Hello everyone!

What an awesome day we had last week with Mary Beth! Our work together provided us opportunities to learn about both the pedagogy of teaching guided reading as well as unpack the introduction of a new text within the LLI curriculum. An extra big thank you to Rayna for allowing us (and a few others;) to watch her teach a lesson.. such an powerful experience.

**Big Ideas From the Day-**

- To close the achievement gap we need to teach with urgency! Paying close attention to what reading behaviors students have and what we anticipate they might not be used to making, we can move them along the continuum. They don't need, nor should they be "marinating" in a single level of text for long periods of time. We should not be determining how high they can go in a given week, month or year :)
- The Book Introduction is the "coat tree that holds up the text for the reader." You are providing HOOKS on the coat rack as you go through each phase of the introduction. As students read, they are placing their understanding of the text on the hook you provided. It is important that you trust in Fountas and Pinnell and you follow their structures and prompts. As we know, it is very intentionally designed.
- Provide a compliment and a teaching point (reading behavior from the continuum) when you read 1:1 with a student (the conference is nested within the guided reading!)
- Take time to anticipate which reading behaviors individual students currently have and which will be your anticipated teaching point. Model it, then let them practice it.
- If you have a range of reading levels- provide scaffolding up, rather than teaching down.

**Next Steps-**

**By the end of January...**

- **Co-teach with a partner using the observation protocol we used with MaryBeth (attached). Pay attention to the pedagogy- how the parts of the lesson fit together? pacing? what research is done of the students? Share out with your PLC how this is a beneficial component to your professional development. We will also talk about this with MaryBeth in February :)**
- **PLC agenda item- Bring a lesson and plan 5 possible teaching points to have ready to give at the end of the introduction of the text (same process we did during our time together).**

I would love to come and watch each of you teach a lesson as well as help you coordinate your work with each other. Thank you for your time and dedication to this work...it's exciting to see the positive impact on student learning!

Please let me know if you have any questions.

I hope each of you enjoy a restful break and happy holidays.
Hi Team,

What an incredible day we had on Wednesday (I think this should be your PLC team name). Thank you for your engagement and energy that you brought to our learning. It is exciting to have the opportunity to work together and be apart of evolving our systems to support instructional coherence in the service of closing the gap for our most vulnerable readers.

A few themes from the day:

**Essential Elements**- We talked at length about essential elements of an intervention program. Several components include intentionally targeting individual needs using effective practices that are research based, creating shared ownership and collaboration with the classroom teacher, being a "warm demander" and allowing for academic struggle, etc.

**LLI vs. Guided Reading**- We had the opportunity to see how LLI takes the various components you are currently creating in your individual programs and intentionally combines them into an explicit, targeted and sequential system of lessons. LLI allows us to front load the text in order to move the student from where they are (instructional level), and teach them the reading behaviors needed to progress along the continuum at an accelerated rate. Remember, getting new materials doesn't make a difference if we continue to teach with them the same way we always have. We are growing our expertise and trusting that F&P know what they are talking about ;)

**Conversations and Constructs**- A major theme throughout the day was around collective efficacy and how we play an important role in modeling shared ownership of students who are served through various support programs. Remember to use the collective pronouns "we" and "our" as well as keeping a student centered focus in your conversations with staff (The student needs..., The student will be successful when..., So we need to...).

**Next Steps:**

It is an expectation that LLI is used as the primary instructional material for your program and that you will transition away from the other resources you have been pulling from. Have trust that this is what is best for students, and that it will expertly supplement their core curriculum as it was designed to do!

You had some time to plan an LLI lesson. Please plan to teach that lesson no later than **Wednesday October 17th**. At your next PLC meeting you will reflect and plan additional lessons. As Marybeth said, we are doing this work with grace and a sense of urgency. Together you have many superpowers- lean on each other, get messy and celebrate the successes!

We will begin to coordinate opportunities to observe models, co-teach groups and organize professional days for you to prep materials, work with your paras, etc. stay tuned :)

Please let me know if you have any questions and how I can support implementation in your programs. This is exciting work, and am so happy to be apart of it with you. Our students are very lucky.

