

Before/During/After Activities

Put Yourself on the Line - A Before or After Reading Activity

1. Ask participants to consider the following statement: *Curriculum Central Staff should mandate common instructional activities in Literacy.*
2. Stand in the centre of the room. Ask those who agree with the statement to form a line to your right and those who disagree to form a line to your left. Allow a few minutes for them to take their positions.
3. Have the two opposite ends of the line meet to discuss their points of view. Each participant in line should end up facing a person with the opposing viewpoint.

When you reassemble as a group, make reference to the beginning of the article where the author states that the curriculum staff had offered professional development around sound literacy practices. When you inservice teachers on strategies there is always the possibility that it will not be successful (i.e., that some teachers will apply these strategies uniformly to their class with limited success, some might misinterpret the strategies, some might ignore the suggestions). Consider the following:

- Should practices be mandated by central staff? If so, how should these be communicated so that everyone understands and puts the practice into place?
- How should teachers be encouraged to adapt the practices to meet the needs of their class?
- What should be done to encourage those teachers who don't initially 'buy-in'?
- Are there some practices that should be consistently and uniformly implemented? How do you get all teachers to buy into these 'essentials'?
- What are the pitfalls of mandating practice? How could you avoid them?

Four Corners - An After Reading Activity

The article explores the path that one school board is taking towards sustainability of literacy reform. Areas to consider for sustainability include:

- developing assessment literacy;
- enlisting administrator support;
- establishing common effective literacy practices; and
- creating a template for the ideal school context among all staff.

After reading the article, post the four areas on individual signs in four separate corners of the room. (A sample sign is below.) Ask participants to decide which of these four are most important to tackle first. Once they have decided, ask them to move to that corner of the room. A group will form at each corner. Ask them to discuss why is this area is the most important in building sustainability. Have each group present a summary of their discussion and then consider it as a group.

Developing Assessment Literacy

Vocabulary Rating - A Before, During and After Reading Activity

Participants are given a list of vocabulary words and asked to evaluate their familiarity with the terms. This activates the background knowledge of students and also draws attention to the word during reading. After the reading, revisit the term in the context of the article and the school and clarify understanding.

Provide each participant with a Vocabulary Rating before reading the article.

Ask them to check their individual rating for each term listed. These terms will be found in the article.

Briefly go through each term and ask those who have indicated confidence in their knowledge of the term to explain the term to the group.

Term	I've never heard of it	I've heard of it but I'm not sure I understand what it means	I know where I could go for information	I could offer some examples	I could try to explain it to someone else	I feel confident that I could explain it
moderated marking						
assessment literacy						
literacy portfolios						
sustainability						
data walls						
triangulation of data						
capacity building						
Item Information Report						
vertical relationships						
high yield strategies						
homogenous reading groups						

Four Season Partners - Everyone Read To - During Reading Activity

Ahead of time, distribute cards that depict a picture of each of the four seasons. Ask participants to sign up for seasonal partners. They will stop reading at certain points in the article and meet their seasonal partners to discuss their thoughts on the article.

Chart four stopping points of the article that you think will lead to the most discussion. (Decide ahead of time what interaction will take place. Will the partners simply discuss their thoughts about the article to that point? Will there be a specific discussion prompt posted?) Ask the partners to eyeball each other when they get to that part of the article and then to move together to have a short discussion. As the facilitator, be prepared to stop the discussion and have the partners move back to their reading.

Have a large group discussion after reading.

Note: This paired activity is similar to Say Something. The strategies are intended to focus reading and provide conversation points during reading. It is an effective way for the participants to share, clarify and extend their understanding.



