



Momentum in Teaching



Case Study #1

Writers Workshop
San Francisco Bay Area

Data were obtained through interviews and classroom visits at three different time periods: May 2016 (pre), January 2017 (mid), and May 2017 (post year 1 MIT PD). Additional sources such as DataQuest, CAASPP, and District resources were used.



THE DISTRICT'S JOURNEY

After an unsuccessful attempt at Writers Workshop, the district created a multi-year plan that relied heavily on Momentum in Teaching, but also on building internal capacity.

2002-2012

2013-2014

2014-2016

2016-2017+



Houghton Mifflin
ELA Adoption in
Place



District leadership
and two coaches
attend Lucy
Calkins Workshop
in San Francisco



In 2015 a new
director was
hired with
Writers
Workshop
experience and
developed a
multi-year plan
for
implementation
beginning in
2016



Momentum in Teaching
was hired to provide
extensive PD



Project
Based Learning
PD



Team decided to
implement Writers
Workshop led by
untrained
coaches there was
no funding for PD)



3 day summer institute
plus a principals session



Student achieve-
ment gaps seen
in CST and local
data



In January, the
district adopted new
math curriculum,
Writing Workshop
was abandoned



3 half-day lesson studies
per grade level, weekly
coach/director
walkthroughs, "treats
and talk" after school
once a month



TESTIMONIALS

What did teachers, coaches, and administrators say about their experience with Momentum in Teaching?

ACCOUNTABILITY & COLLABORATION

Job-Embedded structures such as lesson study are supportive, but hold teachers accountable in connecting PD to practice.



DISTRICT SUPPORT

The district curriculum and instruction team has to be on board, and have the credibility to keep things moving along between sessions with Momentum in Teaching.



HAPPY KIDS = HAPPY TEACHERS & PARENTS

Writing should be fun, and so should teaching. If the teacher isn't enjoying the learning, neither will the students.



"There was the right amount of pressure to perform. In the past, I, and others, didn't do as much as we could have, but lesson study pushed us further. You look like a fool if you aren't trying it in front of colleagues - that's why this follow up really worked. If we keep up these high expectations, Writers Workshop will become a part of our culture."

~ Grade 2 Teacher & Union President

"Our director of educational services and district coach are always checking in with us. They knew what they were talking about and were our cheerleaders. Whenever I need anything, or have questions, they are both eager to help."

~ Grade 4 Teacher

"My kids don't complain about writing anymore. They are more empowered with autonomy in what they are writing about. A number of parents have told me how impressed they are with their child's writing."

~ Grade 1 Teacher

ENGLISH LEARNERS

Writers Workshop builds confidence for all learners.



DISCIPLINE

Students don't want to miss a high interest part of the day!



GROWTH MINDSET

Alignment between the district and Momentum in fostering a growth mindset approach to PD gives teachers a supportive and common message.



"English Learners are writing more. They feel safe to write and won't be judged on what they have to say. Conferences are supportive, and received in a positive way in how to improve their writing"
~ Literacy Coach

"Students aren't sent to my office during writing. This is a new pattern that has emerged with Writers Workshop. Students have found their voice and want to be in class."
~ Elementary Principal

"Writers Workshop with Momentum had the most buy in of any professional development. Cindy, Tara, our Director of Ed Services, and Coach let us know that it was okay to make mistakes, taking a growth mindset approach to PD."
~ Elementary Principal



STUDENT WORK & CLASSROOM OBSERVATIONS



Quantity & Range of Writing

- Pre-Momentum: 1-3 paragraphs in elementary. Most often, paragraphs were guided by a teacher posed question. Consistency varied from teacher to teacher. For example, one 8th grade teacher required one essay per trimester, while another assigned a 34 paragraph research paper over 4 months.

- Year 1 Momentum: Common windows of time for each Unit of Study. Writing across genres: information, opinion, and narrative. Lucy Calkin's rubrics and sample papers used as a guide for consistent student expectations.



Personalized Learning Element: Voice and Choice

- Pre-Momentum: 33% of classrooms had evidence of writing topic voice and choice. Many classrooms had teacher directed topics aligned with either science (i.e. trout projects) or social studies (i.e. great civilizations).

- Year 1 Momentum: Evidence of writing topic voice and choice in 92% of classrooms. Genre was determined by the grade level, but topic within the genre was selected by individual students. In across content activities there was much flexibility in how students learned deeper about a given topic through research and writing.



