

**STRENGTH IN NUMBERS:
Turn the Collaboration Page with Measurable Student Achievement
by Toni Buzzeo**

Five Demonstration Projects

HIGH SCHOOL

Amy Power, Teacher Librarian
Shalisse Johnstun, 9-12th Language Arts
Fort Madison High School
Fort Madison, Iowa

PROJECT: Book Club to address reading deficits and measuring time spent recreational reading as well as academic coursework.

TEST DATA: MAP testing: Lexile scoring
<http://www.nwea.org/products-services/computer-based-adaptive-assessments/map>

SKILLS OR KNOWLEDGE IN NEED OF IMPROVEMENT: Overall the goal is increase amount of time spent involved with recreational reading. That time spent reading is divided as evenly as possibly between academic and recreational reading. Students should be able to select and identify books from a variety of genres. Pose meaningful discussion questions that correlate with our society and their lives. Find and participate in social networking tools to promote recreational reading. Develop an inquiry and selection process to locate materials based on their Lexile scores as well as personal interests so students can improve test scores. The philosophy is better readers' equal better writers and therefore improved test takers.

TEST RESULTS SPECIFIC DEFICITS: Reading comprehension, identifying main idea, supporting details, and having students Lexile measures match grade level.

TRACKING IMPROVEMENT: The book club and language arts courses will serve as the population of students to be surveyed about time spent reading both academically and recreationally. Then we will view test scores to see how reading impacts test scores. Question: What steps can I take with the book club to promote recreational reading to improve test scores?

AASL Standards for the 21st Century Learner SKILLS EMBEDDED:

Standard 4: Pursue personal and aesthetic growth.

* To be used by October 10

1.4.3 Monitor gathered information, and assess for gaps or weaknesses.

-Time study of pleasure and academic reading then compare survey results to MAP testing/Lexile scores

*4.1.1 Read, view, and listen for pleasure and personal growth.

-View a variety of suggested book lists to locate new book titles

- (Post web links for reading advisory on Edmodo where students can reply with feedback based on their searching strategies)
- 4.1.2 Read widely and fluently to make connections with self, the world, and previous reading.
-Participate in group discussion questions pertaining to the book.
- 4.1.3 Respond to literature and creative expressions of ideas in various formats and genres.
-Advise librarian of titles to purchase for ebooks. Explore reviews and readers opinions through blogs, etc.
- 4.1.4 Seek information for personal learning in a variety of formats and genres.
-Will utilize Nook ereader, ebooks, and cover all genres throughout the year
- 4.1.5 Connect ideas to own interests and previous knowledge and experience.
-Recall and discuss what titles enjoyed and explore personal interests that tie into storylines. Use blogs like entries to communicate reading experience.
- 4.1.6 Organize personal knowledge in a way that can be called upon easily.
-Chart thoughts and ideas while reading
- *4.1.8 Use social networks and information tools to gather and share information.
-Participate by having an Edmodo account to communicate
(Set up accounts and are encouraged to recruit new members)
- *4.1.9 Use creative and artistic formats to express personal learning.
-Develop ways to promote author visits through displays and electronic means
(Signage, display on circ desk, and Edmodo)
- *4.2.4 Show an appreciation for literature by electing to read for pleasure and expressing an interest in various literary genres.
-Create reviews about a variety of titles to display publically
(Showcase cards next to books on the shelves to draw attention to patrons)
- *4.3.1 Participate in the social exchange of ideas, both electronically and in person
-Attend weekly meetings with group members as well as post regularly on Edmodo
(Two meetings will occur during the week. One will be during homeroom and the other after school to accommodate the largest number of students. Either the agenda will be ongoing or repeat same meeting format two times a week.)
- *4.4.1 Identify own areas of interest
-Make connections of what already read to discover new authors/title through use of online catalog as well as review websites.
(Create activity with partner and large group to ask questions to reflect on reading habits as well as set goals for the future.)
- 4.4.2 Recognize the limits of own personal knowledge
-Recognize that other group members can recommend titles that may be of interest.
- 4.4.3 Recognize how to focus efforts in personal learning
-Creating and listing goals of time need to spend reading and recording actual time spent reading will keep readers focused.
- 4.4.6 Evaluate own ability to select resources that are engaging and appropriate for personal interests and needs.

