



# Collaboration

MODULE 5

# The Keys to Success

- o Resource-based teaching works because teachers and TLs engage in collaborative planning and teaching units that incorporate skills, content, resources, and technology effectively and meaningfully
- o The T and the TL are equal partners; they facilitate learning by enabling students to access a wide variety of resources suited to his/her ability and learning style, to process these, and to present information in a variety of ways

# Three Key Factors

- o The partnership understands that each is an expert; they arrive at the table with enthusiasm and positive attitudes to the opportunity to collaborate
- o T: knows the students and the content
- o TL: knows the resources, tools, and skills needed to use them effectively

# Three Key Factors, cont'd

- o The team works with the curriculum and with agreed-upon set of skills logically and consistently built upon to grade 12 “mastery”
- o This continuum of skills -- literacy, information, technology, etc. – is familiar to teachers in the school
- o Every teacher takes responsibility for introducing appropriate skills, building on them, and “scaffolding” where skills are overlooked or weak

# Three Key Factors, cont'd

Ken Haycock: On cooperation and communication –

“When we speak about [collaborative] teaching or team teaching, what we are talking about is *two teachers working together, planning together for best possible programs for kids. That involves cooperation, developing units together, and implementing those programs. No more than that – but also nothing less.*”

# A Systematic Approach

- o Teacher-librarians have to take initiative or it won't happen. Accept that.
- o Suggestions are often aspects of casual conversations – have lunch with colleagues, don't miss the photocopy encounter as an opportunity, hang out in the hallway between classes or at recess
- o The first encounter would talk only about grade, subject, topic, and a scheduled time to plan
- o Plan a time after school, over lunch, during a prep block; use collaborative time; get a TOC; get creative

# Systematic Approach, cont'd

- o Begin planning with: *What do we want the kids to learn? What additional information do we need to “factor in” based on the class composition?*
- o What do these kids already know and know how to do?
- o What do we want them to learn? (skills & content)
- o What kinds of resources will we need to meet our learning goals? Are there enough? Are there resources for every child?

# Systematic Approach, cont'd

- o What kind of time do we need if every child is to be successful?
- o What will each of us do?
- o How will we assess the students during the process?  
How will we assess “the project”?  
(formative/summative)
- o How will we evaluate our own success and challenges when we are finished?
- o How will we plan for implementation of this unit next year?



# Benefits

- Skills taught in the context of content are more likely to be retained
- Students are actively involved in the learning
- TL + T “halves” the student-to-teacher ratio!
- TL + T enriches the learning experience and provides variety
- TL + T engage in a rewarding teaching experience and experience success as do students
- It is an effective use of teaching time
- Skills are introduced, reinforced and developed over time

# 10 Simple Strategies, cont'd

- o Start with curriculum, then look at resources
- o Be flexible. Encourage flexibility in the partnership.
- o Keep paperwork simple. Planning is a means to an end.
- o Be patient. Plans evolve over time and through connections. It won't necessarily all be in one place at one time.
- o Strive to say "yes" – forgive your last-minute colleagues.

# Be Patient!

- Building a successful program can take five years or more
- Take the initiative for “first contact” especially with new teachers
- Share ideas and resources with administrators as well as colleagues and students
- Be respectful but not pushy. Use an “ask” attitude when approaching colleagues with a “new idea.”
- Be realistic. Start slowly. Choose those most likely to be receptive. Build on success.

# 10 Simple Strategies

- o Engage in teacher talk – build trust, create ideas, identify common ground
- o Initiate rather than wait. Go to the staffroom. Attend grade or department meetings. Host meetings.
- o Even as you take advantage of informal opportunities like chance encounters at the photocopies, schedule formal ones too
- o Use reflection and dialogue to encourage colleagues to share their unique planning methods and thinking; ask questions
- o Identify how they like to plan: orderly? Intuitively? Last-minute? Long-range? Be flexible and make time when they come.

# Let's Practice

Learning Curation Prompt:

Scenario:

◦Elementary:

As a T-L you have been asked by the grade 2/3 team (2 teachers) to work collaboratively on a unit. They want to study rocks and minerals. One teacher wants to focus on the writing process more and the other teacher is striving to integrate technology more. Both want to embrace the notion of an inquiry project.

◦Secondary:

As a T-L you have been asked by 2 members of the English department to help them plan a literature circles unit. They want the novels to delve deeper around social issues and want the students to be more engaged in the unit. One teacher is concerned about choice and writing output and the other is striving for more open-ended tasks to represent their learning. Both want to embrace the notion of an inquiry project.

◦ If it helps, keep the “systematic approach” and “10 simple strategies” in mind, from this presentation.

◦ Prompt: While you do not have to plan a unit:

◦ Construct a short planning guide detailing how you would begin to work with these teachers. (What will you need to discuss? How would you prepare in advance. What would the beginning conversations/planning times look like? )