The Emergents Professional Development Final Product

The Emergents
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Part - 2
Professional Development
Focus Area: Using Read-Alouds to Develop Vocabulary

For the purposes of this module only, we are pretending that the teachers at our hypothetical PS #1 are forming a learning community to focus on increasing K-2 students' vocabulary content knowledge (in Math/Science/SS/ELA) because data has shown weaknesses in comprehension based upon poor vocabulary scores on state-mandated assessments. Baumann & Duffy (2001, p.609) conducted a qualitative analysis of methodologies employed in published literacy teacher-research studies (Baumann & Duffy-Hester, 2000) and discovered that a typical teacher researcher/teacher-research study is characterized on the bases of four themes and 16 categories (and this is what defines us):

"A reflective classroom teacher identifies a persistent teaching problem or question and decides to initiate a classroom inquiry. This teacher reads theoretical and applied educational literature, including other teacher-research reports, and decides to work collaboratively with a colleague(s). Using primarily practical, efficient, qualitative methods recommended by other teacher researchers, with perhaps a quantitative tool added in, the researcher initiates a study. The teacher learns from and along with students while engaging in the investigation, and she/he finds that the research questions have been altered somewhat throughout the course of the study. The investigator may struggle to balance the dual role of teacher and researcher or feel uneasy with the innovations that are explored. The teacher researcher decides to share the research story publicly and writes it for publication, using a narrative style that includes figurative language and verbal and visual illustrations." Therefore, our "PS#1", upon seeing that the state-mandated reading comprehension scores concerning vocabulary understanding and usage for second graders, have fallen for the 3rd straight year decide to embark upon an adventure, an affirmation. A core of classroom teachers, the librarian, and some inclusion aides now read and get creative!

Vital to the success of the children and adults in this Reading Outloud Learning Community (ROLC) the following guiding principals are established.

* "The truth is oral language is primary, interrelated with written texts and it is the basis of verbal thought, social communication and the complexities of reading and writing" (Chomsky, 1972; Huey, 1908; Loban, 1963, 1976; Monroe, 1965; Percell-Gated, 1991, 1992; Sulzby, 1985; Wells, 1981 as cited in Gentille, 1996.)
* We will publish our results for the world to contemplate and our integrety as researchers and teachers is on the line.
* We believe that classroom teachers must publish their action research so that it may guide fellow teachers, administrators, higher education, book publishers, and policy makers (especially those that are not educators by trade).
* We keep the focus of this venture centered upon the children and their families.

**Context Standards for Professional Development:**

**Staff development that improves the learning of all students:**
- Organizes adults into learning communities whose goals are aligned with those of the school and district. ([Learning Communities](#))
- Requires skillful school and district leaders who guide continuous instructional improvement. ([Leadership](#))
- Requires resources to support adult learning and collaboration. ([Resources](#))

**Process Standards for Professional Development**

**Staff development that improves the learning of all students:**
- Uses disaggregated student data to determine adult learning priorities, monitor progress, and help sustain continuous improvement. ([Data-Driven](#))
- Uses multiple sources of information to guide improvement and demonstrate its impact. ([Evaluation](#))
- Prepares educators to apply research to decision making. ([Research-Based](#))
- Uses learning strategies appropriate to the intended goal. ([Design](#))
- Applies knowledge about human learning and change. ([Learning](#))
- Provides educators with the knowledge and skills to collaborate. ([Collaboration](#))

**Content Standards**

**Staff development that improves the learning of all students:**
- Prepares educators to understand and appreciate all students, create safe, orderly and supportive learning environments, and hold high expectations for their academic achievement. ([Equity](#))
- Deepens educators' content knowledge, provides them with research-based instructional strategies to assist students in meeting rigorous academic standards, and prepares them to use various types of classroom assessments appropriately. ([Quality Teaching](#))
- Provides educators with knowledge and skills to involve families and other stakeholders appropriately. (Family Involvement)

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Initial Implementation</th>
<th>Developing Practice</th>
<th>Securely Implemented</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Read-alouds (two times a week) - Ask teachers to preview read-alouds and consider vocabulary. Are there terms not are likely to be unfamiliar to students. Preteach and provide opportunities for students to interact, practice, and use those terms in extending discussion/activities.</td>
<td>Read-alouds (three times a week) - three strategies be introduced and modeled. Graphic organizers are to be used with one of the stories. Strategies- Predicting Monitoring, questioning and repredicting. 1. Imaging (Identify words the author is using that are descriptive 2. Use prior knowledge about those words and about your senses to create an image in your mind) Inferring Summarizing Graphic organizers: Concept Maps Frayer Model</td>
<td>Read-alouds are integrated across the curriculum. Strategies are modeled and students use a variety of strategies and graphic organizers on a regular basis during their 90-minute Reading/Language Arts block. Teachers plan and conduct family initiative project to promote read-alouds at home.</td>
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References


Clay, M., Gill, M., Glynn, T., McNaughton, T., Salmon, K. (1983). Record of oral language and biks and gutches. Portsmouth,
Part One: **The Emergents**

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**Context Standards-A Review - Part 1**

Hord (2008) says that professionals can no longer rely on yesterday's schooling practices........

