

A NATIONAL STUDY OF COMMON PLANNING TIME ACTIVITIES Examination of Differences by State

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Common planning time, an organizational component of schools practicing the middle school concept, is an attempt to be developmentally responsive to students ages 10–15, as recommended by the Association for Middle Level Education (National Middle School Association [NMSA], 2010). Common planning time (CPT) in schools allows teachers in interdisciplinary teams to fully immerse learning activities from professional development into their classrooms and provides opportunities for teachers to work and learn from each other. Although the concept of interdisciplinary teams utilizing CPT has been identified since the 1960s, until recently, there has been limited research on the effective use of this time (Cook & Faulkner, 2010).

The Common Planning Time Project of the Middle Level Education Research Special Interest Group (MLER SIG) of the American Educational Research Association provided an avenue through which research-

ers from throughout the United States could investigate numerous aspects of common planning time in schools. Although several studies have investigated common planning time in singular states, few studies have examined the national data set looking both within and across the data. For example, Flowers and Mertens (2013) examined the national data set of the Common Planning Time Project of the MLER SIG and provided an overall view of common planning time across the United States. Merits of that study were many and are overviewed herein. However, many significant aspects of the national data set were not explored by Flowers and Mertens (2013). Consequently, the purpose of the present quantitative national study was to extend the work of Flowers and Mertens, examining differences between states regarding middle grades teachers' activities during common planning time. This present study was guided by the following research questions:

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1. How do middle grades teachers spend common planning time?
2. Are there differences by state in how teachers report spending common planning time?
3. Does teacher certification level and teamwork during student teaching influence teachers' time spent on CPT activities?
4. Does teacher certification level and teamwork during student teaching influence their understanding of quality CPT?

CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

The present study is framed by the Association for Middle Level Education's position paper, *This We Believe: Keys to Educating Young Adolescents* (NMSA, 2010). As part of the commitment to developmentally responsive education for students aged 10–15, this position paper outlines the organizational components, best practices, and teacher professional development necessary to best meet the needs of this age group. Two essential structural mechanisms include interdisciplinary teams and common planning time.

Interdisciplinary teams are formed so that teachers may "share the same group of students, same part of the school building, same schedule and planning time, and the responsibility for planning, teaching, and evaluating curriculum and instruction for more than one academic subject area" (George, Lawrence, & Bushnell, 1998, pp. 248–249). In these collaborative networks, teachers meet with other teachers to engage in regular, collaborative discussions on specific topics, focused mostly on content, to further their knowledge in disciplines or pedagogical approaches (Chambers, Lam, & Mahitivanichcha, 2008). Teams who meet to share expertise and collaborate on effective pedagogy often work together on interdisciplinary teaching topics and teach together (Chambers et al., 2008).

To effectively accomplish their objectives, teachers involved in CPT must share a common vision and mission with clearly defined

goals for planning that are embraced and exemplified by all faculty and administrators (Cook & Faulkner, 2010). An essential element for establishing an effective team environment is the daily use of regularly scheduled CPT (Flowers, Mertens, & Mulhall, 1999; Mertens & Flowers, 2003; NMSA, 2010), which includes a specific, planned period of time during the school day in which teachers on the team have the opportunity to meet with one another to plan curriculum and assessments, share instructional strategies, organize team events, discuss student issues, and communicate with parents (Cook & Faulkner, 2010; George & Alexander, 2003; NMSA, 2010).

Cook and Faulkner (2010) found that teachers who felt supported by administration in teaming activities during common planning time felt better prepared to meet the needs of their students. As Hansen (2009) noted, teams that are not provided direction often "stagnate and focus on issues that are only indirectly related to student learning" (p. 33). Common planning time also benefits students who are taught by teachers who participate in CPT. Mertens, Flowers, and Mulhall (1998) found that students taught by teachers using CPT were more satisfied with school, were more committed to classwork, and had more positive reactions to their teachers.

Not all CPT teams work effectively, however. Unfocused planning time and unproductive sharing may be the result of a lack of teacher buy in, a lack of team leadership, low expectations by the principal for the outcomes of CPT, and low support of the school administration for CPT (Cook & Faulkner, 2010; Thompson, Franz, & Miller, 2009). Preliminary analyses from the Common Planning Time Project of the MLER SIG of the American Educational Research Association show that the most common activity teachers engage in during CPT meetings is discussing individual student needs (Mertens, Flowers, Anfara, & Caskey, 2010). Confirming these preliminary results, a study of two middle schools in Tennessee found that administrative tasks

were the tasks most often performed during CPT, specifically, preparing progress reports and report cards and discussions of school-wide committee meetings (Angelle & Gaines, 2013). Teachers who participated in Angelle and Gaines' (2013) study indicated that CPT was never used in their schools to develop service learning, never used for planning interdisciplinary units, and never used to integrate student assignments and assessments (Angelle & Gaines, 2013).

