

Dynamics and activities that can be developed within a PLC to promote the development of relational and collaborative dimensions

M^a del Mar Gallego García
José Luis Carmona Maqueda
CEP Málaga

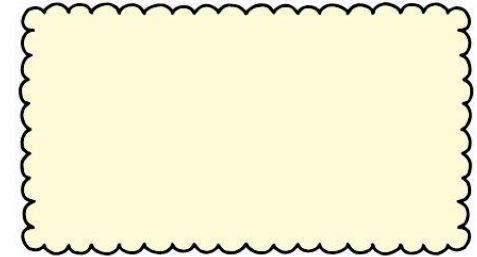
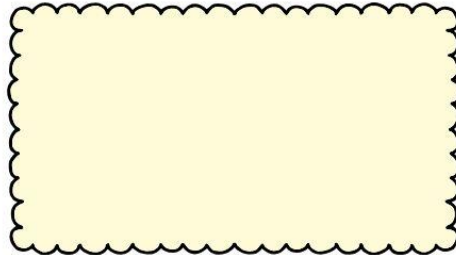
Rosa M^a Arcos de Torres
Alberto Corpas Martos
CEP Marbella-Coín

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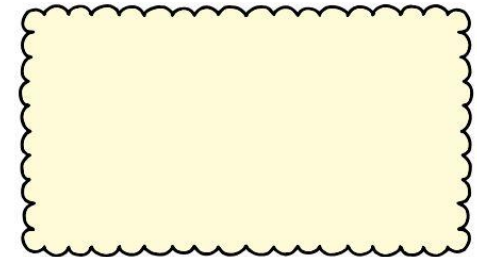
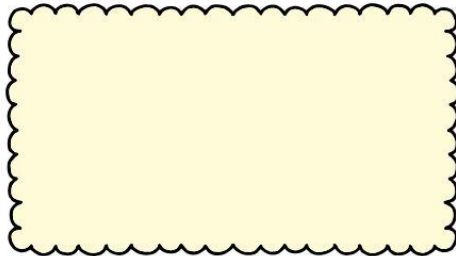
Relational and collaborative dimensions

3,2,1, BRIDGE

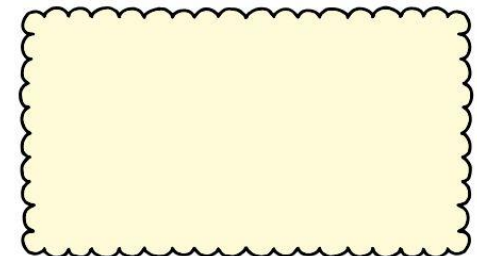
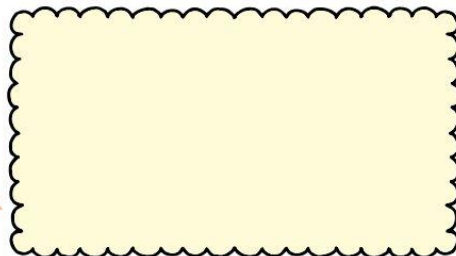
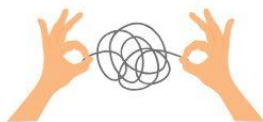
3 IDEAS



2 QUESTIONS



1 METAPHOR



1.-What is expected from PLC members



Expected Tasks of PLC Members

Left Hemisphere: Action & Inquiry (Doing)

Right Hemisphere: Mindset & Reflection (Being)



Outer Ring: Collaborative Support (Connecting)

