

The Positive Effects of Literacy Collaborative On Teaching and Student Learning: A Federally-Funded Value-Added Study

In 2004, Dr. Anthony Bryk, currently President of the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching, received a \$3 million, four-year grant from the federal Institute of Education Sciences (IES) to study the value-added effects of the Literacy Collaborative K-2 program on student learning and achievement. The project was also designed to study growth in teacher expertise and changes in professional communication networks in Literacy Collaborative schools. Dr. Bryk and his research team, based at University of Chicago and Stanford University, selected 17 schools that were interested in adopting the Literacy Collaborative program to participate in the study. The schools were located in 8 states in the Northeast, South, and Midwest. Forty percent of the students across the schools were low-income.

The first year of the study was considered the baseline year because the 17 literacy coordinators from the schools were being trained at their university training sites. The three years following were the implementation years, when the literacy coordinators were teaching professional development classes and coaching teachers. The primary findings were:

- *Students' average rates of learning in grades K-2 increased by 16% in the first implementation year, 28% in the second implementation year, and 32% in the third implementation year.*
- *Teacher expertise increased substantially and the rate of improvement was predicted by the amount of coaching a teacher received.*
- *Professional communication amongst teachers in the schools increased over the three years of implementation, and the literacy coordinators became more central in their schools' communication networks.*

The research team collected fall and spring DIBELS and Terra Nova data from the K-3 students and data from classroom observations of the teachers teaching the Literacy Collaborative literacy block—lessons such as guided reading, writing workshop, and interactive writing. The team also surveyed the teachers and interviewed the literacy coordinators in the schools. In addition, the literacy coordinators kept logs of their coaching and professional development activities.

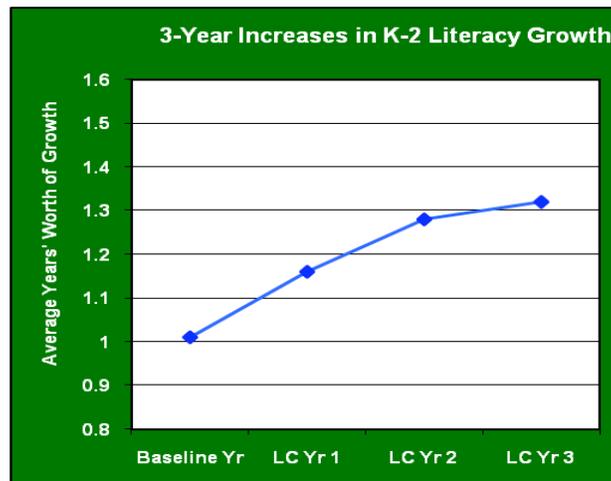
After the four years were completed, the research team had data on 8,500 children who had passed through grades K-3 in the schools and 240 teachers. This is currently the largest data set about coaching and student learning in the education field, and the only one to include data on student achievement, teacher expertise, and frequency and quality of coaching.

Detailed reports from this value-added study can be found on the Literacy Collaborative national website: www.literacycollaborative.org. See "Research and Evaluation." Study results have been presented at the Annual Meeting of the American Educational Research Association (AERA) and the National Reading Conference (NRC), and in 2010 will be published in *Elementary School Journal*, a peer-reviewed research journal.

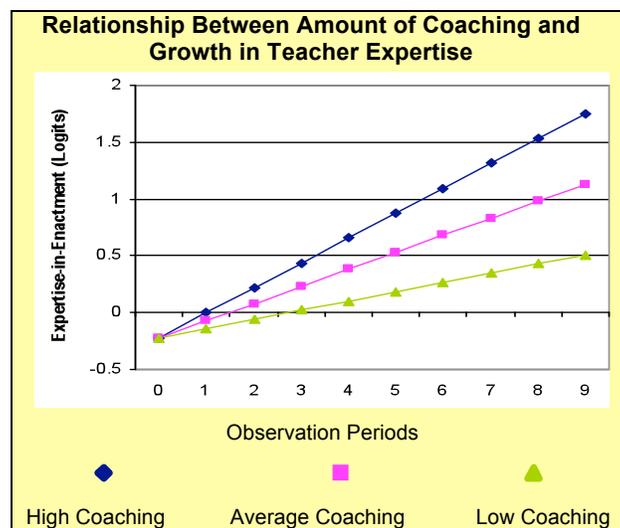
Detailed Results

The analyses of the data on student achievement, teacher expertise, and coaching show very positive results.

