

Remodeling Literacy Learning

Making Room for What Works



The National Center for Literacy Education is a coalition of thirty professional education associations, policy organizations, and foundations united to support schools in elevating literacy learning. Through support for practice, research, and policy change, we are building a movement around the power of educator teams to advance literacy learning. NCLE's portfolio of free resources supports and connects educator teams in collaborating across subject areas and school walls to meet student literacy needs while building accessible knowledge about effective team practices. By using the digital tools available today, combined with the expertise and infrastructure of our stakeholder organizations, we are building a living network to foster the literacies of tomorrow.

To find out more, visit us at www.literacyinlearning.org.

The Survey

Today there is growing agreement that literacy is at the center of all learning. Expectations for what it means to be literate are rising, and all educators must play a role in helping students meet these expectations. To that end, NCLE conducted a nationally representative survey of 2,400 educators of all roles, grade levels, and subject areas to find out where we stand as a nation in the following areas:

- How do various kinds of educators see their role in supporting literacy learning?
- What kinds of training and resources do they have to carry out that role, and what do they find most useful?
- To what extent are schools structured to allow educators to work together to elevate literacy learning?
- What building blocks for professional collaboration are already in place?
- What supports are needed to make professional collaboration effective in improving student learning?

The Findings

Key findings from the survey, explored in more detail in the full report, yield the following conclusions about how US educators are currently working together to meet rising literacy expectations and how best to support them going forward.

1 Literacy is not just the English teacher's job anymore.

The education profession is taking shared responsibility for developing deeper student literacy. Educators from all roles, grade levels, and subject areas agree that literacy is one of the most important parts of their job.

2 Working together is working smarter.

Educators' most powerful professional learning experiences come from collaborating with their colleagues.

3 But schools aren't structured to facilitate educators working together.

Most US schools are not structured to support the kinds of professional collaboration educators report is so important in strengthening their practice. The amount of time US educators have for collaboration is small and shrinking.

4 Many of the building blocks for remodeling literacy learning are in place.

Despite the limitations of traditional school structures and schedules, there are some promising trends and practices for capacity building around complex student literacy that already exist in US schools:

- Basic collaborative structures such as grade-level, subject-area, and data teams are in place in most schools.
- Educators are using digital tools to build professional networks online.
- Many educators value professional collaboration enough to participate on their own time.
- Use of student data to ground collaborative work is common.
- Collaboration is supported by the specialized skills of literacy coaches and librarians.

Individual educators and administrators are committed to moving student literacy forward, but the system is not well set up to use their contributions effectively.

5 Effective collaboration needs systemic support.

When collaboration is the norm, educators reap a host of benefits, including higher levels of trust and the quicker spread of new learning about effective practices. Principals and other school leaders play a crucial role in facilitating effective staff collaboration by modeling and providing tools, training, and time to support it.

Policy Recommendations

Policymakers at the school, system, state, and national levels have a central role to play in remodeling literacy education. To make room for sustained growth in literacy learning, policymakers must

1. Provide the necessary support to ensure that educators know how to teach the elements of literacy pertinent to their content areas.
2. Embed the collaboration of educators in the school day. This is critical for deep student learning and is a necessary prerequisite to the success of other school reforms.
3. Fund professional learning that is ongoing, job-embedded, and collaborative; educators who engage in this kind of learning are better able to engage and advance literacy learning across grades and subjects.
4. Structure the use of educator time to maximize the development of collective capacity for improving literacy learning across a school or school system.
5. Promote accountability by encouraging educators in a school or system to reach shared agreements about successful literacy learning and the steps they will take together to fulfill these agreements.

The most effective school systems in the world design their schools so that teachers spend substantial portions of their day working alongside other educators to think through challenges together. Teachers, librarians, literacy coaches, principals, school leaders, families, community members, and policymakers all can help address the challenges in literacy education today. To read the full report, to find out more, and to join the movement, visit us at www.literacyin-learning.org/remodeling.





Literacy Education in the United States

FINDING

1



Literacy: It's not just the responsibility of English teachers—

FINDING

2

Only **40%** of educators get to co-plan with colleagues more than **once a month**



Co-planning is the professional learning experience survey respondents **value most**

FINDING

3



54% of educators get **less than one hour** during the school week to work with team members

FINDING

4



EDUCATOR
TEAMS



ONLINE
PROFESSIONAL
NETWORKS



COLLABORATION
COMMITMENT



SMART USE OF
STUDENT DATA

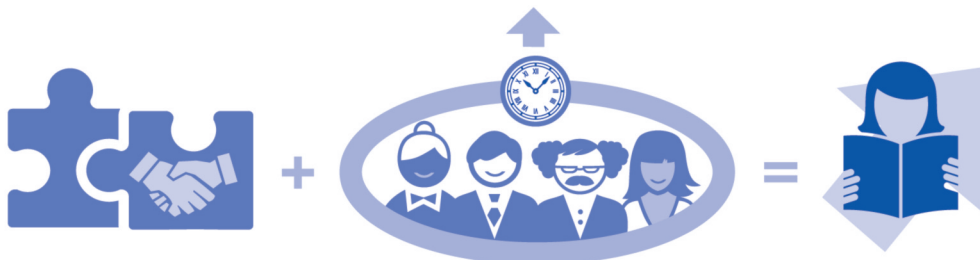


LITERACY
COACHES &
LIBRARIANS

The **building blocks** are in place for change

FINDING

5



What Next? Working together systematically to build literacy learning

To prepare our students for the possibilities of tomorrow, we can remodel our schools so that:

- **Literacy** teaching happens in **every classroom**
- **Educators plan together** so that students learn more
- There is **time for teacher learning** to accelerate student learning

Learn more at: literacyinlearning.org

