to me, in as much detail as possible, the key elements of your example. I will be asking some questions to assist you in telling your story:

Prompts

- This incident, approximately how long ago did it happen?
- What specific circumstances led up to this incident? How did this incident that you observed come about?
- What did the people involved do, what did you do? Please describe the behavior and action that occurred.
- Any particular behaviors that seemed particularly effective?
- What resulted that made you think that this was an effective action?
- How will this shape your behavior in the future? Any other things that you have learned about collaboration from this particular incident?

2) Can you tell me of a challenge to the Elder Friendly Steering Committee collaboration from within the group?

Prompts

- Anything that could have been done differently?
- How did the group overcome this challenge?
- What resulted? Were you satisfied with this result? What impact did it have on the group?
- How will this shape your behavior in the future? Any other things that you have learned about collaboration from this particular challenge?

3) This Steering Committee collaboration has evolved within a larger context, and incidents are likely to have occurred outside the Steering Committee, either within the context of your organization or within the Elder Friendly Program, that have impacted the collaboration. Can you think of an example of an external incident that has influenced the Steering Committee collaboration? (larger environment, policy, funding, external context)

Prompts

- Did this incident have a positive or negative impact?
- Approximately how long ago did it happen?
- What specific circumstances led up to this incident?
- What did the people involved do, what did you do? Please describe the behavior and action that occurred.
- Any particular behaviors that seemed particularly effective or ineffective?
- What resulted that made you think this was an effective/ineffective action?
- How will this shape your behavior in the future?
- Any other things that you have learned about collaboration from this particular incident?

4) How has the Steering Committee influenced your organization and other organizations that you work with (both within the collaboration and outside the collaboration)?

5) Often incidents or happenings occur during the planning and implementation of a project that are unanticipated. What unanticipated incidences have you noticed regarding the Elder Friendly Steering Committee collaboration since you became involved?

6) What is the most important thing that you have learned about collaboration as a result of the Elder Friendly Communities partnership process?

APPENDIX D: OBSERVATION PROTOCOL

Steering Committee Partner Meeting Observation

Date of Observation	Location	Observer:	Ellen Perrault (EP)	Start Time	AM/PM	Length	hr. mins.
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ATTENDEES	\checkmark = Present	R = Regrets				
<i>U of C total</i>		<i>Community Org. total</i>		<i>Program Staff total</i>		

CODING KEY

CODE	1. MEMBERSHIP CHARACTERISTIC FACTORS (WILDER COLLABORATION FACTOR) VIOLET
	Mutual respect, understanding, and trust
1.a	People involved in the collaboration always trust one another.
1.b	Members have a lot of respect for the other people involved in this collaboration.
	Appropriate cross section of members
1.c	The people involved represent a cross section of those who have a stake in what the collaboration is trying to accomplish.
1.d	All of the organizations that need to be members have become members of this collaborative group.
	Members see collaboration as in their self-interest
1.e	Members believe their organization will benefit from being involved in this collaboration.
	Ability to compromise
1.f	People involved in the collaboration are willing to compromise on important aspects of the project.

CODE	2. Process/Structure Factors (Wilder Collaboration Factor) YELLOW
	Members share a stake in both process and outcome
2.a	Organizations that belong to this collaborative group invest the right amount of time in these collaborative efforts.
2.b	Everyone who is a member of this collaborative group wants this project to succeed.
2.c	The level of commitment among the collaboration participants is high.
	Multiple layers of participation
2.d	When the collaborative group makes major decisions, there is always enough time for members to take information back to their organizations to confer with colleagues about what the decision should be.
2.e	Each of the people who participate in decisions in this group can speak for the entire organization they represent, not just a part.
	Flexibility
2.f	There is a lot of flexibility when decisions are made; people are open to discussing different options.
2.g	Members are open to different approaches to how they can do the group's work. They are willing to consider different ways of working.
	Development of clear roles and policy guidelines
2.h	People in this collaborative group have a clear sense of their roles and responsibilities.
2.i	There is a clear process for making decisions among the partners in this collaboration.
	Adaptability
2.j	This collaboration is able to adapt to changing conditions, such as fewer funds than expected, changing political climate, or change in leadership.
2.k	This group has the ability to survive even if it had to make major changes in its plans or add some new members in order to reach its goals.
	Appropriate pace of development
2.l	This collaborative group has tried to take on the right amount of work at the right pace.

2.m	The group is currently able to keep up with the work necessary to coordinate all the people, organizations, and activities related to this collaborative project.
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CODE	3. Communication Factors (Wilder Collaboration Factor) ORANGE
Open and frequent communication	
3.a	People in this collaboration communicate openly with one another.
3.b	Individual members are informed as often as they should be about what goes on in the collaboration.
3.c	The people who lead this collaborative group communicate well with the members.
Established informal relationships and communication links	
3.d	Communication among the people in this collaborative group happens both at formal meetings and in informal ways.
3.e	Individual members have informal conversations about the project with others who are involved in this collaborative group.

