To the Graduate Council:

I am submitting herewith a dissertation written by Edward L. Diden entitled "A Study of Collaborative School-University Partnerships Involving Teams of Educators from Bulgaria and the United States." I have examined the final paper copy of this dissertation for form and content and recommend that it be accepted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Education with a major in Educational Administration and Policy Studies.

Vincent A. Anfara, Jr.
Vincent A. Anfara, Jr., Major Professor

We have read this dissertation and recommend its acceptance:

Robert B. Cunningham

Gregory C. Petty

Gerald C. Ubben

Acceptance for the Council:

Carolyn R. Hodges
Carolyn R. Hodges, Vice Provost
Dean of the Graduate School

(Original signatures are on file with official student records.)

A STUDY OF COLLABORATIVE SCHOOL-UNIVERSITY PARTNERSHIPS INVOLVING TEAMS OF EDUCATORS FROM BULGARIA AND THE UNITED STATES

A Dissertation
Presented for the
Doctor of Education
Degree
The University of Tennessee, Knoxville

Edward L. Diden
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Dedication

This dissertation is dedicated to my family for without their support this would not have been possible. First, to my loving wife of 32 years, Joan, who is a gift from God and whose unfailing devotion, optimism, and support sustained me when I wanted to quit. Her encouragement (gentle nagging) kept me moving, albeit slowly, to completion. We have two wonderful Heaven-sent children, BJ Diden and Miriam Allman, who have always been constant sources of delight for Mom and Dad. Both have earned advanced degrees, and we continue to be amazed at their resiliency. They have long since reached adulthood, and we cherish their friendship and enjoy spending time with them.

I would be remiss if I did not also dedicate this work to my parents, James Jefferson Diden and Helen Francis Newberry Diden. My father, Jeff, completed the third grade. Signing his name was a painstaking difficult task, and reading was very difficult for him. Dad was a man of few words, but when he spoke, people listened. He was one of the hardest working men I've ever known. My mother, Helen, was the oldest of thirteen children. She completed the 8th grade, and then dropped out of school to care for her younger brothers and sisters. Living on a small farm in East Tennessee, my parents provided food, shelter, and clothing for themselves and five children. In spite of our harsh conditions, both parents emphasized the need for a good education and lived to see all five children graduate from high school. Through my rural heritage, I learned the value of hard work and the transitory importance of material possessions. I was fortunate to be the first in the immediate or extended family to earn a college degree.

Family is at the root of everything I am and will ever hope to be.

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This case study examined an intercultural educator exchange program between Tennessee and Bulgaria. This project was the dream of Dr. Glenda Ross. I acknowledge her passion and commitment to global learning and the unique learning experiences provided to all participants as a result of her work with this project.

Lastly, I wish to salute the Bulgaria and Tennessee teams of educators involved in the “My Place, Your Place, and Our Place (MYO Place): Integrating Education for the Neighborhood and the World” project and their willingness to participate in this study. Lifelong friendships have resulted from this worthy project.

Abstract

The purpose of this qualitative case study was to analyze collaborations involving three teams of educators participating in a school-university partnership, the "My Place, Your Place, Our Place: Integrating Education for the Neighborhood and the World" project. The three groups of educators included the Tennessee team (a school-university partnership), the Bulgaria team (a school-university partnership), and the setting created by the combination of both (a cross-cultural integration).

The conceptual framework for this research was based upon Sarason's (1972) work, *The Creation of Settings and the Future Societies.* Due to the intercultural nature of this project, Hofstede and Hofstede's (2005) five dimensions of national culture were used to understand the challenges to collaboration within the combined team.

This qualitative case study focused on two research questions. First, what were the challenges in creating collaborations within the three teams of educators involved in the "My Place, Your Place, Our Place (MYO Place)" project? Second, what were the similarities and differences in challenges across these three teams? Data sources included interviews with nine participants from the Bulgaria team and nine from the Tennessee team, a variety of project documents, and field notes. The qualitative software program, Ethnograph Version 5.0, was used to analyze data using the constant comparative method. The principal investigator served as a participant observer.

The challenges to collaboration within and across the three settings of the MYO Place project were consistent with Sarason's (1972) theory, but differences in findings across the three teams were greater than similarities as a result of national cultural

distinctions between Bulgaria and the United States. When comparing the Bulgaria and Tennessee teams, the similarities in challenges included the reality of professional role differences, lack of time, the reluctance to establish norms to deal with inevitable conflict, and the lack of resources. In terms of differences, the unique struggles experience by the Tennessee team included a lack of consensus on values and goals, deficiencies in conceptual understanding, and the challenge of achieving shared leadership and ownership. For the Bulgaria team, their distinctive challenges to collaboration included dependence on their partner, meeting the expectations of a foreign partner, and the language barrier.

The challenges to collaboration for the combined team were time, distance, language, and primarily the differences in culture. The most significant findings of this research were the challenges to collaboration created by the cultural differences.

This study concludes with recommendations for further research and implications for educators engaged in creating collaborative partnerships. This research supports prior knowledge of the difficulty of creating collaboration within new settings and the multiplied complexity when partnerships involve different national cultures.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Chapter Introduction

Controversy has often swirled around the performance of public schools in America. There seems to be universal agreement that public schools are in need of improvement. This debate runs the gamut from suggestions of reform of existing schools to the massive restructuring of the public education system. Elements of school choice such as public school charters, vouchers, and the home school movement add to the confused state of school improvement and renewal efforts. In such an environment, public education takes center stage in the political debates occurring at the local, state, and national levels.

In recent years, collaboration has received increased attention as an important component of educational renewal. The strengthening of school and university collaborations has risen to the forefront as a viable approach to the improvement of education (Kochan & Kunkel, 1998), and universities have been called upon to provide leadership for these efforts (Justiz, 1997; Mebane & Galassi, 2003). The increase of collaborative partnerships has been triggered by three factors. First, the political climate has created pressure for at least a symbolic relationship between various educational institutions. Second, public schools and colleges of education face increased demands for accountability and better-prepared teachers. Third, public schools and colleges of education face a cadre of similar problems – insufficient funding, public condemnation, diminished public support and respect, low salaries, and teacher shortages (Sirotnik &

Goodlad, 1998). Collectively, these factors have created a climate of expectation for collaborative partnerships between schools and universities.

Although provoked by common pressures, past collaborative efforts between public schools and universities have often been problematic and contentious. Trubowitz (1984) stated, "the history of relationships between public school and colleges is filled with examples of conflict and hostility" (p. 7). These relationships are frequently characterized by "suspicion, distrust, scorn, defensiveness, and condescension" (Goldenberg & Sullivan, 1997, p. 2). This reality begs the question—shouldn't educational practitioners and university professors of education have a common mission to improve schooling for students? If so, is it possible for these parties to work collaboratively to achieve their mutual goals? The irony of such a dilemma is inescapably considering the vital role played by both schools and universities in the total educational process.

Although the challenge of creating effective university-public school collaborations is well known, the analysis of effective partnerships has demonstrated productive outcomes for all stakeholders. In a university-public school partnership described by Goldenberg and Sullivan (1997), a relationship emerged that was collaborative and sustainable and proved to be mutually beneficial to both parties. In their examination of effective collaborations involving schools, colleges and other organizations, Russell and Flynn (2000) noted the critical elements of "building relationships, creating trust, and working together" (p. 203). On the pathway to stronger

collaboratives, the journey and the mutually agreed upon destination are equally important. The elements of process and outcome receive balanced attention.

The eruption of technology and ease of travel have created a shrinking world, a global economy, and a re-examination of the resulting collaborative possibilities. The Internet provides unprecedented accessibility to the burgeoning knowledge base of this new information age. As national economies have become more strongly linked to other parts of the world, we are rapidly becoming citizens of the "global village" (Ornstein, 1995). These changes have created a movement that emphasizes the need for internationalization of collaborative efforts involving public schools and universities.

The creation of collaborative relationships among educators, whether one to one, institutional, or international, involves a willingness to work together for some mutually agreed purpose. Sarason (1972) referred to the development of collaboration as the "creation of a setting" which he defined as "any instance in which two or more people come together in new relationships over a sustained period of time in order to achieve certain goals" (p. 1). This evolutionary process contains seven recognizable and interwoven, though non-sequential phases, including: "consensus on values, substantive knowledge, a historical stance, a realistic time perspective, adequate resources, vehicles of criticism, and the necessity for and the evils of leadership" (p. 6). As schools and universities form collaborative partnerships, they are, in fact, creating new settings. From such truly collaborative settings, mutual benefits may evolve.

Past inter-organizational relationships between schools and universities have been interchangeably termed cooperatives, consortia, coalitions, and collaboratives

(Intriligator, 1983). The label applied to the association is less important than the underlying principle for developing the relationship. Commonly, these partnerships begin as institution to institution affiliations; however, the form of association within partnerships may include a university and a school or district and collaborations between individuals in these institutions (Townsend & Boca, 2003). Individuals, groups, and/or institutions often collaborate as a result of issues or proposed projects that impact multiple stakeholders.

The project examined for this case study included many levels of collaborative partnerships. The project included collaborations between and among the following: university professors, school and university administrators, and classroom teachers representing three Bulgarian and four East Tennessee schools. All of these collaborative efforts are components of a federally funded project, "My Place, Your Place, and Our Place (MYO Place): Integrating Education for the Neighborhood and the World" (Ross, 2002b), to improve international collaboration among educators. International cooperation to improve education includes a focus on the importance of intercultural interaction in the global market place (Mestenhauser &Ellingboe, 1998). Proponents assert that the integration of people, cultures, and places provide new frontiers of exploration for today's educators and students. The international collaborative aspects of the MYO Place project brought an additional layer of complexity since it deals with the creation of settings involving differences in language, culture, and traditions among participants.

This research focused on the collaborations created within the MYO Place project. Sarason's work, *The Creation of Settings and the Future Societies* (1972), framed the conceptual lens for examining these settings. The settings within the MYO Place project varied considerably in degree of collaboration, but the ultimate success and sustainability of the MYO Place project was dependent upon the depth and quality of the creation of each new setting. Three groups of educators were studied as they created new settings. These groups included the team of Tennessee educators, the Bulgarian educators, and the setting created by the combination of the two.

Statement of the Problem

The challenge of creating healthy, sustainable school-university collaborations is well-documented (Goldenberg & Sullivan, 1997; Lewison & Holliday, 1999; Trubowitz, 1984). University faculties and school faculties often regard each other in ways that make collaboration very difficult. Many university faculty regard the quality of teaching in schools as mediocre while educators think that most higher education researchers do not understand "the first thing about running schools and teaching real children" (Goldenberg & Sullivan, p. 2). There is a need for school-based practitioners and university-based researchers to collaborate to address the complex issues involved in the improvement of education. Both groups would benefit from an established process for collaboration that could contribute to their ability to fulfill the institutional mission of serving the needs of their respective constituents. These school-university based collaborations can be expanded beyond our borders to include international challenges and issues of concern to educators. Rigorous analysis of the creation of collaborations may serve to bridge the gap

between theory and practice in creating a pattern for more productive school-university partnerships in the United States and abroad.

The MYO Place project involved multiple facets of school-university partnerships including K-12 educators (teachers and administrators) and university professors in an intercultural relationship between two higher education institutions (The University of Tennessee and Bourgas Free University). At the beginning of any collaborative project, agreement upon shared vision and values is often seen as the sole criteria for success in the creation of the new setting. However, Sarason (1972) maintained that consensus on values is only a first step in the creation of a new setting. In addition to common values, Sarason suggested other components necessary for successful collaborations including "substantive knowledge, a historical stance, a realistic time perspective, adequate resources, vehicles of criticism, and the necessity for and the evils of leadership" (p. 6). All elements are important in negotiating the complexities of the creation of a new setting.

Purpose

The purpose of this qualitative case study was to analyze collaborations involving three teams of educators participating in the "My Place, Your Place, Our Place" project. These collaborative efforts were examined using Sarason's model (1972) of seven challenges to the creation of settings. The three groups of educators included the Tennessee team (a school-university partnership), the Bulgaria team (a school-university partnership), and the setting created by the combination of both (a cross-cultural integration of partnerships).

Research Questions

The MYO Place project participants of both the Tennessee and Bulgarian teams participated in extensive planning and cooperation in preparation for this international educator exchange and the continued development of a shared agenda. This study analyzed collaborations involving three teams of educators participating in the MYO Place project.

The research questions for this study were:

- What were the challenges in creating collaborations within the three teams of educators involved in the "My Place, Your Place, Our Place (MYO Place)" project?
- What were the similarities and differences in challenges across these three teams?

The three collaborations studied included the Tennessee team of educators, the Bulgaria team of educators, and the team created by the cross-cultural combination of both teams.

Conceptual Framework

Sarason's (1972) model of the "creation of new settings" served as the conceptual framework for this study. The following seven interrelated phases of setting creation define the routine challenges of participants as they work together:

- Consensus on values – The ability of participants to reach agreement on basic values, purposes, and goals of the setting.
- Substantive knowledge – The development of an in-depth understanding of the complexity of the setting creation process and acquisition of significant

knowledge and skills geared to meeting the original purpose for the formation of the setting.

- Historical stance – An understanding of the potential conflict created between participants as past personal experience with settings clash with the idealized possibilities of future settings.
- Realistic time perspective – The need for establishing a flexible time table to deal with the complexity of the process.
- Adequate resources – Coming to grips with the false assumption that new settings have unlimited resources at their disposal.
- Vehicles of criticism – In the early stages of the creation of a new setting, ground rules must be established to address inevitable conflict.
- Necessity for and the evils of leadership – Leadership is both necessary and problematic. A system of check and balances of power must be established.

Sarason's (1972) model was used as the conceptual frame for analyzing the patterns of collaboration emerging from the study of settings within the MYO Place project. The components of Sarason's model are defined in greater detail in Chapter two, the review of literature.

Origin of the MYO Place Project

In October 2002, the U.S. Department of State funded a jointly developed project proposal from The University of Tennessee and Bourgas Free University in Bulgaria. The "My Place, Your Place, and Our Place (MYO Place)" project combined two seemingly contradictory parent educational models – place-based education and internationalization.

The place-based model focuses on the local culture, environment, and skills for the local career market. Internationalization is concerned with inter-cultural issues, the global environment, and skills for the global economy. The starting point for the integration of these parent models is the home culture, or "My Place." Connecting the home place to a single foreign country and its people, "Your Place," is the first step to life and work around the globe, or "Our Place" (Ross, 2002b). An excerpt from the grant proposal explains this more fully:

> The educational model proposed here would integrate education for the neighborhood and the world by validating local culture, drawing on foreign partners for comparative learning, producing young citizens who can function anywhere, while motivating them to stay or return home to sustain the local economy, culture, and environment. (Ross, p. 9)

The MYO Place teaching and learning model (Appendix A) created a format for students and educators to compare *My Place* with *Your Place*, and thereby develop the skills for success in global cultures, environments, and work, *Our Place.* One of the goals of the MYO Place project was the development of project-based units of study (Appendix B Example) that integrated local concepts with appropriate cross-cultural themes of the foreign partner.

The MYO Place project was originally intended to be a two year project (September 2002—September 2004). A balance of funds remained at the end of year two so the project was extended an additional year. All funding was exhausted in September 2005, and the project officially concluded with a final report to the U.S. Department of

State in December 2005. The project produced many products that continue to be used by teachers in participating schools in both Tennessee and Bulgaria. Obviously, the ability of the project to expand to include other schools and school districts is hampered by a lack of funding.

The Case: "My Place, Your Place and Our Place (MYO Place)" Project

The "My Place, Your Place and Our Place (MYO Place)" project was led by educator teams from Tennessee and Bulgaria. The Tennessee Leadership Team was comprised of a unique blend of educators with diverse experiences representing a variety of institutional levels. The project was guided by a university professor who served as project director. This professor was assisted by a project coordinator who was also the primary author of the grant proposal. The team included two other university professors, five public school administrators, and two classroom teachers. In the first year of the project, I transferred from the high school principalship to become a district supervisor, and my successor was invited to join the team. The ten member Bulgaria team was led by a university professor as project director. The Bulgaria team included three other university faculty, three school administrators, and three classroom teachers.

All team members (Tennessee and Bulgaria) were willing participants in this intercultural collaboration. Initially, the proposal author alone had a thorough knowledge of the project. In preparation for the formal international exchange aspect of the MYO Place project, a great deal of preliminary planning was done. Early in the project, both teams met to clarify the goals and objectives of the project. This study analyzed collaborations involving three teams of educators participating in the MYO Place Project

as they moved through the process of the development and initial implementation of the MYO Place teaching and learning model (Appendix A).

Significance of the Study

Public schools (K-12) and universities have much to learn from each other in terms of the "creation of new settings." Sarason's (1972) model provides a unique lens through which to view these efforts toward collaboration. The use of Sarason's theory in this study should provide knowledge and understanding to assist educational theorists and practitioners in creating beneficial school-university partnerships. In previous research, the number of studies that utilize Sarason's (1972) model is somewhat limited (Bond, 1984; Ford, 1993; Little-Gottesman, 1983; Perry, 1997); therefore, this research broadens the application of the model by expanding its use in educational settings and by exploring its application to intercultural collaborations. Educators are finding that collaboration is necessary to deal with increasingly complex issues. Hopefully, this research will lead to a greater understanding in the area of educational collaborations as educators at all institutional levels collectively address the difficult challenges in the creation of settings.

The nature of the work of university researchers and practitioners in pubic schools is shaped by specific context and culture (Buysse, Sparkman, & Wesley, 2003). The priorities of college professors are typically focused on theoretical research upon which practice is based. Practitioners, on the other hand, are concerned with strategies to improve life for themselves and/or their students. Both groups function in relatively autonomous cultures with established priorities unique to the context. In speaking to this tension, Buysse et al. (2003) stated: "The idea that practitioners and researchers should

work together to co-construct knowledge as part of a common enterprise, rather than through separate endeavors, could have far-reaching consequences for connecting what we know with what we do in education" (p. 275). University professors and K-12 practitioners in the MYO Place project worked together to develop a teaching and learning model that could possibly be replicated in other educational sites. Hopefully, the analysis of the collaborative efforts of the Bulgaria and Tennessee teams of educators will serve as a guide for further cooperation between schools and universities and foster a greater interest in cross-cultural partnerships.

Limitations and Delimitations

This study focused on the two leadership teams (Bulgaria and Tennessee) and their combined efforts in the MYO Place project. The 11 participants on the Tennessee team included this researcher. One of the university professors served primarily as the project evaluator and was not interviewed for this study. A district supervisor withdrew from the 10 member Bulgaria team and was replaced by the Rector of Bourgas Free University. Due to the scheduling difficulties, the Rector was not a participant in the study. Data sources included the transcripts of interviews with the eighteen study participants (nine from each team), field notes, and documents produced during the work of the project. The documents will be explained in the methods chapter. This research was a narrowly-focused examination of a very complex process – collaborative efforts within the creation of new settings.

The researcher's role as participant-observer (Merriam, 1998) was also a primary limitation. Having participated in the development of the original grant proposal, I had

been closely involved with the project since its inception. Serving as a member of the Tennessee Leadership Team and piloting the MYO Place reform model in my school district also served to heighten the possibility of researcher bias. The possible perception of bias as participant-observer in data collection also raises ethical issues related to anonymity of the individual participants within the work of the project.

This study required that I balance the role of participant with personal experiences as inquirer in the co-creation of new settings. Ford (1993) spoke to the tension created by such a dilemma: "What was common to both researcher and inquirer was finding the outer and inner story that was present in both places" (p. 515). While a participant in the work of the MYO Place project, I attempted to maintain a high degree of objectivity in data collection and interpretation.

A key component of the MYO Place project is the intercultural nature of the collaboration between the teams of educators from Bulgaria and Tennessee. Cultural differences and language issues played a key role in the research. My cultural assumptions may have had an impact on the analysis and interpretation of the data. In studies involving intercultural research, the researcher would ideally possess fluency in the language of all participants. I do not speak Bulgarian and was dependent upon the services of translators for written documents. In the interview process, an interpreter whose first language was that of the participant being interviewed was used. In such cases, definitions of key terms took on a greater dimension of complexity than in the data collection process within the same culture.

Another key limitation of this research was the lack of generalizability of the findings. This case study of the MYO Place project may contribute to the body of general knowledge related to school-university collaborations, but cannot be applied specifically to other partnerships. Context specific factors are important in all partnerships, but perhaps these research findings will contribute to a greater understanding of the elements involved in collaborative processes in education.

Definition of Terms

The definitions below are utilized throughout this study and serve to enhance the readers' understanding of the project. Other terms are utilized and explained in more detail in the review of literature and the research findings.

Collaboration. Collaboration refers to "any instance in which two or more people come together in new relationships over a sustained period of time in order to achieve certain goals" (Sarason, 1972, p. 1). Sarason uses the term "creation of settings."

Comparative education. The discipline of comparative education is defined by Paige and Mestenhauser (1999) as "the ability to compare and contrast education in diverse cultural contexts using educational ideas and practices in one setting as points of reference for arriving at a better understanding of them in another" (p. 3).

Creation of settings. "Any instance in which two or more people come together in new relationships over a sustained period of time in order to achieve certain goals" (Sarason, 1972, p. 1). This term was used synonymously with collaboration for the purposes of this study.

Global education. The expansion of international education to include the academic, analytic, and scientific study of social change and global problem-solving.

Globalization. Replacing the Cold War system, this new international system has arisen as the result of the integration of technology, information, and capital across national borders. Globalization has resulted in the spread of free-market capitalism to almost every country in the world (Friedman, 2000).

Internationalization of education. The study of nations, geographic areas, diplomacy, cultures, and international organizations (Hendrix, 1998) to enhance cooperation, understanding, and exchange.

Learning community. Miller (2000) defines learning community as "a place where caring responsive people nourish each other's learning in the context of authentic relationships" (p. 9). Such a climate may be created in a classroom, school, faculty group, or community.

My Place. "The home place of the local Learning Community (educators, students, and citizens). Learning is looking inward, studying ourselves to prepare to understand others" (Ross, 2002b).

Our Place. "The globe, the home place of the Global Learning Community, all peoples of the world. Learning by looking through "My Place" and "Your Place" to better understand similarities and differences among all cultures of "Our Place," the world" (Ross, 2002b).

Place-based learning (Pedagogy of place). Place-based learning involves the use of the immediate environment of school and community as learning laboratories

(Woodhouse, 2001). Learning experiences are grounded in local cultural, political, social, and environmental contexts. Such curricula "reflect and enhance the life ways of children they serve" (Gibbs & Howley, 2000, p. 53), and contribute to community development and sustainability.

Your Place. "The home place of the partner Learning Community (educators, students, and citizens). Learning becomes comparative, teaching the partner and looking outward to the partner, teaching and learning from the partner, comparing My Place and Your Place as a first step to learning about the rest of the world" (Ross, 2002b).

Chapter Summary

Collaborative partnerships between schools and universities have been touted as a viable strategy for the improvement of education (Kochan & Kunkel, 1998). The "My Place, Your Place and Our Place (MYO Place)" (Ross, 2002b) project was designed to develop partnerships that would give comparable attention to education across all spectra—local, national, and international. This research explored the collaborative efforts of the two teams of educators (Tennessee and Bulgaria) and the combined team as they worked together on the development of the MYO Place model for teaching and learning.

To a great extent, the quality of the collaborative relationships within partnerships will determine the success and sustainability of a given project. The purpose of this study was to analyze collaborations involving three teams of educators participating in the "My Place, Your Place, Our Place" project. On the pathway to collaboration, the journey and destination are equally important (Russell & Flynn, 2000). The secondary outcomes of

healthy collaborations include “building relationships, creating trust, and working together” (Russell & Flynn, p. 203). These patterns of interactions among people are critically important in the development of sustainable collaborative partnerships.

Organization of the Study

Chapter two of this dissertation includes a review of pertinent literature encompassing several related areas. The first aspect of the review of literature begins with an examination of the role of collaboration in educational renewal. Secondly, Sarason’s model will be given a comprehensive review and linked to the theme of collaboration within partnerships of educators. Next, a continuum of relationship strength is discussed within the context of educational partnership literature. Finally, the research related to intercultural partnerships is also examined. Chapter three explains the research design and methodology employed during the study. The analysis of the data is presented in chapters four, five, and six. Chapter four will focus on the Tennessee team, and the Bulgaria team is examined in Chapter five. Chapter six will present the analysis of the collaboration of the two teams as they worked together. Chapter six will also include the findings related to the similarities and differences in the challenges to collaboration across these three teams. The study concludes with summary remarks and recommendations for further study in chapter seven. In addition chapter seven contains a final discussion of collaboration and the lessons learned from the use of Sarason’s model as the conceptual framework for the study. Implications of the findings are given for the practice of educators engaged in collaborative partnerships.

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Chapter Introduction

The purpose of this study was to analyze collaborations involving three teams of educators participating in the "My Place, Your Place, Our Place" project. This review of literature began with an examination of the role of collaboration in educational renewal. Next, the seven components of Sarason's model are given a comprehensive review and linked to the theme of collaboration within partnerships of educators. Sarason's (1972) model of the "creation of new settings" was used as the conceptual framework for examining the collaborative work of the Tennessee Team, the Bulgaria Team, and the cross-cultural combination of both teams. Educational partnership literature also revealed a continuum of relationship strength which was explored in greater depth. Finally, the cross-cultural nature of the MYO Place project led to an examination of the literature related to intercultural partnerships.

Collaboration in Educational Renewal

Against a contemporary emphasis on collaborative approaches to the improvement of education stands a well-documented and deep-rooted tradition of educator isolation (Hargreaves, Earl, Moore, & Manning, 2001). For classroom teachers, this isolationism, while permitting an environment of autonomous professional judgment, often precludes significant feedback as to effectiveness. Many teachers seem to prefer a work environment of isolation, leading Goodland (1994) to hypothesize that some

educators choose teaching due to the solitary nature of the profession. Past patterns of history, often sustained by policy, have elevated isolation and individualism as fundamental principles of educational practice. In such a context of seclusion, educators practice their craft with great independence, but they are deprived of opportunities for the exchange of professional wisdom and knowledge with colleagues.

Due to the organizational structure of public schools, educators at the elementary and middle school levels often work in isolation from their colleagues. The opportunity for interaction between elementary/middle and secondary teachers is more pronounced since they typically work in different buildings. Operating in vastly different settings, school-based practitioners and university-based researchers are also isolated from each other, and the obstacles to these collaborative relationships are recognized. (Feijoo, 2005; Goldenberg & Sullivan, 1997; Lewison & Holliday, 1999; Trubowitz, 1984). Addressing the complex issues of educational improvement for all students will require the collaborative involvement of educators at all levels. The opposite of isolation is collaboration. Any form of collaboration implies a departure from the isolating nature of educational practice within the structure of traditional schooling.

Definitions of Collaboration

The educational research literature contains multiple definitions of collaboration. Embedded within Sarason's (1972) theory of the creation of settings, which he defined as "any instance in which two or more people come together in new relationships over a sustained period of time in order to achieve certain goals" (p. 1), is the concept of collaboration. Collaboration has also been defined as "shared decision-making in

governance, planning, delivery, and evaluation of programs…where people of dissimilar backgrounds work together with equal status" (Schaffer & Bryant, 1983, p. 3). Following the lead of Sarason two decades early, Bazigos (1995) used this definition: "a cooperative undertaking between two or more parties, typically involving coordination of actions and sharing of resources to achieve the same or similar goals" (p. 176). These definitions contain concepts that permeate much of the discussion of collaboration in the literature and typically include individuals or groups coming together in new relationships with a sharing of resources to achieve mutually agreeable goals. Related themes that are pervasive in the literature on educational partnerships include: cooperation (Hord, 1986); consultation (Fishbaugh, 1997; Welch & Tulbert, 2000); collegiality (Hargreaves & Dawe, 1990); and community (Bailey, et al., 2002; Norris, et al., 2002; Myers, 1996).

Reasons for Collaboration

Educational institutions are called upon to address a multitude of problems and concerns of society. The complexities of these issues require the best of the collective skill and energy of all stakeholders. In their study of school and university collaborations, Russell and Flynn (2000) suggested three reasons for these groups to work together. The first reason is the need to fulfill the applied scholarship mission of colleges of education within universities. Such a mission implies connections to other college departments, community groups, and schools. Responsiveness to external pressures is another reason for collaboration. Schools and universities are under intense public scrutiny, and they are expected to address the difficult problems that plague society. A third reason to collaborate is to develop practices and programs that serve the respective students and

other constituents of the various cooperating institutions. These programs typically include such components as “outreach, service learning, inter-professional preparation, and strategic alliances” (Russell & Flynn, p. 197). The public expects that schools and universities should collectively address societal problems. A jointly-planned collaboration of schools and universities is likely to be more fruitful than a vague generic expectation that educators in these educational institutions should work together.

Partnerships

From the public school classroom to the university lecture hall, collaborative partnerships have been promoted as a strategy for educational renewal (Essex, 2001; Welch & Tulbert, 2000). In their simplest form, these collaborations often occur between two cooperating teachers within a single school or a university professor and classroom teacher working together (Townsend et al., 2003) in a mentor-protégé relationship. The mutual benefits of collaboration among individual educators include the reduction of isolation, shared moral support, acquisition of new ideas, fostering of creativity, and collegial validation (Hargreaves, 2001).

Often educational collaborations begin as institutional affiliations as when two universities working together. The form of association within partnerships may also include a university and a pubic school or district and collaborations between individuals in these institutions (Luce, 2005; Thomas, 2004; Townsend & Boca, 2003). Russell and Flynn (2000) stated that the “prerequisites (for institutional collaborations) are the same as that for a successful individual relationship – careful selection of partners, mutual respect, willingness to listen, commitment, an equal power base, frequent

communication, and flexibility" (p. 203). What do the school and university stand to gain from such collaborative relationships? This question is fundamental to the formation of any partnership. For a partnership to function effectively, participants must reach agreement on the goals and objectives for the relationship (Harris & Harris, 1992). Schools and universities may have the collective capacity to address problems and concerns that they can not solve while working in isolation from each other. By doing so, public schools and universities derive mutual benefit.

The Need for Genuine Collaboration

For many years, the rapid expansion of collaborative partnerships has become commonplace so as to raise questions about the effectiveness of such relationships. In the past, the refusal of a school or university to initiate a partnership or become involved was perceived as detrimental to institutional health. In the haste to form these relationships, such collaborations seem to possess more form than substance. The formation of multiple partnerships produces expanded networks of relationships, but do not address the quality of such collaborations. Partnerships may bloom, but without proper cultivation, successful outcomes are unlikely.

In addressing the authenticity of collaborative relationships among educators, Hargreaves and Dawe (1990) contrasted collaborative culture with contrived collegiality. A collaborative culture can promote norms of collegiality from within the profession that allow educators to tackle difficult tasks such as curriculum and pedagogical reform. On the other hand, the structure of contrived collegiality is "administratively designed to smooth the path of externally imposed innovation" (Hargreaves & Dawe, p. 230). Behind

these forced collaborative relationships "lurks an administrative apparatus of surveillance and control" (Hagreaves & Dawe, p. 239). Although an appearance of collaborative effort may be present, this charade undermines the elements of trust, openness, and support that are critical to the development of genuine collaboration.

In an extensive review of the literature, Essex (2001) identified seven characteristics of effective school-college partnerships. An effective partnership…

- "…has a clearly defined purpose and direction.
- …is enthusiastically endorsed by top level leaders in schools and colleges.
- …involves trust among partners.
- …involves open communication.
- …involves mutual respect among partners.
- …provides tangible benefits for all partners involved.
- …has mechanisms to assess progress and measure outcomes." (p. 2)

The creation of successful school and university collaborations is a complex process that seems unattainable by mere mortals. Conflict may result from the interaction of varied backgrounds and with different values. Within a collaborative relationship, the constructive resolution of conflict may lead to individual and group growth.

Conceptual Framework: Sarason's Creation of Settings

The conceptual framework for this research was based upon Sarason's (1972) work, *The Creation of Settings and the Future Societies.* Sarason's theory of the creation of settings broke new ground on the subject of organizational change and collaboration. Sarason defined a setting as "any instance in which two or more people come together in

new relationships over a sustained period of time in order to achieve certain goals" (p. 6). The term setting is often limited to a specific physical location. In his research, Sarason expanded the use of setting to apply to the terms institution, organization, or program interchangeably. Sarason uses the term "*setting*" as the most appropriate yet least ambiguous word that aptly described the underlying concepts of collaborative endeavors.

An obvious example of the creation of a new setting would be when two people enter into marriage. A new setting could also be created by a large group of people with a desire to create a new society. Also, new settings are obviously created in the formation of school and university partnerships. Sarason (1972) asserts that a pattern is followed in the creation of any new setting, and its eventual failure can be traced to factors present from the outset. The major components of Sarason's *Creation of Settings* include "consensus on values, substantive knowledge, a historical stance, a realistic time perspective, adequate resources, vehicles of criticism, and the necessity for and the evils of leadership" (p. 6). Each of these phases of Sarason's model will be discussed in greater detail.

Consensus on Values

When a group begins a new project, participants are unaware of the complexity of the process before them. The euphoria created by initial exuberance and a sense of good will can distort the reality of the rigorous nature of this creation of a new setting. Sarason (1972) explained these initial challenges:

- Superiority of mission—The project is viewed through rose-colored glasses meaning the "superiority of ends is confused with superiority of means" (p. 76).

- A marriage of the attractiveness of the new setting and disenchantment with a previous setting—The glamour of the new setting is often skewed by feelings of dissatisfaction with the status quo of old settings of the past. The new project may be mistakenly viewed as panacea to overcome all past failures.

The individual ideological and personality differences of the participants interact to create these preliminary challenges. Within this initial context of the creation of a new setting, the seeds of failure may be sown.

Much of the initial work of a new group deals with the relationship between conception and practice. As participants consider their involvement in a new setting, their concerns are compounded by past knowledge and experience with previous settings. Many of these past experiences have proven to be futile exercises in perpetuation of the status quo. Sarason (1972) aptly described these experiences*:* "The more things change, the more they remain the same" (p. 22). As participants enter the process again, they describe these feelings*:* "skepticism about outcome, resignation to failure, anxiety about the future, and a subliminal fear that the general situation is deteriorating" (Sarason, p. 4). The early stages of group growth in the new setting also include "conflicting ideas and values, limited resources, a sense of mission superiority by some versus a need to preserve tradition by others, the need to protect the setting from outside influences, and the role of existing settings" (Sarason, p. 58) as represented by members of the group. These factors contribute to multiple uncertainties in the initial stages of the creation of the new setting.

In the planning and implementation of new projects and programs, consensus around mission, goals, and objectives is very important. The group involved in the creation of a new setting will frequently devote considerably time and energy to the development of a consensus mission based upon the value system of the participants. Commitment to a shared vision often creates a false sense of security that all is well with the new endeavor. New groups often operate under the false assumption that this agreement on shared values will automatically assure successful attainment of group goals. Sarason (1972) explained the failure of the revolutions of Castro and Lenin as connected to this false supposition. Later in their revolutionary movements within their countries, Castro and Lenin understood that power, agreement on values and goals, and a strong motivation to succeed were not sufficient conditions for success. While group consensus on values is important, it is only a first step in the creation of a new setting. Initial optimism around a shared vision may serve to blind the participants to the inherent problems and potential causes of failure.

Substantive Knowledge

At the birth of a new setting, substantive knowledge for participants will continue to be focused on the understanding of underlying values and the development of consensus goals and objectives. Participants may also need significant knowledge and skills geared to meeting the original purpose(s) for which the setting was created. These components may include specific project goals and objectives, partnership agreements, and beliefs, mission, and vision. Substantive knowledge also includes the need for governance; that is, policy and procedures issues around the initiation of the setting and

the implementation of the work. The participants may not possess the capacity to view setting creation as a sequence of developmental problems that can be approached in a systematic manner with appropriate ground rules and procedures for operation. These procedures will be derived from the participant's past experience with prior settings.

Initially, some participants may experience a steep learning curve because of a lack of understanding of the purpose of the setting and their needs for substantive knowledge. All participants must gain the essential understanding of the complexities of the task of creating the new setting. Sarason (1972) provided the following admonition:

> …reaching consensus about values is only a beginning point in the creation of a new setting. Indeed, it is a danger point because it is rarely accompanied by the knowledge that in acting on the basis of these values the degree of consensus will inevitably be diminished and the solidarity of the group threatened. After agreement on values the hard work begins. (p. 281)

Passion of purpose, while important, will not supplant knowledge of the setting goals and an understanding of the complexities of the group process.

Historical Stance

As participants engage in the creation of a new setting, they bring the total history of their past involvement in previous settings. Sarason (1972) emphasized the need for individual group members to confront their personal history as to prior settings. This "heritage of conflict" (p. 42) has three aspects:

- An individual's personal way of thinking about a setting may obscure later understandings because much more was going on in the early stages than realized by any individual.
- A new setting always reflects the history of relationships from other related though diverse settings. "One is always dealing with a history of structured relationships" (Sarason, p. 43). Prior experiences between individuals with the setting may also be a significant factor.
- The new group uses its historical knowledge to determine actions consistent with values and goals.

New settings always have some relationship with existing settings. As a result, "the characteristics of new settings...ensure some conflict and competition" (Sarason, p. 46).