- **Increases in student learning:** Comparing the three implementation years to the baseline year, the analyses showed that the average rate of student literacy learning increased by 16% in the first implementation year, 28% in the second year, and 32% in the third year-- very substantial increases. *If they were learning one-year's worth in the baseline year, they were learning 1.32 years' worth in the third implementation year.*



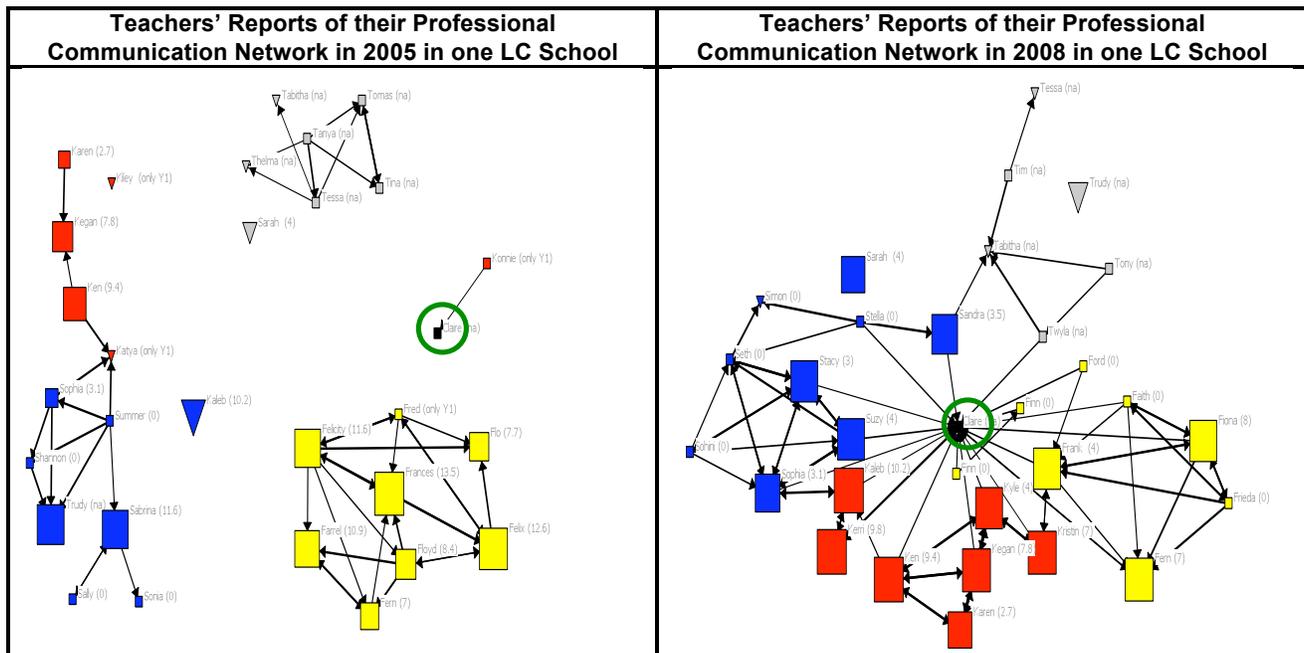
- **Increases in teacher expertise:** Teacher expertise was measured on a scale that ranged from “teaching literacy as a set of instructional routines” to “teaching by facilitating student talk to deepen thinking and understanding,” and average teacher growth increased substantially on this scale.
- The strongest factor that predicted growth in teacher expertise was the amount of coaching a teacher received from the school’s literacy coordinator.



- Increases in professional communication amongst teachers:** At the beginning and end of the study, the teachers in the 17 schools were asked to name the people within and outside of the school with whom they discussed professional issues about teaching. An analysis of these communication networks showed that the professional networks in the schools increased in density and reciprocity, and the literacy coordinator became more central in their schools' communication network. Specifically:

- Density:* At the end of the study, teachers reported discussing professional issues with more of the teachers in their school than at the beginning of the study. In addition, more teachers reported discussing issues with teachers not in their own grade level team.
- Reciprocity:* At the end of the study, more teachers reported consulting with teachers who also reported consulting with them.
- Centrality of the literacy coordinator:* At the end of the study more teachers reported that they consulted with the literacy coordinator in their school.
- Example:* The graphics below show the changes over three years in the professional communication network teachers reported in one school. In 2005, most teachers only communicated within their grade level teams. The literacy coordinator was not a central person in the network.

In 2008 there was substantially more across-grade level teacher communication and the literacy coordinator had become central in the communication network.



* Downward-facing triangles represent teachers whose survey data were missing. Numbers in parentheses are the average number of coaching sessions the teacher received per year.

■ = kindergarten teachers

■ = first grade teachers

■ = second grade teachers

■ = third grade teachers

■ = literacy coordinator