



The Teacher Center of Broome County
Teacher Study Group Grant Award

2014

FINAL REPORT DUE BY APRIL 7, 2014
DOCUMENT PROCESSES AND OUTCOMES

STUDY GROUP TOPIC: Kindergarten Literacy

List of group members: Vanessa Baker, Adrienne Knowles-Colsten, Donna Murray, and Amy Rigo

The final report must be word-processed and submitted both in print and through e-mail using this form. Send print copy Teacher Center @ WSKG, BOCES Mail Drop #22 and e-mail file to btct@btbooces.org. This report will be posted on the Teacher Center web page at <http://teachercenter.info>.

Describe the initial goal of the group noting any adjustments that had to be made as time passed.

The initial goal of our book study was to read *The Common Core: Teaching K-5 Students to Meet the Reading Standards* by Maureen McLaughlin and Brenda Overturf to learn new strategies and to gain ideas from text and topic discussions to apply with our kindergarten students to help them meet the Common Core Reading Standards. We particularly targeted the standard skills of key ideas and details, integrating knowledge and responding to literature and informational text. Our group of teachers works on a daily basis with a common group of students. We wanted to gain similar insight and be able to discuss and learn from the text, as well as from one another. Our goal was to become more comfortable and efficient with teaching the Reading standards.

While our initial goal was covered, the text did a good job helping to go beyond just kindergarten students to help generate strategies for all elementary grade levels, as the text broke down the standards and helped to show how they build on one another. This allowed us to talk meaningfully about the connection of the Reading

standards across grade levels as well as ways in which to make the standards the most appropriate for our younger Kindergarten students.

Describe the ACTION PLAN that the group followed.

When we submitted our application we had created a schedule for meeting dates and an agenda for chapters to read and discuss within each meeting, with a designated weekly group leader to facilitate discussion. This plan worked well for our group- it gave us focus and helped to breakdown the readings into manageable chunks. At our weekly meetings we discussed those readings and generated ideas for lesson plans, classroom strategies, as well as to talk through concerns with implementation.

Describe how the action plan was implemented.

Our study group read assigned chapters weekly then met to discuss the chapters, create summaries that included lesson ideas to implement, and talked about specific standards and skills to target for standard mastery. The book facilitated a lot of meaningful discussion that helped to change our teaching and ultimately improve our students' performance. Each week a different group member facilitated the meetings discussions which helped to offer different perspectives on the reading. The text made it easy to find a strategy or two to practice implementing during that week's reading assignment and discussion. By adding one or two new strategies each week, we were able to easily manage, develop and implement many new tools to use to help promote learning in our students across all of the Common Core reading standards.

Evaluate the impact of the study group effort on teacher/student performance. How has this study group changed you as a teacher? Do you anticipate that any of your teaching practices will have changed?

Our discussions helped to generate practical strategies to implement. As a result of selecting meaningful strategies we did see growth in our student performance. Through new strategies we were able to help encourage more meaningful thinking and analysis about reading so that the students would answer questions with more detail, apply higher thinking skills (such as predicting) and find ways in which to meaningfully relate the story to their life.

At the start of our book study the kindergarten students were answering text questions related to our standards scoring a 3 out of 7, by the end of the book study and implementing strategies our students on average are answering 5 out of 7 questions accurately.

The process of reading and applying a new text as a group helped to promote professional growth. We are more familiar with the reading standards and our teaching is more deliberate. By studying the reading standards we are much more comfortable with the information, and are able to develop lessons that are more appropriate for our students. Continuous thinking and planning amongst colleagues will easily continue so as to best implement the ELA standards with our students. The book study process as a whole helped each one of us professionals to think more deeply about the kinds of questions we are asking, and activities the students are participating in to help promote higher level skills that are the basis for the Common Core reading standards.

What evidence do you expect to see of student achievement improving as a result of your participating in this study group?

We expect to see more meaningful discussions occur between students as well as teacher discussions with more focus around ELA topics. We anticipate that as a result of the book study and the new strategies we have applied that our kindergarten students will have a deeper level of understanding of the structure of narrative and informational texts.

As indicated by our data discussed above in the performance section, our student performance has increased from an average of 3 out of 7 to 5 out of 7 in questions that require students to identify key ideas and details, integrate knowledge, and respond to literature and phonological awareness skills. The students are now better able to recall key story details, vocabulary, and sequence while also demonstrating skills of thinking beyond the text by being able to meaningfully tie their experiences to their reading. We continue to anticipate a greater independence and confidence, as well as student responsibility to take on greater tasks.

What evidence is there that the goals of the study group has/has not been met?

We have as educators gained a great deal of information in effective ways (reading, sharing, and discussing) to implement the Reading standards. We have seen growth in our kindergarten student reading skills since the beginning of our book study process. Student running records show improvements in understanding in within the text and beyond the text questions. Students have responded positively to new strategies and by implementing classroom strategies to help hone in on the

Common Core reading standard skills we have seen students refer to the text more to answer questions, have seen an increase in the students' abilities to meaningfully integrate their life experiences to the books, and with support have been able to participate in conversations about the text; increasing their comments while still keeping them tied to the reading.

Comment on the value of the study group process? Did it work for you?

We believe this study group was an effective way to learn more about the reading standards, everyone gained information from the reading and discussion of our text. Our group worked well together, we selected a text that was informative and conducive to discussion which helped to improve our process. We were able to brainstorm strategies and talk through our implementation concerns. Overall the process helped to learn in detail about the Common Core Reading Standards, gave us the opportunity to break down the skills within each standard to make teaching our students these skills more manageable and meaningful. All of us agree that the book study process was beneficial and would participate again.

How can we make this study group program better?

We appreciated the book study process, the only suggestion we would have would be to make the weekly paperwork be submitted electronically to help keep it a little more manageable and focused on the reading and application process.

A final report is due two weeks after the last meeting or by **April 7, 2014**, whichever date is first. The report must be typed and double-spaced using the provided form. One copy must be submitted in print and the file must be submitted through e-mail to bctc@btbooces.org. Return to the Teacher Center (Mail Drop #22), 601 Gates Rd., Vestal, NY