

**PROJECT SMART PARTICIPANT TEAM REPORTS FOR FALL & SPRING SEMESTERS**  
**VAN DUYN ELEMENTARY WITH IHE TANIA RAMALHO**  
**EDU 525 CREATING COLLABORATIVE SPACES FOR LEARNING**

Participant's Name:

**Maura White**

**ACTION:** Describe specifically how the Creating Collaborative Spaces for Learning themes are incorporated into your project to cultivate and support student learning.

The theme for creating collaborative spaces is embedded into my project through my work in the PLC (professional learning community) room. The space used for the PLC meetings is also my work space and the book room. This has created an overcrowded area. I believe that as I develop my organizational skills within this space, it will allow for teachers to access teaching and learning materials more readily. It will also promote a positive learning environment in which they spend 40 minutes working each day. Through my action plan, I will create a more viable space for myself and the teachers.

**RATIONALE:** Fully state your **rationale** for the project. Why is this work important?

This project is important because of the need for organization in my work space. This will allow me to feel more professional and prepared to work with my colleagues. I feel that I will be more productive if everything has a place and that this will be evident to those that use the space. I also will utilize this project to organize my personal work space at home. This will support my work from home to prepare for my professional responsibilities.

**RESPONSIBILITIES/TIMELINE:** Identify a series of **action steps** you will take to complete your project. Next to each step, identify person(s) **responsible** for carrying out that task. For each step also identify your **timeline** (during what month(s) you plan to complete each step).

November 30: Draft plan due for my project. Share with Project SMART team.

December 4: Read Introduction in my book "*the life-changing magic of tidying up- the Japanese art of decluttering and organizing*" Complete reflection.

December 11: Meet with K. Dotson to review timeline and receive feedback on progress. Read Chapter 1 and complete reflection

December 18: Complete filing of folders in file cabinets. Label hanging files.

January 2: Read Chapter 2 and complete reflection.

January 7: Complete inventory sheet for guided reading books (A-F) with new sign out list

January 15: Read Chapter 3 and complete reflection.

Meet with K. Dotson to review timeline and receive feedback on progress.

January 22: Complete inventory sheet for guided reading books (G-J)

January 29: Read Chapter 4 and complete reflection.

February 5: Complete inventory sheet for guided reading books (K-M)

February 12: Complete inventory sheet for guided reading books (N-P)

February 19: Complete Chapter 5 and complete reflection.

February 26: Meet with K. Dotson to review timeline and receive feedback on progress

March 5: Complete inventory sheet for guided reading books (Q-U)

March 12: Complete inventory sheet for guided reading books (V)

March 19: Complete inventory sheet for guided reading books (W)

March 25: Meet with K. Dotson to review timeline and receive feedback on progress

April 2: Complete inventory sheet for guided reading books (X)

April 9: Complete inventory sheet for guided reading books (Y and Z)

April 16: Meet with K. Dotson to review timeline and receive feedback on progress

**EVALUATION:** What **data** will you collect that shows the impact of your project on teacher and student learning? How will you document student learning? Teacher learning?

I will document the feedback given by K. Dotson and other teachers regarding the organization of my space.

I will journal my reflections as I am the learner in this project.

I will journal my reflections from the readings in "*the life-changing magic of tidying up- the Japanese art of decluttering and organizing*".

**RESOURCES:** What resources will you need for this project? What costs, if any, will be incurred? What are possible sources of funding for needed resources?

For this project I will need some organizational materials: such as file folders and hanging files, buckets for books, and labels. I have used some of my teacher resource money for the file folders and hanging folders. I will be in need of buckets and labels, which can be purchased as needed depending on the need.

**UPDATE:** Please update us on any changes you made to your team action plan.

Since creating my action plan, I decided not to create an inventory sheet for each guided reading level. It was not feasible to complete this piece and maintain my professional responsibilities. I also had too much inventory to organize and reallocate for donation or storage for book giveaways to students. Another adjustment that I made was to dedicate a section to intervention materials on my storage shelves. This allowed easier access to materials.

Lastly, I was not able to check in with Karen Dotson as frequently as outlined in my plan. This was due to varied schedules and other professional roadblocks.

**ANALYSIS OF DATA ON TEACHER LEARNING:** We examined our reflections and found the following: (Support each claim with examples/evidence).

- I learned that even if I become overwhelmed completing a task then I can complete the task in smaller chunks.
- I learned that I can be productive when I am given the time and space to focus.
- I learned that I rely on feedback and encouragement to follow through on tasks that I may not want to complete. Without support from others, I ultimately become stuck while working on these tasks.
- As I read the book, I was able to choose which pieces I would accept and that it was okay not to feel obligated to follow every suggestion.
- I learned the importance of celebrating the small accomplishments when setting a goal.
- I learned from my peers that there have been noticeable improvements in my workspace.
- I realized that having a plan and then modifying it is not an indication that I wasn't successful.
- I realized that being sentimental is not synonymous with being unorganized. I keep items that bring me joy to hold memories close to my heart.

- I learned that discarding is the first step in tidying up. Tidying up begins with discarding.
- I realized that the folders in my filing cabinet have not been accessed once this year. Why did I keep them?
- I realized that my colleagues appreciated the progress I made over the course of the school year. They were supportive of the daunting task I faced to organize the workspace.

**ANALYSIS OF DATA ON STUDENT LEARNING:** We examined \_\_\_\_\_ and found the following: (Give examples/evidence for each claim).

Although the focus of my project was on adults, I did receive feedback from students when they entered or worked on my space. Most of the time they commented about how many books I have. I explained that the room was for all teachers to have access to materials. Most of the students were surprised, but not affected by the condition of my workspace. They liked to explore and look through the boxes of books in search of their perfect read.

**Participant's Name:** Karen A. Dotson

**ACTION:** Describe specifically how the Creating Collaborative Spaces for Learning themes are incorporated into your project to cultivate and support student learning.

I will be working collaboratively with the Academic Leadership Team (Principal, Vice Principal, Data Coach, Instructional Coach, two Multi Classroom Leaders). We will look at our protocols for analyzing Achievement Network data for our students. During this process we will also look for items where theory and practice do not align. When theory and practice do not align, we will look for the reasoning for this misalignment. This misalignment is impactful for all stakeholders. However, the individuals that suffer the most from this misalignment are our students. It is their academic success which is hindered. I will look for ways to bridge the gap between theory and practice, so all students will be able to succeed (ESSA).

**RATIONALE:** Fully state your **rationale** for the project. Why is this work important?

We have been partners with Achievement Network (Anet) for the past five years. This partnership involves students taking a test based on standards the students have been taught. Anet will score the multiple-choice section of the assessment and give us back student data. The open response section of the assessment is scored through a rubric by the teachers in our school. Teachers then analyze the data from Anet and from the open response scores and decide which one standard teachers will re-teach for two weeks. A new assessment (Exit ticket) is developed by teachers. Next a set of lesson plans are developed to be taught over the next two weeks. After re-teaching has occurred students will give the Exit ticket which was developed. The data from this Exit ticket is scored based on a rubric and analyzed to see if students have improved during the two-week timeframe of re-teaching.

During this partnership over the five years the process of how we analyze data and report out data has evolved. With these changes teachers were given the autonomy to analyze, re-teach, and report out their findings in ways that best fit them and their students' needs. With teachers being given the autonomy to tweak the process, our protocols had fallen by the wayside, teachers were not reporting out data in a uniform way that was comparing like data and student achievement has decreased according to the goals we have set for ourselves as a building. Our goal is to have 80% of our students passing with 65% or higher.

Below you will see a chart from Anet cycle 1.

ELA	Standard	Anet Test	Re-Teach			Math	Standard	Anet Test	Re-Teach
2	RL 2.1	29%	70%			2	2.NBT.1	37%	95%
2	L 2.4	29%	70%			3	3.OA.3	55%	83%
3	RL 3.1	28%	38%			4	4.NBT.1	28%	57%
3	RL 3.5	32%	16%			5	5.NBT.5	28%	59%
4	W 4.2								
5	RI 5.8	25%	91%						

Looking at this chart we can see there were only three sections who met the goal (Grade 5 – ELA, Grade 2 & 3 – Math). There is even one section (Grade 4 – ELA) which could not report out seeing as their data was never turned in.

With this data listed in this chart, we realized we were in need of creating a new set of protocols to allow teachers the autonomy to differentiate in a systemic way, while allowing teachers to report out data in a meaningful way which will lead to student achievement. Our new protocols must be systematic, implemented building-wide, and allow student achievement to move forward.

**RESPONSIBILITIES/TIMELINE:** Identify a series of **action steps** you will take to complete your project. Next to each step, identify person(s) **responsible** for carrying out that task. For each step also identify your **timeline** (during what month(s) you plan to complete each step).

#### **Fall (October 17<sup>th</sup> & 18<sup>th</sup>)**

- Students will take the first cycle of Anet assessments (ELA and Math)
- Teachers analyze data
- Teachers develop a goal for students to pass after the re-teach (benchmark goal: 80% of students to pass with a minimum of 65% or higher)
- Teachers formulate which standard to re-teach
- Teachers create their exit ticket students will complete after the re-teaching of the standard
- Teachers will analyze data to see if students reached the goal (why or why not)
- If students did not reach their goal, what are the next steps

#### **Winter (January 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup>)**

- Students will take the second cycle of Anet assessments in ELA and Math

#### **Winter (January 22<sup>nd</sup>)**

- Academic Leadership Team (ALT) will meet to develop protocols for the second cycle of Anet for analyzing the data from the assessment.

