



Collaboration

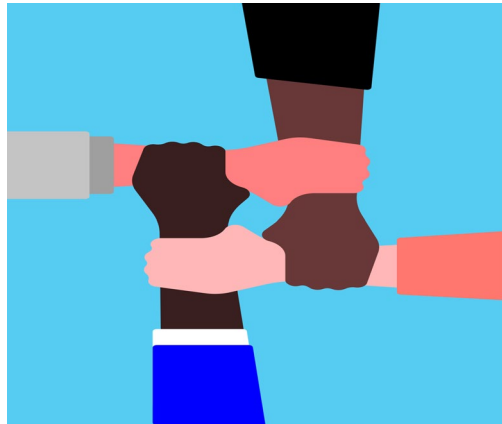
Success beyond challenges

Jill Geissendoerfer-Kieta, Donna Choi and Sangeeta Lama

Collaboration in Transdisciplinary Learning

“Fuse knowledge from a number of different disciplines and engage with stakeholders in the process of generating knowledge.”

Wickson et al 2006



Purpose of Collaboration

Collaboration helps members of the learning community to develop:

- An **open mind** and **balanced** approach towards a **variety of perspectives** and points of view.
- **Empathy**, the ability to **engage with diverse ideas**, **welcome** new thoughts and **take risks**.
- A sense of **acknowledgement** towards the **benefits of transdisciplinary learning** by incorporating **lines of inquiry** from different subjects.
- The ability to **reflect**, debate, **discuss**, and engage in **critical thinking** for the **best outcomes**.
- An **appreciation** for collective **interpretation and reinterpretation of knowledge**.



Challenges in Collaboration

Collaboration demonstrates a commitment to the common goal of supporting and reflecting on a transdisciplinary learning experience and improving student outcomes. Teachers are continually inquiring into and reflecting on learning and teaching as they collaborate with each other and with their students (Claxton, Chambers, Powell, Lucas 2011). A collaborative approach involving sustained dialogue and reflection helps teachers to grow as professionals. They reach deeper levels of understanding together as they inquire, reflect on and make decisions about the process of learning. (Ibo.org The Learning Community, Collaboration)



Challenge:

- **The inability to step out of our defined roles**
 - Collaboration is defined by a shared vision.
 - Objectivity requires all participants to be on equal footing to truly be able to view the situation in an unbiased manner.

Challenges in Collaboration

The learning community recognizes the critical importance of learning to live peacefully together—have the capacity to relate to others and communicate effectively within and beyond the school environment. Linguistic and cultural diversity play a fundamental role in the development of personal and group identities, in establishing a sense of belonging and in enabling global engagement (Singh, Qi 2013). (ibo.org The Learning Community, Collaboration)

Challenge:

- **Differences in culture and values can make it difficult for members to:**
 - Welcome new perspectives
 - Integrate into the group
 - Be open-minded

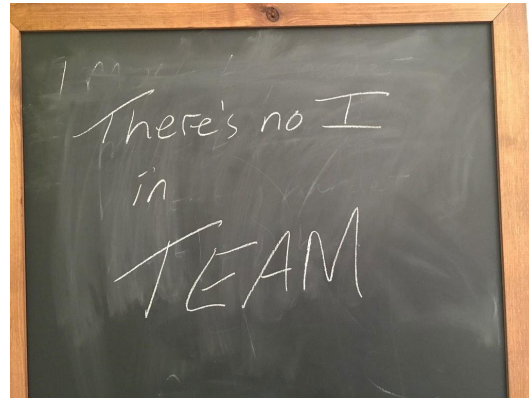


Challenges in Collaboration

Challenge:

- **Managing Individual Egos**
 - **Personal agendas**
 - "I'll do whatever I have to, to get what I want."
 - **Power dynamics**
 - "The truth is that we didn't really like each other."
 - "We really did not get along."
 - Issues with colliding personalities
 - Who's the boss?

