

Effective Literacy Team Meetings

Karen James, UALR RR Teacher Leader

Karen James

- Reading Recovery teacher Leader
- University of Arkansas at Little Rock
- kvjames@ualr.edu

Collaboration is something
we do -

Collaborative is something
we ARE

Literacy must be viewed through a wide-angle lens.

It takes many dedicated people working together to ensure every child's right to literacy.

A single program or a single teacher cannot bring about comprehensive changes within the school.

Goals for today

- Develop a “picture” of what a team meeting might look like and feel like.
- Steps for getting started
- How talk supports thinking
- Role of the facilitator

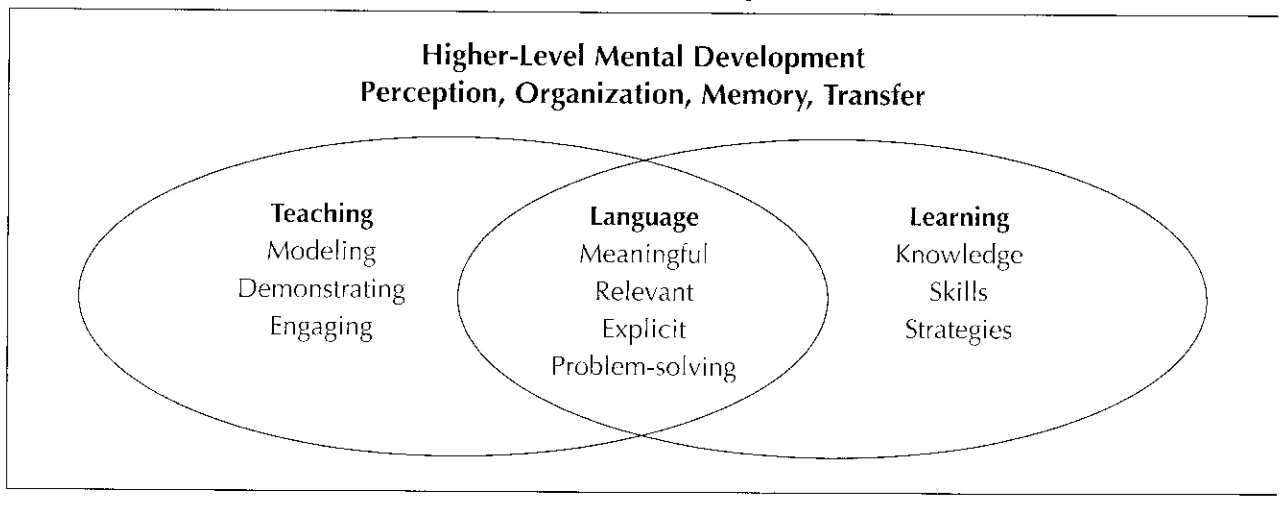
Video clip of LTM

- Think about what these teachers are doing...
- What made this interaction successful?

Team Meetings: Language that promotes Learning

p 10 *Shaping Literate Minds*

Figure 1.2 Language is the bridge for connecting teaching and learning.



Systemic change

...lies in our understanding of how children learn and in our ability to problem-solve with colleagues who work with our children, who share our common experiences, and who speak our language of literacy.

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Apprenticeship in Literacy

Dorn, French & Jones (1998)

All I needed to learn about
Team Meetings, I learned
from Bible Study...

