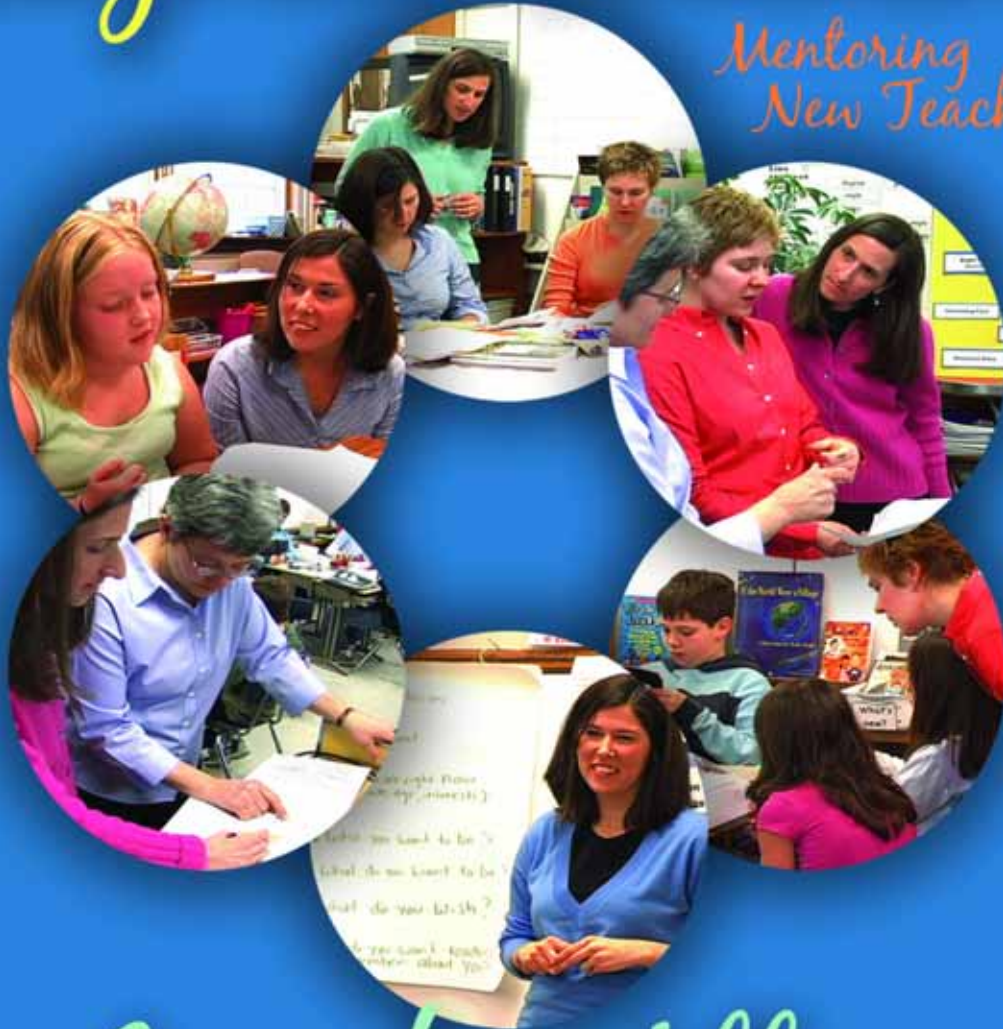


Workshop Guide

Layered Coaching

*Mentoring
New Teachers*



Jennifer Allen

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ISBN13: 978-1-60155-007-1

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Introduction

Layered Coaching: Mentoring New Teachers is a video series taped over a year to show how Jennifer Allen supports new teachers in their work. In the video, viewers will see how Jen structures this support through a “New Teachers Group” program of observations, curriculum building, collaborative teaching in classrooms, and study-group time.

Viewers will see new teachers working with Jen and their colleagues during the fall, winter, and spring months as they map curriculum and assessments, observe best teaching practices in demonstration classrooms, and grapple with the issues both novice and veteran teachers face.

This guide is designed to help facilitators use *Layered Coaching* in workshop settings. The plans provided are flexible, allowing you to tailor the suggestions to the needs of your group. There are two types of study groups that might benefit from viewing the videos. Literacy coaches or mentors working with new teachers might use the videos and support materials to develop plans and talk through the best ways to work together. We also provide suggestions for using the materials in a study group of new teacher mentors or new teacher workshop coordinators.

The following teachers are featured in this video series:

Jessica Soucy—fourth-grade teacher in her first year of teaching

Jeni Frazee—third-grade teacher in her third year of teaching in the district

Leslie Lloyd—veteran third-grade teacher and co-leader (with Jennifer Allen) of the monthly new teachers’ meetings

Carolyn Bridges—veteran fourth-grade teacher who collaborates with Jen Allen and hosts many new teacher observers in her demonstration classroom

Lesley Fowler—veteran fifth-grade teacher who collaborates with Jen Allen and hosts many new teacher observers in her demonstration classroom

We encourage you to preview the materials before using them in any workshop.

The Six Layers of Coaching Support

Jen Allen developed the “layered” coaching model as she created plans for supporting teachers at all levels of experience. The video focuses specifically on her work with new teachers, but in reality Jen uses it with all teachers she works with as a literacy coach and specialist:



These layers consist of the following:

- “Literacy Room” of Resources for Teachers**
 The literacy room is stocked with books for use in literacy instruction, displays of new materials, videos for use in study groups and for review by teachers, graphic organizers, professional books and materials, and a meeting area with refreshments. (For more on the literacy room, see the photo essay “The Literacy Resource Room” on pages 20–22.)
- Study Groups for Teachers**
 These groups meet monthly (from October through April) with six to twelve participants, and have a focus set by the teachers. The groups always include common reading from professional books and journals, as well as published videos of teachers at work. For more on study groups, see pages 26–28 of the guide, “How Study Groups Are Like Self-Cleaning Ovens.”
- New Teachers Group**
 The New Teachers Group was developed by Jen to assist the six teachers who are in the early phases of their careers. Most are first-year teachers in the district, but the group also includes a third-year teacher (Jeni), a second-year teacher who changed grade levels (Walli), and a veteran teacher new to the district (Laurette) who asked to be part of the group so that she could have assistance in understanding district expectations for new teachers.



The group is intended to be a support not only to new teachers but also to new veteran teachers who may want support in learning curriculum and grade-level goals.

Each month, these teachers are released for a full day. In the morning, they observe teachers of their choice. In the afternoon, they meet with Jen and the co-leader of the New Teachers Group, Leslie Lloyd, a third-grade teacher. These afternoon meetings include a discussion of the morning observations, curriculum mapping, a reading workshop, and a writing workshop. For more on the New Teachers Group, see pages 29–42 in the guide.

- **Observations of Colleagues**

The new teachers observe colleagues throughout the morning as part of their monthly full-day release, but observations also take place throughout the year. Jen developed an observation form that the new teachers use to focus their learning, and it was revised throughout the year. For more on the observation form, see page 37 of the guide.

- **Support in Classrooms**

Jen's support of the new teachers in classrooms ranges from co-teaching and planning, to observations and discussions of what was learned. For more information about the observations and Jen's role in classrooms, see page 42 of the guide.

- **Regularly Scheduled In-Service**

All teachers participate in regularly scheduled literacy training and events. These events are beyond the scope of this video, but include monthly professional development at staff meetings, family literacy breakfasts with a children's book author, and participation in state and regional literacy conferences.

The Importance of Dialogue Journals in Supporting New Teachers

Taking the time to build relationships with those you support is essential to the success of coaching. Dialogue journals support relationship building—they are an informal channel that facilitates communication. Exchanging journals is another opportunity for less verbal participants to share their thinking, and the written responses provide facilitators with insight into participants' reflections.

Corresponding with new teachers can start before the school year begins. It can begin through e-mail, letters, or phone conversations. Jen and Leslie Lloyd, the co-leaders of the New Teachers Group, use dialogue journals to close each New Teachers Group meeting. They provide a timely response to the teachers and return their journals within a day or two.

Ideas for journaling prompts include the following:

- What have you tried since our last meeting?
- What are some things you've been thinking about since our last meeting?
- What challenges do you face in supporting new teachers?
- What are some unanticipated roadblocks or challenges that you face in supporting new staff?
- What are you wondering about this week?
- What is working well in your room?
- What would you still like to implement?
- What are some unanticipated challenges?
- What obstacles are you still facing?
- What do you see as your strengths? Needs?
- Would anyone like to share a moment from working in classrooms with new teachers this week?
- Would anyone like to share some student work, or a student comment?

WORKSHOP 1

Understanding Layered Coaching

The power of the layered coaching approach is that the layers support one another so that all of a facilitator's or coach's energy is not poured into one in-service event or workshop experience. The support is designed to sustain itself over the course of the year.

Distribute copies of the schedule for the New Teachers Group (pages 44–45), “Layered Support: Meeting the Needs of Beginning Teachers” (pages 31–32), “Charting the Course” (page 36), and “Planning a New Teachers’ Professional Development Program” (pages 33–34). View the introduction to the DVD (Chapter 1).

Questions for Reflection and Discussion

- Think about your own coaching. What are the layers? How do they come together? How are the layers the same as Jen’s layers? How are they different?
- How do you build conversations across activities with your new teachers?
- How do you layer coaching with veteran teachers differently from coaching with new teachers?
- What are the strengths of the layered coaching model?
- What are the weaknesses?
- What would you like to include from the model in your teaching?
- What do you like best about providing in-class support to new teachers?
- What is most challenging?
- What are the benefits of having a coach with you in the classroom?
- What have you found difficult?
- One of the drawbacks of the monthly release day for teachers is time away from students and being out of their classrooms. What are the pros and cons of pulling new teachers out of their classrooms each month?



WORKSHOP 2

The Literacy Resource Room



View the “Literacy Room Tour” segment of the DVD (Chapter 2). Distribute copies of the “The Literacy Room” photo essay (pages 20–22), and “On Board with Literacy Leadership” by Jennifer Jones and Charity Meyer (pages 23–24).

Questions for Reflection and Discussion

- What message does a professional resource room designed in this way send to teachers?
- What resources in the “Literacy Room” look most helpful to you?
- What are the constraints of developing a literacy room in your school or district?
- How could you work within these constraints to adapt some aspect of the model?
- If you have space constraints, how can you create spaces to give your teachers similar messages about the importance of their learning?
- Where in your building do teachers naturally gather? How can you better use that space to support professional conversations?
- If you do have a similar room or an available space, which ideas will you incorporate?
- Are there unused doors or walls or cubbies in the school where you can share information, display books, or add chairs for small-group discussion?
- If you had to prioritize needs in the district, which materials would you purchase first? Why?

If creating a literacy room is not an option, and extra space is nowhere to be found, then creativity will be needed to show off the latest professional resources.

Here are some ideas for providing professional resources:

- Sharing new titles at a staff meeting
- Setting up a professional resource section in the library
- Using book stands to show off the latest professional books in your office area
- Using the color copier to copy the covers and tables of contents of new professional books, and posting them by mailboxes or in grade-level closets
- Writing a literacy newsletter for staff that shares the latest professional resources

WORKSHOP 3

In-Class Support of Teachers



View the fall and winter segments of Jen and Jessica working together in Jessica's fourth-grade writing workshop (Chapters 3 and 4). Distribute copies of "Night Terrors: Let the Coaching Begin!" (page 35) and "Idealism Fades to Reality: Thinking Back to My Days as a New Teacher" (pages 29–30) to read.

