

THE BENSON ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

P. S. 200

The Development & Dissemination Schools Initiative

“ONE SCHOOL’S JOURNEY...”

D & D Team:

**Vincent Grippo, Community Superintendent, District 20
Lia Cassa, Director of Bilingual and E.S.L. Programs**

**Sylvia La Cerra, Principal, I.A.
Maria Mandel, Assistant Principal, I.A.
Rosalie Eaione, E.S.L. Teacher
Karina Maceczek, Bilingual Teacher, GLOBE Program
Ilene Moore, E.S.L. Teacher**

FROM THE DESK OF...
SYLVIA LA CERRA,
Principal, I.A. P.S. 200

June 1, 2000

P.S. 200 has worked to find a focus for this project but even as this was unclear, our mission for our English Language Learners and indeed for the entire school, was to support the attainment of the New English Language Arts Performance Standards for our students.

Recognizing that learning is a continuum and not a series of isolated events, we have tried to assess where our students are in each grade and where they are headed now and in the future. After reviewing statistical data found in test reports, our Annual Report Card and teacher articulated concerns, we have come to see writing must be a major focus for all our ELL's. In addition, we must be able to document and disseminate our best practice.

Reading seems to be taught consistently and well in our classrooms and the ELLs are grouped and engaged by each teacher. However, writing is more difficult to teach because it requires painstaking commitment to moving students through each of the drafts and revisions which are required if we are to succeed.

The teachers who are part of our Action Research have worked to model successful strategies which benefit all children. Some of the teachers in our E.S.L. program use a push-in model which has been highly successful in disseminating best practices. Ilene Moore (one of our D&D Liaisons) has been using this model for some time now and she welcomes any teacher to observe her as she guides the children through writing activities which engage them and improve their skills. Rosalie Eaione has charted the progress of two students experiencing a great deal of difficulty in meeting the standards. By articulating with the classroom teacher and working with parents and teachers from Project Read, Ms. Eaione has seen progress for these children who have been "at-risk." Inna Kogan, a highly professional Bilingual teacher has worked to change some of her classroom practices. As she worked with a member of our team from IHE she has been pleased with her own progress in her part of Action Research. A relatively new member of our team, Karina Maceczek, as Bilingual teacher who has moved through the grades with her fourth grade Russian Bilingual class, and next year she will take them

to fifth grade. Her classroom has become a busy place with members of the school community and supervisors observing her great success in the effective use of cooperative learning.

In the primary grades, we find that our Balanced Literacy Model has helped all of our students make progress as assessed by portfolios of work, E.C.L.A.S. documentation, and observation by staff developers and supervisors. In two of our first grade classrooms in particular, all the students have had success in reading and writing. Melissa Cassandra and Dina Donadio have taken voluntary training at Columbia, and workshops at the district level on their own time to become thoroughly familiar with all practices which encourage students to learn. These are model classrooms, and there is a steady stream of visitors who observe our two teachers as they work with all the children, in all the elements of Balanced Literacy. The parents of our English Language Learners have been engaged by the teachers. They are invited into the classroom for celebrations of their children's work, to give support to the value of literacy. They are as proud of their children's progress as any of the English speaking parents and their presence gives testimony to the children of how important their education is.

Our kindergarten teachers have been involved in giving all children their earliest experiences with language development. They guide the children through all the aspects of literacy, and based on their E.C.L.A.S. assessments they provide the children with rich language experiences. By working together, these professionals share the ideas and concerns which come up at their weekly meetings.

Best practices can be seen in all of our classrooms. The problem is that often teachers do not have the opportunity to share and compare. Common preps provide some opportunity. By hi-lighting work that our children and teachers have done successfully we hope to break through the barrier of isolation which somehow has been part of the teaching experience.

We feel that those engaged in our Team's work can become the vehicles for making a transition and move all our children to meeting the Performance Learning Standards in Language Arts. "P.S. 200: Committed to Excellence".

Comparison of E.L.L. Scores for a four year period.

	A	B	C	D	E
1		1996	1997	1998	1999
2	% ELLs Att Profi	47.3	43.8	62.9	47.7
3					
4	% Mandated Gains	81.3	75.1	90.4	71
5					
6	% At/above Rd	10.2	42.3	25	33.3
7					
8	% At /above Math	51	65.4	70	100

Questions to consider:

1. Were there the same number of teachers delivering services?
2. Were the teachers the same? Did they take the same children each year? (Was there continuity?)
3. What **are** the mandated gains? How were they established?
4. Why does the year 1998 show such sharp increases? Conversely, why is there such a sharp drop from 1998-1999?
5. What are the numbers for the current year 2000?

