Building a Collaborative Learning-Centered Culture

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From Isolation to Collaboration

20th Century
LEGAL EXPERT
Perry Mason

21st Century
LEGAL TEAM
Harry’s Law
From Isolation to Collaboration

20th Century
MEDICAL EXPERT
Ben Casey

21st Century
MEDICAL TEAM
Grey’s Anatomy
From Isolation to Collaboration

20th Century
LAW ENFORCEMENT EXPERT
The Lone Ranger

21st Century
LAW ENFORCEMENT TEAM
CSI Miami
From Isolation to Collaboration

20th Century
EDUCATIONAL EXPERT
Welcome Back Kotter

21st Century
EDUCATIONAL EXPERT
Are We Trying to Improve Schools One Teacher at a Time?

Individual growth does not ensure organizational growth. Organizations need more than well-developed individuals. Effective leaders focus on developing the culture and the collective capacity of the organization.

Center for Creative Leadership (2003)
Michael Fullan (2007)
Richard Elmore (2006)
Individual Growth Does Not Ensure Organizational Growth

Student achievement gains and other benefits are influenced by organizational characteristics beyond the skills of individual staff. We saw schools with competent teachers that lacked the organizational capacity to be effective with many students. The task for schools is to organize human resources into an effective collective effort.

Newmann and Wehlage, (1995)
In this Age of Accountability

- Isolation is not an option!
- Collaboration is a responsibility!
Our Collective Journey

TOGETHER we will focus our work around the Four Priorities:

- To meet the personal needs of each student
- To elevate the importance of great teachers and learning
- To make the improvement of public education a moral imperative of every citizen and stakeholder
- To accelerate innovation and transform schools to meet Global21 demands

TOGETHER we will follow the Pathway:

- To work collectively using the skills of effective strategic planning and continuous improvement to assure our policies and initiatives are bringing about the intended results

TOGETHER we will keep Our Promises:

- To be accountable for what we want students to KNOW, how we want them to BEHAVE and what we want them to ACCOMPLISH by assisting all students
  
  KNOW - To meet or exceed state, national and international curriculum standards that incorporate acquisition of 21st century skills through engaging opportunities in the arts, world languages, health and physical education, career and technical education as well as the core subjects of reading/English/language arts, mathematics, science and social studies;
  
  BEHAVE - To develop the personal skills and dispositions of wellness, responsibility, cultural awareness, self-direction, ethical character and good citizenship in an environment that is caring and safe;
  
  ACCOMPLISH - To graduate from high school prepared for post-secondary education and career success through personalized pathways and guidance that focus students on productive and satisfying lives.

TOGETHER, we must be steadfast in keeping the achievement and well-being of our students the central PURPOSE for everything we do. All actions must foster the vision:

“Good Kids Doing Great Work”

Developing students who are healthy, responsible, self-directed, lifelong learners who have the knowledge and Global21 skills necessary for living satisfying and productive lives.
School Teams Defined

Each of the teams described has multiple functions. This document outlines those functions that apply to school growth and improvement.
Collaborative Team Structures
Focused on Learning

The fundamental question in organizing collaborative teams is, “Do the people on this team have a shared responsibility for responding to the critical questions of learning in ways that enhance the learning of their students?”
Organized by Content

Math Team

Reading - Language Arts Team

Science Team

Arts Team

Social Studies Team
Grade-level Teams

PreK-K Team

First Grade Team

Second Grade Team

Third Grade Team
Vertical Teams

PK – 1 Team

2-3 Team

3-5 Team
Logical Links

- Math-Science Team
- Reading-Social Studies Team
- Language Arts-Technology Team

[Diagram showing connections between the teams]
Interdisciplinary Teams

6th Grade
Math, Science, Social Studies & Language Arts

7th Grade
Math, Science, Social Studies & Language Arts

8th Grade
Math, Science, Social Studies & Language Arts
Making Time for Weekly Collaboration

• Build Common Preparation Time into the Master Schedule
• Parallel Scheduling
• Adjusted Start & End Time
• Shared Classes
• Group Activities, Events & Testing
• Banked Time
• ISE (PD and Faculty Meeting Time)
Do You Know What Your Teams Are Doing?

