



Washington State Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development

“The Practitioner’s Best Friend”
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Can We Learn This Together?

Together we can face any challenges as deep as the ocean and as high as the sky. **Sonia Gandhi**

Encouraging a culture that supports one another to achieve our goals is imperative. In continuing on from David Cooke’s Critical Question in August, Can You Help Me?, we must provide a supportive environment for learning to be welcomed within our professional community. When we are faced with the overwhelming sensation of “I don’t know,” how do we develop a culture that accepts this premise? Hopefully we can initiate the momentum to move in a direction of continuously responding, “Can we learn this together?”

Teacher leaders, instructional coaches, and administrators should strive to develop a culture that embraces a growth mindset. The following actions serve as a supportive means for establishing a solid foundation of connecting, learning, and growing together:

Connect - Provide ample time for educators to connect and build relationships. Through trusting bonds authentic communication can develop.

Process - Create a safe environment for educators to continuously process their growth goals. Goals can be revised through continuous conversations to truly identify specific needs.

Collaborate - After educators identify others who share similar growth goals, they need time to work together. Offer routine opportunities for educators to collaborate and make progress towards their goals.

Empower - Develop instructional leadership within educators by encouraging them to share their successes. Allow educators to identify strategies they can pass along from effective implementation within their own classrooms and buildings. When educators can be empowered to share ideas that support the growth of their colleagues, it is powerful in and of itself.

Reflect - Intentionally provide multiple opportunities for reflective practice. Develop a routine to provide educators time to analyze their progress and establish future goals as they achieve current ones.

An educator's career is a learning journey. As the hurdles of change cross our professional path, we are presented with opportunities to thrive. These challenges, though, can cause the feeling of isolation, frustration, and defeat. It is extremely important to reach out to others and remain side-by-side as we travel in new directions on our journey. Truly embracing challenges in a collaborative nature allows us to find the strength to climb each mountain. Celebrating success together, when reaching the peak, develops the desire to establish new goals as we descent into the next valley of change.

The grass is only greener on the other side if we can embrace the learning journey and travel there together. So reach out to your colleagues as you approach the valley ahead, trying to reach the next mountain peak, and ask, "Can we learn this together?"

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