2.- Need of a facilitator to provide scaffolding



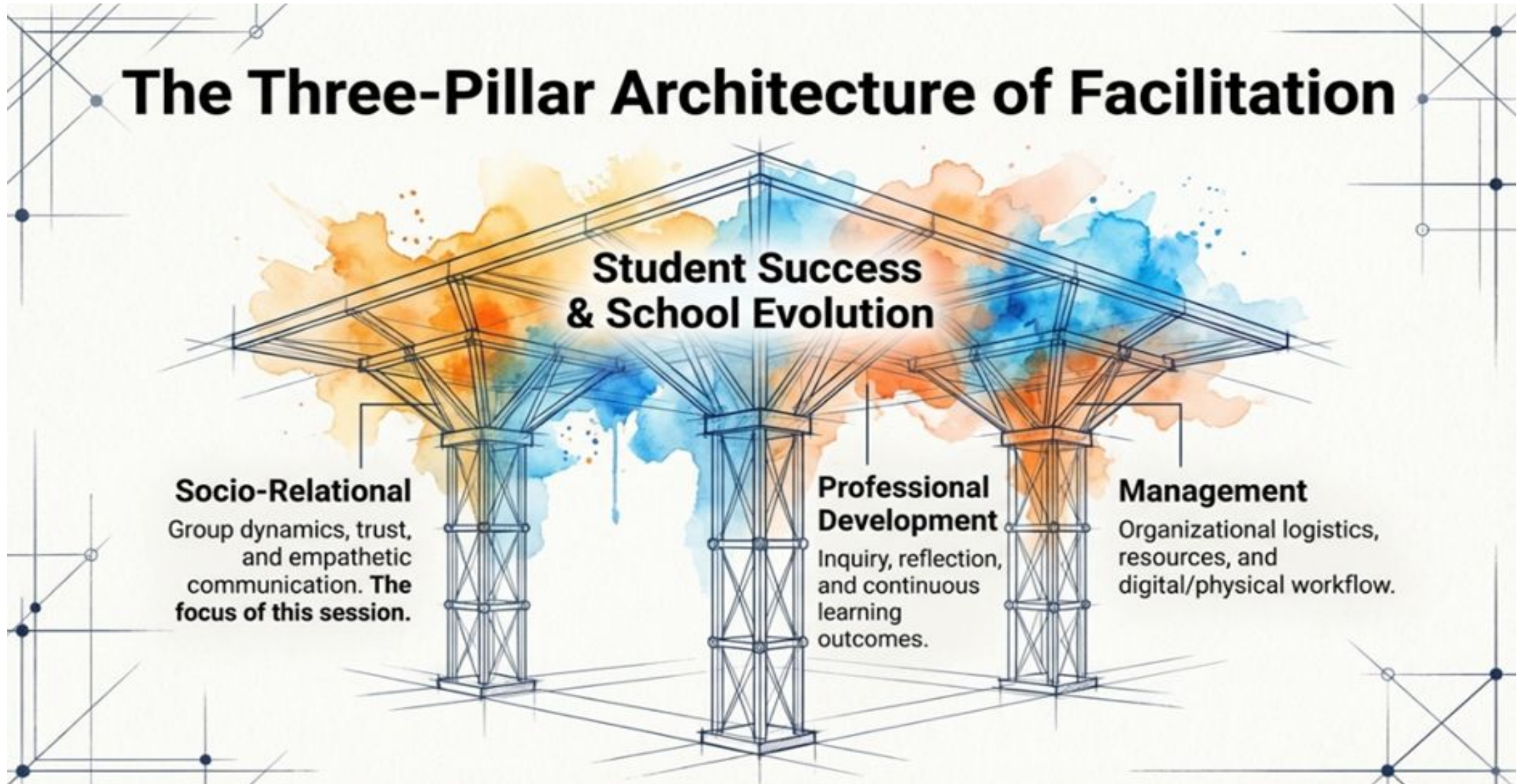
Facilitators

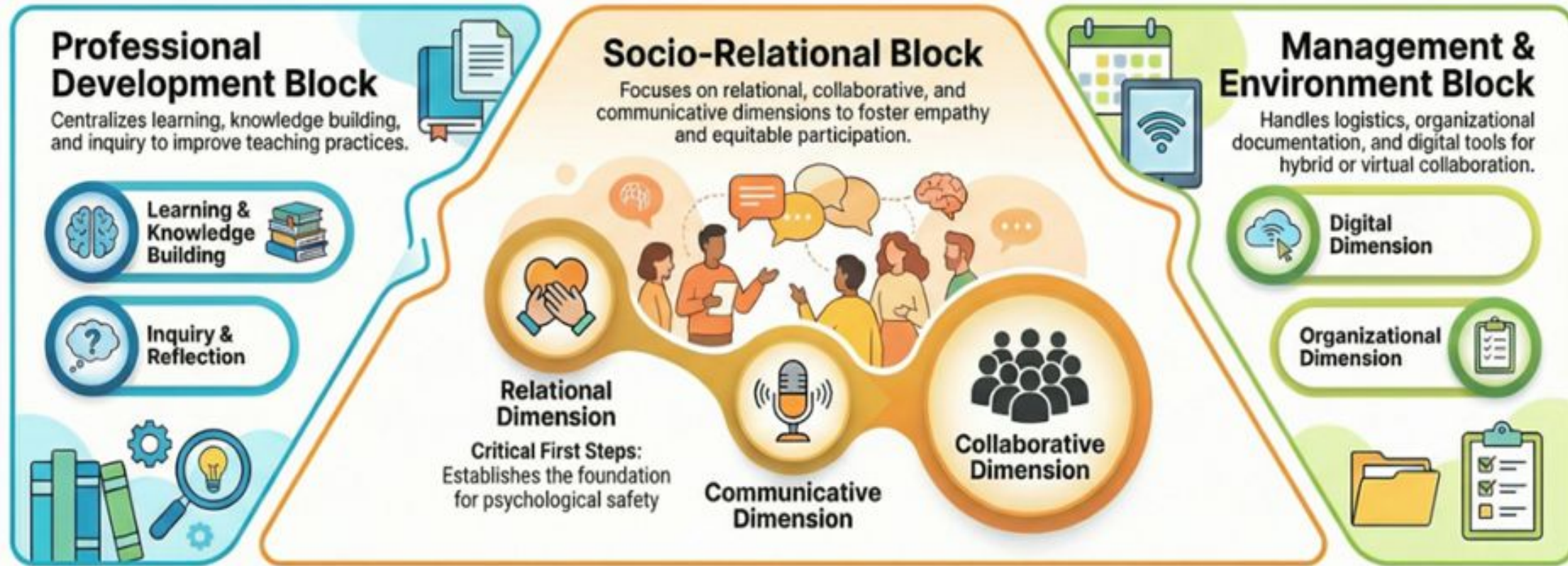


3.-Dimensions to develop as a facilitator



In the LeaFaP project framework, dimensions are categories that group the essential roles, functions, and responsibilities of a facilitator supporting Professional Learning Communities (PLCs). These dimensions provide a structure for designing training activities and defining the necessary learning outcomes—knowledge, skills, and attitudes—for high-quality facilitation.

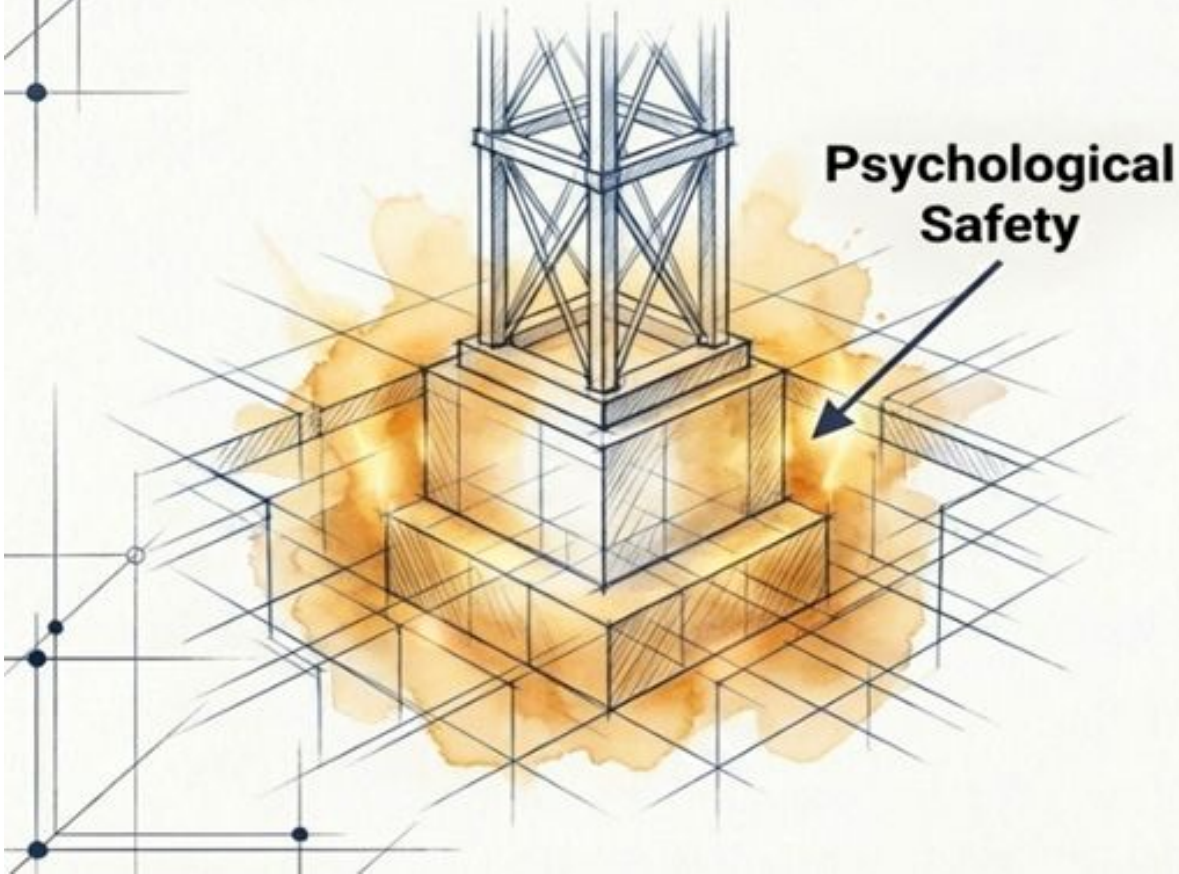




In other words, the facilitator is expected to promote specific dimensions of competencies and possess a range of professional characteristics to effectively support Professional Learning Communities (PLCs). We identify seven core dimensions that structure the facilitator's roles and responsibilities:

1. Relational Dimension.
2. Communicative Dimension.
3. Collaborative Focus Dimension.
4. Learning and Knowledge Building Dimension.
5. Inquiry and Reflection Dimension.
6. Digital Dimension.
7. Organizational Dimension.

The Relational Dimension is the First Step



Core Message

Deep collaboration cannot thrive without psychological safety, empathy, and mutual respect. Relational dynamics are the absolute prerequisite for collective learning.

Supporting Point

We cannot expect professionals to deprivatize their practice, share failures, or admit vulnerabilities without first feeling entirely safe in their environment.

It is critical to emphasize that developing these dimensions, particularly the relational and collaborative ones, is the first step toward transforming schools and work teams into "safe spaces". From this point of view, the facilitator must work on developing a specific range of dimensions among the members of a Professional Learning Community (PLC).

PROFILE OF A HIGH-QUALITY FACILITATOR



Temporary & Empowering: Role fades as group becomes autonomous; members take lead.



Data-Informed & Analytical: Guides use of evidence and basic research for decision-making.



Strategic & Self-Reflective: Uses active listening and questioning, analyzes own performance.



Supportive & Non-judgmental: Maintains focus on shared vision, offers emotional assistance without judgment.

The Foundation & Facilitator Traits



The Strategic Moderator & Trust-Builder

Facilitators must be non-judgmental active listeners who use questioning to encourage reflection.



Relational & Collaborative: The Critical First Steps

Developing these dimensions first creates "safe spaces" essential for deep inquiry and trust.



Temporary & Empowering Scaffolding

Facilitators provide initial modeling until the group can function autonomously and lead themselves.

