



Collaboration in Education

Developing an Equal Opportunity to Learn

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Goals for the Session

1. Review existing opportunities to collaborate in your current setting
2. Learn about the research on the effects of collaboration on educational achievement
3. Create an increased desire for you to collaborate in your current setting
4. Draft realistic plans to increase your collaboration this spring and fall

Recent Collaboration

Think about your recent collaborative interactions
with educational colleagues.

Collaboration Examples

Teacher next door

Curriculum mapping

Group scoring of assessments

Coaching a sport with a fellow coach

Lunch group

Unit/Department meeting

TAP Mentor

Recent Collaboration

- When are these occurring?
- Were most encounters planned, or were they informal?
- What kinds of topics are discussed, addressed?
- Does someone usually facilitate the collaboration, or are most encounters informal?
- How is the balance? Are you getting as much as you are giving?
- How valuable are these encounters to your success in your professional role?
- Are there collaborations taking place around you in which you wish you were involved?

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Pair up, and Share Your Thoughts

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What Did You Say,
and What Did You Hear?

What does the research say about the power of collaboration?

“There is no research anywhere to support the idea that teaching alone, in isolation, improves student learning.”

At best, strong individual teachers create
‘Islands of Excellence.’

The Human Side of School Change, Robert Evans

Research Findings

Schools will never realize the fundamental purpose of helping all students achieve at high levels if the educators within them work in isolation.

National Educational Service

Research Findings

The basic structure of successful collaborative work consists of teams whose members work *interdependently* to achieve *common goals*.

More Effective Schooling, Lawrence Lezotte

Research Findings

People who engage in collaborative team learning are able to learn from one another and thus create momentum to fuel continued improvement. It is difficult to overstate the importance of collaborative teams in the improvement process.

Classroom Instruction that Works, Marzano

Research Findings

Opportunities for teachers to

- talk with colleagues about teaching,
- consider new ways of doing things, and
- hammer out shared understandings about goals

were common across diverse environments where practices were rethought in ways that benefited both teachers and students.

McLaughlin and Talbert (2001)

Research Findings

Schools in which we observed strong collaboration developed higher quality solutions, experienced increased levels of professional confidence, expanded the pool of ideas, tested new ideas and provided greater support for new teachers.

On Common Ground, DuFour and Eaker

The Right to an “Equal Opportunity to Learn”

Dr. Whitehead has required that all programs
will be:

- Aligned
- Articulated
- Coordinated

Aligned

The instructional program matches the state and district standards, targets, GLEs and assessments.

A Typical Alignment Process

Teachers on every team study state standards, clarify essential outcomes for students, and develop an instructional calendar to ensure that all students have access to a core curriculum that could be addressed in the allotted time.

In other words, each team clarifies exactly what each student will learn, and when it will be taught.

Articulated

The instructional program is a continuation of previous learning, and provides a foundation for future learning. There is no content or skill gap from one year or course to the next.

A Sample Articulation Step

Once an instructional calendar for a grade level is established, teams work with the grade level above and below to ensure vertical articulation and to identify any gaps or overlaps in the curriculum.

Coordinated

Courses or subjects within a grade level use common instructional patterns, routines, and expectations. Content in one area is supported in other parts of a student's day.

Grade Level Coordination:

- Teachers of a grade level hold parent meetings to explain common expectations and routines.
- Homework schedules are balanced throughout the week by subject area.
- Vocabulary and spelling lists in Language Arts classes are generated from science and math programs.

Think for a Moment:

How well is your daily practice

- Articulated
- Aligned
- Coordinated

Think for a Moment:

- 1 – Daily Practice has a lot of room for improvement in this area
- 5 – Daily Practice is average in this area
- 10 – Daily Practice is very strong in this area

Think for a Moment:

How well is your daily practice

■ Articulated	1	5	10
■ Aligned	1	5	10
■ Coordinated	1	5	10

Think for a Moment:

What would it take for your program to be more

- Articulated
- Aligned
- Coordinated

And, to take this a step further

In addition to staff collaboration, there are other forms of collaboration which can be equally powerful in increasing student achievement.

Three Kinds of Collaboration:

- **Staff to Staff**
- **Staff to Student**
- **Student to Student**

Why is expecting staff to collaborate with students so important?

- Students learn ways to clearly communicate their opinions and needs, and to see that they are valued
- Smaller collaborative groups can help individualize a student's learning
- Collaboration builds trust and respect
- Collaboration builds relationships. It helps students buy in to the system or process

Why is expecting students to collaborate so important?

- It cements their thinking
- It helps to make a product or project better
- It helps students to consider things they hadn't thought of
- It helps students to see ideas from another perspective
- It teaches life skills, preparing them to join the workforce

Where should you increase collaboration in your daily practice?

- What are your biggest areas of professional frustration or needed improvement?
- Where is the greatest need, to improve your program's articulation, alignment, or coordination?
- What collaboration already exists in which you wish you were involved?
- Which mode of collaboration is most absent? Staff to Staff, Staff to Student, or Student to Student?

Make a Plan

- Where do you want to improve the level of professional collaboration in your daily practice?
- How will you increase collaboration?
 - Specific and Attainable Goal
 - Measurable Outcome
 - Results Oriented (evidence of student learning)
 - Time bound

Review of Session Goals

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