

Teaching as Principled Practice

*Managing Complexity
for Social Justice*

Linda R. Kroll • Ruth Cossey • David M. Donahue
Tomás Galguera • Vicki Kubler LaBoskey
Anna Ershler Richert • Philip Tucher

Mills College

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Teaching to Collaborate, Collaborating to Teach

Ruth Cossey

Philip Tucher



An hour before the starting bell at Edgewater High, student teachers Colleen and Tessa arrived to set up for the day's buoyancy lesson. They wanted to provide students with easy access to both highly technical and everyday ordinary equipment needed for the six planned experiments. Near the front entrance, for example, hanging over the edge of a huge vat of water was a piece of rope attached to a bag of more than a thousand pennies resting below the water's surface. A wall chart guided the physics students through the activity they were to complete, even before class officially began.

AUTHORS' NOTE: All the names used in this chapter are pseudonyms.

With a partner lift this bag both under water and outside the water. Write your names and your estimate of the weight in both cases. Comment on any observations you have about this phenomenon.

Colleen surveyed the classroom; she thought her students would find it inviting although maybe a bit intimidating. Tessa, who had volunteered to be the teaching assistant for the day, quickly sighted all the materials on her checklist while Colleen silently rehearsed the sequence of instruction she and the other nine teacher candidates had planned. All was ready. Colleen only hoped that her students, accustomed to a few visitors at a time, wouldn't be overwhelmed by the presence of not only her cooperating teacher, Mr. Zales, but also the videographer, several college professors, and the host of mathematics and science teacher candidates. While she taught the class, her colleagues would collect data related to the agreed-upon research theme.

Students would come to appreciate the importance of struggle and respect for others' ideas as integral to the learning process.

At 3:30 that afternoon the teacher candidates held a formal research-lesson-debriefing meeting. Each of them had taken about an hour to analyze—if tentatively—the particular data they gathered during class. A few more college professors joined the audience along with the school's vice principal. Colleen summarized her reactions to that morning's class: a critical incident along the path of a 2-month research lesson cycle. Near the end of her 10-minute remarks, she added

... In general the theme for doing this is time. It's such a time-intensive process. I know that any time you do things as a group, it takes as much time as it would have if you multiply ordinary time by the number of people in the group. That's just how long it takes. And it's often a much better product, and you learn a huge amount doing it, but I have my daughter saying things to me like "Can I go to Shauna's house 'cause I get attention there and I don't at home." And things like, "How come we only get to work on your projects?" ... It's been fun. I really, I liked doing it. I didn't have time to do it, but I really enjoyed the process.

Teaching is hard—too hard to attempt in isolation. The promise of collegiality is far too great to ignore. Yet, Colleen's statement about time illustrates one of the many tensions teachers and learners of all ages and contexts struggle with as we strive to reap the benefits of collaboration. This chapter springs from the core belief that learning occurs in relationships. Clearly, the education of both students of teachers and students of teaching can be greatly enhanced by interaction. The work of teaching and learning to teach requires attention to several important principles. As explored in other chapters, we will need to make sense of the political implications of our work and attend to the developmental needs of our students within an ethic of care while reflecting and deciding on the most appropriate content of a lesson or unit of study. The magnitude of the work of learning to teach cannot be overstated. You do not have to—and perhaps you cannot—put all of this together alone. The rest of this chapter will ask you to also consider pursuing a principled practice of collegiality as integral to your professional development. You will examine several facets of collaboration, including dilemmas resolved within the context of collaborating to teach and teaching to collaborate. Throughout the chapter, you will find a lack of precision in the use of the words *collegiality*, *collaboration*, *cooperation*, and their derivatives. Simply put, the words will refer to folks talking, thinking, and working together and not to any particular set of practices.

❖ GETTING SMARTER TOGETHER: COMMUNITIES OF PRACTICE

In Chapter 4, you read about constructivism as a theory of learning. Ask any Piagetian or Vygotskian; he or she will tell you that social interaction is critical to individual knowledge development. Here, we would like you to consider that individuals are not the only ones who get smarter as a result of good interactions; communities can also gain knowledge and become able to do and think things that the individuals of the community would find hard or impossible to achieve alone. In social interaction, individuals co-construct knowledge by negotiating new meanings through their engagement in mutual activities. Even on those occasions when we believe we do our learning in isolation, we generally rely on the previous work of others; for example, writing and auditory or visual images. Furthermore, even when aspects of our work are done in solitude, we typically make sense of required tasks in the context of having to prepare

for, or receive feedback from, an audience other than ourselves. Hence, much of what is considered to be solitary knowledge contributions can be traced to intentional or unintentional group efforts.

