DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 478 517   CS 512 293

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TITLE   Exploring Visions of Literacy Learning. NCTE Reading
                Initiative.
INSTITUTION   National Council of Teachers of English, Urbana, IL.
PUB DATE   2002-00-00
NOTE   11p.; See CS 512 291-302 for related documents.
AVAILABLE FROM National Council of Teachers of English, 1111 W. Kenyon Road,
                Urbana, IL 61801-1096. Tel: 800-369-6283 (Toll Free); Web
                site: http://www.ncte.org. For full text:
                http://www.ncte.org/ readinit/curriculum/inqstudies.shtml.
PUB TYPE   Guides - Non-Classroom (055)
EDRS PRICE   EDRS Price MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS   Elementary Education; *Inquiry; *Literacy; Portfolios
                (Background Materials); *Professional Development; School
                Involvement; *Teacher Improvement
IDENTIFIERS   Reflective Practice; *Study Groups

ABSTRACT
        The National Council of Teachers of English (NCTE) Reading
Initiative and this Inquiry Study: "Exploring Visions of Literacy" invites
study groups to embark on a professional journey no individual can fully
predict. Through considering the visions of several leading literacy
educators (B. Cambourne, M.A.K. Halliday, J. Harste, S. Harwayne) as well as
the vision of another Reading Initiative study group, the study group members
are invited to step back and carefully contemplate, "What is literacy? What
kind of literate beings do we want to create?" Participants will consider the
value of their own learning history and examine the beliefs about reading and
writing that shape their classroom practice. Participants will read the work
of teachers and researchers asking questions similar to their own and will
document all this learning in a personal literacy portfolio. Reading
experiences that each group lives together can translate directly into
teaching plans for tomorrow. Every participant will emerge from this study
with new ideas, new tools, new questions, and a new lens through which to
view literacy learning--the path each participant creates may seem familiar
to others, but it will be an individual path. Lists 17 professional reading
and video resources. (NKA)

NCTE Reading Initiative

Exploring Visions of Literacy Learning

I looked up the road I was going and back the way I come,
and since I wasn't satisfied, I decided to step
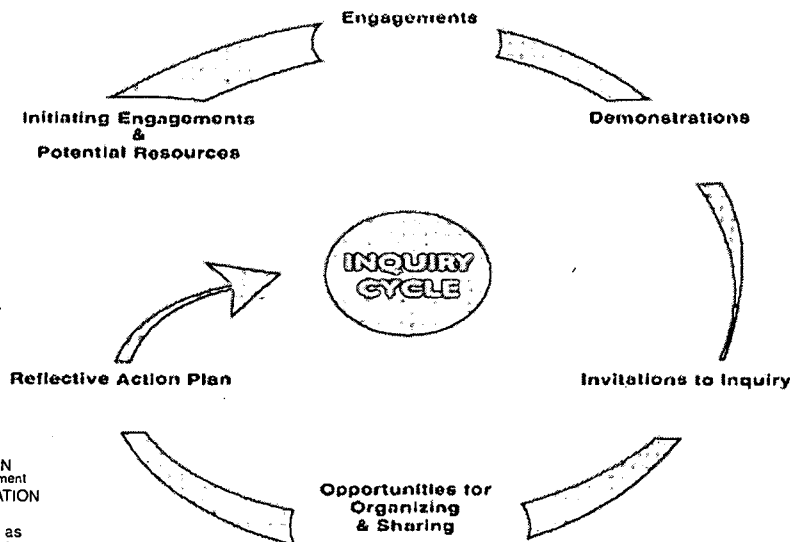off the road and cut me a new path.

Traveler, there is no road.
The road is made as one walks.

Caminante no hay camino,
Se hace el camino al andar.

Maya Angelou   Antonio Machado

Welcome to the NCTE Reading Initiative and this Inquiry Study: *Exploring Visions of Literacy Learning.* Your study group is one of many that are embarking on a professional journey none of us can fully predict. Yet, the NCTE leaders who have authored the experiences you'll find here are masters at creating invitations for educators. They've worked with study groups themselves and have generously shared their best strategies; thus, we are confident the experiences will be rich ones that help your school community rethink its literacy practices. For instance, through considering the bold visions of several leading educators (Cambourne, Halliday, Harste, Harwayne), as well as the vision of another Reading Initiative study group, your school community is invited to step back and carefully contemplate, What is literacy? What kind of literate beings do we want to create? You will consider the value of your own learning history and examine the beliefs about reading and writing that shape your classroom practice. You will read the work of teachers and researchers asking questions similar to your own and you will document all this learning in a personal literacy portfolio. Reading experiences that your group lives together can translate directly into teaching plans for tomorrow. Everyone will emerge from this study with new ideas, new tools, new questions, and a new lens through which to view literacy learning. The path you create may seem familiar to others, but it will be your own.

