

WHAT YOUR COLLEAGUES ARE SAYING . . .

“This book is a game changer. This step-by-step manual for establishing collective efficacy that fosters student learning is absolutely necessary in education—not just in this current environment, but always. There’s something for everyone in this book. It’s relevant for district leaders—even school boards, principals, coaches, and classroom teachers. The actionable steps in this book are not grade-level specific. They work for all grade levels, all content areas, all schools everywhere. It contains opportunities in every chapter to respond, reflect, collaborate, and set goals that will make schools better. Everyone wins when the steps outlined throughout this book are taken—administrators, teachers, students—everyone wins. This is more than a feel-good book, more than a book full of lessons—it’s a resource that makes collective efficacy attainable. *Collaborating Through Collective Efficacy Cycles* could just prompt an educator’s revival.”

—**Elaine Shobert**, Literacy Coach and Lead Teacher
Rock Rest Elementary School, Monroe, NC

“This text really advocates for authentic, meaningful professional learning experiences in-house that honor the teacher. *Collaborating Through Collective Efficacy Cycles* will resonate with and meet the needs of many educators. The clear process shared is powerful because it can be used across grade levels. It really works for *all* teams. Our teachers are our greatest source of professional development and giving them this roadmap to improve practice is essential.”

—**Katie McGrath**, Instructional Facilitator
Loudoun County Public Schools, Aldie, VA

“For those of us working on high-quality instruction and developing teacher capacity, this text presents the PLC process as a well-framed, well-explained, and well-attained growth cycle for our teachers. *Collaborating Through Collective Efficacy Cycles* takes on a topic that many schools have had mixed results with. This playbook essentially guides educators with action steps. Many readers have had some experience with a version of a PLC in their district, but it is safe to say that this provides a more systematic approach in tapping into teacher leadership.”

—**Michael Rafferty**, Director of Teaching and Learning
Derby Public Schools, Derby, CT

COLLABORATING
THROUGH COLLECTIVE
EFFICACY CYCLES

COLLABORATING THROUGH COLLECTIVE EFFICACY CYCLES

ENSURING ALL STUDENTS
AND TEACHERS SUCCEED

A PLAYBOOK



INCLUDES
35+
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Visit the companion website at
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for videos and downloadable resources.

LIST OF VIDEOS

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Videos may also be accessed at resources.corwin.com/collectiveefficacy

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INTRODUCTION

Have you heard of *collective teacher efficacy*? This term is widely used in educational circles, but you may be wondering, “What does efficacy really mean? It sounds good, but how does it happen?” Others may be concerned that it’s yet another thing on an already full plate. Collective teacher efficacy is the “perception of teachers in a school that the efforts of the faculty as a whole will have a positive effect on students” (Goddard et al., 2000, p. 480). This playbook demystifies the concept of collective teacher efficacy and offers a defined pathway toward educators’ personal and professional fulfillment, while simultaneously elevating student achievement and well-being.

Let’s break this concept apart. From Bandura’s (1977) early work on social cognitive theory, we understand that people want to have some level of control over their lives. When an individual experiences this sense of control, they feel a sense of *self-efficacy*. Self-efficacy is the “belief in one’s capabilities to organize and execute a course of action” (Bandura, 1997, p. 3) that leads to a desired result. Since people interact with others through a network of relationships, we understand that *collective efficacy* is a group’s shared belief that by working together they have the capacity to successfully organize and execute a course of action. In schools, *collective teacher efficacy* is the belief that efforts of teachers working together—as a collective, rather than as individuals—are capable of positively impacting student learning and motivation.

Self-efficacy is the “belief in one’s capabilities to organize and execute a course of action.”

A RUNNER’S HIGH

If you’ve ever completed a long run and felt like you could keep going a few more miles, you may have experienced a runner’s high. It’s a feeling of bliss and excitement that occurs when a runner hits a certain stride. People who play other sports or exercise with intensity may also feel a runner’s high when they get into a rhythm or groove. In this case, the euphoric feeling occurs after intense exercise, but others experience a similar sensation when they’re on a winning team or playing music in perfect rhythm with a band or orchestra. There is newfound energy, a second wind. If you’ve felt this sensation before, you know that your head feels clear and your entire being seems lighter. You’re in a groove, a zone, or state of flow (e.g., Csikszentmihalyi, 1990).



