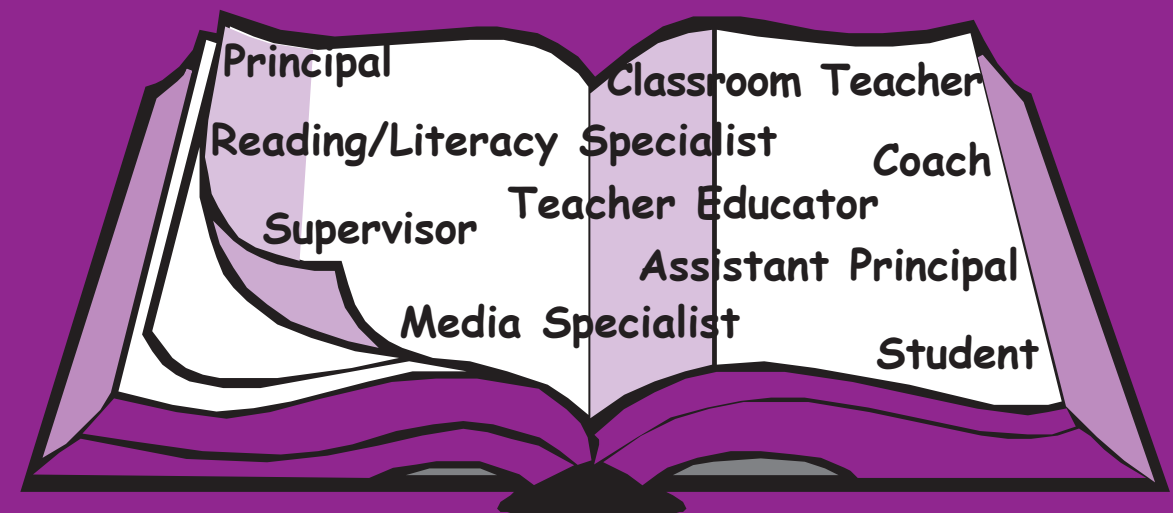


Teachers on the Cutting Edge

Volume 18

Studies and Research Committee

May 2006



Literacy Leadership

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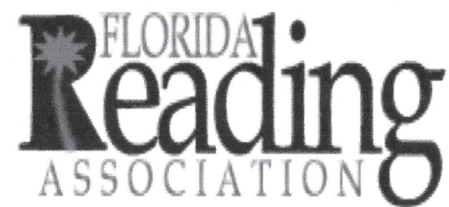
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Florida Reading Association
 2006

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LITERACY LEADERSHIP

Foreword

Each year the Studies and Research Committee of the Florida Reading Association (FRA) publishes *Teachers on the Cutting Edge*, a sampling of current research and other educational activities that affect student learning and represent “best practices” in an area related to literacy.

This year, members of FRA as well as other educators have expressed interest in the role of leadership in literacy development; furthermore, there has been widespread interest in improving leadership as a key to successful implementation of large-scale reform. Thus, the committee chose this topic because leadership matters; in fact, a recent study supported by the Wallace Foundation found that in factors relating to literacy development, *leadership is second only to teaching*. Thus leadership has relevance at all education levels and with all types of learners. In this volume, articles that address the current knowledge base concerning literacy leadership include the following:

- Various leadership roles and qualifications related to literacy
- Development of various leadership roles
- Characteristics of effective literacy leaders
- Importance of creating and maintaining a collective vision
- Need for knowledgeable decision makers
- Suggestions for leaders

FRA’s Studies and Research Committee hopes that Florida educators will gain insights by reading these summaries of articles and books on literacy leadership and that they will share copies of this issue of *Teachers on the Cutting Edge* with colleagues, school leaders, parents, policymakers, and friends in order to enlighten key stakeholders about the latest information on leadership. To promote discussion among teachers and administrators, FRA encourages educators to copy and distribute the summaries presented here for use by individuals and institutions. Designed to aid teachers and administrators in their efforts to learn about research and best practices that support literacy development, *Teachers on the Cutting Edge* is one of the benefits of membership in the Florida Reading Association

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LITERACY LEADERSHIP

Source

Rolheiser, C., Fullan, M., and Edge, K., (2003). Dynamic duo: Literacy joins forces with change. *Journal of Staff Development*, 24(2), 38-41.

Summary

The Toronto District School Board developed the Early Years Literacy Project (EYLP) to help schools target ESL students and close the achievement gap. The EYLP has documented a 13% gain in reading scores for those schools participating over the first three years. In building this effective literacy collaboration each school has a literacy coordinator who is essential to literacy professional development. Each coordinator visits classrooms, models literacy instruction and assessment, and facilitates building a collaborative culture. In addition the district conducted summer institutes, provided university literacy courses for teachers, assigned part-time Reading Recovery™ teachers to schools, and emphasized the principal's role as a literacy learner. The ultimate goal of the EYLP is to build student's capacity for ongoing literacy improvement.

Implications/Applications

Collaborative literacy leadership encourages schools to

- promote greater student achievement in reading.
- increase teacher confidence as they become literacy experts.
- create dynamic principal role as it evolves from administrator to literacy learner to collaborative facilitator.
- allow all participants to be equal stakeholders in the literacy education of the students.
- “help teachers and administrators view their work as change agents who help others develop change knowledge, skills, and dispositions”;
- “focus sustained professional development initiatives on literacy, and on understanding and managing change;
- use a variety of professional learning approaches (summer institutes, district series, and job-embedded approaches including study groups, mentoring, and action research);
- use well equipped in-school leadership teams (administrators and teachers) to mobilize improvement efforts;
- maximize opportunities for school-based practitioners to explain practices (e.g., the Learning Fair);
- facilitate opportunities for school-based practices within and between schools;
- realize that persistence is a key change attribute. Developing individual and collective expertise and building district momentum takes time.”

“Realize that persistence is a key change attribute. Developing individual and collective expertise and building district momentum takes time.”

Rolheiser, Fullen, & Edge, 2003

LITERACY LEADERSHIP

Source

Sousa, D. A. (2003). *The leadership brain: How to lead today's schools more effectively*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin Press.

Summary

Sousa provides an important guide to leadership. His chapter titles include: understanding leadership, linking leadership to the brain, brain-compatible curriculum, brain-compatible instruction and assessment, teacher evaluation, ethical and spiritual leadership, transforming school culture, and putting it all together. Each chapter provides a description of the topic, explanations and examples based on recent brain research, leader's questions, and specific useful tips for leaders. Many chapters include checklists and worksheets for self-reflection and use with other educators during professional development. Educators must take advantage of the new knowledge in our field. The implications of recent brain research for leadership must not be overlooked. This book is chock full of suggestions based on this new knowledge.

Implications/Applications

The author identified attributes of a leader:

- Leaders are made, not born.
- Leaders know their stuff.
- Leaders have a clear vision of their mission.
- Leaders respect and care for their followers.
- Leaders have high expectations.
- Leaders demonstrate absolute integrity.
- Leaders are excellent role models. (pp. 8-10)

Leaders “must be able to be and do the following: understand people; be decisive; communicate and listen well; be flexible; know when to delegate; be innovative; set priorities; be a visionary; know when to be intense and when to relax; be positive; have a sense of humor that avoids sarcasm; be willing to take risks; be introspective; develop good problem-solving and decision-making skills; know how to assess and coach the skills of others; be predictable; and be there.”

