

Supporting Learning Through a Multi-Layered Professional Community: Making Change Work with Reading Recovery and Literacy Collaborative

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Educators at George L. Cook Elementary once described themselves as a community of learners that began with a commitment to Reading Recovery and grew into a comprehensive school reform effort. As Reading Recovery began in the district over 15 years ago, teachers became curious about the techniques and strategies being taught during Reading Recovery lessons. Soon, Reading Recovery teachers in the district were asked to share descriptions of Clay's work and help teachers understand how to teach more effectively. Classroom teachers were provided staff development to assist them to understand more about Clay's work and how to teach for strategic processing. Many teachers responded that it was the first time they really understood how young children learn to read and write, as previously they had just followed the teacher's manual of the basal. Since 1991, achievement has risen, teachers are more reflective in their teaching, and classrooms are more child-centered. They attribute this growth to long-term commitment to Reading Recovery and Literacy Collaborative,[®] a multi-layered professional community developed in partnership with Reading Recovery. Every child deserves to be a student in such a school.

Recent federal initiatives such as Reading First and No Child Left Behind underscore the importance of quality instruction for young readers. The goal of becoming a fluent reader by the end of third grade is a worthy one, widely held by the education community. How to accomplish this goal, however, remains a topic of debate. Reviews of literacy research such as the work of the National Reading Panel (NICHD, 2001) offer only broad insights into the most effective instruction for primary chil-

dren, without substantial research supporting a particular set of materials or practices. In response, some districts commit significant resources to the implementation of scripted, teacher-proof published materials in hopes of raising test scores. Other schools, in contrast, invest in the professional development of their teaching staff as a way to recognize and build on the unique characteristics of individual learners. This type of professional development, however, does not rely on one-shot inservice sessions



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led by guest speakers; rather, long-term, continuing professional development for teachers as life-long learners is considered essential. In some schools, the staff development begins with the selection of a school-based literacy coach charged with providing ongoing learning opportunities situated within his own school. We know that extensive, long-term professional development is difficult to sustain; yet, short-term efforts doom us to a constant state of starting over. How can we create deep roots for the implementation of research-based practice?

Reading Recovery provides an effective model of professional development (Simpson & Montgomery, 2007). In Reading Recovery, the teacher leader provides guidance for the group of teachers as they observe lessons and dialogue about teaching and learning during weekly sessions in the training year and several times each year after that (Forbes & Briggs, 2006). The teacher leader also provides support to individual Reading Recovery teachers on school visits. As a result of this outstanding professional development, the Reading Recovery teachers at George L. Cook developed the expertise required to effectively design instruction for the lowest-achieving students so that they accelerate their literacy learning.

In this article we describe the work of another staff development initiative with the goal of raising literacy achievement of all students through the efforts of onsite literacy coordinators who work closely with individual teachers to help them create positive learning environments, organize powerful teaching opportunities, and make instructional decisions based upon the needs of individual stu-

dents. This network of teachers, staff developers, and university personnel is called Literacy Collaborative (LC) to denote the partnerships that support learning at all levels. As in Reading Recovery, LC assumes that teachers grow professionally and “learn by doing” with the continuing support of these school-based literacy coordinators who teach courses, model lessons, observe classroom teaching, and provide coaching aimed at shifting teaching to a higher level of precision based on students’ needs. The national standards require that Literacy Collaborative schools have Reading Recovery services and are moving toward full implementation of Reading Recovery to ensure that all students who need it have access to this intensive intervention (www.literacycollaborative.org).

