



ELA Think Tank / Leadership

I hope 2017 has gotten off to a great start for you. I know that some districts had a snow day last week to add one more day to their Winter Break. I hope your spring semester is a rich and robust one with your students and colleagues.

News from the Office of Standards & Instructional Support

In June of 2016, the Office of Standards and Instructional Support initiated Phase IV of the District Sample Curriculum Project. The focus of Phase IV is to explore high impact instructional practices and to consider the decision-making processes, specifically the metacognitive thinking, when planning, delivering, and reflecting on a lesson. As an office, we launched this Phase in all ten content areas and brought together nearly 200 teachers for a three-day institute.

In English Language Arts / Literacy, we had fifteen teachers representing elementary, middle, and high school discussing instructional shifts due to the increased expectations in standards and instructional approaches to meet those shifts.

The three-day institute allowed for rich conversation around important instructional topics in ELA. Those topics include – and, yes – are not limited to

- working with multiple texts,
- writing in class every day,
- managing effective classroom discussions, and
- building meaningful relationships.

As part of the Institute, teachers drafted a lesson to deliver to teachers in other content areas on Day Three. Homework for the participants was to return to their classrooms and implement a lesson incorporating some of the learnings from the Institute.

To see the resources for Phase IV, a sampling of the teacher-created lessons, and a video of the Grade 5 lesson delivery, see the [Phase IV: High Impact Instructional Strategies](#) website. As with other phases of the [District Sample Curriculum Project](#), these resources are to stimulate dialogue in districts and to provide resources for teachers, teacher-teams, and district leaders to shape for their own use to support student achievement.

CDE News

Standards Review and Revision. CDE continues to develop its plan to guide the upcoming standards review and revision process and is seeking the input of all interested parties.

CDE has extended the timeline to provide feedback to April 30, 2017. The online system can be found [here](#).

Results of the survey will inform the Department's planning for the upcoming review and revision of the standards, required by state law.

Standards Review and Revision Committee Application.

The application materials to serve on the Standards Review and Revision Committee are now posted on the website. The application consists of two parts: 1) to serve on the committee and 2) to serve, if interested, as a co-chairperson of the committee. You do not have to apply to be a co-chairperson but we have combined the applications to streamline the process.

I encourage you to be involved in this review and revision process! Begin by providing input on the online survey and apply to serve on the Committee.

NCTE, CCIRA, CLAS Notes

NCTE. I received the following info from one of our NCTE members and Colorado colleagues. **If you have an interest in literacy assessment work, this would be a great committee.**

Assessment continues to inform, even drive, curricula and pedagogies. Because it influences literacy teaching and learning—across the country and across every section of the Council—literacy assessment is a shared concern and a shared challenge. This committee will have the following charge:

- To monitor developments in assessment policies and practices;
- To inform Council leaders and NCTE members, as they consider policy and advocacy, about ways assessment practices are impacting teachers.
- To identify assessment practices that support the kinds of teaching and learning that research in literacy, language arts, literature, and composition studies demonstrates as most significant and effective.
- To identify opportunities or needs for NCTE research and/or publications on literacy assessment.

K-8 literacy teachers who would be interested in working with the committee, please contact Peggy O'Neill at Poneill@loyola.edu.

Research and Resources

With CCIRA hosting several awesome speakers, I thought I would highlight some of them and their work:

Penny Kittle: <http://pennykittle.net/>

Kelly Gallagher: <http://www.kellygallagher.org/>

Doug Fisher: <https://fisherandfrey.com/>

Donalyn Miller: <https://bookwhisperer.com/>

Nell Duke: http://www.soe.umich.edu/people/profile/duke_nell/

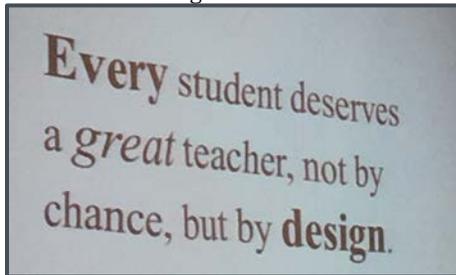
Jeff Anderson: <http://www.writeguy.net/>

Lester Laminack: <http://www.lesterlaminack.com/>

Follow them on Facebook or on Twitter. Their posts are always like mini-professional development sessions!