Sousa, 2003

LITERACY LEADERSHIP

Source

McAndrew, D. A., (2005). *Literacy leadership: Six strategies for peoplework*. Newark, DE: International Reading Association.

Summary

The author provides the reader with significant theories and research on leadership, as well as describing vignettes of different types of classroom teachers. He discusses the barriers to and successes of good teacher leadership. His philosophy integrates the personal hopes and desires of all the constituents with the professional work environment.

The major portion of the book addresses six successful strategies “to do the peoplework at the heart of leadership” and includes leadership studies for the basis of each strategy. This up-to-date book includes many excellent resources on literacy leadership and should be a part of every literacy leader’s library.

Implications/Applications

- Create and communicate a vision.
 - “Ask all stakeholders for their visions.
 - Draw a personal literacy lifeline...
 - Use common interests, trust, and rewards.” (p. 45)
- Be a model.
 - “Make and honor commitments...
 - Show interest and ask questions.
 - Take advantage of teachable moments...
 - Choose words wisely.” (p. 63)
- Experiment with new ideas and take risks.
 - “Obtain graduate degrees...
 - Participate in professional organizations...
 - Start groups inside and outside of school.” (p. 78)
- Nurture competence, trust, and collaboration.
 - “Assume that everyone is capable of performing to his or her maximum ability...
 - Give away power...
 - Always say ‘we’” (p. 91)
- Encourage the heart.
- Transform yourself through reflection and learning. (pp. 21-22)
 - “Keep a leader’s log.
 - Observe leaders...” (p. 127)

LITERACY LEADERSHIP

Source

Lyons, C. A. & Pinnell, G. S. (2001). *Systems for change in literacy education*. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann.

Summary

Lyons and Pinnell discuss a number of ways for presenting professional development and provide a comprehensive plan for implementing successful professional development that considers all aspects of the process from initial planning to evaluation. It is based on recent research and addresses the needs of and specific information necessary for the adult learner.

This book is divided into four sections: Developing Teachers’ Conceptual Knowledge and Skills, Implementing High-Quality Professional Development, Enabling Professional Development Through Coaching, and Supporting Lasting Change. The Appendices and other portions of this book provide numerous rating scales, action plan outlines, and other helpful forms and templates.

The authors address the various stakeholders, share vignettes identifying the ways to make everyone share a piece of the process, and provide suggestions for developing study groups and research projects. Each chapter also includes questions and ideas for extending staff development skills.

Implications/Applications

This book contains crucial information for educators planning comprehensive professional development. The authors identified the characteristics of effective professional development:

- Complex ideas are experienced, discussed, and analyzed in a variety of learning contexts.
- Professional development is grounded in the practice of teaching children.
- Learning conversations surrounding the act of teaching.
- The learning community shares and supports a language that can be used to communicate complex ideas.
- Balance is maintained between demonstrating specific teaching approaches and reflecting on and analyzing the process of teaching. (p. 58)

“A leader is one who knows the way, goes the way, and shows the way.”

John C. Maxwell
Author, Seminar and Conference Leader

Source

Tate, M. L. (2004). *“Sit & get” won’t grow dendrites: 20 professional learning strategies that engage the adult brain*. Thousands Oaks, CA: Corwin Press.

Summary

Tate presents twenty brain-compatible strategies for working with the adult learner, based on recent and significant research. The author also discusses adult learning theory and the implications for educators conducting preservice and inservice activities.

This book is an excellent user-friendly tool and includes the following strategies: 1. Brainstorming and discussion; 2. Drawing and artwork; 3. Field Trips; 4. Games; 5. Graphic organizers; 6. Humor and celebration; 7. Manipulatives and models; 8. Metaphors, analogies, and similes; 9. Mnemonic devices; 10. Movement; 11. Music, rhythm, rhyme, and rap; 12. Project- and problem-based instruction; 13. Reciprocal teaching, cooperative learning, and peer coaching; 14. Role-plays, drama, pantomimes, and charades; 15. Storytelling; 16. Technology; 17. Visualization; 18. Visuals; 19. Work study and action research; and 20. Writing and reflection.

Each strategy is defined (*What?*), a theoretical framework provided with important statements and resources (*Why?*), sample professional learning activities described (*How?*), and a page for reflection and application is included. Tate emphasizes the fact that educators, developing and implementing programs for adults, must consider learning styles and the most recent knowledge about learning and the brain.

Implications/Applications

The six principles for providing good learning experiences for adults:

- Adult learners are involved in the selection of content and development of experiences (p. xxii)
- Learning is connected to the participants background knowledge. (p. xxiii)
- Learning is processed in many ways. (p. xxiv)
- “Learning is collegial and directed at solving specific job-related problems...” (p. xxv)
- Ample opportunities for reflection are provided. (p. xxvi)
- “Following initial training, adults are provided with ongoing support that can take the form of peer coaching or study groups...” (p. xxvii)

“He who knows not and knows not he knows not: he is a fool--shun him
He who knows not and knows he knows not: he is simple--teach him.
He who knows and knows not he knows: he is asleep--wake him.
He who knows and knows he knows: he is wise--follow him.”

Arabian proverb

Source

Dole, J.A. (2004). The changing role of the reading specialist in school reform. *The Reading Teacher*, 57, 462-470.

Summary

The author explores the history of the reading specialist. Under the auspices of the Title I program of ESEA of 1965 and 2000, reading specialists emerged to improve reading achievement in schools with many poverty-level students. At first, the struggling students were in a pullout program. The focus at this time was on supplementary intervention. However, researchers found only limited success in these programs. There appeared to be little carry-over once the students returned to their regular classrooms. In 2000, new goals were established for Title I that called for the involved teacher to be highly qualified to teach reading. They further stated “the reading instructional strategies and programs used to teach reading should be scientifically based.” Finally they addressed the need for formal and informal assessment. These new goals proved to be more acceptable because the students were getting the instruction that they needed to progress in their reading skills.

Dole feels as though the reading specialists who are working in the schools are best able to take on the role of reading coaches and mentors. Reading coaches can play an important role in professional development. Five types of support for classroom teachers include: theory, demonstration, practice, feedback, and in-class coaching. It was important that teachers have consistent practice in their own classrooms.

The author’s experiences in Utah proved that the most important kinds of reading coaches’ activities are teaching demonstrations and modeling of lessons. Dole further presents a script that a reading coach might have in the classroom. It is helpful for the coaches to build strong positive rapport with classroom teachers. In this way, the coach provides feedback to the teacher after observing a lesson, and the teacher becomes reflective about his or her teaching.

Implications/Applications

Reading coaches were asked to identify characteristics of an effective reading coach:

- Effective reading coaches have to have a greater level of reading expertise than the teachers they are coaching.
- Reading coaches have to know how to teach reading extremely well and to have actually done it successfully.
- Reading coaches must be reflective about their own instructional practice.
- Reading coaches have to be able to articulate what they are seeing in a classroom.
- Reading coaches need to support and nudge--balancing on a fine line between supporting the status quo and placing too much stress on teachers.
- Coaches need to be able to plan and organize “on the run.”
- Reading coaches need a sense of humor.

LITERACY LEADERSHIP

Source

Quatroche, D.J., Bean, R. & Hamilton, R.L. (2001). The role of the reading specialist: A review of the research. *The Reading Teacher*, 55, 282-294.