Drolet (2009) reported that the Rhode Island middle school teachers using CPT were not engaging in interdisciplinary team teaching best practices, such as looking at student work or discussing instructional practices. The teachers in the Rhode Island study did not coordinate with other personnel in the school and did not coordinate with each other in pedagogy, sharing expertise, coteaching, or providing feedback on homework or assessments.

The present study seeks to examine whether common planning time on a national scale affirms the findings from these state-by-state studies; that is, that CPT is more often used for administrative tasks and paperwork versus its more substantive use as a source of professional development, sharing expertise, and collaborative planning, as advocated by Association for Middle Level Education and their position paper, *This We Believe: Keys to Educating Young Adolescents* (NMSA, 2010).

METHOD

Survey data for the present study were collected as part of *The Middle Level Education Research Special Interest Group (SIG) and the Center for Prevention Research and Development's (CPRD) National Middle Grades Research Project on Common Planning Time, Phase II* (Flowers, Mertens, Anfara, & Caskey, 2009). After researchers in each state received informed consent from teachers, teachers were sent a link to an online survey. Teachers were asked to choose the top 3 CPT activities they most frequently engaged in.

These items were then extracted for analysis using SPSS, Version 21. In addition, multiple Likert-type items measured how often teacher teams spend time engaging in specific CPT activities were grouped for purposes of examining both within and across states the emphasis on activities during common planning time. Variables measured with these items include *curriculum and instruction*, *student centered activities*, and *quality of CPT time*.

We aggregated data by state, recoded them as necessary, and analyzed them through descriptive statistics to determine frequencies for each of the CPT activity variables. Results from the frequency counts were filtered into a new SPSS file with variables by state (1–7) and CPT activity (1–16). Frequency counts were conducted to assess differences across states regarding most commonly engaged in CPT activities. ANOVAs were used to examine differences among states according to aggregated data regarding how often teacher teams engaged in curriculum and instruction and student centered activities and to address the quality of CPT time as espoused by teacher respondents. Bivariate correlations were then conducted to examine the possible relationships between aggregated CPT variables, teacher certification level, and teacher engagement in teamwork during their student teaching programs.

DATA SOURCES

An online link to the National Middle Grades Research CPT Teacher Survey was forwarded to middle grades teachers in seven states ($n = 564$). States in which schools participated include Illinois ($n = 118$ teachers in 5 schools), Kentucky ($n = 146$ teachers in 9 schools), Maryland ($n = 49$ teachers in 1 school), North Carolina ($n = 32$ teachers in 2 schools), Ohio ($n = 36$ teachers in 1 school), Oregon ($n = 46$ teachers in 3 schools), and Tennessee ($n = 131$ teachers in 5 schools). The survey took approximately 20–30 minutes to complete and included items which measured teacher demo-

graphics, how teachers use common planning time, the extent to which aspects of collaboration work well, and perceptions of need for professional development. Survey items included fixed answer responses as well as Likert type responses.

RESULTS

Perceptions of Activity Time and Quality of CPT

We initially sought to examine what activities teachers said they spent the most time on during CPT. Items were grouped and given a variable name to provide a lens through which to understand the type of agency in which teachers participated. The named variables were then used to analyze how often teams engaged in activities and how their understanding of quality CPT might vary across states. Variable 1 was named *Curriculum and Instruction Activities*. Specific activities under this variable included: plan special team projects and activities; set goals and objectives relating to student learning; coordinate and integrate curricula across subject areas; teach interdisciplinary units; and work together in the presentation of lesson. Variable 2 was named *Student Centered Activities*. This variable included activities which directly focused on work with students, such as: hold conferences with students to recognize their accomplishments; monitor and coordinate student homework across subjects; work together to develop a personal progress plan for each student; review/provide feedback on each other's assessments of student performance; identify student learning styles in an effort to match instruction to student strengths and needs; and meet with individual students to address problems. Variable 3 was named *Quality of CPT*. This variable included statements that addressed the level of understanding teachers on teams had for what they considered quality CPT, such as: understand the purpose of common planning time, our team has enough time during our regular team meetings to achieve

their goals; our team has an agenda or plan of action for each team meeting; the time our team meets together is usually well spent; we usually meet the goals/plans set forth in our team meetings; and team meetings are collegial.