Lindsay
Hi Everyone,

I truly enjoyed our learning together this week! The team has grown not only in number but in knowledge and excitement about the work. When asked what your most important tools are to assist your super power you collectively said each other! Your shared about the importance of utilizing your partnerships as supports to learn from one another, to build trust and relationships with staff and students, and to help you stay "laser" focused on the heart of the work- what is best for students! I can't think of anything more powerful- talk about collective efficacy! Together you identified several areas at the core of the work as we move forward.

**Shared Vision- What is the “WHY” of our work together this year?**
- Building student confidence and love of reading while closing the gap
- Implement LLI components and utilize structures consistently
- Students can understand and articulate their goal to become independent readers

**A few Key Ideas from our Learning**-

**Utilize think alouds when supporting adult learning**
- How are you making the decision about the teaching point...What you are working on and why “This is what we are going to be working on______, because_____.” Use curriculum specific language for calibration
- Responding to student needs/behaviors- “This is what I observed, this is what I am going to do about it…” (Compliment, misconception, error correction, etc)
- What are you paying most attention to in the moment and why/what follow up questions. What the adult should be listening for

**Planning a Lesson**
- Take time to consider what are they going to get vs. what might be a struggle when looking through the book prior to the lesson. Have a few teaching points ready ahead of time
- Remember the coat hook- what are we using to support the reader throughout the instructional leveled book (there should be some struggle which is where the teaching and learning happens!)
- Looking at the continuum, what specific behaviors/teaching points match goals and struggles of the text- which will you pay attention to. “What pops out neon to you?” Use the within, beyond, about to guide your decision making.

**Next steps**-
- Try pre planning using considering the above points and the triangle structure MB introduced to us (Student: what do you know about the student? Text: What are they likely to understand or mis understand from the text? Level: What is the level of the text?)
- Pick a partner to co-teach a lesson before November 15th. Please let me know what date you schedule this for so I can help cover if needed. It would be beneficial for you to share your pre planning- what you anticipate may be a struggle and what possible teaching points you may provide prior to the lesson. We will discuss this experience during our next time together as a group. *Be intentional about sitting side by side and co teaching- NOT separating tutoring to individual students ;)
- I would like to schedule a round of coaching with each of you in the next three weeks to support our new learning. Please send me a day and time that would work for you and one of your LLI groups.
Remember what Marybeth shared... “Teachers are superheroes in disguise!

Hey ELA team,

What a great day we had on Thursday learning about the planning process to ensure we maintain our very limited instructional time around transferable skills and strategies. Thank you Amy for your guidance and support.

Some key learnings that I heard from Amy and the team included:

- We need to focus on teaching a variety of strategies to help students learn the transferable skills.
- Creating skill based success criteria can help us keep skill, not tasks, at the forefront.
- In ELA, skills are the content.
- Backwards planning, starting with standards and skills and THEN thinking about text and task will help us focus on transferable skills during our mini-lesson.
- A one-size fits all T-shirt really fits no one.

Next Steps

Several people mentioned to me that it would be very helpful to know what was being taught where so they felt they could focus on certain standards and not have to feel like they have to cover ALL standards in depth with every novel. Stacy, Amy and I debriefed and felt like it would be great to give you some time to look at a year long scope and sequence based on standards, skills, and strategies. To that end, we set aside a couple of dates to do that work. I will have Laura get you subs and we will meet in my room to do the fun work :)

- November 19: Neva
- December 13: 10th Grade English (Tillson, St. Pierre, Worthy)
- January 10: 9th Grade English (Tillson, St. Pierre)

Thank you all for all you do to teach our students.

Dawn
Before the Studio Lesson

Hello 6 - 12 math teachers,

If I missed someone on the email list, please forward.

Tomorrow, Thursday, we will once again be together to work together on improving our math practices. Below are links to help prep you for the day. **We will meet in the high school conference room at 8:10.**

**Learning Targets:**

We will learn to plan purposeful questions in order to:

- Provide access to all students to make progress towards the day’s learning target,
- Assess and Advance students’ thinking,
- Engage students with each other’s ideas.

**Pre-Thinking for Tomorrow**

As we work together tomorrow, be thinking about what questioning strategies you have used since October and if there are certain questions or types of questions that you have found effective.