Literacy Collaborative is an organization of university faculty, researchers and public school educators who have worked together since 1993 to improve literacy instruction. Begun at The Ohio State University serving the primary grades and expanded in 1999 to include Grades 3–6, over 900 literacy coordinators have been trained across the U.S. since that time. LC has its roots in Clay’s theories of children’s literacy development. The creation and development of LC began with a study group of classroom teachers, Reading Recovery teachers, and university trainers who asked themselves the following question: How can what we have learned about Clay’s theories of literacy development inform classroom instruction? The results of this collaboration was the development of the Literacy Collaborative framework—a research-based comprehensive framework to guide reading, writing, phonics, and word study instruction in K–6 class-

rooms, as well as a professional development model to support its large-scale enactment (Fountas & Pinnell, 1996, 2001, 2006; McCarrier, Pinnell, & Fountas, 2000; Pinnell & Fountas, 1998). Although Clay stresses that Reading Recovery “can be used with children from any kind of classroom curriculum” (2005, p. i), LC represents a unique sharing of theoretical underpinnings that guide instruction in both Reading Recovery lessons and classrooms. The implementation efforts and effects in primary classrooms are the focus of this article.

The Literacy Collaborative Framework

The practices used in Literacy Collaborative primary classrooms are based on the research and theoretical work of Marie Clay, who studied the behaviors of young children learning to read and write for four decades (Clay, 1991, 2001, 2005). Clay has described the “in the head” strategic problem solving used by readers who have developed systems for improving their processing of text every time they read. Most children develop this self-extending system in the first years of school, provided there is good teaching; and this learning happens within a wide range of instructional approaches. In LC schools, teachers use a comprehensive instructional plan that includes teaching approaches specifically designed to help learners expand their strategies (Fountas & Pinnell, 1996, 2001, 2006; McCarrier, Pinnell, & Fountas, 2000; Pinnell & Fountas, 1998; Pinnell & Scharer, 2001; Scharer & Pinnell, 2007). Work in classrooms has also been informed by recent attention to reading difficulties (Snow, Burns, & Griffin, 1998) and by a national

survey of research that identified five essential components of reading instruction (Armbruster, Lehr, & Osborn, 2001; NICHD, 2001).

Instruction for students involves a combination of reading, writing, and word study experiences that helps them learn the purposes of literacy, as well as how written language works. Students at all levels engage in “learning by doing” through reading and writing in tandem with explicit teaching and guidance from the teacher. Small-group reading instruction assures that students learn to comprehend written texts (Pearson & Fielding, 1991; Pressley, 1998) as well as learn to use phonics skills to analyze words while reading for meaning (Pressley; Snow, Burns, & Griffin, 1998). Instruction is designed to teach comprehension and vocabulary while also both assessing and providing explicit instruction in reading fluency (NICHD, 2001; Pinnell, et al., 1995). Teachers also provide daily lessons on the conventions, skills, and craft of writing. Students write daily, applying critical principles to their own production of writing in a range of genres (Scharer & Pinnell, 2007). Instruction in writing, in fact, contributes substantially to children’s understandings about words (Clay, 1991; NICHD) as they learn to hear the sounds in words (phonemic awareness) and learn to look at letters and words (Lieberman, Shankweiler, & Lieberman, 1985; Vellutino & Scanlon, 1987; Lundberg, Frost, & Petersen, 1988) in ways that support both reading and writing achievement. Across the framework, children learn letter-sound relationships in several different ways, including direct lessons, hands-on active exploration, manipulation of magnetic letters, and many

opportunities to use this basic information while reading and writing.

The language and literacy framework used to guide instruction within LC schools provides an organized combination of experiences, each of which contributes uniquely to children’s literacy development. Transitions are made across the grades to adjust to children’s growth in reading, writing, language, and word knowledge, as well as their development of study skills. Kindergarten and first-grade classrooms are characterized by productive, active learning, through which children gradually become more independent. By second grade, children are making the transition to longer periods of silent, independent reading and writing, and by third grade, two 60-minute instructional periods for reading and writing include explicit whole-group instruction, small-group instruction, and independent silent reading and writing. At all grade levels, interactive read-aloud is a daily activity that serves as a foundation for learning in all other components of the framework. Children experience a rich collection of children’s literature across all components of the framework to ensure that they not only learn to read and write but want to read and write.