Engagements

Initiating Engagements
&
Potential Resources

Demonstrations

INQUIRY CYCLE

Reflective Action Plan

Invitations to Inquiry

Opportunities for
Organizing
& Sharing

Burke, Crafton, Egawa, Harste, Martens, Smith
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LEARNING CONCEPTS

The following is a list of learning concepts that will be explored in the study. You are encouraged to add additional concepts that reflect constructivist, inquiry-based learning, as it is not meant to represent an exhaustive list.

- Learning and teaching are theoretically driven; each of us holds theoretical beliefs that direct our practice.
- All practice is generated out of sets of beliefs, even when those beliefs are intuitively held and have not yet been tested by reflection.
- Multiple theories of learning and teaching exist.
- Beliefs, practices, and theories are interwoven and develop in cultural contexts.
- Every person has beliefs and they operate upon those beliefs intuitively; a change in their belief system initiates a change in their actions.
- Two teachers/learners will work with the same concept or experience in different ways, depending on the underlying beliefs each holds
- Understanding one's own literacy learning is helpful in considering and revising one's teaching practice.
- Active learners are clear about their interests, needs, and uncertainties.
- Effective teachers of reading use their knowledge and beliefs about reading to adapt instruction to individual differences among learners.
- What it means to be literate is a complex definition that differs in the many contexts of our lives.
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FOCUSING QUESTIONS

These are questions that we, as authors of this study, generated to focus the experiences provided in this inquiry study. Everyone in your Reading Initiative group is invited to add questions throughout the study and throughout the year.

- We see ourselves as a group of good, strong teachers, but our test scores are low. What more could we be doing to support our students?
- How do you organize for classroom instruction if you *don't* group kids by ability?
- It's important to me that I choose the books I get to read, but my students can't seem to handle choice. How do other teachers handle this?
- Do these "visions" of literacy really work for *all* students?
- What about the basal reading materials? I'm expected to use them.
- What can I do with my ESL students? They're working with a teaching assistant and I'm not sure she's helping them very much either.
- I learned to read in a traditional way and I've taught that way most of my career. Why should I give up something that's proven to be successful?
- How do learners use a portfolio to keep track of their literacy growth?
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TERMS ASSOCIATED WITH THIS TOPIC

In addition to asking the questions that came to mind when we considered teachers as active inquirers of their own practice, we generated an initial list of words and phrases related to research and inquiry. You might elect to begin your own list—graffiti-style—on a large piece of butcher paper that can be added to over time. You are also invited to add terms to those below. This list helps frame the territory of our work.

Practical	Theory	Collegial	Congenial	Models of reading
Practice	Demonstrations	Engagements	Responsive teaching	Reflection
Beliefs	Critique	Vision	Learning process	Observation
Personal literacy	Literature discussion	Literacy portfolio	Audit trail	

READING INITIATIVE LEARNING STRANDS

The Reading Initiative professional development experience could be envisioned as a complex tapestry of beliefs, engagements, readings, questions, and reflections. Each engagement is woven onto a foundation provided by the following strands.

Personal Literacy as Part of a Cultural Community	Knowledge Base	Close Observation	Supportive Literacy Contexts	Professional Culture
Focused observations and analysis by each participant of his/her own literacy processes and theories, including the forces that impact those theories.	The concepts and experiences explored and supported by professional reading.	Focused observations and analysis of students as literacy learners.	Exploration and development of contexts that support and encourage readers and writers.	Exploration and development of procedures and contexts that encourage collegiality.

Exploring Visions of Literacy Learning
An Outline of the Study

Initiating Engagements

Shared experiences that help participants reflect on their personal experiences a nd knowledge—getting those out into the class conversation—as the group predicts the direction of the study.

The Site Leader facilitates several or all of these experiences to get the study underway.

I1
Collecting What We Know
As a group, participants contribute to four ongoing collections: 1) questions about the learning study; 2) at least five resources for a group-created text set, including books, journals, articles in the popular press; 3) a graffiti board collection of all related words and phrases, i.e., responsive teaching, conditions of learning, personal literacy; and 4) a list: what possible ways could we study important visions of literacy learning?

