



Establishing Time for Collaborative Professional Learning

Online Course Syllabus

Course Overview

This online course examines one of the biggest resources needed to support collaborative, job-embedded professional learning: establishing a consistent schedule that allows educators to learn and work together to improve their own practices and content knowledge. Improved educator knowledge and instructional practices have been found to improve student learning and achievement—the goals of all systems and schools. Yet, retooling current schedules and time within the school day might seem daunting to many educators, administrators, and school board members.

This course will help educators and school board members make the case for a restructured schedule that provides time for teachers to work together in collaborative teams to improve their practice. It will also review a Seven-step process for engaging a wide array of system constituents to research, identify, and recommend a strategy for establishing time for collaborative professional learning. This course also provides a set of examples of how other schools and districts have created these new schedules. Six broad time options will be shared and examples provided. Finally, the reason for this work—collaborative professional learning—will be defined. While retooling the schedule can be daunting work, ensuring that time is used well must also be addressed. Teaching has long been cited as being a solo effort; many educators are not used to making curricular and instructional decisions with their peers. Many will need assistance to use this time well. The last section of this course will address this concept.

Course Outcomes

Learners who complete this course will be able to:

- Develop a logical, realistic rationale for establishing time for teachers to learn and work together during the school day.
- Utilize the Seven-step model (*Establishing Time for Professional Learning*) to determine the most viable strategy for allocating time for collaborative professional learning.

- Investigate and weigh numerous strategies for establishing collaborative professional time in schools.
- Describe or illustrate the quality of collaborative interaction among educators that benefits teachers' practice and student learning.
- Utilize tools, information, and strategies to restructure the current schedule to provide time within the school day for professional collaborative learning.

Course Modules

This course includes four modules:

- 1) **Making the Case for Collaborative Professional Learning:** Three decades of research have established that collaborative, job-embedded professional learning that occurs between colleagues is the most effective method for supporting teacher learning and implementation of new strategies. Building this kind of professional learning system requires a schedule that provides time for colleagues to work together on a consistent basis during the school day. This module will explore the rationale, research, and best practice that support this system of collaborative professional learning.
- 2) **Examine a Seven-step Model for Establishing Time for Professional Learning:** Retooling a district's or school's schedule impacts many more people than students and teachers—it also affects parents, daycare, bus schedules, school boards, community organizations, and district calendars. Exploring options and implementing appropriate strategies requires the involvement of many constituents. A Seven-step model, described in the course text, will be explored. This module will also help participants explore the supports and potential barriers to establishing a schedule for collaborative professional learning.
- 3) **Models for Establishing Time:** There are six broad strategies for retooling school schedules to provide time for collaborative professional learning. This module will explore those six strategies, provide examples, and allow participants to practice some of the processes discussed in Module 2.
- 4) **Using Collaborative Time Effectively:** It is not easy to retool a schedule and secure buy-in from all the people affected by the change. Yet, we must also consider how that time will be used by educators who are used to making their own instructional decisions. This module will focus on the attributes of effective collaborative professional learning, vignettes, and strategies that have been found to impact educator learning and practice and student achievement.

Course Text and Readings

A digital copy of the primary course text, *Establishing Time for Professional Learning*, is provided. There will also be readings provided within each module for you to download. You will find a bibliography of resources used to develop the course at the end of this syllabus.

Module 1: Making the Case for Collaborative Professional Learning

Essential Question: *Why should we create time for teachers to work and learn together?*

Module 1 Outcomes

Learners who complete this module will be able to

- 1) Articulate a rationale for establishing consistent time for collaborative professional learning.
- 2) Identify key interactions and behaviors of highly effective collaborative learning.
- 3) Summarize key research findings and implications about the relationship between effective professional learning and improved student learning.

Module 1 Elements

- Course Introduction
- Course Navigation
- Module 1 Introduction and Essential Question
- Video: Clyde Tombaugh Elementary School, Las Cruces, New Mexico
 - Read how experts view this learning team
 - Use an Observation Tool
- Video: Stephanie Hirsh—how improved teacher practices result in improved student achievement. Collaborative professional learning improves teacher practices.
- Readings
- Reflection
- Video Presentation: Research Support for Collaborative Professional Learning: What do we know now about Professional Learning?
- Reading: *Establishing Time for Professional Learning* [ETPL], Introduction, pp 7-9
- Module 1 Reflection
- Module 1 Assessment

Module 2: Examine a Seven-step Model for Establishing Time for Professional Learning

Essential Question: *How can you engage your system to support a change in the current schedule to embed collaborative professional learning into a daily/weekly occurrence?*

Module 2 Outcomes

Learners who complete this module will be able to

- 1) Explain the purpose of each step of the Seven-step model.
- 2) Utilize the Seven-step model to establish time for collaborative professional learning.
- 3) Identify potential barriers to restructuring time for collaborative professional learning.
- 4) Determine criteria for analyzing time options that are most applicable to their current situation.