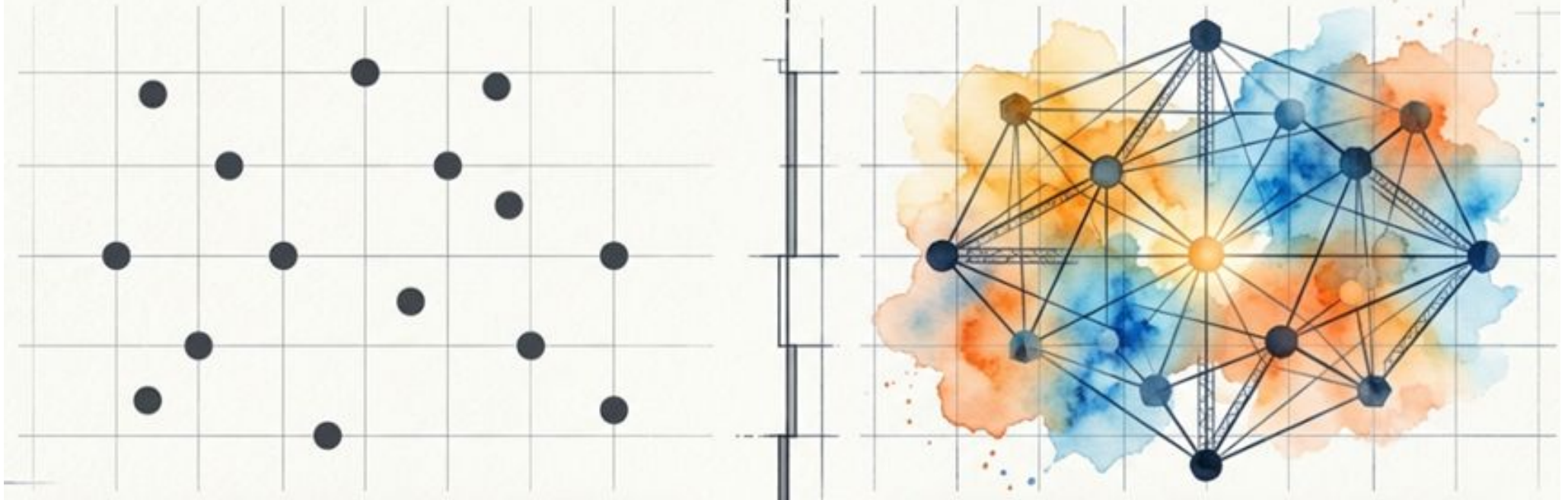
We focus on the Relational and Collaborative dimensions as the first step, because of promoting the relational and collaborative dimensions is the critical first step in transforming schools into effective learning environments:

- Creating a safe space.
- Emotional safety for idea exchange.
- Shared knowledge building.
- The facilitator's role as scaffolding.

4.- Items in these dimensions



From Isolation to Collective Inquiry

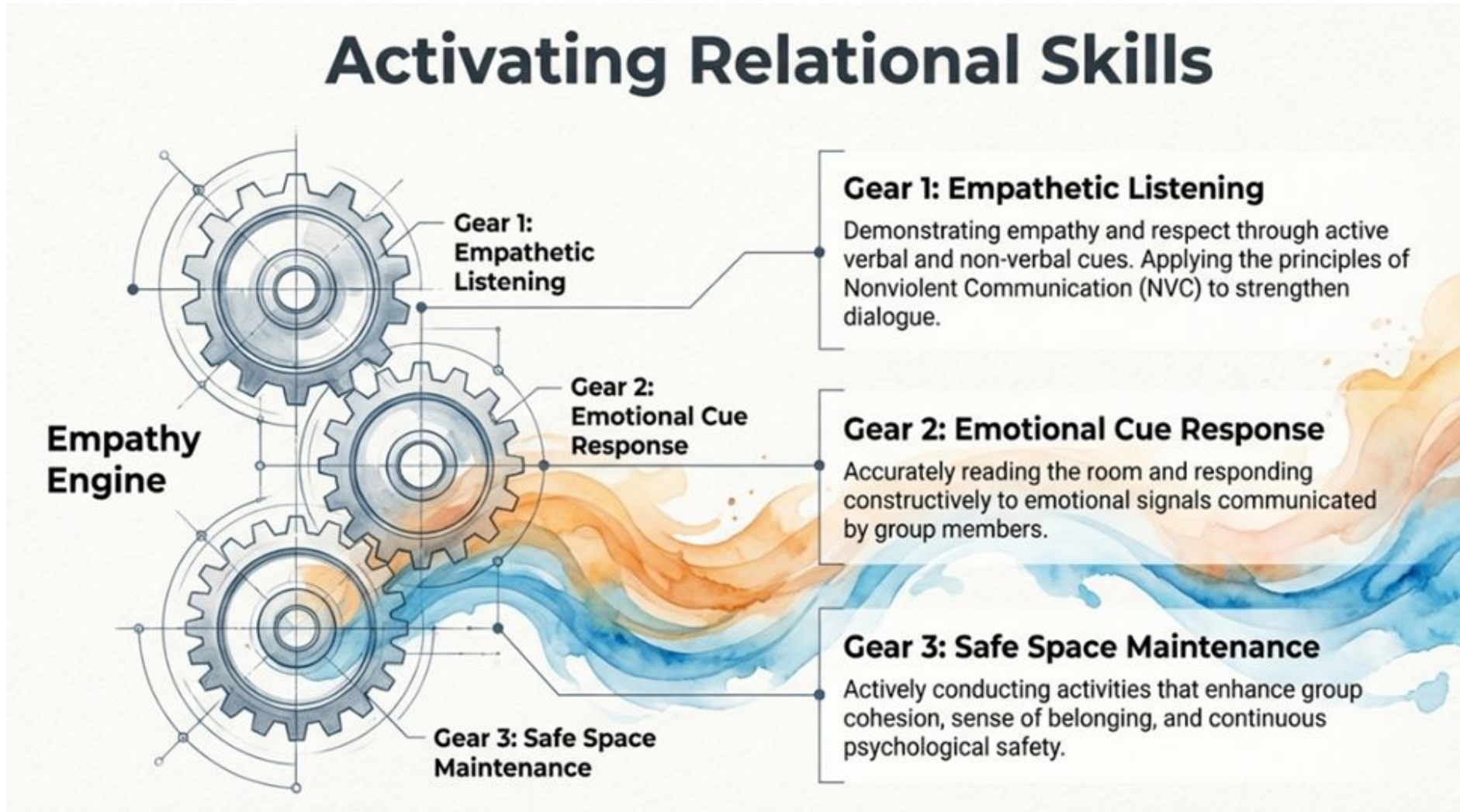


We are working as a group of professionals who are sharing and critically questioning our practice in a continuous, reflective and inclusive manner, oriented entirely toward learning and professional growth. Achieving this requires specific training to transcend mere cooperation.