#### **Winter (January 26<sup>th</sup>)**

- Teachers will begin the second round
- Teachers analyze data
- Teachers develop a goal for students to pass after the re-teach (benchmark goal: 80% of students to pass with a minimum of 65% or higher)
- Teachers formulate which standard to re-teach, based off data received back from Anet
- Teacher will develop a pre-assessment to be given before the re-teach
- Teachers will administer the same pre-assessment as the Exit ticket
- Teachers will analyze data to see if students reached the goal (why or why not)
- If students reached their goal, what are the next steps to enrich students
- If students did not reach their goal, what are the next steps for an intervention

**Winter (March 16<sup>th</sup>)**

- Academic Leadership Team (ALT) will review Anet Re-Teach data to see if protocols put into place was successful with creating a systemic way to report out data and to see if protocols put into place improved student achievement

**Spring (March 26<sup>th</sup> & 27<sup>th</sup>)**

- Students will take the third cycle of Anet assessments in ELA and Math

**Spring**

- Teachers will begin the third round
- Teachers analyze data
- Teachers develop a goal for students to pass after the re-teach (benchmark goal: 80% of students to pass with a minimum of 65% or higher)
- Teachers formulate which standard to re-teach, based off data received back from Anet
- Teacher will develop a pre-assessment to be given before the re-teach
- Teachers will administer the same pre-assessment as the Exit ticket
- Teachers will analyze data to see if students reached the goal (why or why not)
- If students reached their goal, what are the next steps to enrich students
- If students did not reach their goal, what are the next steps for an intervention

**EVALUATION:** What **data** will you collect that shows the impact of your project on teacher and student learning? How will you document student learning? Teacher learning?

Data and information be collected before and after each Anet Cycle. The data that will be collected will be from the following areas:

- Protocols completed by teachers
- Original percentages of passing students
- Pre-assessment
- Pre-assessment data
- Re-teach lesson plans
- Post-assessment results in percentages

**RESOURCES:** What resources will you need for this project? What costs, if any, will be incurred? What are possible sources of funding for needed resources?

The will not be any cost involved with this project. Time will be the only cost factor.

**UPDATE:** Please update us on any changes you made to your team action plan.

I have a natural tendency to take on more than I can accomplish within a given time period. This is evident in my first action plan; I began my Project SMART action plan with a large scope. All of what I wanted to take on was good and should be reviewed. However, the scope was too large to be taken on at one time. Without a true focus I would not have been able to accomplish any of this task with any level of excellence. So, my first action plan needed to be whittled down from all of the following:

- Communication
- Collaboration
- Curriculum (culturally relevant)
- Curriculum (protocols – plan, implement, and monitor)
- Roles and responsibilities
- Decision making

- Initiatives – budget gaps – sustainability
- Policies and practices
- Ethical leadership

Knowing I had to whittle down my list a focus on one or two of the topics from above, made me think deeply about what one or two items from the above list would make the biggest impact on student and teacher learning. After thinking about the impact, I decided to focus on curriculum (protocols – plan, implement, and monitor). I implemented this focus with our Achievement Network (ANet) assessment cycles.

ANet is a summative assessment given to students to assess the standards which have been taught and learned over a span of time. The cycle begins with students taking the summative assessment. Once the assessment is completed, teachers and academic support staff are given data to analyze from open response questions. Teachers select a specific standard to reflect on. Teachers and academic support staff review the data to see where students were successful or where students struggled with standards. Students are then placed into groups based on their ability levels.

Once the standard has been selected, teachers then reflect on how the standard was originally taught over a span of time. Teachers and academic support staff pick out what were possible misconceptions, what are the trends of student abilities, what will students need to be able to do to be successful, and how can this standard be retaught differently. Teachers develop a goal for their desired pass rate. For example: 80% of students will pass with a 65% or higher at the end of the two week re-teach. This goal is shared with administration and teachers begin their work with planning lessons to intensively teach where student ability levels are for the next two weeks. After the two weeks of re-teaching an exit ticket is given to see the impact of the intensive two week re-teach. Teachers and academic staff re-analyzed the data to see if teachers and students reached their desired goal. The exit ticket data from the re-teach is shared with administrators. A meeting with administrators, academic support staff, and teachers to discuss whether the goal was reached, why or why not, and what are the next steps (how do we enrich or intervene).

#### **ANALYSIS OF DATA ON TEACHER LEARNING:**

After our first ANet cycle, we found teachers were not being as vigilant as they had in the past. This year marked our 5<sup>th</sup> year of implementation and teachers had become casual with completing each step. Yes, many items are on the forefront of teacher minds. However, our work around the ANet cycles are a non-negotiable. This work is necessary to improve both student achievement and teacher practices. Some of the findings are as follows:

- When the exit tickets were developed, teachers were placing only two questions on the assessment. By placing only two questions on the assessment, teachers were placing students in a pass-fail situation. The grading was: one hundred, fifty, or zero. Moving into the second cycle teachers were instructed to give a minimum of six questions on the exit ticket. With six questions on the assessment, this allows for students to have an opportunity to realize success. Students now could make two mistakes and receive a passing score.
- When teachers are developing exit tickets we are developing the exit ticket to see student ability levels. However, when teachers were developing student exit tickets they were doing so with multiple choice questions. Multiple choice questions do not require students to show their work. When students are directed to select from a list, it is difficult to know where student misconceptions. With the second ANet cycle, teachers were instructed to only use open response questions. This was implemented in ELA and Math, when answering questions in ELA students had to answer using a written response. In Math, students had to show their work of how they arrived at a response. The open response in both ELA and Math gave so much more insight into student thinking and understanding.
- Upon reviewing the goals teachers set for student achievement in the first cycle, the academic support team and administrators realized teachers had set students goals low. Seeing as teachers had already taught the standard and the original passing rate was 40% setting the new goal/pass rate of 50% (after a two week re-teach on one standard) is not setting the benchmark high for student achievement. Teachers must be reflective

in their practices to see how best to reach students and their needs. Teachers must also have the belief students can learn and that students have the ability to apply new knowledge. There is a direct correlation between teacher belief and their ability to create engaging lessons for students to receive quality instruction. VDES teachers, academic support, and administrators come to consensus of what would be a reasonable goal for the following ANet re-teach cycles (80% of the class/grade level would pass with a minimum of 65% or higher). Also, a poster was created for teachers to use as a template for teachers to use when creating their posters to report out their data.

- For the first cycle of ANet three grade levels did not turn in their data in a timely fashion. Administrators had to intervene to collect the data from grades: 2, 3, and 4. The data is used to drive instruction and time is of the essence. With each day the data is late, another day of differentiated instruction has passed. Another day, means another missed opportunity for student improvement. Once administrators reached out to the grade levels that had not turned in their data, the data came back in various ways. Some grade levels began the cycle showing information by each classroom, and ended the cycle giving information for the entire grade level. Other grade levels did the same but in reverse order. For the second cycle teachers were instructed to decide on one way to report out information. If you began reporting out by the grade level, at the end the data needs to report out the same. This is an important step, so we can compare two set of data points to make a proper comparison. Also, a reminder letter was developed and sent out to each grade level team of the new deadlines for ANet cycle two

At the end of cycle one, all the above specifics were put into place for ANet cycle 2. At the end of cycle 2, the following were items were realized:

- When goals were set for the second cycle, teachers did not raise the pass rate to what was previously discussed (80% of students would pass the exit ticket with a 65 or higher). Teachers continued to set the benchmark lower. Below are the goals set by each grade level for the second cycle.

<b>ANet Cycle 2 Goals</b>		
<b>Grade Level:</b>	<b>ELA</b>	<b>Math</b>
Second	50%	50%
Third	80%	80%
Fourth	80%	80%
Fifth	86%	75%

- Academic support and administrators met to discuss the setting of the goals and the importance of teacher beliefs and mindsets. Teachers discussed how they felt like we were not making allowances for student improvement. Everything is not about pass/fail. Students who had a pass rate of 15% should not be expected to pass the exit ticket with 80%. Even with intense teaching, those students would not have enough academic time to bridge the gaps and clear up misconceptions. We should take notice of students who had an original low passing rate and acknowledge them for the improvement seen over the two week re-teach period. So, an additional column was added to the report out poster. This additional column was added to acknowledge the improvements for all students by grade level or individual classrooms. With this additional column teachers were ready to set the pass rate at 80% for the third cycle.
- With this second cycle, all teachers turned their data in on time. Therefore, there was no time wasted for in teacher instruction and student achievement.

## ANALYSIS OF DATA ON STUDENT LEARNING:

Here is the data from cycle one:

ELA	Standard	Anet Test	Re-Teach			Math	Standard	Anet Test	Re-Teach
2	RL 2.1	29%	70%			2	2.NBT.1	37%	95%
2	L 2.4	29%	70%			3	3.OA.3	55%	83%
3	RL 3.1	28%	38%			4	4.NBT.1	28%	57%
3	RL 3.5	32%	16%			5	5.NBT.5	28%	59%
4	W 4.2								
5	RI 5.8	25%	91%						

The details from this chart is evidence of student learning. Here is some general understanding for the columns listed:

- Standard - is the code from the Common Core State Standards (CCSS), the standard that was retaught
- ANet Test - this column is the original test pass rate after teacher first taught the CCSS
- Re-Teach - this column is the pass rate after students were intensely re-taught the specific standard over a two-week time period.

