Making Working Together Work - Evaluating and Improving Organizational Collaboration

CDC Surveillance and Evaluation Net-Conference
April 15, 2010

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University of Massachusetts Amherst
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Task Force</th>
<th>Evaluative Inquiry Groups</th>
<th>Consortia</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Professional learning</td>
<td>Strategic Alliances</td>
<td>Self-managing teams, Quality circles</td>
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<tr>
<td>Team-based organizations</td>
<td>Networks</td>
<td>Partnerships</td>
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<td>(Peters, 1987)</td>
<td>Communities of practice</td>
<td>Coalitions</td>
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<td>Critical Friends Groups</td>
<td>Continuous improvement teams</td>
<td>(Butterfoss, 2007)</td>
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<td>(NSRF, 2005)</td>
<td>(Wenger, 1998; Sergiovanni, 2004; Gajda &amp; Koliba, 2009)</td>
<td>Federation</td>
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<td>Continuous improvement teams</td>
<td>Learning organizations</td>
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<td></td>
<td>(Fullan, 2005)</td>
<td>(Schmoker, 2004; Senge, 1999)</td>
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The sine qua non of collaboration is shared purpose.

Two or more entities come together for a reason - to achieve a vision, to do something that could not otherwise be accomplished as independent actors working alone.
Principles of Organizational Collaboration

1. An Imperative
2. Nested Context
3. Stages of Development
4. Levels of Integration and Quality
5. A Human Endeavor
6. Cycle of Inquiry
1. An Imperative

We live in a time when no organization can succeed on its own...As we look around us in a new century, we realize that businesses and non-profits in today’s interconnected world will neither thrive nor survive with visions confined within the walls of their own organizations. They need to look beyond the walls and find partners who can help achieve greater results and build the vital communities to meet challenges ahead.

- Drucker & Whitehead, Harvard Business School, 2000
2. Nested Context

Inter-Organizational Collaboration

*Strategic Alliances*

↓

Intra-Organizational Collaboration

*Communities of Practice (teams)*

↓

Inter-Professional Collaboration

*Community of Practice (team)*
3. Stages of Development

Assemble and Form
Storm and Order
Norm and Perform
Transform and Adjourn

Tuckman, 1965; Tuckman & Jensen, 1977; Bailey & Koney, 2000
4. Levels of Integration

- Shared Information & Mutual Support
- Common Tasks & Compatible Goals
- Integrated Strategies & Collective Purpose
- Unified Structure & Combined Cultures

**Cooperation**
- affiliations, loose networks

**Coordination**
- associations, coalitions

**Collaboration**
- consortia, joint ventures

**Coadunation**
- mergers, consolidations

Formal Integration

Defining Strategic Alliances Across a Continuum of Integration
Adaptation of Figures 1.1, 1.2, & 1.3 in Bailey and McNally Koney (2000)
Ultimately, it is people who collaborate not organizations.
Organizations are "Constellations of CoPs"
6. Communities of Practice (Teams) Engage in a Cycle of Inquiry (DDAE)

They must do much more than meet!
Are you lonely?
Tired of working on your own?
Do you hate making decisions?

HOLD A MEETING!

You can —
• See people
• Show charts
• Feel important
• Point with a stick
• Eat donuts
• Impress your colleagues

All on company time!

MEETINGS
THE PRACTICAL ALTERNATIVE TO WORK
Meetings are necessary … but need improvement!

+ Approximately 11 million occur each year in US and average professional attends 62 per month (MCI Conferencing White paper, 1998, p. 3)

+ 50% of the meeting time is a “waste” (Nelson and Economy, 1995, p. 5)

+ Most professionals have had no real training in devising, managing, or participating in effective meetings.
Collaboration Evaluation and Improvement Framework

1. Determine a Shared Purpose
2. Raise Collaboration Literacy
3. Inventory & Map Communities of Practice
4. Monitor Stages of Development
5. Assess Levels of Integration
6. Assess Inter-Professional Collaboration
7. Make Corrections & Recognize Accomplishments
### Oral Health Community of Practice Inventory Form

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name of CoP?</th>
<th>Members of the CoP?</th>
<th>Mission/Purpose of the CoP?</th>
<th>Frequency and Location of the Meetings?</th>
<th>Importance?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>State OH Core Infrastructure Team</td>
<td>- State Dental Director</td>
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<tr>
<td>State OH Coalition Leadership Group</td>
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<td>State Chronic Disease Unit</td>
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A series of questions may be posed to both strengthen each of the developmental phases and facilitate the transition of the alliance from one phase to the next.

