

13 TEACHERS TEACHING TEACHERS™

FOR A DYNAMIC COMMUNITY OF TEACHER LEADERS

The challenge of learning to lead as an NBCT

By Bill Ferriter

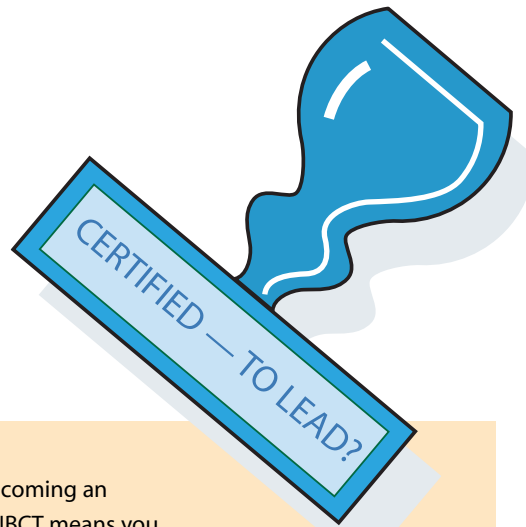
National Teacher of the Year for 2003 Betsy Rogers had only one goal in mind when she sat for certification from the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards: To improve her work with the 1st- and 2nd-grade students in her classroom. “I never saw beyond those four walls,” said Rogers. “I went through the process strictly to become a better teacher. That was my goal all along.”

Like most of the nation’s 55,000 National Board Certified Teachers (NBCTs), Rogers reached her goal, stak-

“Becoming an NBCT means you have demonstrated accomplishment in teaching children and working with other adults to further the learning of your students. While this certainly qualifies one as a role model for other teachers, it does not assess one’s readiness to be a mentor, staff developer, or assume other leadership roles. Some of us were ready for these roles prior to certification and others were not. Certification has little to do with that readiness. The question becomes, “After certification, then what?”

— Carolyn Guthrie, NBCT

ing out a place on the cutting edge of education after demonstrating an ability to translate new ideas into classroom practices informed by rich understandings of students. Rogers began to constantly ana-



WHAT'S INSIDE

Focus on NSDC's standards

The Learning standard applies facts about how adults learn.

PAGE 5



NSDC profile

Instructional coach Marit Nierman rolls up her sleeves.

PAGE 7

Research brief

ELLs need academic English skills.

PAGE 9

NSDC tool

Reflect on “A day-in-the-life.”

PAGE 11



National Staff
Development
Council
800-727-7288
www.nsd.org

lyze the impact of her instruction, praising lessons learned from the National Board. “The process of certification helps you to understand your content and your kids better,” said Rogers, who now works as a curriculum specialist at Brighton Elementary School in Jefferson County, Ala. “It taught me to focus at a much deeper level.”

But classroom successes often aren’t enough, especially if districts are using National Board certification as a strategy for improving teaching quality throughout a system. With a growing body of evidence that NBCTs have a positive impact on student achievement, decision makers are increasingly interested in engaging these highly accomplished teachers as leaders. “Each NBCT has publicly demonstrated professional expertise in both content knowledge and pedagogy. As a district, we would be remiss in our failure to acknowledge this accomplishment,” said Sue Dole, deputy superintendent of Springfield (Ill.) School District No. 186 (The National Board Resource Center, 2005). Dole’s district is exploring ways to involve NBCTs in its new teacher induction program, as professional development leaders, and as hosts of observation classrooms.

Several states are beginning to document a wide range of new work being done by NBCTs. In Washington, for example, a 2003 survey showed that NBCTs were more engaged in advocating for quality teaching, leading professional development, and implementing new instructional approaches after certifying than they were before becoming NBCTs (Stokes, Helms, & Maxon, 2003). A follow-up study in October 2006 found that over 50% of NBCTs in the state of Washington were more involved in school and district leadership after certifying (Center for Strengthening the Teaching Profession, 2007).

Of particular interest to NBCTs are coaching opportunities. “I could see myself mentoring new teachers,” shared Mike Hutchinson, one of North Carolina’s 11,000 NBCTs. “The process of thinking through objectives ... is learned through National Boards. Those processes would be good to pass on to new teachers.” NBCTs also express confidence in their ability to support colleagues learning to design effective instructional practices and to use multiple measures for student assess-

ment (National Board Resource Center, 2005).