**P.S. 200'S UMBRELLA FOCUS: HOW CAN P.S. 200 SUPPORT THE
ATTAINMENT OF THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS STANDARDS FOR ITS ELLS?**

ILENE:

HOW CAN A STRATEGIC,
STANDARDS-DRIVEN,
MULTI-GENRE BASED WRITING
CURRICULUM **WITH:**

- SCAFFOLDING
- BEST PRACTICES
- BLOOM'S TAXONOMY

PREPARE ELLs FOR LONG TERM
ACHIEVEMENT BEYOND
HIGH STAKES ASSESSMENTS?

- NYS ENGLISH REGENTS,
- GR. 5 S.S., READING...
- ETC.

ROSALIE:

HOW CAN A FOCUS ON WRITING IN A 3RD
GRADE ESL PULL-OUT CLASS PREPARE
ELLs FOR THE GRADE 4 ENGLISH LANGUAGE
ARTS ASSESSMENT?

KARINA:

HOW CAN THE IMPLEMENTATION OF
COOPERATIVE LEARNING GROUPS IN A GIFTED
RUSSIAN BILINGUAL GR. 4 CLASS POSITIVELY
IMPACT ON ELA & NLA?

1998 - 2000, 2 YEARS DOWN, 3 MORE TO GO... LOOKING AHEAD TO 2000/2001

Ilene Moore's Individual Action Research Question
for the Development/Dissemination Initiative:
**HOW CAN A STRATEGIC, STANDARDS-DRIVEN, MULTI-
GENRE BASED WRITING CURRICULUM, WITH:
SCAFFOLDING, BEST PRACTICES AND BLOOM'S TAXONOMY,
PREPARE ELLS FOR LONG TERM ACHIEVEMENT BEYOND
HIGH STAKES ASSESSMENTS? (ALL ELA STANDARDS
ADDRESSED)**

INITIAL REFLECTION

- HOW CAN A WRITING/THINKING CURRICULUM HELP GAIN ENTRY INTO THE ZPD OF OUR ELLS?
- HOW IS SELF-ESTEEM HEIGHTENED THROUGH A PROCESS & PRODUCT, TEACHER-CREATED WRITING CURRICULUM?
- HOW CAN METACOGNITION BE AUGMENTED THROUGH WRITING?
- HOW WILL DATA BE FORMED/ANALYZED/SHARED?

PLANNING:

- OVERALL TEACHER OBSERVATION OF HER K-5 CLASSES
- INTENSIVE OBSERVATION/DOCUMENTATION OF GRADE 2 PUSH-IN & GRADE 5 PULL-OUT
- COLLECT DATA
 - WRITING SAMPLES, LAB SCORES...
 - TEACHER'S ARTICLES RE: AR, EDUCATIONAL RESEARCH LESSONS...
 - INTERACTIVE OBSERVATIONS WITH EDUCATIONAL ALLIANCE PERSONNEL

ACTION:

- DEVELOP STRATEGIC WRITING/THINKING CURRICULUM
 - IMPLEMENT PROCESS.PRODUCT APPROACH
 - INCORPORATE BLOOM'S TAXONOMY
 - CREATE SCAFFOLDS/TEMPLATES
 - CONDUCT GRADE 5 ATTITUDINAL WRITING SURVEY
 - INTEGRATE CURRICULUM
 - EMPOWER STUDENTS WITH SELF-ASSESSMENTS
 - ALIGN CURRICULUM WITH: PRINCIPALS OF LEARNING, BLOOM'S TAXONOMY, ELAs, BALANCED LITERACY, VYGOTSKY'S ZPD, 5 STANDARDS FOR EFFECTIVE TEACHING (CREDE), MARLOW'S HIERARCHY OF NEEDS...