Descriptive statistics, presented in Table 1, were computed for all states ($n = 7$) with regard to the aggregated variables, *curriculum and instruction*, *student-centered activities*, and *quality of CPT time*. Items that measured how often teacher teams spend time engaging in specific CPT activities required responses on a 7-point Likert scale for scoring on ordinal scales, with 1 = *never*, 2 = *once a year*, 3 = *several times a year*, 4 = *quarterly*, 5 = *monthly*, 6 = *weekly*, and 7 = *daily*, for the variables of *curriculum and instruction* and *student-centered activities*. For *quality of CPT*, Likert items ranged on a 5-point scale, with 1 = *strongly agree*, 2 = *strongly disagree*, 3 = *neither agree nor disagree*, 4 = *agree*, and 5 = *strongly agree*.

Mean scores indicated that teachers across states spend time engaging in CPT activities and several times a year and at most quarterly as opposed to monthly, weekly, or daily. Even those teachers in Illinois and Ohio, who had the highest mean scores across all states for *curriculum and instruction*, only engaged in these activities on a quarterly basis while teachers in Oregon only participated between once and several times a year. Teachers in Kentucky, Maryland, North Carolina, and Ohio tended to agree with statements concerning their understanding of *quality CPT* whereas teachers in Illinois, Oregon, and Tennessee tended to neither agree nor disagree, thus suggesting that a national understanding of quality CPT is varied and quite possibly unclear to many teachers across states. Next, a one-way ANOVA was used to test for common planning time differences among all states ($n = 7$) included in this study. For all aggregated CPT variables, ANOVA results showed strong differences existed between states. Tukey post hoc comparisons were then con-

TABLE 1
Mean Scores for Time Spent on Variable Activities and Understanding of CPT Quality by State

States	N	Curriculum and Instruction		Student Centered Activities		Quality	CPT
		M	SD	M	SD	M	SD
Illinois	119	4.0	1.0	3.8	1.1	3.9	.7
Kentucky	147	3.2	1.2	3.6	1.3	4.2	.7
Maryland	50	3.0	1.2	4.0	1.1	4.3	.5
NC	33	3.8	1.1	4.2	1.4	4.1	.6
Ohio	37	4.4	1.1	4.3	1.0	4.2	.6
Oregon	47	2.8	1.2	3.3	1.3	3.6	.8
Tennessee	131	3.4	1.4	3.6	1.5	3.9	.7

ducted to determine which specific groups differed significantly according to aggregated CPT variables.

Differences for how teachers engaged in curriculum and instruction activities during common planning time differed significantly across states, $F(6, 531) = 11.88, p = .000$. Tukey post hoc comparisons of the seven states indicated that Illinois ($M = 3.95$, 95% CI [3.76, 4.15]) differed significantly from Kentucky ($M = 3.16$, 95% CI [2.96, 3.36]), Maryland ($M = 3.01$, 95% CI [2.65, 3.38]), Oregon ($M = 2.84$, 95% CI [2.49, 3.19]), and Tennessee ($M = 3.38$, 95% CI [3.14, 3.62]). Teachers in Illinois tended to spend more time on *curriculum and instruction activities* during designated common planning times, though teachers only reported a mean score of quarterly attention to curriculum and instruction activities.

With regard to student centered activities, slight differences existed among states, $F(6, 519) = 3.27, p = .004$. A Tukey post hoc comparison indicated a difference between Oregon ($M = 3.31$, 95% CI [2.92, 3.71]) and Ohio ($M = 4.25$, 95% CI [3.88, 4.62]) ($MD = .94$) as teachers in Oregon tended to spend more time on *student-centered activities*. Further, statistically significant differences existed between states with regards to teacher understanding of *quality CPT*, $F(6, 538) = 6.17, p = .00$. Tukey post hoc comparisons indicated statistically

significant differences between Kentucky ($M = 4.19$, 95% CI [4.08, 4.30]) and Illinois ($M = 3.93$, 95% CI [3.81, 4.06]), Oregon ($M = 3.65$, 95% CI [3.4, 3.9]), and Tennessee ($M = 3.9$, 95% CI [3.77, 4.02]), as well as between Maryland ($M = 4.25$, 95% CI [4.09, 4.41]) and Oregon, and Maryland and Tennessee. Finally, statistically significant differences were found between Ohio ($M = 4.18$, 95% CI [3.99, 4.38]) and Oregon.

