

# Activity 7:

## Professional Collaboration through Inter-visitation

<b>Purpose:</b>	Through reading, discussion, and planning, this session will familiarize participants with the conditions and practices that support effective teacher collaboration. This session guides participants in planning for inter-visitations that lead to the collaborative development of teachers' instructional knowledge and skills in order to effect powerful changes in student learning.
<b>Length of Time:</b>	40 minutes
<b>Materials:</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Article: <a href="#">Why Collaborative Inquiry Teams? (National Center for Literacy Education)</a><sup>1</sup></li> <li>• <i>Handbook for Professional Learning</i>, pages 89-90</li> <li>• <a href="#">Inter-visitation Protocol for Reciprocal Peer Mentoring</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Inter-visitation Protocol for Studying Peer Practice</a></li> </ul>
<b>Essential Question:</b>	What are the key elements of professional learning that promote professional collaboration that powerfully changes student learning? How can your school use inter-visitations to build on those key elements of professional learning?

### Activity Steps:

- 1 Article Study: Why Collaborative Inquiry Teams? (15 minutes):** Participants read the article independently, and then, in pairs or small groups, engage in the 4 “A”s Text Protocol<sup>2</sup>:

  - The group reads the text silently, highlighting it and writing notes in the margin on post-it notes in answer to the following four questions:
    - What assumptions does the author of the text hold?
    - What do you agree with in the text?
    - What do you want to argue with in the text?
    - What parts of the text do you want to aspire to?

<sup>1</sup> Available at: <http://www.literacyinlearningexchange.org/sites/default/files/ncleshortlitreview.pdf>

<sup>2</sup> Four “A”s Text Protocol, Adapted from Judith Gray, Seattle, WA 2005, National School Reform Faculty, [http://www.nsrffharmony.org/system/files/protocols/4\\_a\\_text\\_0.pdf](http://www.nsrffharmony.org/system/files/protocols/4_a_text_0.pdf).

- In a round, have each person identify one assumption in the text, citing the text (with page numbers, if appropriate) as evidence.
- Either continue in rounds or facilitate a conversation in which the group talks about the text in light of each of the remaining “A”s, taking them one at a time—what do people want to argue with, agree with, and aspire to in the text?

**2 Teacher Collaboration through Peer Coaching and Inter-visitation (10 minutes):** Participants read the descriptions of “Peer or Collegial Mentoring” (page 89)<sup>3</sup> or “Inter-visitation and Intra-visitation” (page 90) in the *Handbook for Professional Learning*. In pairs or as a group, participants discuss the following question:

- How do peer coaching and inter-visitation relate to the following elements of effective collaboration?:
  - Privatizing practice
  - Using evidence effectively
  - Creating collaborative culture
  - Maintaining an inquiry stance
  - Enacting shared agreements
  - Supporting collaboration systematically
- In your school context, in what ways might peer mentoring or inter-visitation be responsive to identified teacher and student needs?
- In your school, what impact might peer coaching or inter-visitation have on teachers’ practice and student outcomes?

**3 Planning to Collaborate through Inter-visitations (15 minutes):** Participants review the two inter-visitation protocols in the Inter-visitation Toolkit (the Inter-visitation Protocol for Reciprocal Peer Mentoring and the Inter-visitation Protocol for Studying Peer Practice) and discuss the following:

- How and when might each of the protocols be used in your school? How might you adapt them?
- What structures or resources would be needed to use these protocols? Who could you reach out to for this support?
- What next steps could you take to incorporate either reciprocal peer mentoring or studying peer practice?
  - (The “Checklist for Planning Professional Learning” on page 75 of the *Handbook for Professional Learning* might be helpful when planning the next steps.)

## Follow-up by School Teams:

School teams should then spend time creating a plan to implement one or both of the inter-visitation protocols with pairs or teams of teachers in their school. Based upon the needs assessment they conducted, school teams might consider grouping teachers by grade, content area, or role, or by inviting teachers to suggest who they visit. They should consider how the pairings or groupings can be flexible and responsive to meet any new needs that arise, as well as build trust and ownership among the teachers. In addition, school teams should consider whether it would be helpful to initially review a skill, like taking low-inference notes, so the conversations can be focused on evidence and not opinions.<sup>4</sup>

<sup>3</sup> For more information on peer coaching, see pages 37-42 in the *Handbook for Professional Learning*.

<sup>4</sup> Resources for introducing or reviewing low-inference note-taking, including a note-taking template, are available at ARIS Learn LO

Finally, school teams should consider what existing or new structures would support teachers in visiting each other (refer to “Strategies for Implementing Inter-visitations” for ideas from other New York City schools included in the Inter-visitation Toolkit available on the Advance Intranet Measures of Teaching Practice page as well as ARIS Learn LO 763).

- 1** **1<sup>st</sup> Extension Activity: Participant Planning (30 minutes):** Participants meet with their colleagues to plan the upcoming visits. For a template to support integrating inter-visitations in a cycle of professional learning, participants can refer to “Professional Learning Team Cycle Planning Guide” on page 77 of the *Handbook for Professional Learning*, as well as a completed sample of this template in the Inter-visitation Toolkit. For a template to support with scheduling and discussing the purpose for each visit, participants can refer to the “Scheduling Template” and corresponding sample in the Inter-visitation Toolkit.
  
- 2** **2<sup>nd</sup> Extension Activity: Ways to Make the Learning Public (40 minutes):** After the cycle of inter-visitations, invite the teacher teams to share their learnings with their colleagues, including any changes in their teaching practices and changes in student outcomes. This sharing is also an opportunity to evaluate the impact of inter-visitations and brainstorm revisions to improve using inter-visitations as part of the school’s professional learning plan.