Summary

In the mid 1990's the IRA Commission on the Role of the Reading Specialists was charged with several tasks. One was to develop a literature review to summarize the current view of that role and the various roles reading specialists assume. While it was found that the role of the reading specialist depends on the context of the instructional situation, they are seen as having a "complex position" (p. 287), assuming many roles and responsibilities, and being viewed differently by different professionals. Other questions addressed include:

Do reading specialists make a difference?

"It appears critical that professionals with extensive knowledge of reading instruction be part of every classroom where there are students who need help learning to read." (p. 289)

How should Reading specialists function?

Although the major roles appear to be those of assessing and instructing, other roles suggested were leader, student advocate, resource, and collaborator.

Implications/Applications

- For reading specialists: Be aware of the complexity of the role that spans from instructor to collaborator to liaison.
- For classroom teachers: Involve classroom teachers in professional development; stress collaborative work for improving literacy of students.
- For administrators: Understand the multiple roles of the reading specialist and allow time for interactive planning with classroom teachers.
- For teacher educators: Deliver programs that are broad and that acknowledge the multiple tasks of the reading specialist.

"The reading specialist's role as a collaborative leader requires empathy, understanding, and resilience. The reading specialist must be a hard-working member of the faculty and an equal to teachers yet also be able to advise and assist teachers at each grade level. ... have the reading specialist be a member of the school community by participating in school-related duties and after-school responsibilities. However, keeping the duties manageable, such as a highly visible front door duty or an open computer lab monitor, allows the reading specialist to share equally as one of the staff while maintaining a visible and accessible presence every day in school life. Thus, ... the literacy program as a whole can be seen as a natural part of everyone's school day."

Guth & Pertengill, 2005

LITERACY LEADERSHIP

Source

Russo, A. (2004). School-based coaching: A revolution in professional development—or just the latest fad? *Harvard Education Letter*. Retrieved March 30, 2006, <http://www.edletter.org/past/issues/2004-ja/coaching.shtml>

Summary

They call it coaching, but it is teaching. After years of disappointing results from conventional professional development efforts and under ever-increasing accountability pressures, many districts are now hiring coaches to improve their schools. The professional development strategy known as school-based coaching generally involves experts in a particular subject area or set of teaching strategies working closely with small groups of teachers to improve classroom practice and, ultimately, student achievement. In some cases coaches work full-time at an individual school or district; in others they work with a variety of schools throughout the year. Most are former classroom teachers, and some keep part-time classroom duties while they coach. Russo argues that many of the more conventional forms of professional development such as conferences, workshops, and in-services are ineffective because they are often led by outside experts who tell teachers what to do, then are never heard from again.

Implications/Applications

According to Russo, school based coaching meets many of the standards set forth by the National Staff Development Council (NSDC.) <http://www.nsd.org/>:

- the organization of educators into "learning communities" that have clear goals consistent with school and district goals;
- effective leadership to support "continuous instructional improvement";
- the application of research to school and classroom strategies and decision making;
- support for teacher collaboration;
- the development of educators' skills at increasing parent involvement.

"They call it coaching, but it is teaching. You do not just tell them. . . you show them the reasons."

Vince Lombardi
1913-1970

LITERACY LEADERSHIP

Source

Sturtevant, E. G. (2003). *The literacy coach: A key to improving teaching and learning in secondary schools*. Washington, DC: Alliance for Excellent Education.

Summary

This report focuses on the role of the literacy coach in secondary schools. The report notes the ongoing difficulty that high school students have in accomplishing the reading task in our high school classrooms. After delineating “what adolescents need” to be successful at reading to learn and the factors that inhibit effective change, the report focuses on those schools and districts that have implemented ongoing, effective professional development with the *literacy coach* in the role of leader. This report looks at the components of effective “coaching” models and methods to recruit and train the literacy coach.

Implications/Applications

- Coaching is seen as a part of a larger system of professional development, with the literacy coach integrated into this system.
- Literacy coaches, teachers and administrators need intensive training and education.
- Selection of coaches takes into account knowledge and skills needed and the ease with which the coach will be able to establish a rapport with the school community.
- Support for coaches is ongoing.
- Coaches are seen as supporting but not replacing teacher knowledge.
- Adequate funding and resources are available.
- Literacy coaches’ services should include the following:
 - Lead literacy teams
 - Guide teachers in using appropriate strategies
 - Function as expert teachers

“Leadership is second only to classroom instruction among all school-related factors that contribute to what students learn at school.”

Leithwood, Louis,
Anderson & Wahlstrom, 2004

LITERACY LEADERSHIP

Source

Henwood, G.F. (2000). A new role for the reading specialist: Contributing toward a high school’s collaborative educational culture. *The Journal of Adolescent & Adult Literacy*, 43, 316-325.

Summary

This article concerns the author’s development and implementation of the new role of school wide reading specialist for a suburban high school. The descriptive article reveals the author’s process and collaborative activity with colleagues. Originally employed to teach comprehension skills through explicit instruction to 5% of the high school’s population, the author was asked to address the broader scope of reading improvement needs throughout the school. The principal provided the opportunity for and encouraged collegiality between the author and the high school’s content area teachers.

The remainder of the article concerns the author’s rationale for and practice in the new role, school wide reading specialist. The author’s practices as support for content area teachers reflected the principal’s goals: She was left alone to determine the structure of and to evaluate the new role, its impact and outcomes; she approached others not as an expert but as a partner, developing a “paired partnership” with content area colleagues. (p.317) She practiced collegial decision making and followed “teacher-selected” (p.317) options for her input through modeling, demonstration, observation, participation with a specific student, shared reactions, and selected strategies, which met the before-during-after framework for working with content material.

The article concludes with the author’s descriptive survey and narrative of the collaborative process and implementation in this school. Closing comments include evaluation and reflection on learning to collaborate with peers and the benefits of that collaboration.

Implications/Applications

The implications of this one reading specialist’s work are seen in these two statements:

- “...I (had) the opportunity to contribute to the overall literacy development of students.”
- “...Some key staff (recognized) that “reading was more than skills and comprehension.” (p. 322)

“The total (direct and indirect) effects of leadership on student learning account for about a quarter of total school effects.”

Leithwood, Louis,
Anderson & Wahlstrom, 2004

LITERACY LEADERSHIP

Source

Bean, R., Swan, A. & Knaub, R. (2003). Reading specialists in schools with exemplary reading programs: Functional, versatile, and prepared. *The Reading Teacher*, 56, 446-455.

Summary

The authors describe a two-stage study of the role of reading specialists. Stage one reveals the results of an IRA 1996-1999 survey of 111 schools recognized as having exemplary reading programs. Fifty-eight respondents, 97 % of those schools' principals, stated that the reading specialists were important or very important to the success of the reading program. (p. 447). Principals were asked, "What does the reading specialist do?" They replied that the most frequent tasks asked of the reading specialists were instruction, diagnosis and resource related.

Stage two of the study reported information gathered from interviews of twelve school reading specialists. The authors sought to identify the reading specialists—"Who are they?" Answers showed that the majority were female veteran teachers, former classroom teachers with credentials and an average of 20 years experience. They also wanted to learn what reading specialists do? Responses indicated that there were 5 roles: resource to teachers, school and community liaison, coordinator of reading programs, contributor to assessment, and instructor.

The authors conclude that these roles represent leadership responsibilities and describe the components of each role from that point of view (p. 449-452), concluding with the finding "reading specialists in exemplary schools displayed...characteristics that promote shared leadership in schools." (p. 453)

Implications/Applications

The authors provide these implications:

- Reading specialists must not only be knowledgeable in literacy, but must also develop leadership and communication skills.
- Reading Specialist certification programs must include experiences that focus on leadership qualities and dimensions.
- Those employing reading specialists must be clear about job descriptions and qualifications.
- The instructional role is "essential, but not sufficient." (p. 454)

"What you always do before you make a decision is consult. The best public policy is made when you are listening to people who are going to be impacted. Then, once policy is determined, you call on them to help you sell it."

