



Collective Teacher Efficacy: Optimising Your Team's Activity

The Holy Grail of School Improvement

Building Collective Teacher Efficacy (CTE) is quite rightly the 'holy grail' of school improvement. When teams of teachers share a collective belief in their ability to positively impact each and every student, they teach we are as close to a 'guarantee' (effect size 1.57) as we can get of 'every student succeeding'.

This is not just because a) these teachers have a high level of trust and feel deeply supported when sharing with their colleagues. Nor simply because b) they have higher levels of job satisfaction and c) lower levels of stress. Nor simply because d) they are open to observation, feedback and have a desire to continuously improve. Rather it is the sum total of each of these 4 factors that creates this incredible advantage in making such a positive impact in the students they teach.

Collective Teacher Efficacy (CTE)

“the collective belief of teachers in their ability to positively impact upon student learning”



Higher levels of job satisfaction and capability



Openness to give and receive feedback



Sharing openly with colleagues



Actively managing personal wellbeing

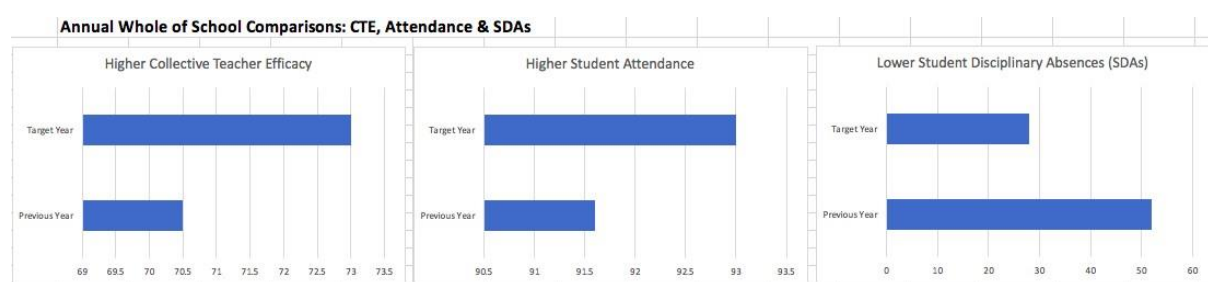
Higher CTE Leads To Higher Student Achievement & Engagement

The evidence showing the impact of higher collective teacher efficacy (CTE) on student achievement and engagement seems pretty clear. Regarding student achievement, the table below shows the impact of CTE levels across primary school teaching teams over two semesters and the corresponding growth in A-C data (students achieving a C grade or higher) in English and Maths. As you can see student achievement in English and Maths is higher (and in most cases grows) in teaching teams that have above average CTE levels throughout the year, or who grow their CTE to a level above the average. However, the students of teaching teams with below average CTE across the year, have lower English and Maths results and more troublingly their achievement goes backwards!

Teaching Team	CTE S1 %	CTE S2 %	GAIN %	Student Cohort	ENG S1 %	ENG S2 %	GAIN %	MATHS S1	MATHS S2	GAIN %
Teaching Team A	74	78	4	Student Group A	89%	91%	2.00	97%	97%	0.00
Teaching Team B	67	75	8	Student Group B	77%	80%	3.00	85%	87%	2.00
Teaching Team C	50	66	16	Student Group C	63%	69%	6.00	66%	77%	11.00
Teaching Team D	61	65	4	Student Group D	89%	76%	-13.00	89%	81%	-8.00
Teaching Team E	70	88	18	Student Group E	59%	71%	22.00	65%	73%	8.00
Teaching Team F	72	80	8	Student Group F	67%	83%	16.00	77%	94%	17.00
Teaching Team G	79	79	0	Student Group G	71%	79%	8.00	88%	92%	4.00

Key:	Yellow - Below Australian CTE Teaching Team Average	Red - Negative Growth
	Green - Above Australian CTE Teaching Team Average	Blue - Neutral or Positive Growth

Regarding student engagement, a year x year comparison of CTE, student attendance and incidents of short disciplinary absences (SDAs) shows that attendance goes up and behaviour problems go down when there are higher levels of CTE.