Of course, not every group exchange fosters learning or facilitates new knowledge and growth. Wenger (1998) reminds us that communities can reinforce shared and erroneous stereotypes or produce “tried-and-failed” solutions to problems. Fullan (1993) also cautions that we must learn to differentiate between group collaboration and “group-think” because, in groups, individual creativity, difference, and even responsibility can become stymied or silenced. In groups, a lack of focus or common purpose can result in a scattering of efforts and, at best, a waste of time. Despite widespread agreement that human beings have a predisposition towards co-constructing meaning, there is abundant evidence that school classrooms and teacher lounges are not automatically settings for nondysfunctional learning communities. Collegiality, taken as a principle of practice, however, can help you harness the power of community to expand exponentially your professional efforts to teach and learn.

❖ LEARNING TO COLLABORATE: HAVING PRODUCTIVE INTERACTIONS

Successful collaborations depend on seemingly contradictory premises. There needs to be diversity among the collaborators, but participants must share a number of cultural practices. The diversity will allow the group to probe teaching and learning issues through a richness of multiple perspectives. It is especially through difference—in perception, in areas of expertise, and in experience both in and outside the classroom—that the group will avoid simply reinforcing the status quo. On the other hand, interpersonal communication requires that the group either initially or eventually come to share some common language, common goals, and, to some extent, an agreed-on range of acceptable patterns of work and interaction.

Wenger (1998) considers two components of community theory: *participation* and *reification*. The first of these, participation, relates to being a “part of things.” Lave and Wenger (1991) and Rogoff (1995) suggest that an individual’s participation in a group activity can range from peripheral to very active. Participation is intricately linked to individual identity formation relative to the group. Wenger, Lave, and Rogoff posit that an

individual’s identity can radically affect her or his individual knowledge development and contribution to the group. Who you are in the group is affected by your own previous experience and understanding, your own role in the group knowledge construction, and what you ultimately take away from the experience in the group (Cohen & Lotan, 1995).

Reification refers to taking the experiences of the group interactions and transforming them into artifacts or words that can be interpreted by group members and others as new knowledge. This new knowledge, fruit of the group’s labor, can remind individuals within the group of the shared values and vision toward which the group is moving. Thus, in the classroom, as students reflect on their learning process during a particular activity, a teacher might “coin” a way of remembering a lesson learned: helping doesn’t mean giving answers; no one of us is as smart as all of us together; there are many ways to skin a cat!—to name a few. To assist students in internalizing new and common expectations of the group, teachers can help “lessons learned” become integral to classroom practice as they are referenced repeatedly while the community develops.

What would these ideas of participation and reification mean for you as you look for and work toward meaningful collaboration with other adults? In the most effective communities, people agree that difference is an important asset of the group. If group members appreciate diversity and actively strive to see and use the different strengths of others and of themselves, generally more and better work will get done and status issues will be markedly less disruptive. Working with people who know how to—or are really interested in learning how to—work across differences results in more productive activity, but such cooperative productive activity is not that simply accomplished. Minimally, such collaboration requires community members to have highly developed listening skills and to exhibit a willingness to be flexible, possibly beyond each person’s initial area of comfort. Good collaborations are almost always safe, but they are typically at some point uncomfortable. Let us turn to the examination of one collaborative structure you may find available to you to consider further some of the determinants of fruitful collaboration.

❖ COLLABORATIVE PLANNING FOR INSTRUCTION: LESSON STUDY

You will remember Colleen and her colleagues. They were engaged in collective lesson conceptualization and implementation in a process of

professional development borrowed originally from Japan in the form of lesson study (Lewis, 2002). Variations of this practice are becoming common in the United States and are often the nexus of school/university and other institutional partnerships.

Why would the group of preservice math and science teachers want to engage in collaboration such as lesson study? What knowledge about learning and teaching did they seek to gain? Colleen was teaching a course in physics open to all students in her public high school. She knew that in two months she would be faced with the problem of having her students master buoyancy beyond what they had intuited in elementary and middle school. She wanted to get them to a precollege-level understanding of the forces involved in floating or sinking objects as an instantiation of general knowledge about forces working on the world. This was her first year teaching high school students, and she did not know their general knowledge level. Given her own uncertainty about what would be expected of her and her students in a general physics class, Colleen eagerly volunteered when her group of novice teachers had to choose a member around whose class they would design and teach a research lesson.