-Keep log of what reading with rating system for titles. Then use a variety of resources (lists, word of mouth, library reviews, etc. to select next book)

SUMMARY:

They read below grade level as measured by their lexiles.
They lack reading comprehension skills that allow them to identify the main idea and supporting details in recreational reading.
They do not spend enough time in pleasurable recreational reading.
They lack the skills to choose recreational reading materials that match their interests AND their abilities (as measured by lexiles).
They do not spend enough time in pleasurable reading and academic reading.

FINAL RESULTS/INTERIM REPORT

Link Drop in Test Scores to a Decline in Time Spent Reading

Amy Power, Teacher Librarian

Fort Madison High School

Fort Madison, Iowa

Organization has taken place where a book club has been formed meeting at least once a week to address the issue of lack of time spent reading in a high school setting. The first step in joining is for members to create accounts on Edmodo. an educational social networking site, in order to communicate ideas and thoughts.

The first program is preparing for an author visit via Skype with Sarah Beth Durst. We have promoted it in a variety of ways including an all-school announcement, teacher suggestions, postings all around the school, and word of mouth. Multiple copies of the books have been ordered and circulated with a bookmark indicating websites to research. A meeting will take place before the visit to go over the procedure and etiquette during an author visit and to generate questions to ask. I will require students to post questions for Sarah Beth Durst on Edmodo and describe their thoughts during the reading experience.

After the author visit, we will view suggested reading links posted on Edmodo covering a wide range of genres to find the next title to read. Then we will narrow the list to five or six titles and vote for the final selection. They will use a systematic reading comprehension form while reading to pull out the main ideas as well as discover areas of interest in order to discuss ideas that are meaningful to their lives. Another component to encourage recreational reading is the acquisition of Nook eReaders and eBooks through Follett. I currently have two, another is being donated from the National Honor Society, and I am writing a grant due at the end of this month. This approach will hopefully guide students to make connections from what they have already read to new authors and titles through the use of the online catalog and reviews on websites/blogs.

Teacher collaboration will consist of tracking English students throughout their educational career. The goal for next year is to add a larger sample of students including other teachers. The first step will be to survey their reading habits and interests to

establish a starting point. The survey will consist of opinions about print and electronic formats as well as competing factors/interests of their time. Next they will utilize a silent/active reading chart once a week over the rest of the school year. Additionally the teacher and I will view lexile scores from MAP testing, which they will take three times this year, then create a spreadsheet recording the data and then brainstorm ideas to promote reading.

In an effort to promote reading as an important part of the educational experience the creative writing course will collaborate with the online newspaper club. Every month a student or group of students will highlight a book reviewing in great detail why it is noteworthy beyond, "I just liked the book." Hopefully this step will promote the idea of creating and sustaining an active library blog so that students can recognize the limits of their own personal knowledge as well as participate in the democratic process.

MIDDLE SCHOOL/JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOL

Karen Lampe, Teacher Librarian
Cassandra Macans, Grade 8 Reading
Danville Junior High School
Danville, Iowa 52623

PROJECT: Muslim and Hispanic Literature Study

TEST DATA: ITBS

SKILLS OR KNOWLEDGE IN NEED OF IMPROVEMENT: Reading comprehension

TEST RESULTS SPECIFIC DEFICITS:

Drawing conclusions--negative on 4 out of 5 questions

Interpreting information in new contexts

Interpreting maps and diagrams

Out of the 17 questions in inference and interpretation, we were negative in 7 of them

TRACKING IMPROVEMENT: PreTest/PostTest including unfamiliar passages of literature, pictures, and charts/graphs that require students to draw correct conclusions, appropriately interpret information in new contexts, and appropriately interpret information on charts and graphs.

AASL Standards for the 21st Century Learner SKILLS EMBEDDED:

2.1.3 Use strategies to draw conclusions from information

4.4.4 Interpret new information based on cultural and social context

FINAL RESULTS:

After examining the 8th grade literacy test scores on the ITBS, we determined that we needed to focus on analysis and interpretation of materials from different formats – fiction, nonfiction, pictures, political cartoons, and graphs and charts. During their eighth grade literature class, students study literature from different cultures and learn about those cultures, such as Muslim, Hispanic/Latino, African-American, Native American, and Asian-American.

During the last two weeks, we read a fiction passage and modeled how to approach an analysis/interpretation question. Then the students practiced on their own. We also modeled how to analyze a photograph, using the tool provided by the Library of Congress. Students then worked in pairs to analyze another photograph. The emphases were on writing what they saw and what they learned from the photograph. Students then had a second practice analyzing a photograph. During this, they were given a picture of a teenage boy. Independently, they listed details that they noticed. Next, they analyzed the items they had listed and wrote a short narrative, developing the boy's personality. After sharing, the classroom teacher read the real story (the boy had committed suicide due to bullies). Finally, we modeled and then had students practice analyzing a political cartoon.