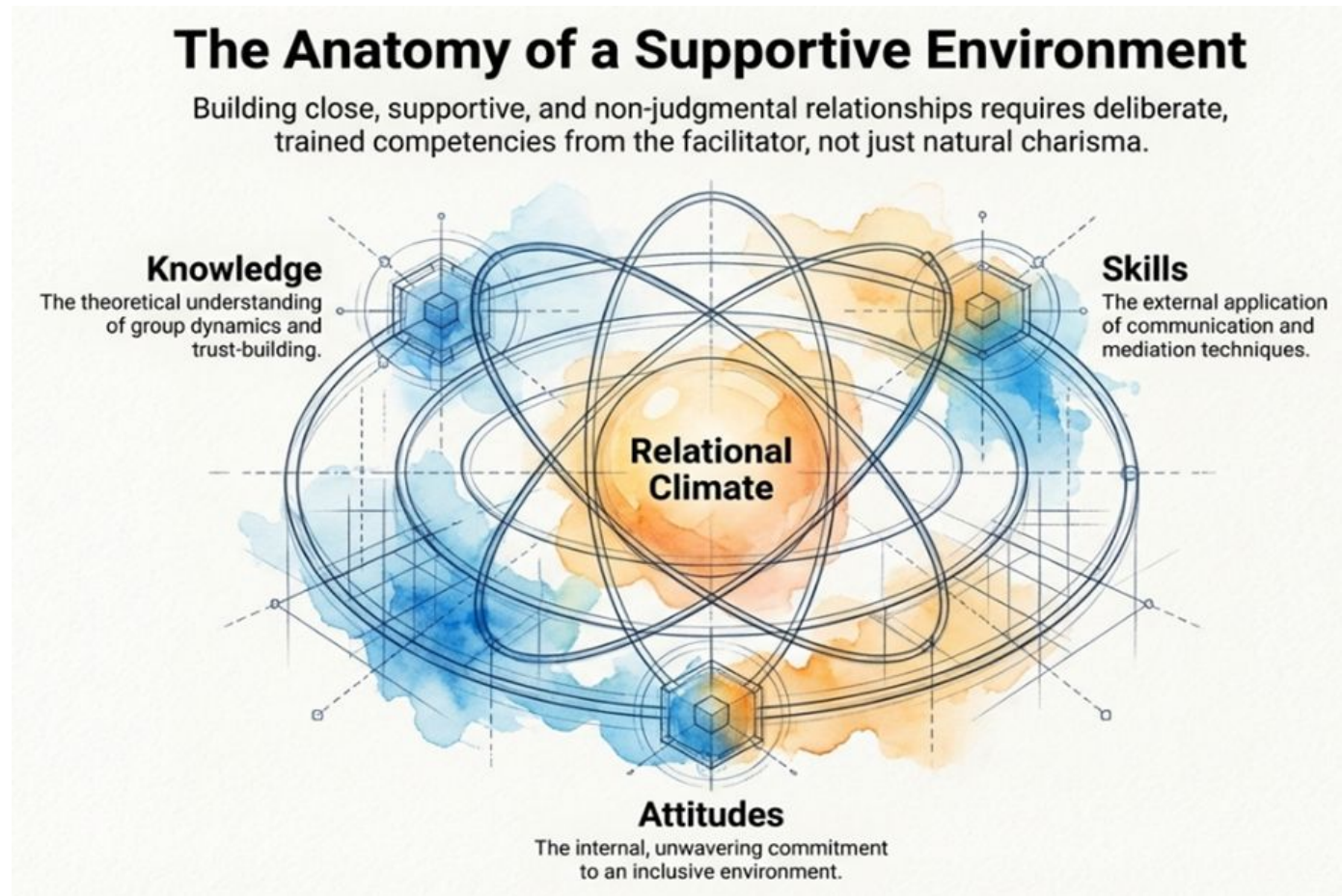
The learning outcomes within the LeaFaP project are structured as a comprehensive model of knowledge, skills, and attitudes (KSAs) that facilitators must develop to effectively support Professional Learning Communities (PLCs). These outcomes are organized into seven dimensions, with the relational and collaborative dimensions serving as the vital first step for establishing the trust necessary for deep inquiry.

a. Relational Dimension.

This dimension focuses on the interpersonal climate of the group, prioritizing the human connection required for teachers to feel safe sharing their classroom challenges. In this way, it is very important to activate relational skills in order to achieve: empathetic listening, emotional cue response and safe space maintenance.



- **Knowledge:** Facilitators must understand specific strategies for building trust and empathy within group settings. They also need a foundation in conflict resolution theories and mediation techniques to handle disputes respectfully.
- **Skills:** Key skills include demonstrating empathy and respect through both verbal and non-verbal cues and responding appropriately to the emotional signals of members. Most importantly, the facilitator must possess the ability to create and maintain a "safe space" where educators feel empowered to reflect on both successes and failures without fear of judgment.
- **Attitudes:** A facilitator should maintain a deep commitment to a positive, collaborative environment and remain receptive to diverse perspectives, even during challenging conversations or conflicts.



b. Collaborative Dimension.

Building on the relational foundation, this dimension ensures that the group moves beyond simple "superficial talk" toward collective responsibility and shared knowledge.

Equipping the PLC for Collaborative Action

Knowledge (The Theory):

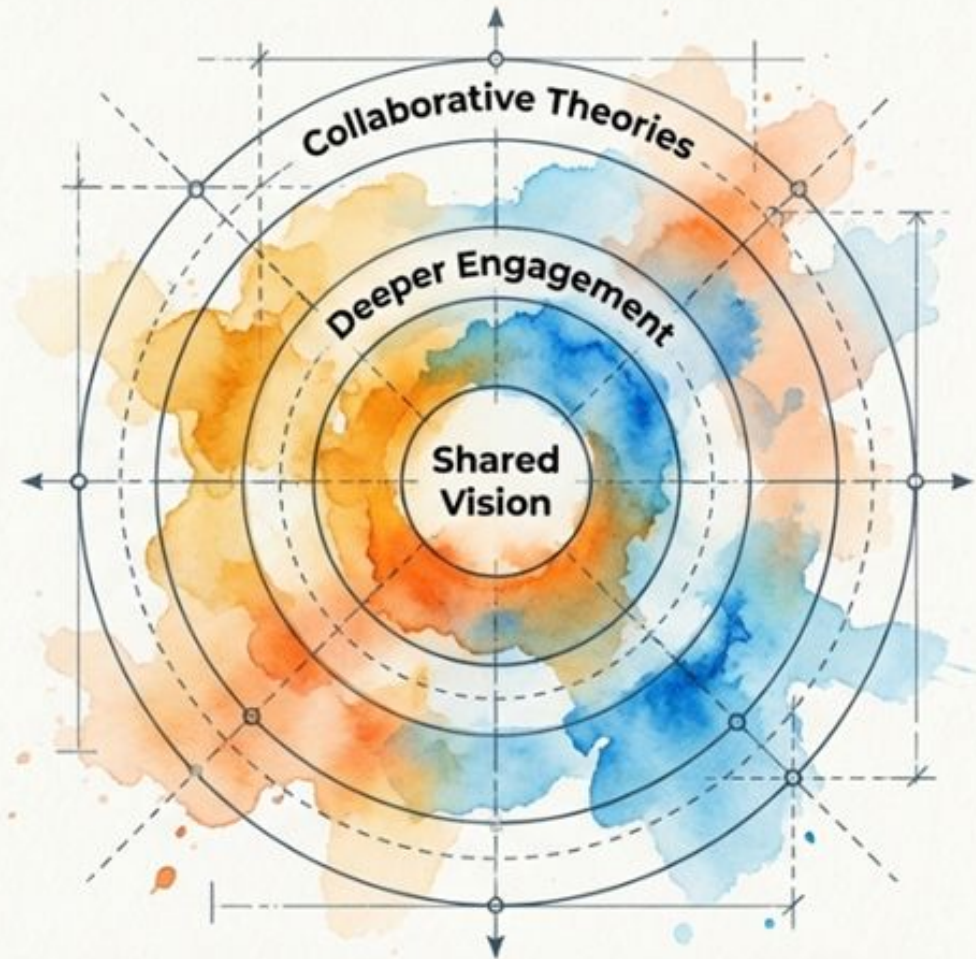
Understanding collaborative learning theories, shared leadership models, and the mechanics of collective efficacy in educational settings.

Skills (The Execution):

- Utilizing specialized techniques to drive deeper engagement.
- Facilitating goal-setting and action-planning sessions.
- Tracking and assessing progress toward collective pedagogical goals.

Attitudes (The Drive):

Valuing meaningful interaction over superficial exchanges and committing to mutual support.



The Collaboration Paradigm Shift

	Cooperation (Superficial)	Collective Responsibility (Deep)
Goal Orientation	Individual goals and private practice.	<i>Shared vision and joint inquiry.</i>
Resource Dynamics	Simply sharing existing materials.	<i>Deprivatization of practice and co-creation of new pedagogy.</i>
Feedback Culture	Avoiding critique to maintain artificial harmony.	<i>Mutual accountability for student outcomes and constructive critical reflection.</i>

5.- Our context



In-Service Teacher Training in Andalusia

Network of 32 in-service teacher training centers:

- Provide lifelong training to teachers.
- Support public schools and teachers.
- With pedagogical and management autonomy.

