

2. Readings at a Glance

The articles are grouped by the main theme that each addresses; however, most articles relate to more than one theme. The links are listed in the Making Connections charts on the At a Glance pages.

System Reform

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Guide to the At a Glance Pages

At a Glance pages include information about the readings to facilitate planning for use in learning sessions.

Summary of key ideas and main concepts presented in the article

Guiding Questions to initiate discussion of article concepts.

- Question 1 focuses on understanding the concepts presented in the article.
- Question 2 focuses on considering how the concepts can be applied in the adult learners' work contexts.

Recommendations for connecting this reading to themes and parameters.

Reading 1, page 53

Accomplishing Districtwide Reform

LYN SHARRATT AND MICHAEL FULLAN

In Brief:

The current literature is filled with examples of districts that have made thoughtful and significant system changes in order to facilitate large-scale instructional improvement, yet have not obtained the improvement in practice and student results they expected. This article highlights the important lessons about districtwide reform that have emerged in York Region District School Board in the early stages of their literacy reform. A large multicultural district in Ontario, York Region has a diverse socio-cultural and linguistic population. The widespread support for the district Literacy Collaborative strategy, and the strong results from a subset of schools that implemented the literacy components consistently, suggest that effective change involves precision and perseverance. The results so far suggest that a tipping point to achieving significant system change may be near. The 13 Parameters for effective literacy teaching and learning—the foundation of this Toolkit—emerged from the York Region Literacy Collaborative strategy.

Guiding Questions

1. What major lessons or insights emerge from the study of this district's literacy reform efforts?
2. Which of these lessons or insights are important in your own work context? Why?

Making Connections

Themes	Parameters
System Reform	Parameter 1: Shared Beliefs and Understandings Among All Staff
Change Knowledge and Expertise	Parameter 11: Staff Commitment to Literacy Learning and Professional Development
Professional Learning	
Shared Leadership	

14 | 13 Parameters: A Literacy Leadership Toolkit, Research Resource Book

Accomplishing Districtwide Reform

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Guiding Questions

1. What major lessons or insights emerge from the study of this district's literacy reform efforts?

2. Which of these lessons or insights are important in your own work context? Why?

Making Connections

Themes

System Reform
Change Knowledge and Expertise
Professional Learning
Shared Leadership

Parameters

Parameter 1: Shared Beliefs and Understandings Among All Staff
Parameter 11: Staff Commitment to Literacy Learning and Professional Development

New Lessons for Districtwide Reform

MICHAEL FULLAN, AL BERTANI, AND JOANNE QUINN

In Brief:

Key lessons are emerging from the increasingly sophisticated understanding of how districts implement large-scale change. The authors identify 10 components that make improvement possible: (1) compelling conceptualization, (2) collective moral purpose, (3) effective system structure, (4) capacity building, (5) lateral capacity building, (6) ongoing learning, (7) productive conflict, (8) a demanding culture, (9) external partners, and (10) focused financial investments. When leaders implement these components rigorously and interdependently, they can build school capacity and improve student learning. The authors conclude that as more districts reach out to learn from one another, greater progress in raising the bar and closing the achievement gap can be expected.

Guiding Questions

1. How can school districts implement district reforms that will last? What components make improvement possible?
2. Of the 10 identified components that contribute to large-scale improvement, which one is strongest in your district, and which one is weakest? Provide details to support your view.

Making Connections

Themes

System Reform
Shared Leadership

Parameters

Parameter 1: Shared Beliefs and Understandings
Among All Staff
Parameter 4: Principal as Literacy Leader

Great Expectations: The Transformation of Lake Wilcox Public School

DEB WALLACE, CAROL ROLHEISER, AND BLAIR MASCALL

In Brief:

Whether it's turning an individual school around or attempting large-scale district reform, the challenges are great. The transformation of Lake Wilcox Public School in Ontario is a story of change efforts that were successful. A team of researchers from the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education of the University of Toronto monitored the implementation of literacy strategies in the York Region District School Board over several years. They created case studies of individual schools, and of the district as a whole, to assess which factors had an impact on building literacy capacity. This article reports on one of those schools and its success in increasing student achievement. The school's success is attributed, in part, to the role the district played. The authors report on six elements in their district model to build school capacity: shared vision; knowledge management; instructional/assessment focus; the building of leadership capacity; accountability, evaluation, and feedback; and coherence building.

Guiding Questions

1. What were some of the actions taken at both the district and school levels to build capacity at Lake Wilcox Public School?
2. How has the building of capacity been supported or hampered in your own work context?