Assess Inter-O rganizational Collaboration

SAFAR
Strategic Alliance Formative Assessment Rubric

# Strategic Alliance Formative Assessment Rubric

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Level of Integration</th>
<th>Purpose</th>
<th>Strategies &amp; Tasks</th>
<th>Leadership &amp; Decision-Making</th>
<th>Interpersonal &amp; Communication</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Networking 1         | • Create a web of communication  
                      • Identify and create a base of support  
                      • Explore interests  
                      | • Loose or no structure  
                      • Flexible, roles not-defined  
                      • Few if any defined tasks  
                      | • Non-hierarchical  
                      • Flexible  
                      • Minimal or no group decision making  
                      | • Very little interpersonal conflict  
                      • Communication among all members infrequent or absent |
| Cooperating 2        | • Work together to ensure tasks are done  
                      • Leverage or raise money  
                      • Identify mutual needs, but maintain separate identities  
                      | • Member links are advisory  
                      • Minimal structure  
                      • Some strategies and tasks identified  
                      | • Non-hierarchical, decisions tend to be low stakes  
                      • Facilitative leaders, usually voluntary  
                      • Several people form "go-to" hub  
                      | • Some degree of personal commitment and investment  
                      • Minimal interpersonal conflict  
                      • Communication among members clear, but may be informal |
| Partnering 3         | • Share resources to address common issues  
                      • Organizations remain autonomous but support something new  
                      • To reach mutual goals together  
                      | • Strategies and tasks are developed and maintained  
                      • Central body of people  
                      • Central body of people have specific tasks  
                      | • Autonomous leadership  
                      • Alliance members share equally in the decision making  
                      • Decision making mechanism are in place  
                      | • Some interpersonal conflict  
                      • Communication system and formal information channels developed  
                      • Evidence of problem solving and productivity |
| Merging 4            | • Merge resources to create or support something new  
                      • Extract money from existing systems/members  
                      • Commitment for a long period of time to achieve short and long-term outcomes  
                      | • Formal structure to support strategies and tasks is apparent  
                      • Specific and complex strategies and tasks identified  
                      • Committees and sub-committees formed  
                      | • Strong, visible leadership  
                      • Sharing and delegation of roles and responsibilities  
                      • Leadership capitalizes upon diversity and organizational strengths  
                      | • High degree of commitment and investment  
                      • Possibility of interpersonal conflict high  
                      • Communication is clear, frequent and prioritized  
                      • High degree of problem solving and productivity |
| Unifying 5           | • Unification or acquisition to form a single structure  
                      • Relinquishment of autonomy to support surviving organization  
                      | • Highly formal, legally complex  
                      • Permanent re-organization of strategies and tasks  
                      | • Central, typically hierarchical leadership  
                      • Leadership capitalizes upon diversity and organizational strengths  
                      | • Possibility of interpersonal conflict very high  
                      • Communication is clear, frequent, prioritized, formal and informal |
**Figure 4. Strategic Alliance Formative Assessment Rubric – Recording Spreadsheet**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CURRENT/BASELINE and PROJECTED/DESIRED LEVELS OF INTEGRATION</th>
<th>School District Drug/Alcohol Prevention Team</th>
<th>School Resource Officer Team</th>
<th>Community Mental Health Agency</th>
<th>City Police Department</th>
<th>Community Resource Center</th>
<th>University Social Work Department</th>
<th>Visiting Nurse Association</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Date: __________</td>
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<tr>
<td>School District Drug/Alcohol Prevention Team</td>
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<td>City Police Department</td>
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<td>University Social Work Department</td>
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**AVERAGE CURRENT/BASELINE AND AVERAGE PROJECTED/DESIRED LEVEL OF INTEGRATION BY GROUP/AGENCY**

**AVERAGE CURRENT/BASELINE LEVEL OF INTEGRATION ACROSS THE ALLIANCE**  
**AVERAGE PROJECTED/IDEAL LEVEL OF INTEGRATION ACROSS THE ALLIANCE**
Assess Collaboration Within Primary Work Teams

CoPCAR
Community of Practice Collaboration Assessment Rubric

Communities of Practice (Teams) Engage in a Cycle of Inquiry (DDAE)

