



National College for
School Leadership

www.ncsl.org.uk

What are we **learning about...?**

Facilitation within school networks

Facilitating collaborative learning in networks


A development tool designed to explore the
facilitation of collaborative learning in networks

Facilitating collaborative learning in networks

This development tool has been designed to enable individuals and groups to explore their practices in facilitating collaborative learning in networks.

Through the exploration of a series of conjectural statements about the facilitation of collaborative learning in networks, the activity aims to promote personal reflection on facilitation practice. It provides a collaborative context in which shared reflection between network practitioners can take place.

The tool will be most useful to those network participants who have some experience of facilitation and who would benefit from comparing and contrasting their experience with that of others in order to explore and analyse the key components of their facilitation practice.

The development tool can be used as one way of engaging individuals acting in a facilitation role within a school learning network or across a group of networks. It is designed to encourage discussion and promote reflection on participants' experiences of facilitation. It enables participants to learn from colleagues about the facilitation of collaborative learning in a range of different contexts. 

Acknowledgements

We would like to thank Ronnie Woods and participants in the Collaborative Leadership Learning programme for their contributions to the design, development and publication of this tool.

Kirsten Hill and Jasbir Mann
Lead Developers

ISSN 1749-7353

Facilitating collaborative learning in networks

Activity guidance

Individual activity



10 mins

Step 1 instruction

- Read carefully each of the statement cards provided.
- Choose the statement which resonates most with you, which says something about how you feel about facilitating learning.
- The statement you select will either relate to how you have experienced collaborative learning, or how collaborative learning might operate in a learning network.

Notes

- ✓ Give each individual a set of statement cards, which can be copied and cut out from the template provided on pages 4 and 5.

Individual reflection



15 mins

Step 2 instruction

- Using the 'Pause for thought...? Reflection sheet' provided, write a short reflection.
- Why did you choose that statement?
 - What does it say about the context in which you work?
 - Does it relate to how you have experienced things or how you would aspire for things to be?
 - What might make facilitating collaborative learning difficult for you?

Notes

- ✓ Ensure that everyone in the group has a copy of the 'Pause for thought...? Reflection sheet' detailed on page 6.

Paired discussion



20 mins

Step 3 instruction

- Working in a pair, share your reflection with a colleague. Listen and take notes if you wish.
- Share your thoughts on one another's contribution.

Notes

- ✓ Encourage participants to give each other sufficient air time, allowing at least five minutes each to share the outcomes of their individual reflection before they progress to shared reflection.

Whole group plenary



15 mins

Step 4 instruction

- *Individual reflection* - ask participants to take five minutes to complete the 'Reflection for action' record sheet, identifying issues of significance for facilitation in their networked context.
- *Shared reflection* - ask participants to reflect together in the wider group on what they have learned about facilitation and the implications for practice in their context.

Notes

- ✓ Give every member of the group a copy of the 'Reflection for action' record sheet, which can be copied from the template on page 7.

Facilitating collaborative learning in networks

Statement cards

Photocopy these pages on to card and cut out.

Leadership and facilitation lie at opposite ends of a continuum along which a facilitator may move in the course of facilitating a collaborative learning group.

Facilitation in learning communities creates learning spaces where teachers and headteachers can co-create new knowledge.

In collaborative learning groups facilitation may be drawn from a variety of sources, creating a stimulating environment for learning.

Facilitation of collaborative learning can be helped or hindered by prior group relationships.

Effective facilitation can come from within a collaborative learning group, either from one individual or more.

Facilitation of learning groups must ensure that learning engages with the whole person.

Facilitation of a collaborative learning group should lead progressively towards autonomous control by the group of both the process and content of the learning.

Facilitation of collaborative learning demands a flexible response to the emerging needs of the group.

Facilitation of collaborative learning is most effective when the facilitator is from outside the group.

A facilitator brings tools and support so that a collaborative learning group can have a discourse around issues which are imperative or compelling to the group.

It is vital in the facilitation of collaborative learning that the facilitator shares the professional expertise of the group.

Skilful facilitation creates opportunities for group participants to interrogate their assumptions.

A major role in facilitating learning communities is to engage the group in collaborative enquiry.

A major role in the facilitation of collaborative learning is to model learning processes.

A key aspect of the facilitation of collaborative learning groups is the development of questioning skills.

Use this space to add your own statement

Pause for thought...? Reflection sheet Photocopy this page.



Please use this space to record your thoughts in response to the questions posed.

Statement

Why did you choose this statement?

What does it say about the context in which you work?

Does it relate to how you have experienced things or how you would aspire for things to be?

What might make facilitating collaborative learning difficult for you?

Reflection for action record sheet Photocopy this page.



Please use this space to record your thoughts in response to the questions posed.

What have you learned about the facilitation of collaborative learning?

What are the implications for developing effective network facilitation practices in your context?

What actions will you take to ensure that your personal learning has an impact upon the facilitation of collaborative learning in your context?

What are we learning about...?

The seven titles in the series focus on:

What are we learning about...?

- LEA involvement in school networks
- Establishing a network of schools
- Community leadership in networks
- *'Making mathematics count'* in school networks
- **Facilitation within school networks**
- Sustaining a network of schools
- Leadership of school networks

To order a copy of this publication and others in this series, please email **nlc@ncsl.org.uk** quoting the reference **WAWLA/Facilitation within school networks**

National College for School Leadership
Triumph Road
Nottingham
NG8 1DH

T: 0870 001 1155
F: 0115 872 2001
E: nlc@ncsl.org.uk
W: www.ncsl.org.uk/nlc

Networked Learning Communities

learning from each other

learning with each other

learning on behalf of each other