But are NBCTs uniquely qualified for — and prepared for — leadership?

Leading “beyond the box”

Many of the accomplished educators in the Teacher Leaders Network, a professional community of nearly 300 teachers working in rural, urban, and suburban schools across America, have learned that leading adults takes a unique set of skills. During a focused three-day conversation in February 2007, these educators — 80% of whom are NBCTs — examined the challenges of stepping into leadership roles.

Teachers working outside the classroom quickly learn that leading adults requires a measure of unexpected staying power. “My biggest challenge was adjusting to the needs of adults. To work effectively with adult learners, I’ve had to remember to be flexible, patient, and responsive to individual situations. All these are qualities I needed for my work with kindergartners and 1st graders. I just needed them in larger quantities for adult learners,” said Virginia NBCT Gail Ritchie.

Susan Graham, an NBCT from Stafford County, Va., added, “Adults process and are motivated differently than children. To some extent, we lead children to, as well as through, learning because their base of knowledge and ability to make meaning ... are still developing and must be guided. With adult learners, the teacher’s job is to facilitate self-instruction.”

Teachers who succeed as leaders also recognize the importance of trust in the adult learning process. An atmosphere of safety is essential for encouraging educators to take professional risks so building community becomes a critical first step for driving change. “I quickly learned that building relationships is essential,” said Betsy Rogers. “Anything that I can do to assist teachers with teaching is what helps me to build positive relationships, and those relationships are important for having influence as a leader.”

“Adults bring a wide range of prior experiences with them,” added Carolann Wade, coordinator for National Board Certification for Wake County (N.C.) Public School System. “You have to respect and value that experience in order to



Bill Ferriter received his Middle Childhood Generalist Certification from the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards in 1997 and renewed his certificate last year. He is a 6th-grade social studies and language arts teacher at Salem Middle School in Apex, N.C. He writes a monthly column on teacher leadership for T3 and maintains a blog on the NSDC web site.

Join the conversation with Bill by visiting www.nsd.org/blog/ and offering your opinion.

be successful.”

Finally, teacher leaders learn to balance an adult’s need for safety with the mental challenge required for meaningful change. Laurie Stenehjem, supervisor for a novice teacher induction program in Grand Forks, N.D., wrestles with this balance regularly. “I’m finding that many teachers are impatient with their own learning ... As adults, maybe we don’t want to feel the cognitive dissonance that happens before really deep new learning takes place. Learning can be uncomfortable and we avoid discomfort.” Stenehjem said.

Lessons learned the old-fashioned way

The assumption that board certification automatically prepares teachers to tackle these distinct challenges is flawed. “Too many NBCTs are pushed into the role of teaching teachers when they are not comfortable with adult learners. They may have already taken on the role of committee leaders and curriculum developers ... but they still may not be comfortable providing true staff development for their colleagues,” said Deanna Harris, an NBCT in Wake County, N.C.

Rogers echoed this thinking. “When you become board certified, people tend to think that you can do it all, but that’s really not true. To lead, you have to have background knowledge and personality traits that aren’t related to board certification. Moving beyond my classroom scared the death out of me. I never had any training in working with adults.”

Many learn leadership lessons the old-fashioned way — through repeated experiences and a personal dedication to growth. Pursuing individual professional development helped Harris cope with new opportunities. “The year after I certified, I was invited to join an action research group. That was a nice ‘after NBC’ professional development. My principal also encouraged me to take facilitative leadership training, which was another ‘next step’ for me.”

Others establish relationships with informal mentors that provide continuing support after certification. “One major lesson I learned was to find a trusting mentor,” said Shelly Ward, NBCT and 4th-grade teacher from Bellevue (Wash.) School District. “Having someone be honest and

forthright with me (about leadership) helped. It was only then that I began to understand how I could make a difference.”

Wake County’s Wade sees these informal mentors as the key to developing teacher leaders. “NBCTs need to have people guide them into new leadership roles because they often have a sense of initial fear about teaching other adults,” she writes. “Mentors support teachers through each new stage of professional growth until they have confidence in their own abilities to lead.”

Sometimes, success in newly created positions relies on little more than a tenacious refusal to quit. Serving as district trailblazers, teacher leaders adopt a ‘make it happen’ attitude when faced with unforeseen barriers. “I work in a position that is new for our district. There are three of us — all of whom are NBCTs — so we’re trying to shape what this role is going to be. Sometimes, we feel like we are spinning our wheels, but we jump in and do what has to be done,” Rogers said.

