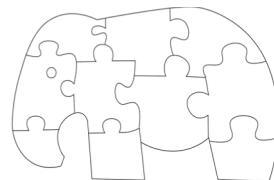


Organizational Systems and Structures

Leadership I - Grades 6–8 - Day 5

Diagnosing Your System



Directions

Use the guiding questions to compare the system you currently have at your school with the components listed below.

For each, consider the Leadership Questions and make note of:

- Plus Evidence – What evidence do you have that your students are benefitting from this practice?
- Deltas – What changes or upgrades need to be made?
- Information Needed – What information do you still need to answer these questions?

Knowledge-Building/Topic-Based Curriculum

“Building knowledge systematically in English language arts is like giving children various pieces of a puzzle in each grade that, over time, will form one big picture. At a curricular or instructional level, texts—within and across grade levels—need to be selected around topics or themes that systematically develop the knowledge base of students.” (page 33 of CCSS ELA)

Leadership Questions

Does your curriculum build knowledge of the world and words within and across grades?
Is there any aspect of your system that is doing this for students?

Plus Evidence

Deltas

Information Needed

Text Complexity and Text Selection

The standards (and readiness for college and careers) demand exposure and work with increasingly complex texts; grade-specific standards interact with text complexity in an integrative manner, and as such, text complexity and selection are a foundation for strong literacy implementation.

Leadership Questions

How are texts selected for students? Who is selecting them? Do they have the knowledge about text complexity that is necessary to make these choices?

Plus Evidence**Deltas****Information Needed****Systematic Phonics**

This is a program that directly teaches the spelling/sound patterns of English in a clear sequence (e.g., beginning with consonant sounds then moving to short vowel sounds, long vowel sounds, consonant blends, and so forth). It's important in K-2 to be consistent within and across grades otherwise the "structure" or "system" is compromised.

Leadership Questions

What program do you use? Is it consistent in Grades K-2?

Plus Evidence**Deltas****Information Needed**

Work with Syntax and Morphology

As part of a deep focus of the language of complex texts, students should work with syntax—the arrangement of words and phrases—and morphology—analysis of root words, affixes, parts of speech—to deconstruct authorial choices and their impact. This should not only be a separate set of student materials, but a regular part of instruction with complex texts.

| Leadership Questions | Plus Evidence | Deltas | Information Needed |
|---|----------------------|---------------|---------------------------|
| Do students use the grade-level complex texts to work with syntax and morphology? Do teachers know how to do this work with students? | | | |

Volume of Reading/Independent Reading/Love of Reading

Students should experience “miles on the page” and practice beyond mastery with decoding spelling/sound patterns of English, and time has to be made in the literacy block/school day for experiencing a volume of reading of text that can be read independently by students. This includes teacher-assigned texts and student-selected texts. This should not include limiting students exclusively to their F&P level.

| Leadership Questions | Plus Evidence | Deltas | Information Needed |
|---|----------------------|---------------|---------------------------|
| Are there regular opportunities for students to read independently or with peers based on their personal interests? Is there an accountability system for this? Are students able to read books outside of “their level”? Are there opportunities for students to explore topics of interest through independent reading? | | | |

Guided Reading/Read-Aloud/Close Reading

These are all shared reading experiences that should use grade-level, complex texts for maximum impact. Thus, this interacts with nearly all the parts of the elephant, with the possible exception of volume of reading and aligned interventions.

Leadership Questions

Does your curriculum ensure that all students, regardless of independent reading level, are exposed to complex, grade-level text in whole-class instruction?" Do teachers use these texts to model and teach syntax and morphology? Does your guided reading program use grade-level, complex texts?

Plus Evidence**Deltas****Information Needed****Coordinated Interventions**

Make sure that if you are pulling kids out for interventions, it is in the interest of moving kids into the same work that the rest of the class is in; look for opportunities here to build knowledge and vocabulary on a topic prior to students reading the grade-level text. Similarly, interventions may involve increased exposure to phonics, syntax, writing, etc., to build capacity in these areas and accelerate the student towards grade-level demands. Tier II interventions can be 'aligned' work around building knowledge. Tier III interventions would likely not be grade-level work but rather in the interest of moving students into grade-level work—such as work with phonics for a student in 5th grade and above.