CTE & Quality Time In Teams

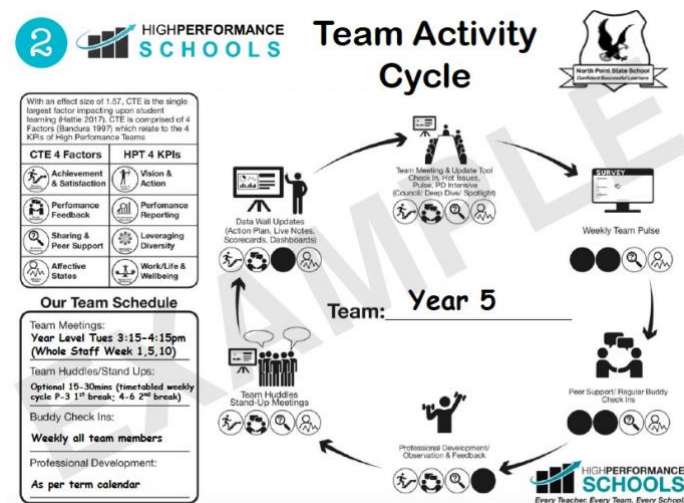
Having worked with hundreds of schools building High Performance Teaching Teams, we know that in order to create higher levels of CTE school leaders must increase the both the 'quality' and 'amount' of time teachers spend in teams.

QUALITY TIME IN TEAMS

Getting enough time in teams is of course a tricky problem with different school types (primary, secondary, special education) and systems (public/ independent/ catholic etc.) having different rules and norms around teaching team meetings and non-contact time. However there are some cross system consistencies that make creating enough time for teaching teams possible ([click here](#)). Even more important than the 'amount' of time is the 'quality' of time. If the quality of teaching team activities such as meetings is low than teachers will avoid such activities which creating a self-fulfilling cycle of avoidance, stress and ultimately lowered student achievement.

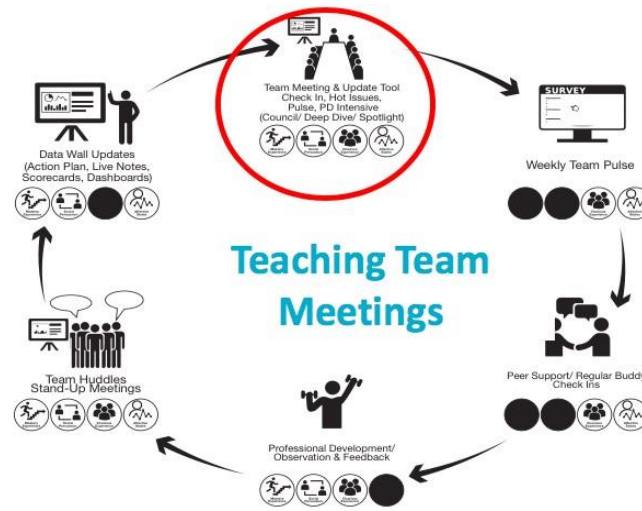
The Teaching Team Activity Cycle

As you can see in the example HPT teaching team activity cycle, teaching team activities are more than just the teaching team meetings they attend (however this is arguably one of the most important team activities they engage in) and include a number of other important team activities.



Some of these team activities are purely information/ data focused (i.e., completing short team pulse surveys and updating the team data wall), whilst other team activities are primarily communication focused (i.e., team meetings, buddy check ins, team huddles and professional development). The example 'Team Schedule' described above is typical of a High Performance Public Primary School (with a number of schools going above and beyond this where time and resources allow). Let's unpack each of the communication focused team activities now and discuss what 'quality' and 'time' may look like for each one:

Teaching Team Meetings



Teaching team meetings are the single most important (and arguably the most complex) team activity to optimise in both time and quality. Starting with quality, we've written extensively about the difference between low and high quality teaching team meetings in previous blogs and have developed a simple QuickStart guide used widely across High Performance Schools ([click here](#)).