Redefining the teacher as leader

Six years ago, the Institute for Educational Leadership released *Leadership for Student Learning: Redefining the Teacher as Leader*. In this report, the Task Force on Teacher Leadership argued that teachers should play a central role in school change. “Teacher leadership can be a big part of the answer [to critical questions like] how can we create the ‘professional community’ that research shows is essential to peak school and student performance? What can be done to increase the quality of teachers and enhance the professionalism of teaching and teachers? How can the necessary bridge be made between challenging academic standards ... and what goes on in the classroom?” (Usdan, McCloud, and Podmostko, 2001).

Driven by a sense of responsibility for advancing education, NBCTs are helping to rethink teaching and learning. Few back down from professional challenges and most are recognized and respected by their peers. For many NBCTs, certification serves as an invitation to become leaders.

The impact of this professional energy is left to chance, however, in districts that fail to pro-

[See the May 2007 issue of *The Learning System* to learn more about how states and districts support National Board certification.](#)

vide the kinds of supports necessary for success. Pairing some of our most influential and accomplished teachers with systematic training on the nature of adult learners can only help to blend who NBCTs are with who the profession wants them to be.

References

Center for Strengthening the Teaching Profession. (2003). *Summary findings from focus groups of NBCTs*, pp. 1-13. Inverness, CA: Inverness Research Associates.

Center for Strengthening the Teaching Profession. (2007). *Teachers' views: Professional development that improves teaching and learn-*

ing, pp. 1-12. Silverdale, WA: Author.

National Board Resource Center. (2005). *NBCTs improve student achievement in Illinois*, pp. 1-4. Normal, IL: Illinois State University.

National Board Resource Center. (2005). *Using Illinois NBCTs to lead school improvement*, pp. 1-4. Normal, IL: Illinois State University.

Stokes, L., Helms, J., & Maxon, D. (2003). *Results of a leadership survey of NBCTs in Washington*. Inverness, CA: Inverness Research Associates.

Usdan, M., McCloud, B., & Podmostko, M. (2001). *Leadership for student learning: Redefining the teacher as leader*. Washington,

See the May 2007 issue of *The Learning Principal* to learn what it's like to lead a school filled with NBCTs.

Teachers Teaching Teachers (T3)TM is published eight times a year by the National Staff Development Council, 5995 Fairfield Road, #4, Oxford, OH 45056. Copyright, NSDC, 2007. All rights reserved.

MAIN BUSINESS OFFICE
5995 Fairfield Road, #4
Oxford OH 45056
513-523-6029
800-727-7288
513-523-0638 (fax)
E-mail: NSDCoffice@nsdc.org
Web site: www.nsd.org

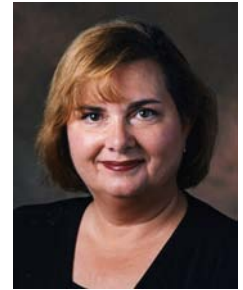
Editor: Joan Richardson
Designer: Kitty Black

NSDC STAFF
Executive director
Dennis Sparks
dennis.sparks@nsdc.org
Deputy executive director
Stephanie Hirsh
stephanie.hirsh@nsdc.org
Director of business services
Leslie Miller
leslie.miller@nsdc.org
Director of learning
Cathy Owens
cathy.owens@nsdc.org
Director of publications
Joan Richardson
joan.richardson@nsdc.org
Director of special projects
Joellen Killion
joellen.killion@nsdc.org
Distinguished senior fellow
Hayes Mizell
hayes.mizell@nsdc.org

BOARD OF TRUSTEES
Sue McAdamis
President
Sydnee Dickson (2008)
Karen Dyer (2010)
President-elect
Maria Goodloe-Johnson (2009)
Charles Mason (2007)
James Roussin (2009)
Sue Showers (2008)
William Sommers (2008)
Past president

COPYING/REPRINT POLICY
All content in *Teachers Teaching Teachers (T3)* is copyright protected by the National Staff Development Council and may not be copied or reprinted without permission. Please see www.nsd.org/library/publications/permpolicy.cfm for details as well as a form for submitting a request.

CONTACT
Complete contact information for all staff and board members is available on the web site at www.nsd.org/connect/about/index.cfm.



Joellen Killion is director of special projects for National Staff Development Council.