◀ **OVERVIEW OF THE COLLECTIVE EFFICACY CYCLE**
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To read a QR code, you must have a smartphone or tablet with a camera. We recommend that you download a QR code reader app that is made specifically for your phone or tablet brand.

This mental state, a state of flow and inner harmony, can be cultivated by teachers who work collaboratively toward a shared goal and attain it.

There are mental benefits that stem from collective teacher efficacy. These benefits don't just happen by chance, though, just as the mere act of running doesn't promise a runner's high. We may run several miles each day but still feel awkward and out of breath at the end of each run. Instead, the right conditions must be present to feel the sensation. We must train in specific ways to create the best conditions for the runner's high to manifest.



◀ **NANCY SHARES ABOUT
COLLECTIVE FLOW**
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The same holds true for teaching, although teachers may not be aware that feeling this sensation is possible for people who work in schools. This could be because, like recreational runners, teachers may not train in optimal ways. What might happen if we trained with more intention by systematically designing collaborative professional learning experiences? The answer is we could increase the likelihood for the runner's high to appear for each member of the collaborative group. Essentially, we could create collective flow, or co-flow. Collective flow is a "state that occurs when a group is performing at the peak of its abilities" (Sawyer, 2003, p. 167). There is empirical evidence that collective flow occurs from the combination of high challenges and high skills (Salanova et al., 2014).

High skills × high challenge + success = collective teacher efficacy

Teaching has long been viewed as an individual activity. In this playbook, we contend that teaching *and learning* can be more effective when teachers work together. While individuals can develop a degree of confidence and self-efficacy working alone, greater confidence, self-efficacy, and collective efficacy are realized when teachers work together on a team, such as a PLC+. When PLC+ teams collaborate toward shared goals and are successful with their efforts, their sense of collective teacher efficacy develops and the chances for feeling the runner's high, the collective flow, are increased.

Collaboration is a driving force to develop collective teacher efficacy; one cannot do it alone. When PLC+ team members collaborate and attain shared goals, they become more motivated and their expectations for future success increase. This is collective teacher efficacy in action. There is a realization that the team can solve problems that an individual cannot.

Similarly, collective teacher efficacy provides the fuel teams need to maintain course when bumps or glitches are encountered. "As people's sense of efficacy grows stronger, they become more courageous and confident in dealing with difficult circumstances, recasting them in ways that appear more manageable" (Evans, 2009, p. 70). Since teaching is a highly emotional undertaking, it's clear that actively participating in collaborative processes that foster collective teacher efficacy to emerge will benefit educators and students alike.

VISION OF TEACHING AND LEARNING

Our vision is that every educator goes to work each day feeling inspired and confident to positively impact students' lives. Once they arrive at school, we hope that they

- Feel valued as professionals
- Are engaged in high-performing teams as part of their regular workdays
- Experience that high levels of trust, care, and collaboration are cultural norms at the school
- Routinely confer with colleagues to examine their practices
- Willingly accept collective responsibility for student learning, even for students who are not in their classrooms

These qualities, though aspirational, are attainable in all of our schools. Just as runners train for races using the best know-how in the field, educators should also prepare using the best know-how in our field. This knowledge can be found in the Visible Learning® Meta^x, a highly respected research base that contains findings from studies related to student achievement from literally millions of students around the globe. From this vast research, we know that collective teacher efficacy has a 1.36 effect size on student achievement, even “after controlling for previous student achievement and demographic characteristics such as socioeconomic status” (Klassen et al., 2010, p. 466). This is a significantly above-average influence (0.40) and one that should significantly accelerate student learning. Clearly, cultivating collective teacher efficacy should be a priority for all educators and policy makers.