We have structures in place and we have time to meet...NOW WHAT?
Collaboration

The purpose of collaboration--to help more students achieve at higher levels—can only be accomplished if the professionals engaged in collaboration are focused on the right work.

Learning By Doing
Case Study

Learning By Doing

Second edition: pages 117-118
Learning by Doing

A Handbook for Professional Learning Communities at Work
Richard Stiggins, Rebecca DuFour, Robert Eaker, Thomas Marry
pp. 117-118

Building the Collaborative Culture of a Professional Learning Community
The Case Study: Are We Engaged in Collaboration

Principal Joe McDonald was puzzled. He knew that building a collaborative culture was the key to improving student achievement. He could cite any number of research studies to support his position. He had worked tirelessly to promote collaboration and had taken a number of steps to support teachers working together.

He organized each grade level in the Nampa Middle School (Nampa, The Fish) into an interdisciplinary team composed of individual math, science, social studies, and language arts teachers. He created a schedule that gave teams time to meet together each day. He trained staff in collaborative skills, consensus building, and conflict resolution. He emphasized the importance of collaboration at almost every faculty meeting. He felt he had done all the right things and for 3 years he had waited patiently to reap the reward of higher levels of student learning. But to his dismay and to the bewilderment, every academic indicator of student achievement monitored by the school had remained essentially the same.

Principal McDonald decided to survey the faculty to see if he could discover why the collaboration had yielded no gain in student achievement. The satisfaction survey he developed revealed that, with very few exceptions, teachers felt their collaborative time had strengthened the bond between teachers. Specialist teachers were less enthusiastic and expressed some resentment about being lumped together in one collaborative team. In general, however, teachers seemed to enjoy working together.

Principal McDonald then decided to make a concerted effort to observe personally the workings of the teams. At the first meeting he attended, a seventh-grade team focused on the behavior of a student who had become increasingly disruptive.

According to the team, the student was disinclined to follow the rules and had often disrupted the class. The team met to schedule a parent conference so they could present their concerns to the parent as a group. An eighth-grade team brainstormed strategies for achieving their team goal of reducing disciplinary referrals for tardiness to class. As a meeting of a second seventh-grade team, he observed a lively debate about whether or not members should accept late work from students, and if so, how many points they should deduct for each day the work was late. The fourth team he observed assigned roles and responsibilities to each member to ensure all the tasks associated with an upcoming field trip were addressed.
The Principal of a middle school had worked tirelessly to promote collaboration and had taken a number of steps to support teachers working together:

• He organized each grade level into an interdisciplinary team.
• He created a schedule that gave teams time to meet together each day.
• He trained staff in collaborative skills, consensus building, and conflict resolution.
• He emphasized the importance of collaboration at almost every faculty meeting.
Teams Focused On...

- the behavior of a student who had become increasingly disruptive
- strategies for achieving their team goal of reducing disciplinary referrals for tardiness to class
- a lively debate about whether or not members should accept late work from students, and if so, how many points they should deduct for each day late
- roles and responsibilities of each member to ensure all the tasks associated with an upcoming field trip were addressed
What Advice Would You Give?

How can we provide the parameters and framework to ensure teams use their collaborative team time in ways that have a positive impact on student learning?
What are your schools’ teams doing?
What Are Your Schools’ Teams Doing?

Once school is underway in September and collaborative teams begin to meet on a regular basis, visit every collaborative team in your assigned school(s) to collect information on the work of those teams. Your role is strictly an objective observer (a fly on the wall). Take notes by listing:

(a) All topics of discussion
(b) Any tools/protocols used during the meeting(s)

Bring the information you collect to the Coaching for Learning online meeting in October.
Critical Questions of Teaching & Learning

1. What do all students need to know, understand and be able to do in this lesson or unit of study?
   1.5 -- What CORE instruction will best facilitate the learning?

2. How will we know if they have learned it?
   2.5 -- What evidence will we accept during the learning that indicates where each student is on the learning progression?

3. How will we respond if students do not learn?
   3.5 -- What TARGETED or INTENSIVE instruction will likely have the most impact, given the evidence of student learning?