Fit the strategy to the learner

NSDC's Learning standard includes several key components. First, adults learn in different ways. An additional idea is that learning is change. Last, learning is a social process. As coaches interact with teachers, they use the Learning standard to shape the nature and the content of every conversation.

Successful coaches enter each coaching interaction with some fundamental choices. One choice is the stance they take in relationship to the teacher they are coaching. In *Mentoring Matters* (MiraVia, 2001), Laura Lipton and Bruce Wellman describe three approaches to mentoring: consulting, collaborating, and coaching. Each approach is a choice a coach makes. In this article, I will use the terms expert, peer, and facilitator to describe the three stances a coach may take.

The stance may be one of expert to novice; peer to peer; or coach to teacher.

In the first stance — expert to novice — the coach has confidence that he or she has knowledge and/or skills teachers do not have. The goal of this interaction is to develop a teacher's competence, capability, and confidence and to develop his or her knowledge or skills. In other words, the coach acts as a teacher.

In the second stance — peer to peer — the coach is a peer who works alongside his or her colleague. In this interaction, peers learn together, each developing and applying knowledge and skills to refine practice and sharing with one another what they are learning as they apply their learning. In this stance, the peers may offer one another feedback or jointly solve problems related to implementation of the new learning.

In the third stance — coach to teacher — the coach is a facilitator who guides teachers as they reflect on and self-analyze their practice. In this

interaction, the coach helps teachers gain increased consciousness about their practice to understand more deeply their decision-making processes, and encourages them to explore how variations in their practice influence how students learn.

Coaches select a stance based on teachers' needs and the goals of the interaction. One challenge coaches have is to maintain flexibility about which stance to take and to resist the easy role of being the expert. Coaches become coaches because they are master teachers. They have demonstrated their expertise and have credibility with their peers. It would be easy to destroy that credibility if coaches acted as if they have the one right answer or one right way to teach. This is particularly difficult when teachers, glad to have support and eager to refine their instructional skills, seek advice from a coach, asking the coach what he or she would recommend in a particular situation. This might be an appropriate approach for a coach in some situations, but it could provoke ill will in others. Coaches might begin with a facilitator stance before moving to an expert stance.

Selecting a stance allows the coaches to identify an instructional approach to coaching.

EXPERT: As an expert, the coach uses a direct instruction model. The coach shares the rationale for the learning, grounds it in the teacher's experience, gives examples, models the learning, guides the teacher as she or he practices using the



LEARNING

Staff development that improves the learning of all students applies knowledge about human learning and change.

For more information about NSDC's Standards for Staff Development, see www.nsd.org/standards/index.cfm

learning in the classroom, and then offers opportunities for reteaching or extending the learning. If a coach works with a novice teacher, for example, who does not have an array of strategies for differentiating instruction for students who read substantially below grade level, the coach could convey to the teacher the importance of employing instructional strategies to meet the needs of all students; share several strategies for differentiating a lesson; model the strategies; observe the teacher as he uses the strategies in his classroom; offer feedback; and, as the teacher demonstrates competence with these strategies, share ways to differentiate assessment, assignments, and/or instructional materials, all while holding students to the same rigorous content standards.

PEER: In the peer stance, the coach invites teachers interested in learning about differentiation to join with him in a learning team. The coach schedules a time for teachers to gather, brings some possible resources including books and videos for their collaborative investigation to the first meeting, asks teachers to explore their assumptions about teachers' responsibilities related to student learning, and engages teachers in a discussion about the importance of differentiation. The coach coordinates the team as they develop a plan of action for learning about differentiation. He is the first to volunteer to demonstrate a strategy for several team members in one teacher's classroom and asks the observers to give him feedback on the lesson. He covers one teacher's class while she observes another teacher. He works with individual team members or pairs to design lessons that include differentiation. He observes and gives teachers feedback about their use of differentiation strategies. He seeks support from the principal to buy instructional resources to use with non-readers that will help them meet the standards.

FACILITATOR: As a facilitator, the coach meets with individual teachers or small groups to explore their understanding of differentiation, their strategies for differentiation, how those practices impact student learning, and ways to refine their current practices. His goal is to raise teachers' consciousness about how they think

about and use differentiation in their classrooms, their ability to analyze their practice based on its impact on student learning, and their capacity to think about their thinking. He meets with teachers as they plan instruction and asks teachers to be aware of the decisions they make and to share their rationale for their decisions. He asks reflective questions that promote thoughtful examination of practice, encourages teachers to come together with samples of student work to more deeply understand the impact of teachers' work on student work. In addition to asking teachers to examine the practical reasons for their decisions, he asks them to consider the theoretical and moral rationale for their decisions.