Module Elements

- Module 2 Introduction and Purpose
- Video: Maggie Westhoff : District Story of Establishing Time for Collaborative Professional Learning
- Video: Stephanie Hirsh: Underlying Assumptions about Time
- Part I: The Seven-step Model
 - Reading
 - Video—Joellen Killion: Overview of Seven Steps
- Part 2: Practice using some of the tools
 - Practice using Tool 2.3
 - Reflection
 - Practice using Tool 2.2
 - Read Tool 4.1 and practice
 - Read Tool 7.5 and analyze
- Module 2 Reflection
- Module 2 Assessment

Module 3: Models for Establishing Time for Collaborative Learning

Essential Question: *What is the best approach for establishing regular and consistent time for collaborative professional learning?*

Module 3 Outcomes

Learners who complete this module will be able to

- 1) Make sense of the six approaches for establishing time for collaborative professional learning.
- 2) Practice applying criteria to assess the time approaches.
- 3) Identify priority approaches from the various models.
- 4) Practice evaluating the advantages and disadvantages of their priority approaches of finding time.

Module 3 Elements

- Module 3 Introduction and Purpose
- Video: Pat Roy, Overview of the Six Approaches to Time
- Reading: articles plus Tools 4.2 (pp 48-58)
- Practice
 - Practice Scoring Approaches with Criteria
 - Practice Exploring Stakeholder Views
- Video: David Swierpel: District Story of Refining Collaborative Professional Learning
 - Supporting materials: Log and Improvement Cycle
- Module 3 Reflection
- Module 3 Assessment

Module 4: Using Collaborative Time Effectively

Essential Question: *What does effective collaboration among educators look like and sound like? What happens during effective collaborative learning time?*

Module 4 Outcomes

Learners who complete this module will be able to

- 1) Define and describe the characteristics of effective collaborative professional learning.
- 2) Delineate the behaviors that contribute to ineffective collaborative professional learning.
- 3) Postulate the structures or approaches most relevant or appropriate to their current situation.

Module 4 Elements

- Module 4 Introduction and Purpose
- Videos: Example of Bad PLC/Good PLC
- Video Frederick Brown: Attributes of effective collaboration—what does it look like in practice?
- Read six vignettes of collaborative learning groups
- Read a choice of three out of six articles with a variety of protocols, activities, or structures that can be used in team settings
- Reflection
- Reflection and Culminating Activity

Course Completion: What Happens Now?

Participants who pass all assessments will be emailed a certificate signifying their completion of the course. You will also be asked to complete a post-course survey to provide feedback. This is voluntary but important to help Learning Forward improve the course and the online learning experience.

Course Resources

Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation. (2014, December). *Teachers know best: Teachers' views on professional development*. Seattle, WA: Author. Retrieved from www.teachersknowbest.org/reports.

Bowgren, L. & Sever, K. (2007). Shaping the workday: District brings professional learning into the classroom. *JSD*, 38(2), 20-23.

Crow, T. (2015). Keys to collaboration. *JSD*, 36(3), 10-12.

Education Resource Strategies. (2012). *School design: Leveraging talent, time, and money*. Watertown, MA: Author. Retrieved from <http://www.erstrategies.org/cms/files/1350-school-design-analyses-and-worksheets-section-1.pdf>

Emberger, M. & McTighe, J. (2006). Teamwork on assessments creates powerful professional development. *JSD*, 27(1), 38-44.

Frank, S. & Miles, K. (2008). *The strategic school*. Corwin: Thousand Oaks, CA.

- Hord, S., Lieberman, A., Miller, L., Roy, P., and Von Frank, V. (2014). *Reach the highest standards in professional learning: Learning communities*. Corwin: Thousand Oaks, CA.
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- Keller, J. & Kusko, M. (2015). Collaboration by design: School chooses strategies that allow teachers to learn with and from each other. *JSD*, 36(3), 20-23.
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- Killion, J. (2013). *Establishing time for professional learning*. Oxford, OH: Learning Forward. Available at www.learningforward.org/docs/default-source/commoncore/establishing-time-for-professional-learning.pdf.
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- Lock, K. (2006). Dear colleague—please come for a visit. *Teachers teaching teachers*. 2(2).
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- Richardson, J. (2002). Think outside the clock: Create time for professional learning. *Tools for schools*, 6(1), 1-7.
- Richardson, J. (2009). Protocols. *Tools for schools*, 12(3), 1-7.
- Rocha, Polo. (2015, July 22). The Q & A: Jacqueline R. Stillisano. *The Texas Tribune*, Austin. Retrieved from <http://www.texastribune.org/plus/edu/vol-2/no-15/the-qa-jackie-stillisano/>
- Roy, P. Forthcoming. *Reach the highest standards in professional learning: Resources*. Corwin: Thousand Oaks, CA.
- T Daly. (2015, June 30). The conventional wisdom on teacher development. [Web log comment]. Retrieved from <http://tntp.org/blog/post/the-conventional-wisdom-on-teacher-development>