One of the challenges of confronting history is the preoccupation with future goals as a new setting is being created. During the frenzied activity around the creation of a new setting, "the future overwhelms the past" (Sarason, 1972, p. 66). Participants in new settings generally lack the ability to conceptualize the inherent problems occurring within the group. As a result, the participants may lack understanding of the problems and possible solutions. Sarason explains that those who create settings limit their thinking to four factors: "strength of motivation, values, personality, and power" (p. 67). Although important, these factors are insufficient to assure the success of the new setting. Attention must be given to the historical, sociological, and developmental realities of the participants as they work together.

Realistic Time Perspective

As the goals and objectives of a new setting are finalized, a timetable will be created. The target dates for completion of the various tasks in the timetable will be determined by a number of factors. The timetable is almost always impacted by budgetary guidelines or previously established project benchmarks. The creators of new settings always have a timetable in mind (Sarason, 1972). Also, the time required to attain operational goals is typically underestimated by project planners. With some disregard for the relationship between conceptions and theory in setting creation, the leader may establish a rigid timetable. The personality and management style of the leader is generally the determining factor in the establishment of such a strict project schedule.

As new and existing settings negotiate, the issues around time constraints may increase feelings of pressure for the individuals within the group. The reality of personal and collective time constraints generally forces flexibility in the use of time but may contribute to a heightened sense of initial frustration. A flexible timetable is essential to the success of a new setting. Such a critical component is directly contrary to the frequent drive for results often required in most project driven processes. Sarason (1972) elaborates: “The existence of a fairly definite timetable usually creates a present dominated and tyrannized by a future which when it arrives is not the one imagined” (p. 63). The preoccupation with stringent action plans contributes to the obsession with the future goals and may impede the thoughtful consideration of the history of the settings brought to the process by individual participants.

Adequate Resources

In creating a new setting, another problematic issue is the adequacy of resources – human or otherwise. This concern is particularly prevalent in the public service sector where adequate resources are a constant concern. If the program or project seems worthwhile then sufficient resources will somehow mysteriously appear. Initial concerns regarding the adequacy of resources may be totally ignored.

The leadership may first become aware of inadequate resources. As the problem magnifies, the competition for resources can become a major divisive issue (Sarason, 1972). Previously established priorities are brought into question. Group members may raise issues of competence and honesty of the leadership. The leadership of the group may become alienated. Paradoxically, as inadequate resources surface as a chief concern, the production demands may increase; thus intensifying the problem. Participants may become increasingly dissatisfied with the work, thus diminishing the probability of creating a sense of community within the group that is so necessary for survival of the setting.

Vehicles of Criticism

In the creation of a new setting, Sarason (1972) maintained that "conflict is neither bad nor avoidable, but ignoring it is calamitous" (p. 147). Early in the process, ground rules must be established to address these predictable conflicts. Sarason (1972) elaborates: "Some implicit or explicit rules are necessary by which the individuals will be governed" (p. 16). This revelation of the obvious is frequently ignored by the group. These vehicles of criticism are integral to the planning process, and also address the

larger issues connected with the balance of power among the participants. Although essential to the survival of the new setting, the rigors of developing group norms may be viewed as detrimental to the sense of good will that often permeates a new collaboration.

Although motivation and value agreement may be readily apparent, these elements do not address the details of implementation. Due to their initial exuberance, the participants may lack the ability to anticipate problems and create strategies to deal with the inevitable disagreements. A meaningful discussion of group ground rules is initially avoided because of the concern that differences of opinion may be created. Anticipating the problems and conflicts is an arduous task requiring rigorous intellectual engagement of all participants. Some individuals may abandon the group thus further diminishing the "sense of good will" that pervades the initial work. The failure to develop ground rules or norms of conduct for the setting may also create a climate characterized by ambiguity and competitiveness.

Necessity for and the Evils of Leadership

Participants in the creation of a new setting understand the necessity for leadership, but they may misjudge the complexity of its practice. This aspect of Sarason's (1972) theory also impacts governance issues related to the setting. An established system of checks and balances is essential. Human history underscores the old adage that "power corrupts, and absolute power corrupts absolutely." Often, the need to create a new setting is the vision and passion of a single individual. Does this visionary become the leader? If not, how is the leader to be selected? A core leadership team is usually formed. How is the core leadership group chosen? The selection of a core leadership team may

immediately create division and alienation among other participants. How should decisions be made, by whom, and on what basis? How does the leader define the beginning point? What is the leader's perspective of time? The likelihood of success in the new setting is greatly diminished if these essential issues of leadership are not thoughtfully considered.

The "necessity and evils" of leadership point to the apparent contradictions in the practice of leaders in the creation of new settings. Many people view the role of leadership as destructive to both the leader and the setting. In the earliest stages of a new setting, the leader views himself or herself, as do others, as the most important person in the setting. The leader may enjoy being the focus of attention to the detriment of the group. As a setting matures, the leader will not continue to receive this adulation as other participants develop their own knowledge and skills and begin to question leadership decisions. This exhibition of autonomy by individuals within the group may be viewed as conceit and arrogance by the leader. The leader may also perceive this independence as destructive to community within the setting. Later, the leader will hopefully understand his or her responsibility in helping participants to develop in their own way. Ultimately, the leader must relinquish some measure of leadership to others (Sarason, 1972).

The leader(s) of a new setting must also confront the paradox of the virtue of self-denial. The participants in a new setting often believe that their total resources, energy, and effort must benefit those for whom the setting was created. In the public service sector, leadership tends to ignore the needs of those involved in the creation of the setting. Sarason (1972) elaborated:

> The professional and personal growth and change of its members, and the ways in which their mutuality can enhance this growth and change…to the extent that a setting becomes more and more focused on its relationships to the outside world, it increasingly loses sight of what it can or must do for its own members. This development is inevitable in those instances where the setting was conceived and justified only in terms of what it does for others. (p. 86)

In reality, what proves beneficial to the group members is also helpful to the recipients of the services for whom the setting was created.

Summary of Sarason's Theory

Sarason's (1972) theory of the creation of settings was derived from his research at Yale University with the establishment of the Yale Psycho-Educational Clinic. His theory applies to new settings created in multiple ways throughout society. The failure of new settings is escalating exponentially. The creation of new settings is the manner in which society restores itself (Gardner, 1981). Although Sarason describes seven components of his theory of the creation of settings, he warns that these phases do not possess any pre-determined order nor should they be viewed as rigid or bounded. Although description of phases may enhance initial understanding, the theory of the creation of a new setting must be conceptualized holistically to comprehend the inherent complexity of the process.

Other Research Involving Sarason's Theory

The application of Sarason's theory of creation of settings to other educational research studies is very limited, most being unpublished dissertations. Little-Gottesman

(1983) used the Sarason's framework for an examination of the role of appointed leaders in creation of setting. Bond (1983) applied Sarason's principles to the development of a new human service setting—a school mental health program. Three stages of program development and implementation were analyzed. Although the leader of this new setting utilized entrepreneurial and collaborative leadership styles, the study confirmed the difficulty of the creation and sustainability of high-quality settings.

Ford (1993) examined a setting created during the formation of the Faculty of Education at York University in Ontario, Canada. The stories of three of the initial faculty members, including the author, were analyzed. This study speaks to the complexity of the role of participant-observer in conducting such research. The author discusses the inner turmoil created by the interrelated roles of participant, researcher, and writer.

Perry's (1997) examined the organizational dynamics, with university collaboration, of the opening of a new K-8 school in an urban school district. Four myths or false assumptions were described by Perry as extensions of Sarason's theory of the creation of settings. They are as follows:

- Consensus on basic values is sufficient to assure success. Perry describes this myth of shared values as "the basic faulty premise" (p. 10) underlying the creation of new settings.
- Unlimited resources will be available to meet the needs of the setting.
- The virtue of self-denial – This myth denies the reality that self-interest is beneficial and necessary in the healthy functioning of an organization.

- Myth of professionalism – A sufficient supply of trained personnel dedicated to the service of the clientele is available. Perry proposes a new definition of a professional as one who always pursues growth opportunities.

Based upon Sarason theories, Perry (1997) proposed six stages in the creation of settings that she describes "as unfolding in roughly chronological but overlapping stages" (p. 16). These stages were "initiation, planning, honeymoon, implementation, crisis, and decline" (Perry, p. 16). Perry's findings confirmed Sarason's (1997) admonition that "creating a setting is one of the most complicated obstacle courses devised by man or God" (p. 203).

In the organizational efforts for the new school, Perry (1997) noted that planners struggled to identify values, prioritize goals, and develop a sensible timeline. Clarity of values and purpose had not been attained as the opening date for school approached. In the ensuing confusion, the "why" questions became subservient to the more pressing "how" questions of the opening of school. "Participants may not have known where they were going, but they knew when they had to be there" (Perry, p. 243). As this innovative school setting was developing, the inability of stakeholders to reach mutual goals and the pressures of time created an initial regression to traditional schooling practices.

At the conclusion of her research, Perry (1997) adds the myth of immediate change. When all the pieces seem to be in place, the creators of new settings are lured into thinking that the desired change will be quickly attained. The anticipation of instant change is unrealistic and contributes to counter-productive expectations and regression as experienced in every proposed innovation. Perry also noted the conflicts created by traditional bottom-up and top-down patterns of authority. These struggles created

confusion and ensuing power plays. In conclusion, Perry's study confirmed the applicability of Sarason's observations to the complexities of the creation of new settings.

The principles of Sarason's work can be applied in multiple ways to educational collaborations. Two or more individual educators, institutions, or any combination may choose to work together on issues of common concern. If these participants have prior knowledge and understanding of the complexities of the creation of settings, the likelihood of successful outcomes is greatly enhanced.

A Continuum of Partnership Strength

From a comprehensive review of literature related to collaboration and collegiality, Little's (1990) identified a continuum of four stages of teacher interaction progressing from "conditions of complete independence to thoroughgoing interdependence" (p. 512). The four phases are (a) storytelling and scanning for ideas, (b) aid and assistance, (c) sharing, and (d) joint work. Little's findings address a variety of teacher interactions which occur in the daily routine of professional practice.

Under conditions of almost complete independence, teachers occasionally venture to a colleague for ideas, suggestions, or advice. These infrequent forays describe the "storytelling and scanning" stage where the most common though rudimentary of teacher interactions occur. Phase two, "aid and assistance," is based upon the assumption that a coworker will supply encouragement and support when asked. Novice teachers may solicit some help with careful attention to the amount and frequency. This "just ask" element is problematic due to the difficulty of separating the nature of requested help from judgments about teacher competence (Little, 1990). Inexperienced teachers are

concerned that their frequent requests for assistance will result in their competence being questioned by veteran colleagues.

In some cases, the depth of teacher interactions moves from independence toward interdependence. “Sharing” embodies the mutual exchange of materials and resources and openness in the expression of ideas and opinions. In practice, this element of sharing is impacted by the willingness of teacher participants, and their desire for reciprocity in meaningful interactions. The most advanced stage, “joint work,” is reserved for teacher encounters that demonstrate shared responsibility for the collective working of teaching. The motivation for this relationship of interdependence must originate in a desire for improvement and success in a teacher’s independent work. Such teacher collaborations are typically voluntary and peripheral to the work of most educational institutions; therefore, such interdependencies are rare. “Teachers are now being pressed, invited and cajoled into ventures in collaboration, but the organization of their daily work often gives them scant reason for doing so” (Little, 1990, p. 536). The interdependence demonstrated through joint work will not become ingrained in the routine of professional practice until “each one’s teaching is everyone’s business, and each one’s success is everyone’s responsibility” (Little, p. 524).

The literature related to the development of educational partnerships and collaboration also yields a continuum of several concepts in the form of interrelated terms such as cooperation, consultation, collaboration, collegiality, and community. Each term implies a bond between individuals, groups, or institutions. The concepts of cooperation, consultation, collaboration, collegiality, and community seem to represent a continuum of

increasing strength of relationships among individuals and groups within educational partnerships. There is little disagreement about the need for and the value of improved working relationships among educators and stronger associations between educational institutions.

Cooperation is "the degree to which an individual or group attempts to accommodate another party's concern or need" (Welch, 1998, p. 121). Although activities are typically agreeable among participants, the outcomes are not necessarily mutually beneficial.

Consultation is a process involving a trio of elements including a consultant who provides technical assistance to a consultee who in turn provides services to a client (Welch & Tulbert, 2000). This methodology underlies the "train the trainer" and the technical assistance models prevalent in contemporary staff development programs. This same framework can also be seen in various educator induction programs that employ mentor-protégé relationships (Townsend et al., 2003).

While cooperation indicates a willingness of two or more parties to work together, Hord (1986) contended that cooperation and collaboration represent two "distinctly different operational processes" (p. 22). Collaboration promotes ownership of the process through the "development of a model of joint planning, joint implementation, and joint evaluation between individuals and organizations" (Hord, p.22). Collaboration certainly includes a willingness of participants to work together, but cooperation does not rise to the level of shared responsibility and decision-making characteristic of collaborative relationships. Participants must find mutual agreement as to mission, goals, and

objectives for the partnership to function effectively (Harris & Harris, 1992; Hubbell & Burman, 2006). Collaboration involves a greater commitment of time and energy to a joint enterprise. Cooperation and collaboration imply different expectations of the participants. Conflicts may arise if some individuals are expecting a relationship of cooperation while others are expecting collaboration (Hord).

Collegiality includes "ongoing professional interaction from a position of trust; it is a meeting of equals where each colleague is respected for his or her own unique contribution to the whole" (Marlow & Nass-Fukai, 2000, p. 1). On the relationship continuum, collegiality involves a sense of shared practice and is the result of extensive collaboration among partnership participants. Within a collegial relationship is the recognition of what is important to each partner. In his study of teachers, Hargreaves et al. (2001) state that "collaboration precedes collegiality" (p. 168). The development of the elements of collegiality such as trust, respect, and reciprocity within a relationship will require additional time and a greater level of commitment. "Strong collaborative cultures and collegial relations within and among schools provide essential supports for implementing effective and sustained changes" (Hargreaves et al. p. 169).

The concluding phase of the relationship continuum is community. The interaction of collaboration and collegiality provide a fertile soil for the growth of a "real and meaningful" community of learning thus enriching the educational partnership and contributing to its sustainability. School and university partnerships could be redefined as professional learning communities for the participants by taking advantage of the best research findings related to learning, teaching, and professional development (Myers,

1996). Such a process would focus on four areas: “the community nature of schools; the constructivist nature of learning; the problem solving nature of teaching; and the personally constructed nature of teacher knowledge and competence” (Myers, p. 6). Such a partnership would be a living organism involving a personal journey of discovery for each participant regardless of institutional affiliation.

Writing in 1887, German sociologist Ferdinand Townies explained the concept of “gemeinschaft” (Sergiovanni, 1994). The concept of gemeinshaft or sacred community has profound implications for the sustainability of collaborative partnerships. This German word, gemeinschaft, has a three-fold meaning. It implies community by kinship, of place, and of mind. Kinship is the concept of “we” that is often seen in immediate and extended families. Place originates from the sharing of a common locale or habitat such as my school, my neighborhood, or my town (Sergiovanni). Gemeinschaft of mind encompasses the sharing of common goals or a shared set of values. The merging of these concepts represents both human and supreme forms of community. Sergiovanni added a fourth dimension to his discussion of gemeinshaft. He explains that a community of memory arises from the concepts of kinship, place, and mind. Traditions, customs, and rituals demonstrate this community of memory; perhaps, the highest plane of belonging. These concepts provide a more sacred perspective of local and global community and a potential framework for powerful group learning in collaborative relationships.

The essence of strong collaborative partnerships is the capacity to build learning communities in increasingly diverse educational settings. According to Johnson and Johnson (1987), an authentic community only exists when four qualities are present:

interaction, purpose, interdependence, and individual growth. These traits address both the sociological and psychological dimensions of the development of a community of learners (Norris et al., 2002). Learning communities respect the value of both the individual and the group. The sociological aspect deals with the development of the group and how it interacts with other groups. The psychological nature of community is focused on the individual. The health and productivity of the group is dependent upon the growth and development of the individual. On the other hand, the climate of the group must foster the maturation of the individual. The lack of individual growth results in stagnation of group purpose and lack of cohesiveness. The parallel attention to individual and group concerns within community is the element of reciprocity (Fullan, 1999). This symbiotic relationship permits individuals and groups to respond in constructive ways to meet each others' needs. The learning community model provides a rich theoretical lens through which school and university collaborations can be re-examined.

The literature seems to indicate that school and university partnerships move through a relationship continuum—cooperation, consultation, collaboration, collegiality, and community. This movement toward community will strengthen and enhance the sustainability of such partnerships. Norris et al. (2002) spoke to this potential: "Community celebrates the dignity and worth of self and others, fosters the empowerment of both and encourages and supports the maximum development of human potential for the benefit of the common good" (p. 5).

Intercultural Collaboration

Since the conclusion of the Cold War and its influence, globalization is the emerging international system which has arisen as a result of the integration of technology, information, and capital across national borders (Friedman, 2005). Globalization has resulted in the spread of free-market capitalism to almost every country in the world. With this increasing influence of globalization, intercultural collaborations are becoming more common in education. These cross-cultural partnerships challenge the conventional ways of teaching, knowing, and learning (Commeryas & Mazile, 2001). These intercultural relationships bring an additional layers of challenge related to language and dissimilar beliefs, values, expectations, and ways of thinking and feeling. All of these differences fundamentally impact communication through the sending and receiving of messages. Educational systems in each country perpetuate the culture, language, traditions and the political and economic structure of the native land. These influences also extend to the classroom level and impact the design of instructional methods and strategies used by educators as they work with multicultural learners (Cifuentes & Ozel, 2006).

In addition to these differences in thinking and behavior patterns, institutions operate in a variety of ways. In a partnership between Brigham Young University-Hawaii campus and five countries in the South Pacific (Bailey, Mitchell, & Winstead, 2002), differences in indigenous values were noted as challenges. These dissimilarities in values included approaches to authority, the use of time, demands of course work, and the dedication to the teaching role. These differences create greater potential challenges to

the development of intercultural collaborations. Kubow and Crawford (2001) explained their perspective of the complexity and potential value of intercultural collaborations: “Attention to both content and process in light of increasing globalization represents a shift in thinking toward problem solving by citizens in a multinational context” (p. 84). For successful intercultural collaborations, the partnership must have a highly visible identify, and host institutions in respective countries must be designated to sustain the mission of the project.

Globalization is also having a dramatic impact on universities and the organizational structures formed between countries to promote higher education across their geographic boundaries. A leading scholar in higher education, Philip Altbach (2004), explains this dilemma: "We are at the beginning of the era of transnational higher education, in which academic institutions from one country operate in another, academic programs are jointly offered by universities from different countries, and higher education is delivered through distance technologies" (p. 22). Such changes will extend partnership relationships from simple university collaborations to supranational organizations or Intergovernmental Organizations (IGOs). Kienle & Loyd (2005) contend that educators will be trained differently to meet the emerging possibilities and challenges presented by globalization: “Leaders of American colleges and universities need to be able to build new understandings of global relationships and propel their individual institutions into the mix of newly formed international organizations and partnerships in the knowledge producing community” (p. 580). For example, the International Space University is a cooperative of 30 interconnected electronic satellite campuses around the world. The World Bank, the World Trade Organization (WTO), the European Union (EU), and the

UNESCO Institute for Statistics are a few of the other international actors who are expected to perform on this global stage.

Relationships and collaborations within these international organizations will be dramatically influenced by the varying cultures of the participants. For example, management and leadership theory and practice is impacted by the combined forces of globalization and the influence of culture. Each culture stamps a set of unique expectations on the practice of its leaders. In his pioneering work on global commerce and communication, (Lewis, 2006) explains: "Each society breeds the type of leader it wants, and expects him or her to keep to the path their age-old cultural habits have chosen" (p. 105). As a result leaders cannot be easily relocated from one culture to another. The complexity of cross-cultural collaborations within education is magnified exponentially by these cultural influences.

In their research with school administrators, (Slater et al., 2006) found stark contrasts between educational leaders in Mexico City as compared to South Texas. Citizen expectations of leadership within these two countries are quite different. In the United States, citizens expect leaders to be assertive and take action to achieve goals. On the other hand, Mexican citizens desire a leader who is trustworthy and in whom they can believe. In an educational context, graduates in the United States are expected to take control of people and tasks. The focus of Mexican education is on "consistency, reliability, and continuity" (Slater et al., p. 169) whereby students gain insight into their place in history. These findings have significant implications for the future preparation of

administrators within these cultures and for potential educational partnerships between these two nations.

Based upon 30 years of cross-cultural research in 70 countries, Hofstede and Hofstede (2005) have much to contribute to the discourse on intercultural collaborations. In the summary of their seminal research in *Cultures and Organizations: Software of the Mind*, Hofstede & Hofstede explained culture as "the collective programming of the mind that distinguishes the members of one group or category of people from another" (p. 4). Lewis (2006) defines culture as "the customs, beliefs, art and all the other products of human thought made by a particular group of people at a particular time" (p. 588). As a learned phenomenon, culture arises from a person's social environment. The complexity of the impact of culture on collaborative work is intensified by different levels including national, regional, gender level, generation, social class, and organizational.

Hofstede & Hofstede (2005) also defined five dimensions that characterize cultures of nations and peoples. Differences in these dimensions dramatically influence how people from different cultures work together. These dimensions are:

- Power distance—The extent to which the less powerful people in a society accept inequality in power and consider it as the norm.
- Collectivism versus individualism—This dimension is described on a continuum. Collectivism is a preference for a secure interwoven social framework whereby individuals in a group expect other members to look after their interests in exchange for unquestioned loyalty. The polar opposite is individualism in which

the social network is loosely knit and the paramount concern for individuals is the care of themselves and their immediate families.

- Uncertainty avoidance—The extent to which members of a society experience anxiety from situations perceived as unclear, unstructured, or unpredictable.
- Masculinity versus femininity—On a continuum, femininity demonstrates an inclination for relationships, modesty, caring for the weak, and quality of life. The converse, masculinity, prefers achievement, heroism, assertiveness, and material success.
- Long-term versus short-term orientation—A long-term view promotes values oriented toward future rewards such as perseverance and thrift. Other attributes held in high esteem include respect for the demands of virtue, sense of shame, and belief in frugality and order. A short-term orientation treasures personal steadiness and stability, respect for tradition, strong desire to 'save face,' and an obligation to fulfill social obligations.

As a result of their findings, these authors assert that intercultural cooperation is crucial to the future survival of society. In the MYO Place project, the Bulgarian and Tennessee educators have very different cultural experiences. The work of Hostede & Hofstede and Lewis (2006) was used in my research findings to understand the challenges to collaboration related to various cultural perspectives of the teams as they worked together.

Chapter Summary

Accelerated advances in technology have created rapid global changes with pervasive implications for education and the work of educators. This case study explored the collaborative efforts of teams of educators in the MYO Place project. While developing a common understanding of the goals of the MYO Place project, the Bulgaria and Tennessee leadership teams sought to create collaborative teams within their own context. The merger of the two teams forms a third intercultural team that may, in turn, strengthen the original collaborations.

The challenge for educators within the global context of the 21st century is to determine how to develop an educational process that honors the indigenous character of local communities yet prepares students for the economic realities of the global market place. Perhaps, this goal can best be accomplished through intercultural collaborative partnerships among educators. An exploration of the collaborative efforts of these teams of educators may contribute to stronger intercultural partnerships and enhanced learning opportunities for future students and educators.

CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY

Chapter Introduction

The “My Place, Your Place, Our Place (MYO Place)” project (Ross, 2002b) was the case examined in this research study. This chapter begins with a description of the research design. The participants are described and specific research procedures are explained. The research instruments used in this study are described in the context of the data collection process. The data analysis and verification processes are also detailed.

Research Design

This research utilized a qualitative case study approach. The purpose of this study was to analyze collaborations involving three teams of educators participating in the "My Place, Your Place, Our Place" project. This study was more narrowly focused on the following two research questions:

- What were the challenges in creating collaborations within the three teams of educators involved in the “My Place, Your Place, Our Place (MYO Place)” project?
- What were the similarities and differences in challenges across these three teams?

The three teams being studied included the Tennessee educators, the Bulgarian educators, and the cross-cultural combination of both teams.

These research questions were best answered through the use of a case study methodology. Creswell (1998) described case study as an investigation into a system

bound by time and space. This research was bound by the time and space constraints of the work of the educator teams within the MYO Place project. A case study approach is particularly suited for research involving the analysis of process and the acquisition of information that cannot be gained by other means (Merriam, 1998). The use of case study methods also allows for the examination of a phenomenon in greater depth, and involving the perspective of the participants most directly involved. The phenomenon of collaboration was the topic of investigation in this study. For these reasons, a qualitative case study is the design methodology of choice for this research.

Background of the Case—Study Participants

Within an educational context, new settings or collaborations are often created around projects or programs. The case examined in this study, the "My Place, Your Place, and Our Place (MYO Place)" project, was an example of such a collaboration. In January 2002, The University of Tennessee and Bourgas Free University in Bulgaria submitted a successful application to the U.S. Department of State to work in partnership on the proposed development of a learning model and curriculum called *My Place, Your Place and Our Place (MYO Place)* (Ross, 2002b). The underlying concept for the MYO Place concept was initially developed by professors and doctoral students in the Department of Education Administration and Policy Studies (EAPS) in The University of Tennessee College of Education, Health, and Human Science (CEHHS).

The principal author of the MYO Place grant proposal had previously completed dissertation research of an institution of higher education in Bulgaria (Ross, 2002a). This case study involved interviews of university professors and government leaders. A

network of collegial relationships emerged from this research contact with professors at Bourgas Free University. These relationships became the foundation for a partnership between The University of Tennessee, Knoxville and Bourgas Free University in Bourgas, Bulgaria that led to the joint development of the MYO Place grant proposal (Ross, 2002b). The grant proposal was an outgrowth of this graduate student's passion for internationalization of education and love for the country of Bulgaria (Ross). In this earlier research in Bulgaria, many similarities were observed between Tennessee and Bulgaria, as related to economic struggles and isolation (Ross). In Bulgaria and rural East Tennessee, the educational and economic success of graduates is gauged by the distance moved from home to earn a living. This departure of the "best and brightest" threatens economic health, cultural sustainability, and community survival. The $195,000 grant was awarded in October 2002 and work began on the two-year project.

The participants in this study were members of the Bulgaria and Tennessee leadership teams of the "My Place, Your Place, Our Place (MYO Place) project. All participants were educators representing various levels of the profession including K-12 and higher education (see Table 1). The 10 member Bulgaria leadership team includes four university faculty, three school administrators, and three classroom teachers. One university faculty member of the Bulgaria team was selected as a replacement for a participant who withdrew and was not interviewed. I was a member of the administrator sub-group of the Tennessee team and assumed the role of participant-observer in this study. The Tennessee Leadership Team was comprised of four university professors, five public school administrators, and two classroom teachers (see Table l).

Table 1

Participant Subgroups of MYO Place Project

	University		Classroom	
	Faculty	**Administrators**	**Teachers**	**Total**
Bulgaria Team	3	3	3	9
Tennessee Team	3	4	2	9
Teams Combined	6	7	5	18

One member of the Tennessee team served as project evaluator and was not asked to be interviewed as a study participant. The remaining 18 team members agreed to be interviewed for the study. Each leadership team spent considerable time working together prior to meeting face to face. The project included exchange visits of team members over two summers to learn about local culture, design curriculum, and develop a college course on the MYO Place model for both universities. The project promoted collaboration among educators and institutions (K-12 through higher education). Participating college professors, K-12 school administrators, and teachers from two diverse cultures developed the MYO Place teaching and learning model (Appendix A) and piloted the use of the model in the participating schools in both countries.

The theoretical frameworks for the MYO Place project were based upon pedagogy of place (place-based learning) (Theobald, 1997) and internationalization of curriculum (Mestenhauser and Ellingboe, 1998). Pedagogy of place promotes learning opportunities for students grounded in the local community. An often-contrary educational trend is to internationalize learning (Mestenhauser and Ellingboe) by stressing the importance of education for intercultural interaction in the global market place. The goal of the MYO Place project was to integrate local and international so that people, cultures, and places could become real to participants in both countries (Ross, 2002b).

Data Collection Procedures

The MYO Place project created a large database of information including meeting agendas and minutes, participant journals, project reports, responses to reflective questions, email correspondence, and other project documents. Data for this research were collected from interviews with participants, field notes, and project documents. Some of these data were gathered prior to the defense of my prospectus and approval of my research by the University of Tennessee Institutional Review Board. The principal documents included the grant proposal, a project notebook, project leaders' emails, my research journal, and three annual project reports (2003, 2004, and 2005). Thinking that the MYO Place project might be the subject of my dissertation research, I kept a notebook of project information including articles, meeting agendas and minutes, other handouts, and my personal reflections of the meetings of the Tennessee team. This notebook included project information collected from October 2002 through December

2004. The researcher journal was kept by me during the face to face meetings of the Tennessee and Bulgaria teams as they visited each other in the summer of 2003. My journal focused on the interaction of the two teams during their work together. The visit of the Tennessee team to Bulgaria occurred from May 30—June 10, 2003. The Bulgaria team visited Knoxville from August 21—September 2, 2003. Several other Tennessee team members also kept journals during these visits. A review of these journals during the data collection process yielded no significant contribution to the study. The project reports (2003, 2004, 2005) were an annual requirement for the grant by the U.S. Department of State. The project report for year one was submitted in January 2004 for the time period of September 16, 2002—September 16, 2003. Year two of the project covered September 2003—September 2004 and was submitted in December 2004. The final third year report was provided to the U.S. Department of State in December 2005 for the period of September 2004—September 2005. After a successful prospectus defense and approval by The University of Tennessee Institutional Review Board (Appendix C) on January 27, 2004, the 18 members of the Tennessee and Bulgaria leadership teams were invited to participate in this study. Field notes were kept by this researcher throughout the interview process and project participation. The data collection procedures for each data source are explained in the subsections that follow.

Interviews and Field Notes

The primary data collection process utilized in this study was semi-structured interviews of individual participants. Tennessee and Bulgaria team members received a copy of the informed consent form (Appendices C, D) explaining the specific procedures

for the research and the interview protocol (Appendices E, F) containing the interview questions. For non-English speaking participants, these forms were translated into the Bulgarian language (Appendices D, F). Participants were given adequate time to consider their involvement. As participants agreed to participate in the study, they signed the informed consent form and an extra copy was provided for their use and information prior to the beginning of the data collection process. The semi-structured interview protocol (Appendices E, F) was used to generate discussions and ensure that questions were followed with consistency. The interview began with an explanation of the process and the two general questions. The Group 1 questions (Appendices E, F) were posed to participants regarding their participation in the initial team setting – Bulgaria or Tennessee. The Group 2 questions (Appendices E, F) were asked of participants from their perspective as members of the setting created by the combination of the Bulgaria and Tennessee teams. The questions were not limited to those listed in the interview protocol. From time to time the sequencing of questions changed since an interviewee's response occasionally applied to more than one question. All interviews concluded with questions about the project impact upon participants and a request for advice for other educators who might be involved in a similar collaboration.

The interviews were conducted from January through August of 2004. Due to constraints of time and cost, the interviews with the Bulgaria team members were completed during a week-long visit to Bulgaria from January 30 to February 5, 2004. Five members of the Bulgaria team did not speak English. The project director for the Bulgaria leadership team translated the informed consent document and interview

protocol (Appendix E and G) into the Bulgarian language for non-English speaking participants. During the interviews of the non-English speaking participants, an interpreter was used. Interviews varied in length from 35 to 54 minutes. When an interpreter was needed, the length of the interview increased. The Tennessee team members were interviewed in the spring and summer of 2004. The interviews of Tennessee team members varied in length from 42 to 80 minutes. For the 18 participants, a total of 15 hours of audio interviews were transcribed for analysis.

Field notes were kept by the researcher as data were collected from the interview participants. These notes included comments and impressions during and after the interview sessions. These field notes were added to the transcription of interviews in the form of memos in the Ethnograph data files. These memos reflected researcher observations as interview data were collected. As a participant observer, the researcher also recorded other observation and reflections during development and implementation of the project.

Documents

Multiple data sources were reviewed during this research including a project notebook, participant journals, project reports, responses to reflective questions, and email correspondence. Participant journals were kept by several Tennessee team members during the combined work of the two teams. A review of these journals during the initial data collection process produced no meaningful contribution to the study. Five principal categories of documents were identified and analyzed as data sources. The principal documents included the grant proposal, a project notebook, email

correspondence between Bulgaria and Tennessee project leaders, my research journal, and three annual project reports (2003, 2004, 2005).

The "My Place, Your Place, and Our Place (MYO Place)" project was originally developed as a grant proposal submitted to the U.S. Department of State. The original grant proposal included the rationale for the project and the goals and objectives (Appendix H). The proposed products of the project included a teaching and learning model (Appendix A) and project-based units of study. The written proposal including the teaching and learning model were analyzed as a data source for this research.

The early planning and implementation of the project involved frequent communication between the project director in Bulgaria and the Tennessee project director and coordinator. The project director of the Bulgaria team was the primary contact for project planning. The Tennessee team divided the management responsibilities between a project director and project coordinator. The Tennessee project coordinator assumed the primary responsibility of coordinating the development of the project with the Bulgarian project director. Fourteen months of email correspondence between the Bulgarian project director and the Tennessee project coordinator were reviewed and appropriate sections were converted to text files for analysis.

The Tennessee project director and coordinator traveled to Bulgaria in December 2002 for an initial project planning meeting with key Bulgaria team leaders. The first face to face meeting of both teams occurred during the period of May 30 to June 11, 2003 when the Tennessee delegation traveled to Bulgaria. During this twelve day visit as a participant on the Tennessee team, I kept a detailed journal of the developing design and

implementation work of the project and the daily interaction of the participants. The Bulgaria team visited Tennessee from August 21 through September 2, 2003. I continued some journaling for this visit, but my work scheduled prevented me from participating in all of the school site visits. This journal was converted to text files and analyzed using Ethnograph. At this point, I was developing the format for this case study research, but my prospectus was not approved until January 2004.

Annual progress reports on the project were submitted to the funding agency, the U.S. Department of State. The report for year one covered September 16, 2002 through September 16, 2003 and was presented in January 2004. The year two report was for the period of September 2003 to September 2004 and was submitted in December, 2004. The final project report encompassed September 2004 to September 2005 and was filed in December 2005. These reports were written primarily by the project leadership in Tennessee with input from various participants. Each traveling participant was asked to complete an individual report on their experience. These reflections were included in the annual report. These reports were analyzed for supporting or contrasting evidence of prior themes and findings discovered in the other data sources.

Several steps were taken to protect the participants (Appendices C, D, E, F). Codes were assigned to participants to protect their identity. No identifying information was used to connect participants to the study. Quotes or related data were not attributed to any named individual. All participants are known by the researcher; therefore, anonymity cannot be guaranteed but individual confidentiality was assured. A transcriptionist was used to transcribe the interviews, and a confidentiality agreement (Appendix I) was

signed. After the transcripts were reviewed for accuracy, the audiotapes were erased. Electronic copies of the data were stored on the researcher's computer, on floppy discs, and in hard copy form. Access to the data was restricted to the researcher and the transcriber.

Data Analysis

The conceptual frame for this study was based upon Sarason's (1972) theory of the "creation of settings." Sarason (1972) defined the creation of a setting as "any instance in which two or more people come together in new relationships over a sustained period of time in order to achieve certain goals" (p. 1). This evolutionary process occurs in the following seven recognizable non-sequential phases: "consensus on values, substantive knowledge, a historical stance, a realistic time perspective, adequate resources, vehicles of criticism, and the necessity for and the evils of leadership" (p. 6). The interview questions for this study were derived from these components (Appendices I, J) and provided codes for analysis of the data.

The qualitative software program, Ethnograph Version 5.0, was used as a data management and analysis tool. This program allowed the researcher to analyze texts of interviews and documents by coding and sorting text files across selected settings. Within the Program Manager of the software, a project was created to contain all files. Appropriate child projects (subsets of files) were also created. For example, the transcripts of all Tennessee interviews were placed in a child project. Transcripts from Bulgaria team members were placed in a separate child project. Participant responses to the questions related to be combined teams were isolated from the remaining data by

search procedures within Ethnograph. These procedures allowed data to be analyzed specific to the design of the study – Tennessee team, Bulgaria team, and the combined teams.

Interview transcripts and artifact text files were Word documents. These documents were copied and pasted into the Ethnograph Editor. After initial scanning of the text files of the various data sources, preliminary codes were established to begin the analysis process. These decisions were framed by a reliance on Sarason's (1972) components of the theory of setting creation. Codes used in the initial examination of the data included planning, values, goals, conflict, confusion, cooperation, mission, collaboration, leadership, and relationship(s). Initial codes were revised as the data continued to be analyzed. The first transcripts of interviews and project artifacts were coded as other participants continued to be interviewed and other documents examined. Each text file was numbered to protect confidentiality of participants. As text files were studied, sections were assigned an appropriate code that described the content. Follow-up strategies to address clarifications in transcripts included the use of email with the Bulgaria team members and email, phone calls, and additional face-to-face dialogue with Tennessee participants. Researcher hunches and surprises were also recorded along side the data in memo form. Additionally, a journal of general impressions was kept on each file as it was analyzed. Later, these observations were converted to file memos.