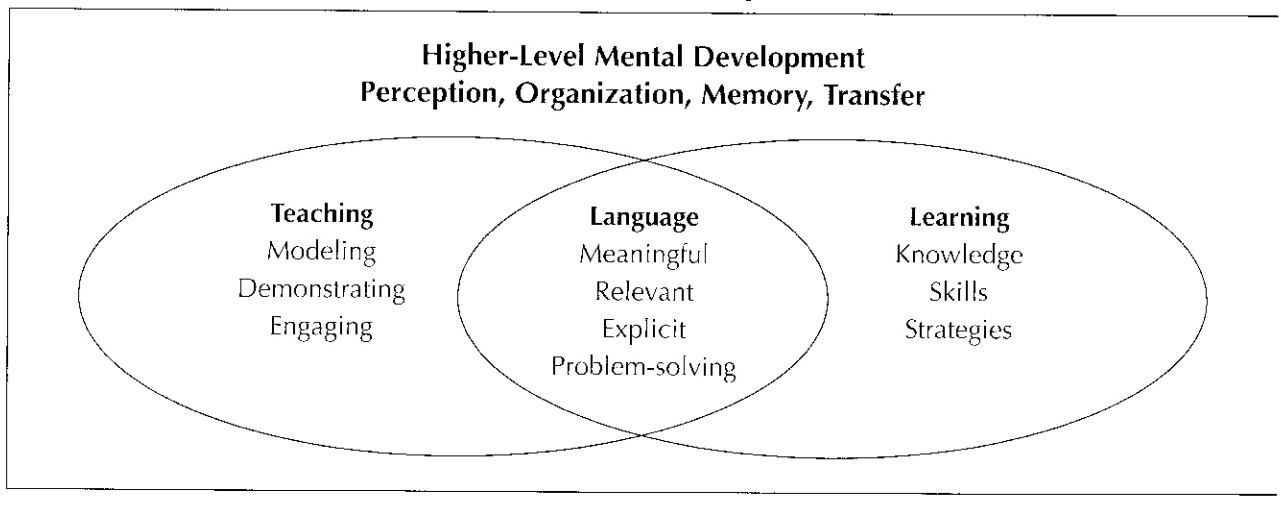
Lessons learned from Bible Study

- Everyone is welcome – regardless of the past
- Study together – go back to text regularly
- Share ideas and how they relate to the study
- Share concerns and share celebrations
- Material studied is relevant – or made relevant by the leader of the group
- Material challenges each to change, adapt and think about things differently

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The Ultimate Goal

... is to create systemic change within the school culture while building internal capacity for supporting the change process.

This means the true agents of change reside within the school doors – the teachers, the principal and the support staff.

Multi-faceted goals of LTM

- Refine a shared language of literacy
- Deepen the team commitment to the achievement of all students
- Consolidate resources for the success of all students
- Refine teaching practices in light of the needs of the students
- Garner deeper reflection and internal capacity for support

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Team Meetings at their best

- Provide a social context for problem solving, support and sharing
- Encourage flexibility of thinking and application
- Use tools for data collection, analysis and deeper problem-solving
- Allow for flexibility in agenda in order to meet the needs of the teachers
- Each participant is viewed as a “knowledgeable other”

Team Meetings at their Worst

- One person dominates
- Agenda dominates rather than thinking and learning
- Participants leave feeling like they are stupid, dumb or not valued for their contributions or knowledge
- Tools are used in judgmental manner
- Teachers have “told what to do”
- Tempers flare/people “bristle”

So, how do we do it?

- Getting started
- Keeping going
- Ongoing monitoring and maintenance

Getting Started

- Considerations
 - Procedures & Processes
 - Start where learners are
 - Shared role as “more knowledgeable other”
 - Playing for the same team
- Implications
 - Beliefs are deeply held
 - Support + pressure + success
 - Tools are just tools

Tools for Team Meetings

- Assessment wall(s)
- Professional Resources and Texts
- Running Records, anecdotal records
- Lesson plans
- Test results
- Student writing notebooks, travel logs and conference notes

Nuts & Bolts

- Work with administrator
- Decide who will be involved in initial team meetings
- *Invite* participants
- Include information: what to bring, what to prepare
- Have a clear beginning & ending time
- Prepare Guidelines/SOP

Typical Guidelines

- Everyone is extremely knowledgeable – every opinion and idea is important in the process
- We control what happens within our school/room/etc – we will keep our talk centered on what we can control
- Children, parents, colleagues will be treated with dignity and respect

Team Meetings usually include...

- Problem-solving around learning issues
- Problem-solving around teaching issues
- Deepening understanding of procedures and components
- Professional study in relation to the focus areas
- Reflection and personal application

Sample agenda

- Celebrations & Surprises
- Analysis of student data (i.e. running records, writing samples, observational notes)
- Professional study based on analysis of student data
- Personal reflection and plan of action

Sample of Professional Study

- Fluency
- What is Fluency?
- Where can we see evidence of fluency?
 - What evidence do you see in your student's reading/writing of developing fluency?
 - For those who do, what are you doing as a teacher to continue this?
 - How can our teaching support the less proficient reader/writer?
- What does this mean for our teaching?

