Project Smart Team Action Report Form
Using Common Core Learning Standards & Data to Improve Student Achievement
2012 - 2013

Teacher(s)/School: Frazer

SUNY Oswego faculty member: Tania Ramalho and Christine Walsh

Teacher Participant Names: Patricia Cupoli, Gary Dunner, Diana Ebner, Jean Flynn, Susan Hiemenz, Tammy Howington, Caroline Mackessy, Diane Miller, Kelly McSweeney, Mark Netti.

Project or Team Name: Four teams: Cultural Connections (Dunner & Flynn); 1st Grade Assessment Data Comparison (Cupoli & Mackessy); 6th/7th Grade ELA (Miller & Howington)

Action: Describe your CCLS project. Which CCLS standards will you target?

We wanted the teams of teachers to increase overall familiarity with CCLS to the extent that they applied to their specific projects. Teams engaged in three projects targeting ELA CCLS; the 7th and 2nd grade teachers did not complete their projects.

Rationale: Fully state your rationale for the project. Why is this work important?

The most important rationale behind the three projects was for teachers to be able to address their specific needs in classrooms in terms of promoting student learning relative to CCLS. The emphasis of the work was to provide teachers with independence to pursue a meaningful project with support from other participating teachers and college professors. The atmosphere we created for SMART at Frazer was one of positive regard for the professional work of teachers, trust in that they can plan and implement their projects, and be free to ask for help. In a climate where teachers are being told what to do and being judged by compliance, the freedom that SMART offered was precious.

Responsibilities/Timeline: Identify a series of action steps you will take to complete your project. Next to each step, identify person(s) responsible for carrying out that task. For each step also identify your timeline (during what month(s) you plan to complete each step).

1. Patricia Cupoli and Caroline Mackessy, first grade and special education teachers, respectfully, worked on comparing assessment data between mandated formal assessment instruments and teacher formative and summative assessments. Teachers believed that the formal assessments provided a skewed view of student learning. By paying attention to data they generated in their own assessments, teachers were able to change instruction and vary weekly progress monitoring. MacKessy, in particular, worked with a nonverbal first grader and during the second semester was able to use an IPAD with the student that allowed for better monitoring of progress.

2. Diane Miller & Tammy Howington created a CCLS-focused plan book for their ELA curriculum, a template that made it efficient to align lessons and standards. Miller followed this part of the project with the implementation of the reading curriculum suggested in Book Whisperer, as
Christine Walsh recommended. Walsh worked closely with Howington to improve delivery of ELA lessons, classroom management, and organizing/using a writer’s notebook for her 7th grade classes to increase writing fluency.

3. Jean Flynn & Gary Dunner, school counselors, were able to conduct the project Cultural Connections. Selected Frazer students were first trained in interviewing skills by Syracuse newspaper reporters, then interviewed other students, family members and Tania Ramalho who are from different countries. Students developed interview questions, learned to use a tape recorder, asked questions during interviews, conducted Internet searches about interviewees’ countries of origin, summarized the topics and wrote final texts from the interviews, illustrating them with pictures. This project showcased many CCLS standards for ELA.

**Evaluation:** What data will you collect that shows the impact of your project on student achievement of CCLS? How will you document student learning? Teacher learning?

Student and teacher learning were self-reported in a form provided by professors. Teachers reflected in writing during after-school PD sessions about what they were learning and how it aligned with CCLS. Informal oral reports and observations were also collected.

**Resources:** What resources will you need for this project? What costs, if any, will be incurred? What are possible sources of funding for needed resources?

With the funds provided by SMART, we were able to acquire extra materials for teachers and counselors such as tape recorders, composition books, professional books for teachers and books for students.

**Analysis of Data on Teacher Learning:** We examined our reflections on the 6 shifts, and CCLS and found the following:

Teachers were able to engage in actions that evidenced the following:

**Shift 1: Balancing Informational & Literary Texts** – 7th Grade team provided both informational and literary texts, with the emphasis on student choice. The first grade teacher, Cupoli, was using a Pearson scripted curriculum that offered such balance. Cultural Connections students read primarily informational material on the Internet.

**Shift 2: Knowledge in the disciplines** – 6th/7th Grade team emphasized reading and writing for pleasure and student choice.

**Shift 3: Staircase of complexity** – Both 6th/7th Grade and Cultural Connections teams supported students in close reading.

**Shift 4: Text-based answers** – 6th/7th grade team, particularly Miller, engaged students in conversations about the texts they were reading. Miller reported that she can change the reading culture at Frazer and students’ lives through reading.
**Shift 5: Writing from sources** – 6th/7th grade and Cultural Connections teachers and counselors supported student writing from sources.

**Shift 6: Academic vocabulary** – 6th/7th grade, Cultural Connections, and the regular (Cupoli’s) 1st grade classroom were able to develop students’ vocabulary, leading to more complex texts. Mackessy’s nonverbal student with autism was able to begin signs of emergent literacy by reading whole words, identifying their sounds and meanings using technology.

**Analysis of Data on Student Learning:**

- In the 6th/7th grade, students read and wrote more for pleasure, took more books out of the library, discussed books, asked for book recommendations.
- Cultural Connections exposed students to the value and interest of diversity, in the lives of peoples from other countries, and the information available on these countries. With support, they crafted narratives from interviews they conducted.
- The primary special education student was more engaged with learning activities, and less frustrated, being able to show knowledge of letter sounds, sight words, and spelling words.