



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: Common Core State Standards

List of group members: Sharon Meade, Maureen Mattimore, Angela Panigrosso, Brianna Moreno, Kim Bogart, and Diane Zunic

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 btcc@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 this study group was to improve student achievement and growth by studying the Common Core State Standards (CCSS) for Literacy. We wanted to address the need to expand our knowledge and understand how the CCSS and 21st Century skills play a role in improving education. We felt that through a book study, professional development training, as well as time to collaborate and discuss our practice would be a wonderful way of attaining our goal. In addition we hoped to explore how these standards apply to all our subject areas which varied from Reading, Language Arts, Humanities, and Special Education. Throughout the exploration and discussion of this book we were able to look at the standards in great detail and develop a better understanding of how students must learn to read, write, speak, listen, and use language effectively in all content areas. As we read this book we were able to interpret and discuss each of the different standards as well as the Framework for 21st Century Learning. Although the book we selected did not have the format or the strategy content of what we had expected, we were able to benefit from the explanations and various versions of the standards as they applied to different content areas. As a result of our discussions and the book, we were able to share supportive strategies/techniques as they applied to each of our content areas. It was beneficial to do this prior to implementing aligned strategies/techniques that may have been new to us. After implementation we then had the opportunity to return to our study group and discuss the results. Overall, the study group allowed us to create a collaborative culture to further develop our teaching practices by learning together, trying new techniques, and examining the outcomes.

Describe the ACTION PLAN that the group followed.

1. Read the book, The Common Core Companion: Standards Decoded, Grades 6-8 by James Robert-Burke.
2. Discuss the content of the book and how it applies to teaching the Common Core Standards in ELA, Literacy, and Humanities courses
3. Decide as a group which tips/strategies from the book to implement within the classroom.
4. Implement the strategies, discuss, and analyze the results of implementing the strategies
5. Share our experiences of implementing knowledge gained from the book into our practice.
6. Have a district Curriculum Specialist, Laura Zanrucha, come and speak to the group about the Common Core and train the group on Common Core strategies.
7. Implement what is learned from the training with the Curriculum Specialist into our practice and meet to discuss our experiences.

Describe how the action plan was implemented.

Our group did an exceptional job in regards to meeting the action plan we established. We initially met to address logistics of our study group by establishing group norms, reviewing and discussing our goals and action plan for our study group. We then made a plan to read the book, The Common Core Companion: Standards Decoded, Grades 6-8 by James Robert-Burke. After completing our weekly readings, we would meet to reflect on the reading and share our own expertise and findings for each standard. Our discussions included the content of the book in great detail and how it applied to teaching to the CCSS in each of the courses we teach. As we studied the suggested strategies for each standard, we collaboratively decided which ones we would utilize within our content areas. We implemented our selected strategies between each meeting and reflected on how these strategies worked during our meetings. The meetings allowed us to assess, analyze, and reflect upon our implementation. If something didn't work in one content area, we discussed it and modified it to try again with our students and found improvements and success in doing so. We then had our district Curriculum Specialist, Laura Zanrucha; share her expertise on the Common Core as well as 21st Century Skills. This additional professional development allowed us to have access to more supportive resources for the CCSS we could apply to our instruction in the various subject areas we teach.

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?

This study group has definitely been eye opening to us all. As the Common Core is new, we continue to do our best to help students learn a rigorous curriculum with more success. As teachers, this study group has increased our confidence level as we apply the various standards to our instruction. In addition it had provided us with access to some amazing strategies to implement in an effort to help all of our students reach their maximum potential. We discovered various tips and strategies from the book that we could apply to our teaching practices and instructional approach. We also identified and recognized a variety of techniques mentioned in the book that we had already been implementing. The professional development from this study group reaffirmed our confidence in the efforts we had made prior to the study group and created the confidence we needed to try new strategies to further support the CCSS. Our increased understanding of the CCSS has improved our teaching practices. By better aligning our instruction to the standards we were able to see the benefits as we increased the potential learning of our students. Overall, we believed that the effort from our group and the chance to further develop our craft has helped us as teachers and in turn has improved students' learning and performance. We valued this opportunity and plan to continue discussing the results of the techniques and strategies we implement throughout the school year with one another. As a result of our experience we intend on creating a Power Point presentation to share with our building administration and teachers within our grade level at our team meetings. In addition, we will meet and share with our district curriculum specialist so that she may share our learning experience with other grade levels within our building.

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

The Common Core definitely caught many teachers and students off guard when it was introduced this year. Feelings of anxiety in teachers, students, and parents were expressed. However, throughout our participation in this study group we have a much better interpretation and understanding of the CCSS for Literacy as well as increased confidence to help improve students' skills in Reading, Language, and Writing. By focusing on these standards and utilizing the variety of techniques, strategies, and resources this study group opportunity has provided us with, we will improve students' skills in each of these areas as they become college and career ready. We are more knowledgeable about the skills students' need to succeed and plan on doing our part to make sure that all students reach their maximum potential. Some areas of improvement have already been noticed with our students' interaction with text, understanding of various types of text, as well as in their writing.

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

We met our goals for this study group. Our original plan was to explore our need of quality implementation of the Common Core. It is imperative that we learn more to help provide all students with the quality education that they deserve in addition to providing them with the skills and a knowledge base needed for their future. The techniques and strategies we learned will teach students to acquire knowledge that they need in order to perform to the highest standards set by the Common Core. We were able to work together to improve student achievement and growth, by being provided with adequate support and resources to study, implement, and reflect on the CCSS.

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

Overall, the Study Group worked for each and every one of us. Much was learned from all members of our group. We were able to reflect upon and implement strategies that we read about as well as discuss how the strategies worked for other members in our group. Having a diverse group of teachers was beneficial because we were able to see how the standards were applied in different content areas. We also valued the time we had within the study group to learn, share, and grow with one another and we were very pleased with the Study Group process.

How can we make this study group program better?

There weren't any problems that we found with this study group program. We thought it was helpful to us all and were thankful for the opportunity.

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 btc@btbooces.org. Return to the Teacher Center (Mail Drop #22), 601 Gates Rd., Vestal, NY