When coaches recognize that they have options (*different ways*) about their stance for coaching, they can be flexible and adjust their approach to coaching to meet the needs (*change*) of their clients and their goals. They engage teachers in conversations (*social interaction*) to promote collaborative interaction about teaching and learning. A coach's mission is to improve teaching and student learning. As such, the coach views his or her work as promoting learning among both teachers and their students. ♦

One challenge coaches have is to maintain flexibility about which stance to take and to resist the easy role of being the expert.

MORE ABOUT COACHING

Taking the lead: New roles for teachers and school-based coaches

By Joellen Killion and Cindy Harrison

This guide to school-based coaching is written by two educators who have developed coaching models and worked closely with dozens of coaches. They explore the complex, multifaceted roles played by teacher leaders and school-based coaches, as well as examining district and school expectations, hiring practices, and deployment of these educators.

A companion CD-ROM includes dozens of tools that teacher leaders and school-based coaches can use in their work. One of those tools is a new set of Innovation Configurations for school-based coaches. *NSDC, 2006. Item B352.*

Price: \$36, members; \$45, nonmembers

Order through NSDC's Online Bookstore, store.nsd.org

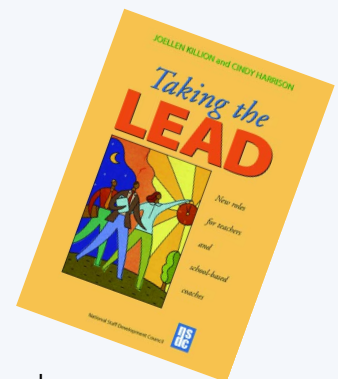




Photo by EMILY SCHUELLER, student
Instructional coach Marit Nierman, right, works with teacher Beth Clearman.

Coach lends them her ears

By Tracy Crow

Instructional coach Marit Nierman approaches her job with teachers this way: “I’m the person in this building who gets to roll up my sleeves and help you do this — I am an extra set of ears,” Nierman describes. When she looks to the future, one of her questions is how long will the district need a coaching program? Nierman asks, “Will teachers get to a point where they coach each other? Or will we always need an extra pair of ears?”

Nierman works at Garrison Middle School in Walla Walla (Wash.) Public Schools. She has worked in the past as a reading specialist in a traditional pullout model. Now, as part of a dis-

trictwide literacy initiative, she is a coach who works with teachers in grades 6-8. The school has about 600 students and 40 teachers.

Building relationships was — and still is — a major goal for Nierman. She was new to the district when she became Garrison’s instructional coach. “I know I was lucky; this school already had an extremely positive culture,” she said. “The staff is a highly collaborative group; there are many entry points for my work and a lot of information about what is needed.”

The trust level at Garrison is high and teachers are willing to receive feedback. Typically, Nierman helps teachers plan lessons and she talks with them after they’ve taught certain lessons so they can reflect upon the experience.

The trust level at Garrison Middle School is high and teachers are willing to receive feedback.

Nierman also helps teachers “connect the dots.” “There are many things going on in the district. How are these all supposed to connect and work together?” she said.

The Walla Walla district is focused on literacy in all content areas so Nierman and three other coaches collaborate to build a comprehensive coaching and professional development program to address literacy across content areas at the secondary level. Each year, the coaches work with a cohort of teachers to develop common lesson structures and integrate specific instructional strategies.

Literacy is “the ability to read, write, and communicate at a level that allows you to participate in society,” Nierman said. For content-area teachers, this means being able to read and write like a mathematician or to read and write like a scientist. For math and science teachers in particular, emphasizing thinking skills and information processing skills is more meaningful than just an emphasis on reading and writing, Nierman has learned.

Because of the instructional strategies and common lesson planning structures, “our culture has changed,” Nierman said. “Now we have conversations that go across departments.”

The district has also adjusted schedules to enable every teacher to have an hour of collaboration every week. At Garrison, students arrive an hour late each Wednesday in order to provide this time for teachers.