The influence of Reading Recovery on Literacy Collaborative is clearly present in its models for professional development at all levels (trainers, literacy coordinators, and teachers) and classroom instruction. LC’s model of staff development requires yearlong, intensive training for literacy coordinators involving seven or eight weeks of onsite, full-time study led by LC trainers. The importance of observing lessons and reflecting on both teaching and learning

are evident in behind-the-glass sessions, videotape analysis, and also classroom observations followed by debriefing sessions. Following their training year, literacy coordinators work with teachers in their buildings in ways similar to teacher leaders working with Reading Recovery teachers during coursework, teaching observations, and coaching. There is an emphasis on the unique needs of individuals within classroom settings; the reciprocal relationship between reading and writing; and the importance of reading continuous text.

Language/word study block

In the language/word study block, children examine language in many different ways. A key instructional context is interactive read aloud in which the teacher reads aloud fiction, nonfiction, or poetry, which children discuss, bringing their own experiences and interpretations to the text. They also have opportunities to participate in the shared reading of texts, which provides a highly supported way to process information and behave as readers. Shared writing, too, is an important instructional context within the language/word study block. Here, children and teacher collaboratively negotiate a text which the teacher writes on a chart often pointing out conventions such as spelling and punctuation. Writing becomes interactive when children are invited to “share the pen” at selected teaching points, a process that helps them focus on the details of print (McCarrier, Pinnell, & Fountas, 2000). During these writing experiences, teachers start with what is known by their students and make instructional decisions to build on that knowledge base. Children may study words by using magnetic letters to support a flexible and deep



During guided reading, the teacher provides small-group instruction for students who are similar in their reading behaviors and can read and understand about the same level of text. The teacher observes, notes students' reading behaviors, and sometimes interacts briefly with individuals.

understanding of letters, sounds, and words that can be applied to reading and writing continuous texts.

Explicit word study is another way children learn to look at language. Teachers provide a brief, explicit lesson on a phonics or spelling principle based on the needs of the students. The goal is to help children learn about letters and sounds, as well as how words work. The minilesson is followed by an application activity and a brief time when children share what they are learning about phonics and spelling. From about the end of Grade 1 through the rest of the elementary grades a 5-day systematic word study system is added to the curriculum.

Also within the language/word study block, the teacher may choose to engage in specially planned activities such as readers' theater (performing a piece of literature), current events, process drama (entering roles drawn

from literacy or other experiences), interactive edit or vocabulary, handwriting, and test reading and writing (lessons to help students understand and perform well on the testing genre).

Reading workshop

A major goal of both instructional approaches used in reading workshop (guided reading and independent literacy work) is to greatly expand the amount and types of texts that students are reading. The expectations for voluminous reading are high (Anderson, Wilson, & Fielding, 1998). In addition, explicit instruction is used to help students read increasingly more difficult levels of text.

During guided reading, the teacher provides small-group instruction for students who are similar in their reading behaviors and can read and understand about the same level of text. The teacher selects a text for the

group, introduces it, and has each student read the text either softly or silently. The teacher observes, notes students' reading behaviors, and sometimes interacts briefly with individuals. After the reading, students discuss the meaning of the story and the teacher helps them expand their processing strategies through demonstration, conversation, or writing. An optional component of guided reading is extending the text through writing, drawing, discussion, drama, or other kind of analysis. Another option, which is especially important for children who are having some difficulty in reading, is to engage students in 1 or 2 minutes of work on words to illustrate important principles that this group of students needs to know. Children reread familiar texts; teachers provide a supportive orientation to a new text purposely selected for this particular group of children and observe their reading to note each child's orchestration of strategies and fluent behaviors. Teachers take one or two running records as children read and plan expert teaching points based on their observations of students' reading behaviors.

