Strategies of Effective Teams and their Schoolwide Impact on English Language Learners

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NYC-RBE-RN @ Fordham University
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NY State Association of Bilingual Education Conference
Objective and Learning Outcomes

Can Professional Learning Communities (PLCs) make a lasting impact on the continued progress of English Language Learners? If so, How do these collaborative teams work? What are their tools?

1. Necessary Conditions - Structures and Systems
2. Analysis and use of data - Data-Driven Protocol
3. Deciding, Implementing and Managing Differentiated Strategies
4. How effective teams work
5. Impact on school culture
Data & Focus on Learning

Demographics
Observations
Attitudes
Assessments
State Tests
Attendance
Experiences
Print environment

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School Structures and Systems: Enable Coherence at Classroom, Teams & School Levels

- Shared vision, unified focus
- Trust, respect and openness to improve one’s teaching practice.
- Organizational support & distributive leadership
- Commitment of all members to follow up and implement the decisions made at meetings.
Data-Driven Dialogue Protocol

1. PREDICT: “I predict”

2. VISUALIZE - “I see” -

3. OBSERVE - “I notice” -

4. COLLABORATE “I think”, “I suggest”

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To begin the conversation:

How did students do on the NYSESLAT, ELA or Math tests?

Baseline, unit assessments?

1. PREDICT:
   “I predict”

Make note of it:

DDI: DATA ANALYSIS WORKSHEET

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>“I PREDICT”</th>
<th>“I SEE”</th>
<th>“I NOTICE”</th>
<th>“I THINK, I SUGGEST”</th>
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<tbody>
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NEXT STEPS (Differentiated Instruction – include Strategies)

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2. VISUALIZE

-"I see"-

2009-2013 ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNERS
English Language Arts - Students at Levels 3 and 4

How does the conversation change?

Source: NYS SED

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2. VISUALIZE
-"I see"

New York City Department of Education
NYC Results on the New York State 2013 ELA Test (Grades 3-8)
School Summary
Results By English Proficiency Status

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>DBN</th>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Number Tested</th>
<th>Mean Scale Score</th>
<th>#</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>#</th>
<th>%</th>
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<td>38.5</td>
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<td>4</td>
<td>6.8</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>4</td>
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What do we see?
How did students do?
Taking a closer look: How did the students in my [this] classroom do?

8.RL.2 Determine a theme or central idea of a text and analyze its development over the course of the text, including its relationship to the characters, setting, and plot; provide an objective summary of the text.

8.RL.3: Analyze how particular lines of dialogue or incidents in a story or drama propel the action, reveal aspects of a character, or provoke a decision.

8.RL.4 Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in a text, including figurative and connotative meanings; analyze the impact of specific word choices on meaning and tone, including analogies or allusions to other texts. R. Salavert, Ed.d. for NYC RBE-RN@Fordham University
4. COLLABORATE
“I think”, “I suggest”

“I think we agree that students show the following strengths _____, but the class, and particularly this group need to develop and/or practice _____.

What strategies should we use? How should we implement them? How will we manage and measure the students’ progress?

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NEXT STEPS (Differentiated Instruction – include Strategies)

1. 
2. 
3. 

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3

The Decision-Making Process

[In our example]

8.RL2 (Strengths) Determine a theme or central idea of a text and analyze its development over the course of the text, including its relationship to the characters, setting, and plot; provide an objective summary of the text.

8.RL.3: Analyze how particular lines of dialogue or incidents in a story or drama propel the action, reveal aspects of a character, or provoke a decision.

8.RL. 4 (Skills that require practice) Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in a text, including figurative and connotative meanings; analyze the impact of specific word choices on meaning and tone, including analogies or allusions to other texts.

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“The deep green pool of the Salinas River was still in the late afternoon. Already the sun had left the valley to go climbing up the slopes of the Gabilan mountains, and the hilltops were rosy in the sun. But by the pool among the mottled sycamores, a pleasant shade had fallen. A water snake glided smoothly up the pool, twisting its periscope head from side to side; and it swam the length of the pool and came to the legs of a motionless heron that stood in the shallows. A silent head and beak lanced down and plucked it out by the head, and the beak swallowed the little snake while its tail waved frantically.”

p.99 Mice and Men by J. Steinbeck
Strategy: Text-Based Questions

“The deep green pool of the Salinas River was still in the late afternoon. Already the sun had left the valley to go climbing up the slopes of the Gabilan mountains, and the hilltops were rosy in the sun. But by the pool among the mottled sycamores, a pleasant shade had fallen. A water snake glided smoothly up the pool, twisting its periscope head from side to side; and it swam the length of the pool and came to the legs of a motionless heron that stood in the shallows. A silent head and beak lanced down and plucked it out by the head, and the beak swallowed the little snake while its tail waved frantically.” [p.99 Mice and Men by J. Steinbeck]

1st Reading: What’s the name of the mountains where the pool was located?, What words does the author use to tell us the time of day? What does the author see near the pool?

