


High Quality Literacy Instruction: The Role of the Principal

The Impact of Systematic Focus and Expertise...

At the school/classroom level...




What Is Possible...

2012-13 School Report Card: 75.8
Exceeds Expectations (Range is 73-82.9)
Level of student growth in reading and math combined (78.2%) exceeded the state level by 12 ½%

Over 4 years:

- Outperformed the state average in math
- Outperformed the state average in reading 2 of 4 years




Continuous Process

2013-14 School Report Card: 70.7

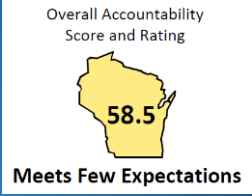
In the past 2 years:

- 10 New teachers
- 14-15 Classrooms
- Staff recruited by nearby school districts
- Staff recruited for district leadership positions



Another School


2012-13 School Report Card 58.5



Goal: Focus on Literacy

Another School

2013-14 School Report Card 63.3



“One of the great ironies in education is that it takes strong and effective leaders to create truly empowered people who are capable of sustaining improvement after the leader has gone.”

DuFour, DuFour, Eaker, & Many, 2006

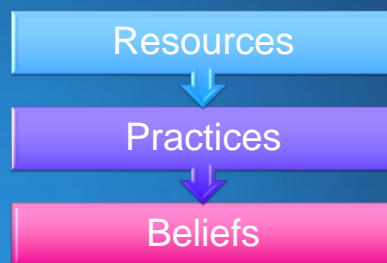
Essential Understandings

- ❖ Leadership matters
- ❖ Expertise matters
- ❖ Systems thinking:
 - ❖ Understanding the complexities of literacy learning and instruction
 - ❖ Literacy is a complex process
 - ❖ Literacy assessment is a process not a product
- ❖ Create a culture of literacy

“A system is an arrangement of things so intimately connected that they form a unified whole. A system is greater than the sum of its parts. The components of a system work together in synergy, producing an effect greater than they each could accomplish alone.”

Lyons & Pinnell

What Often Happens



Routman; 2014

What Needs to Happen



Routman; 2014

Starting from Beliefs

- ❖ Reflect on your own beliefs. You may want to consider the following questions:
 - ❖ How do you go about teaching something new?
 - ❖ What principles guide you?
 - ❖ How do you know if students are getting it?
 - ❖ What do you do when they don't?

Questions from Miller, 2008

“Practices are our beliefs in action.”

Wallis; 2012

Washington School Comprehensive Literacy

Non-Negotiables for Classroom Teachers

Teachers: This checklist is a quick reference for you to use as you implement CLM. The items on this checklist are steps we have taken as part of past school improvement plans and are expectations for all classroom teachers. If you need support with implementation, please work with your literacy coach.

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genres, authors, and topics

- Books in classroom library are organized and labeled according to genre, topic and/or author, not by level

the needs of groups

Instructional

able

Intervention Model, for other ready

Instruction per day,

reading, writing, and

majority of students

provided to meet

Lower level reading and writing resources are included with students

- Writing is taught as a process, including planning, drafting, revising, editing, and publishing
- The Collins Writing Continuum and CCSS is used as the framework for writer's workshop.


Criterion 9: Uses Technology for Effective Communication

- Time in the computer lab is connected to CCSS and students use technology for real-world purposes, including word processing, research, and presenting information

“If we are highly knowledgeable and well grounded in our beliefs and practices, we will always be making some adjustments and improvements to our instruction, but we will not overreact and rush headlong into adopting the newest program or latest fad without question.”

Routman; 2014

Children learn to read and read to learn throughout school – and life.



“In the primary grades, the emphasis on simultaneously building foundational skills and introducing complex content is what differentiates a Common Core curriculum from its No Child Left Behind predecessor. NCLB's sharp focus on basic reading skills often resulted in giving short shrift to content areas like social studies and science. In contrast, the Common Core standards support classrooms in which learning to read and reading to learn occur simultaneously and synergistically.

Pearson & Hiebert, 2012/2013

The standards demand conceptually rich texts that build skills while engaging students in reading and learning. Common Core primary-grade classrooms are characterized by (a) building knowledge, (b) increasing students' responsibility for reading, and (c) providing more time for student involvement with text.”

