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Implementing a literature-based program: Theory to classroom

Judy A. Miller

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California State University

San Bernardino

IMPLEMENTING A

LITERATURE-BASED PROGRAM:

THEORY TO CLASSROOM

A Project Submitted to

The Faculty of the School of Education

In Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements of the

Degree of

Master of Arts

in

Education: Reading Option

By

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San Bernardino, California

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APPROVED BY:

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Second Reader: Mr. Joe Gray

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IMPLEMENTING A LITERATURE-BASED PROGRAM:

THEORY TO CLASSROOM

JUDY A. MILLER

ABSTRACT

Successful implementation of the English Language Arts Framework will
require California school districts to train administrators, teachers,
instructional aides and library personnel. Educators need to
understand that the Framework must be implemented, and that by working
together they can meet the language arts goals outlined in the
Framework. Inservice, mentor teacher time, money spent on conferences,
support of the California Literature Project, the Inland Area Writing
Project, School Improvement Funds and staff meetings are all ways to
help teachers absorb these curricular changes. However, carefully
planned methods for training teachers to utilize integrated language
arts strategies and to support their efforts to implement the program
must be divised by districts to ensure successful conversion to the new
program. My project proposes one such method for implementing the key
concepts of the English Language Arts Framework, employing three stages
or modules: 1.) Inservice to raise awareness, teach use of materials,
and present the rationale for peer coaching; 2.) peer coaching to
provide personalized, non-threatening support during early
implementation; and 3.) grade level meetings to maintain support and
monitor effectiveness of implementation. A review of the literature
introduces the project and identifies approaches most effective in
promoting teacher change.

Challenges posed by California's educational reform movement are being felt across the state: The English Language Arts Framework has forced administrators and teachers to look critically at their listening, reading, writing and language programs. As school districts embrace the curricular values and goals of the Framework, staff development becomes a high priority. "Time and support must be provided for meeting with other teachers to read and discuss works, share teaching ideas, and keep up with developments in the teaching of English-language arts." (California State Department of Education, 1987, p. 40) California is mandating that we implement literature-based programs so that all students, including those with special needs, have access to original literary works. The fractured, skill-based program that was the norm must now become a spiralling, developmental and integrated program. Emphasis on teaching language skills through a range of listening, speaking, reading and writing activities is the basis of the Framework. The state is also challenging teachers to guide students through a variety of thinking processes; the instructional program of the past, that included many low level questions with "safe" and "diluted" ideas, will not be accepted in the future. Cooperative learning, discussion groups focusing on high level questions dealing with aesthetic, ethical and cultural issues will characterize the new language arts program. As schools prepare for these changes, apprehensive teachers look to school and district administrators to provide them with meaningful training. The Framework points out that district support, time to assimilate new teaching methods, establishment of new educational goals, and

formulation of a support system within each school, is necessary if our mission is to succeed.

Review of the Literature

In order to identify training and implementation approaches with high potential for success, a thorough review of the literature was conducted. My focus incorporated examination of findings related to effective inservice techniques as well as successful strategies for implementing major changes to the instructional program. This section summarizes my findings.

Staff development must address proven techniques for increasing students' achievement. Research on teaching models indicate that some methods go far beyond others and should be seriously considered as staff development programs for language arts are being planned. "Staff developoment programs have, of course, been created with curricular and instructional improvement in mind; but we believe that both planners and participants should be striving for particular amounts of increase in student learning..." (Joyce et al., 1987, p.11) In analysis, research shows that teachers gain more from inservice when: 1.) they are ready to receive new information, 2.) time is allocated for working together and sharing or ideas, and 3.) teaching models can be observed and practiced in the classroom.

Focus on teachers' acceptance levels for new ideas is necessary. Some research indicates that teachers fall into three categories which

should be considered by inservice trainers: Low abstract, moderate
abstract, and high abstract. "Staff development must identify
teachers' present mental structures of organization, whether they be
concrete or symbolic, and gradually introcduce new information in a way
that teachers can group and act upon." (Glickman, 1985, p. 113) As
inservice is planned, attention paid to the readiness of the staff is
instrumental in providing the best possible program for a school.

Staff development should be tailored to the needs of each staff. If a
school is composed of many new teachers, (Low abstract) only a few new
ideas should be introduced at one time. These ideas should then be
modeled and practiced before additional information is presented.
Schools that have beginning teachers and teachers that have taught
two-seven years tend to be characterized as moderate abstract. These
teachers are more capable at incorporating new ideas into their
established repertoires. It is evident that teachers who operate on a
high abstract level (or have years of teaching experience) can more
quickly assimilate and apply new ideas, which then improves their
students' achievement. (Glickman, 1985).

Many research studies show that both students and teachers are more
productive and learn more if they work in cooperative groups. In a
study by Anastos and Ancowitz (1987) for instance, a volunteer group of
four teachers wanted to improve their effectiveness with their
students, so together they developed the Collegial Interaction Process.
This program included discussions about materials, pre-conferences

about observation, videotaping, self-analysis, peer interaction,
analysis and coaching. While the program was not without obstacles,
all the teachers involved felt that the instructional improvements they
made were worth the problems they faced. "All participants said that
the program met their needs...This peer-observation program apparently
motivated people to examine their teaching in considerable depth and
detail." They also concluded that "Videotaping was a revealing and
rewarding tool for self-evaluation." (Anastos and Ancowitz, 1987, p.
427) Other research supports this idea and concludes that teachers
working together in groups make considerable professional growth;
"Sharing successes as well as problems became a standard activity as
members encouraged and reinforced one another's growth." (Paquette,
1987, p. 38)

David and Roger Johnson (1987) have conducted numerous studies which
also support teachers working cooperatively as a way to increase
achievement, interpersonal relations, social support, and self-esteem.
Their studies indicate that not only do individual teachers want to
succeed, they also want their groups to be successful. "A cooperative
structure exists when members work together to achieve joint goals.
Members seek outcomes that benefit themselves and their colleagues."
(Johnson, D.W., Johnson, R.T., 1987, p. 28)

Since the early 1980's research has focused on the growth groups have
made when working together. The data clearly shows that group efforts
are more productive than individual efforts because there is the

tendency for group members to check each others' progress. "In a cooperative team, there is a helpful non-threatening ernvironment in which to try out ideas and ask for assistance." (Slavin, 1987, p.9)

The Mentor Teacher Program, prevalent in California since 1983, has produced evidence of effective approaches for changing teachers' instructional behavior. This program provides for teacher incentives to keep highly qualified teachers in the profession by offering them merit pay for assisting new or struggling teachers. A focus of the mentor program is staff development for beginning teachers. Teachers teaching teachers seems to have more credibility than the use of outside consultants for presenting new ideas to a staff.