Here are the take-aways in student learning for the first cycle:

Grade 2 ELA:

- The original pass rate of was 29%. After the re-teaching the standards students were able to pass the same standard with at a rate of 70%. This is a large leap in student understanding and achievement.

Grade 3 ELA:

- For standard RL 3.1 there was a small gain of 10 points after the re-teaching of the standard
- For standard RL 3.5 students did not show any improvement. After the re-teaching of the standard for two weeks the students seemed to regress by 16 points.

Grade 4 ELA:

- We are not able to see student learning, seeing as no data was reported

Grade 5 ELA:

- Students registered the lowest passing rate of all the grade levels in ELA. However, they showed the most improvement after the re-teaching cycle. There was a growth of 66%. The 5<sup>th</sup> grade ELA teacher developed the goal for her students and shared the goal. When the students received the news about their goal, they felt they could do better than the goal that was set by the teacher. So, they discussed a new goal. The students set the goal for the pass rate to be 85% of students will pass at a rate of 65% or higher. Teacher accepted the goal but also let the students know they had a responsibility to work hard to achieve this goal. Not only did the students hit their goal they set, the students surpassed the goal! This speaks volumes to the belief system of students and teachers. There must be a belief students can achieve!

Math:

- Overall, every grade level reported out data that showed a positive trend in student learning a specific standard.

Data from cycle two:

Grade Level:	Teacher	Original Pass Rate	Goal	Re-teach Results
Second Grade	Weaver	ELA – 43% Math – 40%	50%	ELA - 70% Math – 50%
	Freeman	ELA – 41% Math – 33%	50%	ELA – 81% Math – 76%
	Zollo/Monds	ELA – 17% Math – 27%	50%	ELA – 21% Math – 89%
	Huynh/Curkendall	ELA – 0%	80%	ELA – 53%



Third Grade		Math – 0%		Math – 22%
	Crockett	ELA – 38%	80%	ELA – 33%
	Bacon	Math – 22%		Math – 85%
Fourth Grade	Olivia	ELA – 10%	80%	ELA – 42%
	Schantz	Math – 5%		Math – 28%
	Knapp/Melfi	ELA – 37%	80%	ELA – 63%
Fifth Grade	McCann	Math – 17%		Math – 74%
	Oltz/Marra	ELA – 10%	80%	ELA – 30%
		Math – 23%		Math – 74%
Fifth Grade	McCann	ELA – 14%	80%	ELA – 78%
		Math – 14%		Math – 57%
	Oltz/Marra	ELA – 25%	87%	ELA – 65%%
		Math – 53%		Math – 55%
		ELA – 20%	85%	ELA – 57%
		Math – 57%		Math – 57%

Here are the take-aways in student learning for the second cycle:

- The general trend that can be found in this data is the upward trend of student learning specific standards increasing.
- There were a couple areas where student data went down or remained the same (Grade 3 ELA and Grade 5 Math) in the second cycle
- When teachers have the belief that students can learn, teacher create lessons that are highly engaging. Lessons that are highly engaging, lead to increased student achievement
- When students are engaged in the goal making process, they are more likely to achieve the goal. The students will have a high level of investment into the educational process, which will lead students to taking charge of their own learning.

### General Take-Aways:

In education, adults decide they would like to educate young minds. So, they go off to college to learn the pedagogy of teaching young minds. They are desiring to teach students A, B, Cs and 1, 2, 3s and loving to learn to become lifelong learners. In the college setting, the theory of pedagogy is very necessary, so you are actively able to teach students how to read and then to read to learn. However, once the teacher has obtained a teaching job, theory must be put into practice. However, the one thing the college setting cannot teach is how to deal with the reality of the classroom. Teaching young minds is so much more than A, B, Cs and 1, 2, 3s. Teachers must wear the following hats: teachers, social worker, mother, father, psychologist, nurturer, and role model. Not only does the teacher have to wear all these hats for the student, they must also wear many hats for the school to run smoothly as a building. Teachers are also asked to do many items by administrators and the academic leadership team to move student achievement forward and to better their teaching practices. One aspect where teachers are asked to go above and beyond, is during the ANet cycles. It is known when talking to teachers about the items that need to be accomplished during one cycle, we know it is a lot. However, talking about it is one thing, and the doing of it is another. When I placed all the items that we are asking teachers to do during the cycle on paper for this project, it is easy to see how teachers can become easily overwhelmed. I was overwhelmed just placing all the steps on paper.

### My Take-Aways:

I am a teacher without a roster of students, and I am at times overwhelmed with the number of items which I am tasked to complete on a daily basis. When I am sitting down to the table with the academic leadership team and making plans to move our students and teachers forward, we are always thinking of what is best for students. We

know what our goal is, however, we want to make sure this goal can be accomplished without overtaxing teachers. I am an employee that is not too far removed from the classroom. I remember how rewarding and difficult it can be as classroom teacher with a roster of students. So, when making decisions I always come to the table with students and teachers in mind. We need to create a win-win situation when possible. There times when the teachers' perspective is taken out of the equation. The goal must always be focused on what is best for students. However, there are situations where we can create win-win situations. This project has further ingrained we must be careful when we are asking teachers to do "one more thing!" All these "one more thing" add up very quickly. Our objective is not to overwhelm and burn out teachers, it is to increase student achievement and improve teacher practices.

Participant's Name:

Leigh Skeele

**ACTION:** Describe specifically how the Creating Collaborative Spaces for Learning themes are incorporated into your project to cultivate and support student learning.

My Action Plan this year for Project Smart is for me personally to focus on Self-Management. Specifically, self-discipline, organizational skills and goal setting. I plan to achieve this by incorporating "Change" as my theme since I am continuing my work from last year of introducing Personalized Learning in my art room. I will focus on what this will take on my part, self-management, to examine the "nature" of change. By focusing on myself, I will be able to bring change into my classroom.

**RATIONALE:** Fully state your **rationale** for project. Why is this work important?

My rational for this project is important because I think that Personalized Learning is what my school district is working towards. I think that this is a great opportunity for me to bring to my student's additional ways to make and see art while working independently and/or collaboratively. I realize that it will be on me to make this happen.

**RESPONSIBILITIES/TIMELINE:** Identify a series of **action steps** you will take to complete your project. Next to each step, identify person(s) **responsible** for carrying out that task. For each step also identify your **timeline** (during what month(s) you plan to complete each step).

**Action Steps to be taken:**

Organizing the materials that will be necessary for implementing art stations. - Myself and ongoing  
Providing PowerPoints to explain daily rotations – Myself  
Providing written instructions at each station - Myself  
Adjusting to a new lesson plan format. - Myself and ongoing  
Implementing the art stations with students. – After winter break for most grades

**EVALUATION:** What **data** will you collect that shows the impact of your project on teacher and student learning? How will you document student learning? Teacher learning?

I will document student and teacher learning through reflections from my journal.

**RESOURCES:** What resources will you need for this project? What costs, if any, will be incurred? What are possible sources of funding for needed resources?

I will not need any resources.

**UPDATE:** Please update us on any changes you made to your team action plan.

My Action Plan this year for Project Smart was for me personally to focus on Self-Management. Specifically, self-discipline, organizational skills and goal setting. However, the manner in which I achieved my goal did change. I decided to focus on Visual Thinking Strategies instead of Personalized Learning. I still was able to incorporate "Change" as my theme. Visual Thinking Strategies was a perfect way for me to focus on what this will take on my part, self-management, to examine the "nature" change. By focusing on myself, I will be able to bring change into my classroom.

Visual Thinking Strategies (VTS) is a visual arts program founded on the idea that finding meaning in works of visual art involves a wide range of thinking skills.

VTS encourages:

A personal connection to art diverse cultures times and places.

Confidence in one's ability to construct meaning from it.

Active class discussions and group problem solving.

Development of thinking and communication skills.

Development of writing skills.

Transference of these skills to other subject areas.

Students are first asked to look at an image without talking. Then the teacher asks specific open-ended questions ("what is going on in the picture?" "What more can you find?"). This encourages the students to examine what they see; later more specific, probing and directed questions are added. From the beginning students are also asked to back up interpretations with evidence; whenever they state an opinion, teacher asks them, "what do you see that makes you say that?" This is a great way for students to understand that as long as they can defend their answers, there are no right or wrong answers. Everyone is safe to raise their hands. And in many cases more hands went up than I had anticipated.

The teacher ensures that every response is heard and acknowledged, by pointing to what is mentioned as a student talks and then paraphrasing what was said. As the discussion evolves, the teacher will link various related answers, helping to make students aware of their converging and diverging views.

**ANALYSIS OF DATA ON TEACHER LEARNING:** We examined our reflections and found the following: (Support each claim with examples/evidence).

My analyses of data were through my journaling where I recorded what my students and I discovered about ourselves through VTS.

My goal this year was to use Visual Thinking Strategies for every class as a DIN (do it now). I needed to establish from the beginning of my classes a "do it now" for not only my students but for myself as well. The students that I did the VTS with this year were the second to fifth graders. This was done as soon as the students walked in and went to their seats. It established for me the level 0 voice I need from the beginning of class as they walked in. The same picture was used for all four classes each day. It was interesting to hear the differences between the classes as to how they each saw the same images.