Top Three Most Frequent Activities During CPT

We then sought to examine what teachers selected as the top 3 activities they engaged in most frequently during designated CPT. The top three activities identified by teachers across states as most frequently occurring during their designated common planning times were discussing student learning problems/issues (72%), discussing student behavior problems/issues (77%), and planning special team activities (39%). Table 2 presents the data for most frequently occurring CPT activities across states.

Once the most commonly selected CPT activities by teachers were identified across states, the top selections made by teachers were then examined by state and across states. Table 3 presents these data.

TABLE 2
Most Frequently Selected Common Planning Time Activities Across States

<i>CPT Activity</i>	<i>Frequency</i>	<i>Percent of Total Respondents</i>
Discussing student behavior problems/issues	436	77
Discussing student learning problems/issues	407	72
Planning special team activities	222	39
Dealing with schoolwide issues	82	15
Coordinating and integrating curriculum across subjects	59	9
Reporting on schoolwide committee meetings and team leader meetings	58	10
Discussing activities related to parent involvement	53	9
Engaging in professional development activity	43	8
Coordinating and/or developing student assignments	42	7
Coordinating and/or developing student assessments	42	7
Engaging in other behaviors	35	6
Preparing student progress reports, report cards, and attendance/behavior reports	32	6
Integrating technology into the classroom	22	4
Developing curriculum	12	12
Reporting/discussing budget or fiscal issues	2	.4

TABLE 3
Most Commonly Selected CPT Activities Within Across States

<i>States</i>	<i>CPT Activity</i>					
	<i>Planning Special Team Activities</i>		<i>Discussing Student Learning Problems/Issues</i>		<i>Discussing Student Behavior Problems/Issues</i>	
	<i>Within the State</i>	<i>Across all States</i>	<i>Within the State</i>	<i>Across all States</i>	<i>Within the State</i>	<i>Across all States</i>
Illinois	51%	28%	82%	24%	83%	23%
Kentucky	48%	32%	75%	27%	83%	28%
Maryland	18%	4%	78%	10%	88%	10%
North Carolina	27%	4%	85%	7%	73%	6%
Ohio	51%	9%	70%	6%	73%	6%
Oregon	36%	8%	89%	10%	87%	9%
Tennessee	28%	17%	50%	16%	60%	18%

The percentages reported in Table 3 reflect how states fared compared to all states with regard to a specific CPT activity, and the percent of teacher respondents that selected that specific CPT activity as one of their top 3 most frequently occurring. For example, 28% of all teacher respondents who chose *planning special team activities* across all states came from

Illinois, and 51% of the teachers who responded in Illinois chose that activity. More specifically, when compared to other states, 32% of teachers in Kentucky and 30% in Illinois selected *planning special team activities* as one of their top 3 CPT activities. Similarly, when compared to other states, the majority of teachers in Kentucky (28%) and Illinois (23%)

selected *discussing student behavior problems/issues* as one of their top 3 CPT activities. However, across states, Tennessee teachers (42%) most frequently selected *discussing student learning problems/issues* as one of their top 3 CPT activities. Data across states for the top 3 CPT activities show that teachers in Illinois, Kentucky, and Tennessee selected *planning special team activities*, *discussing student behavior problems/issues*, and *discussing student learning problems/issues* as their top 3 most common CPT activities. By contrast, in states such as Maryland, North Carolina, Ohio, and Oregon, the percentages for selection of those activities appeared insignificant across states. However, within state data related to *discussing student learning problems/issues* and *discussing student behavior problems/issues* showed otherwise for all states in the study. The majority of all teacher respondents in Illinois (82%), Kentucky (75%), Maryland (78%), North Carolina (85%), Ohio (70%), and Oregon (89%) (compared to only 50% of teachers in Tennessee) selected *discussing student learning problems/issues* as one of their top 3 CPT activities. Further, the majority of teachers in all states selected *discussing student behavior problems/issues* as one of their top 3 CPT activities. However, the majority of teachers in Illinois (51%) and Ohio (51%) selected *planning special team activities* as one of their top 3 CPT activities.