To allow the teacher to work with small groups during guided reading, students learn to work independently. This time is not filled with busywork or worksheets. Rather, active and productive involvement in reading and writing is the goal. In primary grades, students participate in a range of work, for example, putting together stories or poems in the pocket chart to read, listening to stories at the tape recorder, writing and drawing at a center, reading books from "browsing boxes" that contain easy books or those they have read before, doing a word study activity

in a “center,” reading books they choose from the classroom library, and working on special art or writing projects. Students may do some of these activities at their desks, tables, or at a center. Toward the end of Grade 2, teachers move to a structured independent reading period, which includes: 1) a minilesson on some aspect of reading; 2) independent silent reading while individuals confer with the teacher; and 3) sharing at the end of the period. During this time, the teacher may work with small groups in guided reading or literature study as students work in small, heterogeneous groups to discuss a piece of literature in depth. For literature discussion, students may read the book or hear it read by the teacher or on tape. The teacher demonstrates to students how to engage in the process and guides their discussion.

Writing workshop

Students in Literacy Collaborative schools are taught to write with a combination of whole-class lessons, daily practice in composing and writing a variety of pieces, and small-group instruction. In addition, students engage in reading, writing, and research to explore questions in content areas such as math, science, or social studies. Students may use technology to prepare presentations or final reports.

The workshop begins as the teacher provides a brief, clear minilesson on some aspect of writing—procedures, conventions, strategies and skills, or craft. Students then engage in the writing process as the teacher confers with individuals about their writing. The teacher supports the writer in composing his message and helps the child make connections between

reading and writing to support literacy achievement. For students who are having difficulty learning to write, the teacher may convene a small group for interactive writing or guided writing involving instruction on any aspect of writing that children need to know.

The Literacy Collaborative Professional Development Model

Use of a research-based technique in instruction is only as good as the professional who analyzes students’ strengths and needs, selects a specific teaching approach, applies it in an appropriate way, assesses the results to inform further teaching moves, and maintains a warm and trusting relationship with children while at the same time engaging their interests (Russell & Munby, 1991; Steiner, n.d.). A large body of research has revealed that teacher training is the critical factor in making a difference in students’ learning (Darling-Hammond, 1996). Teachers need very specific training on particular approaches, but they also need the opportunity to reflect on their teaching and talk about their observations of children with a “more expert” other, who can support their development of the kinds of deep understandings they need to continue to improve.

Literacy Collaborative was designed to deliver such professional development support. At the core of this work is a new professional role—the literacy coordinator. To be effective, a literacy coordinator must have a thorough understanding of literacy theory and content, expertise in enacting all aspects of the framework, and experience working with adult learners. The LC has developed a rigorous curricu-

lum to prepare literacy coordinators to successfully take on this demanding role. While still teaching in their own schools, literacy coordinators participate in a year of graduate level coursework on all facets of the LC framework. In addition, they develop essential skills for working with adults as coaches and staff developers. The curriculum includes honing expertise in teaching the framework in classrooms and acquiring new staff developer and research skills. After the training year, the literacy coordinator participates in ongoing professional development activities while continuing to teach part-time in a classroom. During the first 2 years of implementation, after the training year, the literacy coordinator teaches an intensive course (60 hours across 2 years) for teachers in the school and also provides in-classroom coaching to help teachers try out and reflect on new instructional approaches. After the initial 2-year course, the literacy coordinator forms ongoing study groups to continue the staff development initiative based on the unique needs of each building. The initial course is also offered for new teachers entering the school. The literacy coordinator assumes full responsibility for providing a range of school-based professional development opportunities including whole-school professional development courses, study groups, and one-on-one coaching.

The Literacy Collaborative seeks to create a community of learners within each school (Grossman & Wineburg, 2000). It aims to deeply embed itself in the life of a school and over time to make fundamental changes in how the work of teaching occurs. The professional development model is focused on specific content and pedagogy; however, in bringing teachers together, the literacy coordi-

nator also supports the professional collaboration around improving instruction. Teachers work on identified instructional problems and systematically examine evidence about their practice. Structured professional development sessions, individual coaching, and informal support are routine. Teachers apply principles in their daily practice with the support of the literacy coordinator; they learn by doing.

