



**The TEACHER CENTER of Broome County
Teacher Study Group Grant Award
2004-2005**

**FINAL REPORT
DOCUMENT PROCESSES AND OUTCOMES**

STUDY GROUP TOPIC: Teaching Content Literacy

GROUP MEMBERS: Veronica Hawley, Kathleen Kanaley, Linda Oryhon, Kristrin Rodriguez, Jenni Thompson, Laurie Valenti

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.

Our purpose was to read *7 Keys to Comprehension (How To Help Your Kids Read it and Get It!)* by Susan Zimmerman & Chryse Hutchins, discuss the importance of each key, and explore their use in the classroom. We also examined *Tools for Teaching Content Literacy* by Janet Allen and tried various techniques in our classrooms. We discussed the strengths and weaknesses of different strategies and plan to share successful techniques with others at the faculty meeting in May. Our focus was to find ways to strengthen reading comprehension for our students. We added a parent learning component and have planned a teacher/parent workshop that will explain the 7 keys to comprehension and give parents suggestions in how to use the keys at home with their children.

Describe the ACTION PLAN that the group followed.

We read *7 Keys to Comprehension (How To Help Your Kids Read it and Get It!)* by Susan Zimmerman & Chryse Hutchins. Each week we focused on one of the following keys: Using Sensory Images, Connecting Background Knowledge, Questioning, Drawing Inferences, Determining Importance, Synthesizing and Using Fix-Up Strategies. We chose strategies to try in our classrooms and then shared our experiences with the group. We shared ideas informally at grade levels meetings and plan a presentation at the May faculty meeting. On June 2 during Kids & Parents Night Out we will present a parent workshop modeling primary and intermediate comprehension techniques that can be used at home.

Describe how the action plan was implemented.

We followed the following structure:

- Met once a week outside the school setting,
- Rotated the facilitator position.
- Read 1-2 chapters for each session
- Tried different strategies in the classroom and discussed among the group
- Shared findings with other faculty members.
- Planned a parent/teacher workshop to be held in June.
- Discussed continuing the group this summer using *Strategies That Work: Teaching Comprehension To Enhance Understanding* by Stephanie Harvey & Anne Goudvis

How has participating in this study group changed you as a teacher? Have any of your teaching practices changed?

We have become more aware of specific comprehension strategies and have become more intentional in using them in the classroom. Many of us are modeling more and using the think aloud more frequently with our students. We are more comfortable sharing our successes with other colleagues. This study group has promoted discussions on “Best Practices” not only among our group, but with others in our school. It has motivated us to continue our study group this summer.

What evidence is there that student achievement is improving as a result of participating in this study group? What kind of differences are you observing in your students?

Students are using the terminology and using the strategies. One teacher said, “Students are using visualization. They are also using connections: text to text, text to self and text to world.” Another believes her students are making “a slow but steady progression in their ability to comprehend what they have read.” This teacher seems to think that her students are enjoying reading and learning the strategies more since our group began. There is some evidence that students are using fix-up strategies when reading independently.

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

The 5th grade teachers have already shared techniques with each other during team meetings. Teachers are discussing how to teach comprehension and asking each other for suggestions. A teacher/parent workshop has been scheduled to share what we learned. Our study group wants to continue and has chosen *Strategies That Work: Teaching Comprehension To Enhance Understanding* by Stephanie Harvey & Anne Goudvis to read and discuss.

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

It was a positive experience for all six of us. Meeting outside the school setting created an informal, relaxed setting where we could meet with colleagues. “We shared, we learned, and we laughed.” It gave us a chance for immediate feedback and support. It was great to share both what was successful, and what didn’t work.

How can we make the study group program better?

We all would like to be able to continue this learning group. We are limited to one Study Group a year supported by The Teacher Center. We wish that we were eligible to apply for the summer study group. However, we are looking for other resources through the school district to keep our group going.