Teacher Certification, Teamwork Experience and CPT Variables

Statistically significant differences between and within states regarding *curriculum and instruction* related activities, what teachers consider *quality CPT*, and frequency count results showed teachers did not choose activities related to curriculum and instruction as one of their top 3 activities. This caused us to question why this might be so. Thus, we utilized bivariate correlations to examine the possible relationship between most time spent on aggregated CPT variables and teacher certification level. Additionally, we sought to cor-

relate teacher engagement in teamwork during their preparation programs with their engagement in CPT aggregated variables and what they consider *quality CPT*. Pearson correlation coefficients were computed to assess the relationships among the aggregated CPT variables (*curriculum and instruction*, *student centered activities*, and *quality of CPT*), teacher certification level (elementary, middle, middle school endorsement, high, special education, administrative, and other certification), and whether teachers said they worked in teams while student teaching as part of their teacher preparation program. For purposes of these analyses, certification level was converted into seven dichotomized variables, one for each area of certification. For each variable, participants were assigned a value of 1 if they held that certification and a 0 if they did not.

Results from the bivariate correlation indicated statistically significant relationships between special education teaching certifications, administrative certifications, and CPT aggregated variables. Specifically, special education certification was correlated with curriculum and instruction, $r(538) = .212, p < .01$, and student centered activities, $r(526) = .133, p < .01$. In addition, having an administrative certificate was significantly correlated with teachers' understanding of quality CPT, $r(545) = -.103, p < .05$. Teamwork during student teaching was significantly correlated with having middle school, $r(516) = .240, p < .01$, and high school, $r(516) = -.210, p < .01$, certifications. Further, quality of CPT was significantly correlated with working in teams while student teaching, $r(500) = .026, p < .05$. Table 4 displays these results.

DISCUSSION

The present study examined middle school teacher responses regarding common planning time in seven US states. Analyses indicated that teachers generally agreed on the activities that took place during CPT. Responses clustered around items that targeted student prob-

TABLE 4
Bivariate Correlation Among Teacher Certification, Teamwork, and Aggregated CPT Activities

	Teamwork	Curriculum and Instruction	Student Centered Activity	Quality CPT	Elementary Cert.	Middle School Cert.	High School Cert.	Middle School Endorsement	Administrative Cert.	Special Ed. Cert.	Other Cert.
Teamwork	1	-.034	-.001	.100*	-.068	.240**	-.210**	-.038	-.073	-.064	-.086
Curriculum and instruction		1	.638**	.301**	.027	-.060	.022	-.097*	-.061	.212**	.057
Student centered activities			1	.290**	.020	-.024	-.015	-.059	-.037	.133**	.057
Quality of CPT				1	.028	.009	-.054	-.069	-.103*	.058	-.015
Elementary certification					1	.053	-.325**	.128**	.041	.001	.045
Middle school certification						1	-.115**	-.157**	-.043	-.195**	-.118**
High school certification							1	.005	.022	-.166**	-.085*
Middle school endorsement								1	.121**	-.098*	-.035
Administrative certification									1	-.032	.012
Special education certification										1	-.034
Other certification											1

Note: All values are considered significant at the $p < .01$ ** and $p < .05$ * levels.

lems, specifically learning issues and behavioral problems. Few responses indicated CPT was spent in academic activity such as coordinating student assignments and assessments and coordinating, developing, and integrating interdisciplinary lessons. Even fewer CPT meetings focused on traditionally principal related tasks such as budget issues.

Findings from the present study affirm the findings of previous research (Angelle & Gaines, 2013; Flowers & Mertens, 2013); that is, that while common planning time is provided to middle school teachers, few common planning time teams utilize this time to focus on “planning, teaching, and evaluating curriculum and instruction for more than one academic subject area” (George et al., 1998, pp. 248–249), as recommended in the literature. Quite the contrary, rather than focusing on academic issues and interdisciplinary lessons, a majority of respondents reported the common planning time focus was on student learning problems and issues (72%) and student behavior problems and issues (77%). This finding falls far short of the best practice recommendations of the middle level position paper, *This We Believe* (NMSA, 2010).