A Multi-Layered Professional Community

Literacy coordinators are also part of a national network of colleagues. Each literacy coordinator is affiliated with a university training site at Georgia State University, Lesley University, or The Ohio State University. All university training sites must also be a training center for Reading Recovery. Faculty members at each university organize ongoing professional development that allows the constant infusion of refinements in practice. Additionally, required professional development days bring together literacy coordinators from all schools each year. This network activity provides the outside support that schools need to continue momentum toward the LC's ambitious goals.

Literacy Collaborative depends on the individuals at local universities, districts, and schools to put practice into action. Members of the network, however, are connected through a well-articulated, content-based pedagogy. These "disseminators of the program" meet regularly for long periods of time to work on program development and implementation. They form collegial groups that reach beyond university and region as they join together to solve common problems and resolve issues. What

they learn through this helps them support the LC network in their home locales.

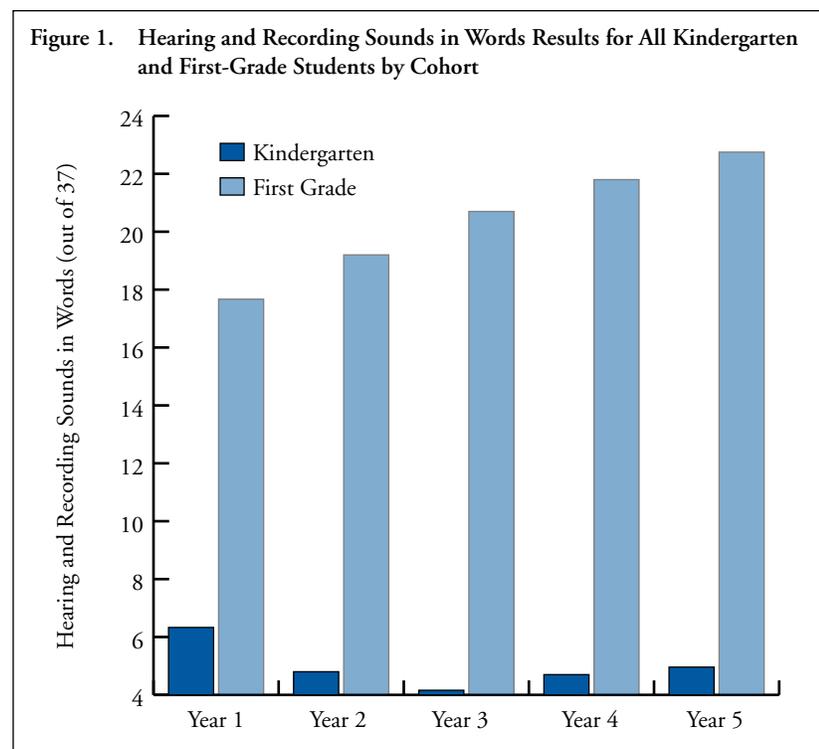
Once such a core group is built (and keeps expanding over time), the members also function as a projectwide quality control mechanism. Changes in the program take place not randomly but through careful analysis and deliberation. This process assures that scaling up takes place with integrity. Literacy Collaborative can maintain its rigor, while real change can take place at the school level.

Research Evidence

A unique feature of both Reading Recovery and Literacy Collaborative is the commitment to collecting data for every child. In LC, some data are collected to help teachers plan appropriate classroom instruction; other data are gathered to document the effectiveness of implementation.

For example, data from kindergarten, first-grade, and second-grade students in 33 schools that have been part of the LC network for at least 4 years were analyzed to determine achievement patterns for cohorts of children over time (Scharer, Desai, Williams, & Pinnell, 2003). The schools in these analyses are representative of other LC schools involved in the Literacy Collaborative network in that they are diverse in nature. Over a third of the schools enroll primarily either African American students or Latino students. Over 50 percent of the students in 25 of the 33 schools received free or reduced-price lunches and 14 of those schools have at least 75% of their students designated as low income.