Initially, the interview transcripts, field notes, and project documents were analyzed and compared between the two original settings: the Bulgaria team and Tennessee team. The principal documents included the grant proposal, a project

notebook, project leaders' emails, my research journal, and three annual project reports (2003, 2004, and 2005). Data for setting three (combined teams) included responses to the Group 2 interview questions (Appendices E, F) and other data sources. On succeeding reviews of these multiple data sources, codes were created and assigned to sections of the data to identify categories or themes (within and between the three settings).

The repeating cycle of collecting data, thinking about it, and noticing additional things continued throughout the analysis process. Data were collected and analyzed, and the researcher thought about the process in the moment. Simultaneously, the researcher noticed new things to collect. Data collection and analysis continued as a simultaneous and iterative process (Creswell, 2002; Seidel, 1998). In subsequent examinations of the data, codes (Appendix L) were revised and organized into families consistent with the original conceptual framework (Sarason, 1972) of the study. Each data source was analyzed in a similar fashion creating additional codes and code families. The definitions of code words were also modified. These refined code words were used in the subsequent data searches in Ethnograph to compile themes and categories across various subsets of data. As additional insights were noted, previously analyzed data was re-examined for new findings. Additional insights arose from this recursive process. Researcher memos continued to be recorded and analyzed throughout the process. This constant comparative process generated the major ideas that allowed the researcher to record the findings and conclusions of the study.

Direct quotes from interview transcriptions, field notes and documents were frequently used in summarizing the findings of this study. For the sake of brevity and

clarity of meaning, lengthy quotes were reduced to the relevant portions that support the findings. This process was performed meticulously to preserve the complete meaning of a quote. In such cases, three spaced ellipsis points (…) were used to indicate the omission of superfluous phrases from the transcripts. To represent the exclusion of complete sentences, four points were used. In some cases, the researcher introduced the use of a word or phrase into the gap if the meaning was obvious based upon the context. These interjected terms were enclosed with brackets.

Data Trustworthiness

To validate the findings of this research, multiple data sources were utilized. These sources that were examined included interview data, field notes, meeting agendas and minutes, researcher journal, project reports, responses to reflective questions posed during project planning and implementation, email correspondence, and the original grant proposal. As the analysis process continued, a point of saturation became apparent. I was no longer gaining any additional information so a decision was made to focus the continued analysis more narrowly on the interviews of the 18 participants, research field notes, and the principal documents including the grant proposal, my project notebook, email correspondence between the Bulgarian project director and the Tennessee project coordinator, my research journal, and three annual project reports (2003, 2004, 2005). As themes were evident in one data source, the researcher examined other data for collaborating evidence. These efforts in triangulation of multiple sources supported the accuracy and credibility of the findings.

Chapter Summary

A case study is an investigation involving the analysis of process and the acquisition of information in a system bound by time and space. The educator teams within the MYO Place project are such a case. The phenomenon of collaboration was the topic of investigation. My research questions are best answered through the use of a case study methodology. The clarity of the methods and the data analysis procedures also increase the trustworthiness of the findings.

CHAPTER IV

ANALYSIS—THE TENNESSEE SETTING

Chapter Introduction

The purpose of this qualitative case study was to analyze collaborations involving three teams of educators participating in the "My Place, Your Place, Our Place" project. The research questions for this study were:

- What were the challenges in creating collaborations within the three teams of educators involved in the “My Place, Your Place, Our Place (MYO Place)” project?
- What were the similarities and differences in challenges across these three teams?

These research questions were applied to the three settings – the Tennessee setting, the Bulgaria setting, and the setting created when the groups combined. The analysis of the challenges in creating collaborations within the Tennessee setting is presented in this chapter. The analysis of challenges in creating collaborations within the Bulgaria setting and the combined team setting are presented in Chapters V and VI respectively. Chapter VI will also include an analysis of the findings related to the similarities and differences in the challenges to collaboration across the three teams. Each chapter will begin with an introduction containing pertinent background information about the project and the participants within each setting. The research questions and the theoretical lens of Sarason’s theory of the creation of settings provide the basic outline for each chapter.

The Tennessee Setting—Origin of the Project and Selection of Participants

The MYO Place project originated at the University of Tennessee within the Department of Educational Administration and Policy Studies. Professors within the department had previously discussed the possible addition of an international study component to the curriculum of the doctoral program. As a result, a cohort of doctoral students completed a summer international study experience in England in 2001. Several members of this group were later invited to participate in the MYO Place project. A University of Tennessee professor who later became the project director for the Tennessee team explained the initial discussions leading to this project:

> About two years ago, the Department of Educational Administration, in some conversations we had among ourselves as faculty members, decided that we wanted to create…a greater international thrust. So it was an outgrowth of our trip to England that we had done the year before and part of it was an interest on the part of a couple of us as faculty members in international affairs. We had a little bit of seed money available to us that we used to help in the proposal writing. (Participant #T7 Interview, April 14, 2004)

A recent graduate of the department became the primary author of the grant proposal by virtue of international experience through dissertation research within the country of Bulgaria. The proposal development from the outset required the identification of a team of Tennessee participants.

The original Tennessee team was composed of 10 members (see Table 2).

Table 2

Tennessee Team Participants

Code – Participant	Faculty/School Affiliation	Project; Sub-Team Roles
T1 – Teacher	High School	Global, Computer Team
T2 – Principal*	K-12 School	Global, Hospitality Team
T3 – District Supervisor*	Curriculum Specialist	Learning Community
T4 – Professor	University of Tennessee	Learning Community
T5 – Author of Proposal	University of Tennessee	Project Coordinator
T6 – Principal*	Elementary School	Project-Based Learning
T7 – Professor	University of Tennessee	Project Director
T8 – Teacher	High School	Place-Based, Computer
T9 – Principal	High School	Place-Based Learning
T10 – Researcher*	Curriculum Specialist	Place-Based Learning

*Denotes doctoral students

The group included college professors at The University of Tennessee at Knoxville, and K-12 principals, supervisors, and classroom teachers representing four area school districts in East Tennessee. Four team members were enrolled in doctoral studies at The University of Tennessee. The professors and graduate students were well-acquainted as a result of their joint participation in a cohort model for doctoral studies. The professors coordinated and taught educational administration and policy studies within the Graff

Scholars Program at the University of Tennessee in Knoxville. The two classroom teachers from the participating districts were invited to participate by two other team members. Seven members of the team had a prior interest in internationalization of education. Five members were previously involved in the summer international study experience in England in 2001. Individuals were selected based upon specific experiences and skills that would enhance the total capacity of the team. The grant proposal was funded and the work began in earnest in the fall of 2002.

The approval of the MYO Place project by the U.S. State Department was met with exuberance from the entire Tennessee team and by the frequent question, "Where exactly is Bulgaria?" The proposal had been written and submitted months earlier by one primary Tennessee author with minimal assistance from two other Tennessee team members and input from the anticipated project director in Bulgaria. The other seven Tennessee team members had previously consented to participate and provided a one page vita for inclusion in the proposal. The second question pondered by the team was, "What did we say we would do?" This challenge was explained by the project director:

> We didn't know at that point…exactly what the project was to entail, but once it was funded then all of a sudden reality hits and you say who, what have we agreed to do here? Now you look back and read it seriously at that particular point. (Participant #T7 Interview, April 14, 2004)

When participants were initially invited to become involved, they understood that the project included a study experience in Bulgaria for the entire Tennessee team. Seven of the 10 participants were not involved in the proposal development process. At the

beginning, the project purpose, goals, and objectives were relatively unknown or forgotten by the participants (Project Notebook, January 2003).

The Tennessee project director spoke of the background of shared experiences among the Tennessee team members:

> Most of us already knew each other as students or as faculty members. There were probably only a couple of members of the initial group…that were not part of the kind of inside cluster…a number of graduate students and several of us as faculty members. So there wasn't a problem of having some conceptual framework in which to kind of classify people, and know who they were and what their skills were, and what they did. (Participant #T7 Interview, April 14, 2004)

The members of the Tennessee team shared many commonalities. A teacher on the team spoke of the purposes common to the Tennessee educators:

> I think ultimately, though, all of us had that common bond of being an educator regardless of what level. We're all educators at heart…. all of us appreciate and value education.…Our ultimate goal is to help other people in the field of education, whether it be at the college level, at the junior high level, whether it be helping teachers from a supervisory level. …all of us had that common thread of education, and I think that showed through in the way that we were able to put aside our differences, our diversities in a way that it did not become stumbling blocks for the whole group. (Participant #T8 Interview, August 29, 2004)

Tennessee participants were educators actively engaged in professional practice albeit at different levels. The majority of the team members were interested in international

education upon which the MYO Place project was based. In their own fields, these educators were recognized as innovative and progressive in terms of professional practice. The Tennessee team remained substantially intact throughout the project; although career demands, family commitments, and other factors impacted the consistency of participation.

Using Sarason's Theory in Data Analysis

Although Sarason (1972) described seven components in his theory, he explained that the creation of settings is a complex process which should not be viewed as chronologically evolving stages or phases. The components of Sarason's theory were used to develop the interview questions (Appendix J) for the collection of data. They were also used to frame the initial and final codes in the analysis of all data sources. With an understanding of the membership of the Tennessee team, project purpose, and the data analysis process, the findings specific to the first research question are discussed.

Research Question 1: What were the challenges in creating collaborations within the three teams of educators involved in the "My Place, Your Place, Our Place (MYO Place)" project?

The challenges to creating collaboration within the Tennessee team were varied and interlinked. The Tennessee team struggled to achieve consensus on the values and goals of the project. Coupled with this difficulty were deficiencies in the participant's conceptual understanding of the multiple theoretical frameworks of the project. The greatest challenge proved to be the lack of time for participants to give to the project outside their countless personal and professional responsibilities. Although the participants were generally pleased with the sufficiency of available resources, certain

non-monetary resources were deemed inadequate. These inadequacies included the lack of human capital meaning the volume of work attempted by the team exceeded the capacity of the 10 participants. Also, the time needed for project management seemed insufficient. In view of these inadequacies of resources, concerns were expressed about the successful project completion, sustainability, and potential future expansion.
Some threats to collaboration occurred around the past history of professional roles of the Tennessee participants. Teachers, principals, supervisors, and university professors brought multiple perspectives to the work of the project.

In terms of governance, the Tennessee team failed to establish explicit norms to deal with the inevitable conflict that arose. Other issues emerged in the attempt to achieve shared leadership and ownership by all participants. Some successes were achieved in this pursuit, but many concerns and issues remained unresolved. The inability to deal with these difficulties could be attributed to the earlier failure to establish explicit group norms to deal with such dilemmas. These challenges to collaboration impacted project development and implementation and the future sustainability and potential expansion of the work.

Lack of Consensus on Values and Goals

Within Sarason's (1972) theory of the creation of settings, consensus on values and goals is the beginning point. When a new group forms and begins its work, the ability of the participants to reach agreement on basic values and goals for the setting is a critical first step. For the purpose of this research, the guiding questions for component one of Sarason's theory was: What were the values and/or goals of the MYO Place project and

how was consensus achieved? Each member of the Tennessee team received a copy of the original grant proposal including the project statement of objectives (Appendix H). These objectives included the activities within the project timetable and the proposed summative outcomes. The narrative portion of the proposal mentioned the values inherent in the planning and implementation of the project (Ross, 2002b). These values included appreciation of the cultures of self and others and the development of skills needed to interact with members of another culture. Nonetheless, the analysis of the data indicates that the theme of lack of consensus on project goals was a challenge to collaboration for the Tennessee team.

To explore this values/goal consensus element, data from documents, field notes, and interviews were analyzed. During the interviews of team members, each participant was asked to explain how the group organized itself for the work (Appendix J). The Tennessee team leaders (director and coordinator) scheduled meetings and developed agendas for these work sessions. The project director spoke of this early work:

> The first major task was to look ahead to the first summer with our trip to Bulgaria and then ultimately the Bulgarians' trip to Tennessee. And to lay out our work plan, what we needed to do before we went to Bulgaria, what kind of presentations we thought we needed to make to introduce the Bulgarians to the task at hand and assign out different responsibilities to different members of the team for presentations. (Participant #T7 Interview, April 14, 2007)

After a couple of initial meetings, the project leaders sought input from the team in the development of a shared agenda. An email request was sent several days prior to each

meeting. Meetings were held at least monthly in the fall of 2002 and spring of 2003 in preparation for the travel of both teams in the summer of 2003 (Project Notebook, March 2003). The project director explained the process in the development of shared meeting agendas:

> Often as we were planning for a particular meeting, [the project coordinator] and I would usually sit down and brainstorm and figure out, you know, what are the next steps? What are the topics? Sometimes we would call one of you to ask was there anything else, or we would send out an e-mail and say have you got something for the agenda. …We kept them pretty open so that other people could contribute ahead to the agenda and even the evening of the meeting could add an item if need be. (Participant #T7 Interview, April 24, 2004)

Another team member spoke of these meetings and their significance in the early work of the project:

> We spent considerable time before the trip to Bulgaria meeting as a group. We met at least monthly at various places….We spent some time getting to know one another…we would talk about global understanding and global thinking and during those times we were able to interact… These were also dinner meetings and that gave us some time to interact with one another in a real informal format where we were able to talk and to learn about the different participants. (Tennessee Participant #T9, August 14, 2004)

The majority of the team members knew each other from past interactions. The meetings did serve to deepen relationships among team members. Although the organization and

administration of the Tennessee team meetings addressed significant organization elements of the project, a minimal amount of agenda time was given to the development of a consensus of values and mutual understandings of project goals (Field Notes, May 12, 2003). The development of the work plan for project activities consumed the bulk of the team meeting time. In a reflection following a meeting, one participant wrote of the frustration:

> I am still extremely frustrated that things seem to constantly change every time we meet. I have always felt and still feel that this project has tremendous potential as a learning experience for both teams. But I have always felt that it lacks a clear vision, which is why there is no clearly defined path. How can you get there if you don't know where you are going? (Participant #T3 Reflection from Project Notebook, May 12, 2003)

The team continued to struggle with development of a common understanding of project goals and values as a great deal of energy was expended on planning for international travel.

The original grant proposal certainly contained references to the importance of specific embedded values including intercultural understanding and appreciation for diversity; appreciation for local place and a larger international perspective; excellence in learning opportunities for participating students and educators; and the need for trust, unity, and peace in a global community (Ross, 2002b). In email communication with the Bulgarian project director, the Tennessee project coordinator expressed a view of the potential long-term significance of the project:

> That is why projects like ours are so important, I firmly believe. Once we make personal connections outside our own world, we are more likely to see tragedies in human terms rather than simply as items in the newspaper. If we can all collectively raise a single generation of children who understand that, we might have a chance to change things. That has been my driving mission for a long time, and it gives me tremendous satisfaction to have this project to provide students in both countries the opportunity to share "our place," make contact with "your place," and learn to think of "our place" as deserving of peace for all. I feel an urgency to make our project count for peace somehow. (Email Communication: Tennessee and Bulgaria Project Leaders, Oct. 25, 2002)

Although this statement and project activities explicitly described the long-range potential of the project, limited time was given to this worthy goal during the initial project planning meetings (Project Notebook, April 2003). International team building activities were taught during several team meetings. Topics related to intercultural communications were also discussed. The other previously mentioned values received little or no overt attention. A project director succinctly captured the dilemma about underlying values: “It is awfully hard to write a value into something that is concrete. We must keep values in mind to help with what the outcomes will be” (Ross, 2003b, p. 76).

As the project evolved, the Tennessee team’s struggle with agreement on project values and goals continued. This theme of lack of consensus became a major challenge to collaboration as the project developed further. To explore the consensus issue in greater

depth, another question (Appendix J) was posed to the team members. Did your team come to agreement on the fundamental values and goals that support the project? How was this accomplished? If not, what prevented this from happening?

The project director spoke positively about the clarity of purpose and mission in the early stages of the work of the Tennessee team:

> Similarly when we went to Bulgaria, the parts that we had to do to get ready. The sense of what our mission was going to be and the presentations that were developed here before we left that we took over there and presented, I was extremely pleased. In fact, numerous times I would comment…how lucky we were…really…that we've put together a team, by design. But still people who were willing to participate, that had the diversity on it and still the support you know that everyone had for the project. (Participant #T7 Interview, April 24, 2004)

Two other team members responded affirmatively in regard to the presence of consensus among team members about project goals.

> I think there was general consensus. On a scale from 1-5, to me it would be a 3. We give and take a little on some things that we were deciding to do. Some members of the group wanted to focus on a little bit different goals before we went over there. But, that was hammered out, I thought. (Participant #T2 Interview, April 7, 2004)

The participants did not reference personal and/or organizational values, but instead, discussed the specific goals of the project as written into the grant.

> The fundamental values and goals of the project were the project goals of the grant itself. [The project coordinator] was very good in sharing those with us. We hashed them out, took some time during several different meetings to talk about them. We got into some good discussions, even down to the point of…is this the proper word to use in order to express the feelings of what we want to accomplish? There were times of compromise. … All in all, I never felt that anybody was a renegade or that anybody was trying to undermine the purposes of the grant. (Participant #T8 Interview, August 29, 2004)

The statement of objectives (Appendix H) defined the fundamental nature of the project (Ross, 2002b). These objectives were the quantifiable formative and summative goals upon which the evaluation of project would be based. With the pressing timelines during the first year of the project, the lion's share of the time of the Tennessee team was devoted to project activities rather than developing a thorough consensual understanding of the ultimate purpose of the work (Field Notes, May 26, 2003).

In reflecting on the early work, other team members had different perspectives of the attention given to the development of consensus on values and project goals:

> I think there are fundamental values and goals for the project, but I think that they were part of the grant design. I don't think as a team…I don't remember spending lots of time talking about these things. I mean, I'm sure that we did review them and talk about them at the first, and I'm sure I have several handouts with those on them, but they were already in place. (Participant #T6 Interview, April 14, 2004)

Other Tennessee team members expressed a view that the lack of consensus of project purpose and goals was a major obstacle in the implementation of the project. Of the nine team members who were interviewed, six expressed some reservation about their personal understanding of the goals and general lack of clarity for the entire team. An example of this perspective included the following:

> That's one of the issues I think that's bothered me throughout the initial part of the process. I didn't feel like, it might have been just my point of view, but there was no clear understanding about what the goals and values…that supported the project, what the project was really all about, you know. And so, I felt like we were just sort of, for me, just sort of stumbling around in the dark. (Participant #T3 Interview, April 12, 2004)

Another team member mentioned the need for clear project goals and expectations for participants early in the process. This person expressed some frustration by stating these concerns: “Not really knowing where we were going from the beginning, not really having a clear understanding of what was expected and what my contributions would be, and what was expected of me…”(Participant #T6 Interview, April 14, 2004). This lack of clarity led to some tension as expressed by another participant:

> And some of these missing parts are what we are dealing with right now….It creates confusion, and a little hurt feelings, maybe, sensitivities that we are not doing it right. Again, if we agreed upon a set format in the beginning, and we really didn't. We just sort of played at it. …thinking about these things on the

front end prevents a lot of confusion and misunderstandings on the backend. (Participant #T3 Interview, April 12, 2004)

This assessment which came much later in the life of the project did not take into account the continually emerging development of the conceptual frame of the MYO Place learning model. This continuum model (Appendix A) was revised several times in the early months of the project (Ross, 2003b). In fact, the goals and objectives (Appendix M) were also modified substantially at the completion of year one of the project (Ross, 2003b). These revised objectives more succinctly captured the project as it continued to evolve. A copy of the Year One Annual Report was provided to all Tennessee team members. The revised goals and objectives were discussed in team meetings, but not in sufficient depth for all to comprehend (Field Notes, March 2004). Although individual participants expressed a lack of clarity about purpose and goals during project implementation, these concerns were not discussed in the team meetings. This dilemma points to the increased difficulty of achieving true consensual purpose in a setting where the goals are undergoing dramatic revision.

In summary, the theme of lack of consensus regarding values and goals was a key challenge to collaboration among the Tennessee team members, and in fact, influenced other aspects of the groups' work. In the initial stages of implementation, the team members diligently applied themselves to the predetermined activities within the project timetable, but the majority of team members described a lack of consensus of project values and goals that later resulted in confusion and struggles in project development and

implementation. When several team members did not meet deadlines for completion of assigned work, one team member attributed this failure to a lack of consensus.

> Because, we are so busy. But, maybe…we tend to do what we really value. Maybe, it goes back to that…we haven't really seen clearly what we are trying to do, and we haven't really bought into the purpose of it with any real deep commitment. I think that's probably the reason. (Participant #T4 Interview, April 13, 2004)

Although a couple of the team members spoke of some agreement on project goals, this theme of lack of consensus created a challenge to collaboration and ultimately to the potential success and sustainability of the project.

Deficiencies in Conceptual Understanding (What and How Overwhelm Why)

Consensus of values/goals and the substantive knowledge component of Sarason's (1972) theory are closely connected. Within Sarason's framework, substantive knowledge goes beyond shared values to significant knowledge and skills required of participants to meet the original purpose(s) for which the setting was created. To meet project goals and objectives, it was necessary for participants to thoroughly understand the multiple conceptual frames contained within the MYO Place Curriculum and Instruction Design (Appendix A) upon which the project was based (Ross, 2003b). These deficiencies in conceptual understanding proved to be a challenge to collaboration for the Tennessee team.

One of the project objectives (Appendix H) was "to teach participating educators the theory, practice, philosophy, and literature contributing to the MYO Place model"

(Ross, 2002b, p. 14). In teaching others, the Tennessee participants would need to acquire this knowledge and understanding for themselves. Understanding the underlying conceptual theories and their interwoven nature within the MYO Place Design (Appendix A) would prove to be a daunting task for the Tennessee team.

Some team members expressed exasperation regarding the evolution of the project during the first year of the implementation process. In fact, the project coordinator captured the crux of the challenge felt by other team members.

> I really struggled early on…about organization, about division of labor and who does what….I was coming up with a lot of configurations of how things might be. I tried to communicate to people—this is not a full-blown project. We're all working on this project. And I felt some frustration at some stages. People saying, okay what is this and what is that? Well, we don't know because we're making this up as we go, and so there were…paths we started down that really were too complex. So anyway I think what we eventually evolved into makes more sense. But we struggled with that early on. (Participant #T5 Interview, April 13, 2004)

The MYO Place Curriculum and Instruction Design (Appendix A) was developed during the first few months of the project (Ross, 2003b). This continuum model served as the progressive template for the planning and implementation of the project. The complexity of the design contributed to the previously explained lack of clarity of project purpose and to the frustration later expressed by some team members (Field Notes, April 2004).

The project coordinator also articulated some frustration regarding the difficulty in conveying the meaning of the curriculum design.

> My concern is that I don't know for sure that I've ever communicated…. there is a way that this original concept, at least, was written that I do try to hold firm. And I feel some tension sometimes because of this…not clearly understanding. (Participant #T5 Interview, April 13, 2004)

The project director and coordinator devoted enormous amounts of time and energy to the early organizational elements of the project and the development of the MYO Place Curriculum and Instruction Design.

This challenge to collaboration for the Tennessee team can best be described as the deficiencies in conceptual understanding "what and how overwhelm why." The timelines of the project created a pressure to achieve the "what" and "how" at the sacrifice of "why." The "what" included the stated project outcomes. The suggested activities became the necessary "how" to achieve the proposed goals. The "why" involved the conceptual understanding embedded within the multiple interwoven theoretical frameworks of the project. These frameworks were place-based learning, global education, learning community theory, and project-based learning. Place-based learning and global education were the original conceptual elements upon which the MYO Place project was based. Learning community theory was later added to the Curriculum and Instruction Design model (Ross, 2003b). Also, project-based learning became the pedagogical tool for educators to use in the design of instructional units of

study. All components are illustrated in the continuum of the MYO Place Curriculum and Instruction Design model (Appendix A).

During interview sessions, the Tennessee team members were asked if they gained additional knowledge or skills for participation in the project (Appendix J). If so, how were these skills obtained? If not, what prevented you from acquiring the necessary knowledge and skills? When participants were interviewed 18 months into the project, many reflected on the confusion about project purpose and goals from the beginning. These participants also frequently mentioned their concerns regarding the ambiguity around the underlying conceptual frames for the project.

> I think that too much was crammed into what we were trying to do.…I'm not sure that they [project director and coordinator] had a clear understanding either. I may be wrong.… Maybe, I'm the only one in the whole group that doesn't have a clear understanding of what we are about and the goal of the project. (Participant #T3 Interview, April 12, 2004)

The emerging nature of the multiple conceptual frames was unsettling to some participants. During interviews of Tennessee team members, several expressed these concerns. However, these issues were not openly discussed in the early months of team planning (Project Notebook, March 2003). Another example of this lack of understanding follows:

> I think that has been a real struggle all along. Really knowing what it was that we were trying to accomplish in the project. I think…we assumed that everybody understood. But I think as we went along, it became more and more clear that we

> really didn't know – have a clear understanding of our purpose. (Participant #T4 Interview, April 13, 2004)

Some team members obviously longed for a clear understanding of the project design from the outset; but, in fact, the concepts were emerging as the project was implemented. The "work in progress" nature of the project was explained by the Tennessee project coordinator at the first meeting of the Tennessee and Bulgaria teams. "We are early in the process. It is not a finished product. We are on a two year funding timeline which requires continued work together to establish curriculum and instructional models." (Field Notes, June 1, 2003) The deficiencies in participants conceptual understanding of the multiple theoretical frameworks of the project was a significant challenge to collaboration.

Achieving the goals of the project was dependent upon the participant's conceptual understanding of the MYO Place model. One of the key goals of the original project proposal was "to develop a prototype of an educational model to be called the My Place, Your Place, and Our Place Learning Model" (Ross, 2002b, p. 14). This model was later termed the MYO Place Curriculum and Instruction Design (Appendix A). The model diagrammatically illustrated the multiple interwoven theoretical frames of the project. A thorough knowledge of this model by the participants was critical to a holistic understanding of the overall purpose of the project.

The Tennessee team members were interviewed 18 to 22 months into the implementation of the project. With the value of hindsight, one participant offered

recommendations for enhancing goal clarity, conceptual knowledge, and participant understanding from the outset.

> I think probably, again, setting the initial goals from the very first meeting. Visually…talking about the goals of the project. This is what we are trying to do. Does anybody have any questions about this? Does anybody have any concerns about this? Also, to have laid out the time involvement. This is going to take this amount of time, this amount of commitment from you. Can you do this? (Participant #T3 Interview, April 12, 2004)

In addition to the need for identified responsibilities, this participant expressed a need for established deadlines for the assigned action items.

The Tennessee team members also mentioned other substantive knowledge that became important in the work of the project. These facets appeared with some regularity during interviews with the Tennessee participants: international travel, intercultural relations, teamwork, and presentation skills using an interpreter. For example, the knowledge and skills in international travel were of considerable interest. Prior to the MYO Place project, only one team member had previously visited Bulgaria. Half of the team had minimal international travel experience. Two team members had not traveled outside the United States. A great deal of planning was required to deal with the various elements of international travel and the preparation to experience another culture (Project Notebook, May 26, 2003). Considerable time was given to these tasks in the team meetings.

All team members had a copy of the complete grant proposal including the statement of objectives. The project objectives were frequently mentioned in the planning meetings of the Tennessee team. A variety of other topics were also given some attention including global education and place-based learning. Significant time was allocated for skills in intercultural communication. As the date for the first team visit to Bulgaria rapidly approached, a great deal of team planning time was consumed with the pressing details of international travel. Several team members praised the project coordinator for the thorough preparation in these areas. They indicated that this knowledge and skill building relieved much of their anxiety prior to the travel abroad (Field Notes, April 14, 2003). In a project of this magnitude and complexity, these other elements of substantive knowledge were important. These aspects were connected to the project timelines and pointed to the pressure to deal with the urgency of "what" and "how." But a pre-occupation with the immediate clouded the ability of the team to deal with the broader purposes of "why."

Several Tennessee team members wrestled with fully comprehending the complex integration of the four conceptual frames of the project (Appendix A), and this struggle became a challenge to collaboration within the team. The need to merge the conceptual frameworks was emphasized in the first meeting of the two teams in Bulgaria in June 2003 when a Tennessee team member addressed a pointed comment to the project director: "I think there is a need to integrate all the components into one model" (Ross, 2003b). The MYO Place model was only in the formative stages of development within

the original grant proposal. The model would be further refined during the first year of the project. This fact was acknowledged initially by the project coordinator.

> It had to be [a work in progress], it was defined that way. Although I always had something in my head about what I wanted it to be and how I wanted it to get there. I was…trying to make it kind of a group thing of how we got from point A to point B. (Participant #T5 Interview, April 13, 2004)

While the project director and coordinator were aware of this struggle early in the project, other team members seemed oblivious to this fact until much later in the work. (Researcher Journal, June 2003).

In response to interview questions, two team members discussed specifics of this struggle with the various conceptual theories. One team member spoke of the complex nature of the multiple frameworks of the project:

> …so much time was spent initially on focusing us on Bulgaria and understanding what we were going to be experiencing in our upcoming visit that we didn't take the time, that I think was so necessary, to take every one of the pieces of our goals and really explore them in our team. We didn't talk about community and what it was. We didn't talk about place and what it was. We used the terms, but I don't think there was a real clear understanding on the part of all of us on how those pieces fit together, and what we were trying to really accomplish. And, I think this is still the case. The tool for getting us to our goal almost became the goal. The PBL [project-based learning] process almost became the goal rather than the sharing of cultures and exploring my place and your place and building

> connections. It seemed to me, while the PBL was a wonderful tool, it kind of got in the way of that somehow. (Participant #T4 Interview, April 13, 2004)

In the first joint meeting of the Bulgaria and Tennessee teams, another participant underscored this concern by stating, "[Project Director], we struggled as a Tennessee team [on PBLs] and met for many months." (Ross, 2003b, p. 75) These concerns expressed several months into the project captured the essence of the struggles experienced by the Tennessee team as they pursued the implementation of the project. Developing conceptual understanding and connections between place-based learning, global education, learning community theory, and project-based learning proved to be an extremely complex endeavor. The "why" became subservient to the urgency of "what" (project goals) and "how" (activities). These deficiencies in conceptual understanding undermined collaboration in the work of the Tennessee team.

Lack of Time—The Greatest Challenge

In discussing realistic time perspective, Sarason (1972) emphasized the need for a flexible timetable for the success of a new setting. The creation of a new setting typically involves the development of goals and objectives and a timetable for their accomplishment. The target dates for completion of the various tasks in the timetable will be determined by a number of factors. The timetable is almost always impacted by established project benchmarks or budgetary limitations. As typical with grant supported projects, the work of MYO Place was funded for a specified time, in this case two years. The original proposal contained a rather ambitious schedule of activities to accomplish the objectives of the project (Ross, 2002b). Very little funding was allocated for project

management. The magnitude and complexity of the project could have justified a full-time project manager. With the exception of one person, all Tennessee team members were full-time employees in their respective positions (see Table 2). Each person also had other personal and family responsibilities. Four team members were also graduate students working on doctoral dissertations. The two-year time frame led to the creation of rather rigid timelines to meet project objectives and outcomes as specified in the grant proposal. Because a small amount of funding remained at the end of the second year, a third year of continued work on the project was allowed by the agency that awarded the grant.

The Tennessee team agreed to meet at least monthly as the project got underway. The meetings were usually held on weekday evenings to accommodate the schedules of participants. Due to the objectives and the complexity of the project, the meeting agendas were quite lengthy, often lasting in excess of three hours. Participants lived in five different counties in Tennessee with some team members traveling an hour to meet at a central location.

During the interview data collection process, participants were asked how they and their team dealt with the project timelines (Appendix J). Although the responses were quite varied, time was an issue for all participants. Lack of time was the greatest challenge to collaboration for all participants. One person explained:

> It was probably the most frustrating aspect of the entire project for me. I never really felt like I either took the time or I had the time to take to put forth the effort

> that I really need to put to be an effective member. (Participant #T8 Interview, August 29, 2004)

A similar concern was echoed by another participant:

> The time factor has been a killer for me. I even thought about dropping out in the second round because to be a part of the team, you ought to contribute to what the team does. And I felt like I wasn't able to give the time that the…project is demanding. (Participant #T3 Interview, April 12, 2004)

These frustrations were less common in the early months of the project (Project Notebook, April 2003). This reality may be attributed to the excitement created by this new adventure and the initial lack of understanding as to the amount of time required for the project. As the project unfolded, the time demands increased for the team members.

Deadlines were set for various aspects of the work as the project progressed. The first face to face meeting of both teams occurred in June 2003 when the entire Tennessee team traveled to Bulgaria. Travel arrangements had to be made by each participant, and the project director and coordinator had the added responsibility of addressing travel issues for the group. Presentations on various topics were prepared for the collaborative work with the Bulgaria team. Each Tennessee team member took responsibility for a presentation in an area of interest or expertise. These tasks were being completed simultaneously as the monthly team meetings continued (Project Notebook, April 2003). The increasing demands of the project created additional stress. One team member explained by stating "…at times, everyone on each team felt overwhelmed. Overwhelmed by the unknown, overwhelmed as deadlines approached. And, then we all

had full-time jobs" (Participant #T2 Interview, April 7, 2004). One participant questioned the use of time during team meetings: "I think we wasted many hours…on things that were not really important to what the project ultimately came to be. And that bothered me because time is of real essence to everyone on that team" (Participant #T3 Interview, April 12, 2004). The participants did not have the luxury of setting aside other responsibilities to devote additional time to the project. The struggle to find sufficient time increased the pressure felt by individuals within the group.

> With some irritation, one team member spoke to the issue of project deadlines. Well, Lord we don't deal with them.…You know, we just simply don't deal with them. We meet a lot, and we talk a lot; but, I mean, maybe we were better about deadlines as we prepared for the trip, you know certain things that had to be accomplished.…So, you know, I didn't really have any deadlines…so I don't know, deadlines is something, I don't remember any being set really…much, we just kind of met. (Participant #T6 Interview, April 14, 2004)

As this team member was explaining the increasing frustration, another indicated that the anxiety was building for everyone including the project director and coordinator.

> We wanted to pull our weight after working eight or ten hours a day and then coming and doing it. And, then we didn't follow through as well as we had hoped on our goals, the stress went up for us. And, I think they [project director and coordinator] felt the stress from us. I think it went both ways.…I felt some stress in different ways because you did not want to let anybody down in such a big project. (Participant #T2 Interview, April 7, 2004)

The project coordinator echoed a similar concern and spoke with some trepidation about the difficulty in meeting the established goals and timelines:

> And my concern is if we don't get to the place where we're actually doing an exchange of the PBL's, then we've just done projects, we've not done squat, you know, we've wasted the state departments' money. …It's about this interchange and that's not happening… I've just been frantic for the past few months. (Participant #T5 Interview, April 13, 2004)

This failure to meet established deadlines created some concern that the project was not fulfilling its original purpose. The pressure was increasing for all team members.

In preparation for the two team visits during the summer of 2003, the Tennessee project coordinator elaborated on the challenge of finalizing a schedule for the best use of time.

> As you may have noticed, we are trying to coordinate the schedules of five different school systems plus the university schedule for initial informational meetings and to schedule the summer activities. People here have all sorts of organized commitments in the summer as well as throughout the year, so we are obligated to try to schedule everything very tightly to make certain we can find a period when everyone can participate. (Email Communication Bulgaria Project Director and Tennessee Coordinator, October 2, 2002)

The grant guidelines for the MYO Place project required a two-year timeline for project activities and expenditures. With the aid of hindsight, the initial timelines for the MYO Place project proved to be unrealistic in light of other obligations of the team members.

The project directors (Tennessee and Bulgaria) recognized this fact and made revisions to the project goals and objectives for year two of the project (Ross, 2003a). Also, through frugal management of the funds, the project was extended into a third year (Ross, 2003b).

In summary, the theme of lack of time was the greatest challenge to collaboration within the Tennessee team in meeting the various project timelines and deadlines necessary to satisfactorily achieve the project objectives. The Tennessee project coordinator spoke with some chagrin about the controversy around task assignments and deadlines: "That's why I always laughed when…well one person at least has always fussed about delegation. I don't think I ever delegated anything that was done on time" (Participant #T5 Interview, April 13, 2004). The timelines for the project were impractical. Many aspects of project work were delayed due to the failure of team members to meet project deadlines (Ross, 2003b). In the updated plans for year two, the year one report to the United States Department of State to addressed the failure to produce one important project outcome, the Project Based Learning units of study.

> Efforts are being made to encourage classroom teachers beyond the MYO Place team members to participate in the writing of these PBLs…. This part of the project has gone decidedly slower than originally anticipated. We are working hard searching for new incentives for teacher PBL authors. (Ross, 2003b, p. 47)

Finding time was an enormous challenge to creating collaboration within the Tennessee team. This theme was consistent with the research of Sarason (1972). He explained that leaders of a new setting often feel a greater responsibility to meet the timelines, but everyone must contribute to the process. Such a dilemma may create conflict between the

setting leadership and other participants. A healthy setting requires a climate in which these issues of time can be negotiated to mutually satisfactory conclusions.

Inadequacy of Non-monetary Resources

As a new setting is created, participants often assume that unlimited resources are at their disposal. The United States Department of State funding for the MYO Place project did not provide for salaries for participants. A project director and coordinator were designated in the grant, but neither received a salary or stipend for the enormous amounts of time given to the work. All Tennessee team members understood that they were donating their time to the project, and the work of the project was to be done above and beyond the demands of the participant's regular work schedules. Grant funds were budgeted to cover international travel expenses such as airfare, lodging, and meals. Some funds were allocated for supplies, publication expenses, and the purchase of computer technology for Bulgarian schools. Funds were not available to reimburse participants for travel to team meetings. The Tennessee participants also used their personal finances to purchase gifts for Bulgarian colleagues and for other expenses such as passports and required inoculations for foreign travel (Field Notes, May 12, 2003).