Elizabeth Dole,
Senator, North Carolina

LITERACY LEADERSHIP

Source

Toll, C. A. (2005). *The literacy coach's survival guide: Essential questions and practical answers*. Newark, DE: International Reading Association.

Summary

Toll provides practical information for literacy coaches, particularly for those new to the position. The first section of the book provides an overview of different approaches to educational change that have taken place in the last 40 years and the role the literacy coach plays. Additionally, her discussion then shifts to the role of the literacy coach and the qualities he/she should have to be effective. Finally, she concludes the book by sharing ideas for literacy coaches when they encounter difficult or unforeseen situations.

The book is divided into three sections: How Do I Promote Change? What Does a Successful Literacy Coach Do? How Do I Coach in Difficult Situations? The book also includes an appendix entitled "Key Questions Answered in This Book Listed by Topic" which lists questions that are cross-referenced and includes page numbers to locate the topic being addressed in the book. An additional appendix includes information about the resources that are cited throughout the book.

Implications/Applications

- An understanding of the different approaches to educational change and the ability to communicate such changes are essential to the success of the literacy coach.
- Literacy coaches should develop these essential characteristics:
 - Pay attention to the attitudes, beliefs and perceptions as precursors to change.
 - Value the expertise of others and the limitations of one's own "expertise."
 - Demonstrate commitment and respect to helping teachers meet their goals.

"The same two essential objectives are critical to any organization's effectiveness: helping the organization set a defensible set of directions and influencing members to move in those directions. It is helpful for some leadership functions to be performed at every level in the organization; for example, stimulating people to think differently about their work."

Leithwood, Louis,
Anderson & Wahlstrom, 2004

LITERACY LEADERSHIP

Source

Dole, J. A. & Donaldson, R. (2006). "What am I supposed to do all day?": Three big ideas for the reading coach. *The Reading Teacher*, 59, 486-488.

Summary

Although the reading/literacy coach position is found in most school districts around the United States and elsewhere, the utilization of these coaches is different from district to district and from school to school. Some coaches have many administrative duties and others work directly with students and teachers. There has been little research done in the field, but many teachers have filled this position and have suggestions to share. The key role of the reading/literacy coach should be to provide professional development and ongoing support for the classroom teachers.

It has been noted that professional development, without onsite support, has little benefit. Therefore, the role of the reading/literacy coach is vital to the professional development process. Dole and Donaldson focus on three big ideas to help direct teachers in these positions. These ideas provide coaches with specific activities and guidelines for planning and implementation especially when the position is new to the school or district.

Implications/Applications

- Focus interest and attention on the primary goal. No matter what may be assigned by administrators, the primary goal is to work directly with teachers for professional development. Therefore, the coach must establish procedures for meeting with teachers and providing support.
- Ensure that coaches are frequently in the classrooms. At the outset, coaches should consider collaborating with teachers to allay their fears and spark opportunities in their classrooms. Coaches could work with small groups, try out a new technique or strategy, ask teachers to suggest reading skills or strategies they would like to see demonstrated, and work one-on-one with students having difficulties within the classroom setting.
- Be a coach who can help teachers with their reading instruction. Coaches must be supportive and collaborative in order to gain the respect of the teachers.

"All teachers need to be highly qualified to teach reading. ...Effective reading coaches have to have a greater level of reading expertise than the teachers they are coaching."

Dole, 2004

LITERACY LEADERSHIP

Source

Vogt, M. E. & Shearer, B. A. (2003). *Reading specialists in the real world: A sociocultural view*. Boston: Allyn and Bacon.

Summary

Vogt and Shearer take a comprehensive look at the reading specialist from the historical significance to the present-day function. The book is divided into three parts: teacher and school literacy leader; resource teacher and curriculum developer; and coach, supervisor and professional developer. Each chapter includes learning goals, a vignette, expansion of the vignette, discussion of the topic, and then often revisits the vignette for further clarification. The authors provide many research citations, recommended readings, as well as checklists and reference charts.

Implications/Applications

- "It is important to involve teachers in collaborative planning throughout the processes of identifying needs and beliefs and planning curricular changes over two years." (p. 49)
- Literacy teams, composed of various stakeholders, should collect data "about each of the aspects of the school or district's reading/language arts program.... This information is used to acknowledge strengths and identify needs of the literacy program." (p. 73)
- Those gathering necessary information must recognize that, "...it is important to think about who needs what kind of information." (p. 91)
- Planning and organizing an inservice should include the following:
 - Prepare your opening carefully, giving it a personal touch.
 - State your goals and objectives clearly and in teacher-friendly terms.
 - Include an agenda.
 - Sprinkle some humor to fit your personality.
 - Overplan and include the crucial information, based on your audience and topic.
 - Create opportunities for participants to try out your suggestions in the inservice environment, while you provide some scaffolding.
 - Plan the conclusion, wrap-up, and evaluation carefully. (pp. 237-9)

"An important role of the reading specialist is to support classroom research by collaborating with teachers to develop a clear research question, locate related research, select appropriate instruments for data collection, analyze data, and evaluate the results.

Vogt & Shearer, 2003

LITERACY LEADERSHIP

Source

Tatum, A. W. (2004). A road map for reading specialists entering schools without exemplary reading programs: Seven quick lessons. *The Reading Teacher*, 58, 28-39.

Summary

As a newly assigned reading specialist in a school that was one of the lowest performing K-8 schools in a large urban school district, the author was assigned to support eight teachers in grades 4-8. A local university administrator with experience in professional development leadership was invited into the school to observe in classrooms and make recommendations. The administrator recommended a “literacy framework” that included daily read-alouds, guided reading instruction, independent reading, word study, and writing. The author observed that the teachers were resisting change and continuing to bombard students with test preparation materials. As a result of his conviction that the course of instruction he offered was the best approach, he had to convince teachers to accept his support. He concluded that he needed to provide professional development support, to offer instructional practices designed to improve reading achievement, and to provide teachers with instructional materials appropriate for the students. As a result of the insights that emerged from his experience, the author offered seven “lessons” for reading specialists assigned to schools that do not have existing exemplary reading programs. These “lessons” are presented here as possible applications for reading specialists.

Implications/Applications

- Plan an exemplary reading program and a plan for implementation if there is not one in place.
- Establish your identity as a reading specialist within the school culture.
- Be reflective; rethink roles and functions; establish goals based on reflection.
- Become familiar with the school context. It may be necessary to research theories and practices appropriate for students and teachers in a given situation.
- Establish measurable goals, offer instructional strategies that enhance student strengths, and select appropriate materials and resources.
- Use various professional development processes to “sustain momentum.”
- Explore teachers’ perceptions about activities they find useful.

“In the case of good books, the point is not how many of them you can get through, but rather how many can get through to you.”
Mortimer Adler, 1902-2001

LITERACY LEADERSHIP

Source

Bacon, S. (2005) Reading coaches: Adapting an intervention model for upper elementary and middle school readers. *Journal of Adolescent & Adult Literacy*, 48, 416-427.

