Building Capacity for University-Assisted Community School Assessment and Improvement: A Visual Approach

Facilitators: Starla D. Officer, Mary F. Price, Justin L. Ellis
Indiana University Purdue University Indianapolis Center for Service and Learning
Friday, May 11, 2012
Collaboration in the Context of Community Schools

- Community School philosophy focus on addressing needs of the whole child;

- School becomes a hub of support for the child, their family, and the broader community;

- Examples:
  - Mental health programming
  - Adult education
  - Preventive healthcare
The dance of collaboration....

"Can I help it if I was given TWO left feet?"

©T. McCracken mchumor.com
What are the benefits of improved collaboration?

How do we build capacity among community partners and schools to collaborate reciprocally and/or transformatively?
Benefits—Direct Outcomes

- Improved communication across constituencies
- Shared decision making at the school level
  - Evidence of deepening collaboration—vertically/horizontally
- Increased capacity to build a network of partners supporting student success

GOOD READ:
Collaborative Leadership: Developing Effective Partnerships for Communities and Schools (Ruben 2009)
Parents and Community Engagement
- Setting school vision
- Input to school improvement strategies
- Involvement with the kids (Parent nights, mentoring, PTO, etc.)

Students
- Improved student persistence
- Improved student engagement
- Improved student learning
Our Focus

- Develop tools that support individuals and groups to:
  - Monitor the health of key relationships
  - Document the scope of the collaboration
  - Enable goal setting and gap analysis that can enhance the collaboration

- Improve Communication

- Build stronger connections and awareness among partners
Brainstorm

Select a lens to analyze the collaboration

Describe the collaboration

- Identify primary and secondary nodes
- Map lines of communication
- Map directionality of communication
- Map quality of communication

Examine quality of relationships in terms of Closeness

Articulate Learning

- Identify shifts in perspective or new knowledge resulting from analysis
- Gap analysis
- Identify next steps

Students

Organizations
- Refers to staff based in community based organizations (government, non-profit, for-profit, foundations)

Faculty

Administrators
- Refers to campus based staff at any level of the organization

Residents
- Depending on the context, community residents may be referred to as clients, patients, etc.

Key Constituencies in Community Schools (not exhaustive)

- District level Administration
- Funders
- School Administrators
- PARENTS
- Community Partners
- Students
- Teachers
- Others?
REFLECTION ACTIVITY: Mapping Community School Collaborations

Getting Started...

GRAB SOME SCRATCH PAPER.
STEP 1: Select a Collaboration

NOTES

- Consider your relationships only within the context of this collaboration.

- Level of analysis can either be a single project or a range of work/programs at your school.

- Exercise in perspective taking.

- If you have multiple roles, you will need to pick one.
List individuals, groups, organizations, etc. that are involved in this collaboration.

Make sure to:
- List first/last names of individuals,
- List full name of organizations,
- You can assign acronyms for use on your map.
Key Questions:
• Do I think of my relationship primarily as one with an individual or one with unit/organization/group levels?
• Do I know individuals and their roles by name or only the organization, roles/titles of individuals?

**TIP:** group related individuals together in cases where you have contacts with more than one individual in a school/organization.
Visual Cues

**Size Differences** = how central person/group is within this collaboration

- **Larger circles** = more primary to the collaboration
- **Smaller circles** = less primary or active in the collaboration or a specific relationship within an organization/group

**Color Differences** = indicative of qualitative differences

**Line type Differences** = types of connections
The Lens

For this exercise, use your position as the lens through which you will examine the relationships in this collaboration to create your map.
Drafting your map
Using **blue** or **black** pen, **draw a circle** at the center of your paper that represents you and label it with your name.

*List the name of the collaboration at top of page*
Review your notes.
Consider which of the collaborators on your list you consider the most important to your efforts in this collaboration. These can either be individuals or groups/organizations.