What was in it for Colleen's colleagues? Lesson study, a two-month focus of their curriculum and instruction class, would provide hands-on experiences of an inquiry approach to thorough lesson planning and revision. Through the lesson study inquiry cycle, this cohort of teachers would have opportunities to clarify and define their individual visions, goals, and objectives for students. By building on shared experiences with a particular research lesson and diverse interpretations of classroom events—both predicted and actual—the lesson study process also would provide rich opportunities for understanding and talking about students and learning. Success of the collaboration not only would deepen, but ultimately depend on the novice teachers' recognition and appreciation of each other's independent expertise.

Let's take a look at specific activities Colleen and her colleagues undertook. Their work revolved around three highly connected phases of instruction: goal setting and planning for instruction, teaching and observing students, and reflection and analysis of learning. Through lesson study, the group of teachers cycled through several iterations of this planning, teaching, and reflecting process.

❖ PLANNING TO TEACH COLLEEN'S STUDENTS

First, the group of teachers looked hard at their own students to identify a general set of long-term goals for instruction. What attributes of their students as learners—and, in this case, as powerful knowers of science and math—would they focus on together? What would be the theme of their inquiry? These teachers attended to notions of *intellective competence* to help them look even further than their strong desire to have students meet challenging content goals. According to Gordon (1999), the "intellective competence" needed by all citizens in the next century is truly demanding. They will be expected

to bring rational order to chaos, bring knowledge and technique to the solution of problems, to test ideas against explicit and implicit moral values as well as against data, to think critically, and to recognize the relationship between concrete and abstract data.

Intellective competence must orchestrate affective, cognitive, and "situative contexts" directed at purposeful ends. In short, "these academic achievements are less focused on what children know and do and more sharply focused on what we want learners to become—compassionate and thinking members of a community" (p. 1).

The group then cemented the curricular foci of their work by selecting a specific class of students: Colleen's third-period physics class at Edgewater High. With a tentative research theme and a central content topic in mind, the group began planning a lesson that would eventually be taught and revised twice before being taught again as part of an on-site visit to one teacher's school and classroom.

In a healthy collaboration, participants, whether in peripheral or leading positions, have roles and responsibilities and are comfortable in knowing that they are welcome to become as involved as they desire. Every member of the team finds active ways to help create and shape the task. During the lesson study process, some participants researched existing lessons on the topic; some surveyed the literature and experienced teachers for information about common misconceptions high school youngsters held about forces in general and buoyancy in particular; and some drafted the preliminary plan. To clarify their research theme and predictions of possible student responses to the lesson, different volunteers, in pairs, taught the lesson twice to one

another. During this peer teaching, each participant's role was clear. The pair doing the teaching made detailed pedagogical decisions. The other teachers, then in the role of high school students, focused on analyzing and predicting students' responses for each part of the lesson. In this way, each teacher provided an individual perspective and critique on how the lesson would challenge and engage students, thus bringing to life the research theme(s) driving the whole endeavor.

Through the collaborative process of lesson study, this group of teachers prepared a lesson both to support students learning physics and to develop in students an intellectual competency. As a result of this lesson, the teachers hypothesized, students would apply reasoning about Newton's Laws to fluids and also discover and apply Archimedes' Law through guided experimentation and problem solving. Moreover, students would further develop an appreciation for the importance of struggle with challenges and respect for others' ideas as integral to the learning process. The learning goals of this lesson were both academic and social. Students (as well as teachers) would learn to value and productively make use of processes of collaboration. Thus, collegiality was a learning goal as well as a process to learn.

Planning to Learn From Colleen's Students

Not only did Colleen and her colleagues plan the physics lesson, they also collaborated on the research they would conduct during the class period to help them evaluate the effectiveness of their instructional plan. What would they each do as the students in the room were engaged in learning about buoyancy, and supposedly struggling and respecting one another's ideas, as part of the learning process? We could ask more generally: When teachers are observing a lesson in a colleague's classroom, what can they do to further a shared collaborative endeavor? In this case, in preparation for the research lesson, each of Colleen's colleagues defined a focus question that fit under the umbrella of the research theme. Each teacher arrived at the research lesson ready to document students' involvement in the lesson.