**The Emergents**

**Professional Development Final Product - Context Standards**

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Hord (2008) says that professionals can no longer rely on yesterday's schooling practices........

*Therefore, we must grow in a community of fellow learners under a leadership that fosters respect and develops and uses human resources wisely.*

*By continuing to grow ... we become the agents of change in our schools.*

**NSDC’s Context Standards**

**Staff development that improves the learning of all students:**

- Organizes adults into learning communities whose goals are aligned with those of the school and district.
- **Requires skillful school and district leaders who guide continuous instructional improvement.**
- Requires resources to support adult learning and collaboration.

http://www.nsdc.org/standards/index.cfm

**Staff development that improves learning of all students organizes adults into learning communities whose goals are aligned with those of the school and district.**
What are elements of an effective learning community?

Through research five components of researched-based learning communities were identified:
1. Shared beliefs, values, and vision.
2. Shared and supportive leadership.
3. Supportive conditions, both structural and relational.
5. Shared personal practice. (Hord, 2008)

Teachers, as students, can make great gains when grouped in order to meet their professional learning needs.

- Killion (2003) states that professional development that is effective “ensures that teachers of poor readers and nonreaders have specialized professional development that addresses their students’ age-appropriate needs.

A school learning community is focused on the progress of the school as a whole. Therefore, a learning community is an agent for change across the vertical alignment and grade levels because every one is working toward a common goal, student achievement.

- “As an organizational arrangement, the professional learning community is seen as a powerful staff development approach and a potent strategy for school change and improvement.” (Hord, 1997)

- Learning Communities shift the "focus on teaching to a focus on learning." (Hord, 2008)

Learning communities provide teachers with follow-up support in implementing new strategies and better practices.

- Professional development activities need follow-up, support and active participation from all concerned. (Tohill, 2009)

Learning communities promote long-term professional development that results in long-term growth.

- Workshops and traditional professional developments are not likely to produce long-term change in implementation of new practices. (Wirsing, 2009)

- Professional development "is continuous, growing and cyclical." (Tohill, 2009)
**Professional Learning Communities promote discussion and reflection and thus supports classroom practices.**

- In a study that compared traditional workshops and the PLC (Professional Learning Community), "teachers indicated that the professional development and small group reflection supported their teaching of comprehension strategies by allowing them to discuss and reflect on their teaching." Teachers in the PLC group were "observed teaching more comprehension strategies." (Glassett, 2009)

**Learning communities foster and promote collaboration.**

- As John-Steiner (2000) suggested, adults working in collaboration “create zones of proximal development for each other. Collaboration can be a mirror for each partner— a chance to understand one’s habits, styles, working methods and beliefs through the comparison and contrast with one’s collaborator” (p. 189).

- The transfer of new learning is not a top down model it is the practice of peers helping peers. (Eaker, R., Keating, J., 2008).

**Staff development that improves learning for all students requires skillful school and district leaders who guide continuous instructional improvement.**

**Leadership that develops leaders is critical for student achievement and is one of the most crucial roles of professional development.**

- Leaders develop leaders. (Hirsh & Killion, 2009)

- "Aspiring principals must be prepared to better understand their role in relation to teacher leaders and to do the necessary reflective work to help them view shared leadership as a support rather than as a threat." (Portin, 2010)

- Learning Communities shift the "focus on teaching to a focus on learning." (Hord, 2008)

**Leaders must be willing to think creatively in order to encourage problem-solving.**

- "One of the most powerful ways leaders can lead others’ learning and development is through modeling. Other staff are unlikely to take risks experimenting with new ideas if they constantly see senior leaders being cautious. They need to know that it is acceptable to act in this way; that this is a
Leaders foster an environment of trust and respect.

- "...the following characteristics are needed: respect and trust among colleagues at the school and district level, possession of an appropriate cognitive and skill base that enables effective teaching and learning, supportive leadership from administrators and others in key roles, and relatively intensive socialization processes." (Hord, 1997)

- "Trust is a significant factor for the community, and leaders should take steps to build this important capital." (Hord 2008)

- "John Kotter advises that the central challenge of changing culture is "changing people's behavior" (Kotter & Cohen, 2002, p.2)

Staff development that improves learning for all students requires resources that support adult learning and collaboration.

Time for learning and collaboration is an essential resource needed for staff development.

- Time is a resource and “time, or more properly lack of it, is one of the most difficult problems faced by school districts” (Watts & Castle, 1993, p. 306).

Staff development contributes to the development of human resources.

- Resources refers to "a set of frameworks, ideas, tools, information, and documents that members share. It is the specific knowledge members develop, share and maintain. It enables members to deal effectively with the domain of knowledge." (Chi, 2009)

Last thought...
What the professional learning community is doing for teachers is the same thing that workshop learning is doing for students. Berghoff & Egawa state "Every child needs to be an active participant, negotiating within the class culture." The word "teacher" could replace "child" easily. Creating a learning community in our classrooms, takes the same components as a PLC does. Sharing beliefs, sharing leadership, supportive climate, intentional learning, and of course.... practice.

References


