

SCHOOL MANAGEMENT

10 ways teachers may collaborate

How and why teachers may best collaborate to improve students' learning.

[ANDREW OBERTHUR, PRINCIPAL, ST MARTIN'S SCHOOL, CARINA](#) JUL 8, 2021



Many hands...

Teachers are the most influential people in a student's education (apart from the student themselves). So imagine the benefits of teachers working together. Imagine the increase in positive influence in a student's education when teachers collaborate. Add the support of school leaders, teacher aides, learning support staff, subject specialists and the combined wisdom, knowledge and passion for improving students' achievement has enormous impact.

Hence COLLABORATION amongst teaching colleagues is important. Such collaboration may be within a teaching team who teach the same year level in the same school; it may be teachers in different year levels in same school; it may be teachers from different schools teaching same year level or subject who meet face to face or via on-line platforms; it may teacher who network across the country or even across the world through conferences, blogs, or any number of on-line platforms.

In asking my staff at St Martin's Primary School, Carina in Brisbane, teachers and support staff, how and why they may best collaborate to improve students' learning they generated a long list of ideas. I refined the lists into themes and offer these to you. I suspect that you will be doing most, if not all, of these strategies and understand the rationale for them. In which case these lists should be affirming of good practice. I am providing a list of how and a list of what to collaborate, teacher with teacher. (Teacher with support staff is for another article).

The most common strategies that teachers use when collaborating include face-to-face conversations, having a verbal conversation. Email is the second most common way that teachers choose to collaborate. They may send each other messages and they can do this at their convenience. Email also provides a record of the dialogue. It won't replace face to face conversations, however it is convenient.

Other methods for collaboration include team meetings where teachers in the same cohort would have meetings or teachers across your levels may have a team meetings to collaborate. Interestingly teachers also nominated the importance of listening as a strategy which promotes collaboration. So teachers remember to use your mouth and your ears in the same ratio as which they exist. We should be listening twice as much as we should be talking and

that includes when collaborating with our colleagues. Other strategies which included staff meetings, daily check-ins as well as text, phone, informal conversations. They are the strategies which teachers use to collaborate. So now let's explore why they collaborate. What is the rationale for working together?

The most common reason for collaboration was sharing at the load when planning. Planning was the most common response when asked why we would collaborate. The second most common reason why people would collaborate was the sharing of resources. Teachers value working together and they value sharing the load and sharing the resources. They also valued sharing teaching roles and opportunities. For example, when it comes to preparing homework or when it comes to planning resources or creating resources teachers valued sharing at that workload. They also appreciated the opportunity for moderating students work when it comes to assessment. This allows for consistency of consistency of judgment.

Teachers also valued discussing students needs and setting of goals. Similarly when discussing students behaviour and teachers appreciate the opportunity to work with their colleagues so discussing behavioural expectations was also a common response. In our top 10 responses teachers also included asking for advice, discussing the program, keeping a sense of humour while looking after each other.

Finally, in the top 10 reasons for collaborating was the importance of providing feedback to colleagues. So these are the top 10 reasons why teachers choose to collaborate and how they collaborate.

Remember two heads are better than one. Let's work together.

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