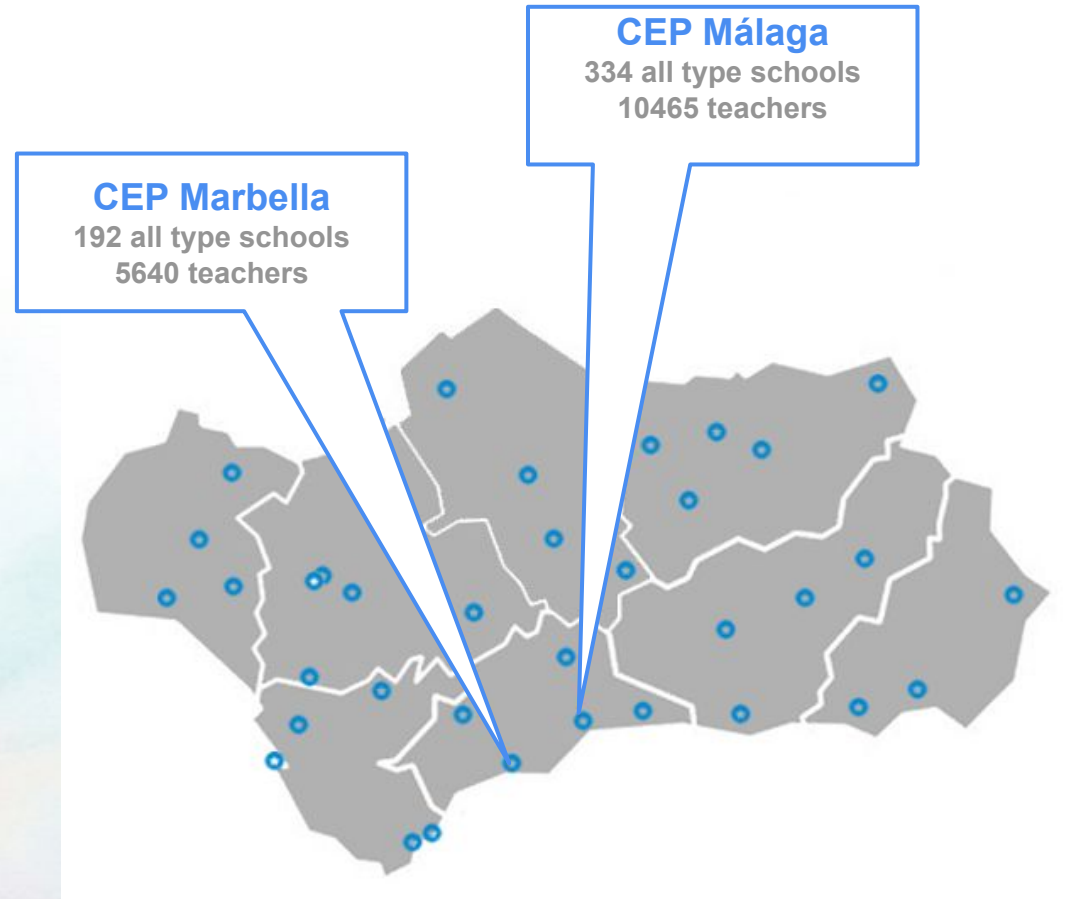
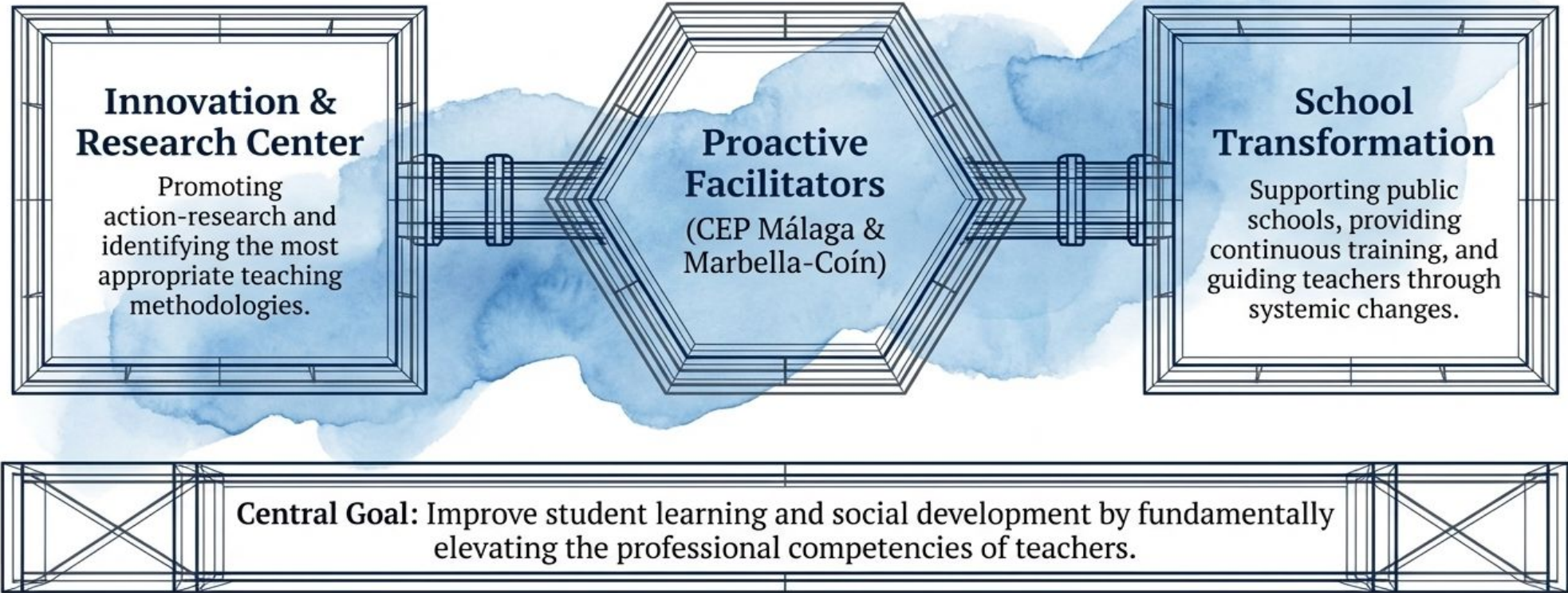


Figura 1. Geographical distribution of teacher training centres



Key Actions



6.- Activities and strategies: Relational dimension



Relational dimension.

- ▶ Within the relational dimension, the primary goal is to transform schools and work teams into "safe spaces". Developing this dimension provides the "emotional scaffolding" necessary for teachers to eventually function autonomously and engage in deep critical reflection. Some specific activities and strategies linked to this dimension could be:

- Cohesion and Trust-Building Dynamics

"Spider web" or "associative cards" are activities that facilitators can do in order to improve group cohesion and performing activities that foster respect and openness.

- These types of dynamics are used as tools to generate trust and empathy within group settings.
- They allow PLC members to recognize one another beyond their professional roles, establishing the strong professional bonds required before the group can move into more demanding inquiry processes.



The next game will consist of throwing the ball of wool to any fellow sitting/standing in the circle. Each person who receives the ball of wool will say to the others aloud:

- I'm from
- Write a word that represents what you expect from this "Conference".

*Don't forget "not to drop the thread".
Because, all of us are connected by the red thread.*



- Dialogic Gatherings

The sources highlight that reflection within a community can be significantly complemented by "joint readings and engaging in meaningful dialogues". These activities, often implemented as dialogic gatherings, are considered less intrusive for several reasons:

- **Equitable Participation:** They ensure an "eye-to-eye" exchange where all members listen attentively and attempt to truly understand the perspectives of others.
- **Democratic Climate:** They foster an environment where every member is free to express their thoughts and feelings, which is vital for building an open and trusting community.
- **Shared Vision:** These dialogues help the group negotiate meanings and co-construct a shared vision and values, which serves as the foundation for generating new pedagogical knowledge.

2.1. Reading and Reflection: Communication That Blocks Compassion

In this first part, you will begin exploring how certain communication habits—such as judgments, blame, and denial of responsibility—can block empathy and connection within teams and Professional Learning Communities (PLCs).

Through selected excerpts from *Nonviolent Communication: A Language of Life* (Marshall B. Rosenberg), you will reflect on the ways in which everyday language shapes relationships and discover opportunities to build more conscious, compassionate dialogue within your professional context.

As a facilitator, what does “seeing others through their vulnerability” mean to you in practice?