OBSERVATIONS:

STUDENTS:

- REQUIRE LESS REVISIONS
- SELF-ASSESS THEIR WRITING
- PEER COACH/ASSESS
- HAVE A HIGHER SELF-ESTEEM
- NOT INTIMIDATED BY "BLANK" PAGE
- FEEL EMPOWERED, TAKE OWNERSHIP OF WRITING
- HAVE INTRINSIC MOTIVATION TO WRITE
- VIEW WRITING AS A PROCESS
- ENGAGE IN DIALOGUE AS PART OF THE WRITING PROCESS
- USE PRIOR EXPERIENCE IN WRITING
- HAVE GROWN METACOGNITIVELY
- RECOGNIZE THAT WRITING GENERATES CONVERSATION
- APPRECIATE THE ESL TEACHER'S ROLE IN 2ND LANGUAGE ACQUISITION
- PUNCTUATE
- INDENT
- WANT TO WRITE!**
- ENJOY LITERACY MODELS
- SHARE WRITINGS WITH PEERS/TEACHER
- HAVE SHOWN IMPROVEMENT IN MAINSTREAM CLASSROOM

REFLECTION:

- TEACHER'S ROLE TO INSPIRE (EMERSON)
- GOOD INSTRUCTION IS KEY, NOT ANY SPECIAL TYPE OF MANDATED PROGRAM
- TEACHING REWARDS ARE INTRINSIC
- SELF-ESTEEM NEEDS MET THROUGH SUPPORT FROM SELF, FAMILY, BROWN UNIVERSITY'S EDUCATIONAL ALLIANCE, DR. LILLIAN HERNANDEZ AND HER STAFF @ OFFICE OF BILINGUAL EDUCATION, NYC, EDUCATIONAL PERSONNEL WITHIN NYC BORAD OF EDUCATION...
- GOOD ACTION RESEARCH QUESTIONS ARE ANSWERABLE!
- ACTION RESEARCH DEMANDS COMMITMENT AND WORKING OVERTIME BEFORE/AFTER THE 8:40-3PM DAY!
- REAFFIRMED THAT I KNOW WHAT I'M DOING!
- *ZPD = ZONE OF PROXIMAL DEVELOPMENT

ILENE MOORES LIST OF *BEST PRACTICES*:

- KNOW THYSELF / KNOW THY STUDENTS
- TO THINE OWN SELF BE TRUE
- RESPECT STUDENTS/PARENTS/CULTURES
- TEACH IN SMALL STEPS, ONE STEP @ A TIME
- CREATE SCAFFOLDS / TEMPLATES
- GUIDE STUDENT'S PRACTICE
- PROVIDE OPPERTUNITIES FOR PRACTICE
- TEACH COGNITIVE STRATEGIES:
 - GENERATE OWN QUESTIONS REGARDING READING/WRITING
- PRAISE
- ARTICULATE WITH CLASSROOM TEACHER
- PROVIDE "MAPS" OF HOW TO PROCEED:
 - GRAPHIC ORGANIZERS
 - PROCEDURAL PROMPTS
 - CUES...
- MODEL, MODEL, MODEL
- HAVE A SENSE OF HUMOR
- ENJOY LEARNING & SPREAD THE FEELING
- MODEL "THINKING ALOUD" TO DEMONSTRATE THOUGHT PROCESS
- TEACH, RETEACH, SUMMARIZE, REPHRASE
- ANTICIPATE DIFFICULTIES
- PROVIDE INSTANT FEEDBACK
- BE HUMAN / HUMANE
- PURSUE LIFELONG LEARNING
- LOVE TEACHING
- BE CURRENT WITH BUZZ WORDS AND "AU COURANT" TERMINOLOGIES
- BE APPROACHABLE
- EXPECT MORE
- EMBED AUTHENTICITY INTO LESSONS
- TRUST STUDENTS
- EXPECT STUDENTS TO COMMUNICATE / COLLABORATE
- CREATE SUPPORTIVE CLIMATE THAT BUILDS CONFIDENCE ENCOURAGES RISK-TAKING
- BRING YOUR OWN PASSIONS INTO THE LEARNING COMMUNITY

- CONNECT CURRICULUM, INSTRUCTION & ASSESSMENT
- FREQUENTLY CHECK PROGRESS OF STUDENTS
- BE SPECIFIC, CONCRETE
- KEEP STUDENTS ACTIVELY THINKING
- CREATE ORIGINAL CURRICULUM AND THINK OF IT AS AN EARNEST CEREBRAL CREATION!
- SHARE WITH STUDENTS ONE'S OWN EXPERIENCES
- CREATE A NATURAL LEARNING ENVIRONMENT
 - SAFE
 - AUTHENTIC
 - INTRINSICALLY MOTIVATING
 - GOAL DIRECTED
 - LEARNING BY DOING
- TEACHER SHOULD NOT SEEK / EXPECT INTRINSIC REWARDS FROM OTHERS
- IMPLEMENT THE ARTS STANDARDS, DBQS, CRQs, ELAs, ETC. AND *MAKE THEIR WHEREABOUTS KNOWN!*