The Tennessee team members were asked the following question: Were adequate resources available to meet your needs and the needs of other team members (Appendix J)? The Tennessee participants did not express any concerns about the adequacy of financial resources. One team member expressed the thoughts common to the other participants:

> You know it was an opportunity to take off on a venture that was different than most of us had done before. Our professional curiosity to learn about another country and its educational system…was the incentive for most of us to do it. The resources, I think the budget that we put together with the state department, has been very adequate. (Participant #T7 Interview, April 14, 2004)

The Tennessee participants were in agreement that the grant funds sufficiently covered the bulk of the expenses.

A couple of team members expanded the concept of adequate resources beyond money to include human capital and sufficiency of time. The magnitude of this project certainly warranted at least a partial salary especially for project management, but the grant guidelines prohibited such expenditure of funds. A previously indicated, lack of time was a major concern for all participants. As the project funding was exhausted, concerns were expressed about sustainability of the work. Participants did not have flexible funding in their professional budgets to pay for the expenses previously covered by grant funds. Some participants expressed a view that the purposes of the project could be better served if it were extended for a greater length of time, perhaps five years (Field Notes, February 5, 2004). For the project to be sustained and possibly expanded, additional human capital, time commitment by participants, and paid management would be needed all of which could require additional revenues.

The learning opportunities for students within the MYO Place project involved project-based learning. In the culminating work of a project, a product would often be produced by teachers and students. The Tennessee participants expressed a view that the

cost of instructional materials would not be an obstacle for their students. The students could assume the costs or the schools had funds available to assist with the expenses. (Field Notes, April 14, 2004). Also, the participating schools already had sufficient technology to be used by students in project-based learning and to communicate with partners in Bulgaria.

In summary, the participants overall were satisfied with the adequacy of financial resources. In the other aspects of the work including availability of human capital, time, and sustainability and expansion of the project, inadequacy of non-monetary resources was a challenge to collaboration for the Tennessee team. Perhaps more could have been accomplished if additional funding were available for project management. Increased funding could have possibly permitted the expansion of the project to include additional partners—educators and institutions.

Reluctance to Confront History of Professional Roles

The historical stance element of Sarason's theory (1972) addresses the understanding of potential conflict between participants as past personal experience with settings collide with the idealized possibilities of present or future settings. As individuals come together to work on a common enterprise, they bring the sum total of their past experiences with previous settings. The original Tennessee leadership team was composed of ten members, four male and six female. There was no racial or ethnic diversity within the group and little difference in socioeconomic backgrounds. The group included secondary classroom teachers, principals, district supervisors, and college

professors. The diversity of professional roles was by design since all team members were invited participants (Ross, 2002b).

To further explore past history, the participants were asked how they and their team dealt with the diversity of backgrounds of individual members (Appendix J). The interview respondents agreed that the group contained little racial, ethnic, or socioeconomic diversity. One participant saw this lack of diversity as a shortcoming for the project: “I don't think we had enough diversity. We were all the same race, basically from the same background. I thought we could have used more diversity. The more diversified the team, the better off…the more diversified thinking there is” (Participant #T1 Interview, April 4, 2004). Another participant explained the benefits of prior personal and professional relationships among many team members:

> …I felt really comfortable with most people in the group…given the structure of this group.…If most of us had not known each other; I think this thing would have been a disaster. We would have been at each other's throats. (Participant #T3 Interview, April 12, 2004)

This diversity in professional roles was viewed as an asset by the majority of participants.

The project director and coordinator worked diligently to create an inclusive climate of mutual respect within the team (Project Notebook, April 2003). Thoughts, ideas, and opinions were solicited from all participants regardless of professional assignment. All team members were asked to contribute to the development of meeting agendas. The meetings were conducted in an open manner with ample opportunity for everyone to offer thoughts or suggestions. One participant noted these routines within the

meetings by stating, “I think everyone's voice was always heard at meetings. You know, we had teachers and administrators and professors…but everyone seemed on an equal basis during the meetings” (Participant #T6 Interview, April 14, 2004). An air of mutual respect seemed to permeate these work sessions (Field Notes, April 14, 2004).

Another team member spoke of the value of past relationships in the development of positive working relationships among team members.

> …everyone knew each other well, for the most part, really were peers in many respects. There probably was not the need to formalize so many things as there are in teams that are just coming together. People operated on more of an informal kind of basis. I think it took awhile for people to speak up even though there was that camaraderie between us. (Participant #T4 Interview, April 13, 2004)

Rarely did any team member offer a conflicting or contentious idea during the meetings (Project Notebook, April, 2003).

The Tennessee team included two classroom teachers who were not acquainted with most of the other group members. They expressed some anxiety as the team began its work. One classroom teacher talked about these initial feelings upon entering the group:

> I was well aware that most of the people, or many of the people sitting around the table were doctors…or PhD candidates, and I was a classroom teacher....At first, it was intimidating, but after we started to get to know the people and to work with them, I felt at ease. (Participant #T8 Interview, August 29, 2004)

The other classroom teacher spoke of the reluctance to contribute to the conversations in the early planning meetings. “So, even if I did disagree, I might have felt a little uncomfortable with saying so.” (Participant #T1 Interview, April 4, 2004)

The challenge to collaboration as advanced by one participant was to use the diversity of the each member to the advantage of the team. Speaking of differences of the team members as assets, he stated: “Different perceptions, different people, different skills…and the task was one of blending those together and make good use of everyone's talent” (Participant #T7 Interview, April 14, 2004). The array of professional roles from K-12 and higher education created the potential for disagreement and conflict around theory and practice based upon past experiences and the complexity of the MYO Place project.

In spite of the professional decorum and apparent good will, the group struggled to achieve consensus in regard to project goals and objectives. The previous theme of lack of consensus connected to this theme of a reluctance to confront history in professional roles. The participants struggled to thoroughly understand the diverse perspectives of team members from different professional roles. In spite of a team climate of mutual respect, this theme hindered collaboration. One participant explained:

> I thought the only diversity that we had in our team…was diversity in terms of work setting. And, I think that we have dealt with that somewhat, but not to the extent that we should. And, I think that's always…that notion of professor-student or professor-practitioner barrier is still there even in our project. (Participant #T4 Interview, April 13, 2004)

Due to their past experience and current professional roles, participants viewed the project development and implementation from vastly different perspectives. A building principal explained one viewpoint: “For the project to work the principal can’t do it, the teachers must do it” (Ross, 2003b). To impact student learning, the Tennessee team had to move toward institutionalization of the MYO Place Model of teaching and learning at the classroom level.

In summary, the Tennessee team is a confirmation of Sarason’s admonition to confront the past history of all participants. The apparent sense of good will and mutual respect may have been a barrier to achieving collaboration within the Tennessee team. The Tennessee team members seemed unaware of the need for constructive debate and deliberation so as to more fully understand the different points of view of the participants within their varying professional roles. Participants rarely expressed a lack of understanding or posed “why” questions related to project development and implementation (Project Notebook, April, 2003). Questioning the status quo within a setting while potentially contentious can serve to produce greater initial clarity about project purpose and improved relationships among participants and enhancing the prospects of positive long-term outcomes. The various work roles (classroom teacher, principal, district administrator, professor) comprised the major historical element of which the team needed to be constantly aware. This theme of reluctance to confront history of professional roles is a confirmation of Sarason’s (1972) research. Sarason stated that from the beginning of the creation of a new setting an individual’s way of

thinking may obscure later understandings because much more was going on the early stages than realized.

Vehicles of Criticism (The Failure to Establish Explicit Norms)

As previously noted, the 10 members of the Tennessee team were mostly known to each other as the result of prior experiences studying or working together. Each team member brought a significant measure of professional expertise to the work of the project. An initial positive climate of respect and openness was apparent (Project Notebook, April 2003). A mutually developed agenda was always used to guide the discussion during the planning meetings of the Tennessee team. From the outset, the novelty of this new shared adventure of learning seemed to promote camaraderie on the team (Project Notebook, January 2003).

In the creation of a new setting, disagreements and conflict are inevitable. Sarason (1972) asserted that a method for dealing with these realities termed vehicles of criticism be developed early in the group process. These group norms also contribute to clarity about governance issues related to balance of power among participants. Sarason indicated that these rules could be "implicit or explicit" (p. 16). Unless all participants in a setting know each other well and have worked together previously, implicit rules would seem to be inadequate in achieving the greatest collaboration. Although an initial spirit of cooperation was prevalent on the Tennessee team and many members previously knew each other, analysis of the data revealed that the group failed to establish explicit ground rules or norms to maximize collaboration and teamwork.

During the interview process, each participant was asked the following question: Did the team develop guiding principles or ground rules to manage the work (Appendix J)? Six of the nine interviewed participants indicated that such procedures were not necessary since most members were well acquainted. One example follows:

> We were a small group. We knew each other, and so I don't think there was…I don't think we ever attempted to developed bylaws or anything like that. It was more of an informal understanding based largely on past history that we'd had with each other that allowed us to work together. (Participant #T7 Interview, April 14, 2004)

Attention was given to overcoming the initial anxiety experienced by some members of the group. The team meetings were conducted with a climate for relaxed social interaction and time for members to become better acquainted (Project Notebook, February 2004). One participant explained:

> I was very comfortable…I felt like I was given plenty of space or time to not only disagree or agree in a way that I could present my ideas. I thought when I had a good idea, it was seriously taken and implemented. (Participant #T2 Interview, April 7, 2004)

The climate of openness created a comfort level that allowed for some freedom of expression. One team member explained: “I think that everyone’s voice was always heard at meetings. You know, we had teachers, administrators, and professors…but everyone seemed on an equal basis during the meetings” (Participant #T6 Interview, April 14, 2006). Another member echoed this sentiment by stating: “I think there was

always freedom to say and speak up and express your opinions" (Participant #T4 Interview, April 13, 2004). Although a positive climate was prevalent from the beginning, these early project planning sessions did not include a discussion of explicit norms for group interaction. As the group continued to work, procedures for conducting the meetings evolved, but a mechanism for the expression of constructive criticism was not included (Project Notebook, March 2004). The team's failure to recognize a need for vehicles of criticism was based upon a false assumption that implicit norms are unnecessary if group members are well known to each other. This lack of explicit norms later proved to be challenge to collaboration as the project work continued. These findings are consistent with Sarason's (1972) research regarding the initial excitement present in the creation of a new setting. This elation may prevent the group from understanding the difficulty of the work, and the nature of the predictable conflict that lies ahead.

Although many participants indicated that group norms were unnecessary; nonetheless, frustration, conflict, and disagreement emerged. Two participants indicated that the absence of norms was a source of frustration and an obstacle to individual and group productivity. One participant stated:

> No, there aren't norms for getting the work done. I think that's been one of the frustrations…you know, its okay for me to speak out in the meetings, but I don't know that things that I say in the meetings change the course of our work in any way. (Participant #T6 Interview, April 14, 2004)

Another participant connected the importance of group norms with the development on consensus understanding of project goals: “Then, also, having some norms of behavior set on the front end would have gone a long way…to making that happen [agreement on goals]. It's just, you know, this isn't working. What would make this work better” (Participant #T3 Interview, April 12, 2004). These participants made a direct link between the earlier concerns about the need for clarity of project goals and the failure to establish explicit norms. These concerns included a clear understanding of the project and a defined role for each participant (Project Notebook, May 12, 2003). Confusion about goals and objectives and the lack of explicit group norms combined to multiple the challenges to the collaborative work of the Tennessee team.

To explore this component of vehicles of criticism more deeply, participants were asked a second question (Appendix J): Did procedures exist to allow agreement or disagreement with project development and implementation? They were asked to explain their response. The majority of team members were obviously comfortable in contributing to the discussion in planning meetings. On the other hand, expressions of disagreement were seen in a different light. Some team members were hesitant about expressing views contrary to the evolving project development plan. One participant said, “So, even if I did disagree, I might have felt a little uncomfortable with saying so” (Participant #T1 Interview, April 4, 2004). Another explained more fully: “I felt apprehensive about bringing up anything I had concerns about because it would be viewed as a negative” (Participant #T3 Interview, April 12, 2004). These views speak to

the obvious need to develop guidelines for expression of disagreement early in the formative stages of setting creation.

After the project was underway for almost a year, other elements of dissatisfaction emerged from some group members. These voices of discontent could be summarized by this response from a team member:

> Well, I think, again, it may just be the way I like to work. I didn't say a whole lot about it because I felt like perhaps I was the only person who felt that way. And then in later conversations with people…actually while we were in Bulgaria, I found out from other team members that they felt the same way as well. So I guess I'm sorry on the front end I did not, but I didn't want to be perceived as not a team player...because teamwork is very important. (Participant #T3 Interview, April 12, 2004)

These concerns were expressed among individual members but were not brought to the entire group for any resolution (Field Notes, June 10, 2003). Explicit norms for group interaction were not developed earlier in the project, and in fact, were initially viewed as unnecessary by most participants.

A profound sense of good will was prevalent in the earliest meetings of the Tennessee team. The MYO Place project provided a unique opportunity to participate in an international education exchange experience. The initial exuberance promoted the false assumption that guiding principles, ground rules, or norms (all termed vehicles of criticism) were not needed. Such governance issues cannot be left to happenstance. Although participants in a new setting may be ecstatic about participation in the group

and demonstrate a high degree of mutual respect between members, explicit norms remain essential.

In summary, Sarason (1972) insisted that vehicles of criticism be developed early in the process of setting creation. The failure of the Tennessee team to establish explicit guidelines was a challenge to collaboration. This finding did not surface initially in the work of the team (Project Notebook, January 2003). During the early months of the work, the Tennessee team displayed an amazing spirit of cooperation. As the frustration began to build (as it always will in a new setting), a consensus method of voicing concerns was not available.

The Challenges of Achieving Shared Leadership and Ownership

Leadership is often described as the inexplicable quality essential to the success of any group endeavor. But, the exercise thereof is fraught with difficulty. Sarason (1972) surmised that the role of leadership is potentially destructive to both the leader and the setting. The evils of leadership are embedded in the aspects of power, authority, and governance and the concerns about whether these elements diminish or enhance the performance of the group in achieving its purpose. The manner in which the leaders are selected is also important. For the continued maturation of the setting and the increased likelihood of sustainability, leaders must share some measure of governance tasks with other team members.

The U.S. Department of State grant funds for the MYO Place project were administered through The University of Tennessee. All project participants were volunteers accepting the work of the project above their pre-existing professional and

personal responsibilities. The key leadership roles within the 10 member Tennessee team were assumed by the project coordinator (primary grant writer) and a university professor (project director) on the educational administration faculty of The University of Tennessee. From analysis of the data, the theme of achieving shared leadership and project ownership was a challenge to collaboration for the Tennessee team. This section will detail the successes and struggles in promoting shared leadership and participant ownership.

In collecting data through interviews, participants were asked the following questions: Did leadership emerge from within the group during the planning and implementation of the work? If so, please explain how this happened. If not, what prevented this from happening (Appendix J)? The project coordinator spoke of the leadership within the project by stating: "…I think a lot of [leadership] was already established before we got here…when I finally saw what the resources were within the team, I'm going, Hey! This falls right into place…so I saw leadership emerging from expertise (Participant #T5 Interview, April 13, 2004). Different team members had expertise in the multiple conceptual frames of the project. Although this prior expertise cast some participants into the leadership light, minimal time was given to the sharing of this knowledge in the early meetings of the Tennessee team (Project Notebook, April 2003).

A committee structure was developed using participant expertise and interest and aligned to various components of the project. Initially, this process proved to be a struggle as reflected in the irritation expressed by the project coordinator:

> And I felt some frustration…at some stages. People saying, okay what is this and what is that? Well we don't know because we're making this up as we go. So there were things that we, paths we started down that really were too complex. I came up with committees that overlapped...so anyway I think what we eventually evolved into makes more sense. But we struggled with that early on. (Participant #T5 Interview, April 13, 2004)

Team members were assigned or volunteered to serve on multiple committees. The establishment of committees and the definition of their responsibilities paralleled the struggles with clearly defining the project purpose. During the early team meetings, these frequent revisions to the committee structure and other organizational elements created confusion for some participants (Project Notebook, February 2003). Another participant affirmed a similar view in the implementation of the project: "Leadership emerged when leadership was necessary…it was not structured tightly in that one person was the leader all the time" (Participant #T9 Interview, August 30, 2004). The ability of the team to confront the challenge of shared leadership and ownership was met with some success and continued struggle.

Successes in Achieving Shared Leadership and Ownership

The Tennessee team did achieve some success in developing shared leadership and ownership of the project. One participant mentioned how the interaction among team members contributed to the emergence of shared leadership within the group in a number of ways.

> I think that the way that the team members meshed within one another and interacted with one another was a key component in the success of the Tennessee team. [Project coordinator], again, I think was instrumental in providing activities…during the meeting time. The meetings were informal…there was never any pressure. (Participant #T8 Interview, August, 29, 2004)

Another person spoke of the leadership lessons learned by the various members of the team as the project was implemented:

> I feel like our doctoral students and principals really followed good examples that were put out before us. There was lots of enthusiasm to learn and progress with the goals of the total program. And, I think, we did. They [leaders] didn't always force issues, and sometimes it would splinter off in a different path than what the leaders had intended. And, they saw that it might be a better way, and they quickly got on that. (Participant #T2 Interview, April 7, 2004)

Another participant spoke positively of the way in which the project director and coordinator promoted ownership by encouraging active involvement in the development of meeting agendas: "…there would usually be an e-mail…to say you know, if anybody has anything that they wanted to add to the agenda. And I have added things from time to time, and they've ended up on there" (Participant #T6 Interview, April 14, 2004). Another tangible example of the Tennessee team leaders to promote joint ownership of the project occurred during the first meeting of the combined teams in Bulgaria. The project coordinator was very careful to check with each team member for feedback as to

the joint workshops and also the comfort level of each participant (Field Notes, June 6, 2003).

When the Bulgaria team visited Tennessee in August of 2003, school site visits were planned. Five Tennessee team members were given the leadership task of planning the schedule of activities for these visits to their specific school and community. These school visits include opportunities for the Bulgarian delegation to interact with other Tennessee educators, students, and community members. One Tennessee team member spoke of how these site visits contributed to a sense of shared leadership and promoted greater ownership of the project:

> I think real leadership occurred among the members during the site visits …each member was given responsibility to put together something at their school site; and they were given the autonomy to do that. Everybody got out of the way and let them do it, and it happened. (Participant #T4 Interview, April 13, 2004)

The project director echoed this sentiment and extended the commendation to all of the summer activities including the presentations which occurred in Bulgaria and Tennessee during the two visits of the summer of 2003.

> I was very pleased. I think every member of the team really took a hold as we were planning our activities of last summer. I think that we gave out assignments to people to get things ready for the trips and for the presentations here. I think everybody having a piece of when the Bulgarians came here…I mean everybody took that piece and we kind of watched to see what they were doing with it, but we let everybody have their head and let everybody run with it, and I thought we

> came up with some wonderful activities and plans. (Participant #T7 Interview, April 14, 2004)

Another participant spoke positively of the outcomes when team members planned the site visits for the Bulgaria team.

> …when people were given a task to do, they did it. Quite frankly, if [not] …for the Tennessee team members following up on their piece of it, the Bulgarian visit here would have been a bust… Everybody worked … to make their visit to their particular place something special for those people. Hours went into that. And the commitment that they got from their staffs and their communities was there. (Participant #T3 Interview, April 12, 2004)

This participant also provided a suggestion for how greater leadership could have been cultivated within the group in other ways. "So, that leadership emerged, but I think it would have emerged to a greater extent if it had been allowed to come to the table when the team met" (Participant #T3 Interview, April 12, 2004). The project provided many occasions for team members to assume leadership responsibilities although some participants indicated that such opportunities could have been more plentiful (Field Notes April 12, 2004).

Struggles in Achieving Shared Leadership and Ownership

The nature and magnitude of the MYO Place project created multiple challenges to achieving shared leadership and ownership for the Tennessee team. In the early months of planning, a great deal of energy, time, and effort was needed for refinement and clarity of project purpose. As previously gleaned from the data, participants were frustrated with

the lack of consensus in project purpose, goals, and objectives. In responding to the interview questions regarding leadership, one participant returned to concerns about project purpose in stating, “I don’t think our goals were fully laid out as well as they could have been at the beginning” (Participant #T1 Interview, April 4, 2004). This ambiguity of project purpose seemed to contribute to the reluctance of some participants to step forward to assume leadership responsibilities (Field Notes, April 2004). Other team members expressed their perspective as to the nature of emerging leadership. “I think some leadership has emerged, but I think there is so much more potential leadership that has not been…encouraged maybe to evolve” (Participant #T4 Interview, April 13, 2004). Another participant expressed a view that participant skills could have been utilized more fully: “I don’t think the strengths of the team members were used as effectively on the front end as they could have been to make the project stronger” (Participant #T3 Interview, April 12, 2004). The challenge of promoting shared leadership within the group proved to be a time consuming task and was intensified by other demands on all participants including the preparation for international travel and the development of training schedules for the two teams when they were meeting and learning together (Field Notes, May 12, 2003).

The project director and coordinator of the Tennessee team made a diligent effort to promote shared leadership. Although some success was realized, the challenge remained a daunting task. This magnitude of the challenge was expressed in a variety of ways by the Tennessee team members. One participant shared a viewpoint as to how the organization of the project materialized.

> As I recall most of the organization in terms of task and duties and so forth was sort of done by [project leaders] and…handed to us in terms of this is what we will be doing. So, I think, the initial planning and organizing was set up as a part of the project direction. I think as we worked together, we adjusted, and probably put ourselves on committees that we hadn't necessarily been placed on originally. So, there was a re-working of structure, but the basic structure, I think as I recall, was given to us. (Participant #T4 Interview, April 13, 2004)

Of course, the grant proposal defined many aspects of the activities inherent within the project.

For some participants, the way in which the project management evolved was seen as authoritarian and controlling. This view was reflected in the following participant response: "So if we could have had more buy-in, in fact it's been kind of a painful thing…in this project it has seemed…top down to me" (Participant #T6 Interview, April 14, 2004). In elaborating on the same concern, another participated concurred by stating:

> Honestly, I felt like… the organization was done for us. So when I finally got the idea that the grant had been funded, we started to meet and at that point, you know, I felt like things were just delegated to us. That's one of the issues, I think, that bothered me throughout the initial part of the process. (Participant #T3 Interview, April 12, 2004)

The management style of the Tennessee project coordinator and director were regarded as top-down by these team members. This perspective created some tension between participants (Field Notes, May 12, 2003). Because many details of the project seemed

tightly controlled, questions were later raised about the delegation of tasks to other team members (Field Notes, May 11, 2004). One team member expressed an inability to find a niche in the project work by stating, "I wasn't doing anything. I mean I couldn't figure out where I fit into the whole project" (Participant #T6 Interview, April 14, 2004).

Impending deadlines also created pressure for project leaders to be more assertive in their leadership style. To some extent, the project director acknowledged the group's assessment of a top-down management style.

> There were times that I guess I was directive of things I thought needed to be done by a certain date and was probably fairly forceful in seeing that they got on the agenda, and that we moved them along with some speed. (Participant #T7 Interview, April 14, 2004)

The project coordinator who was also the primary grant author expressed a single-mindedness about the project that created her own personal dilemma in the development of shared leadership and participant ownership.

> You know, it's my baby. I guess I need to look at it as if it were a child…you have to turn loose and let something grow and not try to cram it into your own mold…Maybe that's more about what I need to do with this project too. (Participant #T5 Interview, April 12, 2004)

Such thought and practice could be viewed as assertive management by some while others might regard it as an authoritarian leadership style. In further discussion of this issue, the project director expanded on attempts to promote ownership of the planning process by the entire group: "There were other items that I thought we really needed a lot

of group input on this…how could we best use the energy and knowledge of the group to come to a decision on a particular problem" (Participant #T7 Interview, April 14, 2004). These contrasting views of project management magnified the continuing struggle in promoting shared leadership and ownership and the challenge to collaboration within the team.

The project coordinator received some disapproval from other team members for a failure to delegate various tasks. One the other hand, some assignments given to other team members were delayed or not completed. For example, participants were asked to develop project-based lesson plans that could be shared with Tennessee colleagues and the Bulgaria team. They were also asked to write specific chapters for a book about the project. Although these various tasks were assigned as essential elements of meeting project objectives, many were not completed in a timely fashion (Field Notes, May 2004). Completion of these components of the project was frequently delayed as a result. This fact, in turn, created concern and some frustration for the project leaders. The project director expressed it this way:

> I tend to delegate things...my personal feeling is the more you give away to others the better the quality of the product you ultimately get and the better buy-in you get from people. And so I tend to delegate. Now along with that, the down side…is sometimes when you delegate if someone doesn't follow up with something, doesn't get done and you got to come back and retrieve it or be patient and wait longer because everybody's busy with other jobs. But I tried to involve you know everybody in the group. If I see somebody not involved, I think well,

> are they busy doing something else? Are they disinterested, or have we turned them off in some way by not including them. I think about things like that and try to make sure we keep everyone tied in to what we are doing. (Participant #T7 Interview, April 14, 2004)

The failure to meet timelines created some apprehension that the project was not fulfilling its original purpose. The project director also accepted some responsibility for this shortfall:

> I'm covered up with other things as well and so I don't devote quite as much time to it as I need to, to keep things moving along rapidly. So part of it is my fault on the timeline as well. A good part of it is. (Participant #T7 Interview, April 14, 2004)

The appropriate delegation of project tasks by the Tennessee leaders proved to be a component of the challenge of developing shared leadership and ownership.

Considering the magnitude of the MYO Place project and the very lofty goals, the leaders of the Tennessee team felt a tremendous responsibility for meeting project outcomes. One of the other team members spoke of this responsibility and the pressure that it created for the project leaders:

> In all truthfulness, [project director and coordinator] had the most stress on them….I think as much as stress as we felt as individual members for our one or two things we would be responsible for, they had twenty. They got very stressed before we got ready to leave. And, before the Bulgarian team got ready to come

> here.…I don't think they [leaders] enjoyed the visits as much as we did because of the stress. (Participant #T2 Interview, April 7, 2004)

Leaders of new settings from the outset typically possess greater knowledge and clarity about group purpose. This was the case with the MYO Place project. The project director and coordinator of the Tennessee team demonstrate strong commitment and enthusiasm to the project by giving huge amounts of their personal time to the work. They performed a yeoman's share of the work in the early stages of project planning and implementation (Project Notebook, March 2003). By so doing, the development of shared leadership and ownership was hampered (Field Notes, April 2004). One participant described this challenge in the MYO Place project in this way: "I think that it became somewhat difficult to move away from authorship to joint ownership" (Participant #T4 Interview, April 13, 2004). This challenge was further magnified by the pressure of project timelines. The desire of a leader to move a project forward must be tempered by the necessity of sharing the mantle of leadership with other participants. This delicate balancing act is critical to the development of joint ownership which in turn enhances sustainability.

Chapter Summary

The purpose of this case study was to analyze collaborations involving three teams of educators participating in the MYO Place project. This chapter focused on the challenges in creating collaborations within the Tennessee team. For the purposes of this study, collaboration was defined by using Sarason's (1972) definition of the creation of settings: "Any instance in which two or more people come together in new relationships

over a sustained period of time in order to achieve certain goals" (p. 1). Sarason's theory of the creation of settings was used as the theoretical framework.

The challenges to collaboration within the Tennessee participants in the creation of their setting were somewhat consistent with those described by Sarason (1972). These identified challenges to collaboration included: the lack of consensus on values and goals, deficiencies in conceptual understanding, lack of time, inadequacy of non-monetary resources, reluctance to confront history of professional roles, the failure to establish explicit norms, and the challenges of achieving shared leadership and ownership.

The themes of lack of consensus on values and goals and deficiencies in conceptual understanding combined to create an enormous challenge to collaboration for the Tennessee team. Two significant goals of the project were to develop the MYO Place education model and to teach participating educators the theory, practice, philosophy, and literature contributing to this model (Appendices A, H). The MYO Place project proposal began with the merger of two somewhat competing conceptual frames—place-based education and global learning. Place-based education involves the use of the immediate environment of school and community to promote learning experiences grounded in local cultural, political, social, and environmental contexts. Global learning incorporates the study of nations, geographic areas, diplomacy, cultures, and international organizations to enhance cooperation, understanding, and exchange and promote problem solving. The premise of the MYO Place project was that relevant educational experiences begin in a local community; without which, learners will not likely develop an appreciation for other cultures, countries, and peoples (Ross, 2002b). As the project developed, two

additional theoretical frames were integrated into the project. Learning community theory was incorporated into the "Your Place" component of the work. In addition, project-based learning became the pedagogical tool for the development of instructional units and lesson plans. Standing alone, project-based learning was a huge leap in conceptual understanding for educators with little or no prior knowledge of this instructional approach. Specific team members had expertise in the four areas, but the team as a whole had a limited comprehension of the complexities of the multiple underlying conceptual frameworks. The inclusion and integration of these concepts was justified from a holistic project perspective, but the underlying theoretical complexity of the work was compounded exponentially. The integration of the four conceptual frameworks was necessary to achieve project goals and outcomes, but this task became a challenge to collaboration for the Tennessee team. Other project activities and products devoid of a conceptual anchor were less meaningful to the participants than they could have been.

The greatest challenge in creating collaborations within the team of Tennessee educators was reflected within the theme of lack of time. Some members expressed frustration that their personal schedules prevented them from being actively engaged in the work. The nature of project goals, travel, and other requirements of the project made participation very demanding for all team members. The impact on collaboration was manifest in the struggle of the participants in meeting project goals in a timely manner. As grant funded work, the MYO Place project required timelines which detailed the completion targets for each component of the work and the ultimate successful conclusion of the project. Some of the project timelines and deadlines were not met or

ignored. The inability to meet initial timelines often led to revised deadlines but also contributed to increased frustration and stress. The project director and coordinator were also burdened with the dilemma of attempting to complete the work themselves or have further delays in the completion of various outcomes of the project. Ideally, the group would have negotiated a more realistic timetable consistent with project goals and acceptable to all participants who, in fact, were responsible for a large portion of the work. This delicate balancing act was dependent upon, in some measure, personality and working styles of participants. Intense pressing timelines also hampered the group's ability to reach consensus regarding project goals and outcomes. Timelines and deadlines were very necessary, but the process whereby these were developed could have contained more flexibility so that all participants including project leaders were not overwhelmed and collective creativity was not diminished.

Although the Tennessee participants thought that the available funding for the project was sufficient, certain non-monetary resources were seen as inadequate. These inadequacies included the lack of human capital meaning the volume of work far exceeded the capacity of the 10 member team. Also, the time needed for project management seemed insufficient. As a result the team had concerns about successful project completion, sustainability, and potential expansion.

The reluctance to confront history of professional roles, the failure to establish explicit norms, and the struggle to achieve shared leadership and ownership were also challenges to collaboration for the Tennessee team. The project coordinator and director strived to create a welcoming climate for all participants during the team planning

meetings. All participants were educators, but they had very different professional roles. This diversity of background and experiences brought different perspectives to the work of the project. These differences were not as obviously during the early stages, and initial sense of group harmony may have hindered the team's ability to confront the difficult issues of project development.

Early in the life of the project, the majority of Tennessee participants expressed a belief that explicit group norms were not needed for the team. This viewpoint was based upon the false assumption that such group norms or guidelines are not required for a group in which most individuals know each other well. In his research, Sarason (1972) explained that conflict is to be expected in the creation of a setting, and it cannot be ignored. He further explained that vehicles of criticism or norms for group governance must be established to address these predictable conflicts. If explicit group norms were developed at the beginning of the work, some issues about time could have perhaps been addressed in a more realistic manner. Without such explicit norms, team members became increasingly dissatisfied and frustrated leading to additional complaint and conflict. The conflicts may also be viewed as personal; thus, further reducing the probability of successful outcomes for the setting. An additional harmful by-product was the harsh criticism of the leadership by the other group members. Such struggles were present in the work of the Tennessee team in their failure to establish explicit norms.

Achieving shared leadership and ownership of the project was also a challenge to collaboration for the Tennessee team. The time and energy devoted to the project by the Tennessee director and coordinator were commendable. Their knowledge, commitment,

and enthusiasm were the genesis of the MYO Place project. Occasionally, these leaders perhaps took responsibility for some tasks that could have been delegated to others. Tennessee participants did assume leadership responsibility for many facets of the project work. They prepared materials and made presentations to the combined teams. Some team members also planned the school visits of the Bulgaria team when they were in Tennessee. Others wrote articles for the MYO Place book which would be a culminating task for the project. In spite of this involvement, achieving shared leadership and ownership remained a challenge to the collaborative work on the Tennessee team.

Although Bulgarian educators made some contribution to the original grant proposal, the MYOP Place project was primarily a Tennessee team initiative. The Tennessee team, in fact, assumed dual responsibilities in the initial implementation of the project. As the Tennessee team members were struggling with their own common understanding of the project purpose, they were making an effort to assist the Bulgaria team with their comprehension of the goals. This task became increasingly problematic in view of the challenges to collaboration already faced by the Tennessee team in the project development and implementation.

In conclusion, no one on the Tennessee team, including the leaders, could have predicted the magnitude of the challenges in the planning and implementation of the MYO Place project. The goal of sustainability and expansion of the work further magnified the complexity of the process.

CHAPTER V

ANALYSIS—THE BULGARIA SETTING

Chapter Introduction

The purpose of this qualitative case study was to analyze collaborations involving three teams of educators participating in the "My Place, Your Place, Our Place" project. The research questions for this study were:

- What were the challenges in creating collaborations within the three teams of educators involved in the “My Place, Your Place, Our Place (MYO Place)” project?
- What were the similarities and differences in challenges across these three teams?

In chapter four, the first research question was applied to the Tennessee setting. In this chapter, the setting created by the Bulgaria team is examined. The challenges to collaboration within the Bulgaria team are presented in this chapter.

The Bulgaria Setting—Origin of the Project and Selection of Participants

The primary author of the MYO Place grant proposal, the Tennessee project coordinator, had previously completed dissertation studies in Bulgaria. In so doing, she became acquainted with two professors at Bourgas Free University in Bourgas, Bulgaria. When the MYO Place grant proposal was being developed, she corresponded frequently with these Bulgarian colleagues to solicit their input. One of these professors agreed to assume the role of project director for the Bulgaria team. The Tennessee and Bulgaria project leaders developed a mutual agreement on a participant selection process. They agreed to recruit primarily educators or schools with whom they had worked previously.

The participating schools included a primary, elementary, and high school. These schools were Michail Lakatnick Primary School, Bratya Miladinovi Elementary, and Bourgas High School of Economics. Pre-service students at Bourgas Free University did their practice teaching at Bratya Miladinovi Elementary. The head master/mistress and one EFL teacher represented each school (see Table 3). One of the university professors spoke of the thought process as the participating schools were selected:

> Those are schools where we have long-lasting contacts. And, I personally I knew them to be people who embrace challenges and eagerly take innovations and innovative work. And, when they were invited, they eagerly volunteered to take part in the project. (Participant #B2 Interview, February 1, 2004)

The project director elaborated on other factors involved in the selection process:

> One of the most important factors in our decision making process was how dedicated and how professional the school principals were. And, what these schools have achieved so far; what the student performance has been, and what the community thinks about these schools. It is a well known fact around Bourgas that these three schools are …the best…among the best, if not the best of their kind. And, there is great demand for these schools. Parents choose to send their children to these schools. And sometimes, they are so full that they can't take any more students. (Participant #B7 Interview, February 4, 2004)

Obviously, the schools and the selected educators were well-respected in the communities they served.

Table 3

Bulgaria Team Participants

Code – Participant	**Faculty/School Affiliation**	**Project; Sub-Team Roles**
B1 – College Teacher	Lecturer English Language Bourgas Free University	Global Learning
B2 – Professor of Education	Bourgas Free University	Global Learning
B3 – Headmaster	Elementary School	Place-Based Learning
B4 – EFL Teacher	Elementary School	Translator; Place-Based Learning
B5 – Headmistress	Primary School	Project-Based Learning
B6 – EFL Teacher	Primary School	Translator; Project-Based Learning
B7 – Professor	Bourgas Free University	Project Director; Lead Translator
B8 – Headmistress	High School	Comparative Learning
B9 – EFL Teacher	High School	Translator; Comparative Learning

The original Bulgaria team was composed of 10 members including three university faculty members, three head masters/mistresses, three English as a Foreign Language (EFL) teachers, and a district level supervisor. Due to extenuating circumstances, one school was forced to change the EFL teacher member on two occasions. Also, the district level supervisor declined to continue participation early in the process. The Rector of Bourgas Free University was chosen as a replacement, but he was not interviewed for this study. Nine team members who agreed to participate in this study and were interviewed included three university faculty, two head mistresses and one head master, and three EFL teachers (see Table 3).