This was done as a class, with students volunteering answers.

Through observation and classroom discussion, we feel that students are making progress with this skill. However, we have also determined that we need to continually provide opportunities for the students to practice analyzing and interpreting information throughout the year with different types of information and at increasingly difficult levels.

MIDDLE SCHOOL/JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOL

Ann Knipper, Teacher Librarian

Linda Urbas, Grade 8 Earth Science (14 students)

Melcher-Dallas Community Junior High School

Melcher, Iowa

PROJECT: A unit on the types of rocks. We want the students to use inquiry learning to figure out ways to identify the rocks and how the rock cycle works. We want the students to use their critical thinking skills to find the differences and similarities of the rocks, then using that knowledge, to explain where a particular rock is in the rock cycle. The kids will use graphic organizers throughout the unit. Do the students classify rocks differently as they proceed through the chapter? We have selected comparison and contrast and vocabulary terms like ‘texture’ and ‘composition’ to focus on.

TEST DATA: Iowa Test of Basic Skills. We reviewed the performance profile and profile narrative for each student, looked at their inference and interpretation reading subtest, earth and space science subtest, and scientific inquiry subtest.

SKILLS OR KNOWLEDGE IN NEED OF IMPROVEMENT: During their previous unit on minerals, they lacked the ability to compare and contrast as well as to understand nonfiction text, including specific vocabulary.

TEST RESULTS SPECIFIC DEFICITS: Low in the science inquiry method and making inferences.

TRACKING IMPROVEMENT: The kids will do labs using their comparison and contrast skills using graphic organizers. They will be given rocks to put into their categories sedimentary, igneous, and metamorphic using their charts and knowledge of the rocks. Vocabulary will be a pretest and a post test quiz.

AASL Standards for the 21st Century Learner SKILLS EMBEDDED:

1.1.1 Follow an inquiry- based process in seeking knowledge in curricular subjects, and make the real-world connection for using this process in own life

SUMMARY: The ITBS showed that Comparison and Contrast skills were lacking. Students will be given four practices of that skill over the course of the project, and then a final performance will reveal how they improved. Graphic organizers to be sent.

FINAL RESULTS:

Rock Unit Results
Ann Knipper and Linda Urbas
Melcher-Dallas CDS

First comparison/contrast was a Venn diagram comparing sedimentary to igneous, sedimentary to metamorphic, or metamorphic to igneous. Each part of the Venn diagram could have six answers.

Total point potential = 18

Number of students	Points Earned	Total Points	Percent
9	3	18	17%
5	6	18	33%
1	9	18	50%

In the final comparison/contrast diagram, the students compared the differences of metamorphic, igneous, and sedimentary, and the likeness of all three. Total point potential = 24.

Number of students	Points Earned	Total Points	Percent
10	24	24	100%
1	23	24	96%
1	20	24	83%
2	18	24	75%
1	15	24	63%

The vocabulary pretest and posttest results:

Student	Pretest 20 points possible	Posttest 20 points possible	Increase/decrease
1	17 85%	8 40%	-9
2	7 42%	7 42%	0
3	7 42%	11 55%	+4
4	3 15%	13 65%	+10
5	4 20%	8 40%	+4
6	9 45%	18 90%	+9
7	5 25%	10 50%	+5
8	7 42%	9 45%	+2
9	8 40%	16 80%	+8
10	13 65%	19 95%	+6
11	8 40%	9 45%	+1
12	11 55%	16 80%	+5
13	Absent	AB	AB
14	17 85%	16 80%	-1
15	5 25%	9 45%	+4

ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

Lisa Hunt, School Library Media Specialist

Janet Villani, Grade 3 teacher

Apple Creek Elementary

Moore, OK 73160

PROJECT: Expository writing assignments employing information gathered from nonfiction books.

TEST DATA: Oklahoma Criterion Referenced tests from April 2011. Third grade skills assessed according to Oklahoma Priority Academic Student Skills (PASS.)

SKILLS OR KNOWLEDGE IN NEED OF IMPROVEMENT: Accessing information and gathering facts from multiple resources.

TEST RESULTS SPECIFIC DEFICITS: Reading scores showed deficits in “using resource materials”, “inferences and interpretations”, and “accessing information.”