Establishing partnerships among all stakeholders, and recognizing what each member independently and collectively brings to the community, is the first step in building relationships. Through these partnerships, members of the community come together to develop and to support a shared vision, mission, beliefs and values. They demonstrate attributes of the learner profile, such as caring, principled and communicator, to strengthen these relationships. (ibo.org The Learning Community, Collaboration)



Challenges in Collaboration

Collaborative learning teams also establish systematic and ongoing professional learning and mentoring programmes that build vibrant professional learning communities. They support new teachers to establish inquiry-based learning and teaching practice. Schools extend their collaborative practice to local networks and the wider global IB community through participation in professional development and encouraging teachers to become active members of the IB educator network. (ibo.org The Learning Community, Collaboration)



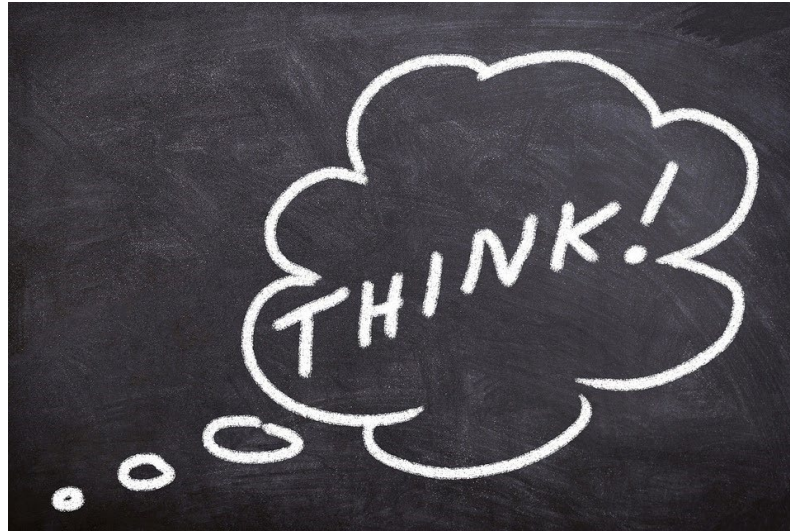
Challenge:

- **Conflicts/lack of communication between participants**
 - Can have negative effects on other participants or ultimate success of the collaboration
 - “Forcing” collaboration onto/with people that feel over-extended & would rather not be included, but are afraid to say no
 - Inflexibility around time zones/modes of communication
 - Unprepared for online or offline meetings.

Solutions



What is needed to collaborate effectively?



There is always a solution to every challenging situation.

Lailah Gifty Akita

How can we collaborate effectively?

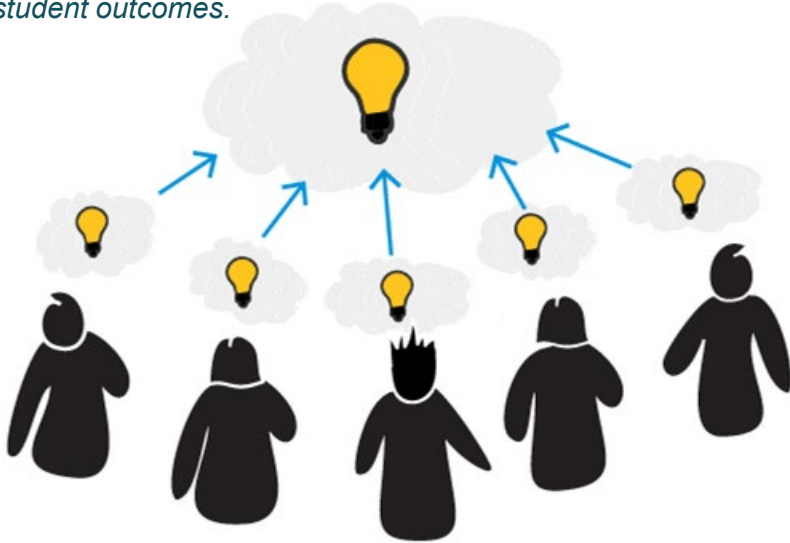
Effective collaboration is an outcome of:

- A Shared Vision
- Empathy and Mutual Respect
- Reflection and Communication
- Constructive Conflict Management
- 21st Century Tools for Collaboration

A collaborative approach puts students at the centre and aims to ensure a holistic, transdisciplinary and coherent learning experience for them. Collaboration starts by developing a shared understanding of what students know and can do. Students are valued participants of the collaborative learning teams. They demonstrate agency and their capacity to take action for their own learning by collaborating with teachers and other students. (ibo.org)

Shared vision

Collaboration demonstrates a commitment to the common goal of supporting and reflecting on a transdisciplinary learning experience and improving student outcomes.