| | | | |
|---|-----------------------------|----------------------|----------------------------------|
| <p>Leadership Questions Are your Tier II interventions aligned around the grade-level work students are learning with the rest of their classmates? Are K–2 interventions aligned to the phonics program?</p> | <p>Plus Evidence</p> | <p>Deltas</p> | <p>Information Needed</p> |
| <p>ELLs and Language Amplification ELLs and Language Minority students benefit from amplified language, a concept from Aida Walqui that can be paraphrased in this context to mean providing students with repeated opportunities to encounter and practice (through reading, writing, listening, and speaking) language and content from multiple perspectives and activities. Amplification of text is often presented in opposition to simplification of text.</p> | | | |
| <p>Leadership Questions Is your support system for ELL students focused on amplifying texts rather than simplifying them?</p> | <p>Plus Evidence</p> | <p>Deltas</p> | <p>Information Needed</p> |

| | | | |
|--|-----------------------------|----------------------|----------------------------------|
| <p>Speaking and Listening These sets of standards, often overlooked due to their not being formally assessed, are a crucial aspect of not only building the primacy of text-based discourse but also a classroom culture that exemplifies a supportive growth mindset. Speaking and Listening interacts with all parts of the elephant in a classroom setting.</p> | | | |
| <p>Leadership Questions Are the Speaking and Listening standards present in the curriculum to which you are exposing your students? Are teachers including them in their lesson planning and delivery on a regular basis (vs. intermittently and as a part of special projects)?</p> | <p>Plus Evidence</p> | <p>Deltas</p> | <p>Information Needed</p> |
| <p>Writing Writing should never happen in a manner divorced from reading primarily, and speaking, listening, and language secondarily. Writing should always be about something—even when it is narrative. Writing is a means to build AND express understanding, and should happen for a variety of purposes and contexts.</p> | | | |
| <p>Leadership Questions Does writing happen primarily in conjunction with reading? Do your grade levels have a system for writing that ensures there are a variety of purposes in all subject areas? Is student writing aligned to the requirements of the writing standards?</p> | <p>Plus Evidence</p> | <p>Deltas</p> | <p>Information Needed</p> |

Vocabulary

Vocabulary is supported through work with complex texts and discipline/domain-specific texts that is frequent and systematic, and integrated into the reading, writing, speaking and listening instruction.

Leadership Questions

Is vocabulary instruction happening as part of work with complex texts and/or building knowledge with discipline/domain-specific texts?
Is there attention to focusing on the RIGHT vocabulary words? (i.e., words needed to fully comprehend the text/words likely to appear in future texts in any discipline and/or words that are part of a word family)

Plus Evidence**Deltas****Information Needed**

Fluency

Fluency is developed throughout the ELA block and content area instruction and this happens in two ways: (1) instruction that builds fluent readers (hearing, reading and discussing content-rich, complex texts and promoting a volume of student reading); and (2) specific fluency building activities (e.g., choral reading, repeated oral reading, reader’s theater).

Leadership Questions

Is fluency on the radar of the ELA/content area teachers at all grade levels? Do ELA teachers engage in the aspects of ELA instruction that support fluency AND specific fluency-building activities?

Plus Evidence**Deltas****Information Needed**

List additional aspects of the literacy program that are currently present in your school—but do not fit into a category on this list:

IDENTIFYING PRIORITIES

What do you want to SEE happening differently in classrooms for students in literacy? Write **up to five substantive and visible changes** for the first six months of school.

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.

What systems or structures are necessary?

To make that happen for children, **what do you want to SEE teachers and/or leaders doing differently** in literacy?

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.

What systems or structures are necessary?

ANALYZING LEVEL 3 SYSTEMS AND STRUCTURES

Leadership Support – What protection, direction, and order have been communicated? Are expectations clear? How will these efforts be protected from intrusion? How will problems be identified and quickly addressed? How will successes be recognized? Does the budget reflect the vision and support? What about technology and materials?

Policies and Procedures – Do any policies conflict with the vision’s outcomes and/or activities? Are any policies directly or indirectly affected by this plan?

Systems and Structures for Student Learning – Is the time that students spend in literacy designed for their standards-based learning needs? Are the student systems placing the right emphasis on the right things?

Systems and Structures for Teachers – On what are teachers asked to spend their time and attention? Consider: planning, collaboration, professional learning and development, data-analysis, observation and feedback, evaluation, etc.

Adapted from Guskey, Thomas. *Evaluating Professional Development*. 2000. Corwin Press.

ACTION PLANNING

Design a set of actions that integrate into one coherent intervention for this next school year. Look for places where your systems, structures, and supports overlap. Include key decisions, and identify those that will require strong direction from the leadership.

Make sure you include plans for:

- Aligned curriculum and text selection
- Professional development
- Instructional lesson planning
- Development through observation with feedback

| What? | Who will lead? Who will be included? | Key Dates |
|-------|---|-----------|
| | | |
| | | |
| | | |