4. How will we respond when they already know it?
   4.5 -- What projects or collaborative studies will likely have the most impact for enrichment or acceleration, given the evidence of student learning?
The Work of Collaborative Teams

- 4 Critical Questions:
  - What do we want all students to learn? (essential learnings)
  - How will we know when each student has learned what we deem most essential?
  - How will we respond when students are not learning?
  - How will we respond when students already know it?
Q.1 What do we want all students to learn?

- Teams clarify essential learning for grade or course (consistent interpretation and understanding)
- ..Build shared knowledge
- ..Utilize vertical teaming
- ..Establish pacing guides
- ..Establish proficiency guidelines
Q.2 How will we know if they have learned it?

- Teams use assessment data to monitor student progress, to identify students who need support and to inform and improve individual and collective practice
- Administer district benchmarks and analyze together
- Create common assessments collaboratively
- Use formative assessment strategies and practices to monitor student progress
- Use formative assessment to identify effective teaching strategies
- Establish criteria for assessing student work
Q.3 How will we respond when they don’t learn?

- Failure is not an option
- Mandatory tutoring
- Resource Centers
- Conference with administrator
- Interventions are directive (required)
- Interventions are flexible
- Interventions are systematic, school-wide and timely
- Daily Homework Help
Q.4 How will we respond when students already know it?

- Provide additional electives
- Provide enrichment through self-selected projects, problem-based learning, and collaborative studies
- Older students serve as mentors for younger students (with adult advisors)
- Utilize peer tutors
Learning By Doing

Critical Questions of Learning

- Chapter 3 (59-93)
- Chapter 4 (95-115)
## Current Reality

Pages 82-83

### The Professional Learning Community Continuum (A)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Element of a PLC</th>
<th>Pre-Initiation Stage</th>
<th>Initiation Stage</th>
<th>Developing Stage</th>
<th>Sustaining Stage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Current Reality</strong></td>
<td>There has been little effort to establish a common curriculum for students, teachers, or the public.</td>
<td>Initiation, teachers have established curriculum goals that align with state standards, district curriculum guides, and district targets.</td>
<td>Teachers have written and distributed learning goals, developed instructional strategies, and identified potential teaching materials.</td>
<td>Teachers have worked to establish a professional learning community with shared goals and processes.</td>
</tr>
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### The Professional Learning Community Continuum (B)

<table>
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</thead>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Current Reality</strong></td>
<td>Each teacher creates the curriculum, and the use of standards to guide student learning is minimal.</td>
<td>Teachers collaborate to identify and prioritize learning goals.</td>
<td>Teachers work together to develop and refine teaching strategies.</td>
<td>Every teacher has work habits consistent with the values of the individual classroom.</td>
</tr>
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</table>
### The Professional Learning Community Continuum (C)

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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Systematic Interventions Ensure Students Receive Additional Time and Support for Learning</td>
<td>There is no systematic plan either to monitor student achievement on a timely basis or to respond to students who are not learning with additional time and support. What happens when students experience difficulty in learning will depend entirely upon the teacher to whom they are assigned.</td>
<td>The school has created opportunities for students to receive additional time and support for learning before and after school. Students are invited rather than required to get this support. Many of the students who are most in need of help choose not to pursue it.</td>
<td>The school has begun a program of providing time and support for learning within the school day, but unwillingness to deviate from the traditional schedule is limiting the effectiveness of the program. The staff has retained its traditional 9-week grading periods, and it is difficult to determine which students need additional time and support until the end of the first quarter. Additional support is only offered as a specific time of the day or week (for example, over the lunch period or only on Wednesdays), and the school is experiencing difficulty in serving all the students who need help during the limited time allotted.</td>
<td>The school has a highly coordinated, sequential system in place. The system is proactive; it identifies and makes plans for students to receive extra support even before they enroll. The achievement of each student is monitored on a timely basis. Students who experience difficulty are required, rather than invited, to put in extra time and utilize extra support. The plan is multi-layered. If the current level of support is not sufficient, there are additional levels of increased time and support. Most importantly, all students are guaranteed access to this systematic intervention regardless of the teacher to whom they are assigned.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
We engage in and assume leadership for promoting collaborative practice.

Noted educator Roland Barth wrote, “The relationship among the adults in the building has more impact on the quality and character of the school and the accomplishments of its youngsters than any other factor.”
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