When There is No Time to Plan:
Then How Do You Collaborate?

Presented by
Marva S Miller and Tammy Barron
University of North Carolina at Greensboro
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Objectives

- Understand forms of collaboration in the context of schools.
- Identify tools that assist general and special educators with planning for diverse groups of learners.
- Analyze methods in which collaborative tools can be implemented within school settings.
- Collaborate and practice ways in which teachers can effectively plan at their schools with other service providers in non-traditional ways.
What is collaboration?

- Collaboration is a working practice where individuals work together for a **common purpose** to achieve a **common goal**.

- “Reciprocal process through which participants create meaning continuously and simultaneously via multiple communication channels.” (Friend & Cook, 2010)
Collaboration is a time of …..

- Sharing expertise
- Networking
- Motivating fellow teachers
- Reflecting
- Participating
- Learning
Purpose of Collaboration in Education

To ensure that all of our students participate in the best learning experience possible.
Who do you collaborate with?

- Teachers
- Parents
- Volunteers
- Administrators
- Students
- Community
Where and when do you collaborate at school?

- Professional Learning Communities (PLC)
- Grade level meetings
- Lesson Planning
- Faculty meetings
- Departmental meetings (i.e. specialists, EC)
- Beginning/End-of-the year meetings
How to build a climate of collaboration

- Avoid an “us versus them” mentality
- Formalize roles
- Avoid organizational barriers
- Understand your own frame of reference (Cohen, Linder, & Stutts, 2006)
- Develop a partnership “language”
- Take a long-term view
- Allocate sufficient resources
- Require accountability
When collaborating, teachers should remember…. 

• there is no one right tool
• they are sharing in the decision making
• ideas must be voiced for any type of change to occur
• there is shared responsibility for educating the students
• to be open to trying new ideas and strategies
Who has time to collaborate?
Quick and easy ways to collaborate

- Blog/Facebook/Twitter
- Teacher Bulletin board/Wallwisher (padlet)
- Post it and go traditional or Pinterest
- Collaboration journal/manual or Livebinder
- Wiki
- Skype
- Email/Google docs
- Moodle
Benefits of Blogging

• Reflect
  – On teaching practices
• Resource
  – Provides access to useful creative ideas
• Read
  – Learn and gather information on how to creatively problem solve
Creating an on-site/on-line Teacher Bulletin Board

• Design and utilize a specific bulletin board at your school just for teachers to share and gather creative ways to implement lessons.

• This is a good way to share accommodations and/or modifications that some of our students need to better access the curriculum, as well as share creative teacher-made materials.

• In addition to on-site bulletin boards, electronic bulletin boards are great too!
On-line bulletin boards

- Present a variety of questions and answers that can be viewed and discussed by a wide audience.

- Quick and easy to construct from multiple places.

- Examples include Pinterest, Wallwisher (Padlet), and Corkboard.me (Noteapp)
Post it and Go

• Can be centralized around grade levels or by topic.
• Provides a great way for EC teachers and service providers to be involved when strategizing with each grade level.
• Topics of discussion are listed and teachers are able to provide their insight and suggestions at leisure.
• Location of the board(s) should be in a central place that is accessible by all staff (i.e., lounge/library/teacher workroom)
Live binder

- Provides a great alternative to a spiral notebook or binder for organizing strategies, activities, and forms used within the classroom.
- Easily updates in real-time.
- Can be accessed by large or small groups of people.
Benefits of collaborating

- Enhances critical thinking
- Improves student achievement (Goddard, Goddard, & Tschannen-Moran, 2007)
- Provides access to additional resources
- Promotes consistency of expectations
- Establishes partnerships with families and community
- Encourages an exchange of knowledge across disciplines
- Exemplifies program coherence
- Meets the educational needs of all students
“Alone we can do so little; together we can do so much”
-Helen Keller
References


Collaboration Resources

- [http://digitalanthology.blogspot.com/](http://digitalanthology.blogspot.com/)