



The TEACHER CENTER of Broome County
Teacher Study Group Grant Award
Summer 2004

FINAL REPORT
DOCUMENT PROCESSES AND OUTCOMES

STUDY GROUP TOPIC: “Reading Essentials”

List of group members: Sharon LaMantia, Joan Janicelli, Louise Ann Bruet, Nancy Hodges, Lorrie Smith & Pat Beebe.

The final report must be word-processed and submitted both in print and on disk using this form. Include information under each of the following headings.

Describe the initial goal of the group noting any adjustments that had to be made as time passed.

The goal of this study group was to read, discuss and develop an understanding of the principals set forth in Reggie Routman’s Reading Essentials: The Specifics You Need to Teach Reading Well. We intended to examine how our present practices aligned with what we read and to discuss ways that we can adjust our current practices to incorporate new techniques we’ve read about.

Describe the ACTION PLAN that the group followed.

The action plan that we followed was:

- We met as a group 4 times this summer for a total of 16 hours.
- We engaged in professional dialogue regarding balanced literacy programs at the primary level.
- We looked for ways to improve E.L.A. instruction and scheduling for the 2004-05 school year.
- Group members volunteered to participate in establishing a Building Literacy Council within our elementary school for the 2004-05 school year.

Describe how the action plan was implemented.

Reggie Routman's book was divided into 4 distinct sections that we used as our framework for reading ahead and for our discussions each time. These sections were "The Essential Reading Life", "The Essential Reading Day", "Teaching Essentials" and "Advocacy is Also Essential". We found these sections to be convenient yet flexible enough to guide our discussions and initiate our collaborative planning efforts for E.L.A. instruction in the fall. We discussed key points that we found as readers and reflected on how these aligned with our current instructional techniques. Our group found ways to enhance our present E.L.A. programs and found validation in many of our established best practices. New ideas were noted to try-out in the fall and we looked for ways to adjust time constraints that often interfere with planning and instruction. Members of the group submitted their names as volunteers for our Building Literacy Council to our principal.

Evaluation of the impact of the study group effort on teacher/student performance.

- How has this study group changed you as a teacher? Do you anticipate that any of your teaching practices will have changed?

Below is a list of some of the changes that we intend to make as teachers next year:

- Display trade books more prominently as opposed to leveled books.
- Include more non-fiction in our classroom libraries.
- Increase independent reading time.
- Increase the choices that students have for books to read, especially for assessment purposes.
- Set up classroom libraries as more user friendly.
- Make better use of the school library.
- Write more classroom books.
- Use transparencies for some Shared Reading lessons.
- Utilize word walls more efficiently.
- Use "Face Walls".
- Do more "Book Talks".
- Use informal reading conferences for assessment and use results to "teach intentionally".

We have to remember that good teaching requires lots of thinking. As we plan for instruction we need to think about how we can take our students to the next level. If we can engage students more in meaningful activities we can do more, in less time. Cultivating a love of learning should always be our primary focus.

- What evidence do you expect to see of student achievement is improving as a result of your participating in this study group?

“One of the best ways I know to be knowledgeable is to engage in ongoing professional conversations. Educators come to value these meetings for the increased collegiality and knowledge that ensue, which eventually translate into higher student achievement.”

(From Reggie Routman)

We as teachers expect to see:

- Students spending more time reading on their own.
- Students choosing “just right” books by themselves.
- Students using the library more.
- Students helping with the organization of classroom libraries by author, genre, fiction/nonfiction.
- Students will participate more in “book talks” and shared reading discussions.
- Via informal reading conferences we will see/hear students trying out strategies we’ve taught/modeled , connections being made from what they’ve read to prior knowledge that they have and describing why they did or did not like a book.
- Continued growth in benchmark comprehension assessments that are administered each quarter.

- What evidence is there that the goals of the study group has/has not been met?

Evidence that supports the goals of the study grant have been met include:

- Establishing 90 min. E.L.A. blocks in all our schedules to support the Three Blocks Literacy Model as well as the Balanced Literacy approach presented by R. Routman.
- Changes in instruction as well as new techniques are planned for the 2004-04 school year. (see above)
- The group met for the 16 hours we were scheduled and had many productive discussions.
- Three members are becoming a part of our first “Building Literacy Council.”

Comment on the value of the study group process? Did it work for you?

We found that this process worked great for us. It enables you to collaborate so much in planning for the up-coming school year. It also validates some of you own best practices which is so valuable to oneself as a teacher. Teachers need time to work together in an environment that feels safe and nurturing. Study groups provide this opportunity!

Thank you!

How can we make this study group program better?

Increasing the number of teachers involved to 8 or 9 would be great! This would allow entire primary or intermediate teams to work together! We had one teacher that attended all our meetings, but could not be a part of the grant.