Sharing lesson plans or meeting every Tuesday afternoon only gets teams so far. Collective teacher efficacy isn't developed because administrators expect educators to collaborate. Instead, collective teacher efficacy is ignited by collaborative processes, the pooling of resources and energy, and mutual accountability. Further, collective teacher efficacy can be developed systematically, yet flexibly. This play-book provides teams with the tools to implement evidence-based practices that hone their expertise as professional educators. In so doing, teams produce and harness the energy that propels learning forward. And when teachers learn, so do students.

The pathway we offer defines how teams can systematically cultivate and increase motivation and energy as individuals and, importantly, with each other. We show how each component of a Collective Efficacy Cycle can be ideally implemented, which provides educators with an understanding of what the desired destination looks like. This approach closely aligns with the PLC+ framework, in which educators are provided with practical strategies and tools to engage in collaborative learning experiences that focus on the following five questions.

When teachers learn, so do students.



PLC+ Framework Guiding Questions

1. **Where are we going?**
2. **Where are we now?**
3. **How do we move learning forward?**
4. **What did we learn today?**
5. **Who benefited and who did not benefit?**

This playbook highlights the value of question 4: *What did we learn today?* While promoting student learning and well-being is our shared purpose, this playbook focuses on *adults'* ongoing learning and deepening expertise as professional educators. In schools where there isn't a shared commitment to adult learning, teachers often "turn inward, relying only on their own experience" (Bird & Little, 1986, p. 495). Research indicates that teaching is not a static profession; rather, effective instruction "requires a solid and continuing education for educators" (Joyce & Calhoun, 2015, p. 43).

HOW A COLLECTIVE EFFICACY CYCLE FITS WITHIN THE PLC+ FRAMEWORK

The Collective Efficacy Cycle is designed to correspond to the five PLC+ questions; teams use their existing knowledge to focus on addressing a common challenge. There is no need for existing PLC+ teams to learn a different structure. For teachers new to the PLC+ process, each of the five guiding questions is detailed in *PLC+: Better Decisions and Greater Impact by Design* (Fisher et al., 2020). The Collective Efficacy Cycle described in this book offers teacher teams an established process that can be used repeatedly; the content changes, but the process doesn't.

Figure 0.1 draws connections between the five PLC+ guiding questions and the Collective Efficacy Cycle.

FIGURE 0.1 CROSSWALK BETWEEN THE PLC+ FRAMEWORK AND THE COLLECTIVE EFFICACY CYCLE	
PLC+ FRAMEWORK	COLLECTIVE EFFICACY CYCLE
Question 1: Where are we going?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Forming a PLC+ team • Co-developing a Collective Efficacy Cycle
Question 2: Where are we now?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Using formative information to determine student needs • Identifying the common challenge
Question 3: How do we move learning forward?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Selecting an evidence-based strategy • Learning about the strategy
Question 4: What did we learn today?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Implementing the strategy • Opening up practice through peer observations • Providing peer-to-peer feedback • Coaching colleagues • Reflecting on results
Question 5: Who benefited and who did not benefit?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Making adjustments that lead to improved student outcomes • Validations and celebrations

The Collective Efficacy Cycle offers a way for teachers and schools to shift from isolated professional development events to creating cultures where professional learning is expected, received, and valued. While there have been many advances in the field of education, including the meta-analyses that determined 322 influences on student learning (Hattie, 2021), many innovative practices have not yet found their way to classrooms. Often, schools use professional development strategies and plans that have grown stale. This is unfortunate for both students and teachers, as students may be missing out on high-quality instruction and teachers may be missing out on professional learning experiences that could be energizing to their careers.

Additionally, it's important that all educators, including those who write educational policy, recognize the importance and value of teacher leadership. If teachers are

FIGURE 0.2 COLLECTIVE EFFICACY CYCLE VISUAL SCHEDULE EXAMPLE

Common Challenge: Relying on algorithms/tools to solve math problems
Evidence-Based Strategy: Student-led questioning

