



Developing Professional Communities

Lessons Learned from a School Literacy Improvement Project

Taffy E. Raphael

Presented at the European and Eurasian Leadership Workshop
Professionalism, a Trademark for Literacy

Focus of My Presentation

- How did I become interested in school literacy (reading & writing) reform?
- What is the Standards-Based Change (SBC) Process that we used in our research on reform?
- What did we do in our project?
- What lessons did we learn about professionalism and leadership?
- How do these lessons apply to our work in IRA Leadership?



How did I become interested in school literacy (reading & writing) reform?

Working in Chicago

- New professional partnerships created among a community foundation, the 3rd largest district in the United States, and 6 Chicago-area universities
- Opportunity to bring many of my experiences together to solve an authentic problem of practice, drawing on
 - Strategy research like QAR
 - Research on comprehension frameworks like Book Club
 - Coordinating graduate programs for teachers



Project Goal

- Develop capacity within the district
 - Increase teachers knowledge of literacy instruction
 - Develop teacher leaders who can support peers in literacy teaching and learning
 - Learn to engage in evidence-based teaching
- Help schools get organized to do the work
 - Creating school infrastructures
 - Helping schools plan and evaluate their progress



Drawing on Existing Research

- First Generation Research:
 - Change takes time (Datnow et al., Lipson & Mosenthal, Boran et al)
 - Change is technically simple, but socially complex (from Fullan, 2005)
 - Characteristics of successful schools
- Second Generation Research:
 - Developmental model(s) detailing complexities and guiding school change
 - Documenting the complexities change process





What is the Standards-Based Change Process?

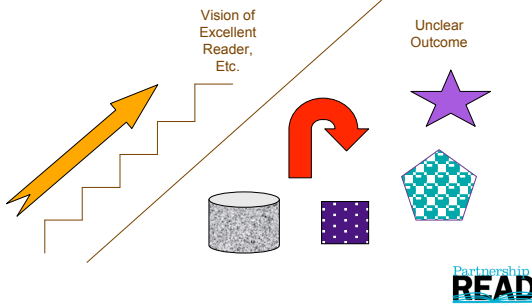
Created by Kathy Au and Tested in Hawaii 1996-2001

Principles Behind the SBC Process

Conventional Wisdom	SBC Process
Training in implementing the program with fidelity	Professional development that allows educators to devise solutions that fit their school
Set program developed by outsiders	Change process adapted to the school by insiders
Start from scratch	Build upon existing strengths, correct weaknesses
Dependent on outsiders	Gradual release of responsibility to insiders, plus networking



Goal of the SBC Process: Create a Staircase Curriculum: Step Steps and No Gaps



How? Through the "To Do" List

- **School-Wide Goals**
 1. Philosophy
 2. Vision statement
- **Grade-Level Goals**
 3. Grade level benchmarks
 4. I Can statements
- **The Evidence System for Evidence-Based Teaching**
 5. Evidence
 6. Procedures for collecting
 7. Rubrics for scoring
 8. Bar graphs for sharing with colleagues
- **Instructional improvements**
 9. Instructional decisions based on evidence



The Project: Scaling Up from Hawaii to Chicago

Colleagues: Kathy Au in Hawaii; Susan Goldman in Chicago and many others!

Research Sites for the Standards-Based Change Process



The SBC Process in Chicago: Partnership READ

- Began in 2002
- 10 Active Schools/Year
- As schools discontinue and slot opens, new schools can join Partnership READ
- Current schools:
 - Pre K-Grade 8 (9 schools), Pre-K to Grade 5 (one school)
 - Range from 71 - 99% poverty levels
 - Predominantly African American or Latino students
 - 4 Demonstration, 2 Promising, 4 New Partner



What happens?

- Teachers start working as a whole school to create their philosophy and vision
- Grade Level Teams Plan Together
- Teachers Learn to Work in Grade Level Teams to Set Goals
- Teachers Learn to Make Goals Clear to Students, Parents, and Each Other



What happens? (continued)

- Grade Level Teams work together to Align the Curriculum Goals
- Teachers Create Evidence Systems to Evaluate Progress toward Benchmarks
- Grade Level Teams Share Data
- Whole School Sharing Occurs
- Evidence is Used to Reflect and Plan



Teams Create Evidence Systems to Evaluate Progress toward Benchmarks

- What will 'success' look like?
 - How will I know it when I see it: the Rubric and Anchor Pieces
- How will I systematically obtain artifacts that provide a window into students' progress?
 - The tasks that yield the evidence
- How will we coordinate within our grade level?
 - The directions for the tasks
 - The timing for collecting the evidence



Lessons We've Learned

For Improving Schools
For Improving IRA

Professionalism in Schools and Organizations

- Goals must be clear
- Create a long-term plan with mini-goals along the way
- Align resources to achieve goals
- Take on increasingly challenging tasks
- Collaborate -- we can't do it alone!