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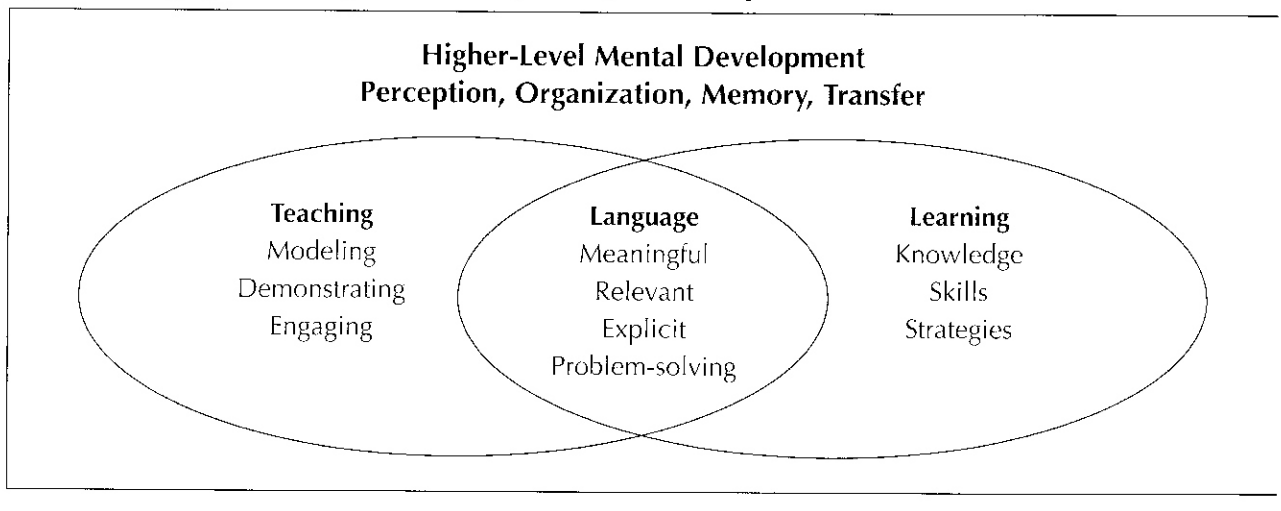
Dorn, French & Jones (1998)

In many ways, team meetings provide a framework for how to think when encountering concerns, problems or “roadblocks”

Team Meetings: Language that promotes Learning

p 10 *Shaping Literate Minds*

Figure 1.2 Language is the bridge for connecting teaching and learning.



Lessons learned

from

Marie Clay & Reading Recovery

- Always find the partially right
- Build from the known
- Language is the mediator
- Hold tentative theories
- Constantly refine theories
- Transfer is critical – walk the walk very soon after talking the talk

Interpretation of Marie Clay

- Everyone arrives with different strengths, experiences, weaknesses, and ideas
- Everyone takes a different path to a common outcome
- Each constructs knowledge in a personal way
- Learning has to be useful
- “Teaching” in response to observation
- Goal is always independence & flexibility
- A few items and a powerful strategy

Constructor of knowledge vs empty vessel

- Personal construction of new learning based on prior knowledge, experiences
- Adaptation of knowledge to fit circumstances
- Multiple attempts to solve problems
- “pop open head, pour in knowledge”
- Question = one distinct answer
- Cause → effect

Responses

- Responses are more right than wrong – the intention is usually to be “right”
- Responses may need to be clarified, enhanced, defined, elaborated – this is often the role of the facilitator

Team Meetings: Roles & Rituals

Roles

- Facilitator
- Participants
- Teacher
- Learners

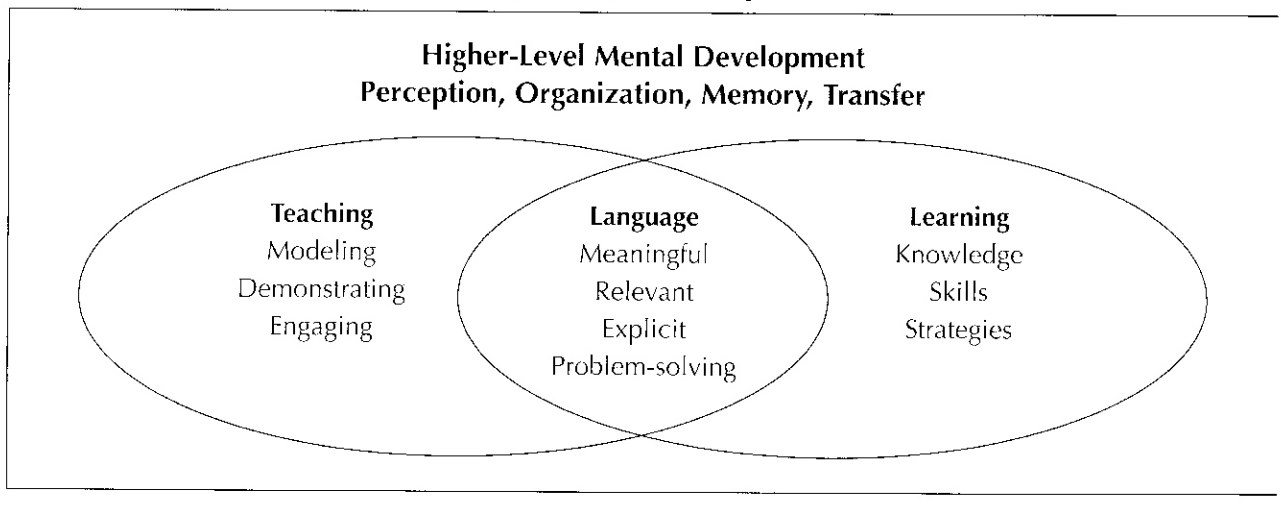
Rituals

- Analysis of student data
- Professional Study
 - Student data and response to teaching
 - Teacher response to student needs
 - Use of procedures
 - Deepening of tentative theories
- Personal Action Plans