Summary

After completing her training as a reading specialist, the author found herself in a middle school humanities class with 30 students. She felt that all of these students could benefit from the specific instruction, prompting, and reflection techniques she had used in a one-on-one intensive intervention model during her training. Recognizing the chances of acquiring 30 reading teachers in her classroom, she turned to her students for help. By capitalizing on the social nature and growing independence of her middle school students, and training them to listen, question, prompt, confirm, explore and reflect on their own reading and on that of their peers, she was able to have 30 reading coaches for her 30 students.

By combining elements of reading intervention models with the behaviors in use in cooperative learning environments, Bacon was able to create her reading coaches model. She provides informal training by first modeling her own thought processes as a reader during read alouds, guided reading, text introduction, and activity instruction. When she becomes comfortable with the learning environment in the classroom, she begins formal training by using a series of half hour mini lessons so that the students know what is expected of them.

Bacon is able to assess her students primarily by *listening* to them read and interact and by reading their reflections. She also uses running records and the Qualitative Reading Inventory-II (1995) before and after intervention to gather more formal data.

Implications/Applications

For reading coaches/specialists:

- Adapt the student reading coach model for use in your school in self contained classrooms as an extension of cooperative learning and reciprocal reading.
- Adapt the student reading coach model for use in your school in reading, language arts, and social studies classrooms in middle school.

For classroom teachers:

- Adapt the student reading coach model so that it fits your teaching situation.
- Include the coaching model in your use of cooperative learning groups.
- Share the model with other teachers in your subject area or grade level.
- Work with your reading resource teacher or reading coach to refine the model to fit your class.

“All change must take into account all variables that make up the status quo and have created the identified problem.”

Sharon Drew Morgan
Author, *Selling With Integrity*

LITERACY LEADERSHIP

Source

Lyons, C. A. (2002). Becoming an effective literacy coach: What does it take? In E. M. Rodgers & G. S. Pinnell (Eds.), *Learning from teaching in literacy education: New perspectives on professional development*. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann.

Summary

This article addresses ways to develop reflective teachers, who use their observations and analyses to drive good instruction. Experienced and knowledgeable literacy coaches can create environments conducive to helping teachers become more analytical and reflective. Lyons discusses the analytical model of coaching and provides specific actions taken daily by literacy coaches as they observe and meet with classroom teachers. These steps include: preparing to coach; observing a lesson; reflecting after the observation; coaching for shifts in teaching; reflecting after coaching, and coaching for self-analysis and reflection. Each step is described and a vignette and important reflective questions are provided. The author also shares important tips for literacy coaches and classroom teachers working collaboratively with these coaches.

Implications/Applications

Lyons lists what she and other researchers have learned from their extensive research in the field related to effective coaches. Such coaches:

- “analyze teacher and student interactions
- call attention to critical parts of the lesson that have potential for shifting teachers’ learning
- engage teachers in constructive conversation
- select powerful coaching points that will lead to deeper conceptual understanding and new learning
- engage teachers in the reflective process to improve their teaching
- create a trusting relationship within which critical feedback is valued
- establish a trusting environment
- set a positive tone for conversation
- create a stress-free context in which teachers feel comfortable sharing their ideas, struggles, and concerns” (p. 94)

“If schools are counting on reading coaches to help all students achieve, coaches need to be reading experts who work first and foremost with teachers. That way, teachers can draw on the coaches’ expertise about reading and reading processes as they adapt practices to improve instruction. Study after study confirms what most school administrators know: Effective teachers help all students learn. Well-prepared reading coaches can help classroom teachers become better reading teachers.”

MaryEllen Vogt, Past President, International Reading Association

LITERACY LEADERSHIP

Source

Anders, P.L. (1998). The literacy council: People are the key to an effective program. *NASSP Bulletin*, 82 (600), 16-23.

Summary

Anders suggests that a literacy council in secondary schools can improve the climate, enhance relations in the community, and benefit faculty and students through professional growth and curricular activities. Anders identifies three assumptions that contribute to the success of literacy councils. First, the entire school community must value literacy. Second, every educator in a school must feel responsibility for teaching literacy. Third, when people are involved in the project they are more invested in the project. According to Anders, council members should be committed and caring. Whether council members are identified on a voluntary basis or by invitation only, the council should represent a variety of groups in the school. Anders recommends that a council leader be selected carefully. She also describes possible council tasks and acknowledges stumbling blocks and suggests how to avoid them.

Implications/Applications

- Council leader should be knowledgeable in literacy, be aware of adolescent literature, understand content area literacy, and have previously taught literacy in the middle or high school.
- Council leader should be organized, communicate well, and be a problem-solver.
- Council leader should evaluate how time is being used and reallocate time so literacy learning becomes the priority.
- The council should listen to what teachers want and what they believe they need and fit this in with what the students need.
- The council should share decision-making and involve staff in decision making and problem-solving.
- The council should promote reflection by all teachers in order to improve the literacy program.

“For a school to be a model learning organization, all faculty members should be professional learners: They should engage in deep, broad study of the learning they are charged to cause. What works? What doesn't? Where is student learning most successful, and why? How can we learn from that success? Where are students struggling to learn, and why? What can we do about it? Effectively tackling these questions is what the ‘professional’ in ‘professional practice’ means.”

Wiggins & McTighe, 2005

LITERACY LEADERSHIP

Source

DuFour, R. (2004). What is a “professional learning community?” *Educational Leadership*, 61(8), 6-11.

Summary

DuFour discusses the ‘professional learning community’ concept and describes its successful implementation in two schools: Boones Mill Elementary School (K-5), in Franklin County, Virginia, and Adlai Stevenson High School, in Lincolnshire, Illinois. The author states that too many educators use excuses for not analyzing data and meeting collaboratively to help improve student learning. He believes that success “...requires the school staff to focus on learning rather than teaching, work collaboratively on matters related to learning, and hold itself accountable for the kind of results that fuel continual improvement.” (p. 11) It is important that educators work together to make decisions on teaching materials, strategies, and assessments. A successful professional learning community will provide direction and assist all teachers in improving their instruction.

Implications/Applications

Professional learning communities are based on the following principles:

- Student learning must be ensured.
 - Questions might include: ““What do we want each student to learn? How will we know when each student has learned it?” How will we respond when a student experiences difficulty in learning?” (p. 8)
 - Responses to students having difficulties should be: “timely: ...based on intervention rather than remediation...directive.” (p. 8)
- Educators must create a culture of collaboration. The teaching-learning process can include the following steps:
 - Identify what you want students to learn.
 - Develop agreed upon formative assessments.
 - Set standards.
 - Administer the assessments.
 - Identify strengths and weaknesses, as a team.
 - Identify needed adjustments to the instructional program.
- The entire professional learning community must focus on the results of the assessments, reflect on the practices, identify successes and areas for improvement, and repeat the cycle.

“We are what we repeatedly do. Excellence then, is not an act, but a habit.”

Aristotle, 384-322 BC

LITERACY LEADERSHIP

Source

International Reading Association. (2004). The role and qualifications of the reading coach in the United States. *A position statement of the International Reading Association*. Newark, DE: Author.

Summary

The International Reading Association (IRA) issued this position statement to clarify and provide some consistency regarding the roles and qualifications of reading coaches. IRA defines reading coaching as “a means of providing professional development for teachers in schools.” Coaches provide the ongoing support teachers need to implement programs or practices. They point to The Reading Excellence Act of 1998 and the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 as the monetary sources, which have led states to allocate funds for the hiring of reading coaches. They describe what reading coaches do and what they must know in order to be effective. Coaching activities range from informal conversations designed to develop relationships to formal in-class coaching with feedback. This requires coaches to be experienced, effective teachers who have knowledge about literacy, excellent presenting skills, and the ability to communicate in non-threatening ways.