HIGH PERFORMANCE SCHOOLS Teacher Forums - Personal Update Tool

Name: *EXAMPLE TEACHER* Date: *DDMMYY* Barometer: *'Rushed'*

Classroom Successes and Challenges

Category	Time	Description	Impact	Action to take
Successes	Last 2 weeks	Collaborative Planning	Cohesive Team	Implement action plan
	Next 2 weeks	Collaborative review of strategic work	Allow for shared planning strategies	Develop similar planning strategies
Challenges	Last 2 weeks	Behaviour	Disruption of class control	Basic classroom management strategies
	Next 2 weeks	Assessment	Report card writing	Communication with team

Work Life & Wellbeing

On Track	Off Track
Sharing resources, Work communication	Late night planning, High stress level, Lack of sleep.

Hot Issues

Describe the Issue	Describe Impact / Risk	Action/Solution
Challenging Behaviour	Total class disruption	PBL, Chill in / Chill out, Stamp - positive consistency.

Priority Students In Focus

Name	Critical Issue (Learning & Wellbeing)	Forward Strategy
[Redacted]	Mental Health, Off Track - no movement, Behaviour	External support, Mum/Child safety, Meeting with Mum, SNAG referral.

Deep Dive Register

Describe the Issue	Key Challenge (Question)	Importance (Impact & Risks)	Possible Solutions & Related Risks
Learning walks and talks	Time to get it done!	See different ideas, Teachers being consistent	But - Teachers feeling judged??



HIGH PERFORMANCE SCHOOLS

Teaching Team Meeting: Forum Agenda (60min)

(Team Name) *Team Meeting (60min)* Chair: *[Name]*
(Purpose & Vision) Moderator: *[Name]*
Date & Time: *[Date/Time]* Notes/Minutes: *[Blank]*
Attendees: *[List]*
Agologies: *[Blank]*

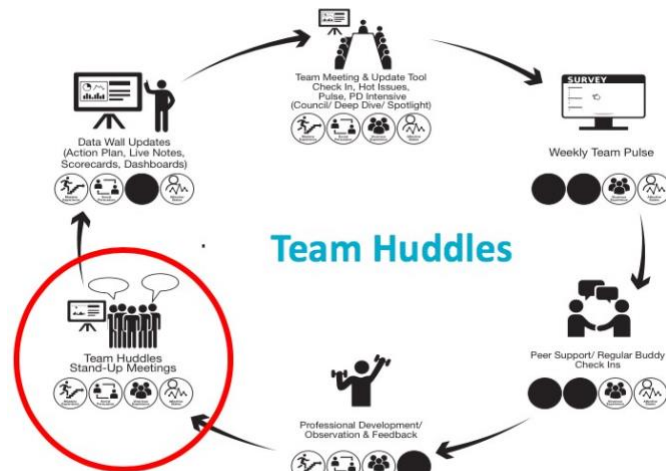
Item	Description	Role	Duration
Item 1	PRE-WORK - Complete Update Tool & Review/ Update Team Data Wall Focus: School Purpose, Team Role & Accountability; Meeting Team Purpose & Outcomes; Moderator Cards & Ground Rules Check In: One word Barometer & 1x Success 1x Challenge from Update Tool	Chair	1 min
Item 2	Hot Issues - focus on day-to-day operational issues Pair & Share Top 2-3 issues - Write on whiteboard and Vegas vote (5 ticks per person) (2 mins) Top 2 topics selected 2 min - elaborate / 1 min - clarify / 3 mins - discuss / 1 min takeaways Live Notes:	All & Led by nominated individual	14 mins
Item 3	Action Plan Update & Leader's Briefing Action Plan/ Dashboard Review & Update and/or Senior Leaders Briefing and Q&A Live Notes:	All & Line Manager	8 mins
Item 4	PD Intensive (Cycle)- focus on teaching, learning & wellbeing & specific student support challenges The Council (all Members)* Deep Dives (deep dive x 2) # Quality Teaching Spotlight # *The Council groups size 5 max then split into 3s and 4s. Cycle times are 5px = 1/1/3/1 4px = 1/1/4/1 3px = 1/1/5/1 # Deep Dives must be prepared prior with peer coach and use (at minimum) the preparation worksheet as handout. Quality Teaching Spotlight see PD session planner - Engage (3) Explain (7) Explore (8) Elaborate (7) Live Notes (Deep Dive & Spotlight Session Forward Goals ONLY)	All or nominated presenter/s	30 mins
Item 5	Check Out Moderator feedback: Next meeting date/time: Roles: Chair: <i>[Name]</i> Moderator: <i>[Name]</i> Final Comment: All - Barometer, Takeaway Action & Satisfaction (1-10)	Chair & Moderator	1 min
Accountable		All	2 mins