Further, only 39% of teachers in all states said they participated in student centered activities during designated CPT. Responses varied in how their participation in CPT activities related to curriculum and instruction in that teachers in Illinois and Ohio tended to spend the most time on *curriculum and instruction activities* whereas teachers in Kentucky, Maryland, North Carolina, Oregon, and Tennessee tended to spend time on *curriculum and instruction activities* several times or only once a year. Strong differences also existed between what teachers considered to be quality CPT and how those teachers spent their time on various activities during CPT. For example, teachers in Kentucky, Maryland, North Carolina, and Ohio appeared to have a stronger understanding of *quality CPT* while teachers in Illinois, Oregon, and Tennessee neither agreed nor disagreed with statements concerning what constitutes *quality CPT*. Correspondingly, for

those states in which teachers had unclear interpretations of *quality CPT*, the teachers tended to spend less time on *curriculum and instruction* and *student-centered activities*. Further, the most frequently selected activities by teachers were nonacademic and related to student behavior or learning problems. Considering that teachers in all states responded that discussing some form of student issues was one of their top 3 CPT activities, teachers may believe that they actually spend the majority of their time on student centered activities. In this sense, teachers across and within states may have drastically different views of what constitutes quality CPT and may lack an understanding of best practices as outlined in *This We Believe: Keys to Educating Young Adolescents* (NMSA, 2010).

Results indicated that having special education teacher certification was correlated with choice of activities and having administrative certification was correlated with what teachers believe is *quality CPT*. However, having elementary, middle school, and high school certifications and/or endorsements had little relationship with how often certain CPT activities are practiced, nor were such certifications related to what teachers considered appropriate CPT activities. Further, results indicate that teachers are appropriately being exposed to CPT concepts and activities during their teacher certification programs; however, many fail to engage in AMLE recommended CPT activities once they are full time teachers. Previous research on the state level has also indicated that teachers do not use common planning time with fidelity or in accordance with the AMLE ideal that the purposes of CPT are to collaborate with grade level colleagues from various disciplines and to discuss content with the goal of improving their own pedagogy and knowledge (Chambers et al., 2008). Teams of teachers, working together, should use CPT to share their expertise, to improve practice, and, in turn, to improve student achievement.

An examination of the underlying causes of why CPT activities generally focus on student

behavior and problems, rather than focusing on improving teacher practice is essential.

One explanation is to focus on the possibility that teachers are not trained in the elements of common planning time or may not understand what quality CPT entails. However, in the present study, teachers reported that CPT was a part of their training and further indicated that experience with teams and CPT took place during their student teaching. Yet, upon placement in schools as full time teachers, these same teachers indicated that fidelity to the concept of CPT was lost. This finding points to a clear disconnect between training and practice. School systems should look into why this is so and correct the problem.

The present study also found an exception to the fidelity problem in implementing the CPT concept was found among those teachers with certification in special education. An examination of the work of special education and the nature of sharing expertise and teaming with colleagues may shed light as to why teachers with special education certification carry their training in teaming to their agency as teachers. Moreover, teachers with administrative certification reported a greater understanding of what quality common planning time should entail. This finding is worthy of further investigation guided by questions such as: Does an understanding of the school as a whole translate into a greater understanding of collaborative efforts to improve teacher pedagogy?

Common planning time that functions with fidelity to the elements articulated in *This We Believe: Keys to Educating Young Adolescents* (NMSA, 2010) provides benefits not only to teachers but also the students who are taught by teachers who participate in CPT. As earlier noted, Mertens et al. (1998) found that students taught by CPT-participating teachers were more satisfied with school, were more committed to classwork, and had more positive reactions to their teachers. These findings, as well as the findings from the present study, should give pause to policy makers, school systems, and school level leaders. Policymak-

ers might want to consider the effects of mandates and required administrative reporting on teachers. If policy requirements are overwhelming, perhaps placing the school in survival mode, teachers may resort to using CPT to meet these requirements, rather than using the time to improve practice. Likewise, school systems may want to investigate whether funding or lack of personnel contributes to CPT being used for activities other than the intent of CPT. School level leaders (e.g., principals) might devise methods to determine whether collaboration during CPT is sacrificed due to scheduling issues or administrative charges to teachers to complete other tasks during CPT-designated time.

Use of common planning time has been frequently linked to young adolescents' achievement and motivation in middle schools (Chambers et al., 2008; Flowers et al., 1999; George et al., 1998; Mertens & Flowers, 2003; NMSA, 2010). However, a troubling aspect of middle schools today is that the strategy of common planning time and interdisciplinary teaming is not being implemented with fidelity on a national scale. Further conversations are needed among faculty in teacher preparation programs, educational policy makers, school system leaders, and school principals about the importance of common planning time within effective middle schools that work to improve the education of young adolescents.

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