"I HEAR AND I FORET. I SEE AND I REMEMBER. I DO AND I UNDERSTAND."
-CONFUCIUS

**LOOKING
AHEAD
TO
YEAR III
2000 / 2001**

**ILENE MOORE IS A K-5 ESL TEACHER @ P.S.
200, DISTRICT 20 K.**

Rosalie Eaione's D&D Focus: How Can a Focus On Writing in a 3rd Grade ESL Pull-out Class prepare ELLs for the Grade 4 English Language Arts Assessment?

INITIAL REFLECTION

- Interested in HOW *intermediate* level ELLs acquire the necessary skills for attaining the ELA standards
- What strategies work well?
- How do my ELLs feel about learning English?

PLANNING

- Identified 2 ELLs, one in 3rd grade & one in 4th in same intermediate group
- 3rd grader highly motivated, 4th grader eager, but struggling
- Observed in mainstream classroom
- interviewed ELLs
- Articulated with classroom teacher
- Researched data found in cumulative folder:
 - background
 - test scores
 - arrival date
 - home language

ACTION

- Collated writing samples, data, observations
- Provided literature-based curriculum
- Conducted interactive reading/writing sessions
- Provided daily opportunities for writing

- Participated in *accountable* discussion
- Analyzed writing samples
- Conferenced with D&D personnel / colleagues

OBSERVATIONS

- ELLs looked forward to *read-alouds*
- Enjoyed reading the classics, i.e. Charlotte's Web
- Clear Expectations* alleviated fear of the blank page
- Visual aids improved comprehension/heightened interest in the literature

REFLECTIONS

- Noticed 4th grader had very good insight & demonstrated higher order thinking skills, but still weak in the area of writing
- 3rd grader performed well on LAB (passed)
- Focus on writing had reinforced my belief that ELLs must have writing tasks not only in the mainstream classroom, but in the ESL one as well

BEST PRACTICES

- DAILY PRAISE/RECOGNITION GIVEN TO EACH ELL**
- AWARENESS OF STRENGTHS/WEAKNESSES OF ELLS**
- PEER TUTORING**
- ARTICULATION WITH CLASSROOM TEACHER**
- OPPORTUNITIES FOR EACH ELL TO SHINE**
- PROVIDE WONDERFUL LITERATURE**
- SUPPORTIVE ENVIRONMENT**

Karina's D&D Focus: How Can the Implementation of Cooperative Learning Groups in a Gifted Russian Bilingual Grade 4 Class Positively impact on ELA & NLA?

INITIAL REFLECTION

-ACADEMIC IMPACT:

- Developing writing/oral communication skills
- Integrating Interdisciplinary curriculum
- Implementing NYS Standards
- Involving Theory of Multiple Intelligence

-LINGUISTIC IMPACT:

- Maintaining/Developing L1 & L2
- Balanced Bilingualism: Perfecting BOTH languages!

-SOCIAL IMPACT:

- Peer interaction/evaluation
- Self-reflection/evaluation
- Student-Centered environment
- Students assume "real life" roles as they manage, research, participate/perform in *Cooperative Learning Groups*

PLANNING

- Incorporate Cooperative Learning Groups into classroom strategy
- Target Linguistic/Academic/Social Levels
- Students are center of learning process
- Incorporate Multiple Intelligence Theory
- Design/Integrate Thematic Interdisciplinary Curriculum
 - High performance on standardized tests
 - Implement Visual/Performing Arts
 - Integrate new media technology

REFLECTIONS

-According to the data: IT ALL WORKED!

-Grade 4 ELA: ALL scored high

-16/18 @ 4! 2/18 @ 3!

"...demonstrated understanding of written and oral text beyond the initial level."

-NYSTP Student Performance Report

BEST PRACTICES

-Standards-driven, teacher-created, integrated, thematic curriculum for ELA & NLA

-Cooperative Learning Groups

-Student-Centered Classroom

-Incorporation of Theory of Multiple Intelligence

-Balanced Literacy Approach

-Dual Language Program

-Emphasis on Visual/Performing Arts

-Teamwork with Colleagues

-Employ Technology

-Unlimited devotion/creativity