Pearson & Hiebert, 2012/2013

Complexity

- ❖ Children are complex
- ❖ English language is complex
- ❖ Comprehension and thinking are complex
- ❖ Professional learning is complex
- ❖ Reciprocity between reading and writing is complex
- ❖ Relationship of literacy to content learning is complex



What vs. How

If our goal is to develop independent, self-directed learners...



Purposeful Instruction

- ❖ Purpose – reason, intent, desired effect

How will this lesson/activity help individual students grow in literacy abilities?



What does the child need to do to complete the task?

Authenticity

“Authentic reading, writing, and discussion experiences are like those that are encountered in the day-to-day lives of people, as opposed to school-like activities such as completing worksheets or answering teacher-posed questions.”



Marinak & Gambrell, 2010


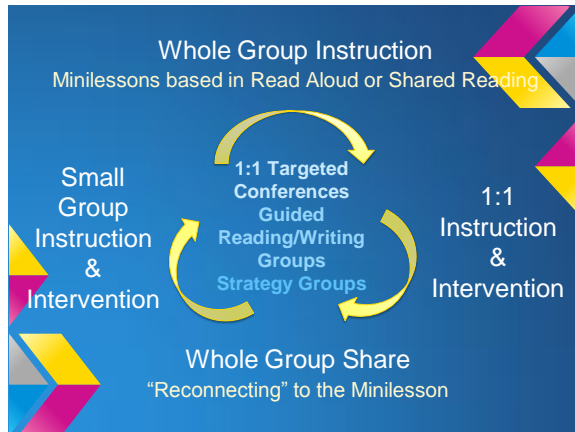
“Research has clearly shown that reading and writing are interactive, closely connected processes that support each other and that participation in strong writing programs clearly benefits both reading and writing development. In classrooms—including those in high-poverty schools—where student achievement is high, reading and writing are routinely linked, and students have a great many writing opportunities across the curriculum.”

Routman, 2005

Literacy Learning in OASD

150 Minute Literacy Block

- ❖ Interactive Read Aloud and Discussion
 - ❖ Daily as part of the reading/writing workshop or integrated with a content area
- ❖ Reading Workshop
 - ❖ Daily 90 minute block
- ❖ Writing Workshop
 - ❖ Daily 40-60 minute block

Principal Leadership

- ❖ Think about the instruction currently happening in your school
 - ❖ What are areas of strength?
 - ❖ What areas are you unsure of?
 - ❖ What areas might need improvement?
- ❖ Identify one or two areas of focus for your school and some action steps to take including data that you might need to collect/examine.

"We've become a profession of fads, latching onto the latest and greatest new program, idea, or thingamabob that carries guaranteed, "research-based" successes. Stacks of material related to obsolete fads gather dust in supply closets as districts and schools rush to spend more money getting their teachers up to speed on the latest fad. When the money runs out for that fad, we change our focus and seize the next published 'savior.'"

Hall, P. & Simeral, A. 2008

When programs claiming to be based on scientifically based reading research (SBRR) began to appear, many educators understandably assumed those programs had been **explicitly tested** through scientific research. But this was often not the case. Rather, programs were simply **based** on research.

"The Trouble with Packaged and Scripted Interventions" by Donna Scanlon (2013)

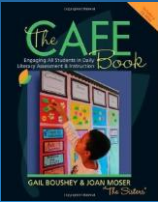


Explicitly **tested** through scientific research

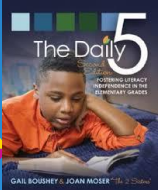
or

simply **based** on research?

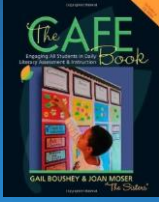
M. Ford, Aug. 2014



“The CAFÉ system, based on research into the habits of proficient readers...”




“Based on literacy learning and motivation research...” and “compelling new brain research.”



200 pages informed by approximately 60 references

Number of references from peer-reviewed forums? 6



200 pages informed by approximately 45 references

Number of references from peer-reviewed forums? 4

M. Ford, Aug. 2014

“Such programs clearly should not claim that when they are implemented with fidelity they will have a positive impact on literacy acquisition. Nor should they claim that strict adherence to program guidelines will result in better outcomes than would more **responsive instruction** using either the same instructional materials or materials that are specifically selected to meet students’ current needs.”

