



Teams

Why Teams?

WIDE World strongly encourages team participation in our courses. Team members complete readings and some assignments individually, while the team speaks with "one voice" during online discussions and works together on a single key product (e.g. a unit design, a revised/reversioned lesson).

We promote teamwork for a number of reasons:

- We have found through research and experience that team participation enhances and encourages engagement in, and practical application of, course content.
- Team members support each other using a common educational language and framework, while enacting shared strategies in their local context.
- Current views of school education reform depend heavily on teacher collegiality and learning for district, school, and practitioner development.

Forming Teams

When enrolling learners in WIDE World courses as part of a Team, there are four essentials:

1. Teams must have either 3 or 4 members
2. Team members must teach the same subject or else have similar administrative roles
3. Team members must teach at the same grade level
4. Team members must work in the same school or district

Why Team Requirements?

WIDE World has found through research and experience that these four fundamental factors best determine a team's learning satisfaction and success. There is also a practical reason for requiring that members of a team teach the same subject at the same or similar grade level: throughout WIDE World courses, the members of a team are responsible for completing all readings and some assignments on their own, but it is as a team that they submit a single team response to primary assignments that are focused on one curriculum unit.

Exceptions to the Rule

If there are interdisciplinary teams working on interdisciplinary units (probably in high school) or team-based learning groups in middle school, such teams could thrive in our courses as long as they understand that they will be working on a shared, common curriculum unit or lesson plan that we want them to use in their classroom(s). Within the context of interdisciplinary teams, it can also be helpful to have the disciplinary-similar team members communicating with each other as they ensure the disciplinary continuity of the lesson or unit content.

How Teams Work

The members of a team work together through several sessions of the course towards submission of a curriculum unit or lesson plan. Because each team submits a single response to most assignments and works on a single product for the course, team members take turns as the "Team Reporter." During his/her rotation as Team Reporter, it is the reporter's responsibility to submit the team's drafts and responses to session assignments online. This format means two things:



How Teams Work Continued:

1. Team members must communicate with one another face-to-face in order to complete the assignment as a team, which is then shared in the Study Group by that Session's Team Reporter;
2. Team success depends on agreement among its members regarding choosing and developing a common piece of work. The lack of a common subject and grade level has proven in many situations to be a major obstacle to team success.

Geographical proximity--especially being on the same staff and knowing one another previous to the course--allows for face-to-face meetings of the team. This greatly enhances and supports the workings of a team, and should be a priority for team formation.

How WIDE World Supports Teams

For Team Members

Throughout the course, team members can talk with their coaches at any time about the success and challenges of working within a team. Coaches can troubleshoot common problems and advise on next steps if more help is needed.

- Materials: Learners have access to the WIDE Handbook, which gives further details on successful team-building

For Local Facilitators and Administrators

WIDE World's account manager is dedicated to ensuring a positive experience for all schools and districts. The account manager acts as a liaison for local facilitators, and is available to discuss any issues or concerns during every stage of a school/district's program.

- Materials: Local facilitators are sent a set of guidelines that provides information and a checklist for forming teams

Common Problems of Mismatched Teams

- Unhappy team members do not participate and withdraw from the course
- Inactive team members leave the brunt of the work to those who share the same subject category and grade level
- Complaints about limited learning due to frustration and lack of connection with team assignments
- Dissatisfaction, inactivity or withdrawal due to larger team sizes of 5 or more