As soon as the students reached their seat, I would call a few students and then move on. I wasn't sure if my students would buy into this. I wasn't sure about myself being consistent with this as a routine.

However, as it turned out all of my fears and anxiety about whether or not my students would actually buy into this were never realized. My students cooperated about not talking while the speaker is talking. Not to interrupt and comment about what classmates have to say about the painting when it is not their turn was nonnegotiable for

me. If I hear anything or anyone talking I stop and say, "Wait I hear talking, OK now go". And the talking stops and we start up again. In the beginning establishing the "rules" I would say was the hardest. I knew that if the students didn't respect each other's turn that this would not work. I expected that all my classes should and would be able to sit and listen quietly. Having said that: that is exactly what happened all year long. VTS was more of a success than I had imagined it would be. I was thrilled at how easy and fun it was. I was surprised at how many hands went up when I said, "what do you think is happening in this painting". I was more surprised how offended faces looked when I didn't call on them (yet). The fourth grade especially. So naturally I would call on everyone who wanted to contribute.

Overall VTS was a welcomed success for me as a teacher this year. Especially my goal for being consistent and self-disciplined by having it ready for every class every day.

**ANALYSIS OF DATA ON STUDENT LEARNING:** We examined \_\_\_\_\_ and found the following: (Give examples/evidence for each claim).

The images that were used for VTS were carefully chosen in order to appropriately challenge student abilities. For example, in the beginning students associate memories, facts, and emotions. Their viewpoints are many times based on their own personal experience. The image should be accessible so that students can recognize what they are observing. VTS uses images specifically for beginners because beginner viewers are "Storytellers." Therefore, the images I chose for my students did contain familiar people, actions, interactions, settings, and emotions. By using their memories, senses, and personal associations their observations about art quickly turn into narratives. It surprised me at how true this was.

For example, the painting by Grant Wood, American Gothic, has two adults standing in front of a house holding a pitch fork. It was interesting to hear responses about this painting because of the lack of action. I was amazed at how easy it was for some students to make up stories about what they thought was happening. "They're married, they're moving because they are outside". "They're talking to heaven holding a candle". "They're poor because they live in a tiny house". "They're married holding a devil stick." "He's a butler"! "They live in a small town and the neighbors are *taking* their picture".

It was interesting to hear the differences between the classes as to how they each saw the same image. In the painting by an English artist Maggi Hambling, Dorthy Mary Crawfoot Hodgkin, one class saw the figure as a woman and another class saw a man. One reply from a student was "he is copying off the picture, looking at it and drawing". Another student said, "he looks like George Washington because he has white hair". "He is old 95". When alas a student from the back of the room summed it up. "He has four hands". "One is writing, one is pointing, one is holding something, and one has a magnifying glass in it".

Yet the class who thought the figure was woman replied, "She is writing a book because there are books behind her." "She is a grandma with goggles." And "she has four arms like a spider, like an infected centipede."

Another painting, The Giant, by N.C. Wyeth, has a huge giant in the clouds. The students said that it was "a big god and kids are looking up and playing in the sand", "a caveman because he is holding the weapon and he's not wearing a shirt". "Hercules because of circles on the butt". "A giant holding a stick".

The painting, Maple Sugar Time, by the Native American artist Patrick Desjarlait has a cubist look and it also has a dark drudge feeling to it. Student responses consisted of it being a restaurant, people working and washing dishes. As when a student said, "I see a soup spoon making food for the whole world."

One student really surprised me when he replied: "It's from the World War 1 the Holocaust". "What do you see that makes you say that?" Because the cheeks are boney" he replies.

I think that my students learned through Visual Thinking Strategies how to look carefully, think about what they see, and articulate their responses. As myself being the facilitator, my students began to overcome their own limitations by sharing observations and insights with each other. By adding to each other's observations and bouncing ideas off one another enabled a "group mind" to find possible meanings. And by one class at a time I learned how enthusiastically my students were able to do just that.

**Participant's Name:** Valerie Escoffery

**ACTION:** Describe specifically how the Creating Collaborative Spaces for Learning themes are incorporated into your project to cultivate and support student learning.

Creating Collaborative Spaces for Learning Theme incorporates into my project through a self-reflection journey. As a Preschool/Special Education Teacher, I sit at the cusp of educational practices that are evolving into the 21<sup>st</sup> century. With this evolution, children and adults may often experience a disconnection due to lack of exposure, experience or desire. Children although the same age range do not all learn at the same pace. Our system of teaching continues to disallow for these differences while claiming to "meet children where they are". This may not always be the case, and children as well as adult move either along with huge gaps or not at all. Children and adults become anxious and second-guess themselves leading to poor self-confidence in their judgement of skills and abilities.

**RATIONALE:** Fully state your **rationale** for the project. Why is this work important?

This project is important because my heart bleeds for some of the children that I have worked with over the years. We (myself included) are forced to adapt to learning and teaching (especially for our youngest learners) in a "force ripe manner" (a Jamaican term to describe when a situation is not ready or has not come full term). Days are segmented into unrealistic periods; children's natural internal mechanisms for learning are stifled by constant interruptions, artificial reality and lack of space and movement. Children's Work is Play when it allows a natural flow of experiences that evolve over a longer period. Children need more than 10 months to prepare for the grueling expectations of Kindergarten. In some respect, we have returned, some might argue never left, the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> century perspective of children as "mini adults" and not human beings who require care, experiences and time for development before taking on "the world" and being left to manage life's interactions with limited adult supervision.

**RESPONSIBILITIES/TIMELINE:** Identify a series of **action steps** you will take to complete your project. Next to each step; identify person(s) **responsible** for carrying out that task. For each step, also identify your **timeline** (during what month(s) you plan to complete each step).

Jan-March: Self- reflective journals of personal growth and challenges.  
Jan-April: Photo Portfolio of "children's work is play"  
Feb-April: Children's candid reflections on learning in the classroom.  
Feb-March: Signed Parental Photo Permission Release  
April -May: Editing of materials in preparation of PowerPoint Reflection  
May: Presentation of PwerPt

**EVALUATION:** What **data** will you collect that shows the impact of your project on teacher and student learning? How will you document student learning? Teacher learning?

A collection of Student and Teacher's reflection on how their learning is progressing in their own words or challenges faced by the teacher and/or how the teacher presents learning will be collected. In addition, photo documentation to support reflections and learning will be taken.

**RESOURCES:** What resources will you need for this project? What costs, if any, will be incurred? What are possible sources of funding for needed resources?

Resources needed: Video/camera, reflective class journals, reflective journal/teacher, pencils, crayons, markers and classroom environment (indoors/outdoors)

**UPDATE:** Please update us on any changes you made to your team action plan.

I have eliminated the Power Point presentation because some parents were reluctant to have their child included. Also, after several attempts to acquire signatures (even in person) I decided that this piece of the project was not my focus.

Therefore, I decided to maintain focus on the essence of what is important to me and that is a realistic reflection into my own teaching style and how it is effective in an everchanging education system. The idea that "MORE IS LESS" for me is quite the opposite. "LESS IS MORE". Taking a personal journey into what I'm expected to teach, how I'm teaching and how children are receiving it. Because I do have some options, I continue to seek new ways to provide Mindfulness strategies. I have made personal efforts to learn new strategies that will support the need of skills that teach self-regulation and focus through breathing. Not just for my students but these practices have been my resource to support my own wellbeing.

**ANALYSIS OF DATA ON TEACHER LEARNING:** We examined our reflections and found the following: (Support each claim with examples/evidence).

During this school year, I have struggled with situations that are beyond my control. For example, I have students in my class who live in an environment of uncertainty; Incarceration, late hours due to parents work schedule and unknown reasons for anxiety and stress. These realities play out in the classroom as behaviors that are intense with uncontrollable crying, difficulty trusting and the lack of just not knowing.

As a teacher, I am also affected by these behaviors and situations. How I respond, support and perceive my students and their parents is very important. But am I supported? For myself, the personal journey to find answers for students and supporting their being able to cope with the daily stress they are under, has had me also needing the same stress relief. For example, I took a four-day workshop through Yoga Ed. It was amazing. I initially registered to gain information and techniques for my students. What I got, was a great deal of relief from my own stress of classroom management, meeting the unique needs of the individual children and orchestrating three adults in the classroom and delegating and supporting their learning on how an effective early childhood classroom should operate.

