Research Brief
Teaming and Achievement

Question: What is the impact of teaming on achievement?

Summary of Findings: Teaming is certainly being pointed to as a strategy to improve learning for at risk students. Whether teaming is actually effective at improving student achievement seems to have mixed findings. Some studies find no significant differences for reading, math, science, and social studies achievement, where others state "evidence abounds suggesting that teaming results in higher achievement in math, reading and language arts skills." There is hard research on teaming, however, but most of it comes from the middle school level. The key factor for positively increasing student achievement through teaming seems to be the extent to which the team uses the team structure to focus on learning activities. The general consensus from the research on teaming is that it is beneficial on several levels. Outcomes include improvements to work climate, parental contact, job satisfaction, and higher student achievement.

Critical issues for schools to consider on the path to teaming (Flowers, Nancy; Mertens, Steven B.; Mulhull, Peter F., 2000):
√ The first is that after teams have been formed, teachers must focus on learning to work together as well as what types of activities they will undertake as a group. These activities and relationships are what will eventually influence classroom teaching and learning.
√ Second is that common planning time is a critical component of a team's success. Teams with high levels of common planning time report both engaging in team activities more frequently as well as feelings of a more positive team climate.
√ Third, teams with fewer students engage more frequently in team activities and have more positive interactions among team members.
√ And finally, teams that have been working together for a longer period of time have benefited from the longevity of their team relationship as evidenced by more coordination activities as well as greater feelings of success in their work.

Online Resources:

What Makes Interdisciplinary Teams Effective?
The Self-Study data illustrate several critical issues for schools to consider on the path to teaming. The first is that after teams have been formed, teachers must focus on learning to work together as well as what types of activities they will undertake as a group. These activities and relationships are what will eventually influence classroom teaching and learning. Second is that common planning time

is a critical component of a team's success. Teams with high levels of common planning time report both engaging in team activities more frequently as well as feelings of a more positive team climate. Third, teams with fewer students engage more frequently in team activities and have more positive interactions among team members. And finally, teams that have been working together for a longer period of time have benefited from the longevity of their team relationship as evidenced by more coordination activities as well as greater feelings of success in their work.http://www.nmsa.org/research/res_articles_march2000.htm

The Impact of Teaming: Five Research-based Outcomes. Research on Middle School Renewal.
Flowers, Nancy; Mertens, Steven B.; Mulhull, Peter F.
Middle School Journal v31 n2 p57-60 Nov 1999
This article discusses five outcomes of interdisciplinary teaming in middle school settings, based on the School Improvement Self-Study. These outcomes are intended to illustrate the positive impact of teaming with data from schools of varying demographic features. Outcomes include improvements to work climate, parental contact, job satisfaction, and higher student achievement.
http://www.cprd.uiuc.edu/schools/MSJ%20article%20Nov99.pdf

How Teaming Influences Classroom Practices.
Flowers, Nancy; Mertens, Steven B.; Mulhall, Peter F.
Middle School Journal v32 n2 p52-59 Nov 2000
Summarizes research findings from a longitudinal study related to measuring effective classroom practices, the aspects of interdisciplinary teaming that affect practices at the classroom level, and how classroom practices relate to student achievement.
http://www.cprd.uiuc.edu/schools/MSJ%20article%20Nov00.pdf

Improving Student Achievement by Overcoming Teacher Isolation.
Costello, Ronald W.
Clearing House v61 n2 p91-93 Oct 1987
Outlines the process by which students at Lawrence Central High School in Indiana improved academically through the teaming of two teachers in a particular subject area, and hence reducing teacher isolation.
http://www.nwrel.org/re-eng/products/TeacherTeaming.pdf

A Study of Teachers' Sense of Efficacy. Final Report, Executive Summary.
A conceptual framework for the study of teachers' sense of efficacy was used to determine the extent to which teachers believed they could influence student learning. Significant relationships among teacher efficacy, student-teacher interaction, and student achievement were found. Teachers with high efficacy

attitudes tended to maintain high academic standards, concentrate on academic instruction, monitor students' on-task behavior, and develop a warm, supportive classroom environment, and their students had higher achievement test scores than did students of teachers with low efficacy attitudes. School organizational structures of teaming, multi-age grouping, and collegial decision-making among teachers appeared to be school factors that may increase teacher efficacy. Further research of teacher efficacy should be conducted within the contexts of teacher education, school organizational structure, beginning teacher socialization, and parent-teacher relations.

http://www.ed.psu.edu/CI/Journals/1998AETS/f3_3_riggs.rtf

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http://www.educationpartnerships.org/