Instructor’s Guide for Teams

Topic Area: Collaboration

Module: Teams

Case Study: Bridging the Gap: Special Education Teachers and Regular Education Teachers Collaborate to Achieve Success

Summary: It is time once again for the new school year, and Ms. Cadaber finds herself at a loss. She wants to bring her special education team closer to the regular education staff. She knows her students would benefit tremendously if the special education team was to interact with classroom teachers regularly. She recognizes too, that the classroom teachers are extremely busy with the beginning of the year and because there are over 2000 students and staff, reaching her goal this year once again feels impossible.

Characters and Roles:
- Ms. Cadaber, special education facilitator
- Dr. Lovejoy, principal
- English Teacher
- History Teacher
- Science Teacher
- Paraeducator
- Mandy, Paraeducator

Tools:
- Reflections in the Teaming Activities Section

Artifacts:
- State Map
- Reflections in the Teaming Activities Section

Web Sites:
- [www.co-operation.orgedtech.kennesaw.edu/intech.cooperativelearning.htm](http://www.co-operation.orgedtech.kennesaw.edu/intech.cooperativelearning.htm)

Discussion Points:
- What can classroom teachers do to improve communication with paraeducators?
- What are the pros and cons of doing team building activities during staff meetings?
- What strategies can instructional leaders use in meetings to keep teachers focused on the topic being discussed or the proposed activity?
- What are the pros and cons of responding to reflective questions following a meeting?
Activities:
- Use the “Ripple Effect Picture” as a team building activity at a meeting.
- Brainstorm strategies to improve communication between regular and special education teachers.

Reflective Question: Scene 1, Question 2 – What might a paraeducator be concerned about when he enters a classroom? *The role of a paraeducator is to improve student learning. It is important for the regular classroom teacher to communicate exactly what the paraeducator should be doing each day. If the support person does not have clear expectations, he might feel uncomfortable with the content or the responsibility he is supposed to assume with respect to the student with special needs. In addition, most paraeducators want to be actively involved and feel like what they do benefits the students with whom they interact.*

Connections:
- Topic Area: Collaboration; Module: Working with Paraeducators