Through my readings and journaling reflections, I learned a few things:

- ❖ Children are resilient. They can for the most part withstand some of the pain they go through as long as they know that someone cares for them and have their best interest at heart.
- ❖ Strategies of any kind are not a one size fit all type of mechanism. That children and some adults need choices and consistency. The latter is most important.
- ❖ I AM NOT A MACHINE NOR A ROBOT! 😊

- ❖ I HAVE GOT TO BE PATIENT WITH MYSELF AS MUCH OR SOMETIMES MORE THAN I AM WITH THE CHILDREN AND ADULTS I WORK WITH.
- ❖ LESS IS MORE! Children come to me just turning 3 years old. There is a lot they have not experienced, and they rely on the adults around them to support them and nurture them but most importantly teach them. SOMETIMES IT DOESN'T JUST MEAN ABC OR 123.
- ❖ I WILL revamp what I do and how I do it. While technology is good, for the very young, it disengages them from having to listen/respond, think and it instills the idea of sudden gratification. In my experience, in the past (it probably is within the last 5 years) I didn't use smart boards but relied more on CD players and reading books myself. Children listened, they learned to listen rather than look. They were better able to draw mental pictures from what they heard rather than follow imagines on a board. They could hear and understand better the idea of a STOP/GO musical game and be able to hear the music stop and not continue and become frustrated because they don't understand what it is they are listening for.
- ❖ Lastly, my quest for personal satisfaction of working with a team of teachers who have varied assistant teacher training or very little classroom experience at all. I must come to the realization that whether I like it or not, the responsibility of supporting my assistants in handling how I'd like the classroom to operate will only happen if I become a better leader. This would include me having those hard conversations and not leave to chance that leading by example is enough. ITS NOT!
- ❖ Continue to journal my thoughts and feelings, antidotes and struggles. It helps to organize my thinking, relieve tension and help me put into perspective what's more important. FIRST AND FOREMOST, THE CHILDREN!

#### **ANALYSIS OF DATA ON STUDENT LEARNING:**

- ❖ I examined the use of mindful breathing on a daily and consistent basis for all children and found that children are positively responsive to the concept. For children who have emotional struggles for any number of reasons, consistency and patience will instill their own personal use of breathing as a calming mechanism.
- ❖ Children need adults around them that are well grounded, patience and in the moment; ready to meet their needs, patiently walk/talk/console them through the turbulent times. If the adult is of calm mind they can be focus and ALL IN.
- ❖ I examined the personal belief that my fellow co-workers are as willing to do the job in the same capacity of care and dedication and have found that I cannot compare my personal work ethics with others and that if I need the folks I work with to raise the bar than showing by example is not the only way to show (after all any one can see and not see at the same time) Instead, taking the time at the time of an occurrence, with diplomacy meet people where they are, explain to them without belittling them but always offering them an opportunity to bring a little of themselves into the mix of things so that whatever they are doing they will have some personal interest and I will have much needed task done.

**Participant Names:**

**Tori Freeman & Chassidy Weaver**

**ACTION:** Describe specifically how the Creating Collaborative Spaces for Learning themes are incorporated into your project to cultivate and support student learning.

We, Tori and Chassidy, are going to observe the reaction of our students, parents and ourselves to ANet standardized tests that have been applied to second graders. We are doing this because we believe that students are expected to sit individually for lengthy amounts of time to complete a long test that does not meet their needs, nor does it measure their academic strengths or weaknesses. These tests are seen by the district as academically informative to the teachers, parents, and district as a whole in comparison from class to class, and district to

district. From a teacher's perspective they are not in the least helpful. This is because the tests are often not correctly aligned with the pacing guides for our curriculum, the wording of the tests are not consistent, and in the end, we are comparing apples and oranges. The district pays an absurd amount of money to administer this exam quarterly to find that as a district, we are basically failing. We are also competing against a network of school districts that are also failing. If you look at the overall percentages, with a 65% as passing, no one is passing. These tests are not coherent with creating collaborative learning spaces because the tests are not teacher created and they do not measure what they are being taught at the time. We believe that there are more sufficient ways to create a collaborative learning space while effectively tracking student progress and data.

**RATIONALE:** Fully state your **rationale** for the project. Why is this work important?

We would like to provide insight on the effects the standardized tests have on students and even teachers. Students all learn at different paces and in different ways. As teachers, we are encouraged daily to differentiate and modify the lessons and work that are provided to students to meet their individual needs. However, students are consistently assessed with standardized testing that does not meet individual student needs. This work is important because standardized tests are meant to be a "one size fits all" in a society where there is no such thing as one size fits all. Above all else, teaching practices are being altered to teach to a test, not to teach to the abilities of the young minds that are in front of us. Not only are the students effected by these tests, teachers are as well. Teachers are often judged upon their student's proficiency rather than growth.

**RESPONSIBILITIES/TIMELINE:** Identify a series of **action steps** you will take to complete your project. Next to each step, identify person(s) **responsible** for carrying out that task. For each step also identify your **timeline** (during what month(s) you plan to complete each step).

**End December/Beginning January:** First look at the standardized test our students will be taking mid-January and compare it to our given curriculum.

**Mid-January:** We will observe and write a detailed report for each class on the procedures of the test, what happened during the test, issues that may have been faced by students and/or teachers, and any interaction with parents about the tests.

**End January:** We will report about findings in general and specific students, and about the helpfulness or not of this generated data, effects on students and ourselves as teachers.

**February:** We will be focusing on observations we make in our classrooms during the exams, students' progress with our own sets of progress monitoring, real things that happen in the classroom, and continue with journals with journals weekly in greater depth.

**March:** Parent Survey/ Teacher Survey/ Student Survey – This will all be done with pencil and paper anonymously. The teachers that will be surveyed will be from grades that take the Anet exams (grades 2-5).

**April/May:** We will put together the findings and writing the final report!

**EVALUATION:** What **data** will you collect that shows the impact of your project on teacher and student learning? How will you document student learning? Teacher learning?

Various surveys, observation, student test data

**RESOURCES:** What resources will you need for this project? What costs, if any, will be incurred? What are possible sources of funding for needed resources?

Create Surveys  
Internet  
Paper  
Anet Tests and data



Parent and teacher participation

...FREE

**UPDATE:** Please update us on any changes you made to your team action plan.

We, Tori and Chassidy, made changes to our action plan by excluding the teacher survey for several reasons. We noticed that examinations were different from grade level to grade level making the data received irrelevant. Due to our school wide schedule and New York State testing it was difficult communicating with all teachers without interfering with their test preparation. Also, when we planned to give a survey to all teachers, we neglected the fact that lower grade levels did not partake in the Anet testing. However, we did talk with our other second grade team members and we found that their views were very similar to our own.

We also decided that collecting data from parents of students in grades 3 – 5 was irrelevant because these are mandatory state testing grades. In our building, students are strongly encouraged to take these exams and this year alone, there were zero opt outs. The parents of students in grades 3 – 5 are not as involved in the Anet testing process because at these grade levels, Anet is viewed as practice test preparation for the New York State math and ELA exams.

**ANALYSIS OF DATA ON TEACHER LEARNING:** We examined our reflections and found the following: (Support each claim with examples/evidence).

- Students are expected to take the Anet exams four times a year, two tests at a time for a total of 8 tests. When students are testing, they are expected to sit individually, spaced out and no talking until the last person finishes their test; this time typically spans about an hour and a half to two hours. The entire building is shut down and there is expected to be minimal movement throughout the hallways. Teachers are expected to take the students to the bathroom before the test because once the test begins, students are not allowed to leave the classroom unless it is a dire emergency.
- There are two subject areas in which students are tested. Students are first tested in ELA (english language arts). This test consists of two to three reading passages with upwards of fifteen multiple choice questions and one short response question where students are expected to show their comprehension in written form. The second test students take is math. Students are expected to answer upwards of twenty multiple choice questions and two multi-part written response questions.
- Scores across the network (meaning across the country) are generally very low scoring, considerably under a 60%, the mean of all student test scores across the network. Students are often commended for “beating the network”, meaning they have a higher passing percentage than the mean of students in the country regardless of having an actual passing grade or not. A passing test score in Van Duyn for any other test is generally a 65%.
- We have found that the Achievement Network (Anet) is a nonprofit organization that is reaping millions of dollars from low income, low achieving school districts like our own. The organization was founded by Marci Cornell- Feist and John Maycock, graduates of Harvard. They put together these tests when they heard of teachers in the Boston area disappointed in the testing resources available to them. The company is continuously growing, nearing 200 employees claiming the majority are educators. The Achievement Network (Anet) claims they are “a partner, not a vendor.” However, schools and districts are paying 80% of the costs of these examinations and services to Anet. The brochure on their website states they are aware “one size does not fit all” and that they are able to customize the tests to fit district needs. This is concerning to us because if there is differentiation between the tests in every district that is paying for Anet, how is it they are able to provide teachers with data for one test, and one test only from all over the country?
- Anet comes out with the students results in a timely manner. The data that is received is all of the student test scores, the answers they gave for every multiple-choice question, and percentages students that passed each standard. Anet also provides teachers with the percentages of all schools that took the tests across the country, broken down to every question and standard.