Far West Laboratory has done extensive research in this area, recently finalizing a two-year study of the mentor program in California. The study concludes that while some aspects of the program are not successful, it increases opportunities for teachers to play significant roles in developing school programs. In this leadership role, mentor teachers provide ongoing guidance to new or developing teachers. When evaluating the successes of the mentor program, it is clear that when teachers have the opportunity to practice and receive feedback on lessons, skill attainment is much higher. Coaching as a follow-up to formal training provides even greater understanding and application of new ideas.

As shown in Figure 1, data indicates that the strategies used by mentor

teachers are successful. Modeling of lessons, lesson observations with feedback, discussion of strategies, and coaching are ways in which mentors help teachers refine their work. "Without coaching, only a few trainees will be able to implement the newly learned skill." (Olsen, 1987, p.4) Working together, the trainee and the mentor can overcome many of the common problems, jointly enhancing their ability to implement the curriculum.

Structure of Training	Concept Understanding	Skill Attainment	Application to Own Setting
Presentation of Content	85%	15%	10%
Modeling	85%	18%	10%
Practice & Feedback	85%	80%	15%
Coaching	90%	90%	80%

(FIGURE 1)

A program that has goals similar to those of the Mentor Teachers Program is Impact II. This university-based program, funded by the Exxon Foundation, provides teachers with grants to encourage participants to develop classroom activities, units, or programs. The object of this teacher networking program is to develop programs that are classroom tested, then make them available to other classrooms and schools. "It is a staff development program that enables master teachers to instruct other teachers and provides teachers with the opportunity to exchange and adapt ideas." (Dempsey, 1985, p.45) Impact II offers workshops, encourages interschool visits, and gives participants public recognition. This allows for teachers to adapt the material to fit their teaching style, to see the classroom programs in action and receive positive recognition for their work. Many school districts use Impact II to implement major changes to systems. It works because it combines the necessary elements for change: Respect for the teacher, positive self-esteem, and professional commitment. (Mann, 1985, p.42)

As schools begin to adapt new programs, staff developers should be aware of how and why teachers make changes in their instructional programs. Research indicates that there are several major reasons for teachers to change their teaching style. As inservice is being planned, it is beneficial to evaluate the staff carefully to determine which methods will maximize transfer of the new program being implemented.

Student behaviors tell teachers immediately if their lesson is

successful. If students meet the challenge of learning with

enthusiasm, if they are actively engaged in their learning, then

teachers feel successful and see little reason to change their method

of instructing. However, when students do not respond as planned,

teachers will often engage in self-evaluation to determine why the

lesson was not successful. Many times the answer surfaces in the staff

lounge as "...development is passed from teacher to teacher in personal

contacts..." (Goodman, 1989, p. 70) Teachers sharing ideas is a

natural process that occurs in many schools. Often a colleague can

point out an alternative quickly. Educators agree that when students

are motivated and involved, they learn more. Instructors are challenged

to motivate their students because without that motivation the learner

will not make the desired gains. Robert Swartz (1986) agrees with this

idea and points out that it is important for teachers to personalize

the learning, increasing it's relevance to students. Increasing

relevance increases motivation which improves students' achievements.

This philosophy is also evident in the English Language Arts Framework

which states that, "Piecework and fragmented worksheets isolating a

single skill must give way to activities and assignments designed to

involve the student in active thinking, responding, exploring and

shaping of ideas." (California State Department of Education, 1987,

p. 38) Teachers that set up programs that spoonfeed students small

amounts of information do little to promote success and, in fact, the

result is minimal transfer of learning, and the student's motivation is

very low. Teachers are the key to children's education. It is a

challenge to each instructor, then, to create a classroom in which

students are so motivated to discover their world that they eventually become the prime movers for their education.

More and more studies show that when teachers work together in a peer coaching style, they are more likely to improve their instructional techniques and will attempt to use new ideas and practices.

In 1987, a staff development consultant began a peer coaching program in two Michigan elementary schools. The two schools started the project quite differently: In one, the school staff was eager to begin the project; the other school discarded the idea completely. The principal worked hard to point out the positive effects of the program. Teachers were reassured and, one year after introduction of the concept, some of the staff joined in. Shelley Bruder's program began by slowly introducing the teachers to the project, getting them used to being videotaped, learning how to observe lessons, then recording and giving feedback on the videoed instruction. Teachers were able to choose their "preferred" coaching partners, and teams met often to discuss their needs and possible strategies. While the schools approached the project differently, both reached the same conclusions. Teachers valued the opportunity to observe colleagues teaching. "Clearly, peer coaching increased teachers' opportunities for observation and feedback." (Sparks and Bruder, 1987, p. 55) Both staffs reported more sharing and discussion of teaching ideas during free time, and meaningful partnerships were formed. One example cited was typical of the positive responses. "It's been great opening up to

another member of the staff; I had never before explored teaching with another teacher, nor had I gone into depth regarding improving teaching." (Sparks and Bruder, 1987, p. 55)

Common among the programs researched was the element of teacher preparation before the actual classroom observations, videotaping or peer coaching sessions took place. One staff in Virginia set up it's peer coaching strategies in two semesters. In the first semester the participant would learn how to operate video equipment, then use the videotape for analysis. Next, he would practice looking at the lessons for instructional purposes, noting which skills were present and absent from the lesson. During the last phase of the first semester the teachers demonstrated an improvement in their instructional skills. The second semester the teachers broadened their skills by recording their lessons using both video and script. Then they submitted their videos for "feedback" sessions with their colleagues. (Rogers, 1987)

Research suggests that as with all "new" learnings, peer coaching is a process. People develop at different rates and to different stages, and strategies should be implemented as educators become more and more comfortable with them. For some, public teaching does not occur simply because a principal, district, or staff developer mandates it: Preparation, support and positive feedback prepare teachers to participate in peer coaching. Success of the approach can be credited to the fact that "peer coaching enables teachers to direct and manage their own professional growth." (Rogers, 1987, p. 67)

Having reviewed the research, it is clear that there are successful
approaches to changing teacher's behavior which have implications for
implementation for new curriculum. In order to fully implement the
English Language Arts Framework, California teachers will require a
comprehensive inservice and planning program.

My project will focus on the initial stages of the implementation of
the Language Arts Framework, emphasizing staff development based upon
the research cited. The project will include: 1.) A cooperative
learning approach to training teachers, 2.) A high degree of teacher
involvement in decision making to build commitment and 3.) peer
coaching as a method of supporting acquisition of new strategies during
the initial stages of implementation. Cooperative learning will be
used during inservice to convey the basic tenets and methodologies
embedded in the Framework, as well as to demonstrate effective teaching
strategies. Through collaborative acitivites, workshop participants
will acquire a deeper understanding of instructional methods which can
be used effectively with all students.

There will be a high degree of decision making offered to teachers in
several ways. First, at each grade level team (K-1, 2-3, 4-6),
specialists will be designated to serve as coordinators and resources
for other teachers. These people will receive additional training
through California Literature Project or equivalent training early in
the school year. They will then serve as guides for the teachers on
their teams, providing them with materials and strategies which support

the new curriculum. Classroom teachers will choose their new areas of focus. For example, one might develop units using the core literature, whereas another might emphasize teaching the writing process through literature. Teachers will select trainings based upon their needs and interests and share these new ideas at regulary scheduled team meetings. Teachers will recommend support activities and materials needed to implement the program to team coordinators. Examples might include: Guest authors, speakers, story telling sessions, poetry break and reader's theater. Appropriate materials might be: Related library books, supportive audio-visual aids and coordinated teaching units.

As teachers begin to implement the language arts-based program, peer coaching will provide support. Within each team, teachers will be invited to select colleagues to serve as their coaches. Coaches will make recommendations to their peers as the implementation process begins. As teachers feel ready, videotaping of lessons will be encouraged with follow-up critiques shared by teachers and coaches.

Characteristics of successful change, evident in research, will provide the foundation for this project. Through inservice, planning sessions and peer coaching, my plan will move teachers from awareness to implementation of a literature-based language arts program.

To begin the process of teacher change, inservice should be scheduled throught each school year. Staff development would be based on the needs of the school, as determined by teachers and administrators. School sites may want to focus their staff development, using newly adopted frameworks as the guide to the material to be addressed. This then, would provide teachers with a deeper understanding of the State's educational direction and supply them with a solid theoretical background needed to implement the frameworks into the classroom. The timeline included in this project is designed to be a management tool. Simply modified, it could be used to shape the school's direction in other curricular areas. As new frameworks are defined, teachers and administrators could work together to implement them at their own school sites.

DATE	ACTIVITY	RESPONSIBILITY
August 28, 1989	Day 1 Inservice Introduction to English Language Arts Framework	Principal
September 5,6, 1989	Textbook Orientation	Houghton-Mifflin Representative
September 21, 1989	Grade Level Meeting Choose Language Arts Emphasis	Team Level Language Arts Specialist
October 3, 1989	Sign Up For Teacher Partnerships	Teacher
October 6, 1989	Day 2 Inservice Peer Coaching	Categorical Program Specialist/Resource Teacher
November 10, 1989	Schedule First Classroom Observation	Categorical Program Specialist/Resource Teacher
December 1, 1989	Partnership Teams Meet Principal	Principal/Teacher
1990 - Ongoing	Language Arts Focus Area Inservices	Categorical Program Specialist
1990 - Ongoing	Peer Coaching Inservices	Categorical Program Specialist

INSERVICE MODULE

The inservice module is designed to provide site-level training for approximately twenty teachers. Ideally, day one of the inservice, Introduction to the English-Language Arts Framework, will be conducted prior to or at the beginning of the 1989 school year. The inservice incorporates teaching approaches embedded in the Framework and would provide participants with practive utilizing these new strategies. The techniques shared are supported by the research and are being used successfully in parts of Canada, Australia, New Zealand as well as many school districts in the United States. Integrating all aspects of language is supported by the research in the review of the literature. Students who might be left out of a traditional, basal, isolated skill approach classroom benefit when teachers establish productive, meaning-centered listening, speaking, reading and writing classrooms. A script which includes major concepts to be covered is presented, and supplementary materials to be used in the inservice are provided in the appendices.

In October, day two of the inservice will be given. The topic will be, "Establishing a Peer Assistance Plan for Language Arts." This inservice will provide teachers with an overview and will stress the benefits of establishing a peer coaching program for the school staff. Research data given in the inservice has been practiced throughout the nation. Studies involving both teachers and their students support teacher partnership programs. A narrative of the inservice is provided with supplementary materials in the appendices.

Day 1:

Introduction to the English-Language Arts Framework

This English-Language Arts inservice script will be given to teachers
in grades K-6. The goals are: 1.) to familiarize each teacher with
the new Framework, and 2.) to show teachers methods for integrating
instruction in oral language, listening, reading and writing.

Begin with an overview of the English-Language Arts Framework.
Emphasize what the new Framework provides, contrasting it to the old
Framework.

SCRIPT

Why Whole Language?

Typically, as educators we have taught to children's deficits, not to
their strengths because we tend to teach from part to the whole.
Oftentimes, letters, sounds and vocabulary are taught in isolation.
However, children's minds think globally first; we know that children
learn language in the following way:

1.   Immmersion - We must pour language into kids: Surround them with
print. Classrooms must be full of meaningful print like poems, charts,
stories, student works and labels.

2. <u>Demonstration</u> - All adults must model for students a love for language by writing and reading with them daily.

3. <u>High Expectations</u> - We believe all kids will learn to talk. Help students transfer that to reading and writing. Research shows that if kids are expected to be low achievers, they will be, and once they are placed in a low reading group they rarely move up.

4. <u>Student Responsibility</u> - Students need to take charge of their education, but as educators we need to focus positively on kids when they achieve. We need to communicate their gains.

5. <u>Approximation</u> - As children learn language, we encourage them. We reinforce each attempt. In reading and especially writing, we expect perfection from very young students. Allow freedom of mistakes - if the word makes sense, allow it. Encourage inventive spelling.

6. <u>Frequently Used</u> - Employ reading and writing skills as often as possible. Students learn to read by reading and to write by writing.

7. <u>Feedback</u> - Students should have feedback from many different sources. Teachers, parents, principals, librarians and even custodians can encourage students.

What Is A Whole Language Classroom?

1. Teacher - The teacher is the key. She has a child-centered classroom where students are allowed to be curious. She exudes a belief in children, and considers the unique background that each child brings to school.

2. Risk Taking - Create a non-threatening atmosphere: Students should feel secure in their own worth. Conduct open-ended discussions that encourage students to participate and grow.

3. Print - Your classroom should be highly literate. Stories, labels, signs and recordings are just a few ways in which teachers can develop print-saturated classrooms.

4. Process - Kids learn by doing. Skills should be explored as the need arises. Studies show that when there is a need to learn, retention is far greater.

5. Community Feeling - Value is placed on all individuals and their ideas. Students and teachers share their feelings and emotions and take time to care about each other, thus building a community.

These strategies are based on scientific research; they are not just the latest trend. Australia and Canada have used whole language techniques successfully for over eighteen years. These studies point

out that students achieve literacy when whole language techniques are coupled with high expectations.

How Is It Done In The Classroom?

There are four techniques that can be incorporated in whole language classrooms.

1. Brainstorming - This method is used throughout the day, not just during writing time. As no value judgements are made, this activity promotes divergent thinking, better listening skills, and oral language development in a risk taking environment. In addition, it can be used as a diagnostic tool by the teacher and the student.

2. Categorizing - Research shows that children learn best when they can link new information to something previously known. Categorizing allows kids to expand or alter their ideas. This method works especially well during discussions because it encourages children to question and challenge in a safe environment. This activity is very successful when done after brainstorming.

3. Shared Reading - This method is to be done by both students and teachers; however as students progress, they assume more of the reading. This activity develops a love of reading. It exposes students to a variety of books and authors. Students have fun with this activity because often they begin to chime in, repeat a chorus, or predict the story's outcome. They are highly involved with their own learning.

4. __Writing Patterns__ - Pattern exercises help students develop skills they will need in order to become successful writers. Students learn to use pattern frameworks. Poems, songs, and rhymes are just some of the patterns teachers can use. Remember to use familiar story patterns as well, like cumulative patterns, interlocking patterns, chronological patterns, and stories that deal with a main character.

Things To Do Everyday.

Have children write everyday in a variety of styles and in every subject. Have students read many books and authors. Oral readings provide students with the chance to develop self-expression. Chanting and singing give students a safe and fun way to participate in language. Sustained silent reading gives kids time to practice the skill. The major benefit of this program is that kids get to pick their own books and then read for enjoyment without having to report on what they have read.

Ways to Incorporate Whole Language

Following are ways in which you can build an enthusiastic language arts program.

1. __Sharing Books__ - For all ages this activity builds suspense; students can echo or repeat lines. Cross-age tutors work well here. Sharing ten books each week becomes over 300 titles in a year.

2. <u>Read to Your Kids</u> - Throughout the day, read to your students. You may want to put a note on the door stating that you are reading and do not want to be interrupted. This shows kids how much literature is valued by you.

3. <u>Storytelling</u> - This activity promotes the development of oral language; it develops critical thinking and is very motivational because students are active in the learning.

Supportive reading groups and reading each day for practice are activities which both support the Framework because they incorporate many of the stated objectives. Both methods can be used at all reading levels to develop a love of books.

Develop Thematic Units

When teachers find ways to integrate the curriculum their students will be highly motivated to learn. Educators should remember to keep a central theme, remembering to treat all students' ideas in an accepting way. While building on a student's previous knowledge, teachers should stay organized and present a variety of materials.
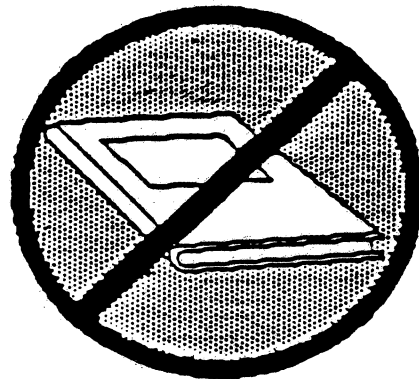
TRANSPARENCIES

DAY 1:

INTRODUCTION TO THE ENGLISH-LANGUAGE ARTS FRAMEWORK

FRAMEWORK-AT-A-GLANCE
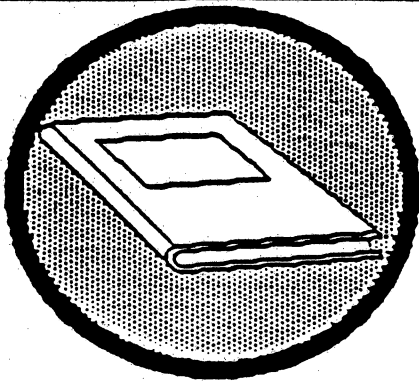
- A systematic K-12 program

- Fragmentation

- A program which attends to the stages of writing

- Attention to corrections only

- Oral language instruction

- Ignoring students' listening and speaking needs

- A phonics program kept simple and taught early

- A phonics program extending into the upper grades

- All teachers to require students to use their language

- Relegating language arts to reading and english teachers

FRAMEWORK-AT-A-GLANCE
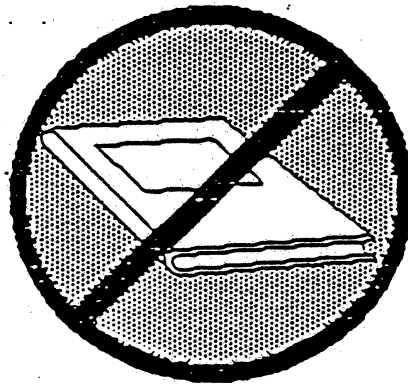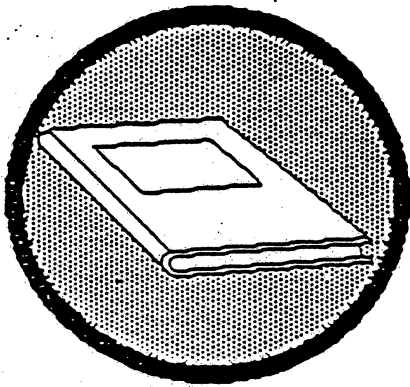
Literature-based programs for all students	Skill-based programs using unfocused narratives and worksheets
Attention to meaning and values	Sterile text on trivial subjects
Integrated instruction of listening, speaking, and writing	Instruction on one of the language arts at a time
Instruction requiring students to use higher order thinking skills	Low-level skills

FRAMEWORK-AT-A-GLANCE
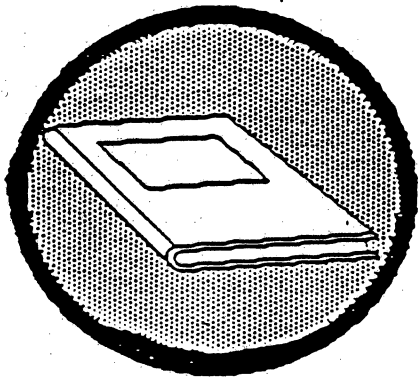
- Modeling effective use of the language arts

- Parents taking an active role

- Teacher preparation on content as well as methodology

- Assessment aligned with the recommended program
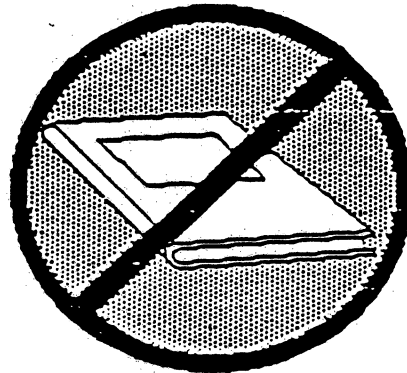
- Adults offering poor models

- Parents taking a passive role

- Preparation on methodology only

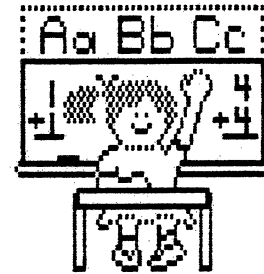- Assessment which emphasizes narrow skills

WHOLE LANGUAGE - WHY?

1. FITS WITH THE DEVELOPMENT OF KIDS.

2. LEARN GLOBALLY FIRST.

HOW DO CHILDREN LEARN TO TALK?

1. IMMERSION

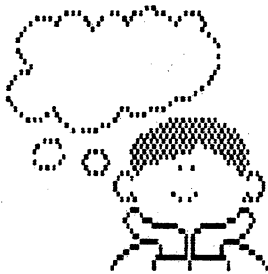2. DEMONSTRATION

3. HIGH EXPECTATIONS

4. STUDENT RESPONSIBILITY

5. APPROXIMATION

6. FREQUENTLY USED

7. FEEDBACK

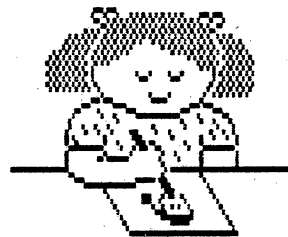# HOW IS IT DONE IN THE CLASSROOM?

BRAINSTORM IDEAS

SHARED READINGS

CATEGORIZE

WRITING PATTERNS

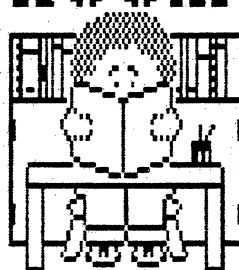# WHAT IS A WHOLE LANGUAGE CLASSROOM?

COMMITTED TEACHER

RISK TAKING/PRINT SATURATED ENVIRONMET

READING AS A PROCESS

COMMUNITY FEELING

WAYS TO INCORPORATE WHOLE LANGUAGE INTO YOUR CLASSROOM
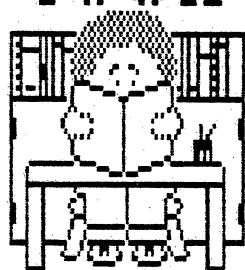
SHARING BOOKS

READING TO STUDENTS

STORYTELLING

SUPPORTIVE GROUPS

READING FOR PRACTICE

THINGS TO DO EVERYDAY

WRITE

READ ALOUD

CHANT/SING
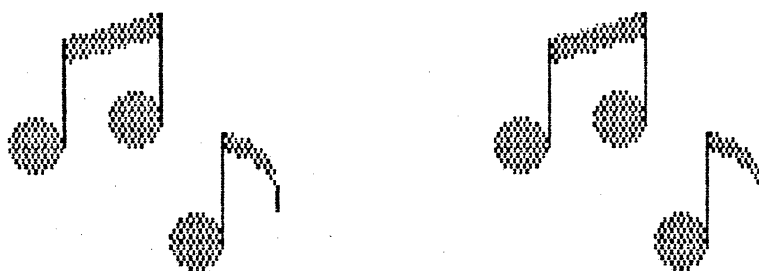
SUSTAINED SILENT READING

DEVELOP THEMATIC UNITS
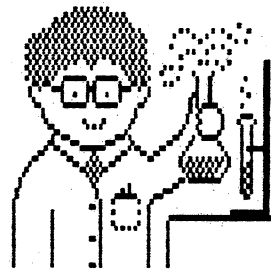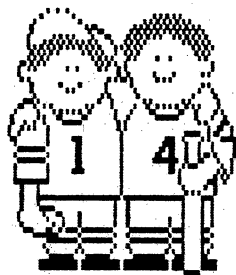
ADVANTAGES:

1. FLEXIBLE GROUPS

2. INTEGRATES CONTENT

3. CENTRAL GOAL CREATES MEANING

"THE GREAT WORKS OF
LITERATURE ARE GREAT
BECAUSE THEY
POWERFULLY TRANSMIT
SIGNIFICANT CULTURAL
AND ETHICAL IDEAS.
STUDENTS DESERVE A
CHANCE TO READ
THESE WORKS."

"FROM VISION TO REALITY, CALIFORNIA EDUCATIONAL REFORM ANNUAL
REPORT FOR 1987," CALIFORNIA STATE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION,
BILL HONIG, 1988.

APPLICATION ACTIVITIES

Afternoon Session

During the activities session, all teachers will read the short story, "Charles" by Shirley Jackson. The activities will mold strategies for getting "into," "through," and "beyond" the literature. These strategies could then be applied by teachers in their own classes, using many different pieces of literature.

Into

Before reading the story, prepare the group with this mind set: Think about the characteristics of your most mischievious student. List responses on chart paper. With a partner, speculate regarding what the story will be about. Have a spokesperson from each group share with the total group. Again, write their responses on the chart paper for all to see. Refer participants to a handout for other activities that could be used to create interest in a story.

Through

Ask participants to silently read different portions of the story that deal directly with the main character, Laurie. Have groups report on characteristics of the main character. Together, read portions that describe Laurie's mother, father and classroom teacher. Cluster ideas

about these characters. Go back to the beginning and read through the
story. Discuss the story sequence, then have each group role play one
segment of the story. Refer participants to the handout for other
activities.

Beyond

Have groups organize themselves in grade level groups, then distribute
the task cards. Explain that the groups will have approximately 45
minutes to complete their task card assignments. They will give an
oral report to the full group at the end of that time.

Task Card #1: Mural

Create a mural depicting the story sequence. Include details from the
story in visual representation. Each group member will provide a
written synopsis for one section of the story sequence. In the last
section each group member will predict what might have happened next in
the story if the author had continued.

Task Card #2: Point of View

Retell the story from the teacher's point of view. Each member of the
group will role play characters in the story. Other characters may be
added. The story should follow the same sequence although the outcome
may vary slightly.

Task Card #3:   Panel Discussion

As a group decide on two or three issues or problems in the story.
Next, divide into two subgroups to address both sides of the issue or
problem posed in the story. Teams may use charts or timelines to
illustrate their points. One member will serve as the timekeeper.
Practice and present your strongest debate to the full group.

Task Card #4:   Reader's Theater

As a group, list characters in the story. Assign a narrator. Divide
the text into sections and, working with a partner, review the story,
writing down the characters'/narrators lines. Put the Reader's theater
script on an overhead transparency for total group sharing. Each
member resumes his role during the presentation.

Task Card #5:   Character Profile

Members may work together as a total group or in pairs. The group
picks a familiar character from a story familiar to all then compares
and contrasts characterisctics of each. A chart or diagram should be
made for sharing with the total group.

After groups have read through the task cards, needed materials can be
obtained. As groups are working, circulate, giving assistance and
encouraging participants to seek assistance from one another. Alert

participants about the time remaining. After 45 minutes, come together as a total group to share outcomes.

Discuss the benefits of working together in teams, pointing out the benefits to students. Group grades or a single evaluation is given.

ALTERNATIVE ACTIVITIES FOR INSERVICE

Into

Films

Filmstrips

Music

Guest Speakers

"Grab" or "Guess" bags

Choral Reading of text portions

Chant text portions

Read aloud portions of the story

For longer or more complex stories, an overview or synopsis could be

provided for students.

Vocabulary

Try to use listed new vocabulary words in the classroom throughout the

day. Challenge students to do the same.

Keep a classroom vocabulary chart book.

Include new vocabulary in daily writing.

Develop "vocabulary teams", each team being responsible for words.

Each team would then report back to the total group using the

vocabulary word correctly ibn a sentence.

Create individual vocabulary notebooks.

Through

Student keeps a response journal or a literature reading log, writing down feelings, questions, words or descriptive passages, unfamiliar words, words liked/disliked.

Share important questions with total group for discussion of meaning.

Create graphic organizers charting the character's action.

Orally read dramatic portions of the story.

Look for descriptive passages.

Summarize (orally, written) chapters.

Write down reactions to literature as it is read to them.

Write about what is read.

Beyond

Create puppets

Create flannel board stories

Illustrate - sections, chapters, stanzas, acts

Create charts, maps

Video tape a reinactment of story sections

Dioramas

Make a Big Book

Conduct interviews

Prepare oral presentations

Conduct mock trials

Extended writings

Research projects related to topics

Compare or contrast story, characters, setting, plot

Author studies

Discussion topics

Create book jackets that promote books

Retell story for younger student

Day 2:

Introduction to establishing a peer assistance plan for language arts

This peer assistance inservice is designed to help teachers in grades
K-6 implement The English-Language Arts Framework through peer
coaching. The goals of this inservice are: 1.) to familiarize the
school staff with the research data that supports peer coaching and
2.) show the benefits of establishing such a program early in the first
quarter of the 1989 school year.

Throughout the inservice, examples will be given that support the
Framework. Participants will be asked to interact, share, and confer
with each other. At the conclusion of the workshop each teacher will
have several ways in which to involve students in cooperative groups to
implement Framework concepts. They will also have a deeper
understanding about the benefits of working with and coaching their
colleagues.

SCRIPT

Natural Sharing

If you ask a group of teachers where they got a new teaching idea or
method, often the response is, "...from another teacher." That is

because typically teachers share both formally and informally. David and Roger Johnson, experts on cooperative learning strategies, point out that, due to this tendency, teachers benefit from an organized teacher-buddy system which provides on-the-job training.

As the state embraces the reformed curriculum described in the English-Language Arts Framework, a critical eye is focused on the teacher. School districts are looking for methods that improve instruction. Many schools across the nation are already implementing teacher partnerships. The Institute for Research on Teaching (I.R.T.) at Michigan State University notes that when it's initial research began on peer coaching some thirteen years ago, there were many who doubted it would work or have any value. Now, because research results are optimistic, the strategy is viewed as having great potential. It is clear that teachers, as well as their students, benefit from cooperative learning. Peer coaching is a way to capitalize and organize the process that often happens naturally within the school setting.

Peer Coaching

1. Evidence supports the belief that peer coaching enhances teacher performance so student achievement also improves. Many districts are investigating the idea of teachers teaming for a common goal. Research is also clear that when teachers learn a new strategy at a workshop, greater transfer is attained if that strategy is not only practiced,

but feedback on the lesson is provided to the teacher resulting in an opportunity to stretch her teaching.

2. The Mentor Program has been using a form of peer coaching in California since 1983. A focus of the Mentor Program is to encourage highly qualified teachers to coach beginning or struggling teachers. While this is not a reciprocal program, it does give teachers the opportunity to practice a lesson then receive feedback on that lesson, so understanding for the trainee goes much deeper.

3. Professional Growth is cited as one of the major benefits of peer coaching. Bored, unmotivated teachers blossom when they look to peers for new ideas or teaching methods. Teachers that are involved in a partnership situation report self-satisfaction and improved self-esteem. Because peer coaching is designed to be non-threatening, districts report that teachers involved in these programs improve their teaching performances.

Peer Coaching: What Makes It Successful?

1. Common to many of the projects that involve teacher partnerships is the commitment that participation must be voluntary.

2. These projects all had support from school site and district level administrators. Funds were provided to support the program with

additional materials or with substitutes to give team teachers time to discuss, plan and evaluate their programs.

3. Successful programs also note that while peer coaching can take place at every school, time must be allowed so a program can evolve naturally, therefore meeting the needs of individuals and the full staff.

Achievement:

1. Research supports the hypothesis that students whose teachers are receiving coaching achieve more in classrooms and on standardized tests.

2. Expanded Repertoire - Because you are part of a team observing others teach, you are exposed to alternative techniques in the classroom. In teaching partnerships you are forced to be more focused on the lessons, procedures, organization of instruction, and students' reactions. During the pre-conference teachers and observers clarify all aspects of the lessons. Improved performance is the result.

3. Self-Esteem - Intellectual and social involvement with peers promotes a positive self-image for teachers. A feeling of self-satisfaction is common. Many teachers involved in teacher partnerships state that it is a program that is anti-burnout: it puts

excitement back into their teaching. The feeling of isolation was replaced with support.

4. Communication between staff members increases. Peer coaching promotes awareness that staff members are, in fact, experts in many areas and can be used as such.

Evaluating Your Peers
_____

In coaching teams, participants work together to establish, plan and implement their lessons. It is important to feel comfortable with your partner. Peer coaching is confidential: administrators are not involved in the evaluation or feedback on lessons.

1. Establishing Trust - Time for planning new ideas must be supported by district and school site administrators. Teachers deciding and discussing curricular ideas together is essential to team-building. Because peer coaching focuses on mirroring the lesson more than evaluation, it becomes a safe place to teach, fail, revise then teach again. As with our students, another important element of peer coaching is to build on each others' strengths.

2. Planning For Coaching - A pre-meeting is held so partners can set goals and objectives for the lesson. During this meeting teachers discuss strategies and clarify the area (s) on which the observer will focus.

3. Observation - As partners gather data, it becomes important to be objective. Report student performance as it relates to pre-meeting goals. Mirroring the lesson for your partner helps to build the trust necessary for successful coaching.
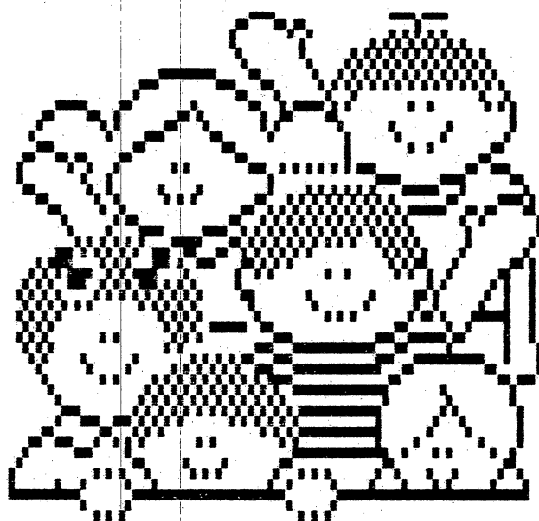
4. Post Lesson Conference - Again provide your partner with an image of the lesson by recalling data about teacher and student performances. Together, compare what actually happened to goals that were set in the pre-meeting.

TRANSPARENCIES

DAY 2:

ESTABLISHING A PEER ASSISTANCE PLAN FOR LANGUAGE ARTS

"NONE OF US IS AS SMART AS ALL OF US."

DAVID AND ROGER JOHNSON
ON
COOPERATIVE LEARNING

"SHARING SUCCESSES AS WELL AS PROBLEMS BECAME A STANDARD ACTIVITY AS MEMBERS ENCOURAGED AND REINFORCED ONE ANOTHER'S GROWTH."

"VOLUNTARY COLLEGIAL SUPPORT GROUPS FOR TEACHERS,"
EDUCATIONAL LEADERSHIP, MARY PAQUETTE, 1987.

"GOOD, CONSTRUCTIVE, HELPFUL COMMITTED SUPPORT CAN COME FROM PEERS AND SUBORDINATES AS WELL AS FROM SUPERIORS. AND IN MANY WAYS IT'S BETTER COMING FROM PEERS THAN FROM ANYONE ELSE."

"ON COOPERATION IN SCHOOLS: A CONVERSATION WITH DAVID & ROGER JOHNSON," EDUCATIONAL LEADERSHIP, DAVID JOHNSON, 1987.

"SOME TIME SHOULD BE RESERVED FOR TEAM-DEVELOPED ENRICHMENT UNITS, WHICH REFLECT THE SPECIAL KNOWLEDGE AND INTERESTS OF TEACHERS AND EXTEND THE SCOPE OF THE DISTRICT GUIDE IN EXCITING WAYS."

"COOPERATIVE PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT: PEER-CENTERED OPTIONS FOR TEACHER GROWTH," EDUCATIONAL LEADERSHIP, ALAN GLATTHORN, 1987.

REGARDING COLLABORATION: "STUDENTS BUILD ON THEIR OWN CAPABILITIES BY LEARNING FROM EACH OTHER, EXCEEDING WHAT EACH MIGHT ACCOMPLISH ALONE."

OCTOBER 21, 1988 PROGRAM ADVISORY FROM JAMES R. SMITH.

PEER COACHING MODULE

In the fall, during the first year of implementation, volunteers from each grade level will be invited to sign up for teacher partnerships. As incentives for new teachers, professional hours toward a full credential will be offered. Established teachers will receive salary credits for each quarter that they are involved in the program. A third option is to pay the participants extra duty pay for hours spent implementing the teacher partnership program.

At grade level team meetings, teacher partners will begin using strategies presented in the inservice. A schedule of classroom observations consisting of pre and post lesson conferences would be made each school quarter. The first observation would begin by November. Follow-up lessons would be scheduled every two weeks following. As participants become comfortable, video taping of lessons would be offered. These videos would help teacher partners in discussing the observed lessons. With permission, a video library arranged by topic will be started in the staff lounge. These videos could be checked out by other partnership teams and shown at team level or staff meetings for specific examples.

Roving substitutes will be written into the school's base budget to provide release time for participating teachers.

Site administrators will not be involved in the evaluation of lessons but will be informed of progress or insights made with each partnership through short quarterly meetings. Teacher partnerships might also prepare short presentations for bi-monthly grade level meetings or for full staff meetings. These presentations will focus on the growth made by the teacher, observer, and the students. Successful lessons might also be outlined or quickly modeled. Research indicates that often after peer coaching models are started in schools, teachers become interested and want to participate.

Funds for inservices will be allocated for quarterly peer coaching inservices. Those teachers that are interested mid-year may attend. Newly formed partnerships will be added to substitute schedules each teaching quarter.

TEAM LEVEL MEETINGS MODULE

Teachers who are involved in decision making clearly are more interested and motivated. The grade level teams will involve personnel in deciding language arts emphasis for each year. An interested staff member will be appointed as the team's language arts specialist. Her job will be to compile resources for her teammates who will also be scheduled to attend additional inservices. This training will then be shared shcool-wide.

Teachers will also choose an area of interest on which to focus and they will gather information to share with their teammates. For example, thematic units might be developed from the core or extended reading lists, and activities related to the writing process, theater, puppetry, or fine arts might be chosen. Teachers will be able to attend workshps that pertain to their areas of interest. As always, they will be expected to share information given during the workshop with fellow teachers. At times, this will require cross grade level team coordination and collaboration. This intense involvement promises to build joint commitment to the program.

By January 1990, established K-1, 2-3, and 4-6 grade level meetings will include discussions and sharing of peer coached lessons. Teachers involved in a coaching partnership will bring in strategy lessons with student work examples when possible. As the grade level meetings

continue, highlighting the strategies used in teacher partnerships,
other interested teachers will be added to the established program.

CONCLUSION

As school districts and educators prepare their students to meet today's challenges, research on applied strategies, active learning, cooperative learning, motivation and peer coaching will continue to be evaluated closely. However, the leadership from the state department is clear; California's core curriculum will be provided to all students. The frameworks in English-Language Arts and History/Social Sciences mandate that educators break from tradition, reform our classrooms. We are charged to stimulate the minds of all of our students: To teach them to defy, summon, question and investigate.

California is faced with making major educational reform. With new curriculum guidelines being adopted each year, school sites must act now to develop models for implementing the changes. My project offers such a framework: One that can be used for the implementation of new cirrucula in history/social sciences and visual and performing arts as well. This proposal is designed to help facilitate schools' and classroom teachers' progress toward implementstion of a language arts program which uses a meaning-centered whole language approach. The teaching strategies presented build on collegial support at the school site. It relieves the pain of change by involving teachers in their professional development and in appropriate decision making activities. This site management approach also promotes leadership by teachers.

To better prepare students for the real world, educators need to begin early to expose children to various cultures, life-styles, economic situations and belief systems. Teachers can empower all students by setting high expectations, using rigorous teaching methods, and focusing on student centered lessons. Educators can provide equal opportunities for their students by assigning group projects, collaboration activities, study groups, and discussion teams. Applied in conjunction with a sound curriculum framework, I believe these methods will prepare all students to meet the challenges of their futures.

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