Questions for Reflection and Discussion

- What's your favorite memory from your first year of teaching? What's your worst memory?
- What are some ways that you can learn about a teacher's vision before going into his or her classroom? How can you learn about a colleague's vision after you've taught with him or her for a bit?
- What do you learn when you teach with someone? How is your teaching different when you plan with someone?
- At one point Jen comments that she "jumped in" to the teaching inappropriately. How do you make sure you scaffold new teachers so that you support them but don't take over? How do you know when you are/are not needed?
- How do Jen and Jessica's roles shift from fall to winter?
- What changes do you notice in Jessica's demeanor from the fall to winter observations?
- Why do you think Jen focuses on assisting Jessica with writer's workshop?
- What is the value of the debriefing "in the midst" of teaching? How does this compare with how you work with mentors or new teachers?

Jessica and Jen co-teach a lesson, using student work as a mentor text.



Using Observation Forms

[illegible]

Reflections: Helping Teachers Observe, Analyze, and Share

Journaling

Each year teachers participate in a variety of activities designed to help them become more effective classroom teachers. One of the most important activities is the process of reflection. Reflection is the process of looking back on an experience and thinking about what you have learned from it. It is a process that can be used to improve your teaching and your students' learning.

One way to help teachers reflect is by providing them with a journal. A journal is a place where teachers can write down their thoughts and feelings about their teaching. It can be a place where they can record their successes and failures, and where they can share their ideas with other teachers. A journal can also be a place where teachers can reflect on their own teaching and on the teaching of others.

There are many ways to use a journal. One way is to use it as a place where teachers can write down their thoughts and feelings about their teaching. Another way is to use it as a place where teachers can record their successes and failures. A third way is to use it as a place where teachers can share their ideas with other teachers. A fourth way is to use it as a place where teachers can reflect on their own teaching and on the teaching of others.

One of the most important things to remember is that a journal is a place where teachers can write down their thoughts and feelings about their teaching. It is a place where they can record their successes and failures, and where they can share their ideas with other teachers. A journal can also be a place where teachers can reflect on their own teaching and on the teaching of others.



Three teachers, two men and one woman, are sitting around a table in a meeting room. They are all looking at a document on the table and appear to be in the middle of a discussion. The man on the left is wearing a light blue shirt, the woman in the middle is wearing a red shirt, and the man on the right is wearing a purple shirt. They are all looking down at the document on the table.

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Learning from the Shadows

—*an interview*—

“The more we study a technique or technique, the more we learn about it,” said the author of *Learning from the Shadows*, a new book about the art of shadowboxing. “The more we learn about it, the more we learn about ourselves.”

—*from the book*

Q: What is shadowboxing?

A: Shadowboxing is a form of boxing that is performed without a sparring partner. It is a form of self-defense that is performed by visualizing an opponent and using the same techniques as in a real fight. Shadowboxing is a form of self-defense that is performed by visualizing an opponent and using the same techniques as in a real fight. Shadowboxing is a form of self-defense that is performed by visualizing an opponent and using the same techniques as in a real fight.

Q: How did you get into shadowboxing?

A: I got into shadowboxing when I was a child. My father was a boxer and he taught me the basics of boxing. I was a very good boxer and I won many fights. I was a very good boxer and I won many fights. I was a very good boxer and I won many fights.

Q: What is the most important thing to remember when shadowboxing?

A: The most important thing to remember when shadowboxing is to stay relaxed. If you are tense, you will not be able to perform your best. If you are tense, you will not be able to perform your best. If you are tense, you will not be able to perform your best.

Q: How can shadowboxing help in real life?

A: Shadowboxing can help in real life by teaching you how to defend yourself. It can help you learn how to use your hands and feet to defend yourself. It can help you learn how to use your hands and feet to defend yourself. It can help you learn how to use your hands and feet to defend yourself.

Q: What are some of the benefits of shadowboxing?

A: Some of the benefits of shadowboxing are that it can help you improve your coordination, balance, and agility. It can also help you improve your cardiovascular fitness and your mental focus. It can also help you improve your cardiovascular fitness and your mental focus. It can also help you improve your cardiovascular fitness and your mental focus.

Q: How can I learn more about shadowboxing?

A: You can learn more about shadowboxing by reading the book *Learning from the Shadows*. You can also learn more about shadowboxing by watching videos or by taking a class. You can also learn more about shadowboxing by watching videos or by taking a class. You can also learn more about shadowboxing by watching videos or by taking a class.

Q: What is the author's background?

A: The author is a former professional boxer and a coach. He has been boxing for over 20 years and has won many fights. He has been boxing for over 20 years and has won many fights. He has been boxing for over 20 years and has won many fights.

Q: What is the author's goal for the book?

A: The author's goal for the book is to help people learn how to defend themselves. He wants to help people learn how to use their hands and feet to defend themselves. He wants to help people learn how to use their hands and feet to defend themselves.

Q: What is the author's favorite quote?

A: The author's favorite quote is “The more we study a technique or technique, the more we learn about it.”

Q: What is the author's favorite book?

A: The author's favorite book is *Learning from the Shadows*.

Q: What is the author's favorite movie?

A: The author's favorite movie is *Learning from the Shadows*.

Q: What is the author's favorite song?

A: The author's favorite song is *Learning from the Shadows*.

Q: What is the author's favorite food?

A: The author's favorite food is *Learning from the Shadows*.

Q: What is the author's favorite color?

A: The author's favorite color is *Learning from the Shadows*.

Q: What is the author's favorite animal?

A: The author's favorite animal is *Learning from the Shadows*.

Q: What is the author's favorite sport?

A: The author's favorite sport is *Learning from the Shadows*.

Q: What is the author's favorite hobby?

A: The author's favorite hobby is *Learning from the Shadows*.

Q: What is the author's favorite pastime?

A: The author's favorite pastime is *Learning from the Shadows*.

Q: What is the author's favorite time of day?

A: The author's favorite time of day is *Learning from the Shadows*.

Q: What is the author's favorite season?

A: The author's favorite season is *Learning from the Shadows*.

Q: What is the author's favorite month?

A: The author's favorite month is *Learning from the Shadows*.

Q: What is the author's favorite day of the week?

A: The author's favorite day of the week is *Learning from the Shadows*.

Q: What is the author's favorite time of year?

A: The author's favorite time of year is *Learning from the Shadows*.

Q: What is the author's favorite place?

A: The author's favorite place is *Learning from the Shadows*.

Q: What is the author's favorite thing to do?

A: The author's favorite thing to do is *Learning from the Shadows*.

Q: What is the author's favorite thing to eat?

A: The author's favorite thing to eat is *Learning from the Shadows*.

Q: What is the author's favorite thing to drink?

A: The author's favorite thing to drink is *Learning from the Shadows*.

Q: What is the author's favorite thing to wear?

A: The author's favorite thing to wear is *Learning from the Shadows*.

Q: What is the author's favorite thing to own?

A: The author's favorite thing to own is *Learning from the Shadows*.

Q: What is the author's favorite thing to use?

A: The author's favorite thing to use is *Learning from the Shadows*.

Q: What is the author's favorite thing to see?

A: The author's favorite thing to see is *Learning from the Shadows*.

Q: What is the author's favorite thing to hear?

A: The author's favorite thing to hear is *Learning from the Shadows*.

Q: What is the author's favorite thing to feel?

A: The author's favorite thing to feel is *Learning from the Shadows*.

Q: What is the author's favorite thing to think?

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Q: What is the author's favorite thing to own?

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Q: What is the author's favorite thing to wear?

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Jen's observation forms were created to help guide the new teachers in their observations. The observation forms are used as tools to launch discussions and debrief after watching colleagues teach. Jen has also had new teachers use the forms in the fall as they observe her leading lessons in classrooms with new teachers.

Distribute copies of observation forms (pages 46–48), “Reflective Observation” (page 37) and “Learning from the Shadows” (page 42). View Chapter 5 on the DVD (discussion of observation form in the New Teacher Group) and Chapter 9 on the DVD (Jeni observing a lesson co-taught by Jen and Lesley).

Before asking new teachers to use the observation form you might want to try the form yourself. Ask a colleague to try the observation form with you. You can take turns teaching and being the observer. Ask your colleague to fill it out while you are teaching a lesson and then swap roles. Take the time to debrief about your observations with each other.

Questions for Reflection and Discussion

- How does the form help focus Jeni's observations?
- How does Jen adapt the form based on the response from the New Teachers Group?
- How do individuals in the group adapt the form to their needs?
- What are the similarities and differences between this form and observation protocols in your school?
- Can you think of other ideas for observation forms that might work in your school?

New teacher Jeni jots notes on an observation form while she and Jen observe a lesson in a fourth-grade classroom.



WORKSHOP 6

Starting a "Staff Picks" Basket



As educators we are always trying to hook our students on books. Jen has created a staff book swap for the teachers. The staff book swap is simple: two plastic bins of adult literature labeled “Staff Picks.” The book swap offers an opportunity for teachers to stay hooked on the latest adult books. Jen has found that the shared reading experiences among staff fosters authentic literature discussions, the same types of discussions that we want our students to have. The Staff Picks baskets are visited frequently by all staff within the building. Staff members who want to share their love of books often donate new titles, too.

View the Chapter 2: “Literacy Room Tour” on the DVD, and note as a group where the Staff Picks baskets fit into the overall scheme of supporting teachers in their literacy development. You might also choose to read “Building a Reading Community” (page 25) or “The Literacy Resource Room” (pages 20–22) for more background on book swaps.

Questions for Reflection and Discussion

- Where could a staff book swap be located?
- What resources are available to start a staff book swap?
- What do you see as the benefits of a staff book swap?
- What opportunities could be created to invite staff to come together and talk about books?
- Would any staff be interested in a book group on an adult novel?
- What do you see as roadblocks to starting a staff book swap?

WORKSHOP 7

Launching Study Groups



Distribute copies of “How Study Groups Are Like Self-Cleaning Ovens” (pages 26–28). View the study-group chapter on the DVD (Chapter 12).

Questions for Reflection and Discussion

- What topics would be of high interest now for a study group in your school or district?
- What books or professional readings could support the group?
- What might be a good schedule for your group?
- Which of Jen’s guidelines will you follow?
- Which of the guidelines will be adapted? Why?
- How can you find out what the teachers in your building would want to study?
- How can you support teachers to lead their own study groups?

WORKSHOP 8 **Mentoring Timelines**

View the fall and winter chapters of Jen's collaborative teaching and mentoring of Jessica (Chapters 3 and 4 on the DVD).

For this workshop, participants will create a timeline of friends, colleagues, and family members who have influenced their literacy development. These timelines will then be used as a catalyst for discussion about what is meaningful and memorable in influencing the literacy of others.

Begin by asking everyone to draw a line across a blank sheet of paper (providing a stack of blank oversized sheets of paper and baskets of markers is helpful). On this line, ask everyone to mark a starting point with a vertical line labeled "Birth" on the left-hand side and another labeled "Present Day" on the right-hand side.

Ask participants to think of at least five people who influenced their development as readers and writers during their lives. Participants should then map out on the continuum when they met each person. Below the timeline, everyone should list the names of these mentors with a one-sentence description of how and why that person affected his or her literacy.

This task should take no more than 10–15 minutes. Ask everyone to write silently. Often it takes at least a few minutes for participants to clear their heads and begin remembering names (especially those of mentors from long ago).

After everyone has completed their timelines, meet in small groups or collectively discuss the following questions:

Questions for Reflection and Discussion

- What did your literacy mentors have in common?
- What are some striking differences?
- Which of your mentors remind you of Jen? Why?
- Which mentors remind you of Jessica? Why?
- What connections do you make to how you mentor students?
- What connections do you make to how you influence the literacy teaching and learning of your colleagues?

