Engaging Staff Meetings: Professional Conversations that Foster Continuous Quality Improvement

Judy Jablon
Early Childhood Consultant

Poll
Who has joined us today?

a. Director/Supervisor/Manager/Owner
b. Education Specialist or Coordinator
c. Coach/Specialist/Mentor
d. Teacher/Provider/Caregiver/Assistant Teacher
e. Home Visitor/Family Outreach Counselor
f. Consultant/Higher Ed Faculty
Today’s Conversation

- Engagement: What does it look like?
- Your role
- The Substance of meetings
- Making time

STAFF MEETINGS

"I can’t wait until tomorrow’s staff meeting," said no teacher ever.

VISUALIZE...

- An engaging staff meeting.
- What might it ...
  - look like?
  - sound like?
- Jot down some thoughts.
An Engaging Staff Meeting...

Looks like:
- People look comfortable and relaxed.
- People are sitting at tables or standing in clusters.
- People are talking with each other.
- You see smiles on faces and eyes that are lit up.
- There are snacks and beverages on tables.

Sounds like:
- You hear back and forth conversation.
- You hear laughter.
- You hear people moving around from place to place interacting with each other and/or with materials.

Show of hands...

For me, engagement in a meeting means…

a. I’m able to talk to colleagues about content that interests me.

b. I learn something new.

c. I’m encouraged to think about ideas in new ways.

d. I can readily apply the discussion to my work.

Why?????

- Does engagement matter when gathering your staff for a meeting?
Research shows a substantial effect on student achievement by structuring how teachers work together to promote each other’s learning. Ikemoto, Talaferrro, Adams

Characteristics of Engagement
- activates prior knowledge
- fosters active investigation
- promote group interaction
- encourage collaboration
- allow for choice
- include humors
- nurtures independent thinking
Engagement and Collaboration

- Build trust
- Strengthen relationships
- Foster learning

Boring Models Boring

To shape the meeting you visualized, think about your shadow.
What does it mean to cast a shadow?

Apply Powerful Interactions to Staff Meetings

- Effective adult-adult interactions are more likely to lead to better teacher-child interactions.
- Think about the 5 principles of a PI stance.
  - Use a strengths-based approach
  - Promote articulation
  - Allow for individualization
  - Encourage learning partnerships
  - Be a model!

YOU influence meetings.

1. Plans

2. Content and Process

3. Logistics
Do you create plans alone or with others?
How far in advance?
What input do you get and from whom?
How often are your meetings and for how long?
Is there some degree of predictability?

Collaboration and engagement begins with planning.
- What's our purpose and what do we want to accomplish?
- How will what we do help us achieve better outcomes for our children and families?
- Who are the best people to come together to design the plan?

Teachers who feel they have a voice in their professional development are more engaged. Knowing everyone is focused on a common theme of professional learning helps build a collegial culture and a stronger support structure.
Sterling

*This ed week article talked about how engaging staff meetings reduces staff burnout.
What’s the content?

- Can we begin with deep thinking about teaching and learning?
- Are there related policies and procedures we need to address?

What’s the process?

- What will they learn?
- What will they do?
- What will they take away?
- How can we revisit it?
- How will we know that what we did is making a difference?
Content and Process Ideas

- Build fluency about child outcomes.
- Have each teacher bring a photo that shows a decision they made about the environment.
- Invite them to annotate the photo with this statement:
  - I decided to _______ because it helps children learn ______.

I decided to use library pockets, popsicle sticks with each child's photo at each interest area. This helps children learn to make a choice and it also reinforces one-on-one correspondence.

Content and Process Ideas

- Continue photo study with links to child outcomes
  - Take pictures of teacher child interactions.
  - Use "I notice" statements to invite examination of teacher actions that lead to child outcomes.

I notice _______ and this helps children learn ________.

Content and Process Ideas

- Explore and "unpack" learning outcomes for children.
- Brainstorm materials and opportunities to provide that support the development of this skill.
- Teachers return to classrooms and set up an experience/invitation to explore.
- Do a gallery walk of classrooms to see how different teachers set up experiences to promote learning/development of the same skill.
Content and Process Ideas

- Study video clips to go deeper into teacher-child interactions, listening for vocabulary, back and forth exchanges, questions that elicit children’s thinking.
  - Choose short snippets.
  - Focus on strengths.

Content and Process Ideas

- Consider aspects of your program you want to enhance.
- Invite teachers to bring photos that reflect this program component.
- Be sure to link to child outcomes.

Content and Process Ideas

- Examine examples of children’s learning.
  - What learning does this example show?
  - What “indicators” does it link to?
  - What might you have documented to learn more about the child’s thinking?
Consider new ways to use a material.
- Each teacher brings one material from her classroom.
- Brainstorm and chart many different ways children can use the material.
- Brainstorm and chart the learning that is possible for children while using this material in varied ways.

Visit classrooms using trip sheets and cameras.
- Find examples of how teachers help children learn self-regulation.
- Find examples of mathematical thinking in the environment.
- Find examples of how families are included in the classroom.

Use materials to reflect on teaching and learning
- For example: Block building
  - BUILD!
  - Think about concepts that children are learning
  - Reflect on vocabulary you can use
  - Consider questions that invite description, explanation, hypothesizing
Content and Process Ideas

Use materials to reflect on teaching and learning.
> For example: Collage
  > Use a wide range of materials.
  > Consider torn paper
  > Fabrics
  > Textures
  > Think about concepts that children are learning.
  > Consider questions that invite description, explanation, hypothesizing

To address administrivia...

> Consider an email or screencast in advance.
  > Housekeeping issues
  > Prep work for the “content”

What about logistics?

> Provide the agenda (and a reflective question or assignment) in advance.
> Be sure to start and finish on time.
> Try to stick to the agenda.
The logistics make a difference!

- The physical environment
  - Seating arrangements
  - Aesthetics

- Snacks and beverages
  - Brought by you
  - Brought by others

- Opening and closing
  - To set the tone
  - To ensure follow up

A few research-based tips...

1. Adequate preplanning
2. Communication that encourages different perspectives and interpretations
3. Shared decision-making
4. Establishment of safe and nurturing environment
5. Collectively-designed ground rules
6. Effective use of time and punctuality
7. Appropriate meeting space
8. Selective invitation when necessary

Questions
Thank you
Stay in touch!

judy@judyjablon.com
www.judyjablon.com
Twitter: @judyjablon

www.PowerfulInteractions.com
Twitter: @p_interactions
Find us on Facebook!

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