**Thursday CEL Math Agenda Link**

https://docs.google.com/document/d/1lS3Dclytaa2QD9Igoo_vhaPitA5NHOCqnmwSQ9s7NGE/edit?usp=sharing

**Follow-up from October, 6 - 12 CEL Math Training Day Link**

https://docs.google.com/document/d/1UeYGlp37KDnClvHZrcnkcLRBjOHBrKYPxyCv-mseb_o/edit?usp=sharing

We look forward to working together again tomorrow,

Darren Benson

After the Studio Lesson:

Hello 6-12 Math teachers! Amazing work last week planning and analyzing a studio lesson in Shawna Rouse’s geometry class. I loved doing the math, articulating a learning target together, and thinking through how to engage students in doing the kind of talk and thinking we hoped for during the lesson. (And we made it happen!)

**As a group we identified these key instructional moves during Shawna’s lesson that supported students in persevering with a problem with high cognitive demand**

- Decision to build processing in or chunk it our, connected to learning target
- Switching groups – changed status, choice, compare ideas, sharing thinking with each other, surface misconceptions, led to revision of thinking
- Accountability to share thinking (with 2 min time frame allowed students to struggle with and then engage with each other)
• Limited teacher talk but very intensive teacher decision making, thinking/adjustments/ongoing moves with the groups throughout the lesson
• Student turn and talks and private think time allowed them to engage with the task, prepared them to share
• Equalizing status, I want to hear from ----. You two talk and you two talk
• Decisions in the moment that were responsive to student needs, let the poster go because the talk and thinking was helping them meet the learning target
• Scanning and listening to students continuing to assess and make decisions to keep them engaged and making sense
• Reference to target throughout the lesson to keep them focused on making connections

Our Next Studio Classroom: March 11th Susan’s Classroom!!

What will we commit to between now and then?

Math Teachers:
1. Practice the habits of thinking of the group today and keep working on your assessing and advancing questions (what you named)

2. Co-Plan with a buddy (1-2 lessons) you may have some
   • Identify the skills, connect to standard
   • Develop a learning target
   • What would students say during and at the end of this lesson if they were doing the target? What would it sound like?
   • Assessing & Advancing Questions
   • Send your principal an email with a few quick bullets of what you learned

Scott/Darren/Stacy:
1. Observations and Look for’s
   • Observing for perseverance, Questions (Assessing & Advancing Questions)
   • Link to the target
2. Planning for support – leadership learning for administrator on Tuesday January 14th with CEL and with NWESD leadership collaborative

Shawna/Susan
• Peer observation
• Partner with you to plan or to observe and give feedback (we will find a way to make that happen as you need!)

Individual commitments to practicing instructional moves
• Shawna – time on learning targets, weekly rather than a really good daily one, pointed out what they need to do, make decisions not just the skill, needs to be really meaningful
• Tammie – Learning targets more meaningful not just specific simple skill
• Susan – make decisions in service of the target, keeping the target as the end in mind rather than the task
• Angie – Not get through a whole bunch of material but getting them through deep thinking, more opportunity to struggle, meaningful learning target and use that to keep in mind rather than
• Dave – target having more clear sense of where I want them to go in their learning make decisions, not just moving through topics, getting them in messy problems
• Scott – Struggle is important, kids knew what they would be learning and it was more about the thinking, they worked through struggle can transfer
• Sue – clear target but also named what they were looking for, letting them do more of the thinking and building peer -
• Damon – changing the groups, recognizing the critical moments, more in the moment decision making
• Aaron – keep working groups, make sure I get around to every group, ownership and buy in
• Ken – engineering pltw for February only (Check with Darren on this) Ken will keep thinking and identify an instructional goal as well
• Morgan – Learning target, benefit using to plan good lens to make decisions through
• Christy ready to explain, trying out process to get kids to interact with each others idea
• Don – accountability to ideas, articulate their thinking, wants to chat with Shawna on building culture in the classroom for talk and persistence
• Amanda – focusing on the main concept/learning target
• Kristin – switch planning process, flip process and write the target first, then plan and write the questions

Great work! Please be in touch with me, your principals, Shawna and Susan with what you need in order to implement these moves and refine your practice together.

