Better Together: Relationships, Collaboration, and Outcomes (Aspects of Culture and Climate, Part 1 of 8)

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Time Frame 90 minutes

Essential Question(s)

How does collaboration foster reciprocity for both individuals and an organization?

Summary

Teamwork is a major contributing factor of job satisfaction and work engagement. The investment in building strong team collaboration creates a win-win outcome for both the employee and the organization. This professional learning session is part of a series that explores the eight aspects of organizational culture and climate measured by K20's research-based survey. Participants look at the research factors that support strong collaboration and then reflect on the data collected from their school survey in order to create a goal for how to improve collaboration at their school.

Learning Goals

- Explore research-based characteristics of the research construct collaboration.
- Analyze survey data in the context of your school.
- Apply strategies to your role within your team and within your school.

Attachments

- Presentation Slides—Better Together.pptx
- Research Brief—Better Together.pdf
- Values Chart—Better Together.docx
- Values Chart—Better Together.pdf

Materials

- Session Slides (attached)
- Research Brief (attached, one per participant)
- Values Chart (attached, one per participant)
- Highlighters (four different colors, one of each color per group of four)
- Chart paper (one piece per group of four)
- Markers (at least one per group of four)
- Pens/pencils (one per participant)
- Red, yellow, and green slips of paper (one of each color per participant)

Preparation

Data Collection

Prior to this PD, your staff will take the K20 8 Aspects of Climate and Culture Survey. The following survey questions are used to measure the collaboration aspect:

1. My co-workers encourage each other.
2. My co-workers demonstrate respect for others.
3. My co-workers are sensitive to other individuals' feelings.
4. My work unit is characterized by a high level of cooperation.
5. Members within my team are willing to put the team's needs in front of my individual needs.
6. Members within my team encourage each other to work as a team.
7. Team members often meet to discuss the team's effectiveness.
8. Team members have to communicate closely with each other to achieve the team's objectives.
9. Team members have a set of shared objectives.
10. There is a strong collaborative spirit in my team.
11. There is a lot of cooperation in my team.
12. Members within my team work together effectively.

If you don't have access to this survey, consider collecting your own data by putting these questions into Menti, Google Forms, or another survey tool. Make sure the data collected does not include any personally identifying information such as email, names, etc.

Setup

Prior to starting, set up tables for groups of four. Make sure that each seat has three colored sheets of paper (red, yellow, and green). Place four different colors of highlighters, markers, and pens in the center of each table for later use.

10 minutes

Engage

Display **slide 2** to introduce yourself and the topic of this facilitation. Mention that today, you will look at the research and data from the climate and culture survey about collaboration, but first, you are going to do a quick activity to reflect and share our previous experiences and feelings about collaboration. In this activity, participants will be shown several statements representing different scenarios that may or may not benefit from collaboration. Explain that most times collaboration is great (two heads are better than one, etc.), but sometimes, it is just not the right course of action to collaborate. Show the video on **slide 3**.

Embedded video

https://youtube.com/watch?v=SmQjJ_hzz-4

Move to **slide 4** and facilitate a modified version of the Stoplight Stickies instructional strategy. Ask participants to find their three small sheets of paper, one of each color, red, yellow, and green. Let them know that as you read each of the statements on **slides 5–11**, they will hold up the color that represents their feelings about collaborating in that situation. There are no wrong answers, but consider calling on a few volunteers to share their reasons for each situation as a way to see different perspectives in these situations.

- **Green**: Yes, let's go!
- **Yellow**: Sometimes. Depends on a few things.
- **Red**: Nope, flying solo...

Show the video on **slide 12** to end on a fun note about collaboration.

Embedded video

https://youtube.com/watch?v=J8Kz_poR55E

20 minutes

Explore

Move to **slide 13** and introduce the learning objectives for this session. The goal is to explore research, analyze the survey data for your school, and apply strategies for improving collaboration for yourself and within the school. Display **slide 14** and ask participants to use their computer or phone to take the DISC Personality Assessment. Mention that they should answer based on how they feel in this moment. Expect different results with different projects in mind or at different times of your life. The results don't define you.

Once everyone has finished, move to **slide 15** and ask, "What do you notice about these four styles in terms of projects and/or processes?" Allow a few volunteers to offer insights. Each of the four styles lends themselves to benefit different parts of the collaborative process from start to finish.

Hand out the values chart, one to each participant. At this time, ask them to fill out only the first column as pictured on **slide 16**. Participants may look at their quiz results for inspiration if they are struggling to answer the questions on the values chart. This should help them identify what they value when collaborating.

Go to **slide 17** and pass out the attached **Research Brief** for the next activity. Ask participants to begin reading the research once they have completed the first column of their values chart.

After everyone has read through it once, ask each person to pick a highlighter color from the center of the table. Then display **slide 18**. Based on the highlighter they choose, they will read the research one more time and use the Categorical Highlighting strategy by highlighting words and phrases they feel speak to the personality style they are assigned (which may or may not represent their highest scoring category).

20 minutes

Explain

After everyone has done their second reading with highlights, have participants take turns at your table sharing what they highlighted and why they related that idea to the work style they were assigned. Use the timer on **slide 19** to make sure each person in the group gets one minute to share out. Move to **slide 20** and give a few minutes for the whole table to discuss the question on the slide. Then ask for volunteers to share what they discussed with the whole group.

Have participants return to their values charts and fill in the second column by reflecting on what actions they take during team projects.

Facilitator's Note: Providing an Example

To help participants fill in their charts, consider providing the following example:

"If I value time on task, then on the positive side, I will schedule time on my calendar to work on a task. On the other side, I might get grumpy in meetings when they go off task."

20 minutes

Extend

Next, have everyone access the Infogram with their school results for “Collaboration.” Then hand out a piece of chart paper to each group. Display **slide 23** and explain that we will be doing an Inside Out chart. They can start with a small rectangle in the center of their chart paper. In this box, write one or two objective observations they have made about the data. This should be straight facts, no interpretation yet.

Move to **slide 24.** In a slightly larger rectangle with a dotted line through the middle, have them write on the top half, statements in response to the question, “What are your feelings about the data?” In the bottom half, have them write statements in response to the question, “What key insights do you take away from this data?”

Finally, go to **slide 25**. In one last larger rectangle, have participants write a statement in response to the question, “What can we do as a result of this data?”

Provide some time for each group to share what they wrote in the last rectangle about what we can do to improve collaboration.

15 minutes

Evaluate

Finally, have participants return to their values chart one more time to fill in the third column and answer the question, “How can we better foster a positive collaborative work community?” After they’ve had some time to reflect individually to this question, let them know they can choose to add what they wrote on the values chart to their Inside Out chart paper as well. Leadership will reflect on the Inside Out chart papers as well.

Research Rationale

Teamwork is a major contributing factor to job satisfaction and work engagement. The investment in building strong team collaboration creates a win-win outcome for both the employee and the organization (Ogbonnaya & Valizade, 2018; Karatepe & Olugbade, 2016; Arnold et al., 2020). Employees who are given meaningful opportunities to work with others in order to meet organizational goals feel valued by their employers. This results in increased commitment to the organization and less disengagement (Ogbonnaya & Valizade, 2018). Moreover, being a part of a team prevents isolation, influences our sense of who we are and what our future career goals are, and contributes to an overall sense of well-being (Arnold et al., 2020; Ryan & Deci, 2000). So we ask ourselves, “How can we strive to create a sense of community in the workplace that contributes to meaningful and effective teamwork?” Traditionally, the four facets of teamwork are (1) Relationships, (2) Goals, (3) Roles, and (4) Processes (Burke, 1982).

Resources

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