



Literacy Collaborative® Middle School Standards

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Introduction

Literacy Collaborative® is a comprehensive model designed to provide a school-wide approach for improving the reading and writing achievement of students. Literacy Collaborative includes 10 essential design elements:

1. a school-based leadership team;
2. a school-based literacy coach;
3. initial and ongoing professional development for teachers and literacy coaches;
4. in-classroom coaching for literacy teachers;
5. research-based classroom instructional practices;
6. systematic assessment that informs instruction;
7. materials to support the implementation;
8. multiple levels of intervention to support differentiated classroom instruction (strongly recommended—Leveled Literacy Intervention);
9. a school/home partnership program and,
10. research on student achievement and implementation.

Schools that implement the model according to the standards described in this document are registered as Literacy Collaborative schools and affiliated with an approved Literacy Collaborative university training center.

Adherence to the following Standards is essential to maintaining a high quality implementation that results in improved student outcomes in literacy achievement.

Definitions

The Literacy Collaborative Standards are intended to inform and support personnel who are responsible for the implementation and maintenance of Literacy Collaborative schools and classrooms.

Standards as outlined in this document are requirements that must be met in order to maintain use of the Literacy Collaborative® trademark. Standards are based on research of effective practice and are essential for assuring quality implementation of Literacy Collaborative. Sites that meet the standards are members of the Literacy Collaborative network.

The **Literacy Collaborative Trademark Committee** is composed of model developers from Lesley University and The Ohio State University. This committee is charged with maintaining the integrity of the model as outlined in these standards, as well as with protecting the investment of educators in implementing Literacy Collaborative.

The trademark for Literacy Collaborative at the middle school grades 7 and 8 (A middle school may also include grades 5 and 6 in the building) is granted by Lesley University and The Ohio State University to schools, district training sites, and university training sites on a royalty-free basis subject to meeting the standards as described in this document. Use of the trademark is subject to annual renewal.

No set of standards can provide for the unique settings of all schools or districts. A procedure for requesting temporary departures from these standards is available at the end of this document.

Year 1- Literacy Coach training year

Year 2- Field year (Literacy Coach leads initial 40-hour professional development)

I. Standards for Literacy Collaborative® Schools

1.1 The middle school will employ an English/Language Arts teacher as a full time literacy coach who will implement the language and literacy framework for at least 45 minutes of daily instructional time. Two periods of 45 minutes to an hour are recommended to engage in daily reading and writing workshops. It is also recommended that English/Language Arts teachers engage students who are below grade level in small group instruction, guided reading, and writing, at least three days a week.

Rationale: During the training year of the coach she is learning how to implement both the reading and writing workshops. Being able to engage the same group of students in these two workshops daily provides the coach the best opportunity to take transfer what she is learning in the training and apply it to her classroom. Similarly the coach will need ample opportunity to engage in small group instruction with students as she is learning guided reading and guided writing in the training.

1.2 English/Language Arts teachers in the school will successfully complete a minimum of 60 hours of professional development provided by their school-based literacy coach over a two-year period (e.g., 40 hours during Year 1 and 20 hours in Year 2) as defined by the course syllabus. This training is recursive until all faculty responsible for teaching literacy (5/6-8) have completed training. Teachers of content areas will receive 20 hours of initial training.

1.3 English/Language Arts teachers in the school will participate in ongoing professional development with their school-based literacy coach following the initial two-year training. This ongoing training consists of a minimum of 10 hours yearly and is spaced across the school year. Maintaining 20 hours of ongoing professional development is strongly recommended. Teachers of content area will receive ongoing training as needed.

Rationale: Teachers need time for professional development that supports them in taking on new understandings, linking theory to practice, and planning for instruction around student needs, with increased student achievement as a goal. A large body of research has revealed that ongoing teacher training is the critical factor in making a difference in students' learning.

1.4 Teachers in the school will engage with their literacy coach in ongoing, regularly scheduled coaching sessions (14-18 coaching sessions per English/Language Arts teacher each year).