It can be helpful to use the workshop time as a starting point in creating timelines. You might choose to have participants keep the timelines for a week, fleshing them out before a follow-up session. Teachers often have their memories jogged when they work with students over the week and are able to return the following week with deeper connections.

An interesting adaptation is to try a timeline that is focused solely on teaching mentors, rather than literacy. Participants can then make connections between teaching, literacy, and mentoring.

WORKSHOP 9

Curriculum Mapping



It is a challenge for new teachers to start the school year and keep their heads above water day in and day out. Over the years Jen has often heard the frustrations of new teachers trying to figure out on a Friday what they are going to teach on Monday. This type of short-term planning lends itself to filling in school days with isolated activities as opposed to thoughtful strategy instruction.

In an effort to support new teachers with long-range planning and strategy instruction, curriculum mapping was incorporated into the monthly new teacher meetings. Jen wanted to support teachers in looking through grade-level curriculum and guide them in fitting it in over the course of the year. The goal was for new teachers to end their first year in the district with a road map to start the next school year.

New teachers have worked on two curriculum maps over the course of the year. One map is a macro look of the year on one page (see blank template on page 49). This is a quick map of the topics and concepts that are to be covered over the course of the year.

The second map is a more detailed look of what they have taught each month (see blank template on pages 50–52). Teachers have time each month to revise what they taught the previous month and plot their ideas for the upcoming month. They are always working a month ahead but are encouraged to reflect on and revise what they are doing in the midst of their teaching. New teachers have shared that this has been one of the biggest benefits to the new teacher group. They say that it is a relief to know what they are going to teach each month and to have a sense of where they are headed.

For this workshop, please view the curriculum mapping chapter from the New Teacher Group (Chapter 6), and distribute blank copies of curriculum maps (pages 49–52).

Questions for Reflection and Discussion

- How might you use this activity with new teachers?
- How do you support new teachers in mapping out curriculum expectations?
- What support is given to new teachers to help them figure out grade-level expectations?
- How else might you support new teachers in meeting the demands of curriculum?
- How might you guide or redirect a teacher who looks at curriculum as something he or she just needs to “cover” as opposed to material that students need to learn?
- Are there opportunities for grade-level teachers to meet and share how they deliver curriculum over the course of the year?
- What advice do you have for new teachers who share that their students just didn’t understand a concept? Do you guide them to go back and reteach or to move ahead?
- How might plotting out assessments fit into the curriculum mapping activity?

- Does your district already have a road map for how the curriculum should be implemented over the course of the year? What types of choices do new teachers have in how they deliver curriculum?
- How do the standards and district expectations fit into this?
- When is it worthwhile to talk to a group about the students in your classroom?
- How can teachers benefit from looking at student work and planning together?
- How can you use this time to look closely at student work together?
- Which assessments and information would you ask your teachers to bring to a meeting like this?
- What happens if a new teacher says he or she can't fit it all in? How do you help guide their decision making?

Jessica, Jen and Jeni work together in the New Teachers Group to develop curriculum maps.



WORKSHOP 10 "My Life in Seven Stories"

"My Life in Seven Stories" is a writing project that evolved out of in-services that Jen facilitated with her school years ago. She posed the following question to the staff: If you could share only seven stories from your life, what would you share?

After brainstorming topics individually, the staff wrote important stories from their lives, and these rough drafts were used to explore writing-craft issues each month, with mini-lessons from Jen on selecting titles, word choice, transitions, and developing strong leads and endings. Participants used their "snapshot" writing from "My Life in Seven Stories" to try out revision strategies in their own writing.

The writing project provided teachers with the opportunity to share their stories with one another and explore common practices in writing workshops with a focus on revision.

Over time "My Life in Seven Stories" filtered into the classrooms. Teachers took the ideas and strategies shared at staff meetings and used them with their own students. As a result of this project, many teachers still use the concept of "My Life in Seven Stories" with their students to launch writing workshops. As new teachers are hired and come on board, it is important to the school that they too have the experience of "My Life in Seven Stories" with students as a way to develop a shared vocabulary around writing, and shared experiences with their colleagues in teaching writing.

For this workshop, you will view the writing workshop in the New Teachers Group where "My Life in Seven Stories" is launched in the fall (Chapter 8). If time permits, you might also view Jessica and Jen co-teaching in the fall, working from the "My Life in Seven Stories" theme (Chapter 3).

Questions for Reflection and Discussion

- Ask participants to generate lists of titles from their lives. Can they narrow their list down to seven stories? What challenges did people face in narrowing down their lists? Was it hard to get started?
- What is the value of having a common core of writing activities?
- What common experiences would you like new staff to have?
- How do you keep new staff in the loop of common learning experiences that your school staff has had over the years?
- What are some other ways that you can invite teachers to write?
- How can teachers participating in writing activities influence instruction?
- What value beyond writing workshop do you see in having teachers participate in "My Life in Seven Stories"?
- What do you see as a positive outcome of having teachers try out the revision strategies that they are asking of our students?
- How do you encourage reluctant teachers to write and share their stories?
- What value is there in having common language within a school and across grade levels when talking about writing workshop and the writing process?

- What roadblocks or challenges do you foresee in having participants write during in-service time?
- How do you help new teachers make the link between writing strategies tried out in in-services and their own classroom teaching?

WORKSHOP 11 Understanding Group Observations

The image shows a 'Completed Observation Form' with handwritten notes. The form includes sections for 'Observer', 'Date', 'Classroom', 'Teacher', 'Students', 'Observations', and 'Reflections'. The handwriting is in blue ink, and the form is filled out with detailed notes.

Having a pair or team observe a demonstration lesson is another way to help teachers understand best practices in literacy. They not only have the opportunity to observe the practice, but they have a shared experience with colleagues in analyzing what they've seen.

For this workshop, you will view the group observation of Lesley and Jen's writing share (Chapter 10) and the discussion of observations from the spring new teacher group meeting (Chapter 11). Distribute copies of the completed observation forms (pages 47–48).

Questions for Reflection and Discussion

- What are the benefits of a group observation?
- What are some of the logistical issues you would need to tackle to lead or participate in this type of observation?
- What are some of the differences in what was noticed by the three teachers? What might account for these differences?
- How might you adapt the group observation activity to fit the needs of teachers in your school?

Leslie, Jessica and Jeni observe a writing share session in Lesley Fowler's fifth-grade classroom.



The Literacy Resource Room

Jennifer Allen

When I moved from a position as a classroom teacher to a new role as a literacy specialist and coach, the one thing I asked for above all else was a room of my own for collaborating with colleagues, displaying resources, and leading study groups. There wasn't much available, so what I had to work with was a large, bare basement room with a dusty pile of old reading materials dumped in the middle of it.

The long view of the "Literacy Room" of resources for teachers.



I quickly found that nothing in the pile was worth salvaging, so I trashed it all and began cleaning the empty space, stocking it with the kinds of resources I wished someone had given me when I was a classroom teacher. Years later, I am still continually reorganizing and rethinking the literacy room as I watch my colleagues use it throughout the day.

Here are some of the ways I organize materials in the literacy room, though I know I'll keep changing the design as I continue to work with teachers.

I try to break up the space in the room with bookshelves and display areas. Some portions of the room are dedicated to children's and chapter books to use in reading and writing mini-lessons. When specific children's books are mentioned in the professional books I read, I try to purchase these books so that teachers can immediately try out the new ideas in them. One section of the room

is dedicated to baskets with trade books linked to reading strategy instruction; another area houses books tied to writer's craft.

This section of the room houses baskets of children's books for teaching reading strategies.



I have a large display of professional books for teachers. This display is updated continuously—if a teacher borrows a book and adores it so much

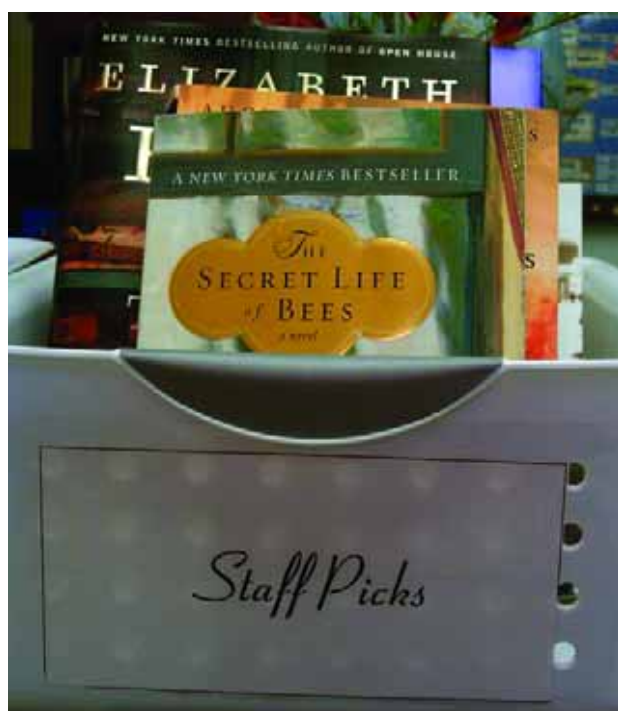
Display of professional books for teachers.



she doesn't want to return it, I find the funds to purchase another copy. This is exactly what I want to have happen as teachers borrow books from this area. I like to have the books handy so that I can actually pick up a text as I recommend it and put it in the teacher's hands as we are chatting informally about specific instructional strategies.

One of my favorite resources in the room is the little basket of "Staff Picks." These are novels, poetry, or nonfiction for pleasure reading that anyone can bring in and offer to lend to their colleagues. Teachers love reading the books recommended by peers for fun, and they see how they are more likely to try a new genre or author when it is recommended by a friend they trust. This leads to all sorts of interesting discussions about reading communities and what makes them thrive.

Our staff picks basket of books recommended by colleagues.



It's important to me that we have a meeting area for our study groups. I've been in situations where there isn't dedicated space for professional meetings, and it seems like the group is always being interrupted or cramped in many ways. Teachers often spontaneously use this space when they find themselves before or after school sorting through resources—with an open, inviting space,

Our group meeting area isn't fancy, but it's a popular place for informal meetings before and after school as well as our study groups.



they are likely to strike up a conversation with a colleague completing the same task, looking for that "just right" book for a mini-lesson on a specific strategy.

One of my most important chores is to sort through the mountain of catalogues, professional journals, flyers for workshops, and stacks of new professional and trade books to make recommendations for teachers. The resource board is updated continually—I try to post more than the new resource information, including if available recent reviews, links to other resources the teachers already know and like, and sets of photocopied articles in sleeves so that a teacher can grab and take a research essay that looks interesting.

I often update the "Literacy News" resource board with new materials, handouts, and professional readings.



These shelves hold graphic organizers.



I'm not a fan of worksheets in literacy programs, but some of the teachers I work with still use them. My compromise is to include an area for graphic organizers in the literacy room, which contains copies of thoughtful and simple tools to help students organize their thinking. Teachers check in regularly to see what is new here.

One of the treats I plan every year for myself and the teachers I work with are trips to the local bookstores. I need to be reminded of what appealing areas for literacy resources look like, and how the big chains like Barnes & Noble are constantly finding ways to help customers slow down, browse, and purchase new materials. My hope is that the literacy room has some of that same appeal, even if it did have a lowly start as a bare basement room that no one in the school wanted.