I2
What Matters About Reading?
Personal Literacy Beliefs
Group members each list 4-5 strong beliefs they hold about learning to read. Several picture books are read aloud to highlight literacy learning issues. The beliefs and any new ideas are added to a draft of Diane Stephens' *What Matters?* sheet. Classroom engagements are also added. This tool will be used throughout the Reading Initiative experience.

I3
Visions of Literacy #1
Manhattan New School
NCTE is a community of literacy educators known for making theory both visible and practical. These materials introduce such practical visions of literacy learning, beginning with: *what does it mean to be literate at the Manhattan New School?*

I4
Visions of Literacy #2
Halliday-Plus
Standing on the shoulders of MAK Halliday, Jerome Harste offers an alternate vision of "balanced" literacy, one that challenges educators to take a broader and more critical look at literacy curriculum.

I5
Visions of Literacy #3
Cambourne's Conditions
Cambourne's Model of Learning is based on a set of learning conditions derived from observing the conditions under which oral and written literacy are learned. Video footage of an "embedded phonics lesson" illustrates the conditions.

I6
Exploring the Learning Process:
How Do You Learn?
Group members explore the learning process to uncover dimensions of learning that are available in real-world learning situations as a means to consider which are essential or pertinent to supportive classroom environments.

I7
"Getting to Know You" Strategies
Using 5-6 personal artifacts, teachers and students introduce themselves to other learners in their classroom community as a means to get to know each other, to build community, and to reflect on important experiences in their lives.

I8
Literacy Dig
Participants collect literacy artifacts from their homes and list the functions represented by the artifacts; they extend the list to consider their meaning-making strategies with those artifacts that represent reading experiences.

5

I9
Exploring Literacy Histories
Participants share positive and negative influences of early literacy experiences and consider those as they define supportive classroom environments.

I10
Creating Your Literacy Vision
After reviewing the visions of key literacy leaders, study groups look across them to identify commonalities and differences and draft their own visions for their classrooms and their school. A roadmap of RI curricular experiences can help group members see the opportunities to build the expertise and create the engagements necessary to actualize the visions. Video footage of another Reading Initiative group's vision is viewed.

Potential Resources
Multiple and varied sources of information that provide alternative perspectives and create opportunities for complex connections.

All participants in the study group contribute resources to a collective text set. NCTE provides key articles and video footage. Site Leader reads all articles in planning the study.

R1
Creating a Text Set
Participants each contribute at least five resources for a group-created text set, including books, journals, articles in the popular press, pamphlets, etc.

Specific to this study:
*   A set of recent literacy journals and texts, or publishers' catalogs
*   District and state curriculum documents

R2
Professional Reading & Videos
Schedule part of each meeting to read from the evolving text set, providing an opportunity to seek information to inform the group's questions.

R3 Read Aloud Titles
A text set on schooling/learning is listed to provide the Site Leader with key texts that highlight inquiry, as well as powerful titles to read aloud as a means to incorporate read aloud into the RI meetings.

Engagements
Opportunities to test out and explore multiple perspectives on the learning process.

These experiences might be facilitated by the Site Leader or by a group leader in the Site Leader's absence. Some experiences are lived outside of the study group time.

E1
24-Hour Inquiry
Participants commit to something they would like to know more about and then spend the next 24 hours learning as much as possible. All share at the next meeting.

E3
Literature Discussion Groups: Talk about books
Participants glean strategies for conducting literature discussions or book clubs by living the process themselves. These can be used to organize discussion of the professional readings, as well.

E2
Knowing Your Students
Participants record the names of as many of their students as they can from memory. They then fill in other information about them on the "Getting to Know Your Students" form. What's remembered, and who's forgotten, is key.

E4
Listening In on a Young Reader
The group watches a video of a proficient reader and comments on what they see, using a Goodman and Watson article to frame the discussion.

E5

Exploring Theoretical Orientations: Reader's Rummy
Group breaks into teams to play Reader's Rummy, a card game that challenges players to uncover and examine their existing beliefs about reading. Based on DeFord's Theoretical Orientation to Reading Profile (TORP).

E6

Exploring the Reading Process
Participants break into groups, and then read "Four Appointments with the Discus Thrower" silently. After reading each paragraph, one person in the group responds orally to four questions. After reading and responding, participants consider which of the Reading Initiative Knowledge-Base Statements were operating during this experience.