News of the funding of the MYO Place project was received in October 2002. The Bulgarian project director began to finalize the participant list for the team so that they could begin to meet together. Individual meetings were held with prospective participants on the Bulgaria team to explain the project in more detail. The project director explained this process:

> In the very beginning, I met with and discussed the project, all it was going to be about, with almost each individual member of the team. I wanted to have their opinion on the project, and I wanted to find out whether they were prepared to get involved in such a project. It took some time to convince some of the EFL teachers that they were able to cope with it because some of them thought it was going to be a great challenge for them. They were very uncomfortable, and they thought that they might not be able to manage. It was some frustration at the beginning, but I did my best to convince them that they were up to it: that it was

as a great learning experience for them. (Participant #B7 Interview, February 4, 2004)

The team met at least monthly during the late fall of 2002 and the spring of 2003. The location of the meetings alternated between Bourgas Free University and the participating schools. The early meetings were consumed with developing an understanding of the project and its goals and the associated responsibilities for the participants. One of the team members explained the process:

> After we were invited to participate in this project, we organized a lot of meetings. We got to know the purpose of the project. We decided on who was going to participate in the project at the school. We divided the roles and decided who was going to take part in the project – who of our students and our teachers of our schools were going to take part. We also marked directions into which we were going to take part in the project. And at our meetings, we talked about what we had already done, and what we have to do in the future. And, this is how the project idea, step by step, became our idea. We embraced it as our idea. (Participant #B3 Interview, February 2, 2004)

In the late spring of 2003, the attention of the Bulgaria team focused on the details of the visit of the Tennessee team in June.

Data Sources and Analysis for the Bulgaria Setting

The prospectus for this research project was approved in January 2004 (Appendix C). The nine members of the Bulgaria team were interviewed February 1-4, 2004 during my second visit to Bulgaria. On this occasion, a core group of four Tennessee participants

worked with a sub-group of the Bulgaria team on the development of the training manual to be used to teach the MYO Place Curriculum and Instruction Design model. Field notes were kept during these interviews and throughout the project work. Memos were also recorded during data analysis. All interviews of the Bulgaria team were conducted in this small window of time. Among the documents used in this study were my research journal, the annual reports of 2003, 2004, and 2005, and the email correspondence between the Project Director of the Bulgaria team and Project Manager of the Tennessee team. My research journal was kept during the visit of the Tennessee team to Bulgaria from May 30–June 10, 2003 and the Bulgaria visit to Tennessee from August 21 – September 2, 2003. This journal incorporated my observations of the interaction of the Bulgaria team members on these two occasions when all participants from both teams were together. The annual reports of 2003, 2004, and 2005 were also used as a data source since they contained written reflections from many of the Bulgaria team members.

A word of cautionary advice must be provided for the reader. As the researcher, I had no occasion to observe the Bulgaria team in the early stages of implementation of the project. The complete Bulgaria and Tennessee teams did not meet until May 30, 2003. As a participant-observer in the MYO Place project, I was intimately involved in all aspects of the work of the Tennessee team including a leadership role with the place-based learning component of the conceptual framework. I attended the meetings of the Tennessee team and collected data in a Participant Notebook including my reflections regarding the work of the team. As the researcher, I was unable to attend the meetings of

the Bulgaria team. The sources of data used to develop these findings for the Bulgaria setting were therefore more limited in scope.

The qualitative software program, Ethnograph Version 5.0, was also used to assist with analysis of the data for the Bulgaria team in the same manner as the Tennessee team. In fact, transcription and analysis of the data from the interviews with the Bulgaria participants began prior to interviews of the Tennessee team members in the spring and summer of 2004. Four of the nine Bulgaria team members who agreed to participate in this study did not speak English. These participants were interviewed through an interpreter. This researcher was dependent upon the skill of the translator in the accuracy of the participant responses. Some quotes from the interviews presented in this chapter are somewhat awkward grammatically; nonetheless, they are presented verbatim.

During interviews of the Bulgaria team, the participants were asked the same questions as those posed to the Tennessee team. Although five of the nine Bulgaria participants were fluent in English, each was given a copy of the questions in their native language (Appendix G) to review prior to the interviews. With an understanding of the selection of the Bulgaria team members and the data utilized in the analysis for the Bulgaria setting, the findings specific to the first research question are discussed.

Research Question 1: What were the challenges in creating collaborations within the three teams of educators involved in the "My Place, Your Place, Our Place (MYO Place)" project?

Sarason's (1972) theory of the creation of settings was used as the conceptual framework for the analysis of data related to the Bulgaria team. The various components were used to develop the interview questions (Appendices G, J) and the first and final

codes word (Appendix L) used in the data analysis process. From analysis of the data, the challenges to collaboration for the Bulgaria team were identified.

The challenges to collaboration for the Bulgaria team included the early dependence on their partner for information about the project. This dependence also created some anxiety about meeting the expectations of the Tennessee team. Since the chosen language for this intercultural partnership was English, the Bulgaria team had the extra responsibility of providing translations and interpreting across this language barrier. These extra language duties created a challenge for the Bulgaria team. The Bulgaria team also experienced some challenge to collaboration in the differences of professional roles among the team members and the lack of time for project work. Also, the economic realities of Bulgaria created a struggle for the team to deal with limited resources needed to assure success in some of the project outcomes. Finally, the Bulgaria team was reluctant to accept the inevitability of conflict in the creation of their setting. This reluctance hampered the ability of the team to constructively deal with conflict when it occurred. The cumulative effect of these challenges hampered collaborative abilities of the Bulgaria team.

The nine Bulgaria participants in this research were asked the same series of questions that were posed to the Tennessee team. The first questions dealt with the aspect of consensus of values and goals of the project. The participants were asked how they organized themselves for the work and how they came to agreement on the values and goals of the project (Appendices G and J). The project director, who also assisted in writing the grant proposal, explained the early organizational efforts of the Bulgaria

team: “There were one or two initial meetings with individual participants, and later on, we started meeting as a team and went through the materials that were already developed. Like, the project mission, the goals, and objectives etc.” (Participant #B7 Interview, February 4, 2004). Another team member described these planning meetings: “At the beginning, we met each month, every month. Sometimes even more often in different places. Every time, different institutions were the host. So, we had the opportunity to discuss things in different places and different settings” (Participant #B2 Interview, February 1, 2004). During the first gathering of the Bulgaria and Tennessee teams in Bulgaria in June 2003, one participant was asked about the Bulgaria team’s preparation in the first few months of the project. This participant indicated that several meetings had been held to discuss plans for the visit of the Tennessee team to Bulgaria. Also, the team had studied many documents sent to them by the Tennessee project leaders (Researcher Journal, June 3, 2003). These factors pointed to the first two challenges to collaboration within the Bulgaria team.

Dependence on Partner

The MYO Place project proposal was written primarily by the project coordinator of the Tennessee team with minimal assistance from other team members. Two professors at Bourgas Free University who later became key leaders for the Bulgaria team acted as consultants in the proposal development. Since the MYO Place grant proposal was primarily developed in the United States, the Tennessee team took a lead in the planning and implementation of the project. The MYO Place project was entirely funded by the United States Department of State. From the outset, these factors created a

dependence of the Bulgaria team on the Tennessee team. This dependency created a challenge to collaboration within the Bulgaria team. At the beginning, the Bulgaria team was somewhat hesitant to initiate some elements of the project in deference to their Tennessee colleagues (Researcher Journal, June 4, 2003). This dependency was multiplied because the English speaking members of the Bulgaria team were responsible for making certain that their non-English speaking colleagues understood the project and its goals and objectives. Additionally, they were responsible for translating project documents into the Bulgarian language and providing interpreting services when presentations were given in English.

In the early months of the project, the MYO Place Curriculum and Design (Appendix A) was being developed primarily by the Tennessee project coordinator (Project Notebook, March 2003). As the various elements were developed and refined, this information was shared with the Bulgaria team. The MYO Place model would become the hub around which all elements of the project would revolve. A Bulgarian participant explained the manner in which information was disseminated from their Tennessee partner:

> Well…in fact, the information that we got back from [Tennessee project coordinator] which came from the American side, was helping us somehow understand the ideas of the project. Because all the time, [Tennessee project coordinator] was, you know, prolific in writing and informing us. And then we wrote back to her, and she came back with a solution or something. And, I think that…maybe she spoke on the part of the whole American team. I don't know this.

But she helped us a lot about clarifying the ideas of the project. (Participant #B1 Interview, February 1, 2004)

During the early months of the work prior to be meeting of the two teams, the flow of information about project planning and implementation was predominantly one way—Tennessee to Bulgaria.

An example of this dependence occurred when a teacher on the Bulgaria team attempted a learning project with her students in the early months of the work (Spring 2003). She and her freshman English students attempted an economics survey project which was an idea she learned from a Tennessee colleague through correspondence by email. Her students divided into small groups and visited several businesses near their school in the city of Bourgas, Bulgaria. Students were not well received by the merchants in the town. The teacher became frustrated and disappointed with the venture. Although her students had completed some research about the economy of their place, the project did not yield a finished product because the next steps were unclear to the teacher and her students (Researcher Journal, June 3, 2003). The exuberance of the teacher was commendable, but she realized that her conceptual understanding of project-based learning was minimal. She would be dependent upon the Tennessee team to assist with expansion of her knowledge and instructional skills in this area.

When the complete teams began their work together in face to face meetings in June 2003, the Tennessee team had prepared extensive presentations on the major theoretical frameworks of the MYO Place project. The seminar topics included place-based education, global learning, learning community theory, and project-based learning.

A Bulgaria team member elaborated on the importance of the two teams working together in the summer of 2003.

> The outlines of the [MYO Place] project became clear when the American partners, the American team, came to visit us in Bulgaria in June [2003]. And, I think that we managed to come to agreement on the fundamental values because our team also took part in the initial planning of the project. At the very beginning, everybody pictured himself or herself very clearly as to their personal roles in the goals of the project. (Participant #B2 Interview, February 1, 2004)

The Bulgaria team did not come to a thorough understanding of the nature of the project until time was spent with the Tennessee team exploring the project goals, objectives, and theoretical frameworks (Researcher Journal, June 8, 2003). In the early work of the Bulgaria team, their dependence on the Tennessee partner created a challenge to collaboration within their team.

Meeting Expectations of Foreign Partner

The early dependence of the Bulgaria team on the Tennessee team created an additional challenge to collaboration. In the first stages of the project work, members of the Bulgaria team expressed concerns about meeting the expectations of their Tennessee partners. Several members of the Bulgaria team felt some anxiety as they began working in the MYO Place project. They initially felt that they might not be up to the challenge of the project. One participant explained this feeling which was shared by several team members: “No, I think that I was a little bit afraid that…I'm not well-prepared for this project. But, as I talked to the rest of the team members, they felt the same. So I felt

comfortable" (Participant #B1 Interview, February 1, 2004). This apprehension was focused on the concern that the Bulgaria team must meet the expectations of their Tennessee partners. This Bulgaria team member elaborated further:

> I thought that the American team would be better than us. Stricter and be better at dealing with timelines. But in fact, I see that we are good enough, at least. Whenever a timeline has been set, we managed to keep it. (Participant #B1 Interview, February 1, 2004)

As a result of their self-effacing role in the partnership, the Bulgaria team expressed a strong desire to meet the expectations of their Tennessee colleagues. "Yes, we had to do research. So this helped us in our knowledge because as intelligent people, we had to meet the expectations of the partners. But I think this influenced us positively of course" (Participant #B6 Interview, February 3, 2004). Many of the Bulgaria team members also spoke often of their "sense of duty" to the work in which they were engaged. A participant explained, "Everyone wanted to give the best…to do the best after he or she had been invited to the project. We had to do our best" (Participant #B8 Interview, February 4, 2007). A Tennessee participant observed that the Bulgaria team's desire to please was demonstrated by an eagerness to perform activities exactly as the Americans wanted (Field Notes, April 13, 2004). Another Tennessee team member explained,

> …at times, it seemed that everybody from Bulgaria questioned whether they would be our equals or not. I don't know, I just got that feeling from emails and stuff. They are our equals, if not better, in a lot of areas. (Participant #T2 Interview, April 7, 2004)

Several educators from the Bulgaria team had previously participated in intercultural partnerships with other European countries. Their commitment to the MYO Place project work was demonstrated in the conscientious manner in which they completed their assigned tasks (Researcher Journal, August 31, 2003).

The fears of the Bulgaria participants were relieved as the two teams began their collaborative work in the summer of 2003. One participant described how the Bulgaria team worked through this initial anxiety after the visit of the Tennessee team to Bulgaria and came to appreciate their contribution to the work of the project.

> In fact, the ideals of the project did not become very clear to me personally and maybe to all the rest of the team until we gathered in June [2003] here. We all had some doubts and hesitation, and were not very clear about it. And, uh, when we gathered, I mean both teams—the Bulgarian and the American teams; then, it was a process of sort of enlightenment into the ideals. Otherwise, we had just a general idea. We made suggestions. Changed the ideas…as we talked. …I don't think the Americans expect us to be as good as we think that they expect us to be. (Participant #B1 Interview, February 1, 2004)

The Bulgaria team came to grips with their own perceived inadequacies. But, the Bulgaria team's early dependence and their eagerness to meet the expectations of their foreign partner were challenges to collaboration for their team.

The Language Challenge

The MYO Place project involved a partnership of educators from very unique cultures and different languages. The grant proposal was written in English and funded

by the United States Department of State. Five members of the Bulgaria team were fluent in English. No one on the Tennessee team spoke Bulgarian. English became the language of choice for the work of the project. To communicate with the non-English speaking Bulgaria team members, an interpreter was required for all presentations. To converse with a larger Bulgarian audience, all project documents written in English had to be translated into Bulgarian. For these reasons, the language difference became an enormous challenge to collaboration in work of the Bulgaria team.

The skills of the English as Foreign Language (EFL) teachers were critical to the work of the project. Not only were four members of the Bulgaria team non-English speakers, most of the faculty members at the three participating schools did not speak English. Each participating school had an EFL teacher on the team. An additional EFL teacher was a lecturer at the university. These four EFL teachers played a key role in illuminating the ideals of the project to their colleagues (Field Notes, February 3, 2004). One of the school-based EFL teachers elaborated on the challenge involved. “The greatest of the greatest challenges is the language. Definitely, of course, I don't feel adequate for the spoken language, more formal. Translating reports…” (Participant B#9 Interview, February 4, 2004). Another EFL teacher echoed the same sentiment:

> The only awkwardness and anxiety is the language barrier. And…anything which might come up and deal with my translation … skill of interpreting things. Because, you know…I have to interpret in both languages. And, it is not always… I don't always understand everything. Maybe I was a little bit afraid of doing the translations. Maybe I thought they would not be very good…you know, with

> the language. And I might not live up to [Bulgarian Project Director's] expectations." (Participant #B1 Interview, February 1, 2004)

Some of the challenge to communication involved the peculiarities of the language. One of the EFL teachers mentioned how much she had grown in her understanding of the English language.

> Again, I learned a lot about English. For example, phrasal words that you don't realize what does it mean. Phrasal words, some differences in written English. A lot of colloquial expressions in English so … the language improvement was tremendous for me. (Participant #B9 Interview, June 4, 2004)

While expressing some apprehension, the EFL teachers responded to their important role in the project. The translating and interpreting work of the EFL teachers was coordinated by the Bulgarian project director.

As a college professor, the Bulgarian project director had extensive training in languages including working as a translator and interpreter at home and abroad. In addition to her role as an administrator of the entire project, she coordinated the important work of the EFL teachers. She explained:

> It has always been my main aim to facilitate the project and assist any of my colleagues when it came to language, language skills, etc. At the same time, it was a very delicate matter because I did not want to make them feel uncomfortable, but I had to be around all of the time. So, it was a very difficult for me, and I guess, embarrassing for them in some ways…. Right now, I think with the EFL teachers who are presently involved in the project, I don't think we have such

> problems. Because I feel the ice as melted in a way. They come to me for help, and they don't take it personal when I edit translations that they have done or they turn to me when they are interpreting; they look to me asking for a word or something. Which is a very good thing. (Participant #B7 Interview, February 4, 2004)

Confirmation of this language challenge was seen when the two teams first worked together in the summer of 2003. Subgroups of both teams worked on various elements of the project and communication across the language barrier was always a concern (Researcher Journal, June 5, 2003). The language challenge brought a layer of multiplied complexity to the work of the Bulgaria team, and the skills of the EFL teachers were crucial to the collaborative abilities of both teams.

The Reality of Differences in Professional Roles

In much the same manner as the Tennessee team, the participants in the Bulgaria group represented a variety of professional roles including classroom teachers, headmasters/mistresses, and college professors. Professional titles, past history, and role expectations can become obstacles to collaboration in the work of a new group. This challenge to collaboration was present within the Bulgaria team. The project director addressed some of the realities:

> And, sometimes it was tough because school principals couldn't always see through the fact that we were a team and none of us was…the so to say…we were all members of a team. In the new situation that we were…that we are in now, they were not school principals, that is, they were not…the sole managers of

> the process. So, I had to adjust a bit, but I don't think there were any major conflicts. (Participant #B7 Interview, February 4, 2004)

A Tennessee participant noted these differences in the interactions of the Bulgaria team members:

> From the perspective of the Tennessee team, sitting and observing the Bulgaria team, I felt there was more of a hierarchy or differentiation between the college people and the elementary/high school people on the team….When it came to interacting with the college and school people, I didn't feel that they viewed the Americans as …the American school teachers in the same light as the Bulgarian teachers. There was a definite pecking order that I felt was there. (Participant #T8 Interview, August 29, 2004)

These findings magnify the need for understanding the past history of participants and the re-clarification of roles when members of a new group come together. So, it became necessary to define their new roles in light of the mission and purpose of the group as they learn to work together (Field Notes, June 4, 2005).

The Bulgarian project director, an expert in languages, coordinated the work of the EFL teachers. She elaborated on how the differences in professional roles were addressed in her working relationship with the EFL teachers.

> …And, the chances that I had to address this issue with them, some of them, came to realize that the kind of expertise that I had gained was much greater than them because I was working for the University, and because my responsibilities were different from theirs. And because I have done some research, etc., etc, I

> wanted to make it so… I wanted to make it easier for them so that the project could continue to run as smoothly as possible…. And, I think that we both have do certain… we both have to adapt, both parties—me and my EFL teachers to…just to… I think we have become better people in this way. (Participant #B7 Interview, February 4, 2004)

The past differences among individuals with respect to education, training, and experience always creates challenges to collaboration within a group.

Fortunately, most members of the Bulgaria team were known to each other prior the MYO Place project. The team tried to downplay the potential negative impact of the diverse professional roles of the team members.

> Of course, there was something like, you know, something like…participants from the university being…in this position, in this site; being a little bit apart from the rest of the schools. But we have always tried not to separate and segregate any of the members. And, I personally had no problems because I have good relationships with the various teachers. I knew most of them before. (Participant #B1, Interview, February 1, 2004)

One participant elaborated on this challenge and the team's attempt to diminish its impact. "I don't think we had differences and diversities in our group. Or even if we had some, we somehow didn't see them. We didn't pay attention to them in the name of our common goals" (Participant #B3 Interview, February 2, 2004). A variety of professional roles bring a set of assumptions and potential biases about how these individuals may or may not work well together. Although the team's attempt to minimize the impact of these

differences was noteworthy; nonetheless, they were a challenge to collaboration for the Bulgaria team.

Lack of Time

Lack of time was also somewhat of a challenge to collaboration for the Bulgaria team. The project work was being done above the regular demands of their professions and their educational system. Most Bulgarian schools operate in two shifts, morning and afternoon. Secondary teachers may teach as many as seven classes per day across these two shifts (Field Notes, June 5, 2003). An elementary teacher spoke of the time demands created by her work on the project:

> Well, mainly by working very hard everyday here at school and after that in our spare time. Either at school or at home. I, personally, work in my spare time because I have classes – five, six, or seven classes a day. So, I work on the project in my spare time on the computer at school or at home. Almost everyday to late at night. And, it's not easy, but it's worth doing. (Participant #B4 Interview, February 2, 2004)

Another teacher mentioned the challenge of finding adequate time for the work of the project especially at the point when the Bulgaria team was preparing for the visit of the Tennessee team in June 2003.

> So, I think that the deadlines were appropriate enough so we have time to do everything. Maybe, except, the time that we prepared to have you in our country was a little bit hard for us because it was the end of the year. And, there had…a lot of work had to be done with students. I mean term tests, examinations, and at

> the same time especially when we had to translate all kind of reports, all kinds of documents that had to be presented here in front of the teachers. That was little bit hard time. Yes, June [2003] was hard time. (Participant #B9 Interview, February 4, 2003)

Also a principal (headmaster) explained the challenge of finding available time for the work of the project.

> I personally had to work hard on it. I had to get extra work home, and stay after my business hours. Besides working on this project and being a full-time principal, I have been working on other projects as well…at the same time…. I wouldn't complain about it. (Participant #B3 Interview, February 2, 2004)

The routine demands of school administration left the headmasters/mistresses searching for time to contribute constructively to the project (Field Notes, February 2, 2004).

The Bulgaria team demonstrated some creativity in maximizing the use of their time to meet the extra workload brought by the MYO Place project. A teacher explained the extra measures that were attempted:

> We discussed the theme of the project with my principal, and we decided which material that we use. We study a lot of literature, and after that when the project was ready, we discussed which of our students and teachers, in fact, would be interested in it…those who would like to work on it. I think…we managed to do a great deal because we gathered together every week, sometimes, everyday, and sometimes two, three times a day if necessary. And, we discussed the problems and what has been done, what hasn't been done. So we have quite close

> relationship among the members of the team now. (Participant #B4 Interview, February 2, 2004)

The lack of time spurred the team's resourcefulness in meeting the challenges of the project work. Additionally, some team members felt the need to improve their computer skills. In spite of the already increasing demands on their time, several sought opportunity to improve their skills to be better prepared to work on the project. One teacher paid for a computer class to improve her skills (Field Notes, June 8, 2003). The lack of time did create a challenge to collaboration within the work of the Bulgaria team. But, the participants did not allow this challenge to impede their efforts to make the project successful.

Limited Resources

Although the economy of Bulgaria has improved in recent years, the country has faced signficant economic hardship since "the changes" of 1989 when the Iron Curtain collapsed. Prior to 1989, Bulgaria was a communist country. The struggling economy has a negative impact on wage earners and the resources available for education. The country also suffers "Brain Drain" as a result of the emigration of the "best and brightest" citizens to other countries (Chompalov, 2000). These austere economic conditions result in limited resources for education and were a challenge to collaboration within the Bulgaria team of educators involved in the MYO Place project.

The MYO Place project budget provided for some resource assistance for the Bulgarian educators. First, each participating school was provided a computer system which included printer, scanner, and digital camera. The computer with Internet access

was important for communication with the Tennessee team. Also, these tools were used by teachers and students in the project-based learning elements of the work. Secondly, specific team members were provided with funds to cover expenses associated with hosting a Tennessee educator (Ross, 2002b).

Lack of resources can be destructive to the creation of a new setting (Sarason, 1972). Limited resources were a challenge to collaboration for the Bulgaria team. When asked about the adequacy of resources for the project (Appendices F, G), several participants spoke proudly of the computer and related equipment but also identified other financial needs:

> First, I can say that our school benefited by having the computer you see over there and the printer, and everything else that goes with it. This set of things we got by the project also enabled us in doing other work besides the work of the project…our everyday work. Of course, we need some financial resources to realize the ideas of the project. Like, for example, making a calendar of traditions and customs and rituals. We need to print this out. We need financial resources to materialize the ideas of the project…the outcomes of the project. (Participant #B3 Interview, February 2, 2004)

The members of the team were most appreciative of the resources provided by the project funding. Nonetheless, many other resources were needed to accomplish the project goals. The project-based activities involved hands-on learning opportunities which typically required additional instructional resources. Typically, a culminating product was created

which became a challenge in the resource poor environment of the Bulgaria schools. A teacher elaborated on the challenge:

> Well, uh…the school environment was given equipment – the computer, the scanner, the digital camera that I think that was all. As far as other financial resources, I think especially for the school, they aren't such. But in our project especially, we had so many things which had to be done, and which definitely needed money. A publisher would have to publish a teacher's book. We have to publish a calendar. So, all this – making exhibits, making exhibitions, we have the ideas to organize excursions to particular Bulgarian villages where traditional rituals are performed so the children could see them. And could reproduce them in their pictures. But all this should be done, maybe with our resources. I don't know resources to be given for these things. Yes, if there is an opportunity for additional financial resources, it would be easier for us. (Participant #B4 Interview, February 4, 2003).

While visiting Bulgaria in June 2003, one of the Tennessee educators asked one of the Bulgarian principals how the school had benefited from the project. He responded simply that the school had a new computer (Researcher Journal, June 10, 2003). In some way, this response points to the value attached to one computer system as the schools had little technology to use in their instructional programs. One participating school, the Bourgas High School of Economics, had approximately 12 computers for use by several hundred students (Field Notes, June 5, 2003). With such limited technology resources, one computer was a tremendous asset.

One of the classroom teachers mentioned the hardship on students and their families in acquiring even small amounts of money for class projects.

> The only thing – maybe, I don't how to explain. Is that because as you know it is hard time for our country, most of the people have low salaries. And, to do our projects, we have to collect money from the students. And, not all of them were so enthusiastic in… would not all agree…to donate money in the projects. So, there were some arguments that it not be so expensive. If I ask a little money, another colleagues ask for a textbook; a third one asks for something,…it was hard for them to save money for the projects. We needed to help some teachers to buy some cardboard; to buy film for the camera, money for developing this film. These were small amounts of money, but still there were some arguments about this….Discs and CDs, all of these, sheets of paper to copy some reports, the letters – maybe we have to give students a little amount of money just for their project. If they need money for the projects directly, to have their own budget about this. (Participant #B9 Interview, February 4, 2003)

This lack of resources created a dilemma for the classroom teachers who were seeking to use project-based strategies and implement hands-on learning activities.

Another goal of the MYO Place project was for the involved students and teachers to create projects and products that could be shared with their international partners (Ross, 2002b). The project director for the Bulgaria team explained:

> Maybe…I was thinking about …the desire that they have expressed to physically transport the artifacts that they have produced in school to schools in the United

States and to have their peer's artifacts here, something like a traveling exhibition. (Participant #B7 Interview, February 4, 2004)

Financial resources would be required to promote this sharing of project results. Upon witnessing the economic hardships in Bulgaria, a Tennessee educator expressed a concern for the challenge that this idea would create for Bulgarian educators.

> Yes, I think so….I do worry about the Bulgarians…uh, this….being able to participate in the Project Based Learning (PBL) activities, the cost of mailing back and forth, and that kind of thing. I do worry about that. I don't think they have those funds available. For us, it's no big deal to stick $10 in the mailbox. (Participant #T1 Interview, April 4, 2004)

The Bulgaria participants were required to cover their expenses for passports and inoculations for foreign travel. In spite of their meager personal finances, the Bulgaria team members purchased gifts for their Tennessee colleagues when they visited the United States (Field Notes, August 23, 2003).

If the long-term goals of the MYO Place project were to be realized in Bulgaria, the challenge of limited resources had to be addressed. One of the participants articulated the challenge very well:

> If we are thinking of further ahead in the future, maybe, there will be this financial aid, I was talking about before, the calendar and other things. Uh…that might say, let's say, not delay, might obstruct, in a way, the ideas of the project to be understood by more people…by the community. (Participant #B3 Interview, February 2, 2003)

Limited resources could negatively impact the implementation of the project work. Furthermore, the final realization of the project goals could be put in peril and the long-term sustainabilility of the work could be jeopardized (Field Notes, June 4, 2005).

In summary, the severe economic conditions of the country created an immense challenge to collaboration for the Bulgaria team. In fact, the financial struggles common to most Bulgarians have created a kind of national cynicism about the future economic prospects for the country. In speaking of their cultural attributes, Lewis (2006) described Bulgarians with "a widespread feeling of pessimism about national helplessness" (p. 310) that is destructive to their development as a nation. The educators and parents of the Bulgaria team seemed to have low morale because of these economic hardships (Researcher Journal, June 9, 2003). Many Bulgarian parents seemed torn by the reality that a brighter future for their children may be elsewhere besides their homeland (Chompalov, 2000).

Reluctance to Accept the Inevitability of Conflict

The Bulgaria team setting was analyzed through the conceptual frame of Sarason's (1972) theory of the creation of settings. While utilizing two components of his theory, vehicles of criticism and the necessity for and evils of leadership, a challenge to collaboration within the Bulgaria team was noted. During interviews with the Bulgaria team members, they were asked questions (Appendix K) related to Sarason's components within the creation of a setting. The Bulgaria participants seemed reluctant to accept the inevitability of conflict within the work of their team. Sarason was resolute in his belief that conflict is to be expected and a group's early acknowledgement can lead to the

development of guidelines or norms to address such conflict when it arises. This reluctance by the Bulgaria team proved to be a challenge to collaboration and seemed to be shaped by unique national cultural influences.

When responding to the questions about the potential need for ground rules or norms for group work (Appendix G), the participants expressed an overwhelming conviction that such guidelines were unwarranted. A team member explained:

> We didn't develop any regulations and written principles and other rules in any specific form. Because, this way, we avoided authority…something like this. Different stages of the project work required different kind of guidance and rules and principles. The main…governing principles were connected with being on time, being disciplined, being tolerant. Be respectful of other people's work…and giving help if help is needed. (Participant #B2 Interview, February 1, 2004)

The project director gave her perspective:

> I can't think of any right now. But, again, there haven't been any formal procedures. Problems were dealt with when they occurred. We didn't put down any rules in black and white so to say. This was unspoken most of the time, and … a rule is too strong a word kind of. I would rather say…points to bear in mind when work was to be done. (Participant #B7 Interview, February 4, 2004)

The principles mentioned by the participants were suitable norms for group work, but they were never discussed in a team context. One of the Bulgarian teachers expressed obvious irritation when asked about norms for the work of the team:

> Well, of course, we haven't written this—ground rules. Yes, but there are some things which are natural in our every day life. And, I think the most important one is that we respect each other. We discuss the problems and the tasks. We try to fulfill everything according to the timelines…to the project timelines. (Participant #B4 Interview, February 4, 2004)

The Bulgaria participants agreed to principles of group interaction including being on time, tolerance, being disciplined, helping each other, and meeting project timelines. Project leaders assumed that all participants agreed or would follow such norms in the work of the group (Field Notes, February 3, 2004).

The Bulgarian educators also demonstrated an appreciation for the values of respect, honor, and teamwork within the context of their work. A teacher explained:

> And…the decisions we've taken…are the result of big discussion of the problems and the tasks. And the conclusions we make…they are the result of respecting each other's opinions and our work as a team. So these are unwritten rules, but which are very important—to respect and honor each other. And, to have in mind the opinion of everyone. (Participant #B4 Interview, February 2, 2004)

Again, these educators expressed a conviction that all team members understood these unwritten principles of group interaction. Another teacher elaborated further:

> Yes, we respect each other's opinion…. And, if we can say that this is a guiding rule—that to listen to everybody's opinion and to have everybody's opinion in mind, and if I do not agree with something then I have to obey to the

> decision of the group.… I think it was a wonderful team. There were no other problems. (Participant #B9 Interview, February 4, 2004)

The mutual honor and respect among the Bulgaria educators was demonstrated during the summer of 2003 when the two teams were working jointly on the project (Field Notes, August 28, 2003). But, the potential for conflict with the creation of a new setting is ever-present.

Bulgarian educators were also asked about the emergence of leadership (Appendix G) within their team. Their responses focused on a decidedly positive view of the impact of leadership within the group. One team member explained her perspective:

> So, the leadership, in a positive way of speaking, of course. We need such a person to coordinate, to be the engine of the planning and everything so, in this sense we can say that [Project Director] does this very well and because there is always need of a person who coordinates everything. Yes, and this helps us…(Participant #B5 Interview, February 3, 2004)

Within the context of the Bulgaria team, participants agreed that a positive climate for teamwork was prevalent. Another participant spoke of the role of the project leader in promoting teamwork.

> Of course, there is a person who is director of the project in our team. As there are directors and there are teachers. Of course, there has to be leadership or different roles. As I said before, we collaborate without problems. We work as a team. (Participant #B6 Interview, February 3, 2004)

In fact, six of the nine Bulgaria participants mentioned teamwork skills as an area of professional growth as a result of their involvement in the project. (Field Notes, April 29, 2004). Another participant explained how respect and leadership united the Bulgaria team.

> So there was a leader in each different part of the task. But being the leader doesn't mean that you don't respect or that you don't have in mind the opinion of others…So, this leadership does not divide us. I think it makes us a team. (Participant #B4 Interview, February 4, 2004)

The role of leadership in unifying the team was mentioned repeatedly by the Bulgaria participants (Field Notes, February 5, 2004). Positive leadership and teamwork are critical to the success of group endeavors, but they will not prevent the occurrence of conflict and disagreement.

The unwritten norms for group interaction suggested by several team members were commendable as was the positive focus on the exercise of leadership demonstrated within the Bulgaria team. During interview sessions, most participants were also hesitant to make mention of any hint of disagreement or conflict within the team (Field Notes, February 5, 2004). In his research examining the effects of culture on international business, Lewis (2006) described cultural characteristics of Bulgarians as sober, cautious, and somewhat suspicious of foreigners. These national cultural attributes could possibly explain the response of the Bulgaria participants to this line of questioning by this researcher. One exception was the Bulgarian project director when she stated, “I think there was mutual understanding, and people who were not happy with things, they just

said they were not. And, we went further and clarified the issue or explained why it was to be like this" (Participant #B7 Interview, February 4, 2004). The project director was the only participant to openly address issues of disagreement, conflict, and debate within the team. The team members were also unwilling to express any criticism of their leadership (Field Notes, February 5, 2004). This finding seems to also be influenced by culture as Bulgarian employees rarely challenge the authority of a supervisor (Hofstede & Hofstede, 2005). These cultural influences will be discussed in greater detail in Chapter VI.

In reality, conflicts are normal in group work, and they were obvious on the Bulgaria team even to a casual observer. The first face to face joint work between the combined teams occurred when the Tennessee team visited Bulgaria from May 30—June 10, 2003. In conversations with Tennessee participants, one of the Bulgaria participants was very open in her expressions of discontent with some elements of the project and their team's dynamics (Field Notes, June 7, 2003). On another occasion during work on the project, an EFL teacher was observed in a heated exchange with her principal (Field Notes, June 5, 2003). As noted earlier, each of the three participating schools in Bulgaria received a computer system and related equipment. After a few months into the project, one computer system was moved to a principal's office making it less accessible to teachers and students involved in the work of the project (Field Notes, August 29, 2004). This decision created dissension within the Bulgaria team. When interviewed for this study, most Bulgaria team members seemed hesitant to discuss or acknowledge any contention, debate, or controversy within the Bulgaria team.

In summary, the Bulgaria participants projected an atmosphere of harmonious relationships within their team. The interview questions seemed to create uneasiness among some participants. These reactions can be explained by the influence of culture on how Bulgarians interact with reach other and respond to people of other countries. While the presence of civility in group endeavors is desirable, conflict is inevitable and in some respects beneficial. The reluctance of the Bulgaria team to accept the inevitability of conflict was a challenge to collaboration. Consensus on norms early in group work creates a mechanism to deal with impending conflict in constructive ways (Sarason, 1972). This principle is almost never recognized by a group prior to the need; therefore, the likelihood and intensity of contentious interactions is increased. Also, conflict and debate are not respected as normal elements of group interaction (Field Notes, May 16, 2005).

Chapter Summary

When individuals agree to begin working together, they will face innumerable difficulties. The Bulgaria team within the MYO Place project encountered some unique challenges. The funds supporting the MYO Place project were provided by the United States Department of State. The grant proposal was written primarily by a Tennessee author. Due to these realities, the Bulgaria team found themselves in a relationship of dependency to their Tennessee partners early in the work of the project. In their developing partnership, both the Bulgaria and Tennessee teams were enthusiastic about the prospects of working and learning together. The prerequisites for successful partnerships as defined by Russell and Flynn (2000) are “careful selection of partners,

mutual respect, willingness to listen, commitment, an equal power base, frequent communication, and flexibility" (p. 203). In their early role of dependence, the Bulgaria team was not prepared to enter this intercultural relationship as equals. This dependency led to a focus by the Bulgaria team on meeting the expectations of their Tennessee partner. For a partnership to function effectively, participants must reach agreement on the goals and objectives for the relationship (Harris & Harris, 1992). In the early months of the work, the Tennessee team was the provider of all project information to the Bulgaria team.

Among the Tennessee participants, no one spoke the Bulgarian language. Four members of the Bulgaria team could not speak English. Since the primary language of the project was English, the Bulgaria team assumed the added communication responsibility of translating and interpreting within the work of the project. These duties created an additional challenge to collaboration for the Bulgaria team.

Within the Bulgaria team, the participants wrestled with the realities of differences in professional roles and lack of time as did the Tennessee team. The realities of the daily practice of teachers, principals, and college professors are different. These professional role differences proved to be a challenge to collaboration for the Bulgaria team. All Bulgaria participants had multiple responsibilities above their professional duties, so lack of time for the project was also a burden.

One of the significant challenges for the Bulgaria team resulted from the austere economic conditions of the country and the lack of resources for education. The Bulgarian teachers and students could not be expected to provide funds to support the

project. These limited school and classroom resources diminished the capability of the teachers and students to create some of the products of the project-based learning modules of study. This economic reality hampered the ability of the team to achieve some of the project goals.