- As teachers, we are told this “data” we are receiving is a reflection of our students’ current academic standings. We have since observed that students are often guessing, rushing, and not reading on these tests because they are aware there is no academic weight for them doing well or doing poorly. When students are also given materials, they have not learned yet, they do poorly. After closely analyzing the data, we as told as teachers “re-teach” the skills and standards that students performed poorly on. Examples of standards and skills we were expected to re-teach were comparing and contrasting three-digit numbers in math and answering comprehension questions based on non-fiction texts for ELA. However, this has often been problematic when we have not taught those materials in the first place, we need to be able to teach it a first time before we can go back and “re-teach” it.
- For most of our students, we have considered the data we receive back irrelevant because students are rushing, guessing, or cannot read the test because it is not at their academic level. We have noticed, teachers of students that take the Anet tests spend hours analyzing irrelevant data and are using PD hours to do so. During the time we take to analyze this data, we make posters and charts based upon a failed student attempt at a standard that we plan to re-teach within two weeks (differentiated for students) and then provide students with a post test to determine their growth. The post test that is given to students are questions and passages directly from the Anet test they took previously. The issue with this however is that the post-test must be the same for all students. Therefore, this makes the differentiation in the reteach irrelevant because we are going back to the “one-size fits all” model. This sets students up for failure because they are not allowed to use the manipulatives, work in pairs, or ask for teacher help. Students that are not on grade level underperform regardless how they were performing during the reteach.
- Upon observations and conversations with the other second grade teachers, particularly the ones in charge of the special education inclusion room, had strong opinions on the test. The students in these classrooms are very low performing academically, generally on kindergarten and beginning first grade levels, ADHD students, autistic, or emotionally disturbed. Administration sees the percentages per grade level, and with the special education inclusion room taking the tests, the rest of the grade level is brought down. These teachers were outraged by the fact that these students are expected to sit for multiple hours to take a test they can barely, if at all read. Then the brunt of the results is not put on the child but put on the teacher as a low performing class or non-effective teacher. Teachers are frowned upon when their students are not performing above the network or as they had on previous Anet tests. An example of this was from after our second-grade students took the Anet tests for the first time back in October. One of our teammates were called into the principal’s office and asked why the students performed so poorly as compared to the students in that teacher’s class from the previous year. The interaction was not a conversation about why this might have happened or how we can be prepared next time, it was an accusation of poor teaching, low student academic levels, and a lack of student preparation. Amongst districts across the country, schools inside the same district, and even between teachers inside the same school, administrators have made Anet a competition when the initial goal of Anet is to prepare our students for New York State exams when they get to that level. In our school alone, we receive monthly updates about what teachers “beat the network”, what grade levels scored the best, and even which teachers scored the best amongst their own grade level teams.
- The few parent surveys of second grade parents that were received back showed that parents were not generally aware of their student’s performance on the Anet tests. From a teacher stand point, no parent actually asks for their child’s test results. According to the survey, parents did not see this test as a proper reflection of their child’s knowledge or academic base. What parents find more important and useful to their understanding of their child’s academics are running record levels, weekly topic math tests, and spelling tests.

**ANALYSIS OF DATA ON STUDENT LEARNING:** We examined \_\_\_\_\_ and found the following: (Give examples/evidence for each claim).

- Anet testing covers the materials throughout the year that are taught in our curriculum, however they are not sequentially aligned with the pacing guides and students are being tested on material before they have been taught it.
- In the ELA portion of the Anet exams, the national lexile reading levels are far above those designed to second graders (420-650). An example of this would be, in Anet ELA exam 3, students read “The Little Hen” which was at a lexile level of 661. Although it does not abide by the national lexile reading level scale, Anet has their own lexile scale designated to second grade as 420-820. A much wider range than the national scale. A lexile level of 820 on the national scale is designated for the end of third grade, beginning of fourth grade.
- Student attitudes towards the test are indifferent. Students have not ever asked for their results from an Anet test. For instance, one student asked if this was a determinant for whether they go to the third grade if they do not pass. Most students noted in their survey that they felt like they sit for a really long time and often in the tests, there are many words that they cannot read.
- When students were asked why they thought the Anet test was important, a few students replied with the notion that they will get a certificate and candy bar at the monthly award assembly if they do well.

In conclusion, it is evident that the Anet should not be a requirement for second grade students. Reason being that the tests are no longer about preparing the students for more important future tests, such as the New York State exams. Academically, these tests are more often than not above student’s current academic levels in math and ELA. We believe that time within the school day should be spent more thoroughly working through the curriculum, differentiating and modifying instruction to cater to student needs. Students are subject to sitting individually for long hours in silence rather than collaborating and learning together as a classroom community. These tests have become an administrative focus looking at student proficiency instead of growth. This affects the students because it is not an accurate reflection on their knowledge of specific standards that are taught to them. In turn, this reflects upon a teacher’s supposed teaching ability and effectiveness in the classroom. Based on our experiences, we feel that the initial purpose of the Anet tests is being misconstrued and overlooked. This form of testing is contradictory to the way students are taught, the way they learn, and even when they learn it because as teachers we are now teaching to the test, rather than teaching for the sake of learning.

**Participant’s Name:** **Vanessa A. Ryder**

**ACTION:** Describe specifically how the Creating Collaborative Spaces for Learning themes are incorporated into your project to cultivate and support student learning.

At this time, I am employed as an Instrumental Teacher for the Syracuse City School District. My assignment is between two schools. My work load is scheduled between Delaware Primary (Mon.-Wed.) and Van Duyn Elementary School (Thurs.-Fri.). Both schools have student populations that generally the same age group, Delaware made up mostly of students who are African-American and Hispanic, and Van Duyn where students are mostly African-American. Both schools struggle with strong support for practice at home and parental involvement to help increase each students’ success on their instrument. I will be working collaborating with Professor Tania Ramalho through the Project SMART course, along with support and encouragement from my colleagues Leigh Skeele, Gwendolyn Fagan, and the Administrative staff at both schools to utilize these strategies to enhance the Instrumental Program at both schools. My primary focus is to identify why students are not able to practice at home and teach them strategies to bridge the gap of reinforcement of skills that are taught in weekly lessons.

**RATIONALE:** Fully state your **rationale** for the project. Why is this work important?

There is a definite inequity for students who attend SCSD compared to other instrumental programs in surrounding school districts. Other school districts have more resources available for students to excel or pursue further enrichment playing musical districts. For many of our SCSD students, their music education is limited to what they can receive at their school during the school day. The expectation for students to be ready to play at All-City, All-County, or NYSSMA is challenging for many because the opportunity is limited to only those who can be relied on to practice at home (house not apartment), have a family vehicle (travel), or can afford and spare time in their family schedule for private lessons (extra-curricular). Student performance opportunities become limited only to what events are available at their school or in the school district. Overall, the lack of preparedness to participate in outside district opportunities decreases the representation of our student community in mainstream performances.

The proposal is to explore different avenues of communication, teaching strategies, and use of technology to help students increase their success/involvement of their Music education. It is my hope that utilizing different methods of communication with parents will help increase involvement for extra-curricular activities. I also hope that using different reading strategies for playing music will help students be more successful practicing on their own at home. I intend to research different materials that will help to mute sounds so that students can practice more frequently at home without disrupting their family routine.

**RESPONSIBILITIES/TIMELINE:** Identify a series of **action steps** you will take to complete your project. Next to each step, identify person(s) **responsible** for carrying out that task. For each step also identify your **timeline** (during what month(s) you plan to complete each step).

- September 2017- June 2018: Provide one lesson a week for 40 minutes to small groups of students by instrument.
- November/December 2017, and May/June 2018: Provide one large group rehearsal during Red House for 40 minutes, along with one assigned lesson time a week.
- January-June 2018: Provide monthly newsletters to families about different aspects of instruments (care, strategies for practicing, fun performance activities at home, etc.) to encourage dialogue between student and parent, open line of communication and feed-back between teacher/family member/student.
- September 2017- June 2018: Provide constant forms of student reflection on progress of instrument. Would like to explore using See-saw on the SCSD Music Department iPads.
- Summer of 2018: Collaborate with administrative staff to provide interested students the opportunity of private lessons to enhance their music skills.

**EVALUATION:** What **data** will you collect that shows the impact of your project on teacher and student learning? How will you document student learning? Teacher learning?

I will collect data from students in the form performance assessments that are recorded. Students will also be taught to reflect on their learning from a performance rubric that is incorporated in our daily lessons. Assessments will be given at the end of each unit, so that students can track their own personal growth through our curriculum book (Essential Elements Bk.1). Students will be able to collect those assessments and keep for their records. By the end of the year, students will be able to evaluate themselves and draw their own conclusions as to how best to improve their music training. Their self-evaluations will be based on the same tool I will use to evaluate them. We recently received iPads at Van Duyn for the sole use of the Music Department. I would like to have students use SeeSaw to record their work and then I can share with parents via email if they have access to computer/internet. I will record students on my computer at Delaware for their own personal use of reflection. Their performances will be collected on an electronic file that can be uploaded to SeeSaw once we have training on implementation at Delaware (Spring 2018).

**RESOURCES:** What resources will you need for this project? What costs, if any, will be incurred? What are possible sources of funding for needed resources?

The will not be any cost involved with this project. Time will be the only cost factor.

**UPDATE:** Please update us on any changes you made to your team action plan.

For the Spring Semester, I added more uses of technology to assist the students at home. To help students, I created practice videos on YouTube for the students to use as a visual aid at home. Parents can also see at home what their students should be doing when practicing on their own. The videos were recorded with visual focus on the fingerings for each instrument, to help students understand the correct fingerings for their instruments.

**ANALYSIS OF DATA ON TEACHER LEARNING:** We examined our reflections and found the following: (Support each claim with examples/evidence).

As the teacher, I need to use more technology to flip my classroom and provide videos for students to watch at home. Next year, I am going to create a webpage with links for my lessons to be reviewed at any time during the year. This will be accessible to students and parents. The classroom will be more station-based, with focus on independent work to reinforce music skills.