CODE	4. Purpose Factors (Wilder Collaboration Factor) PINK
Concrete, attainable goals and objectives	
4.a	Individuals have a clear understanding of what the collaboration is trying to accomplish.
4.b	People in this collaborative group know and understand the group's goals.
4.c	People in this collaborative group have established reasonable goals.
Shared Vision	
4.d	The people in this collaborative group are dedicated to the idea that they can make this project work.
4.e	Individual ideas about what the group wants to accomplish with this collaboration seem to be the same as the ideas of others.
Unique purpose	
4.f	What the collaborative group is trying to accomplish with their collaborative project would be difficult for any single organization to accomplish by itself.
4.g	No other organization in the community is trying to do exactly what this group is trying to do.

CODE	5. Resources Factors (Wilder Collaboration Factor) BLUE
Sufficient funds, staff, materials, and time	
5.a	This collaborative group has adequate funds to do what it wants to accomplish.
5.b	This collaborative group has adequate "people power" to do what it wants to accomplish.
Skilled leadership	
5.c	The people in leadership positions for this collaboration have good skills for working with other people and organizations.

CODE	6. Environment Factors (Wilder Collaboration Factor) GREEN
<i>History of collaboration or cooperation in the (*Calgary Seniors) community</i>	
6.a	Agencies in this community have a history of working together.
6.b	Trying to solve problems through collaboration has been common in this community. It's been done a lot before.
<i>Collaborative group seen as a legitimate leader in the community</i>	
6.c	Leaders in this community who are not part of this collaborative group seem hopeful about what the group can accomplish.
6.d	Others (in this community) who are not part of this collaboration would generally agree that the organizations involved in this collaborative project are the "right" organizations to make this work
Favorable political and social climate	
6.e	The political and social climate seems to be "right" for starting a collaborative project like this one.
6.f	The time is right for this collaborative project.

OBSERVATION NOTES and OTHER LEARNINGS NOTED:

APPENDIX E: CONVERGENCE OF EVIDENCE FOR ALL THEMES

FACTOR (Category) From Mattessich et al.(2001) *Newly Identified Theme (Factor) from the current study	EVIDENCE Interview Transcripts (Individual Collaboration Members' Quotations)	EVIDENCE Meeting Transcripts (Example of dialogue from Member Meetings)	EVIDENCE Meeting Observation Notes (Segments of meeting notes)	EVIDENCE Group Member check Transcripts (Segment of transcript)	EVIDENCE Documentation and Archived Documentation (emails, minutes, etc. since 2000)	EVIDENCE WCFI Results 1=Strongly Disagree 5=Strongly Agree	CONVERGENCE OF EVIDENCE?	FREQUENCY WITHIN DATABASE	IMPORTANCE (ESTIMATE)
Established Informal Relationships and Communication Links (Communication)	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	4.2 Agree	Yes	264	High
Informal Ways	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	4.2 Agree	Yes	256	High
Informal Conversation about Program	Low	Yes	Yes	Yes	Low	4.4 Agree-Strongly agree	Partial	8	Low
Mutual Respect, Understanding, and Trust (Membership)	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	4.2 Agree	Yes	248	High
Respect	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	4.7 Strongly agree- Agree	Yes	69	High
Trust	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	3.7 Agree-neutral	Yes	95	High
Understanding	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No question on survey	Yes	84	High
Flexibility (Process and Structure)	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	4.39 Agree-Strongly agree	Yes	237	High
Open/flexible to Dif. Work Approaches	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	4.3 Agree-Strongly agree	Yes	197	High
Open/ flexible to Decision Options	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Low	4.4 Agree-Strongly agree	Partial	40	Moderate
Development of Clear Roles and Policy Guidelines (Process and Structure)	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	3.9 Agree	Yes	199	High
Roles and Responsibilities Clear	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	3.9 Agree	Yes	148	High
Clear Decision Making	Yes	Yes	Yes	Low	Low	4.0 Agree	Partial	51	Moderate

Shared Leadership*	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	N/A	Yes	177	High
Purpose- Learning*	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	N/A	Yes	158	High
Open and Frequent Communication	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	4.3 Agree-Strongly agree	Yes	127	Moderate
Open communication	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	4.3 Agree-Strongly agree	Yes	70	Moderate
Individuals Informed	Low	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	4.2 Agree	Partial	44	Moderate
Leaders and Members Communicate well	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	4.3 Agree-Strongly agree	Yes	23	Moderate
Shared Vision (Purpose)	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	3.8 Agree	Yes	113	Moderate
My ideas are the Same as Others	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	3.8 Agree	Yes	113	High
We Can Make It Work	Low	Yes	Low	Low	Low	4.6 Strongly agree- Agree	No	2	Low
Members See Collaboration as in Their Self-interest (Membership) Benefit (Membership)	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Strongly agree- Agree	Yes	95	Moderate
Members Benefit	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	4.6 Strongly agree- Agree	Yes	95	Moderate
Unique Purpose (Purpose)	Yes	Low	Yes	Yes	Yes	4.6 Strongly agree- Agree	Partial	99	Moderate
Difficult for Single Org. to Do Itself	Yes	Low	Low	Yes	Yes	4.9 Strongly agree	Partial	24	Moderate
Unique Purpose	Yes	Low	Yes	Yes	Low	4.7 Strongly agree- Agree	Partial	75	Moderate
Skilled Leadership (Resources)	Yes	Yes	Yes	Low	Low	4.3 Agree-Strongly agree	Partial	70	Moderate
Leaders with Working Together Skills	Yes	Yes	Yes	Low	Low	4.3 Agree-Strongly agree	Partial	70	Moderate
Favorable Political and Social Climate (Environment)	Conflicting	Conflicting	Yes	Conflicting	Yes	4.2 Agree	No	114	Low-Moderate
Right Time for Collaboration	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	4.2 Agree	Yes	33	Moderate
Political & Social Climate Right	Conflicting	Conflicting	Yes	Conflicting	Low	4.1 Agree	No	81	Low