TRACKING IMPROVEMENT: For many years we have introduced the *World Book Encyclopedia* to our 3rd grade students to access facts and information about states and animals. This year we decided to use grade level appropriate non-fiction books as resources of information. Students had lessons with these books, took notes and gathered information, and then wrote paragraphs as expository writing – a curriculum connection to Language Arts.

AASL Standards for the 21st Century Learner SKILLS EMBEDDED:

1.1.1 Follow an inquiry- based process in seeking knowledge in curricular subjects, and make the real-world connection for using this process in own life.

*1.1.3 Develop and refine a range of questions to frame the search for new understanding.

1.1.6 Read, view, and listen for information presented in any format (e.g., textual, visual, media, digital) in order to make inferences and gather meaning.

*1.1.7 Make sense of information gathered from diverse sources by identifying misconceptions, main and supporting ideas, conflicting information, and point of view or bias.

1.2.3 Demonstrate creativity by using multiple resources and formats.

2.1.1 Continue an inquiry-based research process by applying critical- thinking skills (analysis, synthesis, evaluation, organization) to information and knowledge in order to construct new understandings, draw conclusions, and create new knowledge.

*2.1.2 Organize knowledge so that it is useful.

2.1.3 Use strategies to draw conclusions from information.

2.2.1 Demonstrate flexibility in the use of resources by adapting information strategies to each specific resource and by seeking additional resources when clear conclusions cannot be drawn.

SUMMARY:

We have been frustrated for a few years because third grade students score low on reference skills and information access with multiple resources. Each year we begin with encyclopedia articles and learn about animals, then we progress to non-fiction, information books. It is frustrating that students are fascinated by great pictures and interesting tidbits of information but we really struggle getting them to write the information down. This year as a companion to the expository writing lessons we decided to start with grade level information books. The lessons began with a review of parts of the books (table of contents, index and glossary) and then a model of how to find specific information using these parts.

Then, students were allowed to self-select from an array of books on grade level. They took books to their tables and sat to read. After 10 min of reading students were allowed to begin taking notes on what they read. It was simply amazing!! They wrote sentences. They noted specific facts that they connected to better understand the state/animal. These notes were taken up and redistributed the next day for an expository writing activity. Students created a paragraph about a state using their notes. When the 2nd activity researching animals happened, they understood even better. They were identifying what they would make a topic sentence while they were taking their notes!

FINAL RESULTS:

Janet/Teacher: I was very impressed that the students did so well and took so much interest. I think we did a much better job introducing the research skills with the nonfiction books and because they were so interested in the subject matter, they wrote many facts to make great paragraphs. I think encyclopedia research will be much more beneficial later in the year after more exposure to writing using their nonfiction books. They will have the foundations to use the encyclopedias much more effectively than in years past.

Lisa/Librarian: For many years we have introduced the World Book Encyclopedia to our 3rd grade students to access facts and information about states and animals. This year we decided to use grade level appropriate non-fiction books as resources of information. Students had lessons with these books, took notes and gathered information, and then wrote paragraphs as expository writing – a curriculum connection to Language Arts.

They did write a paragraph as their first experience after watching a video about Constitution Day. They got the bare bones lesson with paragraph, include facts, and create a topic sentence. Then, this library research (states) was the first activity that was more independent with each student researching a state. Followed by the animal research. So, they have now written 3 paragraphs including facts that they have gotten from print and video resources.

I know that the teacher has evaluated each piece of writing AND the note gathering, but she is also making comparisons over time as they gain experience. As her words described, she is seeing writing improvement this year/right now more than any other year!!

ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

Marsha Hauser, PK-12 Teacher Librarian
Kayla Ramsey and Judy Lueken – Grade 5 Reading Teachers
Edgewood-Colesburg Elementary School
Edgewood, IA 52042

PROJECT: “The Resource Store” – choosing the best resource for my information needs

TEST DATA: TRAILS – Identify potential sources of information for grade 6

SKILLS OR KNOWLEDGE IN NEED OF IMPROVEMENT: vocabulary of resources, ex. A periodical is a magazine; What is a primary source? When to choose a thesaurus versus a dictionary.

TEST RESULTS SPECIFIC DEFICITS: The TRAILS tested was administered on September 19, 2011. It showed serious gaps in understanding the functions of resources like almanacs, but also showed a lack of understanding of basic vocabulary.

TRACKING IMPROVEMENT: After providing opportunities to examine the identified resources and determining the vocabulary for several sources of information, the students will set up shop to ‘sell’ resources for specific needs. A retest of the Trails test will show the improvement in student understanding of the content.

