

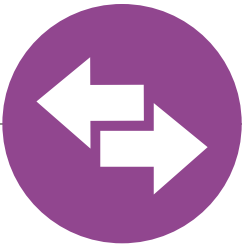
Understanding the Collaboration Continuum

In common practice the term *collaboration* serves as a handy label to mark and acknowledge working relationships between individuals, departments, or organizations. However, collaboration as a working relationship actually lies on a continuum of inter-organizational models, each of which has identifiable attributes and requires specific capacities and inter-institutional supports. As we move left to right across the continuum, we increase our potential to accomplish together that which cannot be achieved alone. Each level requires an increase in time, trust, and turf-sharing.

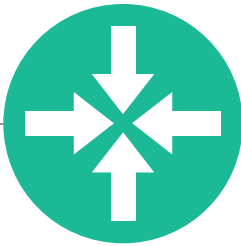
COLLABORATION CONTINUUM¹



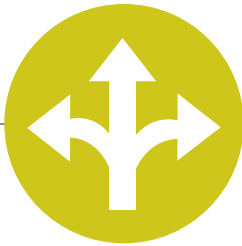
IMMURING
Conducting activities without input from or exchange with other institutions



NETWORKING
Exchanging information for mutual benefit



COORDINATING
In addition, altering activities to achieve a common purpose



COOPERATING
In addition, sharing resources (e.g., staff, finances, space, instrumentation)



COLLABORATING
In addition, learning from each other to enhance each other's capacity



INTEGRATING
Completely merging operations, administrative structures, and budgets. The constituent parts are no longer discernable

CAPACITIES NEEDED

Basic capacities for functioning within a single institution

Clear communication channels across institutions; strategies for identifying interested others at all institutions

Stated objective; known leadership structure through which activities and alterations are managed; plan for regularly evaluating the success of the group's work and goals and making needed adjustments

Stated process for managing budget and/or staff time; possibly written agreements and access to decision-making bodies

Regular opportunities to come together for reciprocal learning

Access to all resources and support available to groups contained within a single organization (e.g., decision-making bodies, leadership, visibility within each organization)

INTER-INSTITUTIONAL SUPPORT NEEDED

None

Administrative support for data collection and listserv, website, and publication preparation and upkeep; tools for connecting people

Professional development opportunities for articulating shared objectives, leading across institutions, assessing progress toward common purpose; incentives for participation; funds for program implementation

Professional development opportunities for budget development and management, working with staff; templates and explicit pathways for writing, endorsing, documenting, and archiving written agreements; direct liaisons to decision-making bodies; staff to coordinate and conduct assessments

Additional resources to support programming

Champions and sponsors in every institution; codified procedures to ensure stable access to all resources and support; clear pathways to request and vet changes to policy and positions

¹ The original Collaboration Continuum, which included Networking, Coordinating, Cooperating, and Collaborating, comes from Arthur T. Himmelman, *Collaboration for a Change: Definitions, Decision-making Models, Roles, and Collaboration Process Guide*. January 2002, Himmelman Consulting, Minneapolis, MN.

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