

# Revolutionizing Collaborative Research

A 20-Year Story of a Successful Research  
Team Supporting Equitable Leadership,  
Research, and Practice

# Session Purposes

- Tell the story of our experiences, strategies, challenges, and benefits; to explain how our work and relationships have been sustained for 20 years
- Offer additional information and suggestions for you to consider in creating a professional learning community of your own.

# Our Team

- Jane Huffman
- Dianne Olivier
- Kristine Hipp
- D'Ette Cowan
- (Anita Pankake, Gayle Moller)

# Our History

- SEDL project on how to create professional learning communities in schools with 30 Co-Developers
- Continued collaboration after SEDL project ended
- Journals, chapters, books
- International research and collaboration
- School and district surveys
- Website

# Our Experience

- Establishing a collaborative team
- First considerations
- Typical meeting agenda/activities
- Handling deadlines/ busy schedules/personal issues
- Maintaining momentum and progress for the long haul
- Common focus/personal goals
- Maintaining a learning culture

# First Considerations

- What now? What next? How? Why?
- Collaborative v. Individual practice and research
- Brainstormed possibilities for impact on student learning
- Examined the alignment of this work to our professional goals
- Committed to a common focus and line of inquiry

# Our Challenge

*“If you want to feel secure, do what you already know how to do. If you want to be a true professional and continue to grow... Go to the cutting edge of your competency, which means a temporary loss of security. So whenever you don't quite know what you're doing, know you're growing.” --- Madeline Hunter*

# Typical Meeting Agenda

- Janie's Joint – 2x/year – 3-day weekend (for years!)
- Submitted agenda items prior to meeting
- Reviewed suggested agenda items at meeting
- Focus and desired outcomes drove priorities
- Included projected times for each item and facilitator
- Ended with next steps/responsibilities
- *Always* left with more work than we came with!

# Typical Meeting Activities

- Each selected an area of interest for individual/team focus
- Continued research in our schools, analyzed data, learned software programs, developed and field tested surveys and other diagnostic tools and wrote proposal for conferences, presented, wrote articles, books, chapters
  - In pairs and/or as a team
  - Authored similarly advancing scholarship
- Our reward! Fine food and stories  and personal

# Handling deadlines/busy schedules/personal issues

- Commitments were sacred
- Required
  - Managing personal time
  - Being proactive v. procrastinating
  - Balancing responsibilities across time for equal contributions
  - Offering support and understanding

# Maintaining momentum and progress for the long haul

- Passion only grew as we learned with and from others
  - Our team and international collegial networks
  - Conference speakers and papers – joint publications
- Presenting and publishing widely as a result
- Applied learning in fieldwork and consulting
- Modeling PLC was key<sub>11</sub> for credibility

# Supports, Constraints and Barriers

- **Supports**

- \* Common Focus

- \* Collaborative and open minded team members (shared responsibilities, flexible mindset, and shared expenses)

- \* Encouragement among team members to achieve professional goals

# Constraints and Barriers

- Limited time
- Work, personal and family issues
- Scheduling commitments

# Benefits of Collaborative Research

- Research and Writing
- Planning and Networking
- Presenting and Publishing
- Personal Perspective

# Research and Writing

- Design research projects
- Collect and analyze data
- Writing papers

# Planning and Networking

- Long-range planning and scheduling meetings and conferences
- Networking with other researchers at conferences developed into collaborative projects with national and international PLC researchers

# Presenting and Publishing

- Presenting at conferences
- Publishing papers
- Collaboratively writing books
- Development of PLC website
- Co-writing and presenting with international partners

# Personal Perspective

- Earned doctoral degrees
- Achieved tenure, promotions, and emerita status
- Developed close personal and lifelong friendships

# PLC Website

[www.plcassociates.org](http://www.plcassociates.org)

*...to assist educators in their  
attempts to work and learn  
together to address  
student needs*

# Discussion

1. How might you establish a collaborative research team?
2. What might you consider first in establishing a collaborative team?
3. What might a typical meeting session look like?
4. How might you handle important deadlines despite busy schedules and personal issues?
5. How can you keep momentum and progress over a long period of time?
6. How important is a common research focus?
7. What if the team members' focus areas or goals are different from one another?
8. How can you create a learning culture within a group that guides your efforts to meet your goals and facilitate change?

# Revolutionizing Collaborative Research

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