

Collaborative Inquiry-based Professional Development for High School and College English and Math Faculty: Design, Implementation, and Facilitation

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College Transitions Partnership

University & College Partners	Public School District Partners
Eastern Washington University	Cheney Public Schools
	Columbia Public Schools
Community Colleges of Spokane	Deer Park Public Schools
Spokane Community College	Lind-Ritzville Public Schools
Spokane Falls Community College	Mead Public Schools
	Spokane Public Schools
	West Valley School District

Context of Our Work

- Widespread efforts to address students' successful transition across sectors
- Implementation of the Common Core State Standards (CCSS)
- Core-to-College work in Washington state
- Administrative support

Partnership Targets

- Lower rates of placement into developmental courses in ELA and mathematics
- Higher pass rates in “first college level classes” in ELA and mathematics
- Collaborative development of a repository of resources for ELA and mathematics instructors

Partnership Objectives

- Establish regional professional partnership, convening 9-12 and higher education faculty around goals related to student success.
- Engage members over successive years, creating conditions for sustained collaboration to improve practices.
- Focus collaboration on development and testing of instructional approaches to measurably improve learning and teaching, beginning with mathematics and English.

In order to...

ensure more of the region's students, especially low-income students, make successful transitions from high school to college.

Partnership Methods

- Design a professional partnership, tailored to regional needs, to allow new forms of collaboration to take-hold over time.
- Regional educational leaders work together on agreed-upon problems of practice.
- Provide time and resources for network members to conceive, test, and apply solutions.
- Connect with administrators to strengthen ties within and across sectors to facilitate cross-sector improvement practices.

Partnership Timeline

2014-15

Organize for collaborative improvement work

Identify problems of practice , form cohorts & develop work plans/timelines

2015-16

Execute plans. Develop/test solutions to agreed-upon problems of practice.

2016-17

Populate toolkit w/ solutions. Reflect on first round approach. Plan second cycle approach.

Execute plan. Develop/test second cycle solutions. Populate toolkit. Determine next steps.

Defining Characteristics of PD

Evaluating Professional Development, Thomas R. Guskey

- It is an *intentional* process.
 - “True professional development is a deliberate process, guided by a clear vision or purposes and planned goals” (17)
- It is an *ongoing* process.
 - “education is a dynamic professional field with a continually expanding knowledge base” (19)
- It is a *systemic* process.
 - “True professional development is a systemic process that considers change over an extended period of time and takes into account all levels of the organization” (20)

Qualities of Effective PD

Evaluating Professional Development, Thomas R. Guskey

- A Clear Focus on Learning and Learners
 - “ teachers commit themselves to making major changes in how they and their students participate in the school” (36)
- An Emphasis on Individual and Organizational Change
 - “organizational and systemic changes are usually required to accommodate and facilitate these individual improvements” (37)

Collaboration is Key to Effective PD

Professional Learning in the Learning Profession,
Linda Darling-Hammond, et al.

- Development of Relationships as *Goal* of PD
 - “Professional development should build strong working relationships... [R]esearch shows that when schools are strategic in creating time and productive working relationships within academic departments or grade levels, across them, or among teachers schoolwide, the benefits can include greater consistency in instruction, more willingness to share practices and try new ways of teaching, and more success in solving problems of practice” (11).

Facilitating an Action Learning Network: Roles and Responsibilities

- **Launching the Network:** establishing purpose, goals, governance, and communications plans; developing shared norms for working together.
- **Curating relevant research and content:** building a library of resources to move the work forward
- **Overall project administration:** organizing and facilitating planning calls, meetings, and activities. Creating, updating and managing against the plan.
- **Ensuring that the coordinators on each campus are kept informed of activities, meetings, workshops.**
- **Facilitation:** Moving the groups smoothly towards consensus and action.
- **Keeping the senior institutional leaders abreast on the progress and direction of the work.**
- **Ensuring that the network participants take full ownership of this work and the process; and are not only devising innovative solutions, but also building lasting relationships.**

Facilitating an Action Learning Network: Common Challenges

There are three main challenges that one can anticipate when organizing and facilitating an action learning network:

- *Lack of focus and purpose*
- *Questionable value-add to members*
- *Limited network attachment and collegial rapport*

“Networks have the potential to broaden the range of perspectives and to create forums for inquiry, discussion and challenge that are very difficult to accomplish within schools.”

How to solve for...*Lack of focus and purpose*

- Define the goals and measures of success at the outset in collaboration with your partners
- Regularly revisit the purpose whenever you come together to ensure that you are all working toward the same goals
- All convenings and collaborations should possess a clearly defined set of objectives and expectations and be facilitated to ensure adherence to the those objectives
- Be willing to evaluate and modify as needed throughout the project duration in order to maintain relevance and purpose.