How might adopting this perspective change the way you approach disagreement, tension, or emotional reactions within your PLC?

In what ways could this shift strengthen trust and connection among members?

Work individually or with a partner (if possible). Imagine a typical professional situation within your PLC:

A colleague repeatedly arrives unprepared for the team’s meetings. You feel frustrated because the group’s time is limited.

Using Rosenberg’s framework, write or say aloud both sides of the conversation following these stages:

1. **Observation:** Describe what happened without judging or labelling.
2. **Feelings:** Express how you feel in response to what you observed.
3. **Needs:** Identify the unmet needs behind those feelings.
4. **Request:** Formulate a clear, respectful request that could improve collaboration.

- Core Relational Strategies

The project's modular training proposes several specific activities to strengthen relational competencies:

1. **Nonviolent Communication (NVC):** Based on Marshall Rosenberg's model, this strategy helps facilitators and members transform communication habits that block empathy by focusing on Observation, Feelings, Needs, and Requests.
2. **Perception Circle Diary:** This is a daily or weekly reflection practice where participants record their observations and feelings regarding interactions to move from automatic reactions to conscious, compassionate responses.
3. **Empathic Listening Role-play:** Participants work in pairs or triads to practice listening using NVC steps while an observer provides feedback on the level of empathy and the absence of judgment.
4. **Relational Climate Check-In:** Using digital tools like Padlet or Mentimeter, facilitators conduct check-ins to identify relational barriers or disconnections within the team before starting collaborative tasks.

1

1. **Observation:** Describe what happened without judging or labelling.
2. **Feelings:** Express how you feel in response to what you observed.
3. **Needs:** Identify the unmet needs behind those feelings.
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2

Weekly Reflection Structure

Day	Focus of the Reflection	Guiding Question
Monday	Observation	What did I observe (without judging) in what was said to me during a PLC interaction?
Tuesday	Feelings	What feelings did that communication awaken in me?
Wednesday	Needs (others)	What needs might have been behind what was said to me?
Thursday	Needs (my own)	What needs were behind my reaction?
Friday	Requests	What clear request could I have made—or received—to improve connection and understanding?

3



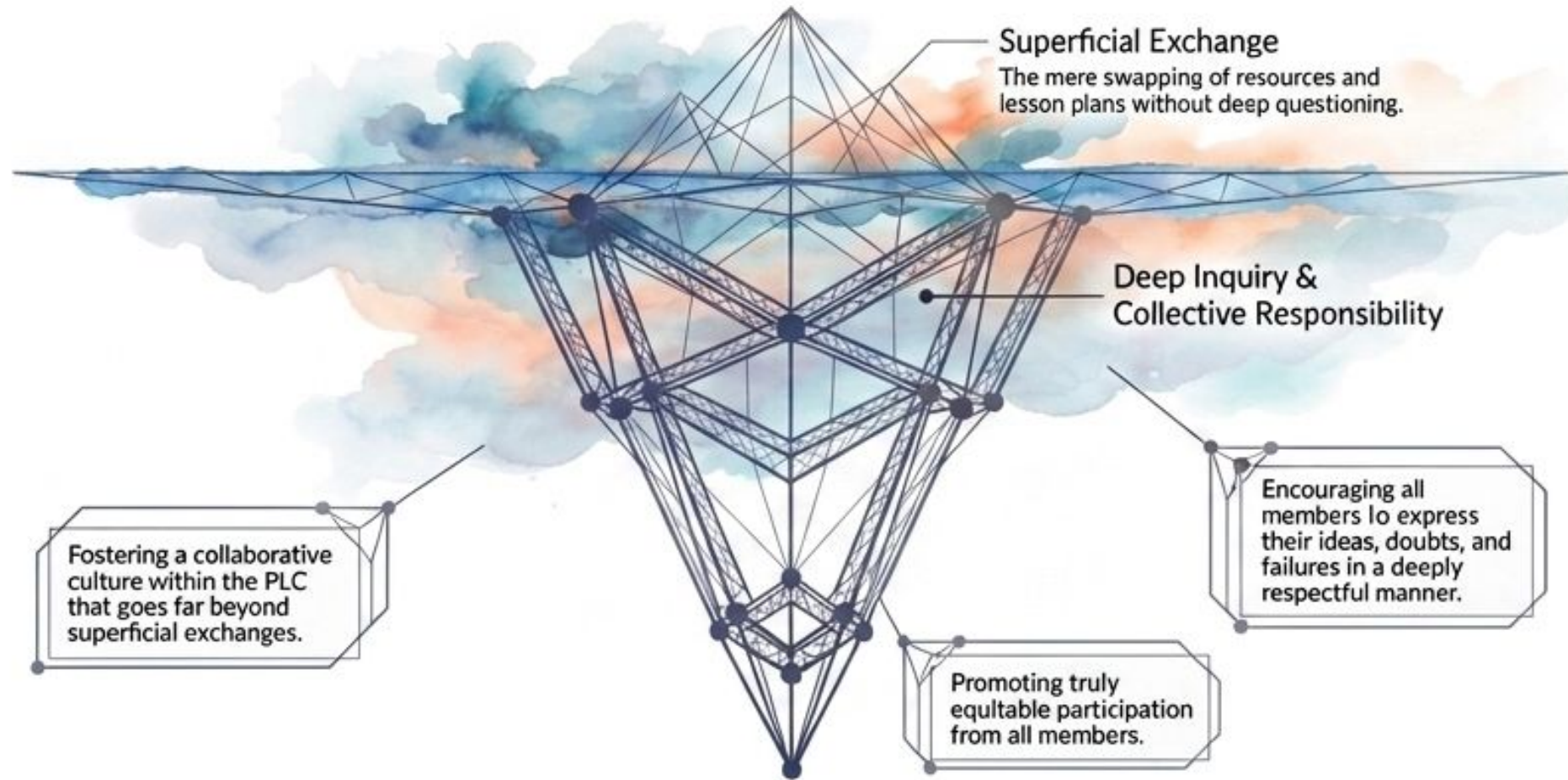
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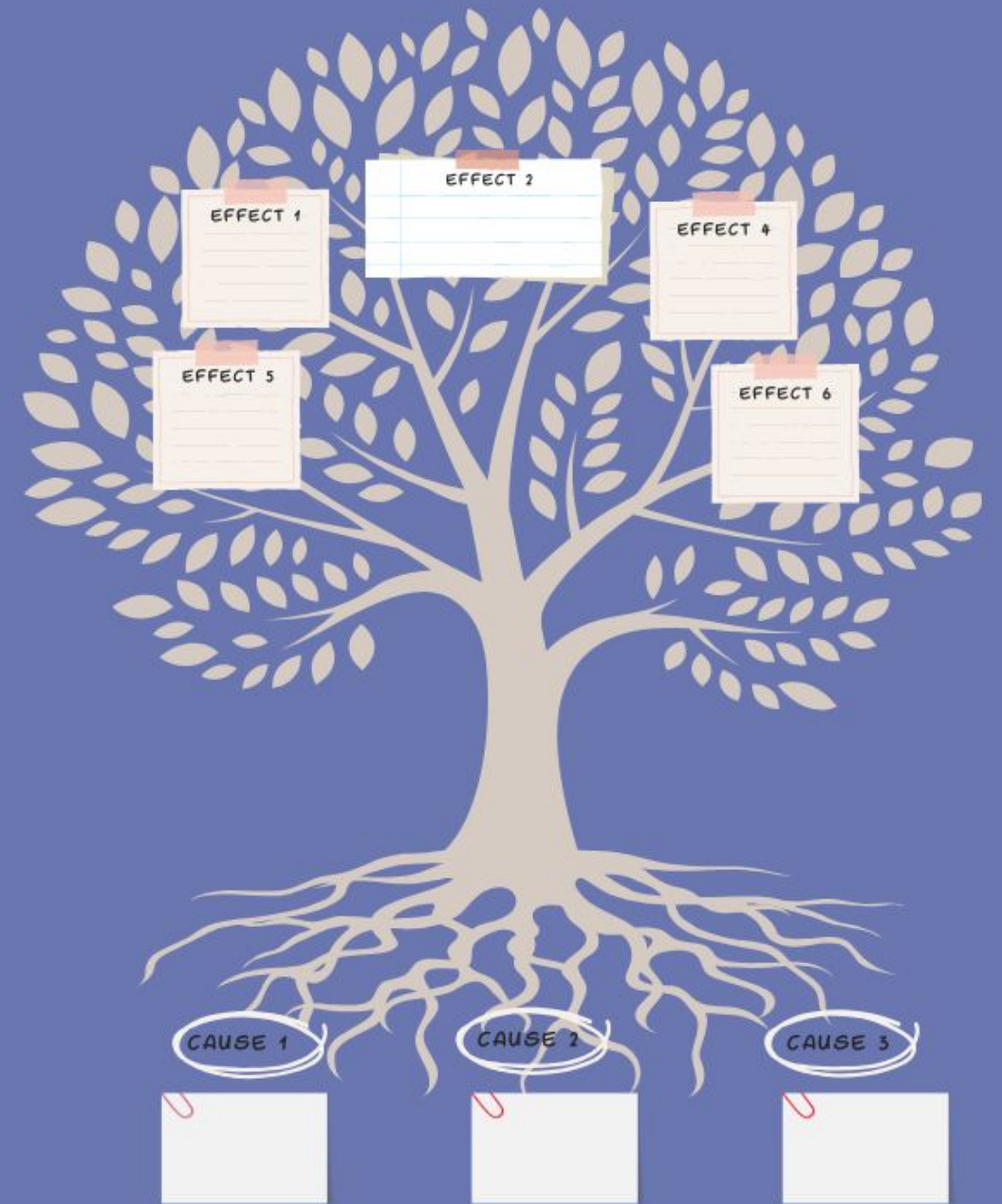
6.- Activities and strategies: Collaborative dimension