Furthermore, IRA provides recommendations for various stakeholders, specifically they appeal to those involved in hiring reading coaches that have the knowledge and skills required to do their job effectively and to assure that these coaches meet IRA standards and acquire reading specialist specialization.

Implications/Applications

Recommendations for administrators:

- Hire only qualified educators to fulfill the role of a reading coach. They must be excellent teachers, knowledgeable in literacy, good presenters, understand adult learners, and be able to model, observe, and provide feedback about instruction.
- Establish clear expectations for the role of the reading coach and articulate this to all staff.
- Support the reading coach in their role. This may include sending them to conferences, trainings, or other professional development opportunities.

“The future of work consists of learning a living.”

Marshall McLuhan, 1911-1980

“It is better to delay implementing a reading coach intervention than to push ahead with inadequately trained coaches.”

International Reading Association
Position Statement (2004)

LITERACY LEADERSHIP

Source

Booth, D. & Roswell, J. (2002). *The literacy principal: Leading, supporting and assessing reading and writing initiatives*. Ontario: Pembroke Publishers.

Summary

This professional book provides administrators with background in literacy development, descriptions of best practices, and explains specific assessments that evaluate the knowledge, skills, and attitudes of students. Booth and Roswell emphasize the importance of shared leadership and school-based leadership teams in developing a strong professional community of learners. Snapshots of successful leaders are included. These profiles are rooted in “real” schools and illustrate the power of effective leadership in the development of a literate school environment. Each chapter ends with suggestions for professional reflection and reading related to the topic being addressed.

Implications/Applications

Five change factors fundamental to literacy-based school change:

- Principal leadership
- Teachers’ knowledge, skills and dispositions
- Professional learning community
- Program coherence
- Technical resources

Core elements of literacy teaching:

- Alphabet knowledge
- Knowledge of sound-letter correspondence
- Automatic sight words
- Reading for meaning
- Numerous opportunities for reading many types of books
- Increased teaching time and extra resources devoted to at-risk readers
- A secure environment that encourages children to grow as readers and writers

Three exemplary literacy models:

- Balanced literacy
- School change
- Literacy framework

Support of a Whole-School Approach to Literacy

- Create a support network for teachers
- Use school-based educational specialists
- Use district-based educational specialists
- Forge partnerships with parents
- Create a vision for literacy
- Implement a literacy initiative
- Examine the role of leadership
- Manage change

LITERACY LEADERSHIP

Source

Lambert, L. (2003). Teachers as leaders: The heart of the high leadership capacity school. In L. Lambert, *Leadership capacity for lasting school improvement* (pp. 32-42). Alexandria, VA: Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development.

Summary

Lambert discusses definitions of the teacher leader, how to become one, and leadership actions. She suggests that all teachers have leadership qualities from the beginning of their teaching experiences and need to be coached and nurtured to become aware of their strengths and the opportunities that abound.

High leadership capacity schools provide opportunities for teacher leaders to take risks and assume the role of adult educators as they coach, mentor, collaborate, and dialogue with colleagues. Lambert also addresses the enculturation of new teachers and principals, barriers to teacher leadership, and encouragement and maintenance of teacher leadership. The author shares numerous specific suggestions for teachers, administrators, and parents to institute in support of teacher leadership.

Implications/Applications

According to the author, teacher leadership comes in many forms: some teachers have leadership titles; others do not. Acting as a teacher leader can energize and motivate oneself and others. There are many actions essential for leadership that must be initiated through conversation, using the following forms: one-on-one, inquiring, partnering, and sustaining. These conversations have the following common elements:

- shared purpose
- search for understanding
- reflection on beliefs and experiences
- revelation of ideas and information
- respectful listening (p. 34)

Lambert identifies the following benchmarks for teacher leadership development:

- “initiate new actions by suggesting other ways to accomplish tasks or goals
- solve problems...
- volunteer...
- invite other teachers to work with them...
- listen to each other....
- admit mistakes...
- talk about children...
- become more skillful in conversations, facilitation, asking inquiry questions, and teaching.” (p. 370)

LITERACY LEADERSHIP

Source

Gabriel, J. G. (2005). *How to thrive as a teacher leader*. Alexandria, VA: Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development.

Summary

Gabriel wrote this book after being assigned as chair of the English Department at Falls Church High School in Fairfax County, Virginia, in 2001. In it he recounts his difficulties and his successes in nurturing leadership among his faculty. The various teacher leadership roles are identified along with recommendations for leadership attitudes and behaviors. Many teacher leaders perform all or many of these leadership roles; they include organizational leadership, strategic leadership, interpersonal leadership, adaptive leadership, motivational leadership, and instructional leadership. Thirty resources are provided at the end of the book including copies of surveys, letters, checklists, curriculum maps, and more. This book is an excellent resource for all educators.

Implications/Applications

- Leaders exhibit certain qualities. They are honest and ethical, organized, perceptive, empathetic and supportive, altruistic, accessible, resourceful, fair, accepting, vulnerable, forward-thinking, global, decisive and incisive, and intelligent.
- Cultivating community is essential. How does one cultivate community?
 - engage in team building
 - nurture growth and professionalism
 - emphasize staff development
 - encourage reflection
- For the teacher leader, the key to a successful program is the implementation of plans for remedial instruction:
 - acknowledge ability levels
 - differentiate instruction
 - reteach and retest
 - use assessments as teaching tools
 - establish tutoring programs
 - consider creative scheduling
 - teach study skills
 - make work meaningful
 - begin homework in class
 - create incentives
 - cultivate community in the classroom
 - inform students of their progress
 - communicate frequently with parents
 - assess your assessments
 - implement Sustained Silent Reading

LITERACY LEADERSHIP

Source

Taylor, B.M., Pearson, P. D., Peterson, D.S., & Rodriguez, M.C. (2005). The CIERA School Change Framework: An evidence-based approach to professional development and school reading improvement. *Reading Research Quarterly*, 40, 40–69.

Summary

In this study, the authors looked at school reform as related to changing school reading programs in order to improve test scores. Schools are offered monetary rewards as well as sanctions as motivation for improving test scores. What seems to be needed is for schools to be able to translate research into practice in schools and classrooms in order to improve reading performance.

One purpose of the study was to identify classroom as well as school variables that might account for student increases in reading and writing. Two things became clear in a single year. Higher level questioning showed a positive relationship to reading improvement and “rote comprehension skill practice” showed a negative relationship. In writing, coaching produced positive growth. After two years, in schools with increases, teachers were seen to be changing their teaching practice by employing more high-level questioning and more coaching.

Another purpose of the study was to look at the impact of the CIERA School Change Framework, a school improvement tool, on schools. It was found that the more elements of the Framework a school employed, the more gain the students showed in reading and writing. After one year the gain was small, but significant. After two years, the gain was found to be “moderately large.” It was determined that change took place gradually. Hard work and persistence on the part of teachers and support staff produced steady growth.

The conclusions drawn from this study show that when teachers buy into the process of positive professional growth, reflective practice, and collaboration, their students will show positive gains in reading and writing.