Using blue or black pen, draw circles on your paper;

Label the circles with the names of the primary groups or individuals with whom you currently have relationships in relation to this collaboration;

Allow for space between the circles in case you need to add items later.

NOTE: At this point do not draw any lines connecting the circles.
STEP 6: Secondary Relationships

- Review your notes.

- Identify those individuals or groups on your list of collaborators you would consider more secondary to the collaboration.

- Using **blue** or **black** pen, draw and label circles with the names of the secondary collaborators with whom you currently have relationships. **NOTE:** At this point do not draw any lines connecting the circles.

**NOTE:** This step is helpful if you are representing relationships between your self and an organization.
### Analyzing Quality in Relationships

Adapted from Bringle et al. 2009; Enos and Morton 2003

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Closeness</th>
<th>Equity</th>
<th>Integrity</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Frequency of interaction</td>
<td>• Extent to which individuals/groups within a relationship perceive</td>
<td>• Extent to which individuals/group hold shared internally coherent values</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>that outcomes are seen as proportional to inputs across the relationship.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Diversity of activities that</td>
<td>• Relative inputs can be disproportionate to outcomes—what matters</td>
<td>• Extent to which relationship offers a way for both parties to engage in</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>form basis for interaction</td>
<td>is perception.</td>
<td>defining problems and solutions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Strength of influence on other’s</td>
<td></td>
<td>• Extent to which individuals’/groups in a relationship match means with</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>person/groups behavior, decisions,</td>
<td></td>
<td>ends (i.e.“practicing what you preach”)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>plans, goals</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
STEP 7: Communication Flow

- Using **blue** or **black** pen and the legend below, draw **directional arrows** between the circles.

**DIRECTIONALITY OF COMMUNICATION**

- "**Unidirectional**" Flow of Communication = Indicate by drawing one line with unidirectional arrow
- "**Bidirectional**" Flow of Communication = Indicate by drawing two lines with bidirectional arrows
**STEP 8: Communication Strength**

Using the legend below, **trace over the directional lines on your map** based on your assessment of the **strength of communication** between yourself and the individuals/groups identified in **STEPS 5–6**.

**STRENGTH OF COMMUNICATION**

**“Emergent” Communication** = Leave line(s) as is.
- Use in situations where there is insufficient information to evaluate

**“Weak” Communication** = Trace “red” line over directional arrows
- Episodic interaction often with delayed or no response,
- Little to no face-to-face contact; mostly electronic modes of interaction
- Collaboration on single activity;
- Little no influence on activities or planning;
- Complete lack of awareness of the other party

**“Moderate” Communication** = Trace “yellow” line over directional arrows
- Periodic interaction (may be more or less concentrated/distributed)
- Reciprocal effort to respond/initiate;
- Mode of contact varies;
- Limited range of activities;
- Some perceived influence on activities and planning;
- Influence confined to a single or narrow range of activities

**“Strong” Communication** = Trace “green” line over directional arrows
- Consistent interaction;
- Reciprocal effort to respond/initiate;
- Engages multiple modes of contact;
- Diverse range activities;
- Definite influence on planning and decision making;
- Influence extends across a broad range of activities.
Characterizing Relationships

Emergent
Undeveloped or Unbalanced

- Benefits negligible or one-sided
- Goals at odds
- Short-term or Long-term
- Project-based
- Decision making made in isolation
- Commitment to own interest and not others
- One or both parties avoid dealing with conflicts
- Nearly all power in the hands of one
- Work within own system
- Maintain separate identities

Transactional

- Each party benefits
- Goals converge at some points
- Short-term
- Project-based
- Decision making in consultation with partner
- Limited, planned commitments
- Both deal with conflict but with discomfort
- One party has somewhat more power but both benefit
- Work within own system and increased awareness of others’ systems
- Maintain separate identities

Transformational

- Each benefits equally and the relationship grows as a result
- Develop and work towards common goals
- Long-term; indefinite
- Issue-based
- Decision making is shared and consensus-based
- Dynamic, open commitments
- Both deal with conflict openly with shared expectation resolution
- Power is equally shared
- Create new systems
- Create shared identity(ies)

OUTCOMES FOR EACH?