CCIRA Notes

Douglas Fisher launched his opening keynote for the CCIRA conference with the following slide:



He invited folks at tables to discuss what they saw as a key word or phrase in the sentence. After a bit of discussion, folks at my table agreed that the idea of “by design” was significant. *Design* implies intent, deliberate action, vision, function. It was a great launch into the three-day conference with nearly 1500 attendees.

Before getting to the bigger, broader take-aways, I’d like to make a bit of a shout-out to the specific sessions I attended. Lester Laminack, children’s author, was inspirational in his presentation and during his “author’s luncheon” talk. Nell Duke stimulated new ways to think about literacy instruction in the elementary years. Likewise, Penny Kittle and Kelly Gallagher, in their Friday Evening Keynote, had secondary teachers consider the trajectory of their instruction over a full-year in 9th Grade English Language Arts. In short, the presenters captured the sentiment of Fisher’s opening slide: **design**.

I would really love to get into the specifics of the individual sessions I attended. They were so rich! However, my three big take-aways come down to this:

Commitment / allegiance: **Lester Laminack** talked about “becoming friends” with a specific text or two (or five). He redefined my perception of “repeated reading”: have repeated readings with a book over the course of a quarter, or even a year. This isn’t a repeated reading to build fluency (i.e. Reader’s Theater), but an approach to build a passion for reading, an curiosity about craft, a friendship with a book. Let students see and experience why a book, or a poem, or a Leonard Pitts commentary stays with you beyond one reading. **Penny Kittle** talked about helping students develop an allegiance to a genre or to an author. Honor what they enjoy reading and then invite them in to read more in that genre or by a specific author. **Nell Duke** challenged us to commit to essential ingredients for effective instruction – and to discard the non-essential ingredients (even the ones we continue to hold on to!).

The “why”: Exploring the “why” can happen in so many ways. **Kittle and Gallagher** talked about the decisions they made in designing the 9th Grade year – and **they explored “why” they made those decisions**. Laminack pushes students – elementary students, even – to ask “why is the author doing that?” I appreciated the sessions where the presenters valued this inquiry process as they designed their own instruction with students.

Relationships: Of course. Douglas Fisher, in his opening keynote, built on the meta-analysis work from John Hattie. Teacher-student relationships has an effect size of .72. But he went further with that data by stating that student mobility, children changing schools, is the #1 negative impact on student achievement. How do we offset the negative effect of mobility on literacy achievement? Building teacher-student relationships.

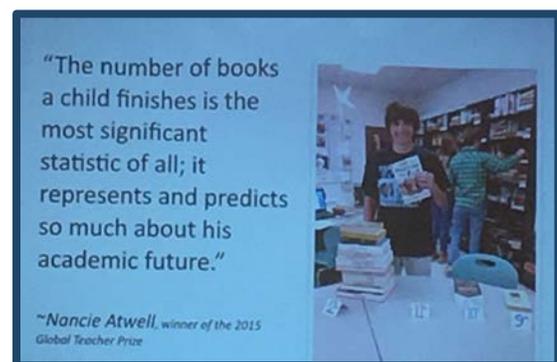


Penny Kittle and Kelly Gallagher built on the idea by being very intentional in designing their 9th grade year with listening and speaking standards at the forefront. Both of them value conferences they have with students during reading and writing workshop. “What can I do to help?” is a question to elicit student talk about their own writing. They reinforce relationship building through the “book clubs” that comprise much of their school year. Book clubs increase student talk.

Contact Info

I have talked with some members of this group on the phone and/or in person about best ways to support your efforts in your schools and districts. Some of you have inquired about face-to-face meetings. I shared with a few of you about my hesitancy to have people travel to a face-to-face meeting if the primary agenda is information delivery from me. I think that need is best served via this monthly update, emails, or webinars. I am also very cognizant of the fact that for many members of this think tank / leadership group would be unable to make it to the Front Range for a two-hour meeting. (Or, if the meeting were held in Grand Junction, folks from the eastern slope would not make that drive, either.)

So I would like to hear from you. Please email me at puzick_v@cde.state.co.us. I would be interested in hearing what you would have on an agenda for a face-to-face meeting. I can think of some items – districts’ approaches to writing instruction, grammar/mechanics vertical alignment, working with multiple texts – but I am more interested in what you have on the agenda.



Please feel free to contact me at puzick_v@cde.state.co.us or (303) 866-6583. I would love to have feedback on the monthly e-update or hear suggestions for topics you would like to have addressed.