Implications/Applications

Literacy leaders must be aware of and understand current research. They must be able to articulate the importance of:

- Concentrating on the use of higher order questioning as a part of reading instruction.
- Avoiding the use of rote drill comprehension activities.
- Employing coaching techniques as part of writing instruction.
- Remembering that true change takes place gradually. Quick fixes do not produce true change.
- Encourage teachers to collaborate and to use reflective practice as part of professional growth.

LITERACY LEADERSHIP

Source

Kinnucan-Welsch, K., Rosemary, C. A., & Grogan, P. R. (2006). Accountability by design in literacy professional development. *The Reading Teacher*, 59, 426-435.

Summary

In this article, the authors discuss the principles of high-quality professional development, examine the use of these principles in a statewide initiative, and report data from the project. The Literacy Specialist Project was launched by the Ohio Department of Education in August 2000 as a statewide professional literacy project. It was based on the idea that “competent, accomplished teachers play a critical role in student success.” (p. 426)

A key aspect of the Literacy Specialist Project was its use of the TLI procedure, in which teachers audiotape three lessons with a specific focus, transcribe the lessons, and then meet with a literacy coach to debrief. These debriefing sessions are also recorded. The literacy coach and teacher then analyze all aspects of the lesson. This initiative has been successful and is continuing to be used and reviewed.

The authors stressed the need for design principles to be reviewed before establishing any professional development. These principles must guide all stages of the process. It is very important in future studies “to establish the connection between professional development participation, teacher learning, and student achievement.” (p. 434)

Implications/Applications

The authors shared the following identified principles from this study:

- Design Principle 1: High-quality professional development directly connects to student learning goals that are clear and accepted by all.
- Design Principle 2: Professional development involves active learning for teachers.
- Design Principle 3: Professional development is embedded in the context of work in schools and classrooms.
- Design Principle 4: Professional development is continuous and ongoing.
- Design Principle 5: Professional development is based on an ongoing and focused inquiry related to teacher learning, student learning, and what we know about good instruction.
- Design Principle 6: Coherence is evident in all aspects of the professional development system. (pp. 427-430)

“You do not lead by hitting people over the head – that’s assault, not leadership.”

Dwight D. Eisenhower, 1890-1969

LITERACY LEADERSHIP

Source

Cobb, C. (2005). Literacy teams: Sharing leadership to improve student learning. *The Reading Teacher*, 58, 472-474.

Summary

In the wake of the No Child Left Behind Act, Cobb argues that elementary “schools need to widen their vision beyond accountability and also take commitment, sharing, and leadership into perspective” (p. 472). She draws on literature regarding the changing role of the principal from a manager to an instructional leader as well as the need for shared leadership in schools as a rationale for developing a school-based literacy team. Cobb provides recommendations for literacy team membership, roles, and actions. She suggests administrators do school walk-throughs which she describes as short, unscheduled visits focused on student learning, rather than teacher performances. By providing teachers with specific and constructive feedback, the principal creates a risk-free environment “where teachers are not afraid to be seen doing a lesson that isn’t picture perfect” (p. 474). Cobb believes that literacy teams can also form, support, and facilitate study groups. She concludes that schools which share literacy leadership are collegial communities “where learning is the shared responsibility of all members” (p. 474).

Implications/Applications

Literacy Team Recommendations:

- Although there is no magical formula for membership, the following people should be included: the principal, reading coach, a primary teacher, an intermediate teacher, and resource teachers.
- Information should be shared and communicated with all the teachers in the building.
- Meetings should focus on curriculum issues, analysis of data, and goal setting for improvement.
- Discussions should be supportive and positive, honoring teachers’ professional knowledge and motivating educators to refine their teaching craft.
- Team members can locate professional materials for study groups, facilitate study groups, or train others as facilitators.

“The leaders who work most effectively, it seems to me, never say ‘I.’ And that’s not because they have trained themselves not to say ‘I.’ They think ‘we’; they think ‘team.’ They understand their job to be to make the team function. They accept responsibility and don’t sidestep it, but ‘we’ gets the credit.... This is what creates trust, what enables you to get the task done.”

Peter Drucker, 1909-2005

LITERACY LEADERSHIP

Source

Hibbert, K, & Iannacci, L. (2005). From dissemination to discernment: The commodification of literacy instruction and the fostering of "good teacher consumerism." *The Reading Teacher*, 58, 716-725.

Summary

The authors of this article are concerned about the effect of marketing reading materials for a balanced literacy program. Many school boards, administrators, and teachers are pressured into purchasing programs for their classrooms. In fact, some of the programs have been mandated. There appears to be no end to the number of available resources. Many consumers think that the programs are equivalent to balanced literacy instruction.

Hibbert and Iannacci developed a guide for good teacher consumerism. Before purchases are made, teachers should study and think about the four to eight questions under the headings of purpose, use, assessment, and values in the guide. This systematic reflection would enable teachers to purchase the right product for their own students. Companies sell their products under the title of "Balanced Literacy," so teachers are apt to purchase them too quickly.

Balanced literacy does not mean the same thing to all teachers. In their research, Hibbert and Iannacci found many definitions. Their study led them to state, "Balance is far more comprehensive in its commitment to ensuring that all aspects of reading, writing, listening, viewing, and speaking receive appropriate rather than equal emphasis within a literacy program. Balanced literacy uses a whole-part-whole approach." That means beginning with the whole text, which leads to genuine reading and writing experiences. The most important part of balance is knowing the students. In addition, teachers are the decision-makers.

The authors offer a critical analysis of two products: The Four Blocks model and IntelliTools Reading. Their criticism and research showed how students and teachers did not adjust well to blocks of time. Time constraints are not conducive to the students or the teachers. In a 2002 study, Hibbert and Iannacci stated that balanced literacy was an ongoing process of inquiry and development.

Implications/Applications

- Teachers should be involved in the process of choosing and modifying materials for their own students and their classrooms.
- Teachers still became literacy supporters because they learned to modify the purchased programs to fit the needs of their students and their goals.
- Administrators must support teachers' decisions to select appropriate resources for their students.

"Programs are often mass purchased in a top-down fashion and deposited into classrooms with little or no input from teachers. ... Teachers must be actively involved in the process of selecting and modifying materials for their students and their classrooms."

Hibbert & Iannacci, 2005

LITERACY LEADERSHIP

Source

Hurd, J. & Licciardo-Musso, L. (2005). Lesson study: Teacher-led professional development in literacy instruction. *Language Arts*, 82, 388-395.

Summary

Hurd and Licciardo-Musso discuss the lesson study approach to professional development, widely used in Japan and now making inroads in the United States. Lesson study consists of teachers working together to develop a research plan using actual classroom lessons. During this process, teachers work on teams to write specific lessons and take turns teaching these lessons while the other teachers observe and take notes. Then everyone assesses and makes necessary changes for the next teaching lesson to continue the cycle. While establishing the teams, the participants spend time developing group norms, as well as identifying ones to monitor for each meeting. These norms include: respect and value of time, ideas, and participation; maintaining focus; and roles and responsibilities.

The building blocks of the lesson study cycle include:

1. forming a study group,
2. setting professional development goals,
3. setting goals for student development
4. planning the lesson
5. teaching the research lesson
6. debriefing the lesson
7. drawing conclusions.

This cycle continues as long as the team stays together, normally for at least a year. The approach's success has been overwhelming.

Implications/Applications

Lesson study is a professional development approach that:

- values the teacher as a professional.
- uses the collective experiences, interests, and talents of the participants.
- provides time and structure to examine student learning.
- provides the vehicle to develop instructional strategies based on observed student learning.
- helps participants change the way they observe students.
- changes the way teachers talk about teaching and learning.
- sets the stage for ongoing, reflective assessment of teaching
- helps to build trusting relationships among colleagues.