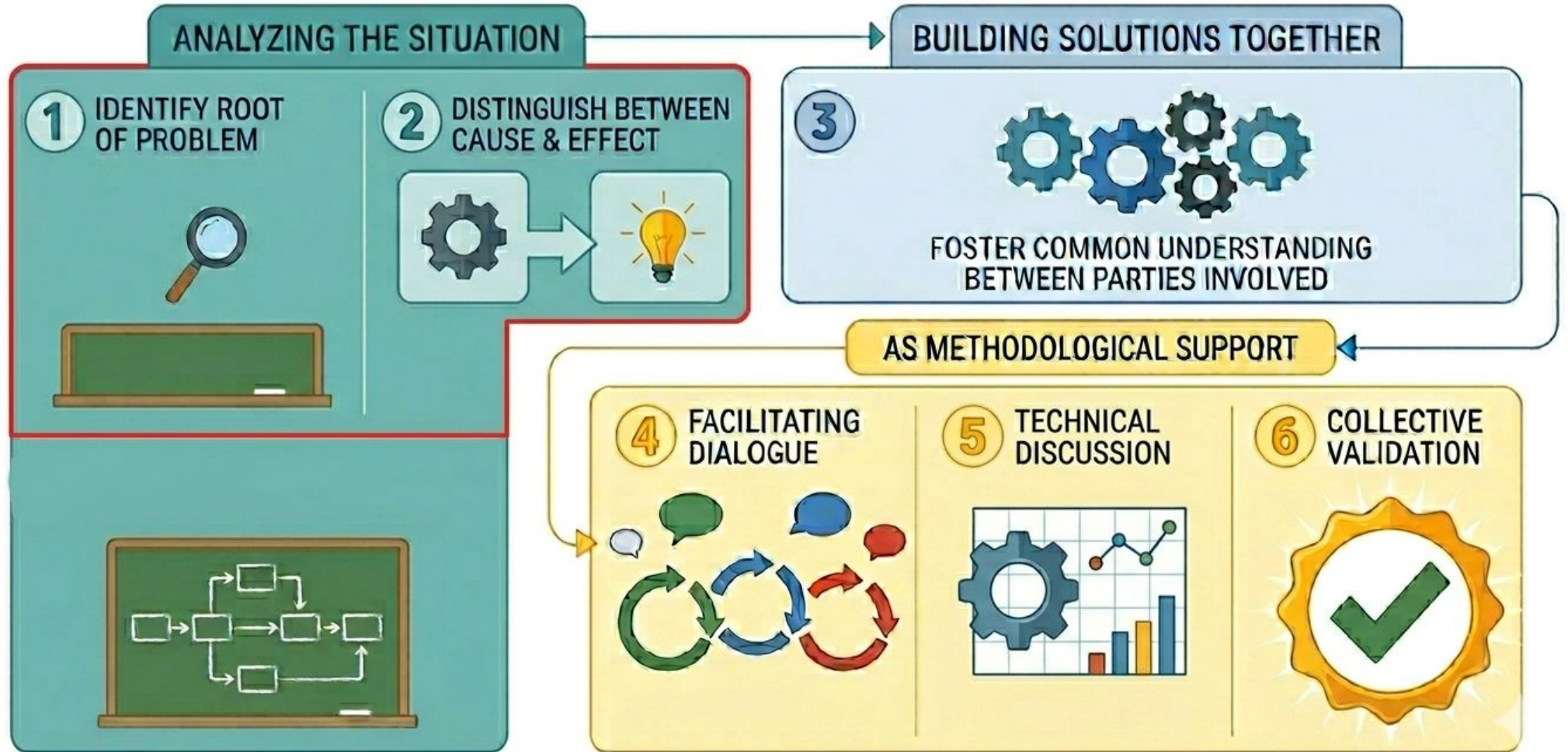
Collaborative Dimensions: The Challenge



Problem tree



BENEFITS OF THE PROBLEM TREE



Thinking routine: 3,2,1, Bridge

3,2,1, BRIDGE

3 IDEAS

A rectangular box with a scalloped border, intended for writing three ideas.A rectangular box with a scalloped border, intended for drawing a bridge.

2 QUESTIONS

A rectangular box with a scalloped border, intended for writing two questions.A rectangular box with a scalloped border, intended for drawing a bridge.

1 METAPHOR

A rectangular box with a scalloped border, intended for writing a metaphor.A rectangular box with a scalloped border, intended for drawing a bridge.

Thinking routine: 1,2,3, Action



1,2,3...ACTION



A



Thinking routines

POINTS ON THE COMPASS

Need to know

What else do you need to know or discover about this idea? What additional information would help you evaluate these ideas?

Worrisome

What do you find to be an obstacle? What is its disadvantage?



Enthusiasm

What excites you about that idea? What is its advantage?