Making Connections

Themes

System Reform
Change Knowledge and Expertise
Planning
Shared Leadership

Parameters

Parameter 4: Principal as Literacy Leader
Parameter 6: A Case Management Approach to Monitoring Student Progress
Parameter 7: Job-Embedded Literacy Professional Development
Parameter 12: Parental Involvement in Supporting Literacy Development

Miracles in Progress: System Change and Coherence

LYN SHARRATT AND CAROL ROLHEISER

In Brief:

The authors suggest that there is no magic to achieving district improvement focused on students' increased literacy achievement; however, will and perseverance to stay the course have resulted in gains in system and school improvement in a district north of Toronto—the York Region District School Board. The authors outline four dimensions critical to the system change: (1) district vision and commitment to a single priority; (2) strategic and aligned leadership at all levels; (3) precision teaching in assessment that drives instruction; and (4) involvement of parents and community in supporting learning. They also provide evidence of the impact of the four dimensions on student achievement and chronicle three phases in implementing system change. Implementation, which took place over several years, resulted in key lessons that may guide the work of others.

Guiding Questions

1. What major lesson about system change can be learned from the details of this school district's journey?
2. Of the range of processes and actions outlined in the article, which ones do you think should be made a priority for implementation by your system, and why?

Making Connections

Themes

System Reform
Professional Learning
Planning

Parameters

Parameter 11: Staff Commitment to Literacy Learning and Professional Development
Parameter 12: Parental Involvement in Supporting Literacy Development

The Role of Standards in Educational Reform for the 21st Century

PETER W. HILL AND CARMEL A. CRÉVOLA

In Brief:

Based on their work on the Early Literacy Research Project in Australia, the authors argue that how schools and school systems operate needs to be redesigned to ensure that all students achieve to high standards. Improving learning necessitates attention to elements that support high expectations, student engagement in learning, and teaching focused on students' learning needs. The authors explore such elements as beliefs and understandings; standards and targets; monitoring and assessment; professional learning teams; home, school, and community partnerships; and leadership and coordination. They conclude that standards-driven initiatives are demonstrating that significant improvements in student learning can be achieved on a relatively large scale and in a relatively short time.

Guiding Questions

1. What literacy teaching practices do effective teachers combine in their daily literacy programs?
2. What role do you think schools, districts, and states or provinces should play to foster a standards-based approach to literacy reform?

Making Connections

Themes

System Reform
Instruction and Assessment

Parameters

Parameter 1: Shared Beliefs and Understandings Among All Staff
Parameter 3: Daily, Sustained, Focused Literacy Instruction
Parameter 5: Early and Ongoing Intervention
Parameter 6: A Case Management Approach to Monitoring Student Progress
Parameter 10: Commitment of School Budget to Acquiring Literacy Resources
Parameter 12: Parental Involvement in Supporting Literacy Development

Dynamic Duo

CAROL ROLHEISER, MICHAEL FULLAN, AND KAREN EDGE

In Brief:

The evidence presented in this article suggests that system-wide reform requires that educators become change experts. The article describes an early literacy project in the Toronto District School Board that focuses on the kind of capacity building needed for system-wide, literacy-driven change. The article describes how the Toronto district uses complementary strategies at the school and district levels to help teachers focus and collaborate on literacy. The strategies simultaneously build expertise in both literacy and change. The results of the district's efforts are described: these include gains in standardized reading assessments over the first three years of implementation. Literacy reform recommendations are provided.

Guiding Questions

1. Why is the development of both literacy and change expertise necessary to achieve the goal of system-wide, literacy-driven improvement in student achievement?
2. Which complementary literacy and change strategies described in the article warrant consideration in your own work context and why?

Making Connections

Themes

System Reform
Change Knowledge and Expertise
Professional Learning
Shared Leadership

Parameters

Parameter 2: Designated Staff Member for Literacy
Parameter 4: Principal as Literacy Leader
Parameter 11: Staff Commitment to Literacy Learning and Professional Development

Creating a Culture of Change

DEBORAH PATTERSON AND CAROL ROLHEISER

In Brief:

The authors describe the work of teachers and administrators working together on school leadership teams in the Edmonton Catholic School District, Alberta. The goal of the initiative, Assessment for Learning, is to *reculture* the district, or to develop a culture of change, where ongoing assessment, reflective dialogue, and collaboration contribute to continuous learning and changes in practice. Teachers are changing how they teach and how they assess learning; as a result, student achievement on standardized provincial tests has increased. The authors describe 10 conditions, or teamwork strategies, that support or hinder the work of learning teams: (1) Learn about change; (2) Commit to change and reculturing; (3) Establish a safe, caring environment; (4) Be open to possibilities and take risks; (5) Choose a meaningful focus; (6) Encourage professional discussion; (7) Model collaborative work; (8) Build capacity for shared leadership; (9) Have high expectations and take responsibility for colleagues' learning; (10) Value a strong collective cognitive and skill base.

Guiding Questions

1. What conditions support the work of school-based learning teams?
2. What challenges to shared leadership have you experienced in your work context?

Making Connections

Themes

Change Knowledge and Expertise
Professional Learning
Shared Leadership

Parameters

Parameter 2: Designated Staff Member for Literacy
Parameter 4: Principal as Literacy Leader
Parameter 7: Job-Embedded Professional Learning in Literacy
Parameter 8: In-School Grade or Subject Team Meetings
Parameter 11: Staff Commitment to Literacy Learning and Professional Development