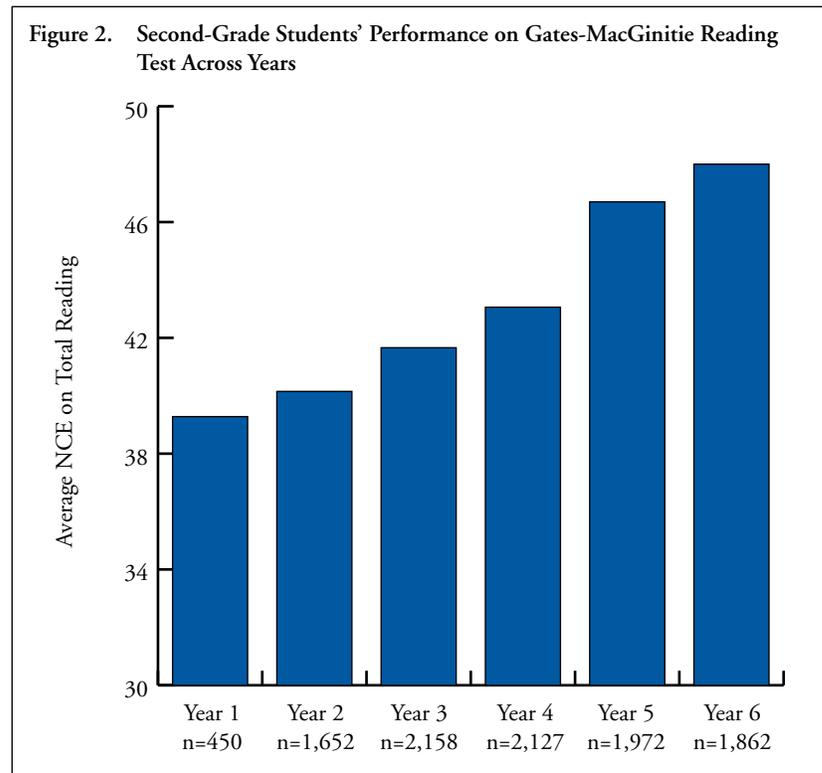
Data were collected on each cohort of children entering the educational program in kindergarten and again in first and second grades. Figure 1 illustrates patterns of kindergarten and



first-grade scores on Clay's Hearing and Recording Sounds in Words task (2002). The average entry kindergarten score was 6.33 (out of 37) during Year 1 and ranged from 4.16 to 4.96 for subsequent cohorts. This demonstrates a fairly stable level of knowledge for each incoming cohort. However, a pattern of rising scores on the test at Grade 1 has been observed. The average scores for students in Grade 1 increased from 17.67 to 22.75 over time; this increase indicates that enhanced achievement has accompanied the implementation of the LC. Results are displayed in Figure 1.

The Gates-MacGinitie Reading Test (4th Edition, 2000) was used to measure reading performance in the fall of second grade in the form of normal curve equivalent (NCE), a statistical transformation of percentile ranks in which reading achievement is divided into 99 equal units with a mean of 50 and a standard deviation of 21.06. An NCE score of 50 is equal to the average score for the general population. NCEs are generally considered to provide the truest indication of growth in student achievement because they provide comparative information in equal units of measurement. Even a small gain in NCEs indicates advancement from the students' original level of achievement. Results in Figure 2 indicate a rising pattern of NCEs for total reading, an increase from 29.85 ($n = 450$) to 48.00 ($n = 1,862$). These scores also indicate a move toward the average score for the general population over time.