LITERACY LEADERSHIP

Source

Heydon, R., Hibbert, K., & Iannacci, L. (2004/2005). Strategies to support balanced literacy approaches in pre- and inservice teacher education. *Journal of Adolescent & Adult Literacy*, 48(4), 312-319.

Summary

This article describes ways that pre-service and inservice teachers were provided experiences leading to their ability to better conceptualize learning and support balanced literacy, through reflecting on their teaching. The authors believe that packaged programs alone do not support balanced literacy teaching. Educators must be involved in the decision-making process, and "... be knowledgeable about language literacy issues, be adept at seeking and critically evaluating information, and be able to relate these understandings to their daily working knowledge of their students." (p. 313) The challenges to balanced literacy include the mistaken belief that teachers can never know enough about teaching, the accountability movement, and the belief, in some circles, that prepackaged programs will solve all educational problems.

The authors used a strategy to help pre- and service educators reconceptualize their teaching beliefs and practices. The use of this strategy enabled the educators to observe, analyze, identify needs, and plan changes to lessons. Additionally, the authors "ask teachers to challenge a transmission version of teaching and learning by beginning with their specific practice; looking at related research, information, and perspectives; connecting this to their own knowledge, narratives, and experiences; and then reflecting upon, evaluating, and acting upon what they have learned." (p. 318)

Implications/Applications

The dynamic reconceptualization strategy entails:

- "select something from their practice that they felt was unsatisfactory..."
- ...describe the dissatisfaction...
- ...explore issues related to the dissatisfaction through a consideration of other perspectives...
- ...identify the source...
- ...rework their original practice (e.g., rewrite the lesson) in a way that reflected their learning." (p. 314)

"In motivating people, you've got to engage their minds and their hearts. I motivate people, I hope, by example - and perhaps by excitement, by having productive ideas to make others feel involved."

Rupert Murdoch,
Chief Executive Officer, News Corp

LITERACY LEADERSHIP

Source

Mahn, H., McMann, D., & Musanti, S. (2005). Teaching/learning centers: Professional development for teachers of linguistically and culturally diverse students. *Language Arts*, 82(5), 378-387.

Summary

This article describes the Teacher/Learning Centers Pilot Project, developed to help create a collegial atmosphere for teachers to observe good teaching and practice their skills in second-grade classrooms in five elementary schools. "An ESL-endorsed teacher from each school site was teamed with a district-assigned resource teacher to co-facilitate the Teacher/Learning Center classroom." (p. 379)

A three-week seminar was conducted during the summer prior to the beginning of the first year of the pilot project. During this seminar, participants developed common language, based on the same theoretical foundation and philosophy. They examined their beliefs and instructional practice and started to think and discuss from a reflective stance. Regular classroom teachers had the opportunity to observe master teachers, pre-plan with the co-facilitators, teach observed lessons, and then discuss their experiences, using the co-facilitators' observations and self-reflection to enhance future lessons. "The TLC model of professional development builds on the concept of *teachers teaching teachers* and exhibits the essential characteristics of effective professional development." (p. 386)

Implications/Applications

Some of the 'guest teacher' reflections included the following:

- "the value of interacting with and learning from their peers..."
- ...the power of peer modeling, observation, feedback, and dialogue...
- ...sheltering of content for second language learners can benefit all students...(p. 383)
- the challenge of learning to work collaboratively after teaching in isolation for so many years.
- changes in the day-to-day routine can be a stimulus for growth and reflection.

Some of the co-facilitator reflections included:

- the need to develop an active partnership.
- the involvement in risk taking, as well as constant reflection and change.
- the development of good peer dialogue around concrete situations and pedagogical issues.
- the involvement in guiding teachers to take a closer look at students' individual needs.

"If your actions inspire others to dream more, learn more, do more and become more, you are a leader."

John Quincy Adams, 1767-1848

LITERACY LEADERSHIP

Source

Rodgers, E. M., Fullerton, S. K., & DeFord, D. E. (2002). Making a difference with professional development. In E. M. Rodgers & G. S. Pinnell (Eds.), *Learning from teaching in literacy education: New perspectives on professional development* (pp. 52-62). Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann.

Summary

The authors discuss the results of a research study dealing with teachers' perceptions of professional development. They provide an outline of the teachers' learning experiences over a five-month period, that included viewing and discussing videotapes of lessons, observing other teachers, and teaching a lesson while others observed and debriefed following the lesson. Student gains were also measured. The researchers carefully studied the videotapes and transcripts to evaluate the effectiveness of different portions of their comprehensive professional development design. This analysis resulted in the following findings about the teachers: they "extended their theoretical understandings about teaching procedures as they tried new techniques" (p. 58); they discovered the value of using more explicit instructional language and they "felt that they had become more effective in linking theoretical understandings to their teaching practices." (p. 59)

Implications/Applications

Based on this research, teachers made some important observations:

- "...teachers found collegial demonstration to be the most powerful tool as they struggled with new ideas or tried to redirect their own practice." (p. 60)
- Demonstrations, followed by conversations with colleagues, were very helpful.
- It was important that the dialoguing include all participants, along with opportunities to readdress critical topics.
- "While these teachers felt they had made shifts in their teaching, they were always seeking more ways to improve." (p. 60)

"It is no more necessary that a man should remember the different dinners and suppers which have made him healthy, than the different books which have made him wise. Let us see the results of good food in a strong body, and the results of great reading in a full and powerful mind."

Sydney Smith, 1771-1845

LITERACY LEADERSHIP

Source

Ivason-Jansson, E. & Gu, L. (2006). Reflection and professional learning: An analysis of teachers' classroom observations. *Thinking Classroom*, 7(1), pp. 4-10.

Summary

During the 2002 fall semester at Mid-Sweden University, the faculty developed a five-credit course for practicing teachers supervising pre-service educators. This course focused on communication among teachers and students and its relationship to student learning. The university faculty decided to conduct research and identified questions, which included the following: "Why and how can teachers use their own activity field as the departure point for their learning? What can teachers learn by observing...? Why is reflection (both individual and group) important for teachers' learning? How do teachers reflect on their reflections on practice?" (p. 4)

Observation was used as the primary method. The teachers were required to observe and take detailed notes, using any method they chose. It was found that teachers used many different formats, for note taking, and observed various items, such as relations to materials, interaction of teacher and students, knowledge of subject matter, etc. The participants noted that the observations of other teachers influenced their own practices. They began to see their teaching through other people's eyes and were better able to make necessary adjustments to their own instruction. Reflections, and the conversations with other educators that followed these observations, made the lasting difference in this practice. This was also seen by the authors to be "a first step in introducing action research into in-service teacher training programs." (p. 10)

Implications/Applications

The different stages of reflection include:

- "during the observation..."
- "...while the participant is rewriting the observation field notes and making comments..."
- "...accounting for, presenting, and discussing the findings from the observation with others in groups." (p. 8)

Observations:

- gave the participants a chance to focus on individual students and their interaction, as well as on the class as a whole.
- allowed an opportunity to focus on teacher/student interaction.
- provided a vehicle for reflection and discussion with colleagues.
- helped focus future self-reflection of instructional practices.

"The great leaders are like the best conductors - they reach beyond the notes to reach the magic in the players."

Blaine Lee,
Founding Vice President, Stephen Covey Leadership Center