Tips for Organizing the Literacy Room

- Make sure there are comfortable spaces for teachers to stop and linger over materials.
- Consider the wisdom of bookstore owners, who know shoppers' traffic patterns and put the merchandise they are "pushing" where customers are most likely to see it. This might be a notice for an upcoming event, or a new professional book displayed on top of a bookshelf that you want everyone to notice.
- I keep bottled water, juice, and soda in a small fridge near the meeting area, and a coffeemaker near the fridge to encourage colleagues to take a break and talk about literacy.
- I purchased the fridge, many books, and some of the equipment in the room with bonus points from book clubs.
- Framed children's art is a great way to dress up even the dowdiest work space.
- It is okay to have baskets on a theme that have just a few books in them, especially at the start. This gives you room to grow as your library grows. You'll be reorganizing the baskets anyway, as you see what interests teachers or what new themes emerge.
- I find it easier to browse catalogues than to surf the Web for professional materials, and these catalogues are good to have on hand in the professional-books area for teachers to browse. I also share the latest professional journals in this area.

On Board with Literacy Leadership

Jennifer Jones and Charity Meyer
Literacy Coaches from Waukesha, Wisconsin

It all started when we read Jen Allen's book *Becoming a Literacy Leader*. We wanted to move from our current roles of reading specialists in the direction of literacy coaching. We are only two of fifteen reading specialists in our district, and our district is also interested in moving to more of a coaching model. When we had the chance in October to go to Maine and spend two days learning alongside Jen Allen and Brenda Power, we wasted no time in making travel arrangements. Over the course of the two-day workshop we had our thinking challenged, engaged in dynamic dialogue with literacy leaders from across the country, and, most important, were inspired.

The first item on our agenda was planning how we were going to share everything we experienced and learned with the other members of our department. While waiting in the Portland airport to fly home we decided to follow Allen's model for study groups using her book as a common text. We also decided to test out the use of "Literacy News" boards for teachers in our school.

Any shift in roles and responsibility comes with skepticism, anxiety, and eventually enthusiasm. Literacy News resource boards are a manageable step in the coaching direction without a major overhaul of our current positions. According to Allen (2006, p. 10) a literacy resource board is "... devoted to professional resources. It contains information such as fall and spring literacy assessment expectations, book lists, articles, conference opportunities, and new professional book titles." For us, the literacy resource board was an avenue to get conversation and discussion moving in the direction of literacy instruction not only in our building, but among other literacy specialists as well.

Our goal of course is to be able to create a teacher-centered environment, like Jen Allen's resource room.

Because many of the members of our department have limited space, the Literacy News

resource board provided the perfect way to branch out into other areas of the building to inform teachers of current literacy news. As a result of our initial efforts and sharing through our study group, numerous other members of our department have established Literacy News resource boards in their buildings. The following is a list of tips we found most helpful in getting the boards up and running:

Purpose: Determine a purpose for your literacy news. Ours is to educate, invite, and promote conversation and discussion about best practices in literacy instruction. Items displayed also invite teachers to come to the literacy resource room for additional information. Set the expectation that this board is for items and issues related to literacy, not a place to post or hang union bulletins, an invitation to science night, or what to do during a fire drill.

Location: As with so many displays, location is everything. It's important to place your Literacy News resource board in a high-traffic area. We all know that we can walk down the same hallway in our building day after day, year after year, and not notice new things. It takes something that is visually inviting to catch our eye, and that is what the resource board needs to do. Avoid cluttering the board with too much; think quality not quantity, knowing you will change the board monthly. The same is true for your literacy resource board. Some high-traffic areas may include the copy room, across or near the staff lounge or restroom, the mailboxes, a well-lighted spot near a main entrance, or outside the literacy resource room.

Audience: In our district we are faced with the challenge of providing support for teachers and classrooms in grades K–6. We have found that it is important to consider the audience of the Literacy News resource board. Primary and intermediate literacy developmental needs are different, and it is

necessary to ensure that the resource board includes information for this wide range of needs. You may consider creating a literacy resource board for primary and another for intermediate, depending on your building needs and resources.

Advertise: Staff needs to be aware that the literacy board is available for viewing and that teachers should make sure to check it out each month. We discovered the value of advertising when a teacher at one of Jennifer's schools commented that she had just recently seen the resource board even though it had been on display for several months. This teacher also told Jennifer that she and others do not frequent the teachers' lounge where the literacy board is placed. Jennifer placed an ad in the weekly news bulletin the following day so teachers knew to pop in and take a look. She is also considering a second Literacy News resource board in another part of the building for teachers who do not frequent the teachers' lounge. Advertisement of the literacy resource board may occur through team meetings, an invitation to view, or weekly news bulletins.

Maintenance: Change the literacy resource board monthly. We try to change our board around the first of each month. Consider teaming up with another literacy leader or leaders in your district to share resource board items. We tend to recommend articles and swap poems. This way each of us is not reinventing the wheel at the beginning of each month.

Materials: Suggestions for items to include on a literacy resource board may include but are not limited to the following:

- Current resources available such as new professional publications, teaching resources, and student materials
- Information on upcoming professional development opportunities
- Study-group meeting dates
- District assessment guidelines, dates of administration, and results
- Mini-lesson ideas
- Web resources such as newly discovered Web sites and blogs
- Reflection questions or quotes about literacy that promote thinking
- Poem of the month
- Inspiring articles
- Student work that reflects best practice in literacy
- Comics related to literacy instruction

We have found that cutting a two-pocket folder down the center and attaching it to the resource board makes for a great place to provide copies of materials on display so that observers can take and run with the great ideas and information. Encourage and invite teachers to share and submit items they think the resource board would be a good place to display.

As a result of the Literacy News resource boards, we have noticed an increase in the number of teachers coming to the resource room for additional information and discussion. This is our first baby step toward becoming more contemporary literacy leaders and coaches. We look forward to implementing many other aspects of literacy leadership and hope to have additional opportunities to share our experiences as we move from the world of reading specialist into the world of literacy leadership and coaching.

Building the Reading Community

Jennifer Allen

The starting point for teaching reading is always our own lives as readers—tuning in to our processes as proficient readers, and then tapping that knowledge to help the children in our care develop new skills and strategies.

One of the most important things I strive to do as a literacy coach is build self-awareness in my colleagues of their reading. We all lead busy lives, and it's not easy to slow down and note the books or texts that bring us pleasure, how we've grown and changed as readers, and how we are part of different communities of readers (at home and in school). Here are some simple strategies I use to build the community of readers among the adults in our building:

1. **Book swap**—The book swap baskets in the literacy resource room are a place where teachers can exchange novels, collections of poetry, or nonfiction texts they have enjoyed recently with colleagues. Over the past few years, the book swap baskets have become very popular. Teachers mention books they have read for fun as they browse the resources for children in the room, or when we meet for study groups. There is also an area near the book swap baskets where teachers can post recommendations. Here is a list of titles recommended recently by my colleagues.

Recommended Reads

- *The Other Boleyn Girl*, Philippa Gregory
 - *Night*, Elie Wiesel
 - *Mephisto Club*, Tess Gerritsen
 - *Memory Keeper's Daughter*, Kim Edwards
 - *On Writing: A Memoir of the Craft*, Stephen King
 - *Skylight Confessions*, Alice Hoffman
2. **Shared novel or memoir**—This year our entire staff is reading *The Glass Castle* by Jeannette Walls. I chose this book for many reasons. The

first is that it is beautifully written. You can't help but be drawn in to the author's story of her horrendous childhood with neglectful parents (who remain in some ways sympathetic characters, despite the abuse). The book also fosters discussion of childhood poverty. The majority of children at our school receive free or reduced-price lunch, and we don't talk enough about the effects of poverty on learning. Finally, the book is a wonderful tool for discussion of reading strategies. We typically read a small amount of the text at a staff meeting, before we get into the usual faculty meeting agenda. This leads naturally into discussion of comprehension strategies with students.

3. **Family literacy breakfasts**—Each year we invite two children's book authors to talk at a breakfast for families. Every member of the school community—from janitorial staff to the students' parents—is invited to attend.

What makes the breakfast extra special is that a copy of the book is provided to each family or staff member who attends (one per family). I use Parent Involvement funds to pay for the books, and plan far in advance. This year our featured authors were Allan Sockabasin and Robert Pottle. Everyone received a copy of *Thanks to the Animals* and *Maine: The Way Life Is: A Year of Wicked Good Poetry*. Next year Jennifer Armstrong will join us for poetry. Students will receive her book *A Poet's Basket*. Ralph Fletcher will join us next spring and read from his book *Fig Pudding*.

These shared texts and experiences all build our appreciation of our reading lives, and how we are a community of readers. From one-time events to the ongoing book swap, we are talking about books and reading for pleasure naturally all year long.

How Study Groups Are Like Self-Cleaning Ovens

Jennifer Allen and Brenda Power

One of our favorite inventions ever is the self-cleaning oven. Set a timer, lock the oven door, and a few hours later—voila! You have a clean oven and can feel virtuous about it, even though it required almost no effort on your part.

Study groups can be like self-cleaning ovens: put a few key elements in place, and they can almost run themselves. We used to spend hours looking for the perfect activity or icebreaker for groups, but over time we've found that a standard format with regular components works best for us. Teachers who come to the group know what to expect. It's not that they aren't exposed to new things, but it's all within a structure that invites comfort and reflection. Here are the components of our study groups that help make the groups feel like they are running themselves:

Meet for One Hour

We've tried longer and shorter formats, and one hour is just right for not requiring too much of a commitment from teachers but still allowing for in-depth exploration of a topic. We provide the schedule months in advance, so that everyone can plan appointments and activities around the study-group meeting.

Provide Discussion Time at the Start

We like to focus the group at the start with a couple of questions related to the study-group topic, or just open it up for discussion about what everyone has tried, related to the theme since the last group meeting. This is a transition time—we can sense everyone relaxing and switching gears from their classrooms to the study-group topic.

View Videos

We've found that many teachers will not read professional books. We can lament all the reasons why some teachers don't enjoy professional reading, but the point is that we can't be certain that teachers will read books we give them outside the study groups. For this reason, we always include short

video snippets so that we have a shared experience with professional best practice.

We've found that it's important to watch video segments that are no more than five to ten minutes long during a study group. So much is going on in each minute of a classroom video that more than a few minutes in a professional setting is overload. We watch one lesson, or one conference with a student, and focus the viewing with a note-taking task. For example, if the video is of a lesson, we might have participants keep two-column notes, with one column labeled "What I Notice" and the other labeled "What I Might Try in My Classroom."

We use videos from Choice Literacy, Stenhouse Publishers, Heinemann, and the Annenberg Foundation; they are all excellent sources of professional video featuring authentic classroom examples of reading and writing workshops.

Include Reading Time

Because many teachers are hesitant about reading professional books, we've found that providing reading time during study groups is essential. We photocopy a brief article or a short excerpt from a book, or highlight a few pages within the book we've purchased for the group to read throughout the year, and include five to ten minutes of silent reading time. Even participants who have read the excerpt recently appreciate the time to dig in and reread and the chance to discuss it with their colleagues while it is still fresh.

We've found that many of the short essays at Choice Literacy are an excellent length for use in study groups. We have one focus essay on a topic, and provide a second or third one for those participants who read faster than their colleagues.

Whole-Group Discussion

We always close the study group with some whole-class discussion of what participants learned and what they plan to try out in their classrooms before the next session. We also make plans for the next session with the group. For example, if we are

working our way through a book together, we talk about reading for the next session. We discuss what video segment it makes sense to view at the next session, based on what worked and what didn't with today's video. We always end each study group on time. Participants are welcome to stay after the group and chat, but those on tight family schedules need to know they can depend upon us to begin and end on time.