Finally, the reluctance to accept the inevitability of conflict created a challenge to collaboration for the Bulgaria team. The Bulgaria team believed that honor, mutual respect, and positive attitudes toward leadership would somehow diminish the probability of conflict. The assumption by the Bulgaria team members that good-natured people can work together without conflict was a challenge to collaboration. When conflicts arose, procedures for conflict resolution were not available. But, this challenge for the Bulgaria team was affected by distinctive cultural influences that will be explored further in Chapter VI.

CHAPTER VI

ANALYSIS—THE COMBINED TEAMS

Chapter Introduction

The purpose of this qualitative case study was to analyze collaborations involving three teams of educators participating in the "My Place, Your Place, Our Place" project. The research questions for this study were:

- What were the challenges in creating collaborations within the three teams of educators involved in the “My Place, Your Place, Our Place (MYO Place)” project?
- What were the similarities and differences in challenges across these three teams?

In this chapter in response to the first research question, the challenges to collaborations are examined within the combined teams as they worked together. The entire Bulgaria and Tennessee teams were together for collective work on two separate occasions for a total of approximately 21 days. Finally, this chapter will examine the similarities and differences in challenges to collaboration across the three teams—Tennessee, Bulgaria, and combined—in response to the second research question.

The complexity of creating a setting involving a combination of the Tennessee and Bulgaria teams is multiplied substantially. Each team had its own set of challenges to collaboration in the initial phases of the project prior to their work together. The MYO Place project, being an intercultural partnership, further amplified the difficulty of the process. Bulgaria has its own unique language and culture which is very different from the United States. Several of the Bulgaria team members were fluent in the English

language; otherwise, this partnership would have been impossible. No one on the Tennessee team knew more than a few words of the Bulgarian language.

The complete Tennessee and Bulgaria teams worked together face-to-face on two occasions. The Tennessee team visited Bulgaria for joint work on the project from May 30 through June 10, 2003. The cooperative work continued when the Bulgaria team visited Tennessee from August 21 through September 2, 2003. On other occasions, smaller groups or individuals from both teams traveled in either direction to continue refinement of the project. In many cases, the purpose of these journeys was for members from both teams to make presentations about the MYO Place project to selected audiences at the partner universities or at conferences in the area. Throughout the life of the project, communication was on-going between both teams through the Internet.

During interviews with the Tennessee and Bulgaria participants, they were asked a series of questions specific to their respective teams. Participants from both teams were asked the same set of questions labeled as Group 2 (Appendices F, G) in reference to their participation in the project as a combined team when the two groups worked together. These questions again were based upon Sarason's (1972) theory of the creation of settings (Appendix K). Each team was creating its own setting. When the teams combined, they brought their collective knowledge, experience, and challenges to the joint work. With an understanding of how the Tennessee and Bulgaria teams combined in the creation of a third setting, the findings specific to the original research question will be discussed.

Research Question 1: What were the challenges in creating collaborations within the three teams of educators involved in the "My Place, Your Place, Our Place (MYO Place)" project?

In the analysis of data for the combined team, the various documents created within the project, field notes, and interviews of the participants of both teams were utilized. Nine members of the Tennessee and Bulgaria teams were interviewed. Their responses to the Group 2 questions (Appendices F, G) were analyzed for challenges to collaboration within the combined team. These interviews were conducted in 2004 after the two teams had worked together in the summer of 2003. The project director of the Bulgaria team summarized the complexity of the combined team's efforts:

> Because a project… it is…one of the aims, one of the major objectives of any project is to bring people together, and bringing people together is not always an easy task. They have to overcome difficulties and problems. And, I think it is part of the game, even fall down, to get up. The point is that you have to keep going, and I think we are going in the right direction. And, I very much hope that this project will get an extension. (Participant #B7 Interview, February 4, 2004)

The two primary challenges to collaboration for the combined teams were the language barrier and the influence of culture. Two secondary challenges were time and distance. Language, time, and distance will be explained at this point in some detail. Also, culture as a challenge to the combined team will be discussed briefly in this section. Since the influence of culture was felt across all three teams, these challenges will be discussed at greater length in response to research question two regarding similarities and differences in challenges across the three teams.

The Language Barrier

From the outset, the MYO Place project had to deal with the language barrier between the Tennessee and Bulgaria participants. Communication is critical for the health and survival of a partnership. The ability to communicate across the language barrier was a huge challenge to collaboration for the combined team. This challenge was clear to the original teams. Since no one on the Tennessee team spoke the Bulgarian language, the selection of participants for the Bulgaria team had to include members who were fluent in English. The Bulgarian project director was a professor in languages at Bourgas Free University. Four other team members spoke English and were EFL teachers, one at the university and three at the participating schools.

Although several of the Tennessee team members had traveled internationally, they had minimal experience in working with educators who spoke a different language. The Tennessee educators understood that language would be a challenge in the MYO Place project. One participant explained: "But, you know, I do understand these differences. I understand language barriers. And, language barriers are tough.…I don't speak the language whereas the other person does. It does become a real issue" (Participant T3 Interview, April 12, 2004). Another Tennessee educator described one of the struggles: "Yes, you had the language issue. Yes, we would be talking about the same thing with different words, and that would take two minutes to clarify the wording" (Participant T2 Interview, April 7, 2004). A Tennessee team member went further to clarify the difficulty for the combined team in dealing with the language barrier.

> I don't think the organization and the flow was as natural between the two teams [combined teams] as it was just for the Tennessee team. For the simple reason you had language as your barrier. And then once you got past language then you had the way even the English speaking Bulgarians would interpret words and phrases…the clichés, plus you had cultural differences. (Participant T9 Interview, August 30, 2004)

As the two teams combined and worked together intensely in a face-to-face relationship, the challenge of language was at the forefront of concern because it was so essential that everyone understood the goals, objectives, and conceptual framework of the MYO Place project. The combined team often worked in a seminar format with presentations by members of each team. In responding to this communication challenge, a Tennessee participant said, "Yes. Sure, there was. And, I think we did some Power Points in both languages. That helped with the general understanding. They would come back the next day with a better understanding of what we had done the day before" (Participant T2 Interview, April 7, 2004).

The presenters also had to learn how to speak through an interpreter. By virtue of their educational leadership positions, most team members had prior experience in doing presentations for audiences of educators. They had little or no experience in presenting with the aid of an interpreter. When the teams worked together, all presentations were required to be made in both languages. Presentations had to be planned with this requirement in mind. The Tennessee project director described the challenge in making these presentations:

> Well, I think language, I was going to say it was a barrier, that's too strong of a word. It, in a sense, slowed us down occasionally is a better way of saying it. You'd get engaged in a conversation, you'd like to run on with an idea and you realize—whoops! I've got to stop and let somebody interpret this for me. (Participant T7 Interview, April 14, 2004)

The information, as one participant indicated, had to be "chunked" to allow the interpreter to convert to Bulgarian for the non-English speaking participants (Researcher Journal, June 7, 2003). The Tennessee participants began to quickly realize the immense challenges to communication when interpreting between languages is required.

The Bulgaria team was dependent upon the Tennessee team for their early understanding of the MYO Place project goals and objectives. The complexity of the MYO Place Curriculum and Instruction Design model combined with the communication difficulties created a potential quagmire for the Bulgaria team. A Tennessee educator expressed a concern about what the Bulgaria participants might be experiencing:

> I think the Bulgarian team was totally confused with what we were doing. I don't think they ever really did understand, even after the sessions. I think they were struggling to try to make sense of what we were doing. I think it was possibly perceived as talking down to them because I think they have some things going on in their own settings that really were every bit as good as some of the things we were trying to share with them. I don't know that they were offended, but they seemed somewhat apprehensive about the whole thing for a long time and maybe

> even to some degree still are a little apprehensive. (Participant T4 Interview, April 13, 2004)

As the teams combined, they attempted to look beyond the challenges and work together to develop a mutual understanding of the project.

The Bulgaria team was, in fact, facing the more difficult challenge in several ways. The EFL teachers on the Bulgaria team were often captured in a group social context during which they were required to interpret on the spur of the moment. These situations created tremendous stress and anxiety for them. The skills required to teach the basics of language are very different from those needed to interpret. These teachers felt a huge burden of responsibility (Field Notes, August 29, 2004). One of the EFL teachers explained:

> So, it's a big responsibility. First, I have to understand the thing for myself, and then manage to translate it as close as possible for the others. Because I will be misleading them in a way. So, that's the only thing—the only anxiety. Well, I wouldn't call it anxiety because it is a responsibility—a burden of responsibility. (Participant B1 Interview, February 1, 2004)

An interpreter was required in all interactions of the combined team. As an example, when the two teams ate dinner, the EFL teachers were positioned strategically among their non-English speaking colleagues so as to facilitate communication (Researcher Journal, June 5, 2003).

When the combined team worked on specific tasks within the project, the language challenge created fascinating interactions. During the visit of the Tennessee

team to Bulgaria, sub-groups were formed to work on the development of Project-Based Learning (PBLs) units of study. In one example, two members of the Tennessee team joined two Bulgarians, one being an EFL teacher who would interpret. One of the Tennessee participants agreed to record notes from the discussion and planning of this sub-group. While attempting to follow the PBL outline, the discussion strayed considerably. The two Tennesseans were often talking to each other in English while the two Bulgarians were speaking in their own language. The EFL teacher attempted to keep the lines of communication open across the language barrier. In spite of the apparent absurdity in this scenario, somehow a draft PBL was developed (Researcher Journal, June 6, 2003). Another Tennessee participant concurred when she stated, "When we met together in our teams, I thought we worked well together given the language constraints. We came together with some very creative projects" (Participant T8 Interview, August 29, 2004).

In summary, the language barrier was a tremendous challenge to collaboration for the combined team. Each team worked to overcome this obstacle so productive outcomes would be seen from the project.

Distance and Time

One of the goals of the MYO Place project was "to provide travel opportunities for Bulgaria and Tennessee participants to observe and study local place and culture so they can model for colleagues and students a knowledge of and value for both cultures and environment" (Ross, 2002b, p. 15). This goal required each team to visit the home community of the partner. The University of Tennessee in Knoxville was the supporting

institution for the Tennessee team. The Bulgaria team was sponsored by Bourgas Free University in Bourgas, Bulgaria. The travel from Knoxville, Tennessee to Bourgas, Bulgaria required an extraordinary commitment of the Tennessee participants during their visit in June 2003. In like manner, the Bulgaria team traveled from Bourgas to Knoxville in August 2003 for joint work with the Tennessee team. This distance and the time proved to be a challenge to collaboration for the combined team. One of the Tennessee educators spoke to this issue:

> We need to be able to develop those relationships and to cultivate them so that we can have more come from that and…distance is a real barrier as far as trying to be able to work collaboratively with somebody that you've seen on two different occasions, once in June and once in August or September, you need that face to face interaction every once in a while to continue and, to continue the excitement, to continue the intensity…so that you can all try to get back on the same page and then assess where you've been and then look at what you can continue….
> (Participant T8 Interview, August 29, 2004)

Prior to the travels of both teams, the Internet was used extensively to get acquainted and share pertinent information regarding the project. Much of the early planning was completed in this manner by the project leaders of both teams. The great distance and time commitment hampered the ability of the teams to work together. Also, electronic communication is somewhat limited as explained by the project director of the Bulgaria team:

> As I said, it was very hard to work when the two teams set so far apart. And, of course, the electronic means of communication are there, but it often takes a personal, physical contact with people face to face to discuss different matters. So, I think we've done a fairly good job taking into consideration the fact of the seven hour time difference, and we are 4,000—5,000 miles away from each other. (Participant B7 Interview, February 4, 2004)

A Tennessee participant also discussed the allotment of time and the rigorous timetable for the occasions when the teams combined to work together.

> I think we were just not realistic at all about what we could get done. Traveling, we were tired over there, and they were tired over here. I know you and I slept four hours per night. You are so interested in wanting to do things. After four or five days, you're awake 20 hours, but you're exhausted. Your concentration goes down. I don't think we were real objective about what we could get done when we were together. (Participant T2 Interview, April 7, 2004)

Another Tennessee educator concurred with this assessment when stating, "I think everybody worked really hard and tried to make it happen, but again it was just so much in so little time that only so much work could be done…there is not enough time built in" (Participant T3 Interview, April 12, 2004). As an international traveler, experiencing the sights, sounds, food, and entertainment of another culture was enjoyable. But the combination of prolonged travel, jet lag, and rigorous schedules was exhausting to the participants (Field Notes, June 8, 2003).

The leadership of the Tennessee and Bulgaria teams completed meticulous planning in preparation for the work on the combined team. Every effort was made to take full advantage of the limited time that the two teams would be together. In spite of this heroic effort, members of both teams expressed concern about the insufficient time.

> Limited amount…nowhere near enough time in Bulgaria and the United States to do things. I think when we were setting at our table dividing up what we were going to do while we were over there, and then, when we were in Bulgaria what we were going to do when they were in Knoxville. We under budgeted our time necessary for it. (Participant T2 Interview, April 7, 2004)

A Bulgarian educator also felt the time crunch as the project got underway. She explained:

> And, I had to get acquainted with the materials of the project for quite a short time. But it was, at maybe this was one of the greatest challenges for me, yes, to learn what the project is about, about its objectives and goals of the project. And after that, to prepare the presentation for our visit to Tennessee. As a matter of fact, it was something new for me. I never worked on such thing before. (Participant #B4 Interview, February 2, 2004)

Based upon his research on the creation of settings, Sarason (1972) cautioned groups about a realistic time perspective in attempting to accomplish their goals. He emphasized that flexibility in the use of time would be needed. The two-year time timeline for the MYO Place grant did not allow much leeway.

Another Tennessee team member felt the challenge of time was the overriding weakness in the project.

> It's about time and to really effectively work together as a team. If we're supposed to work together as a team now we're working individually and truly individually, now and try to make this come together and I think, I think that's going to be the real weakness of the project, in my opinion. And it's that time factor. (Participant T3 Interview, April 12, 2004)

To address the limited time factor, the two teams would require additional face-to-face work sessions. The timeline for the grant would not permit such flexibility and the budget did not have sufficient funds to cover the added expense.

Another goal of the project was to "to develop and test the MYO Place course, instructional units, and learning activities" (Ross, 2002b, p. 14). This goal required the combined teams to develop collaborative curriculum which is a very complex, arduous endeavor. The Project Based Learning (PBL) was the chosen format for these units of study. The combined team invested considerable time in understanding the process and developing draft PBLs that would be refined when they returned home (Researcher Journal, June 5, 2003). One of the Tennessee project team members verbalized a concern about the combined team's willingness to continue to devote time to the PBL process:

> As a combined team? Well, our work together was so regimented in terms of time frames that we had no choice but to get on with it. So while we were working together it was pretty productive I think. Given the amount of time we had together. Now, as we've gone off and done our own thing that follow through has

> not been as good on our side as it seems to have been on the Bulgarian side. But I think that, I get a sense that [Bulgarian Project Director] has really made sure that that's happened. (Participant T4 Interview, April 13, 2004)

Although some of the initial enthusiasm seemed to wither, the entire combined team would not have any additional time together after the final joint meeting in Tennessee from August 21—September 2, 2003 (Field Notes, September 1, 2003). This loss of time and focus on the PBLs and the lack of progress were mentioned in the Year One Project Report ((Ross, 2003b). The Tennessee project director and coordinator worked to renew commitment to this goal.

In summary, the distance between the partners and the limited time for the teams to work together were a definite challenge to collaboration for the combined team. Nonetheless, a Bulgaria team member painted an optimistic face on the future potential and sustainability of the MYO Place project. If the combined team was committed to the realization of the goal of creating a college course, then the message of the project could be perpetual. This Bulgaria team member explained:

> Maybe, so that they could study – maybe, it could be an optional course – they could study the My, Your, Our Place ideas, as an optional course. And this way, work…giving the ideas to students, it can come out that the project can work for years and years on end. This will mean that we have already overcome the space barriers, and we will be able to overcome the time barriers as well. Let's hope that one day that our grandchildren will be working on these project ideas. (Participant #B2 Interview, February 1, 2004)

Contrary to this optimistic outlook, the joint work of Bulgaria and Tennessee groups in a combined team was hindered by the distance and time.

The Influence of Culture

The cultures of Bulgaria and the United States are vastly different. The attributes of culture and the underlying values from which they rise have a dramatic impact on how individuals and groups interact with each other. The culture of the United States influenced the challenges to collaboration experienced by the Tennessee team as they worked together. In like manner, the culture of Bulgaria affected the nature of the challenges in creating collaborations within their team. The underlying influence of culture became more noticeable when the Bulgaria and Tennessee groups joined in the combined team.

Upon further analysis, the challenges to collaboration within the combined team were culturally based; and as such, will be discussed in greater detail in response to the second research question. The cultural implications of the challenges to creating collaborations within the combined team will begin with an examination of the cultural characteristics of Bulgaria and the United States. This explanation will include data from this research study which demonstrated the effect of cultural variables on the collaborative abilities of the combined team. This background will provide an introduction to the far-reaching impact of cultural criteria on collaboration throughout all phases of the MYO Place project.

Sarason's (1972) definition for the creation of setting was used to conceptualize collaboration for this research. He defined the creation of a setting as "any instance in

which two or more people come together in new relationships over a sustained period of time in order to achieve certain goals" (p. 1). The MYO Place project created notable implications for the phrase, "come together." In the context of international partnerships, this phrase assumes an interesting dimension in this new information age. Sarason first developed his theory in the early 1970's when the Internet was unknown. While very comprehensive in nature, Sarason's theories are based upon research within the United States, and they do not deal with the creation of settings from an intercultural perspective. For these reasons, additional bodies of research are used in this study to provide a better understanding of how culture shaped the challenges to collaboration within and across the three teams. One example is *When Cultures Collide: Leading Across Cultures* by Lewis (2006). Lewis' research on global commerce and communication will be used to highlight the distinctive cultural characteristics of Bulgaria and the United States.

Distinctive Cultural Attributes

The research of Lewis (2006) focused on understanding the differences in national cultures when conducting international business. His description of the cultures of Bulgaria and the United States will be used to frame a further discussion of the challenges to collaboration for the combined team. In Bulgaria, quiet and soberness are highly valued; therefore, public displays of contention or hostility are rarely seen. The Bulgarians display a pervasive "pessimism about national helplessness" (Lewis, 2006, p. 319), although the impact is declining as younger, post-communist Bulgarians assume leadership. In general, the values of Bulgaria tend to be rural, based upon a predominantly agricultural society.

Other descriptive terms for the Bulgarian people include disciplined, pragmatic, industrious, highly literate, cautious, thorough, and inventive (Lewis, 2006). They are suspicious but tolerant of foreigners. In reference to time, Bulgarians rarely demonstrate a sense of urgency. They regard patience as a virtue. Bulgarians are well-known for their listening skills. They will not be rushed and goals are set in a slow but deliberate manner. Bulgarians have an inner drive to succeed, but they require plenty of time to achieve their objectives. The Bulgarian people are very hospitable and they enjoy lengthy socializing with friends around food and drink. They also demonstrate great loyalty to those who are fortunate to call them friends.

Americans live at a frenzied pace based upon a cultural history of "first come, first served" (Lewis, 2006, p. 179). Hard work is synonymous with success and time is money. The historic rush of the American past was based upon conquering new frontiers and accumulating wealth. The modern American is just as pressured by the unrelenting drive for success, but the destination is not as clear. For this reason, Americans struggle to find inner harmony. Americans also value rugged individualism over collectivism. They "pull themselves up by their boot strings" (p. 180) and demonstrate unshakable optimism and future-orientation.

Americans are described as opportunistic, impatient, persistent, risk-taking, and sometimes ruthless (Lewis, 2006). They quickly develop trust of others through ultra-friendliness. They are often blunt and disagreeable. In the United States, the dollar is almighty. Americans feel that their norms and values are the only correct ones. They are often more interested in a business deal than a relationship. They are tough, cunning, but

naïve. American English is regarded as tough and clever while leaning toward exaggeration and sensationalism (Lewis). Americans worship at the altar of innovation, change, and improvement. They have a great work ethic and will often bypass a vacation if important work is to be done.

This summary of the inherent cultural differences between the Bulgaria and Tennessee team brings greater understanding to the collaborative challenges within the combined team. The American team took the dominant role in the partnership for a variety of reasons. The Tennessee project coordinator explained the typical American cultural perspective as the teams worked together:

> Yes, that was their culture. And we had the money. You know, there are a lot of reasons that these things were perpetuated. But, you never know where down the line…what we have done is affirm everything everybody has heard about Americans. We weren't ugly. We were not doing it in a mean way. We had no bad intentions. (Participant #T5 Interview, April 13, 2004)

Although the Tennessee team was careful to create a harmonious relationship with their Bulgarian colleagues, cultural influences were apparent. The Tennessee project coordinator elaborated further:

> Yea, it's not hard to figure it out. And, I'm the worst. Let's get in here and get this done, you know. And, this is how it's going to be done. Blah, blah, blah, blah. And, I can stand back and watch me doing it, say, [Self], it's against everything you've been taught… (Participant T5 Interview, April 13, 2004)

True to form, American culture is somewhat forceful. The Tennessee team followed their cultural predispositions. Americans are inclined to take charge while Bulgarians require additional time to consider a course of action (Lewis, 2006).

The Bulgarian cultural inclinations also came to play in the work of the combined team. Bulgarians are typically reserved, patient, and will not display any sense of urgency. The project director of the Bulgaria team explained how these aspects of culture were demonstrated in the work of the combined team.

> But, I think that there were times, especially at the beginning, when some of the members of the Bulgarian team didn't feel really comfortable, especially when we were in the United States. It took them some time to regain their self-confidence because they did not know if they were on a par with their American colleagues. This is, maybe, my personal interpretation of certain things that I observed, but, there were times, when this was more prominent. And, there were times when this was not on the surface that much. So, it was a kind of setback and wait for the American colleagues to come up with ideas and suggestions even though, in many cases, they were well able to give suggestions themselves. (Participant #B7 Interview, February 4, 2004)

This stance by the Bulgaria participants ran counter to the American fondness to take charge as displayed by the Tennessee team. American culture is characterized by a compulsion for frenzied activity even in the face of confusion about a course of action or the ultimate goal. The assumption being that swift action will somehow move the group more quickly to success even in the face of lost directions and goal confusion.

Each team in the MYO Place project brought a specific cultural lens and worldview to the work of the combined team. These cultural differences created challenges to collaboration within the combined team. In spite of these differences, both teams applied themselves to a greater understanding of the other in an effort to attain the goals of the project. A Tennessee participant expressed a strong sense of the camaraderie that developed between the two teams.

> Well, I was, I was so amazed that even within the diversity, the common bonds that are between us, that struck me as much as the diversity did. I think the most difficult part of the diversity was the language barrier, and we seemed to be able to work through that pretty well. I really saw very little else that was a barrier, everything else was just people getting together and finding out about each other and appreciating each other. (Participant #T4 Interview, April 13, 2004)

Additional details of the cultural influences on collaboration will be discussed later in response to the second research question on the similarities and differences across the three teams.

In summary, the challenges in creating collaborations within the combined team were language, culture, time, and distance. The Bulgarian and Tennessee educators experienced challenges to collaboration within their own teams. When they combined, the challenges were multiplied. The primary challenges were language and culture. Time and distance also proved to create some difficulties to the development of collaboration. The language barrier became very apparent as the combined team began its collective work. Culture influences, while equally significant, were not as apparent to members of

the combined team. The impact of culture is examined in more depth in response to the second research question.

Research Question Two: What were the similarities and differences in challenges across these three teams?

The challenges to collaboration for the Tennessee team were explained in Chapter IV, and the challenges for the Bulgaria team in Chapter V. Seven challenges were noted for each of these teams. In Chapter VI, four challenges were noted for the combined team. The challenges to collaboration for the Tennessee team included a lack of consensus on values and goals, deficiencies in conceptual understanding, lack of time, inadequacy of non-monetary resources, reluctance to confront history of professional roles, the failure to establish explicit norms, and the challenges of achieving shared leadership and ownership. The challenges for the Bulgaria team were dependence on partner, meeting expectations of foreign partner, the language challenge, the reality of differences in professional roles, lack of time, limited resources, and the reluctance to accept the inevitability of conflict. The combined team challenges included distance, time, language, and culture.

This section will re-examine these challenges to collaboration in terms of similarities and differences across the three teams. The intricacies of cultural differences between the United States and Bulgaria dramatically influenced collaboration across the three settings. First, the similarities and differences in challenges across the Bulgaria and Tennessee teams will be briefly discussed. Due to the diverse cultures of the two countries, the differences were much more noticeable than the similarities. When the two groups joined in the combined team, they did not lose their cultural identities. To explore

the impact of cultural differences on collaboration, the research of Hofstede and Hofstede (2005) was used from their book, *Cultures and Organizations: Software of the Mind*. Hofstede and Hofstede's five dimensions of national culture were used as an additional conceptual frame to more fully analyze and understand the challenges to collaboration within the intercultural setting created by the combined team.

Similarities in Challenges

The similarities in challenges to collaboration across the Tennessee and Bulgaria teams included the reality of professional role differences, lack of time, the reluctance to establish norms to deal with inevitable conflict, and the lack of resources. Even within these similarities, there were subtle differences in how these challenges were exhibited within each team. Some of these differences can be attributed to cultural factors and will be discussed in more fully in the final section of this chapter.

The reality of professional role differences links with the historical stance component of Sarason's (1972) theory of the creation of settings. As individuals come together to work on a common enterprise, they bring the sum total of their past experiences with previous settings. The potential of conflict exists as participants' past experiences with settings collide with the idealized possibilities of the present setting. The Tennessee and Bulgaria teams included classroom teachers, administrators, and college professors. These distinct groups see the practice of education from very different perspectives. Both groups were enthused about the possibilities of the MYO Place project. The professional roles of the participants created a challenge to collaboration because of their diverse perspectives and the differences in their education, training, and

experience. For the sake of group harmony, both groups were somewhat reluctant to accept potential discord brought by these various professional roles (Field Notes, August 27, 2003).

With the exception of one Tennessee participant, the members of both teams worked on the MYO Place project above the professional duties of their full-time jobs. The lack of time was a challenge to collaboration for both teams. Sarason (1972) maintained that new settings require a realistic time perspective which includes flexibility in scheduling and the overall use of time. With the frenzied pace of their American lifestyle (Lewis, 2006), the Tennessee participants were more prone to complain about the demands on their time. The Tennessee participants added the project work to schedules already jam-packed with other professional and personal responsibilities. The Bulgarians also experienced some difficulty in allocating time to the project but were much less likely to complain (Researcher Journal, August 30, 2003). The Bulgarian educators were also more likely to complete action items by the established deadlines than were the Tennessee participants. (Field Notes, June 4, 2005) While the two-year timetable for the grant prevented flexibility in the use of time to make the schedules more acceptable, the availability of surplus funds permitted an extension of the project to a third year (Ross, 2004).

In his research, Sarason (1972) asserted that vehicles of criticism be establish early to provide governance for the new setting. These vehicles of criticism are often called ground rules of group norms. These norms address the inevitability of conflict that always occurs in a new setting. The Bulgaria and Tennessee teams did not consider the

need for such vehicles of criticism. The Tennessee team failed to establish explicit norms for the group asserting that such guidelines were not necessary due to group members knowing each other well. The Bulgaria team would not consider the need for such norms while maintaining that "this is something that emerges during the process of work" (Participant #B3 Interview, February 2, 2004). In fact, another Bulgaria participant seemed insulted when asked about the development of such written guidelines (Field Notes, February 3, 2004). The Bulgaria team spoke often of teamwork and the good-natured way that their group worked together. They were reluctant to accept that conflict within their team was inevitable. The Bulgarian educators were unwilling to consider the prospects of conflict and hostility within their ranks. Although this component, vehicles of criticism, was seen somewhat differently by the two groups, neither team would agree to consider the implications for their work of the project. This factor was a challenge to collaboration across the two teams. Although the participants in the MYO Place project were delighted about participation and demonstrated a high degree of mutual respect, vehicles of criticism remained essential.

As a new setting is created, participants often assume that unlimited resources are available for their use. The grant funds for the MYO Place project were sufficient for the major expenditures, but many other resources were needed by the teams. The Tennessee and Bulgaria teams experienced a challenge to collaboration based upon the lack of resources. Poor economic conditions in Bulgaria result in limited resources for education. The MYO Place project required the creation of student products from the use of project-based learning instructional strategies. These incidental instructional expenses were not

covered by the grant. The burden of this expense was transferred to students and their parents. Although some grant funds were applied to resource issues for the Bulgaria team, the amount was not sufficient. The Tennessee team, feeling that the grant funds adequately covered most expenses, was concerned about non-monetary resource needs. The Tennessee team mentioned time as a resource and discussed ways to address this issue (Field Notes, April 14, 2004). Another resource limitation of the Tennessee team was the need for additional participants. The team needed more people to assist in the ever-expanding work of the project to ensure proper implementation and address sustainability after grant funds were exhausted.

In summary, four similar challenges to collaboration were identified across the Bulgaria and Tennessee teams. These challenges surfaced in a somewhat distinct manner depending upon specific situational circumstances and cultural influences.

Differences in Challenges

The differences in challenges to collaboration across the Tennessee and Bulgaria teams were abundant. The unique struggles experienced by the Tennessee team included a lack of consensus on values and goals, deficiencies in conceptual understanding, and the challenge of achieving shared leadership and ownership. As the creator of the MYO Place project idea, the Tennessee team assumed a leadership role in the initial stages of the work. They struggled to reach agreement on the values and goals of the project. As the MYO Place Curriculum and Instruction Design Model (Appendix A) was developed, the team also wrestled with the supporting multi-faceted conceptual frames. As the project matured, the Tennessee team also toiled to achieve shared leadership and

ownership of the work. These factors were detrimental to the development of collaboration within the Tennessee team. The Bulgaria team, as the invited partner, did not deal with the same difficulties.

For the Bulgaria team, their distinctive challenges to collaboration included dependence on their partner, meeting the expectations of a foreign partner, and the language barrier. Initially, the Tennessee team was the "keeper of the vision" in terms of the goals and purpose of the project. The Bulgaria team's dependence on their partner inhibited their initiative in the early work of the project (Field Notes, February 4, 2004). This dependence also contributed to an overt demonstration of the Bulgaria team's desire to meet the expectations of their American partner. This is a curious finding especially in light of the fact that the Tennessee team was not meeting its own project goals and expectations. In year two, the Bulgaria team was soon outperforming the Tennessee team in meeting project timelines and deadlines (Field Notes, April 13, 2004). The language barrier was a challenge to the Bulgaria team because many of their members did not speak English. Also, the EFL teachers were placed in the position of heightened responsibility to interpret for all meetings and presentations and to translate all project documents for the dual audiences.

In conclusion, these differences in challenges to collaboration across the two teams reveal some cultural overtones. These cultural influences became more apparent when the teams came together to work as a combined team. For this reason, the cultural influences on the similarities and differences in challenges will be further analyzed using Hofstede and Hofstede's (2005) five dimensions of national cultures.

A Clash of Cultures

Culture had a dramatic impact on the interaction between the Bulgaria and Tennessee team in this project. Cultural differences between the two countries included language, thinking and behavior patterns, beliefs, and institutional patterns. In an analysis of intercultural collaboration, Hofstede and Hofstede (2005) have much to contribute from their 30 years of cross-cultural research in 70 countries. They defined culture as "the collective programming of the mind that distinguishes the members of one group or category of people from another" (p. 4). Hofstede and Hofstede identify five manifestations of culture. They use the onion as a metaphor describing these elements of culture as layers that can be peeled away. These four layers are symbols, heroes, rituals, and values. Values are at the core and represent the deepest demonstrations of culture while symbols are the most superficial. Symbols may be terms, gestures, or objects that only have meaning to those who share the culture. Heroes and rituals are the layers in between. Heroes are persons, living or dead, who possess traits to be admired and emulated by people within the culture. Rituals are practices seen as socially necessary such as manners of greeting and various secular and religious ceremonies. Hofstede and Hofstede defined values as "broad tendencies to prefer certain states of affairs over others" (p. 8). Values are learned very early in life. The fifth aspect of culture, termed practices, is invisibly superimposed across the other four manifestations. Practices only have meaning to the insiders within a culture. These five manifestations of culture are distinctive from one nation to another (see Table 4). The teams in the MYO Place project learned a great deal about the cultural differences between their countries.

Table 4

Dimensions of National Culture (United States and Bulgaria)

Dimension	**United States**		**Bulgaria**	
	Score	**Rank**	**Score**	**Rank**
Power Distance (PDI)	40 (LOW)	57-79	70 (RELATIVELY HIGH)	22-25
Individualism vs. Collectivism	91 (HIGH)	1st	30 (LOW)	46-48
Masculinity vs. Femininity	62 (RELATIVELY HIGH)	19	40 (MID-RANGE)	55-58
Uncertainty Avoidance	46 (WEAK)	62	85 (STRONG)	23-25
Long-term vs. Short-term Orientation	29 (LOW)	31 of 39	Unavailable	

Hofstede and Hofstede (2005) also identified five dimensions that characterize cultures of nations and peoples. From their massive international database, the cultural characteristics of 70 countries were analyzed. The data from numerous multicultural studies were compiled during their research. The five dimensions of national culture are power distance, collectivism versus individualism, masculinity versus femininity, uncertainty avoidance, and long-term versus short-term orientation. The scores on these dimensions are presented for the United States and Bulgaria. The relative ranks of the scores as compared to the other 70 countries are also presented (Hofstede & Hofstede). Differences in these dimensions dramatically influence how people from different cultures work together. These dimensions of culture will be described in more detail including an explanation of the scores for the Bulgarian and American cultures. Data and conclusions from this research will also be incorporated to gain a better understanding of the impact of cultural differences on collaboration for the combined team (see Table 4).

Power distance (PDI) is "the extent to which the less powerful members of institutions and organizations within a country expect and accept that power is distributed unequally" (Hofstede & Hofstede, p. 46). It explains how a society deals with inequities. The PDI score for the United States is 40 (Rank—57-59) of 70 countries which is low. The Bulgaria score is 70 (Rank—22-25) which is relatively high. The power distance index (PDI) also explains employee relationship with supervisors and the employees' perception and preference for the supervisors' decision-making style.

In countries with small power distance (United States), efforts are made to minimize inequalities among people. As an example in the MYO Place project, the

Tennessee team was more interested in shared leadership and ownership of the project than was the Bulgaria team (Field Notes, April 18, 2004). Employees in countries like the United States with a low PDI will have limited dependence on supervisors with a preference for consultation in the working relationship. There will be a relatively small emotional distance between boss and subordinate. Subordinates easily approach and disagree with the boss. On the Tennessee team, this relationship was demonstrated by the openness of the participants to be critical of their leaders (Field Notes, April 30, 2004).

If a large power distance exists, inequalities among people are expected and desired. In high PDI cultures (Bulgaria), subordinates are dependent on bosses. Subordinates, in fact, may express a preference for such dependency by favoring an autocratic or paternalistic supervisor. Management and employees have a large emotional distance, and subordinates rarely approach their bosses directly. When the orders are given by a boss in such an autocratic cultural context, employees typically comply. As previously explained in this study, the lines of separation between the Bulgarian teachers, administrators, and college professors were much more pronounced than in the Tennessee team. Also, the Bulgaria team's dependence on the Tennessee team and their "sense of duty" to meet their partner's expectations could be attributed to their high PDI (Field Notes, May 16, 2005).

The second dimension of individualism versus collectivism is described on a continuum. Collectivism is a preference for a secure interwoven social framework whereby individuals in a group expect other members to look after their interests in exchange for unquestioned loyalty. The polar opposite is individualism in which the

social network is loosely knit and the paramount concern for individuals is the care of themselves and their immediate families (Hofstede & Hofstede, 2005). The Bulgaria score was 30 (Rank—46-48) which is low representing the collectivism end of the spectrum. The United States score of 91 (Rank of 1st) is indicative of a highly individualistic society. Countries with larger power distances are more likely to be collectivist (Bulgaria), and small power distance countries are likely to be more individualistic (United States).

On the two dimensions of culture of power distance and collectivism vs. individualism, the Tennessee and Bulgaria teams were polar opposites. These diverse cultural characteristics had potentially negative effects on the collaborative abilities of the teams. Americans often challenge authority (low PDI) and expect to care only for themselves and their immediate families (individualism). On the other hand, Bulgarians rarely challenge authority and avoid conflict (high PDI) and think of extended family and the collective good for society (collectivist). In collectivist societies, personal relationships take precedence over task and are normally established before business is conducted. On the other hand, the achievement-oriented, individualist culture appreciates the completion of tasks above personal relationships. A Tennessee team member thoughtfully considered the historical context of Bulgaria and their cultural tendencies as the combined team did its work.

