LESLEY UNIVERSITY

The Positive Effects of Literacy Collaborative On Teaching and Student Achievement: A Value-Added Study

A four-year longitudinal study of 17 Literacy Collaborative schools was completed in 2009 and the results show a large positive effect of the program on teaching and student achievement. In 2004, Dr. Anthony Bryk, currently President of the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching, received a $3 million grant from the federal Institute of Education Sciences (IES) to study the value-added effects of the Literacy Collaborative K-2 program on student learning and achievement. The project was also designed to study growth in teacher expertise and changes in professional communication networks in Literacy Collaborative schools. Dr. Bryk and his research team, based at University of Chicago and Stanford University, selected 17 schools that were interested in adopting the Literacy Collaborative program to participate in the study. The schools were located in 8 states in the Northeast, South, and Midwest. Forty percent of the students across the schools were low-income.

The first year of the study was considered the baseline year because the 17 literacy coordinators from the schools were being trained at their university training sites. In the three subsequent years the schools implemented the program. The teachers taught students with the Literacy Collaborative instructional framework and the literacy coordinators provided professional development and coaching to support effective classroom instruction. The primary findings were:

- *Students' average rates of learning in grades K-2 increased by 16% in the first implementation year, 28% in the second implementation year, and 32% in the third implementation year.*
- *Teacher expertise increased substantially and the rate of improvement was predicted by the amount of coaching a teacher received.*
- *Professional communication amongst teachers in the schools increased over the three years of implementation and the literacy coordinators became more central in their schools' communication networks.*

The research team collected fall and spring DIBELS and Terra Nova data from the K-3 students and data from classroom observations of the teachers teaching the Literacy Collaborative literacy block—lessons such as guided reading, writing workshop, and interactive writing. The team also surveyed the teachers and interviewed the literacy coordinators in the schools. In addition, the literacy coordinators kept logs of their coaching and professional development activities.

After the four years were completed, the research team had data on 8,500 children who had passed through grades K-3 in the schools and 240 teachers. This is currently the largest data set about coaching and student learning in the education field, and the only one to include data on student achievement, teacher expertise, and frequency and quality of coaching.

* * *

Detailed reports from this value-added study can be found on the Literacy Collaborative national website: www.literacycollaborative.org. See "Research and Evaluation." Study results have been presented at the Annual Meeting of the American Educational Research Association (AERA) and the National Reading Conference (NRC). In 2010 they will be published in *Elementary School Journal*, a peer-reviewed research journal.

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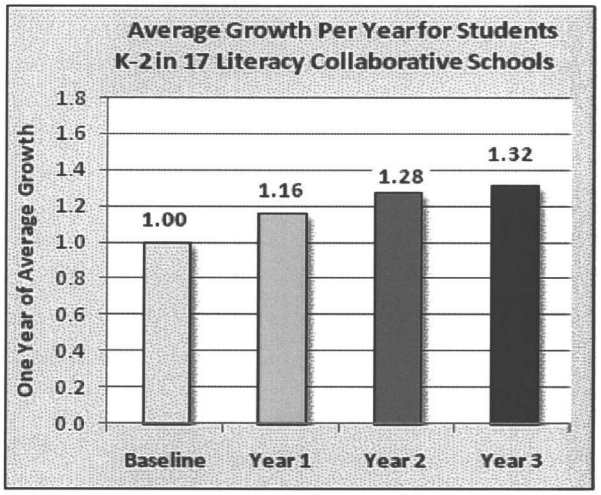
Detailed Results

The analyses of the data on student achievement, growth in teacher expertise, and coaching showed the following results:

- **Increases in student learning:** Comparing the three implementation years to the baseline year, the analyses showed that the average rate of student literacy learning increased by 16% in the first implementation year, 28% in the second year, and 32% in the third year-- very substantial increases. *If students were learning an average of 1.00 in the baseline year, they were learning an average of 1.32 in the third implementation year.*



Baseline: Students learn ***1.00***

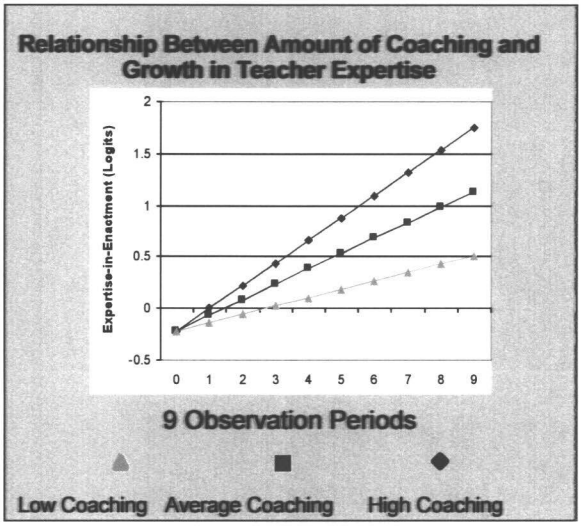
Year 1: Students learn ***1.16***

Year 2: Students learn ***1.28***

Year 3: Students learn ***1.32***

- **Increases in teacher expertise:** Teacher expertise was measured on a scale that ranged from "teaching literacy as a set of instructional routines" to "teaching by facilitating student talk to deepen thinking and understanding," and average teacher growth increased substantially on this scale.