Considering the research theme related to struggle, for example, one teacher looked at issues of gender: Would male and female students show signs of struggle in different ways? Would patterns emerge suggesting that gender impacts the ways in which peers show respect for their classmates' ideas? Another teacher became interested in the detailed learning contexts in which struggle occurs: Did struggle

during whole-class discussion differ from struggle during small-group lab time? One teacher wanted to study student questions—any and all of the questions uttered by students during the lesson. She developed a kind of taxonomy of question asking to categorize the varied questions she heard. Would question asking substantiate struggle? Would struggle lead to question asking? Taking a different approach, one teacher wanted to develop a narrative about one student's experience with the lesson. He followed a single student for the whole 90 minutes—a student still learning English, in this case—and documented as best he could her interactions with the materials, the language, her classmates, and so on. Through careful observation and recording, this teacher was able to convey a detailed account of struggle, but through the eyes of a single student.

As these examples suggest, individual teachers were responsible for defining and highlighting one facet of the shared research themes. Individual abilities to articulate a focus question and hypothesis, design an instrument for data collection, and study the student interactions during the lesson combined to provide richly overlapping data: stories, clumped lists, tallies, and utterances. Shared though the research theme was, each teacher found individual significance in the details of how the lesson had been crafted.

The back and forth between the shared learning of the group and the individual growth for participants is critical to the value of shared work. In developing consensus and crafting research themes, the group was moving toward a shared vision of students' learning. Each individual came to the group's consensus by a different path. In defining goals and a plan for a single shared lesson, individual teachers held different specific priorities within that plan. Even as the lesson was enacted, first among peers and then with high school students, individuals pursued different specific lines of exploration within the shared research theme. Each part of the collaboration included movement toward a shared purpose, with support coming from—and for—the specific contributions and talents of the individuals. This dynamic interaction between common action and individual growth gives generative purpose to collegial effort.

The Teaching Day

The day of the site visit involved so much more than the 90-minute physics class. After a brief orientation meeting, with school map and a

schedule for the day in hand, the group dispersed to observe a variety of classroom lessons for the first hour and a half to get the flavor of a typical Tuesday in math or science class. A panel of students representing a cross-section of students at the school gave their perspectives on life as math or science students. Edgewater High teachers joined in discussions about current areas of interest for their school and departments. Then, just before the start of third period, it was off to Colleen's room. The team had decided on the following directions for themselves: Be there on time. Find your agreed-on observation post and have your observation materials ready. Introduce yourself to students as appropriate, but then be as unobtrusive as possible—yes, along with the videographer, the few college faculty members, and the cooperating teacher, as unobtrusive as possible.

After the research lesson was completed and the flurry of observation subsided, to celebrate and appreciate the students' hard work, the novice teachers and physics students sat down to enjoy pizza. The luncheon provided an opportunity for the teacher cohort to listen to the students as they reflected on the lesson and talked about their current and past experiences learning math and science.

For many teachers in the group, the most intense work began later that afternoon. That's when the tough questions started. What had they observed? Were their hypotheses about how this lesson would impact student interaction and learning confirmed, or did surprises rule the day? Did they have enough evidence to make a case? What if their data collection tools were hopelessly unrealistic? What if they didn't like the lesson?

With about an hour to process their whole morning, teachers worked in the relative quiet of the now-vacant cafeteria to prepare their comments for the research lesson debrief meeting. In pairs, they would tell their stories to the whole group. They would share their question, their data, and their findings. Together, the group would try to address their agreed-on research themes. What had they learned? What did they now know about the ways in which teachers come to know subject matter better for themselves as well as responding to the need to increase students' knowledge of physics? What did they now know about bringing to life a vision for active involvement in learning: the role of struggle and respect for others' ideas in the learning process?

Reflecting on the Lesson Study Experience

Through lesson study, teachers in the cohort had many formal and informal opportunities to reflect on the lesson taught and the lessons

learned by students and teachers alike. This group of teachers developed a newer, broader set of issues and questions to think about when considering their students and their own practice. They reported knowing better how to observe their students for evidence of understanding. They had a better appreciation for the rigors of collecting data about their own teaching practices. They were able to use the lesson study process to further examine their instruction of students who were developing English language skills in addition to learning mathematics and science content. Some of the teachers indicated that they were becoming better judges of general cognitive workload placed on individuals during a lesson. Colleen noted, for example, that in some instances it was clear the teacher did more work, more thinking and reasoning preparing the lesson, than any of the students were required to do to enact the lesson. In those cases, she hypothesized that the notion of struggle was undermined by teacher simplification of student work.

