Literacy: The Key to Academic Success

Presenter: Melvina Phillips
PCG's Center For Resource Management
SEDL Conference
October 24, 2007

Adolescent Literacy School Improvement Cycle

The student is the heart of the Literacy Improvement Cycle

Why Should Literacy Be Integrated into School Improvement Plan?

- Six million students in grades 6-12 are at risk of not graduating, or find themselves ill-prepared for college and career.
- Thirty percent of U.S. students are not graduating from high school
- 75% of students with literacy problems in third grade still experience literacy issues in ninth grade.
- NAEP eighth and twelfth grade scores remain flat or have dropped since 1998.
Adolescent Literacy: A Critical Need

- Not all students who read narrative text well can read and comprehend expository and non-fiction text (Snow, 2001)
- American children are in peril because they don’t read well enough, quickly enough, or easily enough to ensure comprehension in their content courses in middle and secondary schools (Snow, Burns, & Griffin, 1998, p. 98)
- About 33% of secondary students have withdrawn from active participation in class and are reading below grade level (Joyce, Hrycauk, & Calhoun, 2001)

KEY Elements Needed to Improve Adolescent Literacy

**Instructional Improvements**
- Direct, explicit comprehension instruction
- Effective instructional principles embedded in content
- Text-based collaborative learning
- Motivation and self-directed learning
- Strategic tutoring
- Diverse texts
- Intensive writing
- A technology component
- Ongoing formative assessment of students

**Infrastructure Improvements**
- Extended time for literacy
- Professional development
- Ongoing summative assessment of students and programs
- Teacher teams
- Leadership
- A comprehensive and coordinated literacy program

Leadership: Unlocking the Door to Literacy

- Develop Literacy Leadership Team
- Forms Collaborative Learning Communities
- Continuous Assessment
- Understands Literacy Instruction
- Knowledgeable of Reading Research
- Cheerleader
- Lassos Time
- Resource Locator
Leadership

Leadership is the art of getting others to do something that you want done because they want TO DO IT!
- Dwight David Eisenhower

Put Assessment in the Driver’s Seat

It is the action around assessment — the discussion, meetings, revisions, arguments, and opportunities to continually create new directions for teaching, learning, curriculum, and assessment — that ultimately have consequences. The “things” of assessment are essentially useful as dynamic supports for reflection and action, rather than as static products with value in and of themselves.

Darling-Hammond, Azara, and Folk (1995, p. 18)

Assessment Instruments

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Informal Assessments</th>
<th>Formal Assessments</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Content Area Literacy Assessments</td>
<td>Stanford Achievement Test</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher Observations</td>
<td>California Achievement Test</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Informal Literacy Inventories</td>
<td>Group Reading Assessment and Diagnostic Evaluation (GRADE)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scholastic</td>
<td>Test of Reading Comprehension (TORC-3)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Qualitative Reading Inventory III</td>
<td>Stanford Diagnostic Reading Test 4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Burns and Roe</td>
<td>Woodcock-Johnson Reading Mastery</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Professional Development: The Recipe for Success

- Involves ALL stakeholders;
- Links student standards, curricular frameworks, textbooks, instructional programs, and assessments;
- Includes professional development as part of the professional’s workday;
- Relies on expertise of colleagues, mentors, and other experts;
- Includes presence of strong instructional leader; and
- Adequate funding to meet professional development goals.

Learning First Alliance, 1998

Creating Professional Learning Communities

- Begin Conversations with Staff
- Identify Learning Needs of Students and Teachers
- Schedule to Support Opportunities for:
  - Professional Development
  - Coaching Sessions
  - Shared Teaching
  - Reflective Conversations

Supporting Professional Learning Communities

- Peer Coaching
- Mentorship
- Study Groups
- Analyzing Teaching Strategies
- Action Research
- Utilize Professional Networks
- Professional Book Talks
- Observe other teachers/model lessons
- Visit model classrooms, schools, and programs
- Develop curriculum/assessment
- Plan lessons w/colleagues
- Participate in school improvement planning
- Literacy Walk
Coaching Provides Support

Collaborative Learning Communities

Improved Student Learning

Improved Teaching Strategies

Shared Teaching     Peer Coaching

Literacy Coach

Cycle for Improving Instruction

Data Meeting       Staff Development

Literacy Walk       Shared Teaching
Highly Effective Teachers: The Essential Ingredient

Content teachers are the best source for providing students with explicit instruction on how to critically read and think about text.

Abromitis, 1994; Campbell, 1994, Kamil et al., 2000

Explicit Instruction

- Teacher models critical reading strategies
- Scaffold instruction
- Students internalize strategies to become strategic readers
Effective Readers
(Before Reading)

- Activate prior knowledge
- Understand and set purpose for reading
- Choose appropriate comprehension strategies

Effective Readers
(During Reading)

- Focus attention
- Monitor comprehension
- Use fix-up strategies
- Use context clues
- Use text structure
- Organize and integrate new information

Effective Readers
(After Reading)

- Reflect on what was read
- Summarize major ideas
- Seek additional information from outside sources
- Feel success is a result of effort
Strategic Teaching

Making the Connections
Teacher A
Teacher B

The research suggests…

- lessons should include activities/strategies before, during, and after reading;
- instructional practices help students recognize that reading is an active process before, during, and after reading;
- reading instruction and student understanding take place at multiple points (Graves, 2001).

Intervention: Meeting the Needs of ALL Students

- Assign most effective teachers to work with struggling students
- Create/implement intervention program to meet identified needs of ALL students (struggling to gifted)
- Keep intervention classes small
- Use authentic and standardized assessments to guide instruction
- Assure literacy strategies are integrated across the curricula
### Personalize Learning

- Explicit instruction in phonemic awareness
- Explicit instruction in phonics
- Direct and integrated instruction in text reading and comprehension
- Assessment-based selection and monitoring of struggling readers
- Accelerated not decelerated instruction
- Intensive instruction in every session
- Extensive amounts of daily practice

- Teacher directed instruction
- Finite time for duration of intervention
- More time for selected skills and strategies
- Reduce teacher/pupil ratio
- Connections to classrooms and parents
- Teachers who can deliver highly skilled instruction
- Continuously developing teachers of reading

### Fitting the Pieces Together for Adolescent Literacy

- Collaborative Leadership
- Assessment to Identify:
  - Teacher Strengths and Areas for Focus
  - Student Strengths and Needs
- All Teachers Teaching Reading
- Strong Professional Learning Communities
- Well Defined Accelerated Intervention Plan