Through a shared vision and shared objective, team members would:

- feel a sense of purpose
- value their work
- be proud to be part of the team

Through these partnerships, members of the community come together to develop and to support a shared vision, mission, beliefs and values. They demonstrate attributes of the learner profile, such as caring, principled and communicator, to strengthen these relationships. (ibo.org)

Empathy & Mutual Respect

Empathy looks like:

“I’m not proficient in technology, I’m not sure I can complete this group project.”

“Thanks for telling us! This app is difficult to use! Don’t worry, we can all give you a hand!”



Establishing partnerships among all stakeholders, and recognizing what each member independently and collectively brings to the community, is the first step in building relationships. (ibo.org)

Mutual respect is when you:

- value their opinions
- consult their ideas on various ideas or issues
- are polite
- are considerate and kind

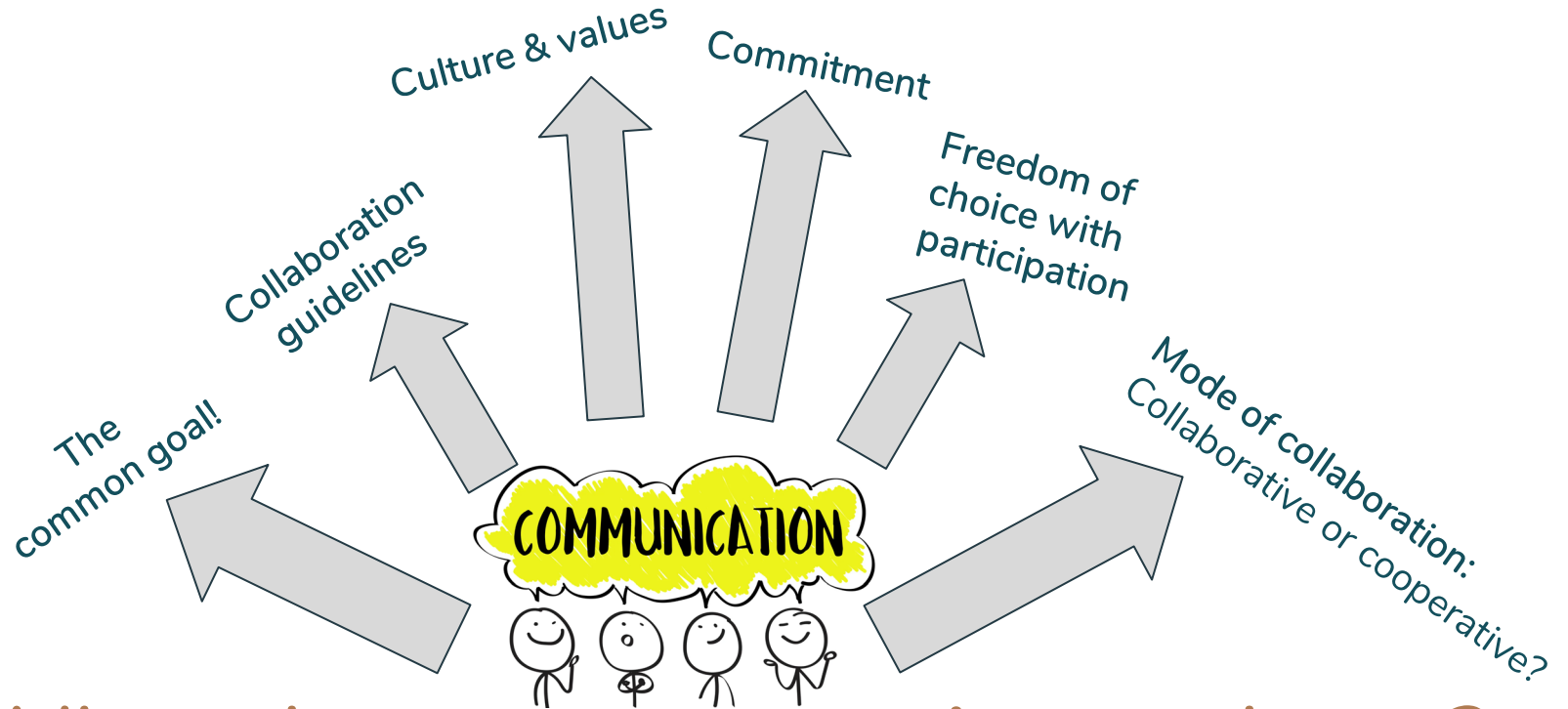
Communication



They demonstrate attributes of the learner profile, such as caring, principled and communicator, to strengthen these relationships. (ibo.org)

Did you know?

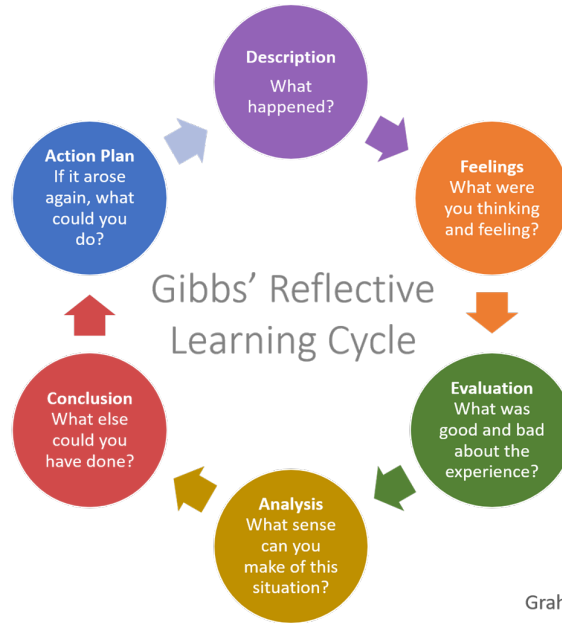