A Typical Study Group

With these elements in place, our study groups look remarkably similar from group to group, though the content and group dynamics vary greatly. Here are sample schedules from different study groups at different grade levels, to give you a sense of how the format works:

Sample One-Hour Format: Study Group on Literacy Instruction for Young English Language Learners

Whole-Group Discussion (10 Minutes)

- What went well in a conference you had with an English language learner this week?
- What are you struggling with in your conferences?
- What else is on your mind about working with English language learners?

Reading (15–20 Minutes)

“Understanding the Silent Period” by Andie Cunningham and Ruth Shagoury (Choice Literacy Web site)

Bonus Reading: “Conferring with Young English Language Learners” (Choice Literacy Web site)
OR a two-to-three-page excerpt from Focus Book: *Starting with Comprehension* (Andie Cunningham and Ruth Shagoury, Stenhouse Publishers).

Either in small groups or all together, discuss experiences with the “silent period.”

Video (15–20 Minutes)

View conferences with Vita and Larisa (two students in the silent period) from *Write from the Start: Conferring with Young English Language Learners* (Choice Literacy, 2006). Before viewing, ask participants to take notes

on all the nonverbal cues each child gives their teacher. After viewing, discuss the cues.

Next Steps (10–15 Minutes)

Discuss what strategies participants have learned for working with students in the silent period, and what else they might try in their classrooms. Make plans for the next workshop. What other issues are emerging in conferences with young English language learners? What readings and video might be helpful at the next study-group meeting linked to these issues?

Sample One-Hour Format: Study Group on Overcoming the Fourth- Grade Slump and Eighth-Grade Cliff

Whole-Group Discussion (10 Minutes)

What similarities are there between fourth and eighth graders? What are key differences? How can teachers at these different grade levels learn to talk with each other more?

Reading (15–20 Minutes)

Read pages 64–68, “Thinking Through Grouping,” from Focus Book: *Still Learning to Read* (Franki Sibberson and Karen Szymusiak, Stenhouse Publishers). Talk about how different participants design reading groups, and what their roles are in the groups.

Video (15–20 Minutes)

View two small groups of fifth-grade readers from the video series *Bringing Reading to Life* (Stenhouse, 2004). Before viewing, ask participants to take notes on all the questions students ask in the groups. What do the questions show about how teachers have prepared students for these groups?

Next Steps (10–15 Minutes)

Discuss what strategies participants have for helping students take more of an active, independent role in reading groups. What might they try, based on what they read, viewed, or discussed today? Skim through the book and select a focus for the next session, and talk through which video topics might be most helpful.

A study group meeting in the spring.



In both of these examples, you'll see that the group depends upon us to know the resource base. If a topic comes up that isn't addressed in the book or article set the group is reading (or is better addressed in another book or article), we offer to bring that to the next session. We've previewed the entire video series, so we can make suggestions about what selections might best address the interests emerging in the group.

Yet our role is also blissfully limited in these groups—everyone knows they will have a comfortable place to share their classroom triumphs and struggles, so many participants quickly learn to bring a funny story, or inspiring student sample, or baffling dilemma to share with the group. They expect the routines of video viewing, reading, and discussion each week, moving easily between jotting notes and chatting.

Because the format is predictable, the learning that emerges over time is rich. The last session of a study group each year is like that wonderful moment when we open our oven and wonder how it miraculously got so clean. Although the self-cleaning oven may remain a bit of a mystery to us, we know study groups are successful because of our belief that we need to let the community evolve over time. We provide a format and resources, and the learning over the year always exceeds our expectations and those of the participants.

Idealism Fades to Reality: Thinking Back to My Days as a New Teacher

Jennifer Allen

I still remember picking up the phone in my kitchen and hearing the words, “We would like to offer you a third-grade position.” Fifteen years have passed, yet the call and the emotions that filled the moment are still vivid and bring me right back to my start as a classroom teacher, the beginning of my journey as an educator.

As I hung up the phone that day many years ago, I began to dream of my very own classroom. I was ecstatic, ready to take off and face the challenges of classroom teaching. What I lacked in experience, I made up for with enthusiasm and my idealistic vision for creating a community of learners.

I spent the summer gathering resources, preparing materials, and creating the inviting classroom environment that I had envisioned during my days as an undergraduate. I shopped all summer, picking up materials that would stimulate learning. I designed and redesigned the physical layout of my classroom, making sure that I maximized the space. I set out to design a “quality” classroom based on William Glasser’s *The Quality School: Managing Students Without Coercion* (1990)—a classroom where students could work together and express themselves freely. I dreamed of a classroom where students would have an opportunity to pursue topics of interest and have a voice in their learning.

Yes, I lacked materials. Even my flag holder was empty. I barely had enough desks for my students. My classroom library was sparse, but I jazzed it up with a few new titles and borrowed books from the public library. Still, I was not discouraged. Together, the students and I would create a rich learning environment.

September came, the school year was set to start, and I was suddenly panic stricken. My classroom was set, but I didn’t have a clue about what I should be teaching the first week of school, never mind how I would cover the curriculum over the year. I wasn’t even sure how to set up the infra-

structure needed for reading and writing workshop.

Then there were the students, all twenty-three of them, including Matthew, who had autism and had been mainstreamed into my classroom without support. My behavior management plan based on Glasser’s control theory in the classroom did not prepare me for Matthew and his daily desk-flipping tantrums. To be honest I wasn’t even skilled at controlling the normal chatter level of the classroom. My small repertoire of behavior management strategies failed me!

I had a mentor assigned to me. She was someone to whom I could turn for logistical questions about the hot lunch program, recess, and field trips. She listened to me, but the reality was that she herself was busy teaching all day. As a new teacher, I also had to create a teacher action plan, which was a state mandate for acquiring a professional teaching certificate—so unconnected to my immediate needs that I was facing in the classroom.

By October, I was in over my head. It was like I had all the pieces of a puzzle but couldn’t put them together. I worked day to day, my head barely above water. I worked every night planning for the next day, and spent every Sunday trying to get ready for Monday. I had no life outside of school.

Days turned to weeks, and the weeks blurred into months. I became disillusioned about my chosen profession—the profession I had spent years dreaming about and planning for. I remember walking into the teachers’ room one day, feeling so detached. My mentor was there and asked how things were going. I simply responded, “I give myself three years and then I’m out of teaching. I just can’t do this.”

As I edged toward the end of my first year as a teacher, I felt alone and ineffective. Matthew was becoming more and more disruptive. I was unable to meet his instructional needs, and his behaviors were interfering with instructional experiences that

New teacher Jessica debriefs with Jeni and Jen after a fourth grade writing workshop.



I was trying to provide for the rest of the class. Somewhere near the end of the school year, Matthew stood up, flipped his desk, marched toward the exit door of my classroom, and in front of the entire class, waved his finger at me and declared, “You’re fired!” I thought to myself, I wish—take me out of my misery!

Here I am fifteen years later, working as a literacy specialist/coach, still working with students

and now teachers. Over the years I was able to recapture my enthusiasm for the profession and remain passionate about learning and supporting others in their personal learning journey. But I have never forgotten my first year. My own story as a beginning teacher guides me as I work to support new teachers in the challenges they face. And once again, I find myself revisiting *The Quality School*, the inspirational work of William Glasser.

In this guide I write about my work with new teachers and the layered support I offer them. I want to share with others what I learn from these beginning educators in hopes of offering insight into support structures that meet the needs of beginning teachers. I hope that through listening to their stories, we will all catch some of the contagious enthusiasm, fresh thinking, and limitless energy that new teachers bring to the profession.

Reference

Glasser, W. 1990. *The Quality School: Managing Students Without Coercion*. New York: Harper and Row.

Layered Support: Meeting the Needs of Beginning Teachers

Jennifer Allen

The new teachers who reported feeling the most supported described their schools as having what we called “integrated professional cultures.” There, new teachers could expect frequent and meaningful interaction among faculty members across all experience levels, and an appropriate novice status that accounted for their developmental needs while not underestimating their potential contributions.

—*The Project on the Next Generation of Teachers* at the Harvard Graduate School of Education

It was the week after April vacation. The talk around the school was that our two newly hired teachers would not be returning next year. I couldn't help but wonder if I had given them enough support. I worked in their classrooms each week, they had participated in monthly study groups, and they each had an assigned mentor. Still, I reflected on what was missing. I knew that they were scrambling with their day-to-day planning and didn't really have a yearlong vision for meeting curricular expectations. There was no time built into their schedule to meet with them. I often found myself making quick exchanges with them in the hallway. All their energy went into survival. All my energy went into helping them with the bare essentials of reading and writing workshops, and implementing local assessments. I knew they were not getting the depth and richness of support that they needed from me to reflect on student learning and use their classroom assessments to inform instruction. I felt that I was just spread too thin trying to meet the needs of our beginning teachers.

About a week after the news hit the school, Katie, one of the teachers, approached me to go over her literacy data. She sat down in frustration and said, “I don't know why I even care. I just don't know if I can do this again.” Her response hit me hard. It reminded me of my own first year of

teaching—the feelings of despair and disillusionment.

It was becoming quite clear to me that beginning teachers enter the profession with a fresh vision and new thinking, but often don't get the support they need to put their ideas into practice. As a result we lose good beginning teachers to other professions. Research supports this thinking. The book *Mentoring Beginning Teachers: Guiding, Reflecting, Coaching* includes these statistics: “National attrition rates indicate that 17 percent of educators leave teaching after one year, 30 percent after two years, 40 percent after three years, nearly half after five years, and up to 80 percent after ten years” (Boreen, Johnson, Niday, and Potts 2000, p. 6).

In addition to our inability to retain our new teachers, we are losing teachers to retirement. I work in a system with many veteran teachers. Over the next five years, we will lose a lot of staff to retirement. With those retirements, we will lose the instructional foundation that we have worked to build as a system unless we find a way to better support beginning teachers. I agree with Diane Sweeney, author of *Learning Along the Way*, that “constantly integrating new teachers into the school community takes time and energy” (2003, p. 98). But if we fail to provide beginning teachers with the support they need, we will find ourselves in this predicament year after year.

I processed some of my thinking with Lucy, a second-year teacher. Lucy shared with me that she didn't need more information and procedures, but rather craved time to process her thinking with others, solidify classroom structures, and plot out curriculum. She wanted opportunities to talk about the obstacles that she faced in the classroom throughout the year without feeling that she was burdening another teacher with her problems. Lucy shared that the supports in place, such as her mentor and in-class literacy support from me, were

invaluable. She also loved the sense of belonging that was generated through study groups, but said she would welcome even more support.

I handed Lucy the reflection I'd written about my first year of teaching (see pages 29–30). After reading it she shared that she could identify with all of my emotions. She went on to say, "It's still really hard for me to reflect and think about my first year of teaching." I replied, "It's taken me fifteen years to put my beginning teaching experience on paper." Writing about my experience as a new teacher made the issue of lack of teacher support all too real to ignore.

It was at this point that I designed another layer of support for beginning teachers that would be in addition to the other support systems already in place. It consists of a monthly designated in-service day for new teachers and will be co-facilitated by a classroom teacher, Leslie Lloyd, and me. This monthly full-day release will provide participants with opportunities to observe other teachers, map out curriculum, and create predictable structures within their classrooms. It will be a forum for new learners facing similar challenges—another layer, an added safety net for beginning teachers.

Essential Layers

- District In-Service
- Assigned Mentors
- Weekly In-Class Support
- Study Groups
- Monthly New Teacher In-Service

[By October, I had added a sixth layer, "Observing Others."]