	COMMON CHALLENGE	BUILDING KNOWLEDGE	SAFE PRACTICE	PROFESSIONAL READING	OPENING UP PRACTICE	MONITORING, MODIFYING, AND CELEBRATING	NEXT STEPS
CYCLE # 1	Dialogue about student learning needs	Professional learning for staff to implement an evidence-based practice	Educators experiment with the new practice in a low-risk environment	Teachers receive professional articles relevant to the practice being learned	Educators observe each other and engage in structured reflections and feedback	Educators engage in learning walks during and after school to discuss student learning	Teachers review evidence of student learning and determine next steps
DATE SPAN:							
Week 1: 9/7	Dialogue						
Week 2: 9/14		9/14 telling vs. facilitating		9/14–9/25 Chapter 2, <i>Number Talks</i> , pp. 38–54			
Week 3: 9/21		9/21 making S's thinking public	9/21–9/25				9/21 sentence starters, chart
Week 4: 9/28	Dialogue	9/28 small group number talks, scaffolds	9/28–10/2	9/28–10/2 Chapter 2, <i>Number Talks</i> , pp. 55–59			

(Continued)

FIGURE 0.2 (CONTINUED)

Common Challenge: Relying on algorithms/tools to solve math problems

Evidence-Based Strategy: Student-led questioning

	COMMON CHALLENGE	BUILDING KNOWLEDGE	SAFE PRACTICE	PROFESSIONAL READING	OPENING UP PRACTICE	MONITORING, MODIFYING, AND CELEBRATING	NEXT STEPS
CYCLE # 1	Dialogue about student learning needs	Professional learning for staff to implement an evidence-based practice	Educators experiment with the new practice in a low-risk environment	Teachers receive professional articles relevant to the practice being learned	Educators observe each other and engage in structured reflections and feedback	Educators engage in learning walks during and after school to discuss student learning	Teachers review evidence of student learning and determine next steps
DATE SPAN:							
Week 5: 10/5		10/25 small group number talks, scaffolds	10/5–10/9				
Week 6: 10/12					10/12–10/16 triad obs.	10/16 ghost visit: chart	
Week 7: 10/19	Dialogue				10/19–10/2 triad obs.	10/23 guided visit: chart, questioning	10/19 review recordings
Week 8: 10/26	Dialogue						10/26 review recordings

Source: Adapted from Chula Vista Elementary School District, 2018.

While collaborative learning experiences foster teachers' continuing education, there are three specific actions teams must take to set up opportunities to generate collective teacher efficacy:

- Learning evidence-based practices to implement with students
- Determining and attaining a shared goal
- Opening up practice through peer-to-peer observations

After all, collective teacher efficacy isn't possible if you're unaware of your colleagues' practices. These are three specific fundamental actions that generate collective teacher efficacy.

Three Specific, Fundamental Actions That Generate Collective Teacher Efficacy

1. Implementing evidence-based practices with students
2. Determining and attaining a shared goal
3. Opening up practice through peer observations

COMPONENTS OF A COLLECTIVE EFFICACY CYCLE

The six modules in this playbook are organized to facilitate teams through a complete Collective Efficacy Cycle, which typically lasts for six to 10 weeks. A cycle is organized around a common challenge that can be addressed by implementing an evidence-based instructional strategy. These may include reciprocal teaching, jigsaw, close reading, or any other strategy that has been shown to accelerate student learning.

It takes time to learn about and implement an evidence-based strategy effectively. One-and-done professional development sessions aren't sufficient for us to gain the knowledge and skills to use a new strategy with students. Research tells us that we need to practice "with peers and small groups of students from 10 to 15 times before a high level of skill becomes evident" (Joyce & Showers, 1982, p. 6). Given that a cycle is structured for about two months, the timeline provides educators multiple opportunities to learn deeply about one strategy. Over the course of the cycle, the expectation is that educators collaboratively

- Use data to determine the area of student need
- Identify an evidence-based strategy that addresses the need
- Read about and discuss the strategy with the team
- Implement and practice the strategy multiple times with students

A cycle is guided by the data, not by external mandates.

- Observe others and be observed while implementing the strategy
- Make necessary adjustments to promote student success
- Validate and celebrate success

While the cycle repeats throughout each school year and is flexible, we recommend that teams follow the modules in order until you're comfortable with the process. We also encourage equity of voice in your team so that each member has opportunities to be the team's activator throughout a cycle. The activator is a member of the team who has the skills required to engage peers in conversations and learning.