Much of Nierman’s learning occurs as the secondary coaches meet weekly to plan the work and hone their skills. They discuss how to integrate literacy strategies throughout the secondary curriculum. They discuss what a year’s worth of professional development should look like. To “build our toolbox,” Nierman said, “we pair up, we practice reflective conversations, and we role-play different strategies that we want teachers to use.”

Nierman has worked at strengthening her communication skills. “I thought I was already pretty good in that area, but the more you learn, the more you realize you don’t know,” she said. “Instead of being the expert, I needed to become more refined in the art of listening and questioning.”

MARIT NIERMAN

Position: Instructional coach

School: Garrison Middle School

School district: Walla Walla (Wash.) Public Schools

Professional history: Taught 1st grade, (2 years); 2nd grade (1 year); Title I reading specialist (6 years); instructional coach (2 years)

Education: Bachelor’s degree in education, Pacific Lutheran University; master’s degree in curriculum and instruction, Lesley University

E-mail address: MNierman@wwps.org

Nierman particularly values the collaborative work the coaches do to articulate their vision for the Walla Walla coaching model. Her biggest challenge is “having an idea where we’d like to see the staff grow, in terms of instruction, in terms of culture, and figuring how to get there slowly. How do we scaffold this work, what do we do first? We see where we want to get. What is the road we take to get there?” Nierman said.

The Walla Walla coaches have worked intensely with Joellen Killion, NSDC’s director of special projects, and this summer will work with Jim Knight, a researcher at the University of Kansas and a leading voice in the field of instructional coaching. Nierman has found this type of assistance critical to the growth of the coaching program.

The district’s support has also been significant. The coaches’ principals join them in the collaborative work once a month. “Our administrators are incredibly involved – as much as they can be with all of their responsibilities,” said Nierman. ♦

The district has adjusted schedules to enable every teacher to have an hour of collaboration every week. At Garrison, students arrive an hour late each Wednesday in order to provide this time for teachers.

Reading and verbal skills are not enough

Study finds English language learners also need academic English for their success

By **Carla Thomas McClure**

English language learners (ELLs) who have good word-reading and verbal skills in English — including many ELLs who no longer qualify for language support services — are not necessarily prepared for academic success, according to a report from the Center on Instruction. Especially as the focus shifts from learning to read to reading to learn, ELLs can benefit from explicit instruction in academic English across all content areas, including mathematics.

What is academic English?

Proficiency in academic language includes the mastery of specialized vocabulary, content-specific concepts, and complex sentence structures; it also encompasses the ability to write, read, and understand such language. Such proficiency is “arguably the single most important determinant” of individual students’ mastery of academic content, concluded the Center after examining research on ELLs.

What prompted the Center on Instruction to focus on academic English?

In its review of research on instructional issues affecting ELLs, the Center found that most ELLs can be taught to read words accurately, but they don’t always comprehend what they are reading. The reasons for such difficulties are not entirely clear. As students move into the upper elementary grades, and reading instruction drops



away, however, students must apply reading skills to acquire concepts, ideas, and facts in content areas. At this point, poor reading comprehension can prevent ELLs from meeting higher-level demands, such as analyzing text or writing about what they have read.

Do native English speakers also struggle with academic language?

Yes. In fact, the Center reports that “native English speakers from all ethnic and socioeconomic backgrounds benefit from explicit instruction to develop academic language.”

What can teachers do to help students acquire academic English?

EDVANTIA™

Carla Thomas McClure is a staff writer at Edvantia (www.edvantia.org), a nonprofit research and development organization that works with federal, state, and local education agencies to improve student achievement.

Targeted, classwide instruction can supplement the skills of English speakers and help prevent difficulties for ELLs. One-on-one or small-group instruction can be used to address difficulties that are shared by only a few students.

The Center on Instruction recommends vocabulary instruction that is frequent, intensive, systematic, and complex. It should include words that are important to understanding the text but not commonly used in conversation (e.g., determine, whereas, and factor). Especially problematic for ELLs are words with multiple meanings. For example, odd, root, and field take on special meanings in the context of mathematics. Multiple exposures to academic and content-specific words across domains (reading, writing, speaking, and listening) can reinforce vocabulary learning. To gain deep understanding, students need 12 to 14 exposures to each targeted word.

ELLs also need to learn strategies for comprehending and analyzing challenging narrative and expository texts.