According to Salesforce (2017), **86%** of employees and executives cite **lack of collaboration** or ineffective communication for **workplace failures**.



What do we communicate about?

Reflection

- **Describe & revisit the experiences** that caused friction during collaboration
- **Address the negative feelings** causing resistance to ideas
- **Evaluate** perspectives
- **Analyze** the situation
- **Reach common ground**
- **Commit to Action** to achieve a **shared vision** for the **learning community**



Graham Gibbs, 1988

They reach deeper levels of understanding together as they inquire, reflect on and make decisions about the process of learning.

Collaboration that supports transdisciplinary learning also engages the learning community in ongoing reflection. Through reflection, members of the teaching team consider the impact of their own frames of reference (which includes subject knowledge, experience, beliefs, values and assumptions) as well as the collective frames of reference.

These considerations are central to transdisciplinary learning and are only possible through collaboration. (ibo.org)

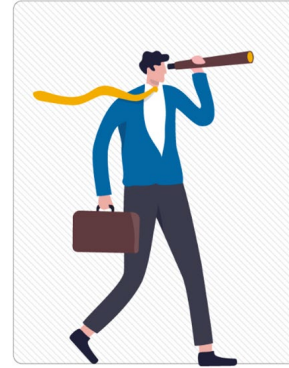
Manage conflict constructively



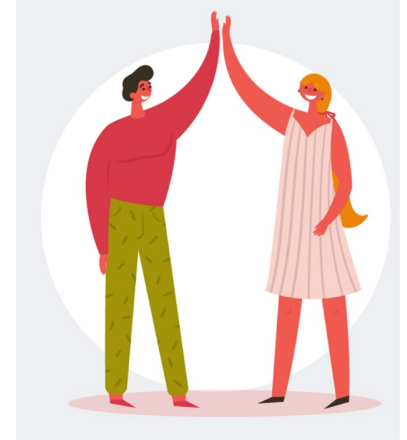
Maintain a **positive attitude**



Communicate **respectfully**



Look for a **win-win situation**



“Let’s work together!”