Rationale: Reflection strengthens instruction. Through coaching with a literacy coach, teachers learn to reflect on the effectiveness of their teaching. Coaching supports teachers as they apply knowledge, develop skills, polish techniques, and deepen their understandings.

1.5 Teachers in the school will collect, analyze, and use systematic assessment data for students who are performing below grade level as readers and writers to inform teaching decisions on a regular basis.

Rationale: Teachers assess students to monitor the effectiveness of their teaching and the implementation of the Literacy Collaborative language and literacy framework. This informs teachers' instruction, helps them to provide interventions, and equips them with strategies for school improvement.

1.6 The school will ensure that the literacy coach, school leadership team, and literacy teachers collaborate to collect assessment data and assessments required by their district/state. Schools will use this information for school-level program evaluation and to design ongoing professional development. Leadership teams will review school data each year and submit a Fidelity of Implementation report to their university training center by the established due date.

Rationale: An essential part of membership in a research-based project is data collection, analysis, and use. Teachers collect and use data in order to monitor the effectiveness of the Literacy Collaborative implementation.

1.7 English/Language Arts teachers in the school will implement the language and literacy framework for at least 45 minutes of daily instructional time. Two periods of 45 minutes to an hour are recommended to engage in a daily reading and writing workshop. It is also recommended that English/Language Arts teachers engage students who are below grade level in small group instruction, guided reading, and writing, at least three days a week.

Rationale: Literacy achievement is linked to the instructional time students spend reading and writing. Regular instruction in a reading and writing workshop that includes a variety of instructional components supports students as readers and writers. In addition, teachers need to apply what they are learning during professional development to achieve deeper understandings and link theory to practice.

1.8 The school will establish and support an active school leadership team that meets monthly to guide and monitor the implementation of Literacy Collaborative. Team members must include the principal/assistant principal, literacy coach, and one literacy teacher per grade level. Additional members may include other administrators, content area teacher, or faculty involved with literacy instruction such as the reading specialist, English Language Arts supervisor.

Rationale: Educational improvement requires teamwork, a common vision, systemic change, and ongoing professional development.

1.9 The school will inform and educate parents/guardians about Literacy Collaborative and create a school/home partnership to support students' literacy development.

Rationale: Research indicates the importance of home support for literacy learning. Students benefit when parents/guardians support students' reading and writing. Researchers have found an important relationship between home reading and scores on standardized tests.

1.10 The school will acquire an adequate and varied selection of books and materials to implement all elements of the Literacy Collaborative language and literacy framework. In addition, the school will provide the professional books and materials needed for initial training and ongoing professional development.

Rationale: Oral language development, reading, writing, and word study are the foundations of the Literacy Collaborative language and literacy framework. By immersing students with a variety of well-chosen texts, they will not only learn to love reading, but they will also learn about written language. Reading and writing are interrelated; what is learned in one area makes it easier to learn in the other. The professional books and materials are used extensively during training sessions to learn about the framework and serve as a resource for further study.

1.11 It is strongly recommended that the school will provide Leveled Literacy Intervention.

Rationale: Literacy Collaborative, as a comprehensive literacy reform model, provides for layers of instruction (classroom and intervention) to assure the successful literacy achievement of all students. In addition to good first teaching, multiple layers of intervention are provided that are theoretically aligned and research-based. Literacy Collaborative schools provide systematic small group and individual interventions for students reading below expected levels.

The Leveled Literacy Intervention (LLI) model, as described in *When Readers Struggle: Teaching that Works A–N* (Pinnell & Fountas, 2009) and *When Readers Struggle: Teaching that Works L–Z* (Pinnell & Fountas, in press), have been designed to be the small group intervention as it is theoretically consistent with Literacy Collaborative, incorporates data tools, and provides for systematic progress monitoring. LLI has been found to be highly effective with students who struggle with literacy learning.

Literacy Collaborative training and annual professional development includes in-depth and ongoing study of *When Readers Struggle: Teaching that Works* (Pinnell & Fountas, 2009). Literacy Collaborative schools, with the support of a trained literacy coach provide LLI professional development for teachers.