E7

The Burke Reading Interview
Participants pair up to interview one another using the Burke Reading Interview. After the interviews, participants consider each question and its significance.

E8

Studying our own thinking and comprehension strategies
Participants read "Story of an Hour" silently noting their thinking-comprehension strategies. The group members then place their strategies into categories in order to heighten their awareness of the reading process and, as a result, better observe other readers.

E9

What Do We Know About Proficient Reading?
Participants reflect on their understanding of proficient reading strategies by engaging in a written conversation about their best definition of reading and what good readers do. An *In-Process Reading Strategies* form is used for recording observations of students.

E10

Share and Reflect on Personal Miscues
Using key thinking/reading strategies, participants analyze a newspaper article and share ideas that highlight the context, text, and the purpose for reading.

Demonstrations
Examination of learning concepts and the learning process. Build from learners' questions and help to generate new insights.

Demonstrations are led by the Site Leader and help build new knowledge and understandings. They generally follow the preceding group and individual experiences.

D1

Are We Collegial or Congenial?
After considering Roland Barth's definition of collegial and congenial relationships, study group members consider how teachers at their school now interact and the role of the principal in supporting collegiality; the group also generates guidelines that will direct their work together.

D2

Three Reading Models
After playing "Reader's Rummy," Site Leaders demonstrate three reading models and the beliefs that are the foundation for each one. Following this demonstration, the group plays "Reader's Rummy" once again, this time collecting four cards from any one of the models.

D3

Where do we start? Relationships among Theory, Beliefs, and Practice
Using a visual model by Dorothy Watson, study group members talk about their evolving practice and how they have or may not have refined theory, beliefs and practice over their careers.

D4

Who Am I as a Reader and Writer?
Each study group member completes a "Reading Profile" and then shares his/ her responses with the rest of the group. Taken together, the responses help the group consider what their reading profiles might mean for how they plan and organize for reading instruction in their classrooms.

D5
Belief Systems and Knowledge Base
Participants read the NCTE Reading Initiative Knowledge Base statements to determine those that fit with their beliefs and those that are confusing.

D6
What inquiry is and isn't
Group members are invited to take out their notebooks and inquire alongside 5th grade teacher Rise Paynter as she studies student talk to inform her teaching decisions.

Invitations to Inquiry

Experimenting by applying questions, tools, and methods of inquiry to a specific issue.

Invitations to inquiry provide opportunities to conduct focused, short inquiries to further explore concepts and questions that have been raised. Participants are invited to choose or create their own inquiries as appropriate. They can be explored by individuals, small groups, or by the entire group.

Q1
What do my students think?
After conducting the Burke Reading Interview with a colleague, identify two students whose reading abilities differ and interview each of them. Share any new insights and questions about what their responses might mean. As an extension, try the same with two adult friends who hold different perceptions about their abilities as learners.

Q2
Personal and Professional Reading Lists
Each group member keeps a "wish list" of professional and personal reading, as well as most significant books or articles from their past. Some of the study group time is scheduled for such reading.

Q3
Quotes that turn me on!
Participants designate a section of their professional notebooks or inquiry journals to note powerful quotes. These could be shared weekly, added to a school or RI newsletter, posted in the meeting room, and even shared with RI staff to include within the curriculum.

Q4
But my students are different!
Group reads three articles that address specific populations: "learning disabled," African American learners "at risk," and English language learners and effective classroom practice suggested by educators who work intimately with each community. Recommendations are considered in relation to the visions before the group and as a way of informing new visions.

Opportunities for Organizing & Sharing

Public displays—charts, webs, lists, notes—of accumulating ideas, knowledge, and plans.

These are used at different places in the study and are saved to revisit over time.

With I3
Questions About Literacy Visions chart
As the alternate visions of literacy are shared, the group takes time to debrief, raise questions, state responses, and note new ideas. These are kept at hand to add to and reconsider over the year(s).

With I5
Creating Our Own Literacy Visions
Large paper charts that can be returned to over time may serve as the organizing device to capture a new school-wide or department vision of literacy learning. Each participant will also plan a vision for his or her classroom and can keep that ongoing record in a personal/professional journal or portfolio.

With RA1
Personal and Professional Literacy Portfolio
Each group member keeps track of the artifacts generated by the engagements within the study group and organizes them to document a record of experiences, beliefs, and a growing strategy resource bank.