Fishbone - After Reading Activity

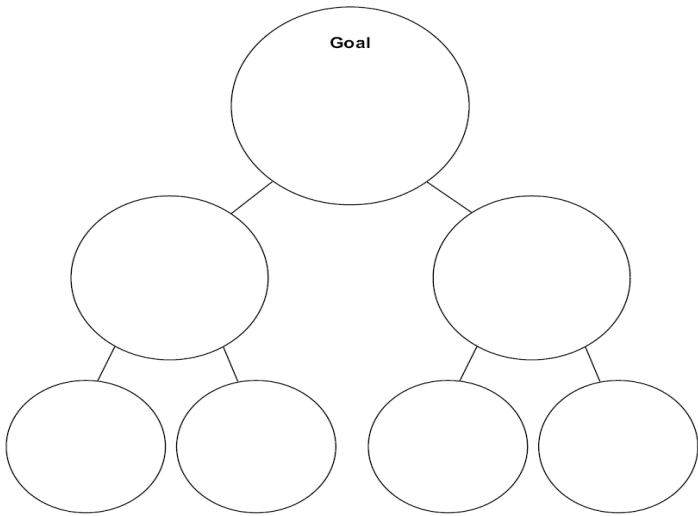
You may choose to do this before reading or after reading. Before reading ask participants to consider why education reforms often fail. One way to depict these various reasons why is to use the fishbone graphic organizer. After reading, go back to the fishbone and discuss if this particular board has considered possible reasons for failure and suggested ways that they will work to counter the problem areas.

If you decide to do it after reading the article instead, have participants discuss the complex variables involved in sustainability. In small groups they will be generating possible reasons why reform efforts do not succeed. On the right side of the fishbone write the problem statement - reform effects are not always successful. Draw a straight line from the head to the tail which will be the spine of the fish. Draw one fishbone for each major reason why. Write in details about each major reason in the space between the spines.

As a group, review the causes for reform failure and discuss what can be done.

Web Connections

Choose a key ingredient for sustainability. Consider the underlying pieces that need to be put into place, using a graphic organizer such as the one shown below. Then consider what should be accomplished at the board level and what should be school level responsibilities. What are the priorities?



E-Chart Summaries

Assign each group a main theme of the article and have the group complete the E-chart graphic organizer. Write the main idea on the left line. Write details from the article on each line of the “E” or have the group consider what should be in place to make these ideas successful. Some themes or ideas might include: principal leadership; professional development; sharing best practices; coaching; and building assessment literacy.

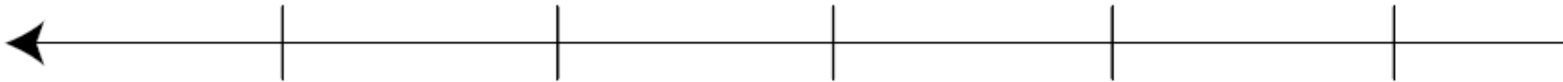
Deeper Reflection

Beliefs and Values

Core beliefs and values, directing your Literacy program, must lie at the center of your sustainability efforts. What are the core beliefs and values held by your organization? Do you believe that all children can become successful literate to high degrees?

Deep Learning

Deep Learning can be thought of as “Continuous improvement, adaptation and collective problem solving in the face of complex challenges that keep arising”. As a group, chart a time line of the history of your attempts at reform. Step back and consider this.



Are you maintaining or sustaining? Are you simply continuing existing programs and keeping your standard practices or are you adapting to changes over time?

Does the time line document your school’s continuous improvement, adaptation and opportunities for collective problem solving? Have you looked at each failure as a way to succeed? What should lie ahead?

Lateral Capacity Building

Michael Fullan, in *Leadership and Sustainability*, describes lateral capacity building through networks as essential for sustainability. People learn from their peers as they collaborate between institutions and between district and schools. Grade Focus Groups, where interested same grade teams met to share ideas and discuss concerns, was one way that the District School Board of Niagara developed lateral capacity building. How else can teachers collaborate between buildings? What has worked for you? What could be your next steps?

What Phase of Change Fits?

Century and Levy's three stages of development illustrate that successful sustaining programs are flexible as they move from establishment to maturation to evolution.

Phases of Change	Description
Establishment	-introduce the program -ensure core elements are established and efficiently operating
Maturation	-is the program being widely accepted -is the implementation becoming 'habitual' for participants
Evolution	-focus is on growth and improvement -facing the challenges of continuing resources, materials and professional development -adapting to new understandings about teaching learning

Which stage fits your efforts currently?

How does having an understanding of the stages of development help? Making sense of this information might help your team decide on next steps and decide which features of your program need attention.

Century, J.R., & Levy, A.J. (2002). *Sustaining change: A study of nine school districts with enduring programs*. A paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the American Educational Research Association, April 3, 2002.