21st Century Tools for Collaboration



- 1 Pear Deck
- 2 Flipgrid
- 3 Padlet
- 4 Nearpod
- 5 Microsoft Teams
- 6 Seesaw
- 7 Kahoot
- 8 Book Creator
- 9 Cospaces
- 10 Buncee
- 11 OneNote
- 12 WeVideo
- 13 Classcraft
- 14 InsertLearning
- 15 Soundtrap
- 16 Lumio
- 17 Canva
- 18 Bookwidgets
- 19 Wakelet
- 20 Notion

Finding time for collaboration requires creative thinking on the part of schools.

(School leaders)...Support face-to-face planning with technology (shared online collaboration spaces; digital meeting platforms to enable broader participation). (ibo.org)

Authentic Examples of Successful Collaboration

Composing Assessment Criteria

Our school was originally founded as a secondary school. When K-6 were added 6 months later, we were given an **assessment rubric for personal-, social-, and methodical skills** used in grades 7-9 and told to use them to assess **K-2 students**.

Since this was an unrealistic assessment rubric, my colleague and I **researched** the criteria laid out in the **national curriculum, LP21**, selected the **most relevant skills** to focus on for **K1 & K2** and for **grades 1-2**, and then **compiled** and **formulated** the assessment rubrics in both **German** and **English**.

This **collaborative experience** was **relevant, rewarding, and successful**. We were able to **reflect** and **discuss** the **interpretations** of the **criteria** in LP21, the **developmental needs and aims** of our **students**, and **produce** 2 sets of relevant assessment criteria, that **truly reflect our students' progress**.



Authentic Examples of Successful Collaboration

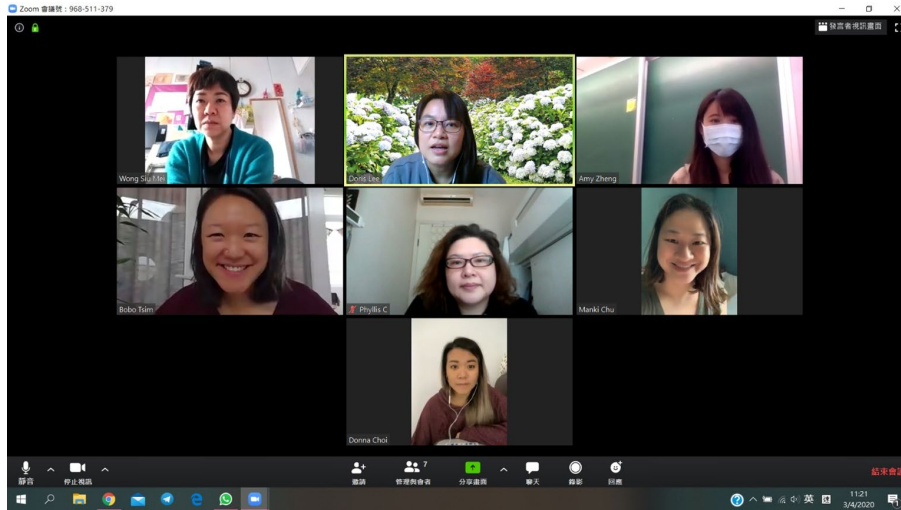
School-wide Project Days: Pilot Project Recycling K-9



In an effort to **strengthen our school community** and **build student relationships** across all 3 Cycles, a committee was formed to **plan and implement school-wide project**. Over the course of 3 days, **students of all grades** will investigate the topic of **Recycling**. The students will be asked to **reflect** on things like **What is Recycling?** What do we Recycle? What Are the Recycling Processes for different materials? **Is Recycling a Feasible Concept?** **Student action** will come when they are then be given the opportunity to **further explore** recyclable materials or **demonstrate their learning** by **creating** something out of “trash,” **producing & presenting** a dramatic performance or “news report” or podcast, or participating in **discussions & debates**. The project will take place in May.

