

Building Capacity for literacy education
Dr. Frank Serafini
Professor - Arizona State University
www.frankserafini.com

Building Capacity (School Level):

Primary Assertion #1

Focus on Building Capacity not on Changing Teachers

Primary Assertion #2

Change without Vision is Chaos / Vision without Change is Martyrdom

Primary Assertion #3

There is a difference between teachers that have taught for twenty years and teachers that have taught the same year twenty times.

Program Operator

Focus is on delivering externally created lessons correctly based on external criteria.
Focus is on correctness in teaching, not effectiveness in learning.
Procedures are more important than being responsive to needs of children.

Thoughtful Practitioner

Focus is on developing effective lessons and experiences to support students in one's class.
Focus in on student learning, not how well the direct lessons go.
Being responsive to the needs of students is more important than following procedures.

What do Teachers need to be successful?

Resources

Effective Resources to support teaching and learning.
Research-Based resources that have proven records for being effective.
Wide variety of resources to support wide range of students' needs, interests and abilities.

Preferred vision

The ability to Critically Examine current practices based on one's Expectations for the future.
Developing a Sense of What Teaching and Learning can be.
Fostering the desire to Expand one's Knowledge and Teaching abilities.

Relationships

Teaching students anything requires developing a positive relationship with them first.
Teachers need to develop effective partnerships with parents and guardians to support student learning.
Teachers work better with administrators and staff that they feel support their work as teachers.

Membership in Learning Communities

Intellectually Challenging

Open to Topics Based on the needs of the students

Teachers as Consumers and Producers of Knowledge

Knowledgeable Uncertainty

Knowledge Held Tentatively

Experience Without Stagnation

Willingness to Question One's Beliefs

3 Ideas to start (School Level)

1. Establish non-negotiables
2. Take the long view
3. Go with the "goers"

Building Capacity (Individual Level):

Teaching / Texts / Talk / Tasks

Teaching: How, and in What Contexts, Do We Teach Reading?

We Demonstrate what it Means to Read Proficiently through the Expectations we set and the Instructional Practices enacted in our classrooms.

Reading Comprehension is...

An orchestration of the following processes:

- 1) *Navigating Textual Elements*: including language, design features, & visual images
- 2) *Generating Meanings*: using available information to make sense of what is read
- 3) *Articulating & Representing Meanings*: making one's meanings visible for consideration in a community of readers

Effective lessons in Comprehension

Retain an Expanded Definition of what it means to comprehend

Are Focused Demonstrations of literate behaviors

Build upon the Knowledge and Prior Experiences of readers

Call Conscious Attention to what successful readers do

Are based on a Gradual Release of Responsibility Model

Assertion: The strategies readers utilize when reading are directly related to the texts they are reading and why they are reading them.

So...Comprehension Instruction Must Be:

- **Contextualized**
- **Focused**
- **Obvious**
- **Connected**
- **In Service of Meaning**

Texts: What Do We Need to Know about What Children Read?

From Print-Based to Digital Texts

From Monomodal to Multimodal Texts

From Static to Interactive Texts

Navigating Visual Design Elements

- Speech Bubbles
- Thought Bubbles
- UpFixes
- Impact Stars
- Motion Lines

Reading new Texts

The texts readers encounter in today's society include more images and design features than ever.

We need to pay attention to all the systems of meaning available in the texts children read.

We need to develop vocabularies to talk about things beyond the written language of a text.

Talk: What Types of Classroom Talk Support Learning and Thinking?

Language is the Primary Tool used for Teaching and Learning.

Creates Opportunities for Sharing Ideas & Interpretations.

It is the Foundation for the Reading Workshop.

How we Talk to Children has as much to do with Teaching and Learning as the Content of Our Lessons!

The Traditional Script: Initiate-Respond-Evaluate

Three traditional Teacher "moves"

The Probe

The Tilt

The Nod

Assertions about talk

- The type of talk used in classrooms by teachers is closely associated with the theory of learning espoused (Transmission = Lecture).
- Most classroom talk focuses on literal recall, not critical thinking.
- Teachers need to do more than ask questions!
- Setting Expectations for Discussions is essential.

Setting Expectations for Talking

- Honestly Reported
- Listening Well & Thinking is As Important As Talking Well
- Address Other Students as Well as the Teacher
- Half Baked Ideas are Accepted and Encouraged

Tasks: What Kinds of Things Should We Make Children Do in the Name of Reading?

Reading Tasks

- **Think:** Analyzing & Commenting
- **Talk:** Whole Class, Small Group & One-on-One Discussions
- **Write:** Reader Response Notebooks
- **Write & Share:** Book Reviews
- **Write & Share:** Goodreads (Social Media)
- **Research:** Author Websites, Genres etc.
- **Art & Drama:** Sketch to Stretch, Improv

Criteria for Responding to Texts

- **Relationship to Literature:** Is there a strong connection between the task or activity and the reading or text?
- **Time Ratio:** Is the amount of time to complete the task greater than the time to it takes to read the text?
- **Purpose:** Does the activity become an end in itself?
- **Control:** Do students have any choice in the activity?
- **Relevance:** Does this activity remind you of anything that occurs in the “real” world?
- **Promotes Critical Thinking:** How does this activity promote critical thinking about texts and the world?

3 Big Ideas

- Building a **Community of Readers** has more to do with teaching reading than any lessons we can design.
- We would be better reading teachers if we worked on being **Better Readers**, not just better teachers.
- When children are **Bored and Confused**, it's because sometimes we can be boring and confusing.