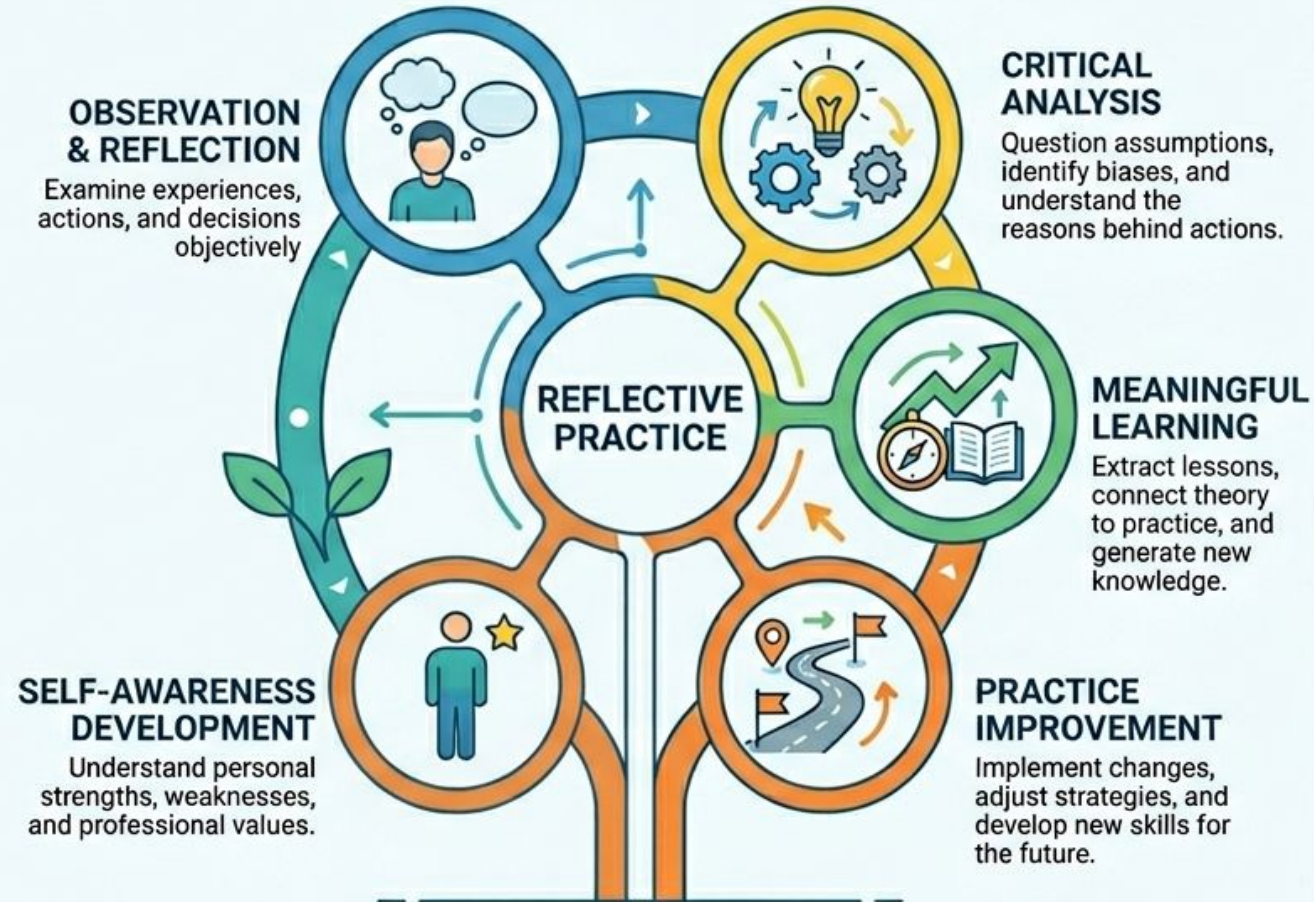
Suggestions

Any suggestions or opinions regarding this idea? What is the next step in evaluating this idea or proposal?

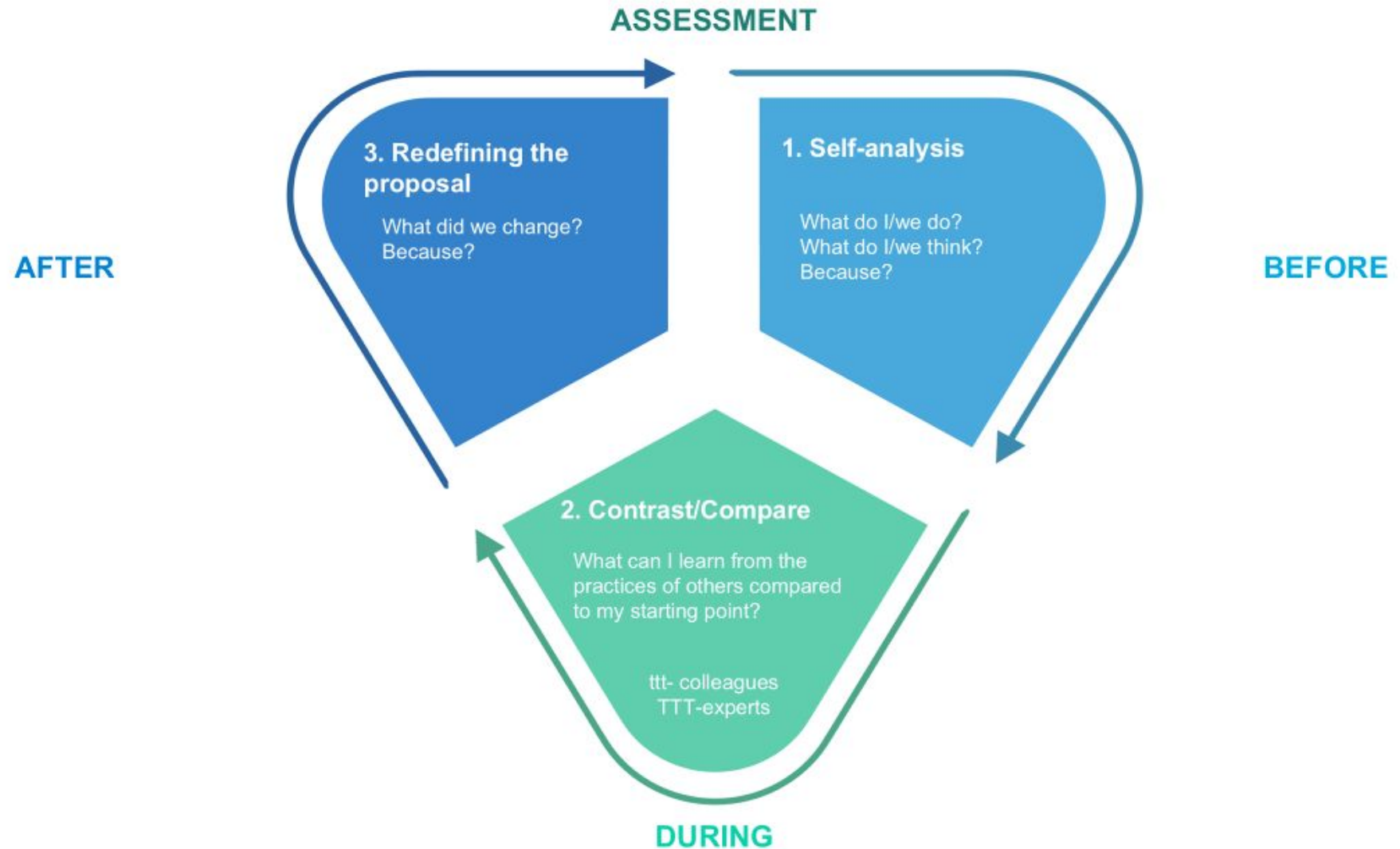


KEY POINTS OF REFLECTIVE PRACTICE

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT & CONTINUOUS LEARNING



Reflective circle




7.- Final Thoughts





Final Thoughts: From Isolation to Collective Inquiry


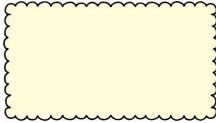



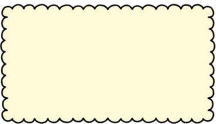



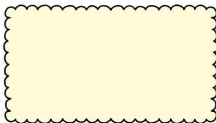


- **The Relational Foundation is Essential:** Building a PLC is not just about sharing materials; it is about creating a "**Safe Space**". Without the **CASA Model** (Curiosity, Admiration, Safety, and Joy), teachers cannot engage in the deep, respectful inquiry necessary to question and transform their practices.
- **The Goal is Autonomy:** The facilitator's role is to provide **temporary scaffolding**. We model active engagement and trust-building until the community is empowered to design and evaluate its own professional growth.
- **A Shift in Culture:** By prioritizing these foundations, we move from individual isolation to a culture of **collective responsibility** and shared knowledge



Final Activity Suggestion: To conclude, we invite you to complete the **3-2-1 Bridge routine**. Compare your initial thoughts about PLCs with the insights gained today. This "bridge" represents your journey from prior knowledge to newly acquired collective insights.

"In summary, without first establishing these socio-relational foundations, it is not possible for the group to reach the levels of critical inquiry and reflection necessary to transform teaching practice."

3,2,1, BRIDGE

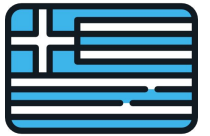
3 IDEAS 			
2 QUESTIONS 			
1 METAPHOR 			



Safety

Scaffolding

Transformation



Leafap

Leading and Facilitating Professional Learning Communities in Schools towards an Inquiry-based and Reflective Practice (KA220-SCH - Cooperation partnerships in school education)



Thank you!

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