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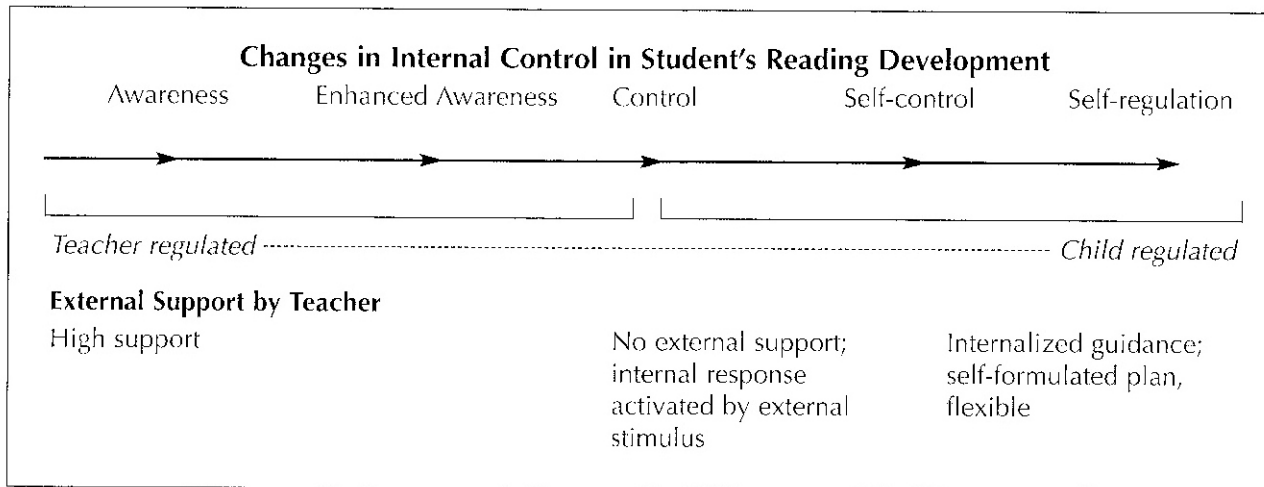
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Continuum of Learning

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Figure 1.3 A continuum of learning control.



Key Points for Successful Problem Solving

- Revolve around student data
- Relate directly to teaching events
- Meaningful, relevant, and focused toward a particular goal or need
- Professional resources as a problem-solving tool
- Development of action plans

Change over time

FROM:

- Facilitator directed
- Rigid routines
- Agenda driven
- Discourse tends to be separate interactions between facilitator & one or two participants
- Procedures are often the focus

TO:

- Facilitator guided
- All are “participants”
- Routines are natural and lead to deeper understanding
- Discourse chains are present
- Procedures are a tool for deeper thinking

Chains of Discourse

From:

To:

- One question – one answer
 - Everyone looking at the leader/facilitator
 - Comment – facilitator breaks in for interpretation – everyone nods
 - Questions lead to simple or closed answers
- Questions lead to a discussion
 - All are participants
 - Participants look at each other, respond to each other in a natural conversational manner
 - Questions and ideas provide the forum for multiple responses

Problem Solving in LTM

The background features a dark blue gradient with faint, light blue geometric patterns. These patterns include thin lines forming a grid, several circles of varying sizes, and rectangular shapes, some of which are partially cut off by the edges of the frame. The overall aesthetic is technical and modern.

Analysis of Problem Solving

- How is dialogue supporting deeper problem solving?
- Consider the chains of discourse...
- What was the role of the facilitator?

Role of Facilitator

- Observe, listen and collect data about where teachers are, what they need and how you can bridge their learning to deeper levels
- Create a context for change through meaningfulness & relevance
- Highlight teaching & practices that indicate a developing, deepening theory
- Labeling practices with application to theory
- Link ideas to larger concepts to ensure

What is teaching?

- ... “teaches by prompting and confirming appropriate responses.”

According to Clay, Guidebook pg 37

What's good for the Goose...

The teacher can do several things which help the learner to direct his attention appropriately...

Prompt to the error

Give the learner some information

Avoid too much questioning

Prompt to the Error

- Direct the learner's attention straight to the information needed to solve the problem.
- Tell the learner the most advantageous move to make.
- This contrasts with vague, somewhat related prompting that takes the learner away from the right move to make

Give the learner some information

- This is not “telling the answer”
- Direct prompting that establishes clearly what the learner should attend to next
- Prompt for the type of information you want the learner to attend to

Avoid too much questioning

- Stay close to the problem-solving at hand

Critical behaviors

- Provide some wait time
- Validating & linking participant input
- Bring participants in
- Input deepens thinking
- Scaffolds that are used are adjusted and diminish over time
- Process over product – it's about the talk

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