



Study Guide

The Power of We:

Creating Positive and Collaborative Classroom Communities

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This study guide is arranged by chapter, enabling readers to work their way through the entire book or to focus on the specific topics addressed in a particular section. This guide is designed to help you reflect on and apply the ideas presented in *The Power of We*, and is a useful companion piece for individuals, small groups, or an entire faculty. Learning Sciences International thanks you for your interest in this book, and we hope that this guide proves a valuable addition and support to your professional development practices.

Chapter 1

1. Think back on your first classroom—what were the things that most excited you as a new teacher? What Goals did you set for yourself? How does this compare to your current classroom?
2. Lee Jenkins (2013) describes some classrooms as “*organized to permit cramming.*” What factors would contribute to this label?
3. What are the differences between formative assessment and summative assessments? Which do you use in your classroom?
4. Nash draws a distinction between teaching for the Industrial Age and teaching for Now. What are some teaching strategies you’ve found less effective over time?

Chapter 2

1. What opportunities for face-to-face interactions do you create in your classroom?
2. What are the four basic active listening skills teachers can model? How do you model these on a daily basis?
3. What are the benefits to starting group work with pairs?
4. Oral Language skills are essential to workplace competency. How does your classroom encourage these skills to develop? What are three concrete lessons you could incorporate collaboration between students?

Lesson	Method of Collaboration

Chapter 3

1. Does your classroom have a set of shared values and expectations, or is it closer to the authoritarian edge of the spectrum? What exercises do you use in the beginning of a new school year to develop a collaborative community?
2. Developing silent cues can be a powerful trust-building activity. How do you (or how can you) employ non-verbal communication in your classroom?
3. What characteristics of an effective teacher do you consciously model for your students? What habits or attitudes do you try to exclude from your classroom?
4. Page 48 lists teacher characteristics that increase student engagement. How many do you embody? How do you express them?

Chapter 4

1. How is your classroom currently arranged? Is it designed for learning? What combination of furniture, open space, and Internet-access possibilities best support your instructional goals?
2. Does your school or district support wellness and fitness in classrooms? What initiatives do your school leaders facilitate? If your area lacks district or school-wide initiatives, what do you support in your classroom?
3. Music and laughter are some of the easiest and most rejuvenating mood boosters for a classroom. Do you use music in any of your lessons? In what ways could it be incorporated into your day?

Chapter 5

1. Encouraging a growth mindset is one of the single most powerful tools we can give our students. In what ways do you help your students cultivate a growth mindset? How do you give feedback?
2. *“Students who are expected to take risks, make mistakes, and experience failure on occasion must know there is a system in place to support them, not judge them”* (Nash, 78). How can you accomplish this in your classroom? In your school?
3. In what ways do you encourage students to provide you with feedback? How can you maximize the impact of these opportunities?

Chapter 6

1. What is the most successful school-wide initiative you have experienced? What made it successful? What role did school leaders, teachers, and students play toward making it a success?
2. What procedures and norms do you practice in the first few days of class to set your students up for success for the rest of the year? What factors need to be emphasized to pave the way for successful group work?
3. Do you use journals or other daily writing activities in your classroom? If not, how could they be incorporated? What other small-ball techniques could work in your classroom?

Chapter 7

1. *“My recommendation to teachers who wish there was something they could do is this: do something. Open the classroom door and look around for someone to share the load and make the load lighter—and more fun”* (Nash, 97). To whom can you reach out in the name of collaboration? Do you have a collaborative relationship with any other teachers in your school?
2. Toxic culture has a negative effect on student learning. Negativity can pervade every aspect of a school, and students pick up on it. How do you cultivate positive energy? What techniques do you use to deal with stress?
3. Imagine your most frustrating school day. What went wrong to make it a disaster? How did you respond? What would you do differently with a new perspective?

Chapter 8

1. What is the difference between congenial organizations and those that are collegial? Which accelerates improvement more? Which is closer to your school right now?
2. How can you encourage more student-initiated questions in your classroom?
3. Do you support your students outside the classroom? In what ways do you (or can you) foster an environment of support and relationship-building?
4. Collaborative learning between and among students, teachers, classrooms, and schools has endless benefits. How can your classroom harness the power of we?