> In terms… of being under Communist control; that historic background. Being under Communist control, it is truly a "group think" but not in the community sense that we are thinking about. That's talking about collaboration and

> empowerment, and that wasn't there. But, it amazes me that it is there to a certain degree, but it is hard for them. “Group think” is part of their culture. [Bulgaria team member] told us this. They think collectively. That is part of their culture. So, maybe it is easier for them in a sense. And, maybe, this is why the development of these PBLs is easier for them because this is a part of their culture within their school. Everybody seemed to be working toward a more common goal as opposed to our school where it’s more the individual. I do my thing with my kids. Maybe, they probably have a great leg up on us; in terms of a learning community, if you want to know the truth. (Participant #T3 Interview, April 12, 2004)

Bulgarian culture is collectivist emphasizing the welfare of the group while American culture is individualistic with a focus on the achievement of individuals. While being interviewed, the Bulgaria participants frequently mentioned team and teamwork in reference to the work of their group (Field Notes, January 16, 2005). Learning community theory was one of the important theoretical frameworks for the MYO Place project. Ironically, learning community theory is strongly advocated in American education in a cultural context where individualism is high-valued when it would be better suited for the cultural dimensions of Bulgaria than the United States (Field Notes, March 14, 2007). Individualist countries with small PDI’s tend to be wealthier. They practice individualism and also promote its superiority over other forms of “mental software” (Hofstede & Hofstede, 2005, p. 106). Most Americans label individualism as

the source of the country's greatness. Individualist societies prefer freedom over equality. Equality is a collectivist ideal.

The third dimension of national culture is masculinity versus femininity. On a continuum, masculinity prefers achievement, heroism, assertiveness, and material success. The converse, femininity, demonstrates an inclination for relationships, modesty, caring for the weak, and quality of life. The United States score of 62 (Rank–19) is relatively high toward the masculinity side of the scale. Bulgaria has a mid-range score of 40 (Rank—55-58) in the direction of femininity. The terms applied to the extremes of this range are assertiveness (masculinity) in opposition to modesty (femininity). The differences in culture are social, but even more emotional. In masculine societies, emotional gender roles are clearly defined. Men are supposed to be tough and assertive with material success as a focal point. Women are reserved, gentle, and preoccupied with quality of life issues. In these cultures, emphasis is placed on academic success, competition, and career achievements. In feminine cultures, emotional gender roles overlap. Both women and men are characterized as "modest, tender, and concerned with quality of life" (Hofstede & Hofstede, 2005, p. 120). The focus is on relationships, cooperation, development of life skills, and social performance.

Societies, according to these dimensions of national culture, are often regarded as tough (masculine) or tender (feminine). Assertiveness is characteristic of the masculinity side of the range. On the feminine side, an emphasis is placed on pleasing others. These traits are reflected somewhat in the interaction of the Tennessee and Bulgaria teams. The Tennessee team was assertive in their leadership of the project. On the other hand, the

Bulgaria team, in attempting to meet the expectations of their foreign partner, demonstrated a feminine perspective, particularly the desire to please. A difference in this dimension is also noted in how cultures deal with conflict. In masculine societies, conflicts are typically resolved by a good fight where the stronger of the combatants survive. In feminine cultures, compromise and negotiations are the preferred methods of conflict resolution. Both the Tennessee and Bulgaria teams expressed a view that group norms for dealing with conflict were unnecessary in their respective teams. The Bulgaria team seemed to be expressing an avoidance strategy in their reluctance to accept the inevitability of conflict (Field Notes, February 7, 2004). In a demonstration of assertiveness, the Tennessee participants were quick to criticize leadership when disagreeing with project direction. The differences in this cultural dimension for Bulgaria and the United States are not as prominent as other elements.

The fourth dimension, uncertainty avoidance, is the extent to which members of a society experience anxiety from situations perceived as unclear, unstructured, or unpredictable (Hofstede & Hofstede, 2005). A need for structure in a culture is born of the fear of uncertainty. The uncertainly avoidance score for the United States 46 (Rank—62) which is weak in comparison to others. The Bulgaria score was 85 (Rank—23-25) which is strong. Countries described by strong uncertainty avoidance (Bulgaria) identify uncertain or unknown situations as alarming or potentially dangerous. Those with low scores (United States) view such circumstances as curious. Strong uncertainty avoidance societies (Bulgaria) generally seek to minimize uncertainty by the imposition of rules and systems that guarantee order and coherence. These factors generally result in a pyramid

hierarchal structure in the organizations. In low uncertainty avoidance countries (United States), people are more comfortable with unstructured situations. Anxiety levels are relatively low, and family life is relaxed. In high uncertainty avoidance countries, ambiguity is avoided, anxiety levels are high, and family life is typically stressful.

The cultural differences in uncertainty avoidance between the Bulgaria and Tennessee teams surfaced in their work as a combined team. In the workplace, weak uncertainty avoidance cultures (United States) tend to be better at invention, but they are worse at implementation. Strong uncertainty avoidance societies (Bulgaria) are worse at invention, but more skilled at implementation (Hostede & Hofstede, 2005). When the two teams met for joint work, sub-teams were created to begin the development of project based learning (PBLs) units of study. A Tennessee teacher observed this cultural distinction between the two teams:

> I think so, we broke up into our teams [sub-teams] and we started doing our PBL's and everything, but I think, you know, as the American culture is we're quick to decide on something, slow to implement it. You know, Bulgarians are slow to decide and quick to implement, you know, we reverse each other there. So I think right now they're in their work stage and I think we're in our slow down stage so I think maybe that causes us cultural issues back and forth, I believe. (Participant #T1 Interview, April 4, 2004)

The original MYO Place grant proposal was primarily an American invention funded by U.S. dollars. The project created a framework for an intercultural educational partnership around curriculum and instruction that honored the homeland of both countries (Ross,

2003a). The MYO Place Curriculum and Instruction Design model was created by the Tennessee team during the first year. The Tennessee team explained the conceptual elements of the model during their first face to face work session in June 2003. When the Bulgaria team understood the project goals more fully, they went to work. It appeared that the Tennessee team had lost its way, but a dimension of culture was being demonstrated. The Tennessee and Bulgaria teams were at opposite poles of the uncertainty avoidance continuum. Another Tennessee participant succinctly captured this cultural phenomenon:

> Everything American, you know; all of that. It could have been that we were doing most of the writing of the grant on this end.…we worked on it and focused on it; getting the curriculum ready and the PBLs…. they were getting ready to feed us three good meals and show us the Polda Lake. They felt like that's trivial compared to these people who are cranking out these volumes of work to do. Which we cranked out too much, and we couldn't get it done. And, I felt like when we got over there, they said; oh well, we can do this work too. Actually, they ended up creating better PBLs than we did. Because, they had ownership of it. And, I don't know, we thought we can create a PBL, OK, let's go on. They wanted to create several really good ones.…Once they had the same script we had written, then they said, oh, well, we can do this. Not only they could do it; often times, they did it better. (Participant #T2, April 7, 2004)

This Tennessee educator succinctly captured this cultural difference between Bulgaria and the United States in the dimension of uncertainty avoidance. Perhaps, an argument

could be made that teams from countries at opposite ends of the uncertainty avoidance spectrum could complement each other, and actually benefit from the inherent cultural strengths and weaknesses. But, both teams had critical responsibilities in the planning (invention) and implementation elements of the project. Following true to cultural characterization, the Tennessee team was strong in invention and weak in implementation. The Bulgaria teams demonstrated a weakness in invention, but excelled in implementation.

Into the second year of the project, members of the Bulgaria team were annoyed with the lack of progress by the Tennessee participants. By their cultural nature, the Bulgarians would not speak openly about such an issue, but the frustration was noticeable when the sub-teams met in February 2004 to work on the MYO Place book. The Tennessee project director explained the dilemma.

> …September [2003]….we gave out some assignments. And the Bulgarians took the assignments to heart and went home and did it. We all got back comfortable with our regular jobs and what else we were doing and put off some things. So when the several of us went to Bourgas in late January and early February [2004], they had pretty well done all the things that had come out of our summer conference and discussion and timeline and we hadn't. You know we went there didn't have much of that stuff done as you well know. And so I think we probably were the guilty ones at that particular point. (Participant #T7 Interview, April 14, 2004)

True to their cultural dispositions, the Bulgarians had completed the assigned task, and the Americans were behind. One of the key objectives from the joint work during summer work of 2003 was to begin to connect school with school, teacher with teacher, and class with class to strengthen all facets of the partnership (Researcher Journal, August 31, 2003). The inactivity of the Tennessee team led to no movement on this goal and little progress on their own development of PBL units of study. This lack of progress by the Tennessee participants was noted by members of the Bulgaria team (Field Notes, February 4, 2004).

In summary, the differences in the cultural dimension of uncertainty avoidance between the Bulgaria and Tennessee teams had sweeping implications for the work of the combined team. Although the project always had an overarching purpose of promoting cultural understanding, the influence of culture in the work of the teams was less obvious to many participants from both countries (Field Notes, June 4, 2005).

A fifth dimension of culture is long-term versus short-term orientation. These cultural variables again follow a range. A long-term orientation promotes values oriented toward future rewards such as perseverance and thrift. Other attributes held in high esteem include respect for the demands of virtue, sense of shame, and belief in frugality and order. A short-term orientation treasures personal steadiness and stability, respect for tradition, strong desire to 'save face,' and an obligation to fulfill social obligations. Hofstede & Hofstede's (2005) research on this dimension included only 39 countries, and a score was not available for Bulgaria. The score for the United States was 29 with the highest score being 118. The rank for the score was 31 and inclined toward the short-term

orientation of the scale. The work values for societies with short-term orientation include freedom, achievement, and thinking for oneself. Short-term orientation is demonstrated in national culture by the norm that effort should produce quick results. This characteristic was noted in the Tennessee team during project work. Long-term orientation emphasizes perseverance through prolonged exertion toward unhurried results. Although a score for Bulgaria was not available, long-term orientation is consistent with other cultural norms of their society. Bulgarians regard patience as a virtue and rarely display a sense of urgency. Goals are set in a slow but deliberate manner, and they require plenty of time to achieve their objectives (Lewis, 2006). In this dimension of culture of long-term versus short-term orientation, the Bulgaria and Tennessee teams were again at opposite ends of the scale.

In conclusion, the educators on the Tennessee and Bulgaria teams developed relationships of friendship and respectful collegiality during their work on the project. Some of these relationships continue even today. Even so, the two teams were dramatic opposites in three of four dimensions of national culture. These dimensions were power distance, collectivism versus individualism, and uncertainty avoidance. On the masculinity versus femininity element, the difference was not as pronounced. For long-term versus short-term orientation, the United States is decidedly short-term in cultural perspective. The scores were not available for Bulgaria (Hofstede & Hofstede, 2005); nonetheless, Bulgarian demonstrates a tendency toward long-term orientation from other cultural research (Lewis, 2006). As demonstrated in the analysis of the interactions of the

two teams, these differences in dimensions of national culture created challenges to collaboration for the combined team.

Chapter Summary

The project ideas and the proposal development were primarily a Tennessee team initiative. The Tennessee team, in fact, assumed dual responsibilities in the initial implementation of the project. The Tennessee team members first developed their own common understanding of the project mission and then assisted the Bulgaria team with their comprehension of the goals. The Bulgaria and Tennessee teams were limited to only two occasions during which they met face-to-face for their joint enterprise.

Two of the challenges to collaboration within the combined team were time and distance. The complete memberships of the two teams worked face to face on two occasions during the summer of 2003. They were limited to less than 21 days of joint work on the project. While sub-groups were together for other elements of the project, the combined team needed much additional time to develop mutual understandings of the project purpose and the underlying conceptual frameworks. The travel distance between Tennessee and Bulgaria also hampered the ability of the combined team to enhance their collaborative skills in two ways. First, the travel time alone required more than 24 hours on both ends of each trip. Additionally, the grant budget did not include sufficient funds for additional trips for the 10 person teams to travel.

The major challenges to collaboration within the combined team were language and culture. The language barrier between the Bulgaria and Tennessee team were uppermost in the minds of all participants as the project began. The project required that

all documents be translated into both Bulgarian and English. The EFL teachers on the Bulgaria team gave an enormous amount of their time to translation of the numerous documents. These teachers gave their full concentration to the various nuances of language translation to assure the accuracy of the documents. All meetings and social events required the services of an interpreter. Careful attention was given to the idioms, dialects, and clichés intrinsic to the process. The EFL teachers managed all of the translating and interpreting services for the project. The EFL teachers also had responsibilities to learn about the other intricacies of the project as did all team members. This language challenge was about maximizing communication which is essential to any collaborative enterprise. Without clear communication between the participants from each team, they could not learn about the other's culture or complete project tasks.

In responding to the second research question, the similarities and differences in challenges across the two teams were analyzed. There were four similar challenges between the Bulgaria and Tennessee teams. There were many more differences, and many of these could be attributed to culture differences. Research by Hofstede and Hofstede (2005) and Lewis (2006) were used to analyze the differences in cultural attributes that impeded collaboration across teams. The differences of culture focused on the combined team through the lens of Hofstede and Hofstede's dimensions of national culture. As they worked together, the Bulgaria and Tennessee teams displayed a variety of differences based upon culture. The two teams demonstrated striking differences in three of the five dimensions of national culture. These three were power distance, collectivism versus individualism, and uncertainty avoidance. These differences were

exhibited in many ways when the teams were engaged in shared work. In the dimension of masculinity versus femininity, the two teams were somewhat different. Some impact was also noted in this component. In the fifth dimension of long-term versus short-term orientation, scores were not available for Bulgaria (Hofstede & Hofstede, 2005). The United States demonstrated a short-term orientation. An examination of other cultural research indicates that Bulgarian culture possesses long-term orientation qualities. The cultural differences between the Bulgaria and Tennessee teams were prominent and dramatically impacted the creation of collaborations across all three teams of the MYO project.

CHAPTER VII

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Chapter Introduction

The purpose of this study was to analyze collaborations involving three teams of educators in the "My Place, Your Place, Our Place" project. These teams were engaged in a project funded by the United States Department of State entitled "My Place, Your Place and Our Place (MYO Place): Integrating Education for the Neighborhood and the World." The project was led by educator teams from Tennessee and Bulgaria. This chapter will present a summary of the findings, offer a concluding discussion, and make recommendations for additional research. Within the conclusions, implications of for the practice of educators engaged or interested in collaborative partnerships are presented.

Summary

In recent years, collaborative partnerships have been touted as a mechanism to achieve improvement in education. The MYO Place project was such a partnership of educators representing the country of Bulgaria and the state of Tennessee. This study analyzed the challenges to collaboration within the three teams of educators involved in the MYO Place project. These groups included the team of Tennessee educators, the Bulgarian educators, and the team created by the combination of the two. Additionally, this study examined the similarities and differences in challenges in creating collaborations across these three teams.

The overarching theme for this research was collaboration. Collaboration was conceptualized by using Sarason's (1972) book, *The Creation of Settings and the Future*

Societies. Sarason referred to the development of collaboration as the "creation of a setting" which he defined as "any instance in which two or more people come together in new relationships over a sustained period of time in order to achieve certain goals" (p. 1). The elements of Sarason's theory included "consensus on values, substantive knowledge, a historical stance, a realistic time perspective, adequate resources, vehicles of criticism, and the necessity for and the evils of leadership" (p. 6). Sarason's theory was used to frame the methodology for the study including the interview questions and the development of code words and themes during the data analysis process.

Tennessee Challenges

The Tennessee team experienced several challenges to collaboration. The challenges included: the lack of consensus on values and goals, deficiencies in conceptual understanding, lack of time, inadequacy of non-monetary resources, reluctance to confront history of professional roles, the failure to establish explicit norms, and the challenges of achieving shared leadership and ownership. The power of influence of these challenges varied, but all had an impact on the collaborative capacities of the Tennessee team.

The combination of lack of consensus on values and goals and deficiencies in conceptual understanding produced a multiplied challenge to collaboration. The MYO Place project included specific embedded values such as intercultural understanding and appreciation for diversity; appreciation for local place and a larger international perspective; excellence in learning opportunities for participating students and educators; and the need for trust, unity, and peace in a global community (Ross, 2002b). Although

these values were emphasized in the original grant proposal, the team struggled to integrate them into the project goals and activities. The Tennessee team's refinement of the conceptual frameworks within the MYO Place Curriculum and Instruction Design Model (Appendix A) also continued for several months. The somewhat conflicting theoretical frameworks included place based education, global learning, learning community theory, and project-based learning. The Tennessee team struggled to develop a holistic understanding of these frameworks that were crucial to the attainment of project goals and outcomes.

The greatest challenge to collaboration for the Tennessee team was the lack of time. Each participant struggled with balancing the work of the project and the other demands of their personal and professional lives. To complicate matters, the preparation for international travel took a tremendous amount of time. The clock was ticking on the two year project. Project deadlines and timelines were frequently not met. The completion of assigned action items was often delayed. Pressing timelines also hindered the group's ability to attain consensus of values and goals. Ideally, a less stringent timeline for the grant would have relieved this pressure on the Tennessee team.

The availability of funding was not a problem for the Tennessee team, but the lack of other resources was. The expenses for the participants were substantially covered by grant funds. Tennessee participants had sufficient financial means to cover other incidental expenses associated with the project. Two other resource limitations were concerns. One was the lack of human capital or expertise as the project expanded in complexity. The volume of work in the project rapidly increased creating a need for

additional people to assist. In a related area, the amount of time and expertise for management was enormous, and the grant did not include funds to compensate someone for administration of the project.

The additional challenges to collaboration for the Tennessee team were threefold: a reluctance to confront history of professional roles, the failure to establish explicit norms, and the struggle to achieve shared leadership and ownership. The participants included classroom teachers, K-12 administrators, and college professors. Due to training, education, and work experience, each professional category brought widely divergent perspectives. The relationship between the participants was very cordial, but their professional roles brought noticeable differences in perspectives to the tasks of project planning and implementation.

The collegial relationships between participants led to a failure to establish explicit norms to deal with the inevitable conflicts of group work. The majority of the team members knew each other prior to the project, so most participants believed that norms were not needed. When conflicts arose in the group, norms had not been developed. Without the constructive resolution of conflicts and disagreements, the collaborative effort of the team was diminished. Unwarranted criticism was levied against project leaders which created some hurt feelings and frustration. These norms for group governance were needed as the project developed.

In terms of governance issues, the team also experienced a challenge in achieving shared leadership and ownership. Some Tennessee team members assumed some leadership tasks in the work of the project. The project director and coordinator struggled

to find a balance between assuming their share of the workload and delegating certain tasks to others to encourage ownership of the project. Some participants disagreed as to whether the project leaders ever achieved this balance. Shared leadership and ownership were critical to the future expansion and sustainability of this undertaking.

In summary, these seven challenges to collaboration within the Tennessee team were consistent with the components of Sarason's (1972) creation of settings. In the MYO Place project, 10 Tennessee participants made a two year commitment to the work. These challenges impeded the team in its ability to sustain the project and diminished the enthusiasm needed to achieve project goals.

Bulgaria Challenges

The challenges to collaboration for the Bulgaria team were also seven-fold. They included a dependence on the partner, meeting expectations of a foreign partner, the language challenge, the reality of differences in professional roles, lack of time, limited resources, and the reluctance to accept the inevitability of conflict. The Tennessee team was the initial architect of the MYO Place project. As a result, the Bulgaria team demonstrated a dependence on their partner and a preoccupation on meeting expectations of the Tennessee team. These challenges interfered with the initial ability of the Bulgaria team to develop their own team's capacity for work on the project.

The language challenge was a struggle for the Bulgaria team. No one on the Tennessee team knew the Bulgarian language. All translating and interpreting was done by the EFL teachers on the Bulgaria team. They expressed some anxiety about the burden

of this responsibility. Although they performed these duties admirably, these added responsibilities were a hindrance to collaboration.

Similar to the Tennessee team, differences in professional roles and lack of time were challenges for the Bulgaria team. The daily practice of teachers, administrators, and college professors in Bulgaria are very different. The lines of differentiation between these professional groups in Bulgaria are more pronounced than in America. The Bulgaria participants had multiple duties aside from the project, so the lack of time for the project made the work more difficult. In fact, the demands on public teachers in Bulgaria are more rigorous than in the United States.

Perhaps, the most significant challenge for the Bulgaria team was the lack of resources available for the project. The economic struggles of the country of Bulgaria impacted the availability of resources for their schools. The schools were obviously lacking in many essential instructional supplies and equipment. The MYO Place project created additional incidental expenses for supplies and materials for student project work. This lack of resources created some disagreements between teachers and their students and was detrimental to the team's desire to meet the project goals.

The Bulgaria team was also reluctant to accept that conflict in group work is inevitable. The Bulgarians preferred to believe that the good nature of people would allow them to work jointly without contention. When conflicts arose, the Bulgaria team had no procedures to resolve these difficulties. Conflict is unavoidable in the creation of a setting. Without a consensus set of norms to deal with discord, relationships between

participants can be damaged and concentration on group goals is potentially diminished, thus restricting collaboration.

In conclusion, the seven challenges to collaboration for the Bulgaria participants hampered their ability to work together to meet the goals and objectives of the project. The Bulgaria team was an exceptionally hardworking group of educators. After becoming knowledgeable of all components of the project, they applied themselves diligently to the individual and group tasks involved in the work.

Combined Team Challenges

The Bulgaria and Tennessee teams united to create a third setting—the combined team. The complete combined team met for joint work on two occasions during the summer of 2003. The challenges to collaboration for the combined team included time, distance, language, and culture. Each team was previously working on project planning and implementation in their specific locale. As a combined team, they developed a common timetable for project work. The members of the combined team also agreed that the lack of time was a continual challenge to their collaborative work. As the combined team worked in the summer of 2003, it became abundantly clear that the vast distance between Bulgaria and Tennessee was also a detriment to collaboration. The lengthy travel distance also consumed their shared time and the trips were costly. The time demands for the Bulgaria team members intensified as the project in the first year evolved into a comprehensive reform model with four underlying conceptual frames.

The language barrier was acknowledged early in the work of the project. In preparation for the work sessions of the combined team, extensive preparations had been

made to deal with the stark realities of the language barrier. Language is a tool for both spoken and written communication. The EFL teachers were deliberately placed during group interactions so as to minimize the impact of the language barrier on communication. This innovative planning by project leaders and the EFL teachers was a benefit to the work of the combined team.

Culture was undoubtedly the greatest challenge to the collaboration for the combined team. The vastly different cultures of Bulgaria and Tennessee (Lewis, 2006) created many unexpected challenges to collaboration. When different languages and the complexity of dissimilar cultures combine, the challenges were intensified . Bulgaria and the United States are different on each of the five dimensions of national culture (Hofstede & Hofstede, 2005). In three of the dimensions (power distance, collectivism versus individualism, and uncertainty avoidance), the differences were dramatic. In the dimensions of masculinity versus femininity and long-term versus short-term orientation, the strength of the difference is not as great. Differences in culture are based upon underlying values. These differences created challenges to collaboration for the combined team.

In conclusion, the complexity of the MYO Place project continued to increase during the planning and implementation. Each team had its own separate challenges in working together. When the two came together, an additional layer of difficulty was added. The combined team struggled with the issues of time, distance, language, and culture.

Similarities and Differences in Challenges

In comparing similarities and differences across the three settings, the differences were much more noticeable than the similarities. When comparing the Bulgaria and Tennessee teams, the similarities included the reality of professional role differences, lack of time, the reluctance to establish norms to deal with inevitable conflict, and the lack of resources. Within these similarities, slight differences were observed in how these challenges were exhibited within each team. Some of these differences can be attributed to cultural factors that became abundantly clear when the two teams worked together.

In terms of differences, the unique struggles experienced by the Tennessee team included a lack of consensus on values and goals, deficiencies in conceptual understanding, and the challenge of achieving shared leadership and ownership. For the Bulgaria team, their distinctive challenges to collaboration included dependence on their partner, meeting the expectations of a foreign partner, and the language barrier.

For the combined team, the challenges to time and language were previously identified as challenges by the Bulgaria and Tennessee teams. The distance challenge did not become a reality until the groups joined in the combined team. The primary difference in challenge to collaboration for the combined team was culture. If a researcher had a desire to select two countries for an intercultural partnership with the greatest cultural differences, Bulgaria and the United States would be a good choice. Obviously, this is not how the partners were selected in the design of the MYO Place project. But, the cultural differences which became apparent were challenges to collaboration for the combined team.

Concluding Discussion

The MYO Place project became an interesting study in the potential value and challenge of developing collaborative partnerships to improve educational practice. For this study, each team in the MYO Place project was viewed as a setting as described by Sarason (1972). He defined a setting as "any instance in which two or more people come together in new relationships over a sustained period of time in order to achieve certain goals" (p. 1). This definition was used to conceptualize the definition of collaboration for this study. The settings within the MYO Place project were the teams—Bulgaria, Tennessee, and the combination of the two.

Sarason (1972) maintained that "creating a setting is one of the most complicated obstacle courses devised by man or God" (p. 203), and "a fantastically complicated social process containing one booby trap after another" (p. 243). Sarason's classic book, *The Creation of Settings and the Future Societies*, was published in 1972. His theories are based upon extensive research in the creation of American settings. Although Sarason frequently uses the term culture, he used it primarily to refer to the climate of a group. In some respects, this study could be said to extend Sarason's research beyond the American borders to include the challenge of creating intercultural settings.

Overall, this study confirmed Sarason's observations of the often disregarded but truly significant necessities of a true consensus of values and goals combined with consideration of historical context, possession of a sufficient knowledge base, a realistic timeline, adequate resources, vehicles of criticism, and the necessity for and the evils of leadership in the creation of a setting. The challenges to collaboration within and across

the three settings of the MYO Place project were consistent with Sarason's theory. The MYO Place project was an intercultural partnership. As such, important lessons can be learned from this research for future such endeavors. Countries or nations with an interest in intercultural partnerships need a significant investment of time and energy in learning the similarities and differences in their dimensions of culture. The rigid timeline in the MYO Place project only allowed minimal time for the promotion of cultural understandings during team sessions. The differences in language, beliefs, values, expectations, and ways of thinking and feeling are culturally based and have considerable influence on collaboration among intercultural partners.

In concluding this research, interesting questions can be asked, namely, what lessons were learned that could be of benefit to the practice of educators engaged in collaborative partnerships or considering such relationships? Also, what was learned that will bridge the gap between theory and practice in meeting the challenges of education today? Using Sarason's theory as the lens, I will attempt to respond to this question.

Lesson 1—You Can't Go It Alone

In face of the tremendous challenges facing educators, the combined efforts of multiple partners will be needed to address these issues. Such partnerships are becoming increasingly more common and necessary. The days of educators working in relative isolation must come to an end. Within each classroom, students possess unique learning difficulties that require a team of professionals to address. Struggling schools can learn from others who have demonstrated success. Colleges and universities can lend a hand to assist PreK-12 educators in addressing innumerable difficulties.

The participants in the MYO Place project grew personally and professionally from this experience. Friendships were forged among colleagues of the same national heritage and with those of another culture. The challenges and triumphs of collaborative work are dependent upon the same variables whether it be two teachers in the same building, school-university, or intercultural partnership. These qualities are "careful selection of partners, mutual respect, willingness to listen, commitment, an equal power base, frequent communication, and flexibility" (Russell & Flynn, 2000, p. 203). These attributes are similar to the components of Sarason's theory of the creation of settings.

Lesson 2—The Importance of Values in Educational Practice

Sarason (1972) stated that the first phase in the creation of a setting was consensus on values. He further explained that the really difficult work of creating a setting begins after consensus on values. In reality, many settings, including the MYO Place project, do not achieve consensus on values and goals before proceeding head-long into the process. For this research, consensus on values was broadened to include agreement on goals of the project. In fact, the MYO Place Model for Curriculum and Instruction Design was finalized several months into the project. This model conceptually described the major elements of the project. This model also served as conceptual anchor for the project goals and objectives.

This research accentuates the needs for all educators to explore the role of values in research and practice. The function of values typically receives little attention in educational practice. By the altruistic nature of education as a service profession, one might assume that most educators share common values. Education as a profession gives

a great deal of attention to mission, vision, and belief statements. Beliefs, while often easier to define, are based upon values. Values are determined by what an individual or group determines to be important. Ideals, virtues, and ethical principles are terms often used interchangeably with values (Willower & Licata, 1997). When members of a group share common values, the likelihood of unified effort toward a common purpose is enhanced. Educators often struggle to identify the values that underlie their practice, and they rarely have such discussions with colleagues. Shared values among educators though difficult to articulate, when understood, lead to improved professional practice (Willower & Licata).

The current focus on globalization and international commerce will stimulate an increase in intercultural collaborative partnerships. Educational institutions will also be developing such relationships. The MYO Place project was such an intercultural partnership. The potential of intercultural partnerships deepens the dialogue around consensus on values. The participants of the Tennessee team briefly discussed the values underlying the MYO Place project. When the teams combined, the hectic pace of the project permitted little time to the address the differences in values between the national cultures of Bulgaria and the United States.

When the Bulgaria team visited Tennessee in August 2003, a Bulgaria participant did a presentation on the values underlying the cultural differences between the two teams. This presentation was a part of the global education conceptual framework of the project. These striking differences would have significant impact in how the MYO Place project would be implemented in the two vastly different cultures. Little time and

discussion was given to the differences in values underlying the two cultures of Bulgaria and the United States. The combined team was preoccupied with developing a mutual understanding of project goals and objectives. Using the research of Hostede and Hofstede (2005), the analysis of the data in this study revealed stark contrasts in the cultures of Bulgaria and the United States. These manifestations and dimensions of culture are based upon values. Sarason's admonition to develop consensus on values should have extended to the underlying values which explained the cultural differences between the partners in the project.

Lesson 3—The Balance Between What, How, and Why

The study of the MYO Place project provided some clarity to understanding balance in theory and practice in education. Within Sarason's component of substantive knowledge, the Tennessee team struggled with understanding the four multiple conceptual frameworks of the MYO Place project. These conceptual frameworks were place based education, global education, community learning theory, and project based learning. These concepts supported the ambitious goals of the MYO Place project. Knowing and understanding these frameworks were crucial to meeting the goals for the project. This challenge for the Tennessee team was termed "what and how overwhelm why." This phrase speaks to the conflict between theory and practice. The focus of practice is "what and how." The heart of theory is the "why." All educators must achieve a balance in "what, how, and why."

In education today, practitioners are inundated with waves of instructional remedies to treat the ailments of their students and schools. In the hectic pace of the

typical school schedule, the practitioner's most immediate need is to know "what" is expected and "how" do I get it done. Practitioners desperately need the time to evaluate "why" the new remedy is better than current practice. Understanding "why" is more likely to ingrain the new method or program into daily practice. Without balancing these three elements, any innovation is doomed for failure.

The focus of most college and university professors is on the theories ("why") of educational improvement. In considering a new instructional process, professors can assist practitioners with understanding the theoretical basis for a change. But, they must also give attention to the practitioner's concern with "how." Otherwise, the practicalities of implementation are neglected and failure again looms on the horizon. This difficult balancing act is crucial to meeting the challenges for education in the future.

Lesson 4—Collaboration in Resource Poor Environments

Sarason (1972) asserted that each new setting must come to grips with the false assumption that unlimited resources are available. Inadequacy of resources was a challenge for both the Tennessee and Bulgaria teams. When groups of educators agree on their beliefs, mission, and vision, priorities can be establish to make better use of the available resources. The economic conditions of Bulgaria left the schools with serious challenges in providing instructional resources such as supplies and equipment. Under such severe constraints, collaboration is difficult, if not impossible. Scarcity of resources is likely to create competition rather than collaboration. To a lesser extent, American educators face inadequacies in resources to meet the needs of their students. In the face of limited resources, educators are admonished to create their own communities of learners

to improve their practice. Collaboration becomes very difficult in a resource poor environment.

Lesson 5—Where Are Your Vehicles of Criticism?

Neither the Bulgaria nor Tennessee team in the MYO Place project developed ground rules or norms for group governance. These failures left both teams ill-prepared for the inevitable conflicts that arose. Sarason (1972) insisted that vehicles of criticism be developed early in the process of setting creation. Complaints and conflict are to be expected; therefore, a mechanism for addressing these issues must be established early in the group process. Well-devised group norms from the beginning of a setting are critical to its survival. Without such, the disagreements and conflict may go underground. They may be seething beneath the surface; perhaps, shared between individuals but never coming to the attention of the group. If criticisms are mentioned as the setting matures, then some will question why the concerns were not expressed earlier. The reason most often expressed is that the complainant wanted to be regarded as a team player from the beginning; thus, legitimate concerns are not voiced openly.

A reluctance to establish group norms can be attributed to concerns about the process being detrimental to the development of team unity; while a failure to do so will be destructive if not fatal to the setting. The development of consensus vehicles of criticism gives permission for participants to offer constructive criticism; hopefully, reducing the potential harm to team solidarity and sustainability of the setting. Just as a teacher would not conduct a class without guidelines for interactions between the students, educators in group work also require a set of norms for group governance.

When the emphasis on collaborative work, all educators need to understand and appreciate the need for vehicles of criticism.

Lesson 6—The Practice of Shared Leadership

Participants in any group endeavor understand the necessity for leadership, but they frequently misjudge the complexity of its practice. The "necessity and evils" of leadership (Sarason, 1972) point to the apparent contradictions in the practice of leaders in the creation of new settings. While everyone within a group recognizes the need for leadership, the leaders of a setting may be viewed with a high degree of skepticism by the membership. Sarason asserted that the mantle of leadership was often detrimental to the chosen leader.

The Tennessee leaders in the MYO Place project encountered one significant leadership dilemma—the proverbial balance between openness and control. The leaders had a responsibility as the "keepers of the vision" to set a path for the group to follow. Also, the leaders had a desire to promote collective ownership of the vision which is most often accomplished by the promotion of shared leadership through appropriate delegation of the myriad of tasks involved in the work. When leaders of a group fail to maximize the involvement of the participants in setting a course of action, they may be rebuked for the use of a top-down management style. On the other hand, if leaders delegate too many tasks, they may be criticized for not assuming their share of the workload. When this frustration builds in group endeavors, it may appear in the form of the "blame game." When a group struggles, blame will often be directed at management or leadership. Some participants may condemn the leader as a controlling micromanager while another may

state that the leadership delegates too many tasks to others and doesn't assume an equitable share of the workload.

The Tennessee project leaders had to determine how to walk this tight rope of openness and control while maintaining the trust and respect of the group members. In a school reform climate where collaboration is promoted, the art and practice of shared leadership becomes very important. To promote shared leadership, the person in charge must relinquish some measure of leadership to others. In order to meet the many complex challenges of education today, shared leadership will be required.

Lesson 7—Build Your Collaborative Abilities (5 Cs Model)

The ability to develop strong partnerships is important for education today. Sarason's (1972) provided a model for the development of collaborative abilities within a partnership. The continuum of partnership strength which arose from the review of literature in this research also provides such a model. I offer this continuum of partnership strength as an alternate model for the development of healthy collaborative partnerships. The continuum is presented here in brief form.

Cooperation is "the degree to which an individual or group attempts to accommodate another party's concern or need" (Welch, 1998, p. 121). Although activities are typically agreeable among participants, the outcomes are not necessarily mutually beneficial.

Consultation is a process involving a trio of elements including a consultant who provides technical assistance to a consultee who in turn provides services to a client

(Welch & Tulbert, 2000). This methodology underlies the "train the trainer" and the technical assistance models prevalent in contemporary staff development programs.

Collaboration promotes ownership of the process through the "development of a model of joint planning, joint implementation, and joint evaluation between individuals and organizations" (Hord, 1986, p. 22). Collaboration certainly includes a willingness of participants to work together, but cooperation does not rise to the level of shared responsibility and decision-making characteristic of collaborative relationships. Collaboration involves a greater commitment of time and energy to a joint enterprise.

Collegiality includes "ongoing professional interaction from a position of trust; it is a meeting of equals where each colleague is respected for his or her own unique contribution to the whole" (Marlow & Nass-Fukai, 2000, p. 1). On the relationship continuum, collegiality involves a sense of shared practice and is the result of extensive collaboration among partnership participants. Within a collegial relationship is the recognition of what is important to each partner. The development of the elements of collegiality such as trust, respect, and reciprocity within a relationship will require additional time and a greater level of commitment. "Strong collaborative cultures and collegial relations within and among schools provide essential supports for implementing effective and sustained changes" (Hargreaves et al., 2001, p. 169).

The concluding phase of the relationship continuum is community. The interaction of collaboration and collegiality provide a fertile soil for the growth of a "real and meaningful" community of learning thus enriching the educational partnership and contributing to its sustainability. School and university partnerships could be redefined as

professional learning communities for the participants by taking advantage of the best research findings related to learning, teaching, and professional development (Myers, 1996). Learning community theory was one of the conceptual frameworks for the MYO Place project.

Writing in 1887, German sociologist Ferdinand Townies explains the concept of **"**gemeinschaft**"** (Sergiovanni, 1994). The concept of gemeinshaft or sacred community has profound implications for the sustainability of collaborative partnerships. This German word, gemeinschaft, has a three-fold meaning. It implies community by kinship, of place, and of mind. Kinship is the concept of "we" that is often seen in immediate and extended families. Place originates from the sharing of a common locale or habitat such as my school, my neighborhood, or my town (Sergiovanni). Gemeinschaft of mind encompasses the sharing of common goals or a shared set of values. The merging of these concepts represents both human and supreme forms of community.

Sergiovanni (1994) added a fourth dimension to his discussion of gemeinshaft. He explains that a community of memory arises from the concepts of kinship, place, and mind. Traditions, customs, and rituals demonstrate this community of memory; perhaps, the highest plane of belonging. These concepts provide a more sacred perspective of local and global community and a potential framework for powerful group learning in collaborative relationships.

The essence of strong collaborative partnerships is the capacity to build learning communities in increasingly diverse educational settings. According to Johnson and Johnson (1987), an authentic community only exists when four qualities are present:

interaction, purpose, interdependence, and individual growth. These traits address both the sociological and psychological dimensions of the development of a community of learners (Norris et al., 2002). The learning community model provides a rich theoretical lens through which school and university collaborations can be re-examined.