- **The effect of coaching:** The strongest factor that predicted growth in teacher expertise was the amount of coaching a teacher received from the school's literacy coordinator.



High coaching: Teachers improve rapidly

Average coaching: Teachers improve at average rate

Low Coaching: Teachers improve at a slower rate

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- **Increases in professional communication amongst teachers:** At the beginning and end of the study, the teachers in the17 schools were asked to name the people within and outside of the school with whom they discussed professional issues about teaching. An analysis of these communication networks showed that the professional networks in the schools increased in density and reciprocity, and the literacy coordinator became more central in their schools' communication network. Specifically:

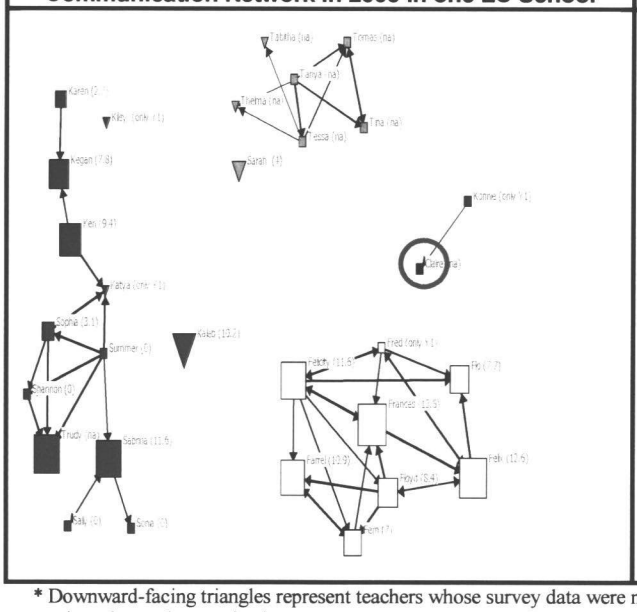
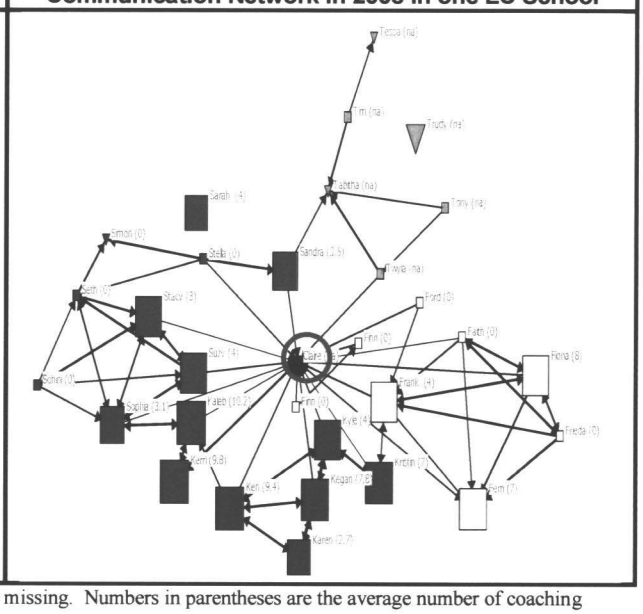
  - *Density:* At the end of the study, teachers reported discussing professional issues with more of the teachers in their school than at the beginning of the study. In addition, more teachers reported discussing issues with teachers not in their own grade level teams.

  - *Reciprocity:* At the end of the study, more teachers reported consulting with teachers who also reported consulting with them.

  - *Centrality of the literacy coordinator:* At the end of the study more teachers reported that they consulted with the literacy coordinator in their school.

  - *Example:* The graphics below show the changes over three years in the professional communication network teachers reported in one school. In *2005*, most teachers only communicated within their grade level teams. The literacy coordinator was not a central person in the network.

    In *2008* there was substantially more across-grade level teacher communication and the literacy coordinator had become central in the school's professional communication network.

Teachers' Reports of their Professional Communication Network in 2005 in one LC School	Teachers' Reports of their Professional Communication Network in 2008 in one LC School
	

* Downward-facing triangles represent teachers whose survey data were missing. Numbers in parentheses are the average number of coaching sessions the teacher received per year.

= kindergarten teachers = first grade teachers = second grade teachers =third grade teachers = literacy coordinator

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What is a Literacy Collaborative School?

Becoming a Literacy Collaborative school is a long-term process that involves comprehensive school change. It involves a whole school effort to provide an effective primary, intermediate, and middle level literacy instructional program with safety nets for the children who need them.

A Literacy Collaborative school is defined by the following characteristics:

School-University Partnership
Teachers and administrators in the school and district have entered into a collaborative long-term relationship with Lesley University. The partnership involves the implementation of a research-based Literacy Collaborative model.

Leadership Teams
The school or district forms a leadership team for the primary grades, one for the intermediate grades, and one for the middle level. The teams can receive training at Lesley University to support and monitor the Literacy Collaborative model.