**ANALYSIS OF DATA ON STUDENT LEARNING:** We examined \_the 4th and 5th grade Band\_ and found the following:

Students need constant visual reinforcement at home. Students benefit from the use of technology and it makes parental inclusion more available. The students were able to cope with stress when they had more tools available to them at home via the internet with the use of YouTube. Students have started to develop more independent skills since playing their instrument in Band: they are becoming better at planning ahead and creating their own strategies for remembering to come prepared for their lessons and rehearsals. Students have demonstrated this by freely sharing their strategies with other students when they express the struggle to remember lessons and their materials. Students have also expressed how they are applying those strategies with other subjects to help them be more organized with school work. Parents have mentioned their child using the YouTube videos to practice, expressing what a great idea it is and how they can support their child practicing at home. When students come to lessons, they are more willing to take their music out and practice without my constant reinforcement. I believe it is the use of the videos at home that have helped them to make more independent connections when they prepare for their lesson.

**Participant Names:** **Dana Crockett and Henrietta Bacon**

**ACTION:** Describe specifically how the Creating Collaborative Spaces for Learning themes are incorporated into your project to cultivate and support student learning.

We are creating collaborative spaces for learning by closely working with two of our challenging students. These two students are not identified as IEP students. They both have the potential to earn good grades and become out-standing leaders.

The two scholars selected have similar issues prohibiting them from excelling academically, socially, and emotionally. They make questionable decisions and seem to have trust issues. One has trouble making friends

with his peers. He argues and bickers with both peers and adults. The other has made friends with another student but seems to encourage this peer to participate in negative activity.

They are on or close to grade level in reading and have the ability to work on grade level in math. They both display difficulty showing their ability on paper.

**RATIONALE:** Fully state your **rationale** for the project. Why is this work important?

We have chosen to work with these two males because we see great leadership qualities in them. I must add, they are African American males. We are very aware of what is happening in our city, state and country for our AA males especially without an education. We know they must build trust and confidence to move forward. We feel that the elementary years are the crucial years to create a strong foundation to get these students to take ownership in their own education.

We will make our business to dismantle the "School to Prison pipeline."

**RESPONSIBILITIES/TIMELINE:** Identify a series of **action steps** you will take to complete your project. Next to each step, identify person(s) **responsible** for carrying out that task. For each step also identify your **timeline** (during what month(s) you plan to complete each step).

Crockett and Bacon will be responsible for:

Restorative talks, Lunch Meetings/ book club, Home visits and Parent? Teacher Conferences

Students selected J and A

Journaling from both students and teachers

Mindfulness and Meditation

**EVALUATION:** What **data** will you collect that shows the impact of your project on teacher and student learning? How will you document student learning? Teacher learning?

Levels and progressions before and after the meetings and relationship building.

Journals/ records of BIC Room visits, observation entries in student hand book

**RESOURCES:** What resources will you need for this project? What costs, if any, will be incurred? What are possible sources of funding for needed resources?

Journals/ iPads

Books of our choice

**UPDATE:** Please update us on any changes you made to your team action plan.

Changes to action plan: We were unable to make home visits with our scholars. Book club readings happened in whole group and not one on one.

**Crockett:** A- parents were in constant transition. I know for a time they were homeless and staying with relatives. I had in person conversations with mother and father. They seemed pre-occupied and offered little solutions or explanations for behavior problems. Most time unreturned phone calls.

After several attempts to involve the parents, I had more success implementing my own strategies:

1. We had lunch daily or as much as my schedule would allow. I discovered he looked forward to coming back to the room to have lunch. If there was a day where he was totally off task, He had to stay in the cafeteria. He did not like it. He enjoyed the small group or one on one time.
2. Journaling did not occur on the days scholars were absent or did not have lunch in the class.

3. Parents chose not to sign up for Dojo. Dojo is a real-time management system, where parents can receive immediate feedback for their child's day.
4. Behavior and academic matrix used to keep parents informed. Signatures were required. Matrix never returned.

**Bacon:** J – I met with mom regarding J's behavior and she began to cry as she explained that his behaviors are a product of his father's abandonment. She seems to think that J's actions are his way of coping with his feelings. It is a known fact that children dealing with abandonment issues may develop poor self-esteem, and a sense of shame surrounding the parent's absence. Children with abandonment issues may have difficulty expressing their emotions. They tend to keep their emotions bottled up and lack the trust necessary to sharing their true selves with others.

After speaking with mom, mom and I decided to brainstorm some ideas as to what we can do to help J to continue to be successful:

- 1). To begin with, we allowed J to come up stairs during lunch on a daily basis to allow him to build a relationship with me.
- 2). Secondly, we tried to focus on J's anger issues. We thought to use resources in house. Ms. Clark, the Promise Land Teacher works with students who needs extra support emotionally and mentally. J will eat lunch every Wednesday with Ms. Clark to share his thoughts and feelings.
- 3). Another idea that we put in place was a Journal. J will write daily during lunch with me in his journal. He can write whatever he wants to write. I will respond with a little note to help support his entry.

**ANALYSIS OF DATA ON TEACHER LEARNING:** We examined our reflections and found the following: (Support each claim with examples/evidence).

**Crockett:** A- enjoyed lunch upstairs away from the other children. I was surprised he did not resist when I offered this option. I asked several times did he miss eating with others. He did not miss eating in the cafeteria. A would proudly walk up to class from the cafeteria unsupervised. He did not say, but I think he feels special. He was able to gain the trust of cafeteria staff and other adults. I believe this made him feel good.

**Background Knowledge for A** - Last year in 2nd grade, A spent most days inside the BIC room or in time out. I was surprised to learn that he remained on academic level during his difficult 2nd grade year. Last year's feeder card, suggested that this student needed to have special arrangements in the room. I did have to move his seating several times. I had to seat him alone and away from his classmates. He worked well by himself. He has also tried to steal from me, after I trusted him to help me with some fun things in class. A has deep trust issues.

A did not go to the BIC room nearly as much as he did in the 2<sup>nd</sup> grade. There were a few times where it was unavoidable, and he needed to reset there.

Previous BIC data shows that 2<sup>nd</sup> grade he visited the BIC 80 -90%  
Present BIC will show a decrease more than 80- 90%

Present situation with scholar A- I continue to journal with him. I give feedback to the student. I continue to have restorative talks and encourage positive behaviors. A continues to have poor judgement from time to time. He especially has challenging behaviors when there is a guest teacher or in specials, PE, ART, Music and Library.

During the morning circle students shared appreciations and A said he had appreciated me. He actually stated my name. When asked to repeat his low response he changed my name and replaced it with teachers. He has shared that his family is very busy and has very little time to have discussions with him. I have noted that there is little parental involvement. He has also developed a relationship with the foster grandpa in our classroom. They both had little contact with each other.

I can now send J into my classroom alone to complete a task, my trust in him is healing. I think he knows that he has to prove himself.

Bacon – J– Also enjoyed coming up stairs to eat lunch with the teachers as well as with each other. The two boys begin to build a relationship among each other. I think J coming up for lunch gave him a sense of self-control, a sense of self-worth, a sense of being needed, a sense of time to recognize his surroundings and choices that needed to be made. Eating lunch upstairs changed J. He began to follow direction in and out of the classroom, listen to all adults, and most of all be nicer to his peers. I think that this was the best strategy for J.

Background Knowledge for J – The Vice Principal Mr. G. was very surprised when he was call on several occasions to deal with J's behaviors. He said J has been a student at Van Duyn School since Kindergarten and has never had any problem prior to 3<sup>rd</sup> grade.

J - What went wrong we wondered? As the Third Grade begin to unfold, J also began to unfold as well. He would show leadership in terms of bossing his peers around, hitting, yelling, telling, and most of all fighting with his peers. He was very angry all the time. He was very disrespectful to all adults. He felt that he did not need to listen. He took on adult roles and did not stay in a child's place. It was clear the J was exhibiting these behaviors at home as well as in school. He was loaded down with responsibilities that the adults should have been in control of.

J – His behaviors were not acceptable in our class or school, therefor I did not think that he showed enough champ behavior to go on the field trip to the “Wild” (ZOO). After considering the fact that he may have never experienced this type of trip or environment, I decided to change my mind and let him participate with his peers. He did a great job on the trip. He was focused and asking a lot of questions. I'm glad he went.

J – However, in second grade J was below grade level in both reading and math. J wanted to learn so he worked very hard to overcome these challenges by staying afterschool daily to read with a long tern sub. When he reached 3<sup>rd</sup> grade he was on reading and math level.

J – Present situation with scholar B, I continue to remind him of his goals and in the classroom, continue to eat lunch with me and Ms. Clark, continue to journal write, and continue to communicate with mom.

J - During morning circle time students were asked to tell one thing that they are thankful for, and one thing that they can do to be a better friend to someone. J spoke and said he was thankful for his teachers and their help. He also said that he could be a better friend by helping his peers.

J – The amount of growth that this scholar has shown is amazing. He feels much better about himself, more **in control, and happy that he had a second chance to make it work.**

**ANALYSIS OF DATA ON STUDENT LEARNING:** We examined behaviors and academic data and found the following: (Give examples/evidence for each claim).

We noticed behavior, motivation and parental involvement has been a major part of the student success or minor increases in academics.

	<b>School/ network scores</b>
<b>A - Reading levels:</b> September: 2017 Level M - end of 2 <sup>nd</sup> grade	<b>ANET-</b> 47% +8%, 31% -9%, 23% -18 ELA
December: 2017 Level N - beginning 3 <sup>rd</sup>	72% +26, 64% +20, ^& +17 Math
May: 2018 Level N + still in progress	

**Math** Placement test 65% Topic 4- 70%, T-5 61%, -- T16- 83% T11- 87%

Student completed homework nightly. In the beginning of the school year homework was rushed and incorrect. Presently homework completed more carefully.