Adaptability (Process and Structure)	Yes	Yes	Conflicting	Yes	Yes	4.0 Agree	No	74	Low-Moderate
Adapt to Change	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	4.1 Agree	Yes	52	Moderate
Survive thru Change in Plan/Member	Yes	Low	Conflicting	Yes	Low	3.9 Agree	No	22	Low
Members Share a Stake in Both Process and Outcome (Process and Structure)	Conflicting	Yes	Yes	Conflicting	Yes	4.0 Agree	No	196	Low-Moderate
Commitment Level	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Low	4.0 Agree	Partial	140	Moderate
All Want Program Success	Low	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	4.6 Strongly agree- Agree	Partial	22	Moderate
Orgs Invest the Right Time	Conflicting	Yes	Yes	Conflicting	Low	3.3 Neutral-Agree	No	32	Low
Multiple Layers of Participation (Process and Structure)	Conflicting	Conflicting	Conflicting	Low	Yes	2.6 Neutral-Disagree	No	79	Low
Multiple Layers of Participation	Low	Yes	Yes	Low	Yes	No survey item	Partial	50	Moderate
Can Speak for Org	Conflicting	Conflicting	Yes	Low	Yes	2.0 Disagree	No	22	Low
Time to Take Info Back to Org.	Low	Yes	Conflicting	Low	Low	3.2 Neutral	No	7	Low
Concrete, Attainable Goals and Objectives (Purpose)	Yes	Conflicting	Conflicting	Yes	Yes	4.3 Agree	No	146	Low
Reasonable Goals	Yes	Low	Low	Low	Yes	4.2 Agree	No	21	Low
Clear Understanding of Goals AND Goals Known (combined)	Yes	Conflicting	Conflicting	Yes	Yes	4.3 Agree-Strongly agree (both)	No	125	Low
Appropriate Cross Section of Members (Membership)	Conflicting	Conflicting	Conflicting	Yes	Conflicting	3.6 Agree	No	102	Low
Member Cross-section	Yes	Yes	Conflicting	Yes	Low	3.8 Agree	No	40	Low
Complete Membership	Conflicting	Conflicting	Yes	Low	Conflicting	3.3 Neutral-Agree	No	62	Low

Sufficient Funds, Staff, Materials, and Time (Resources)	Yes	Yes	Conflicting	Conflicting	Yes	2.1 Disagree	No	186	Low
Adequate Funds	Yes	Yes	Conflicting	Conflicting	Yes	2.1 Disagree	No	117	Low
Adequate People Power	Yes	Yes	Low	Low	Low	2.1 Disagree	No	69	Low
Collaborative Group Seen as a Legitimate Leader in the Community (Environment)	Low	Conflicting	Low	Yes	Conflicting	3.7 Agree-Neutral	No	39	Low
Outsider Leader Hope	Low	Conflicting	Low	Low	Conflicting	3.6 Agree-Neutral	No	24	Low
Outsiders Agree Right Membership	Low	Conflicting	Low	Yes	Low	3.9 Agree	No	15	Low
Appropriate Pace of Development (Process and Structure)	Conflicting	Yes	Conflicting	Conflicting	Yes	3.1 Neutral	No	37	Low
Right Work Amount & Right Pace	Low	Yes	Low	Conflicting	Yes	3.7 Agree-Neutral	No	29	Low
Can Keep Up with the Work	Conflicting	Yes	Conflicting	Low	Low	2.6 Neutral-Disagree	No	8	Low
History of Collaboration or Cooperation in the Community (Environment)	Conflicting	Low	Low	Low	Conflicting	2.2 Disagree - Neutral	No	32	Low
History of Coll. Problem Solving in Community	Conflicting	Low	Low	Low	Low	2.6 Neutral-Disagree (Refers to all Agencies)	No	10	Low
History of Working Together in Community	Conflicting	Low	Low	Low	Conflicting	1.9 Disagree (refers to all city senior orgs)	No	22	Low
Ability to Compromise (Membership)	Low	Low	Conflicting	Yes	Low	3.9 Agree	No	9	Low
Compromise	Low	Low	Conflicting	Yes	Low	3.9 Agree	No	9	Low