Stacy
Paul, Elisa, and Julie,

Thank you for opening your classes to us yesterday. As you know, we are focusing on helping students persist while working and interacting with complex texts and solving challenging problems. We were able to observe the 6th grade ELA classes yesterday and used this focus as our lens.

Following up with more immediate feedback is something I am working at getting better at this year, so below are some noticings and one concrete instructional action that I would like you to try to help students think more complexly.

Noticings
We observed several strong instructional trends across your three classrooms.
- 3 of 3 classes had written learning targets that matched the learning activity.
- 3 of 3 classes had a visual representation of the plot line and quadrant language on the board.
- 2 of 3 classes had at least one turn and talk as part of the learning task.
- 2 classes were talking about plot elements
- 1 class was thinking and comparing different maps and wondering about their purpose
- 3 of 3 classes, students were asked questions and students responded or answered the questions.
- 2 classes, students were asked “why” a decision was made or “why” they had the opinion they had.
- 3 of 3 classes students had notebooks out (ELA or social studies)
- 2 classes students were using literature notebooks during the reading activity
- 3 of 3 were using common language for plot

Action
As I reflected on what I observed through the lens of increasing the complexity of student tasks and thinking, my huge “aha” today was that the questions we ask are an important part of making a verbal discussion or written task complex and interesting so that students engage in rich dialogue or written response.

- I would like us to experiment with how the questions we ask impact the complexity of the learning. **In the next day or two,** I would like you to choose your highest level question around your target and ask students to turn and talk about it and invite me in so we can observe the complexity of student verbal or written responses.

This kind of study can help inform our learning around how to encourage the growth we are looking for in our students persistence as they work through more complex tasks.

Thanks for teaching our kids and working so hard to make our classes amazing. If you have clarifying questions let me know, so I can continue to learn as well.

Remember to invite me in to observe the question and turn and talk.

Darren
Teachers,

**BMS Building-Wide September Classroom Walk-Through Feedback**

One of our goals is to give more frequent and specific feedback that identifies areas of strength and one or two specific instructional moves for the teacher to use. *(If you are a math or ELA teacher, some of this will be redundant, because you have defined or will be defining some instructional steps that include engaging students through meaningful tasks and higher level questions.)*

Our classroom walkthroughs have focused on Purpose, Student Engagement, and the complexity of the tasks on which students are working. Below are some noticings that include a few strengths and one instructional focus area to help engage student thinking and interest.

**Walk-through Strengths - September**

We noticed that teachers are:

- Establishing positive classroom culture and routines
- Clearly posting learning targets and Success Criteria
- Caring for kids SEL needs
- Asking students in-the-moment clarifying questions

Additionally, in our walk-throughs, we noticed a pattern of questioning and engagement that focused students on completing the task or activity.

We did not see as many students engaged in their own thinking, while working on a task. Students were often focused on completing the work and less on thinking about what they are learning.

**Walk-Through Focus Area: Higher Level Questioning and Inquiry**

As we observe in late-October and November, we will be listening for higher level questions and the resulting student conversations and learning that result from the discourse. Planning interesting higher level questions to open and close a lesson and encourage discourse during instruction can spark thinking while students are completing their tasks. **When students are thinking and engaged in learning, they will likely be more motivated to persist through challenging tasks.**

On the next page are some strategies that may help you implement your planned questions.

**Instructional Strategies to support implementation**

All Content Areas:

1. Create sticky notes with the questions you plan to ask to remind you to ask them.
2. Write the questions on the white board before the lesson to remind you to ask them.
3. Verbally open and close the lesson with the questions you want the students to think about as a result of the day’s learning.
4. Ask the questions while an observer is in the classroom and request feedback.
5. Write questions on sticky notes and place the sticky notes in student groups, then pause at key points and have students ask each other when you do your turn and talks.
6. Walk group to group asking your pre-planned “assessing” and/or “advancing” questions based on the responses of the students.

Math Specific:

7. **Math:** Find the suggested questions already developed in Agile Mind’s “Directions for Instruction.”
Some Higher Level Pre-Planned Question Examples:
Below are some sample questions I came up with. These are not intended to be “perfect” questions, but rather offered to show some possibilities. Have fun with it. Designing questions is also a good exercise for us as educators.