Ground Rules (Red Card/ Yellow Card)

- Openness & Trust - Right to 'off record' speech with 'on the record' documented as formal feedback.
- Balanced Debate - Respecting both sides of the argument and allowing diversity of views.
- Competency over Role - Respecting the 'value' of the person's opinion regardless of their 'status'.
- Issues over Personalities - Staying 'issues' focused and not letting personalities overpower the agenda.
- Accountable Actions & Clear Outcomes - Being constructive in feedback and offering a solution focused.

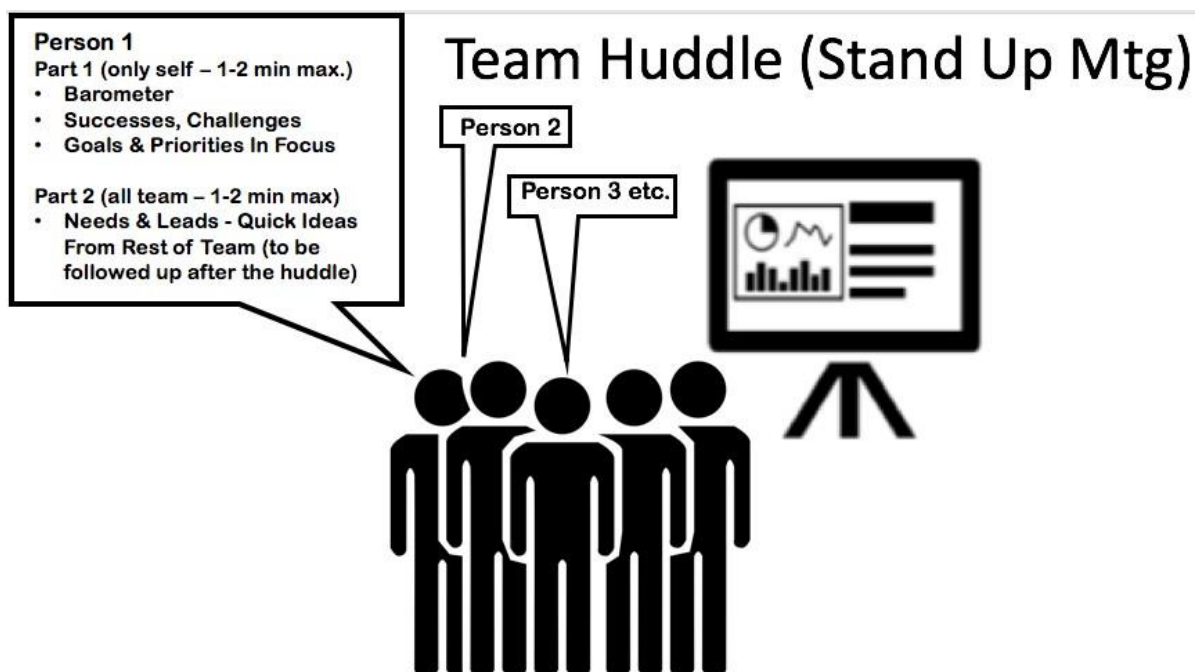
Time is vital, as a general rule of thumb teams need an hour per week or more to meet in order to maintain cadence of relationships and momentum on goals. By structuring your school wide meeting and communication cycle ([click here](#)) effectively (even with highly restricted mandatory meeting allowances) you can create at least 7 or 8 weekly teaching team meetings within a 10 week term.