How to solve for...*Questionable value-add for members*

- Ensure that Network activities are not redundant or just “busy work”
- Organize the work with an eye toward positively furthering the work of the collective while minimizing individual burdens.
- Focus on listening to the Network’s needs and evaluating those needs in the context of the Network’s purpose and goals.
- Inject resources, research, tools, technologies, and support whenever necessary to enhance the Network’s work, or to get a team “unstuck” from a difficult problem.

How to solve for...*Limited network attachment and collegial rapport*

- Build in time for teams to build relationships with one another before diving into the work.
- Allow team members a chance to share the deep expertise that each brings to the Network; seeing it is even better than hearing it.
- Don't assume people will naturally work well together without support and guidance.
- Design opportunities for team members to interact in both formal and informal settings to build rapport and trust throughout the project.

Cohort Responsibilities

- Investigate shared problems or questions of practice
- Learn with and from colleagues
- Seek expertise and perspectives of others beyond the inquiry group
- Use evidence and data
- Act, reflect, and refine practice
- Share and connect learning

TOOLKIT

Cohort Collection

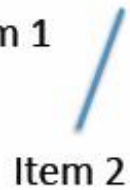


Item 1 Item 2

Cohort Collection



Item 1 Item 3



Item 2

Cohort Collection



Item 1 Item 2

Cohort Collection



Item 1 Item 2

Possible Toolkit Items

- Case studies
- Lesson studies
- Classroom video studies
- Created and/or vetted curriculum
- Reviews of texts
- Collections of research
- Assessments, their uses and results
- Other useful items proposed by cohorts

Successful Transitions to College

A Cross-Sector English and Mathematics Collaboration in the Spokane, Washington Region

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This toolkit contains the materials from our three-year project focusing on the development and implementation of a self-directed, regional, professional development structure for approximately 50 regional K-12, community college, and university faculty in English language arts (ELA) and mathematics in the Spokane, Washington region. Click on a photo below to explore the inquiry projects.



HELPING MATH STUDENTS THINK
CRITICALLY ABOUT WHAT THEY
READ

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TRANSFERRING KNOWLEDGE FROM
PRE-CALCULUS TO CALCULUS

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OBSERVING A CULTURE OF
STUDENT INDEPENDENCE: THE
COSI PROTOCOL

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<https://sites.ewu.edu/successfultransitions/>

Overview of ELA Toolkit Item

Successful Transitions to College

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Cross-Sector Understanding of the Difference between College Ready Reading and College Level Reading

Toolkit Item Overview

Problem of practice: there is a need to develop a shared, cross-sector understanding of the difference between **college-ready reading** and **college-level reading** in order to ensure that expectations and instructional approaches are aligned. **Our toolkit item** includes **two components** to address this problem of practice. We have developed a collection of resources to guide high school and college English departments in the creation of a shared definition of college-ready and college-level reading, including a **discussion protocol**, a **survey** to generate shared data, and a **white paper** revealing relevant research. Using these resources should enable departments to facilitate collaborative discussion toward developing a working definition of these terms. Once an agreed upon definition is reached, educators can then collaborate on learning targets and instructional strategies to help students gain the college-ready reading skills necessary to begin their post-secondary education. Our second component in our toolkit is a **standards “unpacking” activity** that deeply immerses teachers into each reading standard. As they “unpack” a standard, teachers gain a better understanding of the reading skills and the vocabulary students need in order to meet the standard. Teachers can use this information to generate learning



Overview of Math Toolkit Item

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Creating a Math Classroom Environment that Promotes Independent Learning and Perseverance

Toolkit Overview

Our toolkit is designed to help facilitate a student-centered classroom in which students view themselves as capable, independent learners. We wanted our students to take ownership of their own learning and view the instructor as a resource rather than a “dispenser of knowledge.” In our toolkit you will find a rubric intended to grade processes more than an answers, several tasks that we used in our classrooms, and some articles we used to get students thinking about mindset. Together these tools provide a framework for creating a new classroom culture.



When students strengthen their ability to persist, to clearly communicate their thinking, and to work together in a setting that fosters collaboration, they will be developing qualities that are valued in both academic and career settings. When students understand that they have the ability to solve challenging problems in mathematics, they are becoming successful learners across the curriculum. They will be more successful in all their classes as they have developed the skills to succeed in life as well as in math class.

Lessons Learned

Timing

Administrative
support and
buy-in

New forms of
collaboration

Outside
facilitation and
support

Rewards and
challenges

Discussion:

Structural Challenges

- Consider the following:
 - The Successful Transitions project cross-content problems of practice
 - The institutional cultures of your educational settings

Identify some potential structural and institutional challenges you might anticipate you would encounter in establishing your own cross-sector, interdisciplinary collaborative project.

Discussion:

Choosing the right projects

- What kinds of projects or inquiries best lend themselves to cross-sector or cross-disciplinary collaboration?
- How might you use a similar process to tackle problems of practice within your discipline?