A common tension emerged for the group about the role of confusion in learning for their students. Under some circumstances, and with some content, it is best to refine a lesson with the intent of removing all ambiguity for the students. On the other hand, there are times when it is critically important to refine lessons with the intent of injecting enough ambiguity to encourage students to think and reason with the mathematical and scientific concepts. Teachers need to provide students with sufficient opportunity to engage with a balance of exercise, conceptual development, and problem solving. However, when, under what circumstances, for which students, and with what material?—these questions gave life to the investigation. These are the considerations that made the inquiry worthy of the collaborative effort.

❖ DETERMINANTS OF A FRUITFUL COLLABORATION

As we look back on the lesson study experiences of Colleen and her colleagues, what are the implications for the rest of us? What are the overriding benefits of their collaboration beyond the particulars of lesson study? The promise of a principled, collegial practice is that in talking, thinking, and working together we become both individually and collectively wiser about the needs of our students, more aware of the importance of our colleagues' perspectives, and more efficacious in the shared work of teaching.

What will make a collaborative effort worth your while? What are the parameters and constraints that you might consider when thinking about collaboration? First, you might ask yourself if the project you and your colleagues are considering is sufficiently complex and interesting to each of you so that the time you spend working together will lead to greater understanding in areas that matter most to you and your students. There is no use teaming up when one person believes there is only one reasonable way to get the job done. Nor is there a need for collaboration when one person alone could complete the project more effectively. Instead, tasks that are inherently complex are more likely to be worthy of collaborative effort. When there is not an obvious answer or resolution to a problem, multiple perspectives and contributions yield a more successful outcome, and the group grows together in their individual and collective understanding of the situation and of each other. Know that you are likely to get more out of a collaborative effort if you are working on a topic that is truly of importance and interest to you. (Though, at times, heightened interest is the result of close study, and you may only realize halfway into a problem where the interest will come for you. Still, when it comes to decision time about whether a particular task is suitable for collaboration, a “don’t-sweat-the-small-stuff” approach can be a useful rule of thumb.)

Second, consider asking whether each individual has something in particular to examine through the collaboration. An individual focus—and sometimes even an individual motivation—combines with a shared group focus to further and deepen the inquiry for both individuals and the group. These individual foci may be agreed on as interesting by the group as a whole, or they may be of interest, initially, only to some of you. But eventually, what you investigate individually will contribute to a more complicated and deeper understanding of the issue. If the task is worth this shared effort, this should be your goal.

Third, in your collaboration, do you hold a diversity of perspectives? If you do, you are likely as a group to learn a great deal more about the issue than if you all agree from the beginning. As we noted earlier, this diversity of perspectives leads to a richer understanding but also requires focused practice of active listening and respect for differing points of view.

Last, you know that any collaborative enterprise will take time, and time is one of the most precious commodities you have as a professional. Collaboration is time intensive. You will have to ask—just as Colleen did toward the end of the research lesson debriefing meeting—whether a

collaborative effort is worth your time. While the trade-off between *time spent* and *learning gained* is not always evident from the beginning of a project, being able to stand back and assess how a project is going is an important ongoing aspect of working collaboratively. You, and those with whom you collaborate, can practice this stepping-back process of introspection and reflection.

While these four aspects of collaborative work are important, they are but the nuts and bolts of working together. Yes, collaboration takes place best when the task at hand is both compelling and complex for the participants in the group. Yes, it is important for individuals to identify their own particular areas of interest within a shared endeavor. It is true that groups do well when they pay close attention and ensure that diverse contributions and perspectives become heard and valued. When groups cultivate a self-reflective awareness, they are better able to adjust and adapt to the many pressures, including time, that surface along the way. Yet, these aspects of fruitful collaboration are important to the group’s learning—and ultimately the learning of individual participants—because the learning and the subsequent learning of the students takes place in relationships.

❖ COLLABORATION IS ABOUT RELATIONSHIPS

The substance of collaborative work is contained in the nature of the relationships that teachers develop. At issue are relationships with content ideas as well as relationships with students. For example, teachers consider curriculum and pedagogy in terms of district, state, and national mandates but also in light of the general strengths and learning needs of their students. However, this task of choosing carefully sequenced, rich lessons is rife with pitfalls and booby traps. Multiple paths are important for content delivery to students who think differently than each other and you; therefore, we benefit from access to teachers who can help us think about the content and pedagogy differently also.

