



# IT WORKED!

## *Collaborative Planning with Resistant Teachers*

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### **Collaborative Planning with Resistant Teachers**

I am an experienced math coach; however, last year I was placed in a new school. I was told that the teachers in the school were resistant to professional development and it was expressly stated that they did not want to read professional articles or professional books about teaching mathematics. To begin the year, I spent some time visiting classrooms and team planning sessions, getting to know the teachers and students, and building relationships with the staff. I noticed that teachers complained about how hard it was to plan their 4-8 week instructional units and that they often felt like they didn't know where to begin. I also noticed that during planning periods, teachers spent most of their time looking for seatwork or homework online using sites such as Pinterest.com or Teacherspayteachers.com. The worksheets that they found on these sites was what was driving their planning!

I decided to plan full-day professional development with each grade-level team for the purpose of planning an upcoming instructional unit. During the first part of the day, we discussed the major content and standards of the upcoming unit. I shared short resources such as a quick pedagogy-related video from the teachingchannel.org or a condensed content snippet from NCTM's *Teaching With Curriculum Focal Points* and *Teaching Student Centered Mathematics*. During this discussion, we created a shared concept map that included what students should understand and be able to do by the end of the unit. Then we discussed the strengths and weaknesses of groups of students, such as ELLs, special education students, and students who may need extensions. Using this information, we created a planning chart that included the main focus for each week of the unit. What should our students know and be able to do at the end of the unit? We used our own words and experiences to brainstorm this, as well as ideas from the shared professional resources.

After establishing greater understanding of the content and developing an instructional sequence of the unit, I shared a few good print and online resources related to the unit content that teachers could access. What instructional resources may help us? Where do the resources fit within our sequence and why? Each member of the team took a deep dive into one or more resources, selecting instructional strategies and ideas they wanted to share with the team and identifying where the resources fit within the instructional sequence. At the end of the day, as each team member shared their resource ideas, I typed their thoughts into the planning charts that were projected for all to see. Teachers expressed such appreciation for this professional development both that day and later at the end of the units. I knew it worked because teachers said that they felt their instruction for the unit was more connected and coherent than it had been previously and wanted to continue this process for other units!

Since this experience, I've created similar planning charts using online collaborative tools prior to starting instructional units and shared editing rights with teacher teams. During collaborative planning times, we have continued to create concept maps, plan the sequence week by week, and then examine resources to support the concepts and sequence we created. It was a success and has led to increased collaboration in the time that has passed!

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