Results from the Gates-MacGinitie Reading Test were also analyzed by examining the percentage of students with scores in each of the four quartiles. The percentage of students



with scores in the lowest quartile also decreased from 46.0% to 31.3%; as fewer children scored in the lowest quartile the percentages of children scoring in the upper quartiles rose. In sum, even though the average kindergarten entry scores for students remain relatively flat over this 6-year period, average second-grade reading achievement rose substantially as the LC framework was implemented.

But numbers tell only part of the story. We can look at trends over large numbers of children and schools over time, and that provides documentation of the impact of a project like Literacy Collaborative. But most educators are more interested in the impact that a long-term intensive effort can make for "our school." In the next section, we present the story of one school's involvement in Literacy Collaborative in their own words.

One School's Story

The following description was written by members of the George L. Cooke Elementary School literacy team as they reflected on the impact of the Literacy Collaborative on teachers and students in their school.

Higher student achievement and greater student success is what the Literacy Collaborative has meant to the George L. Cooke School, a large K–2 building in rural New York. A large percentage of our students enter school with limited experiences with literacy, little or no preschool experience and frequent behavior concerns. The teachers had been frustrated with programs that were not meeting the needs of our very diverse population. Teaching was not consistent or as effective as we would have liked.

Teachers were actively seeking a more balanced literacy approach.

The Literacy Collaborative was a natural outgrowth of the theories and practices of the Reading Recovery program already in place in our school. The 4-year journey to full implementation of the Literacy Collaborative framework has resulted in dramatic improvements in student achievement and our teaching philosophies. Teachers are more reflective in their teaching and better able to engage in higher-level conversations about the progress of their students. Teachers and students are becoming a true ‘community of learners.’ The teachers are enthusiastic and their classrooms have become more child-centered. Classroom management has improved as a result and the level of frustration of beginning readers has decreased.

Assessment informs instruction. Teachers are more knowledgeable about what their students know and have a variety of strategies to help students with what they need to know. There is a built-in support system through the ongoing professional development meetings and the regular coaching provided by the in-school literacy coordinator, Susan Gottlieb.

One of the first-grade teachers, Karen Van Dunk, described her personal journey from a traditional teacher to more a child-centered teacher.

As someone who came from a very traditional background, my teaching has become more

child-centered. I feel that I now reach many more of my students and am able to bring them from where they enter my class to the cutting edge of their potential throughout the year. The children are able to work at their own levels but are constantly being stretched through guided reading and writing workshop as they interact with each other. I have come to understand that much learning occurs between peers as well as between the teacher and students. The Literacy Collaborative has rejuvenated me and has been the most rewarding time in my career of 30 years. It is exciting to be a learner myself and to better understand how children learn to read and write.

Changes and Challenges During Implementation

The voices of literacy coordinators, too, are an important part of the story. A survey was conducted to learn more about the effects of implementation of Literacy Collaborative on elementary schools. Literacy coordinators in 51 schools who had worked in their school with primary teachers for at least 4 years were asked to identify three changes resulting from implementation of the LC framework and also to identify the three most important challenges they have faced. Their thoughts about changes and challenges are described below.

Changes

Many literacy coordinators commented on the increased amount of time teachers are focusing on reading, writing, and word study, which

is increasing students’ enjoyment of reading and writing. Reading and writing instruction are planned to be efficient and make good use of uninterrupted classroom time, with the goal of greater student engagement while reading quality literature and writing their own stories.

Reading has become an activity that the children enjoy. They look forward to reading workshop every day. It is preferred over recess. Conversations about literature abound.

The course teachers take during the first 2 years of implementation appears to affect the ways they talk about both children and instruction.

Teachers are able to talk collaboratively as a group about best teaching practices, reflect and help one another.

The primary teachers have bonded through our training sessions. We talk the same language of early literacy.

Teacher talk — we have a common vocabulary to discuss things dealing with literacy and student behaviors.

Part of the language of the primary staff focuses on being able to meet each child’s needs as his or her strengths and weaknesses are recognized through the use of assessment tools in both reading and writing.

I am able to address individuals from their own starting point and encourage them to use what they know to go further.