2nd Reading (in pairs, trios): How would you draw the ‘periscope’ head of the snake? (support discussion with a Frayer diagram), What are the two words in ‘motionless’? How do they help you explain its meaning? What is the heron waiting for?

3rd Reading (close reading, in pairs, independently): Explain the setting in your own words. Think about it: How would you justify what the heron did to the snake?
Implementing & Managing Differentiated Strategies

Learning Objective: Analyze the role of setting in the actions of the characters and investigate the meaning of uncommon words used by the author.

A - Students in target group:  8  
B - Students who need additional practice: 15  
C - Students who already master it: 4

“I think we agree that students show the following strengths _____, but the class, and particularly this group need to develop and /or practice _____.”
Implementing & Managing Differentiated Strategies

First Reading

(A) What’s the name of the mountains where the pool was located? What words does the author use to tell us the time of day? What does the author see near the pool?

(B,C) What_____? Ex. What’s a sycamore?

(B,C) ____________?

(C) ____________?

Second Reading

(Pairs, trios):
A; 8, B: 15, C: 4

How would you draw the ‘periscope’ head of the snake? (support discussion with a Frayer diagram), What are the two words in ‘motionless’? How do they help you explain its meaning? What is the heron waiting for?

Third/Close Reading

(close reading, in pairs, independently):

Explain the setting in your own words. (B,C: ... in a complete paragraph)

Think about it: How would you justify what the heron did to the snake? (B, C: IF you were the author, how would you have explained this event?)

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Frayer Model: A Vocabulary Development Tool

- Definition (last)
- Visual (at any time)
- Example (first step)
- Non-example (follows Example)

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Foster good habits and routines to build students' self-esteem, and responsibility for their own learning.

Encourage students to pause, reflect and write about their daily reading is one of the best strategies to practice their academic language while creating notes for their own study.
Quickwrites: A Strategy to Transition into Writing

- Think/Pair/Share
- Exit Tickets
- One-minute Reflection
- Share One, Get One,
- Complete the Frame
- Cloze reading of a familiar reading segment
- Zoom \textit{in}____________
- Zoom \textit{out} ______________
- Replace with Synonym (3-5 words provided or electronic visual glossary)
- Extend the sentence using (3-5 words to choose from)
- Re-write sentence using these words (3-5 new words)
- Four-Square writing method

\[\text{Four Square Writing Method}\]

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How Do Effective Teams Work?
Collaborative Team Process

After considering the NYSESLAT data we analyzed, the school identified the lowest 1/3 group as target. The goal of each of the teams was to boost non-fiction writing in targeted ELL students.

To that purpose, the teams set a calendar to meet regular to follow the progress of the students based on selected strategies.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>DATA-DRIVEN INSTRUCTION: DATA ANALYSIS WORKSHEET</strong></th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>“I PREDICT”</strong> 3-5 minutes</td>
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<tr>
<td>NEXT STEPS (Differentiated Instruction – include Strategies) 8-10 minutes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
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<td>2.</td>
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Implementation steps towards Accelerating Student Learning and Achieving School-wide Goals

- 2008 STATE TESTS
- June Predictive
- October Predictive
- ITAs
- 2009 STATE TESTS
- ITAs
- June Predictive

September October November .... June

Cycle 1: Baseline Assessment
- Short-term Goal #1, Change Strategy #1 and Implementation plan

Benchmark 1: Document Evidence of effectiveness of Strategy #1

Cycle 2: Short-term Goal #2, Change Strategy w. Implementation plan

Assessment of Student Progress Towards June Goal

[Repeat cycles: Address Short-term Goals, Identify Change Strategies, Implement & Document Progress]

June Assessment

Inquiry Team Process

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Inquiry Team outcomes:
Students’ most successful strategies

1. R.A.F.T.
2. Evidence-Based Organizer
3. Cornell notes, with support
Organizer to Identify and Write Based on Evidence

**Finding Details**
I find interesting details that are related and stand out to me from reading the text closely.

**Connecting the Details**
What I think about detail 1:
What I think about detail 2:
What I think about detail 3:
I re-read and think about the details, and explain the connections I find among them.
How I connect the details:

**Making a Claim**
I state a conclusion that I have come to and can support with evidence from the text after reading and thinking about it closely.

**Forming Evidence-Based Claims**

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The Cornell Method

1. Notes
   This is the section where you should take your notes during the course of the lecture. Use bullets, sentences, short-hand, etc.

2. Cues
   Questions, main points, visual clues, and other clues that jog your memory go here. Fill this section in after class.

3. Summary
   Most important points and main ideas go here. Fill in this section after class when you are in the reviewing process.
In June, the members of the three inquiry Teams prepared and delivered training on their work and results.

During the professional development, teachers had the opportunity to practice and discuss the strategies so that they can be implemented school wide.
“Two years ago, we began re-organizing the school into teams that come together with a focus...”