- Dialogue
- Shared Purpose
- Evaluation
- Decision-Making
- Action
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Dialog &amp; Decision-Making</th>
<th>Action</th>
<th>Evaluation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Community of Practice - Collaboration Assessment Rubric</strong></td>
<td><strong>Community of Practice - Collaboration Assessment Rubric</strong></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Agenda for group dialogue is pre-planned, prioritized, and documented. All group members regularly meet face-to-face. Group dialogue is structured and focused on the examination and analysis of evidence related to practice and performance. Disagreements and controversy exist, are addressed and resolved &quot;now&quot; or as close to now as possible. Group members regularly invoke and reaffirm shared purpose and essential outcomes.</strong></td>
<td><strong>All decisions are informed by group dialogue; process for making decisions is transparent and adhered to; group leaders/facilitators are purposefully selected and visible. Group consistently makes decisions about what individual and collective actions they will initiate, maintain, develop, and/or cease. Decisions are directly related to the central practice and purpose of the group.</strong></td>
<td><strong>Each member systematically collects and analyzes quantitative and/or qualitative information about her/his practice and the effects of her/his practice on essential outcomes; evaluation findings are shared publicly and inform group dialogue and decision-making.</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Agenda for group dialogue exists. Most group members regularly meet face-to-face; Process for dialogue tends to be improvisational, but the focus is usually related to making meaning of information about practice and performance; Group will occasionally invoke or reaffirm a shared purpose. Professional tension tends to be unrecognized or unresolved. Group will occasionally invoke or reaffirm a shared purpose and essential outcomes.</strong></td>
<td><strong>Decisions are usually informed by group dialogue; decision-making process may be unstructured and/or lack transparency; group leaders exist, but may not be purposefully selected or visible; Group periodically makes decisions about what practices they will initiate, maintain, develop, and/or cease; Decisions are generally related to the central practice and purpose of the group.</strong></td>
<td><strong>Each member takes action but not necessarily as a result of group decision-making; Group actions are somewhat coordinated and interdependent; actions may lack complexity or challenge, but are generally related to a the central practice and purpose of the group.</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Full attendance at meetings is rare or the group meets face-to-face sporadically. Agenda for group dialogue is not planned. process for dialogue is entirely improvisational. Disagreements do not exist or are unrecognized. Some or most group members are not interested and/or hold disparate conception as to the purpose of the group. Team members may air disagreements privately after the meetings.</strong></td>
<td><strong>A process for making decisions is not transparent or does not exist. Decisions are minimally informed by group dialogue. Group leaders are not purposefully chosen or are not visible. Most decisions are unrelated to the central practice and purpose of the group.</strong></td>
<td><strong>Individually take minimal action; group actions tend to be uncoordinated or involve very little challenge and/or complexity. Actions are typically unrelated to a shared purpose or essential outcomes.</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Each member consistently takes specific action as a result of group decision-making; Member actions are coordinated and interdependent, complex/challenging, and directly related to the central practice and purpose of the group.</strong></td>
<td><strong>Each member takes action but not necessarily as a result of group decision-making; Group actions are somewhat coordinated and interdependent; actions may lack complexity or challenge, but are generally related to a the central practice and purpose of the group.</strong></td>
<td><strong>Most members consider information about the effects of their practice and performance on essential outcomes, but minimal data is systematically collected, analyzed, or publicly shared. Group may rely on &quot;hearsay,&quot; &quot;anecdotes,&quot; or &quot;recollections&quot; as data to inform dialogue and decision-making.</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Individuals take minimal action; group actions tend to be uncoordinated or involve very little challenge and/or complexity. Actions are typically unrelated to a shared purpose or essential outcomes.</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Group members do not regularly collect or share information about their practice and effects of practice on essential outcomes.</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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Outcomes Associated with High Quality Collaboration & Evaluative Inquiry

**For Individuals & Teams**

More likely to take risks, ask for assistance, listen, use information to act, develop creative solutions, develop greater sense of personal responsibility for outcomes, enhance personal self-esteem, build self-efficacy…

**For Organizations/Agencies/Bureaus/Divisions**

Better services for clients, new products, increase in productivity, higher morale - better work climate, less turnover, less waste/sabotage/error, improved financial performance, less redundancy-more efficient, able to adapt, effective use of limited resources, more likely to solve complex problems, more likely to develop innovative programs…
A new order of things…

“It ought to be remembered that there is nothing more difficult to take in hand, more perilous to conduct, or more uncertain in its success, than to take the lead in the introduction of a new order of things. Because the innovator has for enemies all those who have done well under old conditions, and lukewarm defenders in those who may do well under the new. This coolness arises partly from fear of the opponents, who have the laws on their side, and partly from the incredulity of men, who do not readily believe in new things until they have had a long experience of them.”

~ Machiavelli, The Prince