In-School Literacy Coach
The school has a trained literacy coach for the primary grades, one for the intermediate grades, and one for the middle level. Each literacy coach teaches children daily (50% to 70% time) and has received special training to provide professional development (30% to 50% time), including (a) providing an initial professional development for primary, intermediate, or middle level teachers; (b) providing in-class assistance to teachers through demonstration, coaching, and reflection on teaching; and (c) planning and working collaboratively with teachers in the school.

In-School Professional Development Sessions and Coaching
From the second year of participation at the primary, intermediate, and middle level, the majority of teachers are engaged in Literacy Collaborative ongoing professional development and follow-up coaching support. The goal is for all teachers to participate in the professional development. At the middle level, English/Language Arts teachers participate in the full training and content area teachers receive a portion of it pertinent to them. The literacy coach and teachers are continually engaged in updating their knowledge and refining skills through ongoing training and support, which includes ongoing coaching.

Books and Materials
There are adequate materials to support rich literacy programs in grades preK-8 and to implement the language and literacy framework as designed. This includes a bookroom where texts used for guided reading, literature discussion, interactive read alouds, and shared reading are housed.

Prevention and Intervention
Reading Recovery is highly recommended as a 1:1 safety net for children in grade one who, even while experiencing an effective literacy program, are having difficulty in the initial stages of learning to read and write. Leveled Literacy Intervention (LLI) is provided as a small group (3:1) intervention for children in grades K-2 who are reading below expected grade levels. LLI for grades 3 – 6 is provided as a small group (4:1) intervention for students in those grades still experiencing difficulty in reading, writing, and vocabulary development.

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Home Reading

There is a home reading program with parent outreach in place in the school. This might involve classroom materials and/or KEEP Books for primary level students.

Data to Monitor Effectiveness

Teachers in the school develop an Evaluation Plan to determine their priorities for instruction for the year and then collect and analyze data annually to assess the effectiveness of the program in their school. These evaluation plans adjust yearly to meet the ongoing needs of the school population. This data also becomes part of the national research on the effectiveness of the Literacy Collaborative.

Registration as a Literacy Collaborative School

The school is registered with Lesley University and The Ohio State University as an active Literacy Collaborative school. With registration, schools are granted permission to use Literacy Collaborative training materials within the school and to use the trademarked name on a royalty free basis.

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LESLEY UNIVERSITY

Center For Reading Recovery
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Commissioner Mitchell Chester, Ed.D
MA Department of Elementary and Secondary Education
85 Olney Street
Dorchester, MA 02121

October 9, 2013

Dear Commissioner Chester,

Lesley University is aware that the Holland Elementary School has been identified for possible receivership due to insufficient progress in student achievement. As a result of discussions during the summer with central administrators and principals at the Boston Public Schools, we began working with the Holland and six other schools in SY14 on a new federally funded undertaking called the Comprehensive Literacy Teaching and Learning Model Training and Research Project. I am directing this effort as the Co-Principal Investigator.

As you know, extensive research shows that ensuring early literacy success is key to later success in achievement across the curriculum. Our work is designed to help teachers understand the literacy learning process, how to detect difficulties and resolve them, and how to create a rich, motivating and challenging reading, writing and language curriculum that works for all students, including English Language Learners and special education students. The Center for Literacy Collaborative and Reading Recovery is nationally known for working with schools needing significant assistance redesigning their professional development and curriculum. In addition, the Center is a DESE-approved Race to the Top Priority Partner for the Effective Use of Data.

The Boston school and district leaders involved with this project chose to work with us because Literacy Collaborative and Reading Recovery, which together comprise a long-standing comprehensive tiered instruction model, have amassed considerable research evidence of effectiveness. Results of our groundbreaking work have been confirmed by outside evaluators in a number of articles in peer-reviewed journals. These school leaders recognize it is vital that the Holland implement just such a research-validated model to ensure the success of all its students.

The models provide some of the highest quality professional development training to teachers and administrators in the country. Cindy Downend, the Holland's designated liaison and a highly experienced primary faculty trainer, is working with the Lesley primary grades team to train Holland first grade teacher Julie Sneed to become an expert K-2 literacy coach for the school, as well as the K-2 school leadership team, in

Literacy Collaborative professional development, in-classroom coaching and use of data to support differentiated instruction. Along with the comprehensive model's small group and one-to-one safety nets to support K-2 students experiencing difficulty with early literacy learning, we are confident that the Holland can make accelerated progress toward its achievement goals. We also have Literacy Collaborative for the upper elementary grades, which if adopted would support the Holland to effectively expand the model throughout the school.

I have attached a copy of the research summary of a four-year federally funded, externally researched Teacher Quality study, that supports the effectiveness of Literacy Collaborative in accelerating student achievement through long-term, cohesive professional development and coaching focused on best practice. If you would like further detail on the Center's work with schools across the country, my team and I are ready to assist you.

Sincerely,

Irene Fountas

Irene Fountas, Professor and Director

cc: Jeichael Henderson
Cindy Downend