The Center on Instruction recommends explicitly teaching students to make predictions before they read, to monitor their own understanding as they read, to reflect on the strategies they use to increase text comprehension, and to summarize what they have read. Repeated reading is cited as an intervention that has been used successfully with ELLs. Students practice orally reading a text passage to a supportive partner (usually an adult) until the passage can be read expressively, with very few errors. The partner provides corrective feedback and may ask the student to summarize the passage, discuss it, or answer questions.

ELLs also need opportunities to engage in structured academic talk and can benefit from purposeful independent readings that are matched to the reader's ability level (the student should be able to read and understand 90% of the text).

Is academic language important for mathematics proficiency?

Yes. According to the Center on Instruction, "a common misconception about mathematics is that it is a 'universal language,' one that is synonymous with numbers and symbols." However, teachers use academic language to teach mathe-

TO SUPPORT AND PROMOTE READING DEVELOPMENT FOR ELLS:

1. Provide early, explicit, and intensive instruction in phonological awareness and phonics.
2. Increase opportunities for ELLs to develop sophisticated vocabulary knowledge.
3. Teach strategies and knowledge needed to comprehend and analyze challenging narrative and expository texts.
4. Focus on vocabulary and increased exposure to print.
5. Provide significant opportunities for ELLs to engage in structured academic talk.
6. When assigning independent reading, make sure there is a good reader-text match and make assignments structured and purposeful.

matics. Understanding word problems well enough to solve them can also challenge ELLs.

Reference

Francis, D.J., Rivera, M., Lesaux, N., Keiffer, M., & Rivera, H. (2006). *Practical guidelines for the education of English language learners: Research-based recommendations for instruction and academic interventions*. Portsmouth, NH: Center on Instruction. www.centeroninstruction.org/files/ELL1-Interventions.pdf

Note: The Center on Instruction (www.centeroninstruction.org) is part of the federally funded Comprehensive Center network. The Center provides research-based information on K-12 instruction in reading, math, science, special education, and English language learners. ♦

A 'day-in-the-life' scenario



Comments to the facilitator: Storytelling is an opportunity for the participants involved in change efforts to bring their right brains, their emotional selves, to the task. A scenario is a description of the future based on goals or planned actions. It is a way of making intentions visible in a detailed way.

Use this activity with groups that are setting goals or stymied as they try to find solutions to specific problems. The facilitator may already know what questions the group is trying to answer or each group might have different problems to address.

Scenarios can be useful and actionable if focused on a particular issue or question. An example: What will our school look like when more students in our 4th-grade classes are scoring at grade level in reading?

Time: 2+ hours

Supplies: Chart paper, markers, handouts with questions for writing scenarios.

Directions

1. Distribute the handout, p. 12. Separate the larger group into smaller groups of three to five people.
2. Have each small group create a "day-in-the-life" scenario. You can have groups write about the same specific issue or question or have each address a different issue, depending on the group's needs. Invite each group to select a spokesperson who will share the scenario with the larger group. *Time: 30-45 minutes.*
3. Invite all groups to share scenarios. Next, ask the larger group to list assumptions or ideas that are unusual or thought provoking. Write those assumptions on chart paper so everyone can view them. *Time: 60 minutes.*
4. Ask the group, "What actions do the themes and scenarios suggest?" Have the group generate a list of specific actions to take to achieve the desired outcomes. Write those actions on chart paper so everyone can view them. *Time: 30 minutes.*

"The best way to predict the future is to invent it."

— Alan Kay

"The universal love of stories is not a coincidence; our brains function by constructing narratives. Adults and children alike live, learn, and relate to others through stories. Unlike other forms of writing, stories engage our emotions and imagination in the process of learning."

— Editors of *American Educator*

A 'day-in-the-life' scenario

Write a detailed scenario describing what you will see in your classroom or school on one day when you have achieved your desired outcome. Consider the following questions as you write:

- What details of learning will you see in the room and school?
- What will students be doing?
- What will teachers, other staff members, and parents be doing?
- What interactions will be significant?
- What materials will be evident?
- What emotions are detectable in the room?
- What will students and teachers remember about the day?

“The telling of stories leads to shared meaning and emotional experience that changes something profoundly.”

— John Kao



“We are defined by our stories, which continually form us and make us vital and give us hope.”

— Max DePree

Adapted from “Chapter 24: Visual Dialogue,” *Powerful Designs for Professional Learning*, edited by Lois Brown Easton. NSDC, 2004.