Progressing through the five elements on the continuum, a partnership will be strengthened. In summary, these elements are cooperation, consultation, collaboration, collegiality, and community. This movement toward community will strengthen and enhance the sustainability of collaborative partnerships.

Recommendations for Future Study

In considering this research, a final word of caution will be provided to the reader. This research is a case study of a school reform project funded by a competitive grant. This analysis of the MYO Place project may contribute to the body of general knowledge related to school-university collaborations, but cannot be applied specifically to other partnerships or educational settings.

The identified challenges to collaboration with the three teams of educators in the MYO Place project demonstrated the difficulty in creating a setting. The MYO Place project achieved the majority of the goals that were originally established. Some disappointment was expressed because the MYO Place Curriculum and Instruction Design Model did not become institutionalized at any of the participating schools. Reflecting on this research at the conclusion of the process, several questions come to mind. If the grant supporting the project were extended for an addition two to three years, would the MYO Placed model have been integrated into more project schools? How

would the project have changed if the team composition was different? For example, if a minimum of two classroom teachers were required for each participating school. What could have been done to maintain participant commitment and enthusiasm throughout the life of the project? Another intriguing question is how would the project have been different if it was done prior to the accountability pressures of No Child Left Behind? In fact, one of the Tennessee participants mentioned the challenge of implementing the MYO Place principles while complying with the requirements of No Child Left Behind.

> …but right now, there such a mood in education over test scores and accountability, you've got to be a very confident teacher to devote a great deal of your time that may be free …personal time after school is OK… but you've got to careful in allocating your classroom time. If an administrator, director of schools, or local supervisor in your system catches you one day a week doing something other than that…especially with math, you're doing what with Bulgaria? You're doing what? So, I sense some stress there. (Participant #T2 Interview, April 7, 2004)

The No Child Left Behind Act had just gone into effect when the project started. NCLB was on the minds of every PreK-12 practitioner who participated in the project. These realities impeded the work of the Tennessee team. These questions will perhaps provide a stimulus for future research.

Additional research possibilities could include the use Sarason's (1972) theory of the creation of settings for evaluation of school reform initiatives and other educational programs. In fact, Sarason's theory could be used as a model for school reform. It would

be interesting to study a school that applies his theories to their reform efforts. Sarason's model could also be used to analyze a collaborative school compared to a non-collaborative one. Such a study could follow a mixed methods approach and include student achievement as one of the quantitative variables.

Chapter Summary

The length and complexity of the MYO Place project made it a difficult case to study. The challenges in creating collaboration for the three teams of educators will perhaps enlighten future groups or partnerships as they work together. The conclusions drawn from this research will possibly assist in bridging the gap between theory and practice in the difficult process of the creation of settings. Hopefully, the results can add to the overall knowledge base concerning the dynamics of the creation of new settings and thus contribute to greater understandings of the process.

Addendum—Current Status of MYO Place Project

News of the successful funding of the MYO Place project arrived at The University of Tennessee, Knoxville in September 2002. The funding for the project ended in September, 2005. The third and final project report was submitted to the U.S. Department of State in December 2005. The Tennessee project director returned to Bulgaria in the fall of 2006 for some follow-up work and presentations involving the project. Other elements of the work in the participating schools continue such as the use of project-based learning methods. A training manual was developed that included a full explanation of the MYO Place concept and curriculum design. This manual was designed to be used in college courses preparing educators to use the MYO Place principles in

their practice. The manual was published in 2005 in English and in the Bulgarian language.

When being interviewed for this study, one Tennessee participant often expressed displeasure with many facets of the project. When asked about the impact of the project on her personal and professional growth, she replied:

> It's probably the best thing I have ever done. There are two things, in terms, this is a sidelight to the doctoral program; it came about as a result of my involvement in the doctoral cohort – the trip to England and our trip to Bulgaria. I never would have been able to experience what we experienced that week without this project. I see…the more you see in the world, and can experience the world, the more you really understand. You can't see it on TV. You can't see it in movies. You have to live it. We lived it. Living in the apartment and experiencing that was far greater than staying in a hotel. (Participant #T3 Interview, April 12, 2004)

In spite of frequent frustration with some elements of the project, this participant had the experience of a lifetime.

The goal of the MYO Place project was to create a learning process that could improve the quality of education in the United States, Bulgaria, and other countries throughout the world. It fell short of this lofty goal, but the MYO Place manual serves as a tribute to the extraordinarily commitment of many dedicated participants from both teams.

Speaking of the diversity within the Bulgaria and Tennessee teams, a Bulgaria team member seemed to succinctly capture the ultimate goal for the project.

> This is how I see the differences between us and the diversity between and among each one of us…finally in the end brings us closer together. And, I think this is the idea of the project…standing on the differences between us, we can arise to agreement and learn how to respect each other and respect diversity. (Participant #B3 Interview, February 2, 2004)

Yes, standing on our differences, we strive for greater understanding of ourselves and others.

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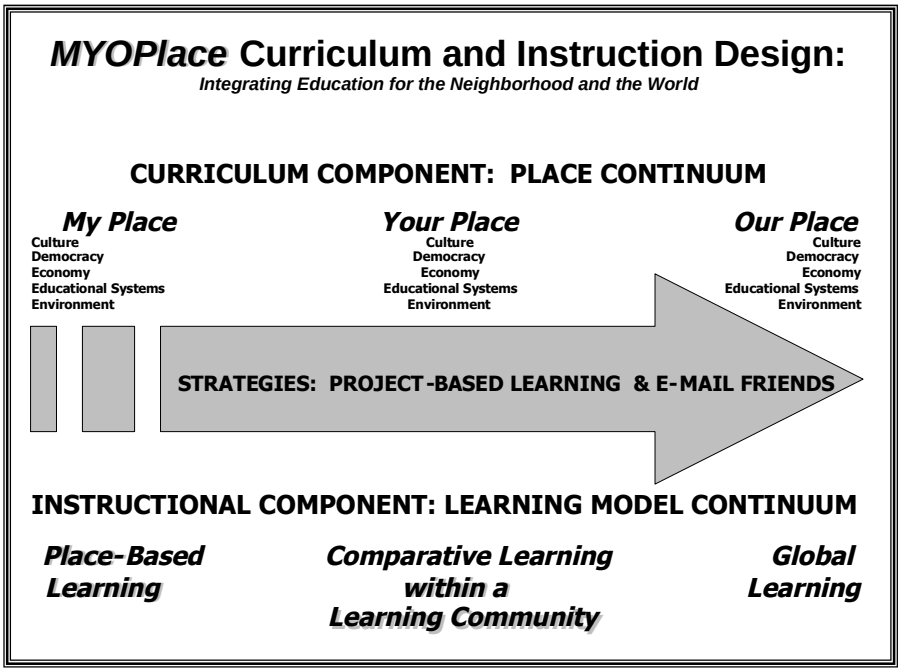
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APPENDICES

Appendix A

Visualization of the Overall MYO Place Concept



Appendix B

Example of PBL Unit of Study

FAIRY TALES

Target Age: 7-10

Topic: Fairy Tales

Project Topic Paragraph

Fairy tales are types of folktales or fables. In these stories, we encounter magical lands, queens and kings, witches and ogres, spells and potions, and talking animals. Nothing seems impossible in fairy tales and goodness prevails over evil. Fairy tales have been retold for generations. They are now a familiar part of our culture. We can read fairy tales from almost any culture and amazingly, many cultures share similar tales. Each story may contain unique cultural locations and information, but the themes are very similar. By studying fairy tales, students have a chance to explore the culture in *My Place* and *Your Place.* As a result, they can gain an appreciation for *Our Place*, a world in which even very different cultures can share many common feelings, truths, and values.

Elements of Place

Culture

Learning Objectives:

1. Project-Based Learning Objectives

Students will:

a) Identify and list characteristics of fairy tales.
b) Listen to teacher's oral reading of traditional and non-traditional fairy tales.
c) Read a variety of fairy tales.
d) Listen to versions from different cultures of the traditional tales, such as, *Cinderella*, and *Little Red Riding Hood.*
e) Compare and contrast different versions of familiar tales.
f) Develop story mapping skills by identifying the setting, characters, problem, solution, and theme of fairy tales.
g) Practice presentation skills and develop teamwork skills by dramatizing a fairy tale with a small group.
h) Write a fairy tale.

2. *My Place* PBL Objectives

Students will:

a) Understand the common characteristics of *My Place* fairy tales.
b) Communicate knowledge of fairy tales through discussion, dramatization, and writing.

3. *Your Place* Comparative Learning Objectives

a) After completing the "Fairy Tales" project, students will compare and contrast the information gathered about fairy tales in another country with their own culture.

4. *Our Place* Global Learning Objectives

a) Students will learn cultural similarities and differences between people in different countries and cultures.

Guiding Questions

1. *My Place* Guiding Questions

a) What are some fairy tales you are familiar with?
b) What do all fairy tales have in common?
c) How are fairy tales different from other genres of literature?
d) What do we learn from fairy tales?
e) Why should we read fairy tales?
f) What do fairy tales teach us about our culture?
g) How have fairy tales been passed from generation to generation?

2. *Your Place* Guiding Questions

a) How are fairy tales in *My Place* similar to fairy tales in *Your Place*?
b) How are fairy tales in *My Place* different from fairy tales in *Your Plac*e

3. *Our Place* Guiding Questions

a) How will learning about fairy tales in *My Place* and *Your Place* help us develop common bonds and respect for each other in *Our Place*?

Product Specifications

1. *My Place* Product Specifications

a) Generate a classroom word web of characteristics of fairy tales in order to activate students' prior knowledge.
b) Read a wide variety of fairy tales.
c) Dramatize a familiar fairy tale with a small group of 4-6 students. The dramatization could be a puppet show.
d) Develop a story map for a fairy tale (each student may choose his or her fairy tale) and identify the setting, characters, problem, solution, and theme (see "Story Map").
e) Explore characteristics of specific characters in fairy tales (see "Fairy Tale Character Report").
f) Write and illustrate a retelling of a fairy tale, based on knowledge gained from the explorations above. Use the "Fairy Tale Story Planner" to make sure each retelling includes characteristics common to fairytales (also see "Fairy Tale Elements Rubric"). Students may work individually or with a partner.
g) Produce a web report for the MYOP project website so others can compare their traditional fairy tales to yours.

2. *Your Place* Product Specifications

a) Go to the MYOP web site at www.MYOPlace.net and find another "Fairy Tales" project that has been submitted by another country.
b) Search for more information about fairy tales in the other country, via the Internet or school and public libraries.
c) Discuss and list similarities between fairy tales in *My Place* and the other country.
d) Discuss and list differences between fairy tales in *My Place* and the other country.
e) Have each student write about the fairy tale from the other country he or she enjoyed most.

3. *Our Place* Product Specifications

a) Read fairy tales from other countries.
b) Compare and contrast characteristics of these fairy tales with fairy tales in *My Place* and *Your Place.*

Resources

1. Materials and Equipment

a) Digital camera or 35 mm pictures saved on CD.
b) Digital scanner to record any existing printed material needed for the project.
c) Fairy tale books.

2. *My Place* Resources

a) School and/or public library
b) Internet access
c) Story Map
d) Fairy Tale Story Planner
e) Fairy Tale Elements Rubric

3. *Your Place* Resources

a) Internet access
b) Library

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Submitted by

Norris Elementary School
Norris, Tennessee, USA

Fairy Tale Character Report

Characters make up a very important part of any fairy tale. Choose a character from a fairy tale and complete the report below.

Name of Fairy Tale_____

Author_____

Name of Character_____

Description of Character: include appearance, personality, etc.

_____

_____

_____

What is this character's role in the Fairy Tale? Why is he or she important to the story?

_____

_____

_____

_____

What did you like best about this character? Least?

_____

_____

_____

_____

Fairy Tale Story Planner

Begin planning for the writing of your own fairy tale, by completing the information below.

Title_____

Setting_____

_____

Characters

_____ _____ _____

_____ _____ _____

_____ _____ _____

_____ _____ _____

Problem or Conflict

_____

_____

Main Events

_____

_____

_____

_____

Conclusion (include any important lessons learned by character(s)

_____

_____

_____

Fairy Tale Elements Rubric

4-Excellent 3-Satisfactory 2-Needs Improvement 1-Unsatisfactory

	Common Beginnings	**Characters**	**Magical Occurrence**	**Happy Ending**
4	The fairy tale begins with "Once upon a time….."; "A long, long time ago…."; "Once in a far away land…."; or something similar	The fairy tale has at least one good character and one evil character with detailed actions that support those characteristics.	The magical occurrence will be an integral part of the plot with characters involved with the magic.	The story ends with characters resolving their problems, being rewarded for goodness, and living happily ever after.
3		The story has a good character and an evil character.	Something magical occurs and it may or may not relate to the plot.	Characters resolve their problems and live happily ever after.
2		The story has either a good character or an evil character.	Something magic occurs.	The characters live happily ever after.
1	The fairy tale does not begin with "Once upon a time…", or something similar.	The roles of the characters are undefined.	No magic occurs.	There is no apparent ending to the story.

Appendix C—IRB Approval

THE UNIVERSITY OF TENNESSEE

Institutional Review Board
Office of Research
404 Andy Holt Tower
Knoxville, Tennessee 37996-0140
865-974-3466
Fax: 865-974-2805

01/27/04

IRB#: 6558 B

TITLE: The Creation of Collaborative Settings: From "My Place to Your Place to Our Place" - A Case Study

Diden, Edward
Educational Administration & Policy Studies
145 Mountain View Estates Rd
Wartburg, TN 37887

Norris, Dr. Cynthia
Educational Administration & Policy Studies
316 Claxton Addn.
Campus

Your project listed above was reviewed. It qualified for expedited review and has been approved.

This approval is for a period ending one year from the date of this letter. Please make timely submission of renewal or prompt notification of project termination (see item #3 below).

Responsibilities of the investigator during the conduct of this project include the following:

1. To obtain prior approval from the Committee before instituting any changes in the project.
2. To retain signed consent forms from subjects for at least three years following completion of the project.
3. To submit a Form D to report changes in the project or to report termination at 12-month or less intervals.

The Committee wishes you every success in your research endeavor. This office will send you a renewal notice (Form R) on the anniversary of your approval date.

Sincerely,

Brenda Lawson

Brenda Lawson
Compliances
NOTE:Provide a copy of the consent form translated into the Bulgarian language.

Appendix D

Tennessee Consent Form for Individual Participants

Project Title: A STUDY OF COLLABORATIVE SCHOOL-UNIVERSITY PARTNERSHIPS INVOLVING EDUCATORS FROM BULGARIA AND THE UNITED STATES

You are invited to participate in a research study. The purpose of this study is to explore the collaborative efforts of three teams of educators in the *"My Place, Your Place, Our Place (MYO Place)* project. Three collaborative settings will be studied – the Tennessee team, the Bulgaria team, and the setting created by the combination of both.

A great deal of preliminary work has been completed by the Bulgaria and Tennessee teams in preparation for the formal international educator exchange aspect of the MYO Place project. Each team worked extensively to clarify goals and objectives of the project prior to meeting during the teacher exchange. During the summer of 2003, the teams visited each other and continued their collaborative work together. The goal of this research is to study the collaborative efforts of the Tennessee team, Bulgaria team, and the combination of both as the MYO Place teaching and learning model is being developed.

This project has created a large database of information including meeting agendas and minutes, participant journals, responses to reflective questions, email correspondence, and other project documents. These artifacts will be converted to text files for analysis. Project participants will be interviewed using a semi-structured format to generate discussion and to ensure that key questions are addressed. Interviews will last for approximately one hour. The interviews will occur during future international visits and at other suitable occasions during the project. The audiotapes of these interviews will be transcribed for analysis. Researcher field notes will be kept throughout this process. These field notes will also serve as a data source.

Data analysis will begin as data are collected. A personal research journal will be used to record daily reflections and significant occurrences that occur during the study. Interviews will be audio taped, and script notes will be taken for clarification. Names will be given a code to protect the identity of the participants. A transcriptionist will be hired to help transcribe the interviews and meetings, and a confidentiality agreement will be required. Quotes or related data will not be attributed to any named individual. Participants will have the opportunity to check transcripts of personal interviews for accuracy. Electronic copies of the data will be stored on the researcher's office computer, on floppy discs, and on hard copies.

Participant's initials _____

After audiotapes have been transcribed and checked for accuracy, they will be erased. Access to the data will be limited to the typist and the researcher. Data will be stored in a locked file cabinet in the secured office of the researcher when not in use. At the conclusion of the study, data will be stored in a locked file cabinet at the University of Tennessee in the Educational Administration and Policy Studies Office, 326 A Claxton Addition. All data will be destroyed after three years.

No identifying information will be used to connect participants to the study. Although anonymity cannot be guaranteed, your confidentiality is assured. No deception will be used in this study, and information will not be used for any other purposes. There are no known risks to participants. Your participation in this study is strictly voluntary, and your informed consent may be withdrawn at any time.

If you have any questions at any time about the study, please contact Edward L. Diden at Morgan County Schools – address 136 Flat Fork Road Wartburg, Tennessee 37887. You may reach me by phone at 423-346-6214 or email: diden@mcsmail.net

You may also direct questions to the University of Tennessee Office of Research Compliance Services at 865-974-3466.

I have read the above information and agree to participate in this study. I have received a copy of this form.

_____ Date _____

Name (Please print)

_____

Signature

* ____Original * ____ Participant's Copy

Appendix E

Bulgaria Формуляр за съгласие от индивидуалните участници

Име на проекта: СЪЗДАВАНЕ НА СРЕДА ЗА СЪВМЕСТНА РАБОТА: "ОТ МОЕТО МЯСТО, КЪМ ТВОЕТО МЯСТО, КЪМ НАШЕТО МЯСТО" - ИЗСЛЕДВАНЕ НА КОНКРЕТЕН СЛУЧАЙ

Поканваме ви да участвате в едно изследване. Неговата цел е да проучи съвместните усилия на три екипа от преподаватели, които работят по проекта "Моето място, твоето място, нашето място". Ще бъдат изследвани три общности за сътрудничество – екипът от Тенеси, екипът от България и общността формирана от комбинацията на двата екипа.

Извършена беше много предварителна работа от екипите от Тенеси и България в подготовка за формалната страна на международния обмен на преподавателите по проекта "Моето място, твоето място, нашето място". Всеки от екипите работи усилено за изясняване на целите на проекта преди срещите по време на обмена. През лятото на 2003 година екипите си размениха визити и продължиха да работят съвместно. Целта на настоящото изследване е да проучи съвместните усилия на екипа от Тенеси, екипа от България и комбинацията от двата в процеса на разработване на модел за преподаване и учене "Моето място, твоето място, нашето място ".

Този проект доведе до събирането на голяма база данни включваща дневен ред от срещи и протоколи, дневници на участниците, отговори на въпроси за размисъл, електронна кореспонденция, и други документи по проекта. Тези материали ще бъдат преработени в текстови файлове за анализ. Участниците в проекта ще бъдат интервюирани като се използва полуотворен формат на въпросите, за да се предизвика дискусия и да се гарантира адресирането на ключови въпроси. Интервютата ще продължат приблизително един час. Те ще се проведат по време на предстоящи визити и други подходящи случаи по време на проекта. Аудиозаписите на тези интервюта ще бъдат транскрибирани за анализ. В процеса на изследването, изследователят ще си води записки. Те също ще се използват като източник на данни.

Анализът на данните ще започне след като приключи тяхното събиране. Ежедневните разсъждения на изследователя и значителни случки по време на изследването, ще бъдат отразявани в личен дневник. Интервютата ще бъдат записвани на касетофон и ще се водят бележки за яснота. Имената ще бъдат кодирани, за да се защити личността на интервюираните. Ще бъде нает човек, който да помогне за транскрибиране на записите на интервютата и срещите и ще бъде изискано съгласие за

Инициали на участника _____

конфиденциалност. Цитати или други данни няма да бъдат свързвани с конкретни, назовани личности. Участниците ще имат възможността да прегледат за точност свалените текст от индивидуалните интервюта. Електронен вариант на данните ще се съхранява на служебния компютър на изследователя, на дискети и разпечатки.

След като аудиокасетите бъдат транскрибирани и проверени за точност, те ще бъдат изтрити. Достъп до данните ще имат само машинописката и изследователят. Данните ще бъдат съхранявани в заключен шкаф в Университет Тенеси, в офис на Департамента за образователна администрация и политика, 326 A Claxton Addition. След три години всички данни ще бъдат унищожени.

Няма да бъде използвана никаква лична информация за свързване на участниците с изследването. Макар че анонимността не може да бъде гарантирана, конфиденциалността е сигурна. В това изследване няма да бъде използвана измама и информацията няма да бъде използвана за никакви други цели. Не са известни рискове за участниците. Вашето участие в това изследване е изключително доброволно и вие можете да оттеглите съгласието си по всяко време.

Ако имате някакви въпроси свързани с изследването, можете да се свържете по всяко време с Едуърд Л. Дайдън (Edward L. Diden) на следния адрес Morgan County Schools, 136 Flat Fork Road Wartburg, Tennessee 37887. Можете да се свържете с мен на телефон: 423-346-6214 или на електронния ми адрес: diden@mcsmail.net

Можете да отправите въпроси и към Отдела за изследвания към Университет Тенеси на телефон: 865-974-3466 University of Tennessee Office of Research Compliance Services at.

Прочетох информацията предоставена в този документ и съм съгласен да участвам в това изследване. Беше ми предоставено копие от този формуляр.

_____ Дата _____

Име (С печатни букви)

_____

* _____Оригинал * ____ Копие за участника

Appendix F
Tennessee Interview Protocol

Code _____

A semi-structured interview protocol will be used to generate discussions and ensure a consistent pattern of responses with each participant. The interview may include most of the listed questions.

The following questions will be asked of all participants from the Bulgaria and Tennessee teams in the initial phase of the interview.

1. Please explain how you became involved in the MYO Place project.

2. What have been the greatest challenges of your involvement in the MYO Place project?

Group 1 – Most of the following interview questions will be asked of participants regarding their participation in the initial team setting – Bulgaria or Tennessee:

1. How did your group organize themselves in preparation for the work?

2. Did your team come to agreement on the fundamental values and goals that support the project? How was this accomplished? If not, what prevented this from happening?

3. Did you gain additional knowledge and skills for participation in the project? If so, how were these skills obtained? If not, what prevented you from acquiring this knowledge and skill?

4. How did you and your team deal with the diversity of backgrounds of individual members?

5. How did you and your team deal with the project timelines?

6. Were adequate resources (financial and otherwise) available to meet the needs of you and other team members? Please explain.

7. Did the team develop governing principles or other ground rules for managing the work? Please explain.

8. Did procedures exist within your team to allow agreement or disagreement with project development and implementation? Please explain.

9. Did leadership emerge from the group during the planning and implementation of the work? If so, please explain how this happened. If not, what prevented this from happening?

Group 2 – These questions will be asked of participants from their perspective as members of the combined teams – both Bulgaria and Tennessee.

1. When the two teams came together, how did the combined teams organize themselves for the work?

2. Did the combined teams come to agreement on the fundamental values and goals of the project? How was this accomplished? If not, what prevented this from happening?

3. Did you gain additional knowledge and skills required for participation in the project as a member of the combined teams? If so, how were the skills obtained? If not, what prevented you from acquiring this knowledge and skill?

4. How did you and other members of the combined teams deal with the diversity of backgrounds of individual members?

5. How did you and the combined team members deal with the project timelines?

6. Were adequate resources (financial and otherwise) available to meet the needs of you and other members of the combined teams? Please explain.

7. Did the combined teams develop governing principles or other ground for managing the work of the combined teams? Please explain.

8. Did procedures exist to allow agreement or disagreement with the project development and implementation process of the combined teams? Please explain.

9. Did leadership emerge from the combined groups during the planning and implementation of the work? If so, please explain how this happened. If not, what prevented this from happening?

Concluding questions:

1. What impact has the project had upon you personally and professionally?

2. What advice would you give to other educators who wish to become involved in a collaboration such as the MYO Place project?

Appendix G

Bulgaria Въпросник за интервю

Код _____

Ще бъде използван полуотворен формат на въпросите, за да се предизвика дискусия и да се гарантира системен модел на отговорите на всеки участник. Интервюто може да включи повечето от изброените въпроси.

Следните въпроси ще бъдат зададени на всички участници от екипите на Тенеси и България в началната фаза на интервюто.

1. Моля обяснете как бяхте включени в проекта "Моето място, твоето място, нашето място"?

2. Кои бяха най-големите предизвикателства за вас по отношение участието ви в проекта?

Група 1 – Повечето от следните въпроси, касаещи участие в първоначалното оформяне на екипа, ще бъдат зададени на участниците от България или от Тенеси:

1. Как се организира вашата група в подготовката си за работа?

2. Достигна ли вашият екип до споразумение относно основните ценности и цели, които са залегнали в проекта? Как беше постигнато това? Ако не, кое попречи това да се случи?

3. Получихте ли допълнителни знания и умения за участие в проекта? Ако да, как бяха постигнати тези умения? Ако не, кое ви попречи да постигнете тези знания и умения?

4. Как вие и вашият екип се справяхте с различията между отделните членове?

5. Как вие и вашият екип се справяхте със сроковете в проекта?

6. Имаше ли на разположение подходящи ресурси (финансови и други), за да се посрещнат вашите нужди и тези на другите членове на екипа? Моля, обяснете.

7. Екипът разработи ли ръководни принципи или други основни правила за управление на работата? Моля, обяснете.

8. Съществуваха ли процедури във вашия екип, които да дават възможност за съгласие или несъгласие по отношение развитието и приложението на проекта? Моля, обяснете.

9. Породи ли се лидерство в групата по време на планирането на работата и нейното приложение? Ако да, моля, обяснете как стана това. Ако не, какво попречи това да се случи?

Група 2 - Тези въпроси ще бъдат зададени на участниците от гледна точка на тяхното участие в смесените екипи – от България и от Тенеси.

1. Когато двата екипа се събраха, как смесените екипи се организираха за работата?

2. Постигнаха ли съгласие смесените екипи по отношение на основните ценности и цели на проекта? Как беше постигнато това? Ако не, какво попречи това да се случи?

3. Като членове на смесените екипи, вие постигнахте ли допълнителни знания и умения необходими за участие в проекта? Ако да, как бяха придобити тези умения? Ако не, какво попречи това да се случи?

4. Как вие и другите членове на смесените екипи се справяхте с различията между вас?

5. Как вие и другите членове на смесените екипи се справяхте със сроковете на проекта?

6. Имаше ли на разположение подходящи ресурси (финансови и други) за да се посрещнат вашите нужди и тези на другите членове на смесените екипи? Моля, обяснете.

7. Смесените екипи разработиха ли ръководни принципи или други основни правила за управление на работата в смесените екипи? Моля, обяснете.

8. Съществуваха ли процедури в смесените екипи, които да дават възможност за съгласие или несъгласие по отношение развитието и приложението на проекта? Моля, обяснете.

9. Породи ли се лидерство в смесените групи по време на планирането на работата и нейното приложение? Ако да, моля, обяснете как стана това. Ако не, какво попречи това да се случи?

Заключителни въпроси:

1. Какво влияние оказа проектът върху вас в личен и професионален план?

2. Какво бихте посъветвали други хора от сферата на образованието, които искат да бъдат включени в съвместна работа подобна на проекта “Моето място, твоето място, нашето място”?

Appendix H

MYO Place Project

Statement of Objectives from Original Grant Proposal

1. To develop a prototype of an educational model to be called the *My Place, Your Place and Our Place Learning Model (MYO Place)*

2. To serve the local schools of the university communities by jointly implementing *MYO Place Learning*.

3. To teach participating educators the theory, practice, philosophy, and literature contributing to the *MYO Place Model*.

4. To develop and test the course, instructional units and learning activities.

5. To develop a syllabus and a bibliography of resources for the *Model.*

6. To train participants in intercultural communications and team-building.

7. To purchase and make operational computer systems and software for Bulgaria institutions in order to develop an ongoing communications network.

8. To provide travel opportunities for Bulgaria and Tennessee participants to observe and study local place and culture so they can model for colleagues and students a knowledge of and value for both cultures and environments.

9. To provide the opportunity for non-traveling representatives of participating institutions to meet and learn from guest participants.

10. To publish the results of the project to communities and academic publics.

Appendix I

Consent Form for Transcriber

Project Title: A STUDY OF COLLABORATIVE SCHOOL-UNIVERSITY PARTNERSHIPS INVOLVING TEAMS OF EDUCATORS FROM BULGARIA AND THE UNITED STATES

I agree to transcribe the audiotapes of this research and promise not to divulge the contents to anyone other than the researcher. All data will be the property of the researcher and will be stored in his office at Morgan County Schools, 136 Flat Fork Road, Wartburg, Tennessee when not in use. I understand that I may withdraw from transcribing the audiotapes of this research at any time without repercussions, and I will be paid for services rendered.

My signature indicates that I have read the above information and agree to the terms described. I have received a copy of this form.

Please contact Edward L. Diden, Morgan County School, if you have questions. You may reach me by phone at 423.346.6214;
Email: didene@mcsmail.net

_____ Date_____

Name (Please print)

_____ Date_____

Signature

* _____ Original * _____ Transcriber's copy

Appendix J

Interview Matrix – Group 1 Questions

Bulgaria and Tennessee Teams

Components of Sarason's Creation of Settings	Corresponding Interview Questions
Consensus on values	How did your group organize themselves in preparation for the work? Did your team come to agreement on the fundamental values and goals that support the project? How was this accomplished? If not, what prevented this from happening?
Substantive knowledge	Did you gain additional knowledge and skills required for participation in the project? If so, how were these skills obtained. If not, what prevented your from acquiring this knowledge and skill?
Historical perspective	How did you and your team deal with the diversity of backgrounds of individual members?
Realistic time perspective	How did you and your team deal with the project timelines?
Adequate resources	Were adequate resources available to meet your needs and the needs of other team members? Please explain.
Vehicles of criticism	Did the team develop guiding principles or ground rules to manage the work? Please explain. Did procedures exist to allow agreement or disagreement with project development and implementation? Please explain.
Necessity for and evils of leadership	Did leadership emerge from within the group during the planning and implementation of the work? If so, please explain how this happened. If not, what prevented this from happening?

Appendix K
Interview Matrix – Group 2 Questions for Combined Teams

Components of Sarason's Creation of Settings	Corresponding Interview Questions
Consensus on values	When the two teams came together, how did the combined teams organize themselves for the work? Did the combined teams come to agreement on the fundamental values and goals of the project? How was this accomplished? If not, what prevented this from happening?
Substantive knowledge	Did you gain additional knowledge and skills required for participation in the project as a member of the combined teams? If so, how were the skills obtained? If not, what prevented you from acquiring this knowledge and skill?
Historical Perspective	How did you and other members of the combined teams deal with the diversity of backgrounds of individual members?
Realistic time perspective	How did you and the combined team members deal with the project timelines?
Adequate resources	Were adequate resources (financial and otherwise) available to meet the needs of you and other members of the combined teams? Please explain.
Vehicles of criticism	Did the combined teams develop governing principles or other ground rules for managing the work of the combined teams? Please explain. Did procedures exist to allow agreement or disagreement with the project development and implementation process of the combined teams? Please explain.
Necessity for and evils of leadership	Did leadership emerge from the combined groups during the planning and implementation of the work? If so, please explain how this happened. If not, what prevented this from happening?

Appendix L

CODE BOOK – FAMILY TREE

Code Families

- Consensus on Values (Sarason's Component # 1)

  Values—Agreement on a shared purpose for group endeavors.

  Commitment—Participants' dedication of "sense of duty" to the work of the project.

  Consensus—Related to the development of mutual understandings among participants.

  Ideals—Principles underlying the goals and objectives of the project.

- Substantive Knowledge (Sarason's Component # 2)

  Knowledge—Significant knowledge and skills required for participation in the project.

  Teamwork—A required skills for successful collaborative work. Often used synonymously with collaboration.

- Historical Perspective (Sarason's Component # 3)

  Anxiety—Initial feelings often expressed by participants as a new project begins.

  Conflict—Describing discord when participant's past settings clash.

  Diversity—Deals with the variety of backgrounds of participants.
  Ex. Experiences, education, culture, professional roles etc.

  Expectation—Meeting the perceived expectations of other participants.

  History—The influence of the past experience of participants on the creation of the present setting.

- Realistic Time Perspective (Sarason's Component # 4)

  Frustration—Defines exasperation experienced by participants as a result of time pressures.

Timelines—Speaks to the need for reasonable time frames for project work.

- Adequate Resources (Sarason's Component # 5)

  Resources—Addresses the sufficiency of assets and the implications for collaborative work.

- Vehicles of Criticism (Sarason's Component # 6)

  Criticism—The essential requirement for all participants to verbalize suggestions, concerns, and constructive grievances without reservation.

- Necessity for and Evils of Leadership (Sarason's Component # 7)

  Governance—Related to leadership practices that promote ownership of the group process by all participants.

  Leadership—Related to designated and emerging leadership demonstrated in the work of the project.

  Sustainability—Dealing with the development of individual and team capacity to expand the work of the project.

- Challenges—Connected to multiple Sarason's components and related to participant response about their greatest challenge during the project.

  Culture—Significant challenge to intercultural partnerships, including multiple components of Sarason's theory.

  Language—Major barrier in project development and implementation in intercultural partnerships.

- Impact—Related to interview question on effect of project on participant's personal & professional growth..

<u>Other Code Words</u>

Advice—Related to interview question on participant advice to other educators who might become involved in a project like MYO Place.

Collaboration—Theme word for dissertation. Used interchangeably with Sarason's term, "creation of setting."

Appendix M
Revised Objectives
Goals and Objectives MYO Place Curriculum Design:

A Continuum of Place, Learning Models, and Learning Strategies
Integrating Education for the Neighborhood and the World

In September of 2002, The University of Tennessee received a grant award from the U.S. Department of State to form a partnership with Bourgas Free University in Bulgaria plus elementary and secondary educational institutions in Tennessee and Bulgaria. Participating professors, principals, headmasters/mistresses, and teachers will work together for two years to develop and field-test methodology to integrate Place-Based Learning with internationalization of education.

Goal

- To design and implement a My Place, Your Place, Our Place (MYO Place) concept, curriculum, Train-the-Trainer workshop, and higher education course module integrating education for the neighborhood and the world through a continuum of place, learning models, and learning strategies.

***MYOP* Objectives**

- To form a partnership between higher education, elementary, and secondary educational institutions in Tennessee and Bulgaria to develop a concept, a curriculum design, a train-the-trainer workshop, and a higher education course module integrating education for the neighborhood and the world.

- To redirect thinking about learning models underlying the MYOP concept: Locally relevant Place-Based Learning and internationally relevant Global Learning are complimentary rather than competing rationales and models for learning. They are opposite ends of one MYOP continuum.

- To link Place-Based Learning to Global Learning through an interactive laboratory for Comparative Learning within a Learning Community, a one-on-one partnership between two cultures as a first step to Global Learning or internationalization of education.

- To train teachers to advance learning through the MYOP continuum using Project-Based Learning Strategies

- To encompass the community at large with students, teachers, and education administrators in My Place and Your Place to form the Learning Community.

- To provide opportunities through student projects for all participants of the Learning Community to honor diversity and participate in democracy in action.

- To address the issues of brain drain with a value of sustaining My Place and Your Place with world class knowledge and skills.

MYOP Curriculum Design Objectives

- To develop and field-test a prototype of a cross-cultural, interactive curriculum design for elementary and secondary students to learn about Elements of Place (culture, democracy in action, educational systems, environment, economy and career markets) in My Place, Your Place, and Our Place (MYO Place).

    - My Place is the home place of a participating school and student.
    - Your Place is the home place of partner school and student in a foreign country.
    - Our Place is the globe, the home place shared by all the peoples of the world.

- To create a virtual laboratory for students to actively share, teach, learn, compare, and contrast **My Place** with **Your Place.**

- To provide an opportunity for students to work together cross-culturally to learn and practice global competencies such as culture-specific and cultural-general intercultural communication skills, behaviors, languages, and area studies with the goal of enabling them to interact respectfully and productively with people of all cultures.

Train-the-Trainer Workshop Objectives

- To develop, in the first year, opportunities for professors, teachers, headmasters, headmistresses, and principals to exchange visits to learn about partners' home place, observe local culture, democracy in action, educational systems, environment, economy and career market.
- To develop and field test, in the first year, a train-the-trainer workshop for participating educators to learn to train other educators in the MYOP concept and curriculum design.

Course Module for Higher Education Educators Objectives

- To develop, in the second year, opportunities for professors to exchange visits to continue in learning about the partners' home place.
- To develop and field test, in the second year, a higher education course module, syllabus and online resources to teach the MYO Place concept and curriculum.

VITA

Edward L. Diden was born in Lancing, Tennessee. He completed a Bachelor of Science degree in Heath and Physical Education at Tennessee Technological University in Cookeville in 1974. He earned a Masters in Health and Physical Education with a minor in psychology at Tennessee Technological University in 1976. He is a 31 year veteran of K-12 public education currently serving as Director of Schools in Cannon County, Tennessee. He is completing his Doctoral Program in Educational Administration and Policy Studies at The University of Tennessee, Knoxville and plans to continue working in school administration.