



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

**FINAL REPORT**  
**DOCUMENT PROCESSES AND OUTCOMES**

**STUDY GROUP TOPIC:** Literacy at the Middle School Level

**List of group members:** Suzette Marino, Barbara McLean, Cindy Raymond,  
Kathleen Salamida, Colleen Spring, and Jo Ann Summerlee

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 initial goal was to read Kyleene Beer's book, *When Kids Can't Read, What Teachers Can Do* and discuss how to effectively teach reading in the content area at the middle level. From the discussions, we chose four strategies that all six of us will try in our classrooms this school year. We will evaluate their effectiveness and discuss our findings. Ultimately, students will be exposed to a variety of reading strategies that will enhance their reading comprehension of content area material.

**Describe the ACTION PLAN that the group followed.**

- We examined strengths and weaknesses of reading instruction in our specific content areas.
- We read *When Kids Can't Read, What Teachers Can Do* by Kyleene Beers
- We focused on the following topics:
  - Explicit Instruction of Comprehension
  - Specific Strategies for Pre-Reading, Reading & Post-Reading
  - Vocabulary Development
  - Helping Students Become Confident Readers
- We prioritized the strategies to implement in our classes.
- We will be meeting periodically during the school year to discuss our successes and share our ideas.
- We will share our results with team members.

**Describe how the action plan was implemented.**

- At our first meeting we discussed the following:
  - What kinds of reading do we ask our students to do?
  - What works well in your classroom?
  - What doesn't work? (weakness & frustrations)
- We surveyed the text.
- We chose topics of interest and specific chapters to present at future meetings.
- We all read the first three chapters thoroughly for the second meeting.
- At subsequent meetings we took turns presenting the chapters and pointing out ideas that we found valuable.
- At our last meeting we chose four strategies to use throughout the school year. We also decided to share with the teams some other ideas that can be implemented as soon as the year begins.

**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?

The reading of this text and sharing together as a group has ignited us to collaborate and share our ideas. We have formed a bond to promote literacy at our middle school. The text itself was a great vehicle for discussion. It also provided us with many tools to use in the classroom. A reading teacher found a few strategies that she never learned in grad school. The Science teacher in the group envisioned herself as a reading teacher! One English teacher began using a few of the strategies in her summer school class.

Our goal is to promote best literacy practices throughout the content areas. We discussed how our teaching practices will change as a result of our study. First of all, we as a group, are committed to try at least four of the ideas Beers presented in the text. There also is a commitment to share these ideas with our teammates. We will meet to evaluate how successful each are in our classrooms.

Through our group discussions we see the value of reflection, both for us as teachers, and also for our students. We need to think about how the we learn.

Sharing our successes and failures will lead us to best teaching practices.

By using and assessing the effectiveness of these strategies we hope to produce better readers. We hope that students will want to read more because we will give them the tools that will aid their comprehension of the written word.

The more they understand what they are reading the more confident they will become. Our commitment to share what we learn with others on our teams. By incorporating some ideas as team practices can only create consistency and lead to student achievement.

Ideas such as:

- Good Book Boxes
- Word Walls (words: We need to know)
- Word/part trees
- Read alouds & SSR

will be shared with each of our teams at the beginning of the year.

Our study group also brainstormed ideas for promoting reading for enjoyment at our middle school.

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

We expect that students will:

- understand the importance of using strategies to enhance their reading comprehension
- gain confidence in their ability to read
- be better able to comprehend content material
- increase their vocabulary
- be able read actively

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

- The enthusiasm of the group was contagious.
- All participants were eager to try new ideas.
- Discussions were open and lead to ways to improve instruction.
- We have a common goal to increase reading comprehension in the content area.
- 3 participants have already used some the strategies during summer school.
- We have chosen these 4 strategies to implement:
  1. Building Social Confidence - words to encourage response (277)
  2. Say Something (106-110)
  3. Think Aloud (123-127)
  4. Somebody Wanted But So (144-149)
- One member of the group has already made the stem starter cards for each of our classes.

Another is making a list of dependent reading behaviors (24-26) for the whole faculty so that we will be able to identify specific reading strengths & weaknesses of our students.

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

Our group found this process valuable. We are a diverse group: 6<sup>th</sup> grade Science, 6<sup>th</sup> grade ELA, 7<sup>th</sup> grade inclusion, 7-8<sup>th</sup> grade Integrated Math/Reading and an Instructional Support teacher. We found ideas that were applicable to our teaching across the curriculum. We learned from the text, and from each other. We have gained more confidence through our reading and our discussions. The text was a great vehicle for professional discussion and growth.

**How can we make this study group program better?**

1. We want to continue our study group throughout the year and invite others to start study groups.
2. We need to open our study group to more teachers from different content areas and include administrators, teacher assistants, aides, and parents.