

5 principles for reviving problematic groups

Unproductive and contentious meetings?

Team-building activities

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Changing attitudes before changing behaviors

Behavior change, though, can lead to attitude change.

Source: **Ermeling, B.A. (2012)**. Breathe new life into collaboration: 5 principles for reviving problematic groups. *The Learning Principal*. 8(1), pp.1, 4-5.



1) Find a shared concern

Find persistent student achievement challenges that a majority recognizes and shares.

- Shared student needs can temporarily suspend old antagonisms.
- Principals must create and prioritize time for the team to directly focus on identifying and addressing common student instructional needs.

Source: **Ermeling, B.A. (2012)**. Breathe new life into collaboration: 5 principles for reviving problematic groups. *The Learning Principal*. 8(1), pp.1, 4-5.



2) Establish teacher ownership

Teachers must set and share the student-need goals themselves as they review available sources of evidence.

- Others may suggest several key areas of need to choose from, but the goal chosen has to be one most teachers see as immediately relevant to their own classrooms.
- Principals must keep at the forefront a team's commitment to work together to develop instruction once a shared problem is identified.

Source: **Ermeiling, B.A. (2012)**. Breathe new life into collaboration: 5 principles for reviving problematic groups. *The Learning Principal*. 8(1), pp.1, 4-5.



3) Get a commitment to meeting guidelines

Empower teachers to hold colleagues accountable.

- Principals must help teams establish, publish, and distribute their guidelines.
- Review guidelines at strategic intervals by reflecting on meeting effectiveness.

Source: **Ermeling, B.A. (2012)**. Breathe new life into collaboration: 5 principles for reviving problematic groups. *The Learning Principal*. 8(1), pp.1, 4-5.



4) Expect productive action

Consistently engage in productive action.

- Strive to collectively accomplish things that have a direct and positive impact on member teaching.
- Principals must mentor the team leader to plan agendas and focus on the cycle of improvement.
- Principals must monitor their own behavior so as to not raise other administrative topics or issues that might distract the team from their agenda and work.

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5) Strategize according to teams and individuals

One-on-one attention may be necessary, even if all groups are struggling to work productively.

- Keep the majority of teams moving forward through commitments to guidelines and establishing a framework and routine for successful action.
- Principals can work directly with individual teams or team members where extra strategic attention is needed.

Source: **Ermeling, B.A. (2012)**. Breathe new life into collaboration: 5 principles for reviving problematic groups. *The Learning Principal*. 8(1), pp.1, 4-5.



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Principal reflection chart for reviving problematic groups

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