AASL Standards for the 21st Century Learner SKILLS EMBEDDED:

1.1.4 Find, evaluate, and select appropriate sources to answer questions.

1.2.2 Demonstrate confidence and self-direction by making independent choices in the selection of resources and information.

SUMMARY: I spent some time on Friday looking at the scores of last year's 4th and 5th grade students on the 'Sources of Information' and 'Reference' sections of the ITBS. I was able to track their performance on those tests for the years they'd taken them and came away with the information that the vast majority of our students improved in those areas from year to year, no matter where they started. That's nice, but it doesn't give me much to go on for your project, since I don't have access to the breakdown of questions that would tell me where our students need more instruction.

So that I can see where our students really need instruction, what would you think if I asked our 5th grade students to take a TRAILS test and set up a quick unit of instruction to address deficiencies that I'd see on that? On the off chance that you're not familiar with TRAILS, here's a link <http://www.trails-9.org/>

There was a question about genres. It involved knowing the difference between historical fiction, fantasy, etc. Otherwise, I didn't look at reading per se. I did realize something pretty cool overnight. Last year, I taught a one-shot version of this lesson to one of the

5th grade sections, but didn't have time to work with the other section on it. When I looked at their ITBS scores on the reference section, there was no difference between the two sections, so apparently my efforts were in vain. However, Marzano would say they needed to see that content at least 3 more times, right? It will be very interesting to see the effects of giving the content 4 'touches'.

Our 5th grade schedules are very tight, and I'm indebted to my colleagues for letting me push this content in front of them. As one of them said this morning, the students do need to know this. My experience in the past is that if time ran out, it was easy to skip information literacy. I am so excited that information literacy skills are incorporated into the Iowa Core, and that the 21st Century Skills are also included. It puts us on the map. Still we need longer school days or school years or both to cover everything we need to give to kids.

FINAL RESULTS:

The Resource Store
Marsha Hauser, PK-12 Teacher Librarian
Edgewood-Colesburg Elementary School
September 30, 2011

After the students took a pretest, the teachers helped with the instructions to create our datasheets and then finding the definition of terms identified as needing instruction. Each class had twelve teams of partners, with each team assigned a term to look up in the dictionary.

Touch 1 In the library classroom, the teams found their definitions, and the group was shown how one team would enter its definition in the appropriate spot on the datasheet. The teachers followed up in the classroom by having every team share its definitions with the class, and the classmates filling in their datasheets with the definitions. The resources they defined were

- dictionary
- encyclopedia
- thesaurus
- almanac
- library catalog
- search engine
- fee-based resource
- atlas
- periodical
- literary genres
- nonfiction
- biography

Touch 2 When they came back to the classroom a few days later, I had prepared examples of what an entry of each resource would look like. I am attaching those entries/examples. The students were then instructed to determine which entry fit with

each resource, cutting it out and gluing it into the appropriate space on the datasheet.

Touch 3 Where possible, the teams matched examples to the resource. This was in electronic resources like the library catalog, fee-based resources, and search engines. When I wanted them to physically handle the resource, because they could, they wrote the name of the resource in the space. For example, *The World Book Encyclopedia*, *The World Almanac*, etc.

Touch 4 The final column of the datasheet asked, "Why would you use it?" By answering this question, the students were essentially rephrasing the definition, and thinking about situations where the resource would be helpful.

The teachers circulated the room with me during the last three phases, answering questions and guiding students. I've been working with both teachers for 17 years, so when my explanations weren't clear, or whenever the teachers saw where they could contribute, they felt comfortable jumping in.

When each team had completed their datasheets, they were retested with the TRAILS assessment. When I have an opportunity, I'll want to call students back to reinstruct them and/or clear up their confusion on the items they missed.

Pretest on choosing sources of information – TRAILS

Identified resources and vocabulary that needed teaching

Developed activity to familiarize students with resources and define terms

Activity involved 4 ways to interact with the resource:

- Define it.
- Give an example of it.
- Identify what an entry would look like.
- Explain when you would use it.

Students retested on the TRAILS test.

In one class, 66% of the students improved their score. In the other, 70% improved. Class 1 grew from 52% correct on their pretest, to 68% correct on the post test. **+16%** Class 2, which had a few minutes to review before they took their post test, grew from 39% correct on the pretest to 69% correct on the post test. **+30%**

To be honest, I'm concerned about the following

- We were still crunched for time.
- I didn't teach some of the items on the test. There wasn't time. If you want, I could separate them from my data.

The upside, is that I'm revamping what and how I teach information literacy at the elementary.