The layers of support for new teachers are designed to be frequent but varied opportunities for learning. Curt Dudley-Marling and Patricia Paugh write that struggling readers benefit from frequent, intensive, and individualized instruction (2004). I believe that beginning teachers also benefit from a framework of support that is frequent,

intensive, and individualized. It is my responsibility as a literacy specialist/coach to provide meaningful professional development opportunities for new educators—opportunities and support that are relevant and connected to the day-to-day challenges that teachers face in the classroom.

I truly think that if we invest in beginning teachers up front and provide them with more support in the beginning of their teaching careers, our school systems will reap the payoff in the long run: skilled, thoughtful, reflective, energized educators who are essential members of our collaborative learning community and committed to student learning and achievement. In *The Energy to Teach*, Donald Graves writes, "We have to remember that when confronted by a world and profession that is in a hurry to get to an unknown destination, that we relax, listen carefully, become informed and ask tough and persistent questions. We relax because we know that we are on a long journey on behalf of our children" (2001, p. 98). Donald Graves reminds me to slow down and provide meaningful support systems to new teachers so that we can keep positive energy flowing within our schools.

References

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Planning a New Teachers' Professional Development Program

Jennifer Allen

It's the beginning of July and I am already sketching out plans for the first day of Charting the Course, the monthly professional development group for new teachers in our school. This new layer of support will be added to the mix of support systems (mentors, classroom support, school in-services sessions, and study groups) within the school. This initiative uses existing resources and staff to support our new teachers. The strategy of maximizing resources from within is supported by the findings of *The Project on the Next Generation of Teachers* at the Harvard Graduate School of Education, which found that "It is at the school site, rather than at the district, where key factors influencing new teachers' experiences converge; it is there that induction efforts should be centered."

The monthly professional development days are designed to provide a safe and supportive environment for new teachers to share challenges, ask questions, and look at how the literacy curriculum fits within the big picture of a school year. The meetings will be co-facilitated by a third-grade teacher, Leslie Lloyd, and me, the school's reading specialist/reading coach. It's essential to Leslie and I that our time together be productive and that participants find the days meaningful—that sessions are not just another meeting that takes them away from their classroom. So often we bombard new teachers with resources and activities but spend little time showing them how these activities fit within the big picture of the district's curriculum and a school year. The information shared at our meetings needs to be relevant to the group's immediate needs. The ultimate goal of Charting the Course is to support new teachers as they work to refine their skills as classroom teachers and at the same time help them gain insight into big-picture planning so that they start thinking about how curriculum fits over a school year. We want participants to see that teaching is more than the delivery of activities; skillful instruction is about thoughtful

planning that hinges on the interconnectedness of days, weeks, and months.

What's Best for Day One?

With goals set and monthly meeting dates set aside, Leslie and I are already planning for the group's first meeting day, the third week in September. Because we want the sessions to be responsive to the needs of the group, we can only sketch out a rough outline for the year (see pages 44–45). However, since we want these days to have a predictable structure, Leslie and I have come up with a basic plan for our meeting days. Our plan is that the teachers will have the morning to observe in other classrooms. The afternoon will be spent debriefing, plotting out curriculum for the upcoming month, and sharing strategies for reading, writing, and word-study workshops.

We know that we need to establish trusting relationships within the group right from the start, but also know that building relationships take time. We are sensitive to the fact that first impressions are lasting impressions—the tone we set the first day can make or break the success of the group for the year. It's easier to move forward slowly than to backtrack and repair first impressions.

Our first meeting will be a full day together, without classroom observations. We want to leave plenty of time for discussion and not feel the constraints of the clock. We hope to get a sense of the group's strengths and struggles so that we can tailor upcoming sessions to support their needs. The plan is to let the group teach us what their basic needs are as new teachers on this first day.

First Meeting Schedule for September

- Beginning-of-the-Year Celebrations
- Sharing Personal Literacy Histories
- Challenges and Obstacles We Face in the Classroom
- Plotting Out Fall Literacy Assessments

- Mapping Out Curriculum Topics: Getting a Big Picture
- Looking Ahead: What Are the Needs of the Group?

This upcoming school year we will have four new teachers who are within their first three years of teaching and one veteran teacher who has been out of the classroom for a few years who has chosen to participate in the group. Our hope is that having these new teachers at the center of our professional development support system means they will become a community and stay connected within the school—and at the end of the year, will still feel they have made the right choice by entering the profession of teaching.

Over the school year I will write about our journey as we try out this initiative for new teachers. I will share their successes and challenges as new teachers to the profession. I will also share my

Mapping curriculum early in the year with new teachers.



celebrations and obstacles that I encounter as a literacy coach striving to assist new teachers. You will get to know the teachers in the group, and learn of the triumphs and challenges they face during the year among new colleagues and students, and within a new school.

Night Terrors: Let the Coaching Begin!

Jennifer Allen

It's mid-July and I just received an e-mail from Jessica, one of our newly hired fourth-grade teachers. I can sense her energy through the cable line. Jess has just finished setting up her classroom, and she is thrilled with the layout of the room. She has her desks in groups and enough chairs for all her students. She is especially proud to share about her classroom library and how she has organized the books. She has been buying books on eBay to add to her classroom library. Jess also shares her thoughts on the professional reading she has done over the summer. She has enjoyed *Nonfiction Craft Lessons* by Ralph Fletcher and JoAnn Portalupi and plans to incorporate nonfiction into both her reading and writing workshops. She has even started designing an integrated unit on Egyptian mummies to kick off the year.

I immediately e-mail Jess back in support of all her thinking and new ideas. I truly am excited for Jessica and all the work she has done. I know that she is ready for the school year and think to myself that she will be an amazing teacher.

Then a week later I get another note from Jess. This note is different—full of fear. The gist of this note is that Jess is petrified of starting the school year and is having nightmares. Visions of out-of-control students fill her dreams at night.

Jess and I meet the following week for lunch. We talk for more than two hours and laugh off the vision of a room full of fourth graders ruling the classroom. Again she shares all of her brilliant, thoughtful ideas about starting the school year, right down to her behavior management system. Her excitement and energy is contagious; I find myself secretly wishing I was back teaching in the classroom.

Halfway through lunch I finally ask, “Why are you so petrified?” She shares that now that her classroom is set up, her fears of not knowing what to do are settling in. We talk about what the first

day of school might look like and the importance of routines and a predictable schedule from day one. I ask a lot of questions and do a lot of listening. I also tell her that if she weren't anxious and nervous about the beginning of school, I would be worried about her. What educator is not nervous about the start of the school year? I know my own nervous energy starts to kick in by the beginning of August.

My interactions and informal conversations continue with Jess throughout the summer, and they make me realize that coaching doesn't have to start at the beginning of a “school year.” It can begin through e-mails, phone calls, and notes as soon as new staff is hired. I realize as a literacy coach working to support new teachers and staff that I need to take advantage of the summer months to start fostering these new relationships. As a teacher I never waited for the first day of school to get to know my incoming students. I always started my summer by sending out postcards to them, encouraging them to write to me throughout the summer. The same can be done to start building relationships with new staff as a literacy coach. I believe coaching works best if there is a trusting relationship between the coach and the teacher—not something that can be created on a set timetable.

These small reflective moments bring new insights into my role as literacy coach. As a result of our e-mails and conversations, Jess and I are comfortable with each other already, on our way to building a trusting relationship. Jess is excited to collaborate with me in her classroom, and I am eager to catch some of her energy and enthusiasm for teaching! She has reminded me that my work needs to start before the first day of school. I will certainly take time to send cards out to the new teachers and let them know that I am available to listen to their thinking and to support them now.

Charting the Course: A Yearlong Professional Development Plan for New Teachers

Jennifer Allen

My first task in thinking through how to work with new teachers was to design a professional development plan for the entire year. Only then could I be sure the group would receive both the content and the experiences they would need during our daylong meetings each month. The plan I've provided here is what I plan to follow all year. Leslie Lloyd and I will assist the group each month with observations in classrooms, shared professional reading, video viewing, and mapping out curriculum and assessments.

We start in September with a full day together, getting to know each other and looking at the topics of study for the year. In October, we move to the “normal” schedule of observations in classrooms during the morning and professional development all afternoon. By November, the structure of the afternoon sessions will be in three blocks, including professional development in the areas of reading, writing, and word study. I've found that

Jen and Leslie Lloyd launch reader's workshop during the New Teachers Group meeting in October.



professional reading and viewing videos of master teachers using best practices are essential for focusing and moving forward. You can view our plans for the year on pages 44–45.

Reflective Observation: Helping Teachers Observe, Analyze, and Guide

Jennifer Allen

Our new teacher support group includes monthly observations of peers, with time scheduled after the observations for group discussion and analysis of what everyone saw. I wanted to develop some observation tools the teachers could use that wouldn't intimidate the observer OR the teacher being observed.

The one-page form on page 46 is designed to ensure that the teachers have some shared elements in their observations. They will all consider the room layout and issues such as materials used or how to assess learning. But beyond that, I hope the form fosters self-reflection, as the observers weigh what they are seeing against their own teaching styles and classrooms. I don't want the form to feel evaluative—I even pondered the font for a while, before choosing a soft script that looks less institutional than what we see on most forms in schools.

Jeni refers to her observation form notes as she confers with Lesley and Jen after observing a lesson.



Keeping It Simple: Reflections on the December New Teachers Study Group

Jennifer Allen

“Written on a sticky note stuck to the edge of my laptop are three phrases: Listen first; teach by example; be patient. These are three things I’ve learned as a school-based literacy coach.” (Journal of Staff Development, Winter 2007)

—Juli Kendall

I sit with a cup of coffee, reading the latest issue of the *Journal of Staff Development*. The last page is an article by Juli Kendall that first appeared on the Teacher Leaders Network Web site. Juli’s words of wisdom remind me of the simple secrets to effective literacy coaching. It’s so easy to get caught up in the mountain of strategies and protocols for designing effective professional development and forget what is really important for me to do. Juli’s comments remind me that my guiding principles really are not found in a research article but are much more personal, involving my interactions with teachers and my skills as a facilitator.

I sit reflecting on last week’s New Teachers Group. It’s December, and we have met together monthly since the start of school in September. The monthly agendas have taken on a predictable pattern, and we are starting to build relationships within the group. The uncomfortable silences have been replaced with chatter about books we are reading and the television shows we are following. We quickly learned that most of us are avid watchers of *Grey’s Anatomy*. Our monthly meetings have fallen into a predictable rhythm, comfortable for participants and filled with rich discussions. The teachers share each month that our time together is a gift and extend their thanks for the support they have been given.

Listening

We start each afternoon meeting with a time to reconnect and talk about what everyone saw in the morning classroom observations. It would be easy to cut the reconnecting section of our agenda short

since we are so pressed for time—but this is a time for the teachers to talk and Leslie Lloyd (my co-facilitator) and me to listen. By listening to their conversations and taking notes, Leslie and I get a feel for the needs and future direction of the group. By listening to them share their classroom observations, we can get a sense of what is important to them as learners.

One of the teachers shared evidence of gradual release that she had observed in a writing lesson during this month’s reconnecting and sharing time. It was more meaningful that a new teacher identified gradual release and then shared the example with her peers as opposed to me “teaching” this concept out of context to the group. The teachers also exchanged management strategies that they are picking up in other classrooms. Sometimes I forget how important it is for new teachers to develop a toolbox of classroom management strategies. At times I find myself wanting to jump into the conversation and share teaching points, but I am reminded through Juli Kendall’s words that it’s more important for me to sit back and listen to the new teachers’ learning and inquiries than to share.