The focus of a cycle is determined by the student achievement or well-being data that is presented and examined by the PLC+ team. A cycle is guided by the data, not by external mandates. This is an important aspect of the Collective Efficacy Cycle. In addition to deepening ownership by selecting the evidence-based strategy to address student needs, educators' agency is promoted because they make this determination. This provides flexibility for each team to select a focus that is relevant to their students' needs. We also encourage teams to invite other educators, such as school counselors and classroom assistants, to participate in a cycle.

HOW THE PLAYBOOK WORKS

Module 1 defines what self-efficacy and collective efficacy are so you develop an understanding of the science behind these concepts. We explain four ways teams systematically cultivate collective efficacy in their schools. To illustrate how this looks in action, we contrast a team with a low level of collective efficacy to one with a high level of collective efficacy. Tools are provided to assess the degree of individual and team efficacy in your contexts and determine next steps. Components and descriptions of the Collective Efficacy Cycle are provided in Figure 0.3.

The subsequent modules open with an Innovation Configuration (IC) map that defines the expectations for the team's success, as opposed to an individual's (Hall & Hord, 2015). Though similar to a rubric, an IC map provides teams with the specific behaviors and dispositions that are expected of each team member, because collective teacher efficacy isn't developed alone. Just like our students, when we understand the goal and criteria for success, we're more likely to be successful.

Module 2 supports teams to use data to determine a common challenge, which centers on students' needs. This is the focus of the Collective Efficacy Cycle. Teams who co-determine a common challenge establish the first of the three fundamental actions that generate collective teacher efficacy.

In Module 3, the team identifies evidence-based practices that will address the identified area of students' needs. From these possibilities, teams select one strategy to learn about. This may include reading about the strategy in an article, a module from a book, or perhaps in a blog. Or it may involve more formalized professional learning experiences. There can be think-alouds, modeling, and discussion of the strategy during team meetings so members gain a deep understanding

of it. Setting a goal by committing to learning about an evidence-based strategy is the second of the three fundamental actions that lead to collective teacher efficacy.

While our team is learning about the evidence-based strategy, we also implement it with students. This is the subject of Module 4: Collaborative Planning and Safe Practice. During Safe Practice, we try out the strategy multiple times. We become more comfortable and skilled each time. The Safe Practice phase protects us from being observed or evaluated. We can feel safe to make adjustments if the lesson isn't promoting student learning to the degree they would like. Without this phase, implementation is less likely to occur as we all use our tried-and-true approaches when we know we are going to be observed. After all, we don't want to open ourselves up to criticism as we are learning a new technique. During this phase, we confer with each other about their implementation of the strategy and students' progress.

After a few weeks of safe practice, peer-to-peer observations are scheduled. The tools and protocols in Module 5 support teams to open up practice by observing each other's classrooms in non-evaluative ways. These observations, while usually 10 to 15 minutes in length, are the hallmark of the Collective Efficacy Cycle. Through observations, you will deepen your understanding of the evidence-based strategy and have opportunities to coach others and be coached. Peer-to-peer mentorship provides powerful learning experiences for both the mentor and the mentee, and the ability to mentor another educator isn't tied to a job title or years of experience. Rather, we guide you through the observation process, providing sample questions that help you to determine the impact on student learning. Peers observing each other is the third of the three actions necessary for collective teacher efficacy to develop during a Collective Efficacy Cycle.

After weeks of learning about evidence-based practice, teams monitor student learning and make any necessary adjustments to ensure students are successful. This is the focus of Module 6. Assessment data is collected and evaluated so you can respond to student needs immediately. At the end of a Collective Efficacy Cycle, it's important that our team pause and collectively assess our impact on student learning, but also on our own learning.



◀ **TAKING STOCK AND RECOGNIZING
TEAM EFFORTS REGULARLY**
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In Module 6, we also celebrate the success of our team and share our learnings with the school through a gallery walk or another protocol that allows learning and innovation to spread. Witnessing others' learnings through a gallery walk prompts vicarious experiences, a precursor to collective efficacy, for others in the school. In educational settings, there is often an inherent, yet unspoken norm to be humble and modest about one's accomplishments. We assert that validation is both healthy and necessary for educators to flourish, individually and as team members. The tools and protocols included in this module help your team to systematically process, acknowledge, and celebrate students' learning, as well as your own. At the end of a cycle, there is closure and teams take stock of their sense of collective efficacy and determine their next steps.

