

Collaborating 1

In their book *The Reflective Educator's Guide to Professional Development*, Dana and Yendel-Hoppey identify ten essential elements towards establishing a healthy teacher group that is focussed on professional learning in which teachers inquire into their practice.

These are summarised here.

Healthy inquiry-oriented Professional Learning Communities:

- **establish a vision that creates momentum for their work;**
What are you hoping to achieve? Individually? Collectively?
- **build trust among group members;**
How can you as members of the group come to trust each other? For example, will you feel able to share with each other experiences of what doesn't work as well as what does work? This relates to issues of how power can influence group dynamics (see below).
- **pay attention to the ways power can influence group dynamics;**
Do you feel comfortable collaborating with colleagues who may have greater or less job status than you?
- **understand and embrace collaboration;**
Do you feel comfortable collaborating with colleagues? Within school? Across schools?
- **encourage, recognize, and appreciate diversity within the group;** *Within the group what different experiences and expertise do we have to offer?*
- **promote the development of critical friends;** *Can each member of our group identify and work with a critical friend?*
- **hold the group accountable for and document learning;** *Is there some way in which as individuals and as a group we can document what we have learned?*
- **understand change and acknowledge the discomfort it may bring to some group members;**

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- **have a comprehensive view of what constitutes data, and are willing to consider all forms and types of data throughout the work of the group;**
What data will we collect to inform our collaborative inquiry?

work with school managers;

Do you have support of your school managers? If not, how do you gain such support?