EACH BENEFITS

EACH GROWS

Adapted from Clayton et al. 2010, Enos and Morton 2003
STEP 9: Evaluate the Quality of the Collaborative Relationships (CLOSENESS)

Using the legend below, trace colored lines over the circles drawn in STEPS 2–3 based on your rating of each relationship along the Relationship Continuum (refer handout—E,T,T).

Factors related to closeness

- Frequency of interaction
- Diversity of activities that form basis for interaction
- Strength of influence on other’s person/groups behavior, decisions, plans, goals

QUALITY OF RELATIONSHIP

- “Emergent” Relationship = Leave circle(s) “black/blue”
- “Exploitative” Relationship = Outline circle(s) in “red”
- “Transactional” Relationship = Outline circle(s) in “yellow”
- “Transformational” Relationship = Outline circle(s) in “green”
Unaware of other person

**Relationships CONTINUUM**

Adapted from Bringle et al. 2009

- **Unilateral awareness**
- **Communication with each other**
- **Coordination of activities with each other**
- **Working for common goals**
- **Planning and formalized leadership**
- **Working with shared resources**
- **Integration of goals**
- **Synergistic Relationships**
- **Transformational Relationships**

As the color shifts to black—the strength and quality of the partnership increases.
Review your map and your brainstorming list.

- Are there any new individuals or groups that you would like or need to include on your map that aren’t currently represented?

- If yes, add these persons/groups to your map using dotted circles, to indicate these new prospects.
Discussion and Analysis
Analysis: Map Description

- Describe the general state of communication among the collaborators on your map?

- Describe the patterns you note in the direction of communication between you and others in the collaboration? Any surprises?

- Do you note any particular clusters or density nodes on your map?

- Are there any mismatches between how you evaluated a relationship versus how you assessed the quality of communication? (i.e. Did you have a green circle but a single yellow or red line?) What other factors might explain the divergence?
• Were there any relationships that need careful attention in the near future or did you note any gaps on your map?

• What opportunities for growth/improvement and/or constraints/challenges did you identify?
4 Perspectives on the George Washington Community High School – IUPUI Partnership
Comparing Maps and Next Steps

- Based on your analysis, what “next steps” can you identify to improve the quality of communication in this collaboration?
  - Individual Strategies
  - Program–level Strategies
  - School/Organizational level Strategies?

- With whom will you focus your efforts?

- Of these which can you enact in the next month, 6 months, year, etc.?
Possible applications
Process for Learning

- **Focus is on capacity building**
- Reflection-in-action (retrospective/prospective)
- **Alternative to written reflection**
- Development programs (any constituency)

**Planning**
- Organizational development programs (deans, departments, CBOs, Community foundations)
- Neighborhood associations
- Team based projects
- Transition planning (one-on-one, organizational or collaboration level)

- **Action oriented**
Assessment tools

- Multiple standpoints (self, collective view, comparative standpoints (pair/share))
- Longitudinal tracking—multiple snapshots over time
- Quality, diversity, directionality of communication as proxy for attending to health of the collaboration
- Density/diversity of relationships within/across constituencies
- Scalar developments (single relationships → networks)
Guide our learning
Contact Information

**IUPUI Center for Service and Learning**

**Starla D. Officer**
Coordinator, Office of Neighborhood Partnerships
Co-Director, Midwest Ctr. for University-Assisted Community Schools
officers@iupui.edu; 317–278–3475

**Mary F. Price**
Coordinator, Office of Service Learning
price6@iupui.edu, 317–278–2539

**Justin L. Ellis**
Graduate Assistant, Office of Service Learning
ellisju@iupui.edu
Thank you.