Teachers are more systematic in the observation of their students. Most teachers are able to tell you strengths and weaknesses of every student in their classroom.

Teachers use running records, observations, and other assessment tools to diagnose students' needs and then begin to implement strategies to help that student; they are not looking at a class as a whole, but at individuals. Specific instructional components, such as guided reading, offer teachers new ways to support children's learning. When combined with a stronger understanding of the reading and writing processes, the quality of classroom instruction increases and strengthens teachers' abilities to help readers and writers with various needs, particularly students who struggle.

Guided reading has offered my staff a comprehensive approach to instruction that accentuates students' strengths so they can address their needs.

Teachers have a better understanding of the reading process and why it's so imperative that children read at an instructional or independent level.

Teachers have gained a better perspective on instruction for lower-ability readers and writers.

Finally, student achievement was identified as rising, which further inspires teachers to continue their implementation of the LC framework.

Our test scores are going up, which pleases the administration.

Challenges

Implementation of the LC framework, however, is not an easy task, as described through the voices of literacy coordinators below:

Implementing the Literacy Collaborative framework involves a tremendous time commitment that adds stress to the new learning. But, I'd do it again!

It's not easy — there are no 'cookbooks,' so it takes awhile for teachers to understand the framework. Once they do, they're hooked!

One of the challenges is helping teachers make shifts from previous methods and teaching techniques to unfamiliar instructional contexts, such as interactive writing or writer's workshop. Such changes do not occur over night, but require considerable time and effort on the part of the literacy coordinator and the classroom teacher.

It seems that it is taking longer than I had originally thought for some teachers to make the changes.

Resistance to change creates a stressful environment when trying to change an experienced staff from a skill-based, teacher-directed approach to a child-centered framework. Ensuring sufficient time for coaching continues to be a challenge for literacy coordinators who are trying to work through large numbers of teachers and who have additional responsibilities assigned to their position.

Coaching on consecutive days is challenging due to scheduling conflicts. Time is a big factor.

It's often difficult for the literacy coordinators to get into classrooms because of other responsibilities given to them.

Despite the challenges, literacy coordinators such as the ones below continue to work hard to support their staff during implementation.

The opportunity to train in the project has been and continues to be a wonderful professional experience. The entire project, based on always working with a more knowledgeable other at all levels, is the only way, in my opinion.

After 5 years of working with teachers, I can now see growth in my teachers' learning. They are more comfortable and I can see results of children being more successful in their reading and writing. We are on the right track. It has taken us awhile to get up the hill, but teachers are scaffolding other teachers and students in their learning.

Conclusion

In these stressful days of testing and adequate yearly progress, some educators look for the "quick fix" with the promise of immediate results and easy implementation. Some "solutions" may totally ignore the individual needs of students and prescribe whole-class lessons that have negative effects on the motivation of both students and teachers. We have learned from over 14 years of work with Literacy Collaborative that the road to increased student achievement is neither easy nor quick. Planning instruction based on the needs of students requires a level

of knowledge far beyond reading a teacher's manual. Rather, more like a skilled physician, the teacher must be able to understand the complexities of students' literacy behaviors and make instructional decisions based on a deep understanding about both children and pedagogy.

We have learned that the notion of learning by doing applies to all learners—whether a first grader, Reading Recovery teacher, or a literacy coordinator—and the depth of understanding is often related to the depth of the experience and the motivation of the learner. We have learned that progress in various schools is uneven, subject to political winds and changing demographics; it is utterly dependent on the commitment and intellectual integrity of educators within schools and universities. The challenges are great, but so are the rewards.

Projects like Literacy Collaborative and Reading Recovery strive to support teachers over time while demanding the best of their efforts in hopes of creating a new generation of readers and writers. Together, Literacy Collaborative, focused on ensuring quality classroom instruction, and Reading Recovery, designed to accelerate the learning of the lowest learners, make a school's literacy efforts effective for all learners.

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