

## Guidesheet 7—Collaboration Inventory

### Facilitator Directions

**Note:** This exercise should be done with a core group of collaborators, not in a larger meeting, with people who have already "committed" to the collaboration.

**Share the Purpose of the Exercise** (Read to group):

- To help bend our thoughts toward discovering what each person here may bring to a collaboration.
- To remind ourselves that collaboration needs to focus on how we complement one another, rather than focus on what we have in common.
- To pool our perceptions of this group in a way that minimizes casual assumptions about ourselves and each other. We often think we know more about each other than we actually do.

**Review some key points of 4.2.2 What is Collaboration? What Gives it Strength?** (Read to group):

To collaborate means to jointly work toward a common goal. There is no universal "right way" to collaborate, but our experience offers some useful cautions and ways to begin thinking about the process:

- A local rural arts collaboration will inevitably take more time and energy than will one school staff person taking charge of an imported one-week residency.
- In the collaborative process, it is wise to begin by discovering and cherishing differences.
- For each partner in the collaboration, the beginning of the process is to discover the unique strengths he or she can bring to the collaboration.

It is understandable, but unwise, to begin a collaboration by searching for consensus. Difference does not mean "disagreement."

- Assume, in any collaboration, that every person brings some strength to the table. We all have differing expertise; the collaboration must find ways to honor each partner's expertise. You may find that others have strengths you had no idea of even if you have known them for years.

**Process Sequence:**

#### 1. Do the Inventory

Give each person three forms:

- one copy of Collaboration Inventory: Self
- two copies of Collaboration Inventory: Other

Each person will inventory the self and two others.

One Other will be chosen by preference.

One Other will be chosen by lot.

Pass out slips of paper. Have each person print his or her name. Collect the slips, put them in a container, have each person draw a name that is not their own. Allow a minute for trading. Do not permit judging anyone's reasons for trading.

Give everyone sufficient time to complete three inventories.

#### 2. Process the Inventory, guided by facilitator's questions:

Distribute the completed Other forms. Ease the tension. Allow a minute to look at them.

Ask participants to look for: positive comments; pleasant surprises; differences between self-inventory and others' inventories.

**Discussion:** Share only what people wish to; look for significance:

Ex: "Do others recognize your strengths? Do they think you are strong in something you haven't acknowledged, or would feel awkward saying?"

Ex: "Do you find that others seem to want you to do things you are tired of doing?"

Ex: "Given your own inventory, and others' sense of your talents, what are you willing to do in this collaboration?"

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