Teach by Example

We focused on launching literature circles in reading workshops this month. Instead of just talking about what literature circles were and distributing role sheets, Leslie taught by example. She introduced a text selection to participants and had the group engaged in real text looking for their own personal connections and proceeded to have a literature discussion based on the text. We also had the group watch a video on literature circles by Harvey Daniels. It was through this viewing that I was reminded how instrumental authentic videos are for bringing literacy concepts alive.

The video provided a visual for the group—they loved it! Viewing literature circles at different

grade levels put all the pieces together and took the concept of literature circles beyond the basic roles—a place where many teachers get stuck. The video also provided a springboard for a discussion around literature circles. You could sense that these new teachers were developing their own visions and thoughts on how they wanted to integrate or refine literature discussions within their own classrooms.

We also had a mini-writing workshop. We introduced the concept of revising titles and had participants try out this revision strategy with ongoing drafts from previous meetings. It was interesting how much moaning there was when it came time to write. Leslie and I wrote and modeled through example. We think the teachers need to experience a writer's workshop themselves if they expect their own students to participate in a writer's workshop.

Patience

I am reminded that I need to be patient. Change takes time, and it never happens as quickly as I would like. Sometimes I forget about all the other curriculum areas that a new teacher has to juggle

beyond literacy. I forget how hard it was for me as a new teacher to incorporate all of my new learning into the classroom. I know all this, but in reality I want the new ideas to be implemented now.

When participants fail to bring materials, lose handouts, forget their writing journals, or choose not to use the observation sheets I have asked them to use, I need to remember to be patient and ease up a bit. I need to remember to listen to what the teachers are telling me, sit back, and hear their successes, to support their individual learning curves.

It's hard being a new teacher. It's hard being an effective literacy coach. We all want to feel successful. We also need to remember that learning takes time, as adults and as children.

I am sitting here finishing my coffee, humbled by Juli Kendall's words, words that I know in my heart are the true guiding principles of an effective literacy coach and classroom teacher. I know that in the hustle and bustle of jammed schedules I will need gentle reminders of what is really important and where I should focus my time and energy. So I, too, have taped a Post-it to my computer, with Juli's words to guide me: "Listen first; teach by example; be patient."

When Life Happens: January New Teacher Update

Jennifer Allen

It was noontime when I received a call from my day care provider, Sandy. She told me that my daughter, Samantha, was coughing a lot. I had an important meeting scheduled for the afternoon with several district principals, literacy specialists, and the superintendent. I decided that I would still go to my meeting and just put a call in to my doctor. Yes, I left Samantha at day care. I thought to myself, Why does life happen on such inconvenient days?

Why did I hesitate to leave work early? I had taken time off before Christmas because Samantha had been very sick. That week, I had spent four days captive on a couch watching the Disney Channel and listening to the music of the Cheetah Girls. Then just last week I was out of state doing consulting work. I felt guilty about taking more time off.

I knew that I needed to follow up on the fact that Samantha was sick again. I put a call in to my doctor and went to my meeting. As the meeting went on and on, I was thinking, What kind of mother fits her daughter into her day like another appointment? I know you must be thinking that I am a horrid person, an inattentive mother! I share this with you because I am constantly wrestling with balancing the demands of my family and job.

As soon as I left the meeting, I turned on my cell phone and found that I had a message. The doctor wanted to see Samantha that day. I rushed home to get Samantha. As I drove, I couldn't help but think about my jam-packed schedule for the following day. I was meeting with another teacher first thing in the morning to go over writing samples. Leslie and I had the New Teachers Group all day. I would then end my day with a study group on writing. Seven substitutes had been hired for the day. It would not be a good day to miss!

I brought Sam to the doctor. Without question they determined that she had a chest infection and that one of her ears was bulging red. The doctor prescribed an antibiotic. Believe it or not I was still thinking that I would leave the doctor's office and

fill the prescription, and that everything would be all set for the next day. Then, just as I was about to leave the office, the doctor turned to me and said, "Samantha needs to stay home tomorrow." It was as if the doctor had read my mind. "No problem," I said. "I will keep her home."

I got in the car with Samantha and just sat for a minute. There were really no decisions to be made, just phone calls. I knew in my heart that I was a mother first and that school would go on without me—but somehow I had still needed a doctor to help me make that decision.

I called my principal, Harriet, and explained the situation. I told her not to worry, that the day would go on as planned and that I would get Leslie, the co-leader of the group, to facilitate the day. Harriet was only worried about Samantha.

Next, I called Leslie. Leslie was more concerned about Samantha than having to facilitate the New Teachers Group by herself. Our plans were already in place for the day. We decided to go over the agenda one more time on the phone in the morning. As I thanked her for helping me out, she said, "That's why it's great to have a partner—you are never in it alone!"

The last thing scheduled for my day was the study group on writing. There are ten teachers in that group. It would be a nightmare to reschedule since I have so many other groups going on during the month. Plus, the weather in Maine is a constant issue in January, often forcing the cancellation of events. I knew they really didn't need me there—the teachers could run their own group.

My last phone call was to Carolyn, one of the teachers in the group. I asked her to facilitate the group and she agreed without hesitation. I let her know where the materials (agenda, reading excerpts, and video) were and told her to call me at home with questions. Carolyn's last words were "Go take care of my godchild!"

After hanging up with Carolyn, I realized that the culture of professional development is beginning to become part of our school community. I

might have been the one to initiate some of these opportunities, but through shared ownership and distributive leadership others in the school have become an integral part of the planning process. As a result, days like this can go on as planned. Isn't that our ultimate goal, to create sustainable professional learning communities that are not dependent on specific personnel? I would be proud if the New Teachers Group and study groups continued within the school long after I am gone.

By six o'clock that evening, I had resolved to spend the next day on the couch with Samantha

watching the Disney Channel and singing along to the tunes of the Cheetah Girls. I realize that there is never really a good day to get sick. I also know that I should have just skipped my "important" meeting that day. I should also ask for help more often when I need it. What could possibly be more important than my child? I am learning to let go. Being an effective literacy leader is not always about facilitating every professional development group. Sometimes it is more important to know when to step back and let others lead the way.

Learning from the Shadows

Jennifer Allen

This past month I decided to try something a little different. I asked Jeni, a teacher in her third year, to shadow me for a full day. New teachers have always made their observations alone. Selfishly, I wanted to be part of the observation and debriefing, and hear their thinking firsthand.

Jeni observed me in various classrooms. She took notes for each lesson observed. At the end of each literacy period I would debrief with the classroom teacher as Jeni listened in. Then she would join in on the conversation, sharing her insights and wonderings. Jeni's comments covered procedural observations, classroom design, assessment questions, record-keeping strategies, observations of relationships with students, and insight into possible next steps for instruction. I was amazed at her thoughtful notes and the insights that she shared on each lesson.

During two of the observations Jeni picked up on the concept of using a student chart for taking a daily status of the class for writing workshop. She observed two different teachers using this strategy. She saw a similar idea implemented in two different classrooms, one belonging to a veteran teacher and another belonging to a new teacher. Jeni shared that she wanted to try out the idea in her own classroom. She asked both cooperating teachers for insight into obstacles she might be likely to encounter in trying out this strategy.

At the end of the day I was working in Carolyn's room, my home base classroom where I work three days a week. Carolyn and I were refining student-led literature discussions. As I walked around the room listening to the student discussions, I was a little disappointed. I didn't think the students were really responding to one another. However, during our debriefing period, Jeni

offered a different perspective. She said she thought it just took a while for the kids to warm up into their discussion. Jeni had also seen our video footage of the student-led discussion from October. She commented that she could see definite progress from the fall taping.

After hearing Jeni's comments I couldn't help but wonder if Carolyn and I were expecting too much too fast from a literature group discussion. Maybe we needed to give students time to ease into their conversations. Jeni even offered ideas about next steps for instruction. She shared that she might have another discussion with students on questions that make for strong discussions. Isn't this what we want teachers to do—assess in the midst of learning to inform instruction? Having Jeni observe literature circles gave Carolyn and me a new perspective on the student-led discussions.

Throughout the day Jeni commented on relationships—relationships that teachers had with their students and the relationship that I had with other teachers. She noted the strong relationships that teachers had with their students and how evident it was that teachers knew their students on both an academic and a personal level. Jeni also shared that it was interesting to watch me work with the different teachers. It made me realize that this form of observation may provide new teachers with a different lens for observing teacher collaboration with a literacy coach. I know that my role as coach varies with teachers, depending on the level of support and collaboration they are looking for.

Having Jeni shadow me for the day was a valuable learning experience. I gained just as much insight into my work as a coach as she did as a teacher. The experience once again reminded me of the power of layered coaching.

Two-Column Notes

What Do You Notice?	What Questions Do You Have?

Yearlong New Teachers Group Plan

Charting the Course in Literacy: Professional Development for New Teachers

Teachers: Grades 3-5
When: First Thursday of the Month
What: Structured Support for New Teachers in Planning and Implementing Curriculum
Facilitators: Jennifer Allen, Literacy Specialist & Leslie Lloyd, Grade 3 Teacher

8:30-11:00 a.m. Scheduled Observations of Other Teachers (Starting in October)
 11:00-11:45 a.m. Lunch
 11:45 a.m. -2:45 p.m. Professional Development Workshops in the Literacy Room

September (Whole Day) The Year at a Glance: Mapping the Big Picture	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reflecting on Personal Literacy History • Assessments Mapping Assessment Schedule • Setting Up Literacy Workshops Creating Predictable Structures and Routines Video: <i>Making the Most of News Magazines</i> Franki Sibberson and Karen Szymusiak • The Year at a Glance: Mapping the Big Picture
October Curriculum Chart: Mapping October	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Using Assessments to Inform Instruction Using the DRA to Inform Instruction - Setting Up Literature Groups Using Writing Prompts and Student Writing Samples to Inform Instruction Using the Elementary Spelling Inventory to Inform Instruction - Organizing for Word Study • Introduce Curriculum Chart: Mapping October • Reading: Setting a Purpose Video: <i>Bringing Reading to Life</i> Franki Sibberson and Karen Szymusiak • Writing: My Life in 7 Stories Generating Titles

Yearlong New Teachers Group Plan (continued)

Month	Reading Workshop	Writing Workshop	Word Study
November Curriculum Chart: Mapping November	Video: <i>Strategies in Action</i> (Stephanie Harvey & Anne Goudvis)	My Life in 7 Stories: Writing Snapshots Writer's Notebooks	Mapping Out Two-Week Cycle
December Curriculum Chart: Mapping December	Literature Circles: Introduction of Roles Video: <i>Literature Circles</i> (Harvey Daniels)	My Life in 7 Stories: Revision as Craft	Word Sorts
January Curriculum Chart: Mapping January	Comprehension Strategies Video: <i>Conferring with Boys</i> (Max Brand)	My Life in 7 Stories Peer Conferences	Integrating Word Study with Reading Workshop
February Curriculum Chart: Mapping February	Responding to Literature Constructed-Response Format	My Life in 7 Stories Video: <i>When Students Write</i> (Ralph Fletcher & JoAnn Portalupi)	Word Study Activities
March Curriculum Chart: Mapping March	Reading Fluency Obstacles in Sustaining Literature Groups	My Life in 7 Stories Assessing Writing: <i>Author's Profile</i> (Teri Beaver)	Word Study Throughout the Day Video: <i>A Day of Words</i> (Max Brand)
April Curriculum Chart: Mapping April	Decoding/Word Recognition Strategies	Genres of Study Obstacles for Sustaining Workshops Video: <i>Inside Notebooks</i> (Aimee Buckner)	Map Spring Assessments
May Curriculum Chart: Mapping May	Revisit, Review, and Revise Curriculum Chart Video: <i>Think Non-Fiction!</i> Stephanie Harvey & Anne Goudvis		
June Curriculum Chart: Mapping June	Review Classroom Data Reflect on the Year Goals for Next Year		

