

Notes from Project Success Gathering: January 2011

All notes and information posted at <http://workingtogether.pbworks.com/Success>

Don't say you don't have enough time. You have exactly the same number of hours per day that were given to Helen Keller, Pasteur, Michaelangelo, Mother Teresa, Leonardo da Vinci, Thomas Jefferson, and Albert Einstein.

H. Jackson Brown, Jr.

If we believe that collaboration is important (and we keep saying it is) **what will you STOP doing in order to find the time to collaborate?** Because collaboration takes time! It is not efficient. However, it is the pathway to innovation.

But how do we change the way we are doing things now to **add** collaboration?

Chip and Dan Heath, authors of *Switch: How To Change When Change Is Hard*, have some tips.

The trick to having good ideas is not to sit around in glorious isolation and try to think big thoughts. The trick is to get more parts on the table. *Steven Johnson, Where Good Ideas Come From*

Success Tip #1: Don't be ambitious. When change is hard, they say, aim low – and leave yourself room to over-achieve.

Success Tip #2: Watch for bright spots. It's so easy to see everything that isn't working (and not very motivating to track failures). Instead, they suggest, we should keep a constant watch out for what does work. When we start noticing what's going on when we're successful, we can do more of it.

Success Tip #3: Publicize your resolution. Peer pressure works!

Still, how will we find the **time**? Really.

Seth Godin suggests we give up "old school" meetings. What's an old-school meeting? It's a one-way information exchange. In today's world, we can share information in a gazillion ways without meeting face to face. When we DO meet, we should create, build, develop, grow, innovate – because while being together doesn't enhance information exchange, it *does* improve our capacity to DO things.

It's not differences that divide us. It's our judgements about each other that do. *Peter Block*

But, we are unused to collaborating. We are used to an "expert/novice" framework. We expect to tell or be told. If we aren't "expert," we don't want to contribute. We feel judged. So we need to relearn how to learn together. We need to find some tools to help.

Pixar Model (see video: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QhXJe8ANws8>)

The Pixar model for working and learning together effectively is based on improv.

1. Make an offer (what's obvious to you is amazing to others).
2. Listen to other offers and plus them: make everyone look good!

So, applying some of these ideas to our meeting, we began by sharing our Bright Spot stories (stay tuned – we'll post them regularly). Then we broke into conversation groups where we used the Pixar Model to have conversations on one of five topics. But FIRST we brainstormed what we could stop doing.

Our Conversations:

7 Ways to Learn and Use Technology Even When You Have Very Little Technology or Technology Knowledge

Read the list at <http://workingtogether68.blogspot.com/2012/01/7-ways-to-learn-and-use-technology-even.html>

7 Ways to Use Inquiry to Engage All Learners (students AND teachers)

1. Develop a community of learners
2. Be a learning coach
3. Create a safe environment
4. Give them the ownership for learning
5. Integrate curriculum
6. Give time to construct meaning
7. Share, showcase and celebrate learning together.

7 Ways to PLAY at School (students AND teachers)

1. Identify priorities
2. Celebrate Small successes
3. Play
4. Step Well out of Your Comfort Zone
5. Go out to watch other teachers
6. Collaborate within school
7. Inquiry projects related to play

7 Ways to Help All Learners Take Charge of their Own Learning (students AND teachers)

1. Provide students with a choice: make it project-based (a problem to solve)
2. Make students aware of the criteria for assignments.
3. Work in groups: helping each other; cross-grade support
4. Peer Editing: Collaborative marking to reduce paperwork
5. Peer Critiquing: Marking together; have students show what they know rather than complete tests
6. Less marking, more assessing (self and peer)
7. Have time at school for educator collaboration (eg. DPA in morning by admin, using Professional Learning Group funds) to learn strategies for putting students in charge of their own learning (and other important things).

7 Ways to Assess (beyond tests) Whether Our Work Together is Making a Difference for Student Learning (Stay tuned)

What small-step commitment will we make?

Each of us will take one small step in the direction of your goal. Here's an easy and important one – to build relationships necessary for collaboration: Go to the staffroom and sit down!

February 9th Digging Deeper New-School Meetings

You choose what to focus on in pairs or small groups to dig deep with colleagues across the district. Add your plans to our google document at

<https://docs.google.com/document/d/1FTK0X8bHLXoVOKA2uX-9dNqoEcp8cOzYZzg9Tj5EJO/edit>

Stop Doing List

Stop...

Reinventing the wheel: share more!
Marking so much (especially marking alone)
Controlling everything
Over-scheduling
Paper work
Staying at school for long hours
Micro-managing
Worrying
Procrastinating
Taking on too much at once
Skipping lunch
Making big goals
Thinking that we have to do everything
Rushing (be more present)
Cycle of negative thinking/self-talk
Saying yes to everything
"Fixing"

