



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

FINAL REPORT
DOCUMENT PROCESSES AND OUTCOMES

STUDY GROUP TOPIC: New Strategies To Improve Reading Comprehension
List of group members: Lucinda Van Vleck, Bette Clare, Tara MacNamee, Kari Kaminsky

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 initial goal was to develop and apply new strategies for implementing methods to improve comprehension in our literacy program by reading Teaching for Comprehension in Reading, Grades K-2, by Gay Su Pinnell and Patricia L. Scharer. As we began, we realized we were unfamiliar with many of the terms and practices cited. Because “reading is thinking,” we learned that the best way to increase student comprehension is to implement a successful balanced literacy program. In addition to the planned reading and discussion, we decided to utilize other resources available and to collaborate to create a workable plan to implement balanced literacy programs in our classrooms in September.

Describe the ACTION PLAN that the group followed.

We read chapters in the Teaching for Comprehension . . . book and followed up with discussions and sharing of key concepts, and previous successful and unsuccessful practices, consulted other professional books from the lending library, previous courses and professional development, watched a Fountas and Pinnell video and decided to collaborate on a plan to jump in full speed in September.

Describe how the action plan was implemented.

Each day, we discussed key ideas learned in our readings and through other sources. Through discussions, sharing and brain storming, we concluded that classroom management and lack of scheduled blocks of time were the major obstacles in the success of previous attempts of fully adopting a balanced literacy program with guided reading and mini-lessons. Then we created a work board, a list of terms for easy reference, an anecdotal record file system, outlines of key concepts and terms, examples of positive questions, and constructed a spiral bound planning guidebook for scaffolding book introductions to be shared. Our principal is working on scheduling ample blocks of time for implementation.

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?

As teachers, the study group has given us a better understanding of how to begin and what to do to modify our teaching practices. We expect the students to become responsible readers and learners who utilize strategies to promote reading, writing and thinking skills and who find reading enjoyable. Meaningful and sustained learning should be the norm in our classrooms.

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

After implementing the ideas learned and using the materials created, our students should increase comprehension and performance on assessments, demonstrate sustained learning in a variety of activities and subjects, utilize a variety of strategies in reading and writing, and develop into responsible learners with a love for reading.

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

The goals have been met as evidenced by our plans for implementation and by the teacher created materials we will be utilizing. We have gone beyond the goals, by expanding our knowledge of the reading and writing aspects of a balanced literacy program beyond the facet of comprehension and our plans on implementation.

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

The group process was extremely valuable. Through collaboration, we helped each other's understanding of key concepts, evaluated previous attempts at mini-lessons and centers, offered ideas for success and implementation, and shared materials from other sources.

How can we make this study group program better?

A follow-up session after the first marking period would give us a chance to share experiences with implementation of our program, and would allow for reflection, evaluation and collaborative planning for the rest of the year.