1. If we are learning to make connections from the text to the outside world, what clues will we look for as we read? Talk to your partner and then we will share our ideas with everyone.

2. Before you start to compare Living on a Dollar with Legend, think about this question . . . “How does comparing two different stories help us understand each individual story better and find common themes? You have two minutes to write your thoughts in your journal, then we will share with our partners.

3. How does learning to solve fractions, better prepare you to solve problems in your life? Take one minute for private think time and then we will discuss it with an elbow partner.

4. You have collected data for this (insert math problem or science problem here), what are some ways that we could make sense of the data? or . . . what are some ideas of how we can find the average of all the data we collected? Discuss it with your partner and then we will share.

5. What ideas have we learned before that could be useful in . . .
   a. designing this lab?
   b. Playing this song?
   c. Playing this game
October 15, 2019
Building Persistent Learners Who Expect to Solve Complex Problems

Thank you for your work on Thursday with the 6 - 12 math team and CEL. It was a productive day as we help students become agents and owners of their learning.

Building academic stamina in students is no simple task. Helping 11, 12, or 13 year olds “think” can be its own unique challenge. Teaching students to persist through complex tasks is going to require that we model persistence, stamina, pausing, and patience as we present content.

On Thursday, we studied the student-centered math practices and teacher-centered math practices. We anchored ourselves by defining the practices and working through complex math problems, where we developed engaging “Assessing” and “Advancing” questions to help engage students thinking and maintain the complexity of the math tasks.

What’s Next
Our next steps include intentionally asking pre-planned “Assessing” and “Advancing” questions during our instruction. Below are some ideas and reminders to help you implement your planned questions.

Instructional ideas to help your implementation
1. Find the suggested questions already developed in Agile Mind’s “Directions for Instruction.”
2. Create sticky notes with the questions you plan to ask to remind you to ask them.
3. Write the questions on the white board before the lesson to remind you to ask them.
4. Verbally open and close the lesson with the questions you want the students to think about as a result of the day’s learning.
5. Ask the questions while an observer is in the classroom and request feedback.
6. Write questions on sticky notes and place the sticky notes in student groups, then pause at key points and have students ask each other when you do your turn and talks.
7. Walk group to group asking your pre-planned “assessing” and/or “advancing” questions based on the responses of the students.

BSD Created Sample Questions from Thursday

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sample Assessing Questions</th>
<th>Sample Advancing Questions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>What does each row in the table mean?</td>
<td>What would the 30th number be?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Why did you choose this representation?</td>
<td>What is alike and what is different about your method of solution and hers?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Why did you choose to solve it this way?</td>
<td>What would happen if . . . ?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How did you know when to stop?</td>
<td>Can you predict the next one? The last one?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Where does the 20 come from in this equation?</td>
<td>What decision do you think he should make?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Do you see a pattern?</td>
<td>How does this relate to . . . ?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What ideas have we learned before that could be useful in solving the problem?</td>
<td>Can you give an example of . . . ?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Hello Everyone,

Thanks for allowing us to briefly join your classrooms today during the differentiation block! As you know we are focused on literacy routines/structures and student agency as part of our literacy goals this year. We noticed lots of great evidence that we're on our way with this work.

Following up and giving feedback to staff is a goal that I'm working on this year, so that we can build collective efficacy, work toward common goals as a staff and support student learning.

Some things we noticed today:

- Students were engaging with tasks/activities during the differentiation block. This allowed teachers to work with individuals or small groups.
- Teachers were intentionally working with small groups or individual students.
- There were book boxes/bags in each classroom, which provided access to texts.
- Routines were present in each classroom.

Today we wondered:

- What's the "red thread" for the tasks students are engaging with during independent time (differentiation block). How does this work connect back to whole class, small group and conferring with the teacher?
- We wondered about the amount of students independently reading books. Are we finding ample time for this at other points in the day? If so, are all students getting access to this opportunity?

My next steps are to continue to learn more about agency and how we see evidence of it in our classrooms and students. Today at BPS we asked students 1) how they chose their book and 2) what they were working on as readers. I wonder how our students would answer those questions?

Please let me know how I can support you and I look forward our continued journey with literacy and agency this year!

Thanks,
Craig
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Craig