Validation is both healthy and necessary for educators to flourish, individually and as team members.

FIGURE 0.3 COLLECTIVE EFFICACY CYCLE COMPONENTS AND DESCRIPTIONS

MODULE	COLLECTIVE EFFICACY CYCLE COMPONENTS	DESCRIPTION	MAJOR TOPICS AND TOOLS
1	Developing Individual and Collective Efficacy	Self and collective efficacy are defined. The four conditions for creating collective teacher efficacy are described.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Self-efficacy self-assessment • Seven norms of collaborative work • Seeking mastery and vicarious experiences • Assessing and strengthening team efficacy, flexibility, craftsmanship, consciousness, and interdependence • Mindful moments
2	Determining the Common Challenge	A guided process for teams to use data to identify student learning needs. Teams develop a shared goal to address one need during the Collective Efficacy Cycle.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Data collection and analysis protocols • Common challenge checklist and tuning protocol • Mindful moments
3	Building Educator Knowledge and Skills	Teams select learning opportunities to build knowledge and enhance professional skills about one evidence-based practice.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Databases to find evidence-based practices • Learning log • Seven design elements of professional learning and pitfalls to avoid • Appealing to the head, heart, and hands when learning something new • Professional readings • Discussion and text-based protocols • Modeling and think-aloud planning tool • Mindful moments

MODULE	COLLECTIVE EFFICACY CYCLE COMPONENTS	DESCRIPTION	MAJOR TOPICS AND TOOLS
4	Collaborative Planning and Safe Practice	Team members engage in deliberate practice in their classrooms to deepen their expertise about the identified evidence-based practice.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Naïve vs. deliberate practice • Reflective questions about deliberate practice • Reframing judgmental thoughts • The Ladder of Inference • Educator agency • Mindful moments
5	Collaborative Planning and Opening Up Practice	Team members observe the evidence-based practice being implemented in each other's classrooms for 15 minutes.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Three components of peer-to-peer observations • Preparing for learning walks and ghost walks • Debriefing learning walks and ghost walks • Microteaching • Formal coaching • Cognitive coaching
6	Monitoring, Modifying, and Celebrating	As a result of the evidence-based practice, student learning is gauged. Teams reflect on their own learning and impact, which affirms their efforts.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Success analysis protocol • Gallery walk facilitation guide • What collective efficacy sounds like • Tool to assess organizational readiness to scale • Individual and team assessment of the Collective Efficacy Cycle

(Continued)

FIGURE 0.3 (CONTINUED)

MODULE	COLLECTIVE EFFICACY CYCLE COMPONENTS	DESCRIPTION	MAJOR TOPICS AND TOOLS
	<p>Appendices: Resources for Teams</p>	<p>Additional resources for individuals and teams to use to build trust, ensure successful meetings, and facilitate consensus. Tools to support teams to manage conflict and overcome barriers are provided.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Collective Efficacy Cycle Visual Schedule Template • Innovation Configuration (IC) Map Action Planner • Trust on Our Team • Self-Assessment for Individual Contributions to Meetings • Successful Meetings Card Sort Activity • Benefits of Recording Notes Visibly and Publicly • Tips for Productive PLC+ Meetings • Conflict in Teams • Facilitating Consensus • Focusing Four Consensus Protocol • Group Dynamics in PLC+ Meetings

The playbook is designed to explicitly teach teacher teams how to systematically cultivate collective efficacy. We encourage you to write it in and keep it nearby throughout the cycle. There are numerous activities and structured reflections that will assist you in refining your teaching craft. Each is designed to invite you to record your individual thinking as well as thoughts generated collaboratively by your team. Please use the playbook to set goals, monitor, track progress, and ensure everyone on your team is on the same page. It's also a way for teams to document the steps taken throughout a cycle, which may be useful for future team efforts or other operational processes at the school.