With the Entire Study
Audit Trail or Learning Wall
After designating a large, empty wall space for the creation of a learning "audit trail," study group members find ways to represent key learning experiences over the course of their work. These might include artifacts, photos, quotes, etc. The wall is a record of the group's journey.

Reflective Action Plan
An opportunity to take new action based on new knowledge, and an opportunity to reflect on future directions that the group or individual learning might take.

RA1
Personal Literacy Portfolio
Using the strategies and tools included in this study, each participant creates a portfolio of him or herself as a literacy learner. The process helps organize the experiences lived during the study group, supports additional use of assessment tools, and prefaces the compilation of a learner portfolio in Year Two of the RI.

RA3
Inquiry at the Window: The year of the birds
Teacher researcher Phyllis Whitin stumbled across a birdfeeder as she pulled out her materials for a new school year, decided to hang it in a tree outside her portable classroom, and the rest is history. Get a birds-eye view of inquiry in action.

RA2
Your School Literacy Vision
The study group sets an initial vision and steps toward accomplishing it. The plan is preserved in a form that it can be revisited over time.

Professional Reading & Videos

Allington, Richard (1998). The schools we have. The schools we need. In C. Weaver (Ed.), *Reconsidering a balanced approach to reading.* Urbana, IL: NCTE.

Allington, R. (1998). More on the schools we have versus the schools we need. In C. Weaver (Ed.), *Practicing what we know: Informed reading instruction.* Urbana, IL: NCTE.

Cambourne, B. (1997). One afternoon in an Elysian field: Socrates' academy addresses spelling. *Language Arts, 75(2),* 97-102.

Egawa, K. and Harste, J. (2001). Balancing the literacy curriculum: A new vision. *School Talk, 7(1).*

Five, C. and Egawa, K. (1998). Reading and writing workshop: What is it and what does it look like? *School Talk, 3 (4).*

Freeman, Y. and Freeman, D. (1998). Effective literacy practices for English learners. In C. Weaver (Ed.), *Practicing what we know: Informed reading instruction.* Urbana, IL: NCTE.

Goodman, Y. and Watson, D. (1998): A socio-psycholinguistic model of the reading process and reading strategy instruction. In C. Weaver (Ed.), *Practicing what we know: Informed reading instruction.* Urbana, IL: NCTE.

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Routman, R. (1999). Developing collaborative communities. In *Conversations: Strategies for teaching, learning, & evaluating.* Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann.

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Routman, R. (1998). Select reading-writing strategies for LD and other at-risk students. In C. Weaver (Ed.), *Practicing what we know: Informed reading instruction.* Urbana, IL: NCTE.

Strickland, D. (1998). Educating African American learners at risk: Finding a better way. In C. Weaver (Ed.), *Practicing what we know: Informed reading instruction.* Urbana, IL: NCTE.

Taylor, D. et al. (2000). Family and community literacy. *School Talk 6(1).*

Van Horn, L. Reading and writing essays about objects of personal significance. *Language Arts,* 78(3), 273-278.

Vasquez, V. (2000). Getting beyond "I like the story": Putting a critical edge on kids' purposes for reading. *School Talk,*

White, Connie (1989). *Jevon doesn't sit at the back anymore.* New York: Scholastic.

Whitin, Phyllis (1996). Inquiry at the window: The year of the birds. *Language Arts* 73(2).

Video Clips

Tour of the Manhattan New School (Tape 1, Clip 1)
Shelley Harwayne
Manhattan New School
New York, NY

The Ebb and Flow of Phonics in a Balanced Literacy Classroom
Laurelwood School
Project AccelerateU
Wayne-Finger Lakes BOCES, New York
(used with permission)

Developing Teachers' Knowledge Base in Supportive Contexts
Valerie Brown, Principal
Hamline K-8 School
Chicago, IL

You Are A Reader (Tape 1, Clip 5)
Donna Bell, Kindergarten
Bradley Elementary School
Columbia, SC

Literacy Workshop in the First Grade (Tape 3, Clip 9)
Sue Hamilton
Center for Inquiry
Indianapolis, IN

Listening in on a Young Reader (Tape 3, Clip 5)
Third Grader Reading Independently
Joanne Hindley
Manhattan New School
New York, NY

For the Love of Literacy
Manor Elementary
Monroe, MI

Creating Conversations: Education as Inquiry
Rise Paynter, 5th grade
Templeton School
Bloomington, IN
(used with permission)

Suggested Study Group Titles:

Going Public (2000). Shelley Harwayne. Portsmouth NH: Heinemann