II. Standards for Literacy Coaches

2.1 Qualifications

- 2.1.A The Literacy Coach’s role is a full-time position in the school.**
- 2.1.B The Literacy Coach candidate provides evidence of successful teaching appropriate for his/her assignment.**
- 2.1.C The Literacy Coach candidate will have a master’s degree or equivalent experience.**
- 2.1.D The Literacy Coach candidate will be interviewed and accepted by a university or district training site.**

Rationale: Literacy Collaborative training is rigorous and equivalent to a demanding graduate-level program. As such, it requires a literacy coach candidate who has successful experience with this level of work and a willingness to take on new learning. Further, the literacy coach will serve as a classroom teacher as well as a teacher educator, providing course work and in-class coaching for teachers for which graduate credit may be awarded. These responsibilities comprise a full-time position.

2.2 Training

The goal of the training of a literacy coach is to develop a site-based leader who is instrumental in bringing about systemic change in a school's literacy program. The opportunities and experiences as outlined by these standards create a unique context for constructing new knowledge and extending understandings.

The in-training literacy coach will:

- 2.2.A Successfully complete the literacy coach training program at a Literacy Collaborative university or district training site. During this training, the literacy coach will:**

- 2.2.A.1 The middle school will employ an English/Language Arts teacher as a full time literacy coach who will implement the language and literacy framework for at least 45 minutes of daily instructional time. Two periods of 45 minutes to an hour are recommended to engage in daily reading and writing workshops. It is also recommended that English/Language Arts teachers engage students who are below grade level in small group instruction, guided reading, and writing, at least three days a week.**

Rationale: The demands of the in-training literacy coach role are such that a person needs to be able to teach the same group of students to affect change over time as well as coach and train teachers. Literacy coaches-in-training need consistent and sustained time to link theory to their practice in the classroom for paradigm shifts to occur and to reflect on that link.

- 2.2.A.2 Complete required graduate level course work (specific to each university) successfully as defined by these standards. The minimum is 230 contact hours led by Literacy Collaborative trainers across face-to-face and online learning experiences (both synchronous and asynchronous). Guided meetings and site visits are in addition to the minimum.**

Rationale: Through the rigor of graduate-level course work, the literacy coach acquires deep conceptual understandings about the reading and writing processes, about how students and adults learn, and about how to create opportunities for students and adults to learn effectively.

- 2.2.A.3 Participate in a minimum of two site visits with Literacy Collaborative trainers during the in-training year and during the field year.**

Rationale: Conceptual knowledge is developed and deepened through conversation about a shared experience. The school visit serves a dual purpose—it provides the shared experience around which coaching, reflection, problem solving, and refinement of classroom practice occur, and it provides the opportunity to support effective school-wide implementation.

2.2.A.4 Work with the school leadership team that meets monthly to guide and monitor the implementation of Literacy Collaborative.

Rationale: Educational improvement requires teamwork, a common vision, systemic change, and ongoing professional development.

2.2.B The trained literacy coach will:

2.2.B.1 Provide school-based initial training for no more than 10 teachers with a minimum of 60 contact hours within a two-year period (e.g., 40 hours during the field year, 20 hours the following year) and provide regularly scheduled in-class coaching sessions for teachers an average of twice every month.

Rationale: Taking on new learning of the elements of the Literacy Collaborative language and literacy framework is a complex process requiring time for instruction, practice, and reflection. Teachers need support as they engage in this new learning; a maximum of 10 teachers in a class ensures sufficient time for the literacy coach to coach and support each teacher.

2.2.B.2 Follow the 60 hours of school-based initial training over the first two years with school-based professional development sessions (a minimum of 10 hours spaced across the school year in approximately 2-hour intervals) and provide regularly scheduled coaching sessions for teachers an average of once every month. Cluster coaching in addition to one-on-one coaching may be used beginning in Year 3. 20 hours of ongoing professional development is strongly recommended.