“To organize the school into PLCs is not easy and it is expensive. You begin by creating meeting times around teachers’ prep schedule, but this is not always possible and you have to be ready with appropriate cover. [...] The formation of teams based on purpose enables teachers who otherwise would never see each other to become strong partners toward the improvement of their craft.”
Calendar: Regular PLC meetings to Analyze Student Work alternating with Study Group sessions on ‘Checking for Understanding and Effective Feedback’

How is the student showing understanding? How do I provide feedback to support his/her next step towards completing the task? Meeting learning objective? Benchmark?
Facilitator: *Ms. C. How useful were the group’s recommendations?* Ms. C offers examples on how she implemented the group’s suggestions and overall student improvements.

**Teacher (Science) presenter shares:**
Task and rubrics – “Write a story pretending that you’re a rock”
Student written work: One sample written in Spanish and another in English
Teacher explains: She has attempted to integrate language development and science content, and is seeking feedback and suggestions to improve her craft.

Guided by the Facilitator, the group analyses the data (student work, task, rubrics), discusses noticings – identify strengths, weaknesses, share wonderings and decide on recommendations. The group provides examples for possible Language Objectives and suggestions to edit the rubric so that it also incorporates criteria pertaining to Language Functions and Grammar.

Facilitator: *Thanks the group and meeting is adjourned.*

Teacher presenter responds to suggestions and thanks the team.
Encouragement and advice can be good motivators, but \textit{feedback} is the \textit{only key} that can motivate and \textit{also guide} the student to take the next and make the extra effort to accomplish a difficult task.

Feedback is:

1. Goal-Oriented
2. Tangible and Transparent
3. Actionable
4. User-Friendly
5. Timely
6. On-going
7. Consistent

Levels of Feedback:

1. Task Feedback
2. Process Feedback
3. Self-Regulation (student use of checklist and rubrics)
T.E.L.L. Feedback Strategy

- **Tell** the student about the exact behavior; be objective.
- **Explain** what outcomes may result from the actions; do not blame. Use ‘I’ statements.
- **Listen** to ideas for improvements, ‘buy-in”; come to agreement.
- **Let the** student know positive or negative consequences if situation is not corrected.

**Examples:**

“The point of this writing task is to practice writing humor, you want to make readers laugh. So, you may want to get feedback from peers; ask, How funny is this? Where might it be funnier?”

“This is a weak needs some work. Read with me: almost from the first sentence its confusing, there is no clear thesis statement. In the second paragraph..., and in the third paragraph you don’t offer evidence, just opinions”
Session Core Question:

Can Professional Learning Communities (PLCs) make a lasting impact on the continued progress of English Language Learners?

If so, How do these collaborative teams work?

What are their tools?

At JHS 145, the Inquiry Teams have worked hard, smart and consistently throughout the school year. Their collaboratively inquiry process has focused on improving the academic language and the ability of English language learners to identify and use textual evidence in reading and writing across content areas.

The inquiry process began with an analysis of the students’ performance on the 2012 NYSEELAT. There was substantial evidence of a learning gap in analytical writing. Thus, the school opted to target this particular type of writing focusing on ELLs with an intermediate and an advanced level of English proficiency.

The school administration - Mr. Hannibal, Principal, Ms. Gonzalez and Mr. McIntosh, Assistant Principals supported the work by ensuring a regular meeting time during the day (1 period every two weeks). The three grade level teams formed by ESL, Bilingual, English, Science, Social Studies, Mathematics and Special education teachers have proactively implemented, documented, shared and discussed the progress of their students at each of these meetings. In the process, they have identified four strategies that effectively support English language learners develop, build and/or extend their ability to use textual evidence orally and in their written work. These strategies are:

1. A Tic/Tac/Toe organizer that guides students in the identification and use of relevant evidence when writing an argument.
2. A version of Think-Pair-Share that includes a Written Conversation strategy.
3. The RAFT protocol, which brings the role of writer (R) to the forefront as it prompts students to consider the audience (A), the format (F) as well as the topic (T), and 4. A variation of the Cornell Note-Taking protocol that encourages students to include key words and notations in their first language, drawings and reuses in the “cues” column to help them clarify, understand and retain the notes they took in class (right column), which are often written in imperfect English.

On June 6, the inquiry team members guided their colleagues in the implementation of these strategies in an engaging three-hour professional development session. The faculty at JHS 145 applaud their colleagues for their work and for sharing strategies that will benefit not only the ELL students in their classrooms, but students schoolwide.

For additional information please contact Roser Salavert at rsalavert@fordham.edu
Trust and genuine interest in improving teaching practices

- There is a clear collective focus on learning objectives that respond to high expectations for ELLs.

- Collaboration across all groups including collaboration among students

- School leaders with a collaborative shared vision that leads to structures and systems that provide opportunities for distributive leadership and support all students.

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The conversation of collaborative Teacher Teams/PLCs focuses on a small group of students.

But, their work inspires the entire faculty and help create an environment where teachers’ ability to work collaboratively builds the capacity to effectively support the progress of ELL students.

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Group Reflection

• What are some ideas discussed today that **square** with my beliefs and practices?

• What are some new ideas **rolling** around in my head?

• What are some concrete steps that I will take as a result of this session?

*Thank you, Roser*