<https://www.linkedin.com/pulse/teachers-should-nosy-noisy-travel-packs-michael-white?trk=hp-feed-article-title-publish> (accessed 15022016)

Teachers Should Be Nosy, Noisy and Travel in Packs!

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Collaboration Checklist

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When historians get around to listing the most astonishing discoveries about student achievement, here is one finding that won’t make their list: **When teachers collaborate (get together to talk in concrete, precise language about instruction and student work), their teaching dramatically improves and student achievement rises (White 2009)**.

Sadly, what might make our historian’s list of astonishing discoveries is that we knew it was all about teaching and collaboration, but did not collaborate often enough in our schools.

The irony isn’t troubling; it’s frightening! We value teaching our students to work together, to learn from one another, but we don’t model this behavior for them. We sing the praises of two heads being better than one, while we ignore the expertise of our colleagues and field experts. It is too often the norm for teachers to work in isolation like independent contractors, sharing only the refrigerator and the parking lot.

It’s this simple fact: You do not become a remarkable teacher or administrator by working alone. Collaboration, calendars and transparency are not about attaining perfection, but probably more about being a better teacher today than you were yesterday, about acknowledging imperfection and looking for competency and complementariness among your colleagues. Sharing materials and ideas allow you to magnify your strengths and work with other teachers that provide different but equally important strengths. So the math teacher who is a master at number sense and data analysis may not be an expert on geometry. But the teacher across the hall cannot wait to share her engaging activity for scalene and isosceles triangles. While no single person will possess every dimension for an effective teacher, the team is more likely to have all of them. And when teachers come together and talk about teaching they realize that improvement is something they can generate, rather than something that is power-pointed out to them by so-called experts.

From a literature review of teacher collaboration, we developed a checklist of the factors that are important to the effective management and growth of teams.

(contact me for a copy of the checklist: white445319@gmail.com)

Where your team feels they are doing well, think about the reasons why this is so. Where your team identifies that they have weaknesses, the start of your school year provides you a great opportunity to work through barriers and develop steps that could be taken to improve your performance.

Reference

White, M., Crouse, A., Bafile, C. and Barnes, H. 2009. Extraordinary Teachers: Teaching for Success. Englewood, CO: Lead and Learn Press.