

Common Misconceptions and Partial Understandings

ENGLISH Program

Global Competencies



Collaboration

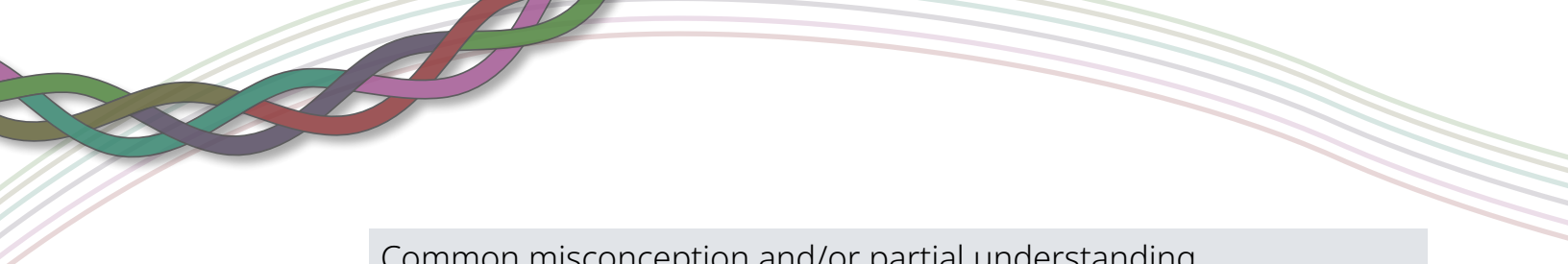
This resource supports educators in developing a deeper awareness of what **collaboration** means. By exploring the common misconceptions and partial understandings related to this competency, we can move towards a shared understanding across Manitoba schools.

Common misconception and/or partial understanding

Collaboration, cooperation, cooperative learning, collaborative thinking, and teamwork are the same idea.

Extending our understanding of collaboration

Manitoba's definition of collaboration incorporates all of these elements (i.e., cooperation, cooperative learning, and collaborative thinking) so that learners are learning collaboratively "with and from others with a shared commitment for a common purpose and goal."



Common misconception and/or partial understanding

There are a number of terms associated with collaboration in the educational context that have different meanings.

Extending our understanding of collaboration

Cooperation is working together to achieve a common goal. We sometimes refer to this as teamwork.

Cooperative learning involves having learners work in groups, often with roles assigned (such as notetakers, reporters, etc.) as they work on a shared task or product. The ideas in learners' work might be complementary, but the learners do not necessarily have to "think together." They may complete their roles effectively without entering into quality collaboration.

Collaborative thinking involves "deeply engaging with and building on the ideas of others for mutual benefit" (Gini-Newman and Case 55).

Common misconception and/or partial understanding:

If I put the learners into groups to work, they will learn to collaborate.

Extending our understanding of collaboration

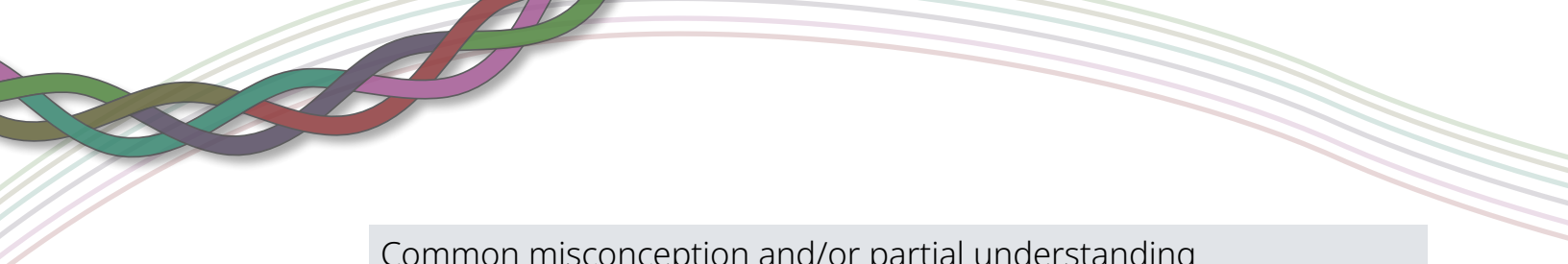
Learners will not learn how to work collaboratively through osmosis. They need explicit teaching and modelling on how to, for example, invite diverse voices to conversations, resolve conflicts respectfully, and think through different perspectives. Teachers need to be careful not to make assumptions that learners—particularly in the higher grades—know how to collaborate effectively.

Common misconception and/or partial understanding

The purpose of collaboration is to learn content; I do not need to teach it.

Extending our understanding of collaboration

Most teachers use collaboration for this purpose and for good reason. Collaboration supports content learning and engagement. Learners also need strong collaboration skills for multiple purposes. If they never learn HOW to collaborate and collaborate well, they will not learn the content well either.



Common misconception and/or partial understanding

If learners confer with each other, they are collaborating.

Extending our understanding of collaboration

Collaboration is not simply conferring with others. In discussion, learners may offer their opinions without seriously thinking about what others are saying. Collaborative thinking involves active listening, weighing, and building on each other's ideas.

References

Gini-Newman, Garfield, and Roland Case. *Creating Thinking Classrooms: Leading Educational Change for This Century*. Corwin, 2018.