Our goal is to be powerful teachers and to empower all our students in their learning. No one teacher’s view is going to be multi-faceted enough to make sense of 20 students’ understandings nor to anticipate the learning needs of 20 diverse students. Collaboration in forming lessons helps to reveal the nuances of the concepts, to hone the important points, and to generate ways to imagine how students might

encounter the core ideas. As you are learning to teach, it is especially useful to have others' ideas to point out directions that students' thinking might go. A good curriculum is never enough, however. Curricular soundness is both enhanced and limited by the quality of the relationships among the human beings in the classroom.

Building relationships with and between students can be aided by professional conversations across race, ethnic, religious, and class boundaries. It is not that one teacher's white Jewish background, for example, will mean that he or she has necessarily more insight than a Christian African-American teacher into what lessons would be more accessible to white Jewish students in any given class. But it is evident that the educational establishment in this country is organized to present the first teacher with experiences that are more similar to those of the white Jewish students than are the world experiences of the second teacher. When these teachers work together, they both have the benefit of each other's distinct worldviews. Together, they also can reinforce for each other their common belief that knowing something about a specific cultural practice tells nothing for sure about any individual, but that knowledge about specific cultural practices can produce a higher level of questions to wonder about students' understanding.

Teaching is a profession rooted in optimism. Teachers are in very real ways keepers of the hope of the nation. We are privileged to behold on a daily basis the promise of sustained democracy through our interactions with students of all stages of civic maturity. Still, not every minute of each day sings with fulfillment. Sometimes, the sheer volume of work, or the inconsistency of the voices of those outside the profession who would try to define our job for us, overwhelms us. Teaching is a profession where the burnout rate is unacceptably high.

So we return to the power of relationships. Consider the nurturing effect that collegial interactions would have for you if you were a teacher new to a school: the sense of calm strength you feel when your new colleagues include and welcome you into the learning community; the sense of belonging and relief you feel when you see that the group will take a "divide and conquer" approach to many of the mundane tasks that you know will need to get done; and the sense of integrity and purpose you feel as the group begins to define shared areas of inquiry, because each person in this learning community is finding new insights into their work.

Because you were not looking for easy answers or simple recipes, and you did not expect to make sense of this most difficult work alone, your persistence can be born out of accountability to and support from

collegial arrangements. Indeed, our colleagues can help sustain us; our collegial relationships can keep us hopeful; and our professional friends can keep us solidly heading in directions aligned with our moral compass. We hold the hope, the vision of a nation transformed by a well-educated enlightened populace. We can hold this vision and contribute to its enactment, in part because we move in professional communities that provide sounding boards, safety, and trust.

❖ CONCLUDING THOUGHTS

Nearly every "how to teach" text will include the importance of working together with other adults to meet the needs of your students. You will be asked to partner with many colleagues in a variety of contexts: with teachers who teach the same course or grade level, with teachers who share the same group of students, and with colleagues and administrators concerned about the same student-discipline issue. You will have opportunities to work side by side with parents, one of you desperate, perhaps, to see progress from a child still struggling to find her or his way in school. You will collaborate, too, with administrators, who must also evaluate your performance; and you will work with colleagues who are serving as union leaders, dedicated to the profession and to your employee rights and opportunities. Thus, you will be asked to collaborate in many settings so that, with support from this group of colleagues, you might teach your students well.

No less important, you will also have to explore what it means to teach others—your students—to engage meaningfully in collaborative work. As you learn to articulate your own priorities for collaboration, you can ask yourself how to support your students to make sense for themselves out of the same collaborative interactions and dynamics. As you think about your students becoming powerful thinkers and doers, where do you and they most need to focus? How will you learn more about your students? How will you decide on appropriate tasks to select? Are the tasks you select sufficiently complex and compelling to merit their collaborative effort? When will you coach them directly? When will you structure their learning so that they work together without your direct involvement? How will you ensure they get a productive balance of individual and collaborative assignments? As students learn to collaborate, their ability to participate fully in a democracy will develop. Because our goals for them are not only about academic achievement, the development of this civic and civil understanding is a good thing.

A principled approach to collegial practice suggests that careful thought about human relationships can shape the ways in which you are able to come to know your students and their learning. Collaboration is not just a principle for your practice as you think about your adult colleagues. Rather, it is a source of knowledge for both you and your students. Understanding that learning is a process of co-construction, accomplished more fully in collegial, respectful, diverse contexts, you place yourself alongside those with whom you partner, ready to support our young people to participate in a democratic society that promotes the success of all its citizens.

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