Teaching Team Huddles



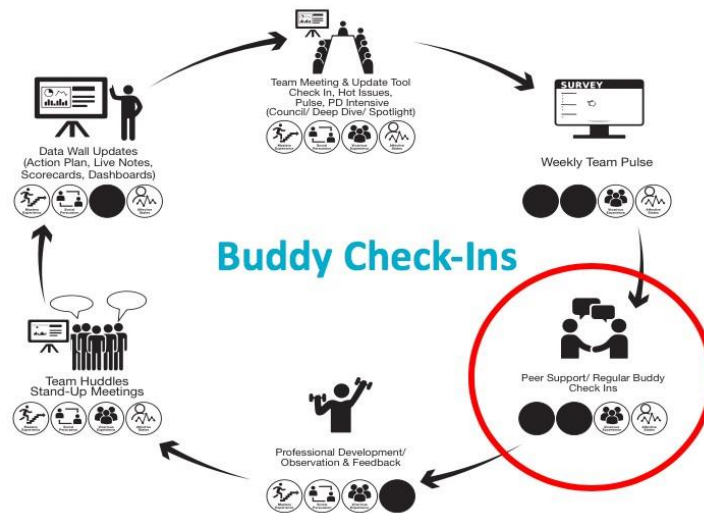
Teaching teams also need to regularly huddle together in short stand-up meetings to a) collaboratively solve problems as they emerge in real time and b) maintain the collective focus on their strategic goals. Huddles are not usually mandated but rather organised so all can generally attend and start at the agreed time or as soon thereafter as two or more team members are in attendance.

Quality - high quality huddles are located in a place where the team data wall is visible and have a simple routine of round the room input followed by short discussion. The input cycle per person is simply PART A: each person doing their one-word barometer followed by current individual success and challenge and stating their priority goals in focus from the team data wall (max 1-2 min). Once the person has completed their input, we move to PART B which is a quick 'needs and leads' idea sharing process where other team members quickly identify how they can help or be helped by the nominated team member (with any longer conversations expanded upon once the



team huddle has finished) (max 1-2 min). Total Time - 15-30 min (based on 2-3 min per person) on a weekly cycle is ideal scheduled on a different day (typically opposite end of the week) to the teaching team meeting.

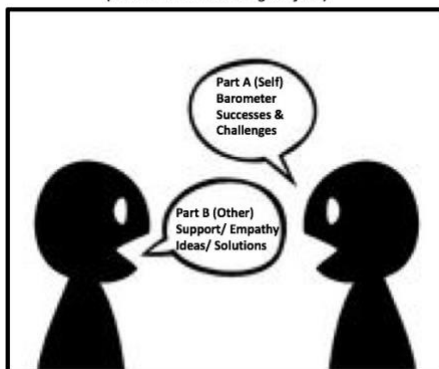
Buddy Check-Ins



Buddy check-ins are quick status updates to connect with and support fellow team members. They are very brief 1:1 conversations. The process of a quick buddy check in is similar to the start of the huddle conversation where you share you barometer, successes and challenges and identify any needs for support or opportunities to support others.

Buddy Check Ins

(Person who initiates goes first)



Quality - This is about sticking to the check in recipe before any more elaborate conversations begin and the important rule that whoever initiated 'goes first' to set the right tone for vulnerability and support.
 Time - This is about setting a baseline of frequency in terms of the minimum amount of check ins among all team members with each other. Teams co-located or with naturally occurring friendships will be higher than baseline (for obvious reasons) but agreeing to the baseline frequency (ie., weekly) ensures that team members who are more remote and or less sociable still give and get and consistent level of support from the wider team.

Professional Development



There is an ocean of information and opinion about what constitutes quality professional development (PD) in teaching teams. The three major things we focus on from a High Performance Teams perspective are: (1.) PD is explicitly linked to the teams purpose and goals; (2.) Just like classroom teaching, the PD has a clear learning intent established and success criteria are operationalised and internalised (ensuring a growth mindset is established) by team members before the activities begin; (3.) At the end of the PD activity learning outcomes are explicitly stated by each participant drawing upon Hattie's 5 Questions (What did you learn? How well did you do? How do you know? How can you improve? Where do you go for help?) albeit within an adult leaning context.

Optimising Your Teaching Team Activity Cycle

High Performance Schools are places where both students and staff can flourish. When staff are flourishing, they are members of high performance teaching teams who have optimised their team activity cycle in terms of both time and quality. These elevated levels of quality team time create higher collective teacher efficacy which in turn maximises student growth and achievement.

So, as we conclude let me leave you with this question: Is the activity cycle of your teaching team optimised or is it time for a tune up?

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