Throughout the entire **planning** process, the **5 teachers** involved (head & deputy head of school, 1 rep from Cycle 3; 1 rep from Cycle 2, & myself) have **truly engaged in successful collaboration**. We’ve **discussed, reflected, & built on each others’ ideas**, to come up with what is destined to be a **successful experience for the entire school**.

Authentic Examples of Successful Collaboration

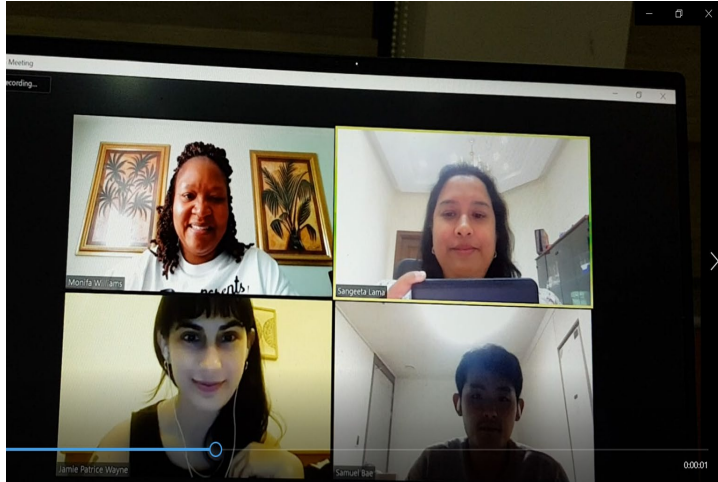


Due to school suspension in **2020**, colleagues and I did **collaborative planning** via Zoom!



Colleagues and I **collaborated** and trained a group of students for the **Hong Kong Speech Festival!**
We came first!

Authentic Examples of Successful Collaboration

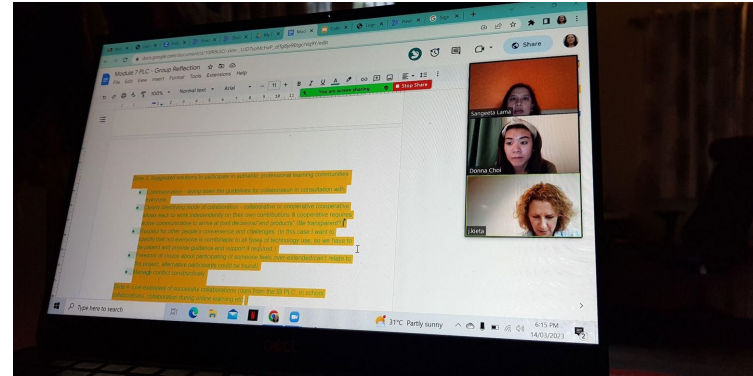
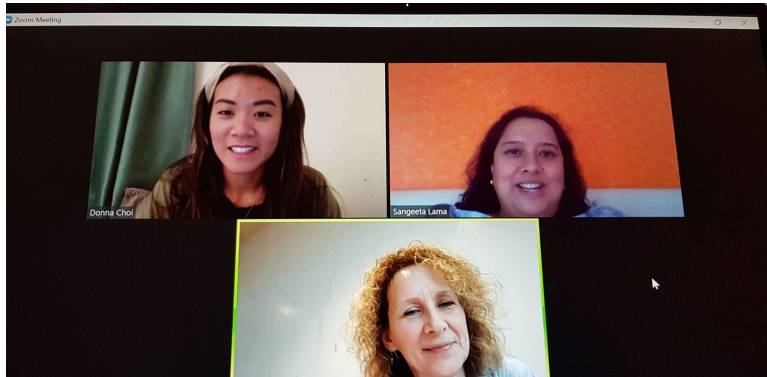


Collaborating with my cohort members during my masters program



Collaborating with my colleague and his Grade 5 class for a Beginning of the Year team building activity

Successful Collaboration in Action



We can make it happen across boundaries and time zones!

Resources:

[PYP resources - Home - IB programme resources \(ibo.org\)](#)

<https://www.ascd.org/el/articles/parent-involvement-a-matter-of-educational-survival>

[5 Steps to Better School/Community Collaboration | Edutopia](#)

[The Tough Work of Improving School Culture | Edutopia](#)

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