Rationale: A research-based model includes ongoing inquiry that informs designs for instruction. Over time, classroom practices will be refined, thus requiring teachers to receive ongoing professional development so that they can continually update their knowledge and skills. Coaching supports teachers' understandings and their application of new learning.

2.2.B.3 Teach students daily for the school year using the Literacy Collaborative language and literacy framework for no less than one 45-minute period at the appropriate grade level (5-8) to continue to develop their skills in literacy. Two periods of 45 minutes to an hour are highly recommended to engage in daily reading and writing. This should include an opportunity to teach students who are below grade level at least three times a week in small group work, guided reading, and guided writing.

Rationale: Literacy coaches need consistent and sustained classroom teaching time to link theory to their practice and to develop the expertise they need to teach others.

2.2.B.4 Plan for and participate in a minimum of two site visits by Literacy Collaborative trainers during the field year. Site visits are also recommended beyond the field year to support a high quality implementation.

Rationale: Conceptual knowledge is developed through conversation about a shared experience. The school visit serves a dual purpose—it provides the shared experience around which coaching, reflection, problem solving, and refinement of classroom practice occur, and it provides the opportunity to support effective school-wide implementation.

2.2.B.5 Participate in ongoing professional development by attending sessions required by their training site.

Rationale: A research-based model includes ongoing inquiry that informs designs for instruction. Over time, classroom practices will be refined, thus requiring literacy coaches to receive ongoing professional development so that they can continually update teachers' knowledge and skills. This professional development deepens literacy coaches' understandings of all aspects of their role and provides them with current information on research and the national initiative.

2.2.B.6 Provide training for the teachers in the school on the administration, scoring, and analysis of the required and recommended assessments to inform instruction for students performing below grade level in reading and writing.

Rationale: Because Literacy Collaborative is a research-based project, it is essential that classroom data be collected on every student. To provide reliable information on student progress, the faculty must be trained in systematic assessment procedures. These data are analyzed at the school level by the literacy coach and school staff. They work together to use the results to monitor student progress, to improve instruction, and to reach goals for student achievement in literacy.

2.2.B.7 Work monthly with the school leadership team to guide and monitor the implementation of Literacy Collaborative.

Rationale: Educational improvement requires teamwork, a common vision, systemic change, and ongoing professional development.

Policy for Requesting a One-Year Exemption from Standards

These standards are to be used as the basis for planning decisions and for monitoring the status of implementation of Literacy Collaborative. No set of standards can provide for the unique settings of all schools or districts. Therefore, it is possible to apply for a one-year exemption from certain standards when unusual conditions prevail, although an exemption may or may not be granted. In any case, the university training center will work with the local administration to achieve the best implementation possible.

The procedure for requesting exemptions is as follows:

1. Any issues of compliance with standards should first be discussed by the literacy coach and the school-based literacy team.
2. If a decision is made to request an exemption from a standard, a written request should be addressed to the affiliated university training site. The request must include a plan for compliance within one year. Literacy coaches trained by district trainers must discuss the waiver request with the district trainer, who will then submit the request, including a statement of rationale and support from the district trainer, to the affiliated university training site.
3. If the issue cannot be resolved through negotiation between the training site and key persons at the school, the exemption request will be forwarded to the chair of the Literacy Collaborative Trademark Committee accompanied by a letter from the university training site.
4. Final granting or denial of a one-year exemption will be made by the Literacy Collaborative Trademark Committee. This decision will be communicated to all parties by the Trademark Committee.

References

Peterman, R.L., Grehan, A.W., Harrison, L.W., & Dexter, E. (2008). *An Evaluation of the Leveled Literacy Intervention in an Urban District 2005-06*. Paper presented at the annual meeting of the American Educational Research Association, New York, NY.

Peterman, R.L., Grehan, A. W., Gallagher, B. & Dexter, E. (2009). *An Evaluation of the Leveled Literacy Intervention in an Urban District 2007-08*. Paper presented at the annual meeting of the American Educational Research Association, San Diego, CA.