Blank Observation Form

Host Teacher:

Date:

Purpose for Visit:

Sketch the Room

Focus of the Lesson

<i>Zone in On....</i>	<i>Distribution of Time</i>	<i>What Do You Notice?</i>	<i>What Do You Wonder?</i>	<i>What Might You Like to Try?</i>
<i>Teacher (What is the teacher doing?)</i>				
<i>Evidence of Gradual Release</i>				
<i>Student Engagement (What are the students doing)</i>				
<i>Materials</i>				
<i>Environment</i>				
<i>Assessment (How do you know the students are "getting" it?)</i>				

Completed Observation Form

Host Teacher: Lesky Fowler

Date:

Purpose for Visit: Group observation

Sketch the Room

Focus of the Lesson

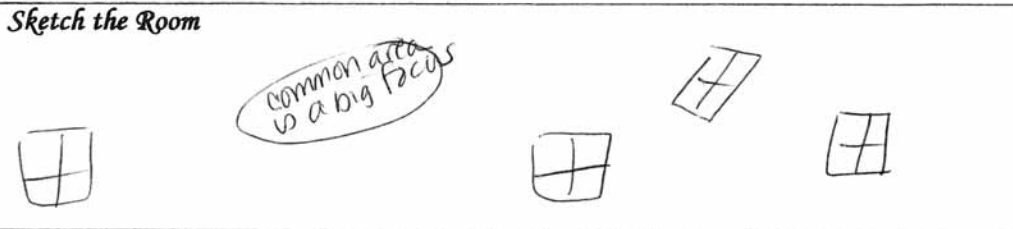
Zone in On....	Distribution of Time	What Do You Notice?	What Do You Wonder?	What Might You Like to Try?
Teacher (What is the teacher doing?)	<p>Write down your thoughts</p> <p>Sharing research Proj</p> <p>- Craft of writing</p> <p>- ears open for leads</p>	<p>→ listening</p> <p>→ Asking important questions</p>		<p>*Make students accountable for comments</p>
Evidence of Gradual Release	<p>Intro then lets students lead</p>			<p>what does student do w/ post-its?</p> <p>"I could imagine..."</p> <p>"I liked how you..."</p> <p>"I think it is interesting..."</p>
Student Engagement (What are the students doing?)	<p>- uses question for lead</p> <p>- Students are writing as Kayla shares</p> <p>- share thinking</p>		<p>- accountability of each student because they need to share.</p>	
Materials	<p>Post-its + pencil for each student to write what they notice</p>			<p>↓</p>
Environment				<p>* May try this to help model peer conferences</p>
Assessment (How do you know the students are "getting" it?)	<p>able to give thoughtful feedback to reader</p>			

Completed Observation Form

Host Teacher: Leslie Fowler
Purpose for Visit: Observation

Date:

Sketch the Room



Focus of the Lesson

Zone in On....	Distribution of Time	What Do You Notice?	What Do You Wonder?	What Might You Like to Try?
Teacher (What is the teacher doing?)	listen to author notice strength write down crafts where are you going next, discussed ears open	used author's chair You can tell they have a common writing topic	where did they get sources? expectations? # of IT?	I like the circle share
Evidence of Gradual Release	give a moment for audience to write down their thinking	everyone in circle shares Leslie models in comments		go on endings for research project?
Student Engagement (What are the students doing?)	read audience well shares comments	research so develop		any + po.
Materials	typed research paper	post-its - write comments for author		
Environment	common area's a big focus - if says the kids are a community		- how long was this process? - was there a common theme guided then a student choice	
Assessment (How do you know the students are "getting" it?)		Student's voice evident in N.F. writing topic sentences	audience writing post-its	clear phrasing rich take us back in time Gave me a pic language grab reader wrapped it up saying why the like it

how did they come up w/
organization, headings?
→
shows of
interesting topic
↓
did a group brainstorm
possible topics?
↓
NF genres?

post-its are very specific - naming crafts

Blank Yearlong Curriculum Mapping Form

Charting the Course: A Look at the Year in a Glance				
	Reading	Writing	Word Study	Assessments
September				
October				
November				
December				
January				
February				
March				
April				
May				
June				

Blank Monthly Curriculum Mapping Form

Charting the Course: A Look at the Year in a Glance

	Reading	Writing	Word Study	Assessments
September	Read Aloud: Literature Books: 1. 2. 3. Comprehension Focus: Vocabulary/ Word Work: Fluency:	Genre: Craft Focus: Conventions/ Mechanics Focus:	Word Within Word: Syllable & Affix: Derivational Relations:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Developmental Reading Assessment (DRA) District Writing Prompt Elementary Spelling Inventory Informal Writing Samples
October	Read Aloud: Literature Books: 1. 2. 3. Comprehension Focus: Vocabulary/ Word Work: Fluency:	Genre: Craft Focus: Conventions/ Mechanics Focus:	Word Within Word: Syllable & Affix: Derivational Relations:	
November	Read Aloud: Literature Books: 1. 2. 3. Comprehension Focus: Vocabulary/Word Work: Fluency:	Genre: Craft Focus: Conventions/ Mechanics Focus:	Word Within Word: Syllable & Affix: Derivational Relations:	

Blank Monthly Curriculum Mapping Form (continued)

	Reading		Writing		Word Study		Assessments
	Read Aloud:		Genre:		Word Within Word:		
December	Literature Books: 1. 2. 3.		Craft Focus:		Syllable & Affix:		
	Comprehension Focus: Vocabulary/Word Work:		Conventions/Mechanics Focus:		Derivational Relations:		
	Fluency:						
January	Read Aloud:		Genre:		Word Within Word:		
	Literature Books: 1. 2. 3.		Craft Focus:		Syllable & Affix:		
	Comprehension Focus: Vocabulary/Word Work:		Conventions/Mechanics Focus:		Derivational Relations:		
February	Fluency:						
	Read Aloud:		Genre:		Word Within Word:		
	Literature Books: 1. 2. 3.		Craft Focus:		Syllable & Affix:		
	Comprehension Focus: Vocabulary/Word Work:		Conventions/Mechanics Focus:		Derivational Relations:		
	Fluency:						

Blank Monthly Curriculum Mapping Form (continued)

	Reading		Writing		Word Study		Assessments	
March	Read Aloud:	Genre:	Genre:	Word Within Word:	Word Within Word:	Word Within Word:	• Start Developmental Reading Assessments (DRA)	
	Literature Books: 1. 2. 3.	Craft Focus:	Craft Focus:	Syllable & Affix:	Syllable & Affix:	Syllable & Affix:		
	Comprehension Focus: Vocabulary/ Word Work: Fluency:	Conventions/ Mechanics Focus:	Conventions/ Mechanics Focus:	Derivational Relations:	Derivational Relations:	Derivational Relations:		
April	Read Aloud:	Genre:	Genre:	Word Within Word:	Word Within Word:	Word Within Word:	• Score Search is On • District Writing Prompt • Elementary Spelling Inventory	
	Literature Books: 1. 2. 3.	Craft Focus:	Craft Focus:	Syllable & Affix:	Syllable & Affix:	Syllable & Affix:		
	Comprehension Focus: Vocabulary/Word Work: Fluency:	Conventions/ Mechanics Focus:	Conventions/ Mechanics Focus:	Derivational Relations:	Derivational Relations:	Derivational Relations:		
May	Read Aloud:	Genre:	Genre:	Word Within Word:	Word Within Word:	Word Within Word:	• Score Search is On • District Writing Prompt • Elementary Spelling Inventory	
	Literature Books: 1. 2. 3.	Craft Focus:	Craft Focus:	Syllable & Affix:	Syllable & Affix:	Syllable & Affix:		
	Comprehension Focus: Vocabulary/Word Work: Fluency:	Conventions/ Mechanics Focus:	Conventions/ Mechanics Focus:	Derivational Relations:	Derivational Relations:	Derivational Relations:		
June	Read Aloud:	Genre:	Genre:	Word Within Word:	Word Within Word:	Word Within Word:	• Score Search is On • District Writing Prompt • Elementary Spelling Inventory	
	Literature Books: 1. 2. 3.	Craft Focus:	Craft Focus:	Syllable & Affix:	Syllable & Affix:	Syllable & Affix:		
	Comprehension Focus: Vocabulary/Word Work: Fluency:	Conventions/ Mechanics Focus:	Conventions/ Mechanics Focus:	Derivational Relations:	Derivational Relations:	Derivational Relations:		

Sample Completed New Teacher Group Evaluation Form

New Teacher Group

Name Leslie

Leslie and I are reflecting on the New Teacher Group this year and already starting to think about next year. In talking with administrators it will be an expectation that all first and second year teachers participate in this group. If you have more than two years of experience then you have the option to participate next year since you did not have the opportunity to have two years of support. We realize that meeting every month was difficult and made for quite a bit of time away from your classroom. We are looking to start a bit later and end a bit sooner. We would like to start in October and end in May, skipping meeting in March.

Thanks,

Jen and Leslie

1) What instructional practices did you implement as the result of the monthly meetings?

Please be specific.

* I have used Carolyn's structure of planning the weeks of our literature circle books — this gives the kids a definite day to day plan. I'm also reading the books to be prepared and make the packets, so I know the books.
* Sorts for word study — sharing ideas

2) How did the monthly meetings inform your weekly, monthly, and annual planning?

Our meetings greatly affected my planning. I had the big picture map to refer to, to know what was expected in the curriculum.

3) How effective were the classroom observations?

So effective — the most effective tool in my new teacher experience. I learned so much from teachers — ranging from paper procedures, classroom behavior management, instruction strategies, etc. Since ~~I was~~ I'm kind of a non-traditional teacher — meaning I never student taught, observing teachers in different content areas and grades has been so useful to me.

7) What else would you have liked to have had included in the meetings?

I would like time to debrief ^{teachers}, even 5 mins, w/ the teacher to ask them any burning questions. I know this is hard to fit in, especially when they're in the middle of ~~the~~ a lesson.

Sample Completed New Teacher Group Evaluation Form

Name Jenni New Teacher Group

Leslie and I are reflecting on the New Teacher Group this year and already starting to think about next year. In talking with administrators it will be an expectation that all first and second year teachers participate in this group. If you have more than two years of experience then you have the option to participate next year since you did not have the opportunity to have two years of support. We realize that meeting every month was difficult and made for quite a bit of time away from your classroom. We are looking to start a bit later and end a bit sooner. We would like to start in October and end in May, skipping meeting in March.

Thanks,
Jen and Leslie

1) What instructional practices did you implement as the result of the monthly meetings?

Please be specific.

- literature circles -
- Inquiry-based format for teaching revision strategies like leads
- peer conferences in writing - ~~more~~ deeper than before
- post-its - more extensively

2) How did the monthly meetings inform your weekly, monthly, and annual planning?

Giving me effective, dynamic lesson structures & Ideas ... helping me keep my focus on enriching exciting learning (not getting "bogged down" in just thinking about management this year!)

3) How effective were the classroom observations?

Wow! Very powerful way to see models of different ways to arrange rooms, structure lessons, & language to use with students. Real-life examples of trying new strategies & techniques. Always helpful to "brush up" on techniques, areas to focus on, things I might be forgetting. Also - sometimes finding a strategy

7) What else would you have liked to have had included in the meetings?

??
..

or new idea for a classroom challenge (I didn't even know I was looking for a solution, for, maybe!)