

**Open Space Seminar
University of Hertfordshire, UK
11th April 2018**

**The EFeCT Project
Exploring Collaborative Teacher Learning: Principles for Practice**



Summary report

This seminar, part of the regular Open Space series at the University of Hertfordshire, was held to raise awareness of the EFeCT project and to provide an active learning session working with the principles for collaborative teacher learning identified by the project. Ten colleagues from the School of Education and outside the university participated in this active learning.

A general introduction was given on the aims and scope of the EFeCT project. The background to the development of factors and principles supporting collaborative teacher learning was also explored.

Multiple copies of a set of cards, designed by Amanda Roberts and Philip Woods for this seminar, were printed, each card showing one of the principles as presented in the EFeCT Guide. An exercise was devised which participants were invited to take part in as groups. In each group, a set of cards was divided randomly amongst participants so that each person had a selection of principles.

Each person was invited to choose one card they wish to highlight. It could be, for example, a principle they think especially important, particularly relevant to their practice, or one that they consider is difficult to achieve or they felt was unclear.

The criterion for highlighting the principle was up to them. Participants then talked to the others in their group about their selected cards. Finally, the groups were invited to choose one card and to share this and the reason for highlighting that principle with the whole seminar.

The exercise and subsequent plenary seminar discussion prompted active and engaged dialogue. Participants found working with the principles useful in a number of ways, including:

- using selected principles to reflect on issues apparent in the practice of their current professional setting: to talk about what was good about it as well as what was problematic.
- helping to identify priorities amongst principles: one participant for example highlighted the importance of there being multiple sources of learning (one of the principles under deep learning); other examples were the need to give attention to emotional learning (another principle under deep learning) and the importance of developing teachers' agency (under participative professionalism).
- raising awareness of how someone might be drawn to principles that are a comfortable option for them, whilst other principles are given less attention because they are seen as more difficult.
- prompting debate about the dangers of collective identity if it requires too much conformity and generates groupthink

A question was raised about the conceptual distinction between features (participative professionalism, deep level collaboration, equity, deep learning) and the detailed principles.



Using the cards in an exercise like this was generally seen as useful. There was a request to have sets of cards that participants could then make use of in their own professional setting.

Amanda Roberts
Philip Woods
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