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Contributors: teachers

How can collaboration, sharing feedback and supporting one another transform the teaching experience?

Sami Rätty, The Utra School: *There were actually four of us on this team, three class teachers and one special education teacher. We worked very closely together throughout the entire project, meaning we had to align the schedules of four teachers and then also the schedules of three classes. That was of course a challenge at times, but we managed it well. The tasks were divided evenly among everyone, and everyone had their own role, which each person carried through successfully. I didn't see any problems in how we implemented this. We managed to coordinate the collaboration well.*

We simply took whatever lesson it was that day, whatever subject, - and if it was agreed upon we integrated the project work into it. So, there were of course challenges at times when coordinating a large group, but in my opinion we succeeded, overall it went quite well.

Henna Hulmi: *Teamwork at grade level is already strong at our school, which made this easier. I personally also felt that it worked very well, responsibilities were shared based*

on individual strengths. There was always someone who took more of a leading role, but planning was done together.

Mike Miikkola: *Regarding grade-level teamwork, we have a meeting time scheduled once a week in our timetable, so in that sense, we come together once a week anyway, which made it easier to discuss these things. Of course, it does take time away from other subjects, where it would also be needed, but it helped, because we had that time reserved once a week in the schedule.*

Anni Joronen, The Marjala School: *We had our grade-level team, meaning my colleague Sanni-Kaisa and I planned and held meetings together. In addition to that, other Green Flag School -teachers and other staff members were involved as well. We also had a multidisciplinary learning week related to the local environment.*

Teachers from the entire school participated, with some activity stations planned by other teachers. Some were planned together as a whole school, so there was a lot of close collaboration.

Janne Salin, The Kontioniemi School: *Collaboration went extremely well, and in everyday weekly life, we work together constantly with other teachers and adults. From planning lessons to learning modules. This felt like a very natural part of the process. In my view, the workload was shared evenly, and responsibilities were always clearly considered according to the situation. Later on, when a third person joined to plan these sessions, we again sat down together and discussed how to proceed and who would take responsibility for each area.*

Jaana Räisänen, The Normaalikoulu Secondary School: *We were two biology and geography subject teachers, and our team worked very well. We were both present in all lessons, planning and reflecting together what to do next?*

There was no strict division of tasks, - except perhaps when contacting someone, one of us would contact one place, and the other another, so there was some sharing of communication. But it worked well for us. That was probably because we were both subject teachers sharing the same workspace making scheduling easy, and our lessons were scheduled at the same time at the beginning, which also helped.

How can school management support and encourage the implementation of Place-Based Learning?

Mike Miikkola: *School management gave us free rein. We worked independently together as a grade level, and we did not request special support. Nor was it specifically provided, nor were we restricted. We had the freedom to work, although of course it is limited by working hours, and obtaining paid extra time or to get separate compensation is quite difficult.*

Sanni-Kaisa Martikainen: *The school management responded very positively and strongly encouraged us to participate. This method clearly supported our school's values and practices so it was seen as a very positive initiative.*

Sanna Huovinen: *With the approval of school management we embarked on this project, and they also provided concrete support, especially in arranging the timetable in a way that made joint projects possible. It is very important to feel that the management is involved.*

Jaana Räisänen: *School management was interested in hearing about what we had done, that we had taken part in such a project and perhaps made students' or youths' voices heard beyond our school.*

When there were joint meetings with other schools, we were able to arrange substitute teachers, so resources were found that way. And then of course the timetables were also arranged so that lessons could be held simultaneously.

What would you recommend to teachers who are starting with Place-Based Learning?

Mike Miikkola: *We cannot just do activities; learning must take place. Good advance planning and time allocated for it, - as my colleague Sami mentioned, a place in the timetable, how the project continues to provide a framework for implementation and progress.*

Anni Joronen: *Planning takes time and effort, especially when implementing outdoor learning. You need ideas and guidance, and that requires time and effort. We noticed that it demanded much more from us.*

Sanni-Kaisa Martikainen: *When we moved into the environment to learn from what was there, it also required teachers to prepare and plan more. Like all collaboration, at the*

beginning it requires discussion But it is worth approaching it with an open mind, because collaboration usually gives more than it demands.

Janne Salin: *I would encourage it strongly, if there is any opportunity to plan broader learning units together and collaborate with other teachers or adults. My personal experience is that it gives much more than it takes. You get to learn new things yourself, use your own strengths, and learn from the strengths of others.*

Jaana Räisänen: *Just approach it with an open mind. You don't need everything ready at the start. A basic idea, focus "What are we investigating?" and some sort of structure is enough As the work progresses, new ideas will emerge. So just approach it with an open mind, and start doing it!*

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