“The Trouble with Packaged and Scripted Interventions” by Donna Scanlon (2013)

That means

FIDELITY should always be to the learner

NOT to the program, framework, or materials

M. Ford, Aug. 2014

“This all too common practice of following procedures, standards, and resources without question, which can sound good and look impressive on the surface, may do considerable harm to students by taking the focus away from their most pressing learning needs and interests.”

Regie Routman, 2014

The answer is not in “buying one more program. It is in what teachers understand and can do and the decisions teachers make minute by minute while teaching.”

Fountas, 2012

“...behind every number is a reader...we, as teachers, have the power to use assessment to make a difference for each one of them.”

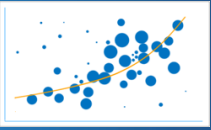
Landrigan & Mulligan; 2013

“educators may be swimming in data, but the data may not be providing the sorts of information needed to improve teaching and learning. Equally worrisome is that some data may be misinterpreted or misused, leading to inappropriate teaching, learning, or inferences about schooling.”

Valencia, 2011

What Counts as Data?

- Assessments
 - Formal
 - Informal
- Student work samples
- Documented teacher observations
- Surveys



“In many schools, [data-based reform] has morphed into an unintended obstacle to both effective instruction and an intellectually rich, forward-looking education.”

Schmoker; 2008/2009

“The consequences of an assessment procedure are the first and most important consideration in establishing the validity of the assessment.”

IRA & NCTE, 2010

What does a reading test assess?

- Reading Ability 40%
- Content Knowledge 20%
- Motivation 15%
- Format 10%
- Error 15%

Guthrie (2002)
M. Ford, Aug. 2014

“What gets measured gets done.”

Peters, 1987

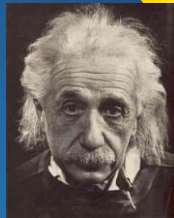
Goal = “deep comprehension”
Assessment = Isolated Skills
Results = ???

“The finer the grain size at which we monitor a process like reading or writing, the greater the likelihood that we will end up teaching and testing bits and pieces rather than global processes like comprehension and composition.”

Pearson, 2008

“Not everything that can be counted counts, and not everything that counts can be counted.”

Einstein



Dylan William,
University of
London



“If we create a culture where every teacher believes they need to improve, not because they are not good enough, but because they can be even better, there is no limit to what we can achieve.”

“teachers who receive substantial professional development—an average of 49 hours in the nine studies—can boost their students’ achievement by about 21 percentile points.”

(Yoon et al., 2007)

Professional Development

- ❖ OASD Layers of Professional Development for Teachers
 - ❖ Explicit professional development in literacy components
 - New teachers
 - Updates for all teachers
 - ❖ Embedded grade level literacy team meetings
 - ❖ Coaching and mentoring
 - ❖ Collaboration
 - School based
 - Cross-district grade level teams

Professional Development

- ❖ OASD Layers of Professional Development - Principals
 - ❖ Explicit professional development in literacy components
 - ❖ School visits/walk-throughs with Literacy Coordinator
 - ❖ Summer Administration Academy
 - ❖ PLC's - **Read, Write, Lead**
 - ❖ Professional Development Calendar
 - Aligns district and school goals

“In terms of the link between a principal’s action and student learning, there is one finding that stands out in time as more powerful than any other: the degree to which the principal participates as a learner.”

Fullan, 2009

Contact Information

Kim Brown
Director of Learning and Communication
kim.brown@oshkosh.k12.wi.us

Susan Martin
Principal – Washington Elementary
susan.martin.washington@oshkosh.k12.wi.us

Deb Zarling
PK-5 Literacy Coordinator
debra.zarling@oshkosh.k12.wi.us

Resources

ESAIL: Environmental Scale for Assessing Implementation Levels
Dorn, L. & Soffos, C. 2012. **Interventions that Work: A Comprehensive Intervention Model for Preventing Reading Failure in Grades K-3.** Boston, MA: Pearson

Examining Beliefs About Reading
Routman, R. 2014. **Read, Write, Lead: Breakthrough Strategies for Schoolwide Literacy Success.** Alexandria, VA: ASCD.

Examining Beliefs About Writing
Routman, R. 2005. **Writing Essentials: Raising Expectations and Results While Simplifying Teaching.** Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann.