

Building Capacity for Effective Literacy Instruction
Dr. Frank Serafini
www.frankserafini.com

The quality of the Classroom Teacher not the Instructional Program is the primary variable in determining the effectiveness of a comprehensive literacy framework.

No significant changes in Instructional Practices will occur until a Parallel Development in Theoretical Understandings takes place.

A Preferred Vision

Effective Teaching
Effective Learning Communities
Effective Literacy Instruction
Effective Professional Development

Developing a Preferred Vision of:

An Imagined Future
A Sense of What One's Objectives Are
Anticipate Possibilities
Judgments about what is worthwhile
Critically examine current practices based on one's expectations for the future.

Effective Teachers...

Have a rich and flexible knowledge of the content being taught. (Content)
Understand how students develop ideas and concepts. (Student Learning)
Are able to enact effective instructional practices. (Pedagogical Knowledge)
Focus on the role of language during instruction and discussions. (Discourse)
Use flexible groupings to address individual students' needs. (Multiple Contexts)
Embed instruction in authentic literacy tasks and environments. (Authenticity)
Provide access to a wide variety of quality resources. (Access)
Utilize a variety of assessments to understand students' abilities. (Inquire)
Achieve higher levels of student involvement. (Engagement)
Create effective classroom environments for learning. (Community)
Conduct inquiry into one's teaching. (Reflective Practitioners)

Reflective Practitioners

Reflect IN and ON Practice
Involve Themselves in Peer Observation & Collaboration
Are Critical Consumers of Research and Resources
Question Traditional Practices
Are More Concerned with "Why" not "How"
Gather evidence of teaching effectiveness

A Preferred Vision
Effective Learning Communities
Effective Learning Communities
Intellectually Challenging
Coherent - Have "Direction"
On-Going
Responsive to Teachers' Needs, Skills & Resources
Include Multiple Voices

3 Principles of Effective Learning Communities

Access & Opportunity

Access to research-based materials, readings, other teachers, quality resources and texts

Time to plan for, reflect on, and enact new instructional practices

Opportunity to expand one's content knowledge base

Time to talk with other teachers in constructive settings

Choice & Ownership

Choices are available for content, sessions, book studies, conferences

Voice - teachers are not treated as passive recipients of knowledge

Invitations to share what teachers know

Allowed to develop one's teaching and interests, and enact instructional practices with some degree of autonomy

Response & Reflection

Teachers observe each other and provide response (Dialogue)

Teachers are encouraged to question their teaching (Knowledgeable Uncertainty)

Opportunities to step back and reflect on one's teaching (Distance)

Dimensions of Teacher Expertise

Pedagogical Knowledge

Content Knowledge

Theoretical Knowledge

Classroom Community

Classroom Based Assessment

Instructional Resources

Developing Pedagogical Knowledge

Demonstrations

Creates Space for Reflection and Discussion

Capable teachers showing what effective practices looks like

Done in context of similar classrooms

A WAY to do things, not always THE WAY

Opportunities for discussing what is being demonstrated

Learning Experiences

Time for Teachers to work collaboratively through instructional decisions in context of classroom

Try this idea and come back to Discuss teaching practices

Optimal Level of Support and Challenge

Support teachers taking steps into new practices

What is the ONE thing the teacher could try on their own next

Professional Voices

Variety of Research and Theoretical Perspectives

Professional Conferences

Professional Readings

Teacher Study Groups

Developing Content Knowledge

Course Work

Content Area Readings

Hands On Experiences

Teacher Study Groups

Theoretical Knowledge

Understands multiple theoretical perspectives for interpreting texts.

Understands learning theories and their implications for instruction.

Uses theory to drive instruction.

Reads within educational literature and outside in other areas (philosophy ect.).

Sees the interconnectedness across academic disciplines.

Classroom Community

The Best Classroom Management Program is an Engaging Curriculum!

Involve Students in the Life and Creation of the Classroom Procedures, Rules and Responsibilities.

Establish Clear, Obtainable, Transparent Procedures and Expectations

Develop a Basic Respect Among Students even During Times of Intellectual Challenge and Disagreement

Focus on the Language Used During Discussions and Instruction

Classroom Based Assessment

A variety of assessment instruments and procedures for understanding learners.

Supports learners and learning, not just reporting and comparing.

Focuses on needs and abilities, not deficits.

Used to drive curriculum and instructional decisions.

Helps make students' abilities visible.

Is on-going, not one day snapshot.

Utilizes teacher as knowledgeable observer.

Instructional Resources

Extensive knowledge of children's and young adult literature.
Draws upon multimodal and multigenre texts and visual images.
Is a critical consumer of instructional resources and programs.
Is the decision-maker, not program deliverer.
Draws upon the resources of students' lives and experiences.

My Preferred Vision for Professional Development

Developing a Preferred Vision
On-Going Inquiry and Development
Sharing Vision

Professional Development

Define and Articulate Effective Literacy Instructional Practices
See Effective Literacy Instructional Practices in Action in Classrooms
Try New Instructional Practices on Own
Reflect on New Instructional Practices
Talk with Others about Practices
Read Professional Voices on Instruction
Develop a Preferred Vision

Developing Vision

Summer Workshops
Presentations of New Information
Get Conversations Started
Focused Inquiry on Teaching Practices
Teachers Select Area of Inquiry
Professional Readings - Other Voices
Developing Year Long Planning - Units of Study
Organizing / Gathering Resources

On-Going Inquiry

Teacher Research Projects
Teacher Book Club - Professional Voices
Peer Observations
On-Line Support - Blogs, Discussion Groups, Website Resources, Video
Conferencing, Podcasts
Demonstrations in Classrooms
Reflection Opportunities
Peer Collaboration

Sharing Vision

Teacher presentations at conferences
Published writings
Teacher-Led staff development workshops
Establishing a community of Reflective Teachers
Consistency without Prescription

Projects of Possibility

Demonstrations and records of quality literacy instruction.
Creates space for reflection and discussion.
Not for Imitation, rather Contemplation
Focus on what children can do given the opportunity.
Focus on what teachers can do given the opportunity.

Where Do We Begin ?

Provide Opportunities for Dialogue & Collaboration (peer visitation / study groups)
Sharing & Inquiry Request Charts
Go With the “Goers” - The Choir is Listening
Ask “Why do you do what you do?”
Learn to Gently “Up the Ante”
Provide Response (2 ★ & a Wish)
Read, Discuss, & Question Research
Demonstrate, Demonstrate & Demonstrate

Email: frank@frankserafini.com
Literacy Website: www.frankserafini.com