Test completed quickly in the beginning, student had knowledge of subject but did not take time on the test. The results from early test displayed failing grades or grades that should have been higher.

ELA Skills can be a challenge. He is stronger in Math.

After restorative meetings **A** became more conscious of the work he was completing and returning. He spent more time on some test and received better grades.



**J – Reading levels:** September: 2017 Level M - end of 2nd grade ELA **ANET-** 79% +40, 81% +41, 77% +36%

December: 2017 Level M - Middle of 3<sup>rd</sup> grade

May: pending

50% +3%, 36% -8%, 73% +23 Math

**Math** Placement test 55% Topic 4 -61% T5- 53% -- T16- 46% T11-72%

Bacon - J - Completes homework in ELA, and some homework in Math.

Struggles with Math due to attention span. He is usually preoccupied with other things in class.

J – After reviewing data and test scores with J, the scholar is now aware of expectations and tries to improve his test scores. Scholar takes ownership in imputing his grades into his own Data Binder. He can check this binder for growth, and accomplishments.

Crockett:

**Continued Work:** We will continue to build relationships with A and J throughout the summer months. This work is important to stop. We will try to keep frequent check in with these scholars.

We hope to make their transition to 4<sup>th</sup> grade smooth. Parental involvement is complicated, so we are trying to develop these scholars to be self-motivated and own their learning. We know it is a great expectation for 8/9-year-old children. We will also try to maintain a relationship throughout their Van Duyn years.

Bacon:

**Extension:** Ms. Crockett and myself would like to continue our relationship with the boys over the summer by putting into place home visits, taking them to the park, the zoo, fishing and so much more. Next year we would love to continue our lunch dates and journal writing.

**Participant's Name:**

**Missy Wilber**

**ACTION:** Describe specifically how the Creating Collaborative Spaces for Learning themes are incorporated into your project to cultivate and support student learning.

I am going to look at myself better and recognize my feelings, so that the students will learn by my example and know that they are important. I ignored and pushed my feelings down for too long. I have been used and taken advantage of too many times. I need to start loving myself and be brave to stand up to things that are not right. When I take care of myself, I would be able to take care of others. The students will be able to see that I am a great person and I could encourage them to express their feelings.

**RATIONALE:** Fully state your **rationale** for the project. Why is this work important?

I need to be able to say what is bothering me in a timely fashion. I usually keep it bottled up and not recognize it or acknowledge it. It builds up and then I exploded at the wrong moment and at the wrong people. Picking this action for my project will help me become a better person and teacher. Being nice to myself and knowing my feelings will make me a better person.

**RESPONSIBILITIES/TIMELINE:**

1. I will write in a journal three times a week.
2. I will show Dr. Ramalho the journal once a month

3. I will reflect on it every other month.

**EVALUATION:** What **data** will you collect that shows the impact of your project on teacher and student learning? How will you document student learning? Teacher learning?

I will see a change in my writing and my attitude. The data in my journal will show me the improvement. I am hoping that the students will open up to me, so that I can teach them how to recognize their feelings and express themselves in a positive manor.

**RESOURCES:** What resources will you need for this project? What costs, if any, will be incurred? What are possible sources of funding for needed resources?

I will use internet readings, talk to people and readings from self- help books from the library. This will not cost anything, so I do not need funding.

**UPDATE:** Please update us on any changes you made to your team action plan.

I made no changes to the action plan. I was able to look at myself better through different techniques through readings and suggestions off the internet. The best example of this is to start a gratitude journal, so every day try to find three things to be grateful for and write them down, so that you can look at the positive things and writing it down is confirming that it happens. When you need to be lifted you can refer to the journal.

**ANALYSIS OF DATA ON TEACHER LEARNING:** We examined our reflections and found the following: (Support each claim with examples/evidence).

The biggest reflection I can make out of the last four months is that I am more clam and recognize how I am feeling. In the past my anxiety was off the charts. Now I take deep breaths and clam my thoughts through mindful breathing. It is very useful.

I can be nicer to myself. It is important to love yourself and be kind to yourself. In the past I put myself down and was very hard on myself. The past four months I worked on self-esteem and my feelings. I was able to get out of the habit of putting myself down and I can pay attention to how I am feeling. I have better self-esteem and able to compliment myself.

I am still working on saying no to friends that are using me. It is tricky to know when you are a friend, or you are just being used. I am a very helpful person, but some people take advantage of it. I am recognizing it more often, but I need a little more push to say no.

The past four months pushed me into a better person which strengthened me to be a better teacher.

**ANALYSIS OF DATA ON STUDENT LEARNING:** We examined \_\_\_\_\_ and found the following: (Give examples/evidence for each claim).

I have helped the students calm down by showing them breathing methods. They can do it on their own. An example of this is when one of the students got mad at another student because he took the toy away, the student use to scream, kick and throw things. He stood up and said "I don't like that. I am mad" He stamped away and then he said "I can do this. Breath three deep breaths" as he took his breaths you can see him calming down. He said "I feel better. Ms. Missy could I please have a glass of water now I am not mad anymore." I gave him water and praised him up and down because he figured out what to do all by himself. This showed me that the students do learn by example and are able to express themselves in a decent manor.

Participant Names:

Renee Curkendall & Thien An Hyunh

**ACTION:** Describe specifically how the Creating Collaborative Spaces for Learning themes are incorporated into your project to cultivate and support student learning.

Looking at various models of collaboration and implementation of interventions for academically challenged children, we will identify those practices that elevate learning and increases overall success for both students and teachers.

**RATIONALE:** Fully state your **rationale** for the project. Why is this work important?

We have an inclusion classroom. While there are some on-level students, there are a high number of students that are not identified yet are significantly below grade level. By looking at what interventions work with the special education students and working collaboratively to address every student in the classroom it is hypothesized that students of all academic levels will demonstrate significant growth. Those that do not, will be evaluated through the special education system for possible classification.

**RESPONSIBILITIES/TIMELINE:** Identify a series of **action steps** you will take to complete your project. Next to each step, identify person(s) **responsible** for carrying out that task. For each step also identify your **timeline** (during what month(s) you plan to complete each step).

- define collaboration practice (formal and informal)
- monitor discussed interventions/changes/adaptations and note successes.
- Collect Data documenting successes and failures of various collaborative practices to identify those that are most successful.

**EVALUATION:** What **data** will you collect that shows the impact of your project on teacher and student learning? How will you document student learning? Teacher learning?

Compare growth for each quarter for both second and third grade and noting practices being utilized

**RESOURCES:** What resources will you need for this project? What costs, if any, will be incurred? What are possible sources of funding for needed resources?

Core 5, Running Record, Unit Assessment, Benchmark assessments, journals  
No costs are anticipated.

**UPDATE:** Please update us on any changes you made to your team action plan.

We have added some new communication styles. Our informal collaboration includes phone calls conversation, in person conversation, text messages conversation, and Facebook messages. We have decided to incorporate a lot of co-teaching and parallel teaching to allow both groups to receive differentiated teaching.

**ANALYSIS OF DATA ON TEACHER LEARNING:** We examined our reflections and found the following: (Support each claim with examples/evidence).

We examined the success of our classroom implementations were based on of our students' academic growth. Our academic growth was based on of our students test scores, and daily formal and informal assessment.

We found that parallel teaching and co teaching was effective for a majority of our lessons. We were able to tackle small issues such as behavioral and academic ones. Students were able to get more individualized attention during instructions since there were two of us and some of the high behaviorally challenged students

were less inclined to act up when I was in the room.

During our fraction lesson we were utilizing more whole group instructions and games to get the students moving and manipulating the actual fraction piece. Due to the fact that these lessons required so much movements and interaction it was necessary that we had two adults supervising and guiding the students around the room. We were also able to address common misconception more easily since there were two of us.

Co-planning the lessons was also more effective since Curkendall came in with a special education background and had many differentiated materials to benefit my lower leveled students.

My relationship with Curkendall evolved positively. She came into this classroom with the special education perspective and I came in with new differentiated and classroom management ideas. I handled the majority of classroom management and classroom instructions when I am in my room. But when Curkendall pulls the red group into her room then she is responsible for the instruction of that period. When students are misbehaving, however, then she sends them to me and I redirect them. We play good cops and bad cops for certain kids who have high behavioral needs that do not do well with the stern teacher role. We work well as a team because I am authoritative while Curkendall is caring and sensitive.

**ANALYSIS OF DATA ON STUDENT LEARNING:** We examined \_\_\_\_\_ and found the following: (Give examples/evidence for each claim).

We examined our math scores and found that when we do a whole group lesson and then break it to our smaller groups, the red group was getting exposure to 3<sup>rd</sup> grade materials that they normally wouldn't. The red group was able to keep up with classroom discussion and was familiar with the dialogue and words that we were using in class. When Curkendall would take them next door then they would focus on just a small strand of such topic and it would allow them for fluency practice. For example, if we were working with 3-digit subtraction and regrouping then Curkendall would review place values and subtraction of 3-digit without regrouping. We would decide as a team to pick and choose the skills that would most benefit them in the long run rather than focusing on the entire thing because it was overwhelming.