Writers Workshop: Level of Implementation

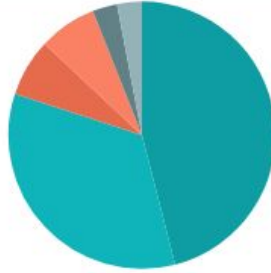
- Pre-Momentum: 11% of teachers were engaging in Writers Workshop "developing" structures. Majority of teachers were focused on editing, or the conventions of writing, rather than the craft. Editing was done with the teacher's pen to the students' papers. Students would rewrite based on these corrections.

- Year 1 Momentum: 100% of teachers were on the Writers Workshop Levels of Implementation Continuum. 85% of mini lessons observed contained the four components: connect, teach, active, and link. Teaching points were mined from the Units of Study and Momentum resources; majority were focusing on craft.



DEMOGRAPHICS AND ACHIEVEMENT DATA

Enrollment: 1,358



English Learners: 25%

Special Education: 7%

Socioeconomically Disadvantaged: 40%

■ Latino (46%)
 ■ Caucasian (34%)
 ■ Asian (7%)
 ■ 2 or More (7%)
 ■ African American (3%)
 ■ Other (3%)

ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS



2018 CAASPP
MET/EXCEEDED

39



WRITING



2018 CAASPP (above/at/near
standard): Producing clear
and purposeful writing

70



ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS



2017 CAASPP
MET/EXCEEDED

36



WRITING



2017 CAASPP (above/at/near
standard): Producing clear
and purposeful writing

61



ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS



2016 CAASPP
MET/EXCEEDED

36



WRITING



2016 CAASPP (above/at/near
standard): Producing clear
and purposeful writing

65%



CHARACTERISTICS OF A SUCCESSFUL IMPLEMENTATION



Communication is Critical - The Director of Educational Services and Literacy Coach established a website with professional development schedules, as well as all Momentum distributed resources for teachers. Newsletters were regularly sent out and then archived on the website. The Director and Coach made themselves accessible. They were in classrooms weekly to observe Writers Workshop, hosted a monthly after school "treats and talk" (about writing), would engage teachers in the planning/needs assessment portion of PD through informal conversations (often around donuts!), and promptly followed through on any resource "promises" they made for a given teacher.

Accountability: Internal and external, meaning within grade level teams (internal) through lesson study, and district/site leadership: principals, directors, coaches (external). Teachers cited throughout group and individual interviews that the lesson study approach pushed whole teams to get on board and implement at a faster rate. It was also noted, that the frequent classroom visits and regular communication from the Director and Coach illustrated DuFour's finding that, "Educational leaders must provide both pressure and support if they are to play a role in improving their schools and districts."



Internal Experts: During the final interviews, teachers consistently cited the Director and Coach's expertise as critical to keeping the work moving forward in between sessions with Momentum in Teaching. Their supportive approach, along with credibility, allowed for greater progress in the district's implementation. It is recommended that a Momentum Successor Plan be developed by districts that consists of additional training of internal experts to foster greater ownership and keep the work moving forward as coaches, PD facilitators, etc.

Principal Professional Development: Buy-in needs to include the principals as well. With any initiative there are different needs that site leaders have in supporting teacher growth. In this district, principals were skeptical and resistant. Since teachers and district leadership were on board, they moved forward with the implementation plan; however, this could have been strengthened if there were more opportunities to support principals. After the first day of professional development, there was a principal only reception with Momentum. It was informal, and site leaders could ask questions and form relationships with staff developers. It is recommended that districts take additional steps in developing their principals to support and buy-in to the "why" behind Writers Workshop.



Student Achievement: This needs to be at the core, and consistently revisited throughout the implementation. The district was committed to narrowing achievement gaps and pushing all learners regardless of where they are on the continuum. A next step would be to look at the Personalized Learning Element: Data Informed, to identify the frequency and type of student achievement data to collect and analyze. The district had begun this work by conducting work sample analyses, and plans to grow their use of data to measure achievement in future years.

Resources: This was the second attempt at Writers Workshop for the district. The first one failed due to three primary reasons: 1) trainers were not trained themselves, 2) resources were not provided or planned for, and 3) a math initiative was introduced within the first year. This isn't easy work. If a district plans on taking this on, make sure to have the resources (professional development, materials, time, focus) over multiple years.



Multi-Year Planning: District leadership had a vision of where they were headed. This was largely due to the Director having experience in another district that had gone through implementation. She understood the challenges and what would make these shifts successful (professional development, materials, time, focus). The district plan was created through her expertise and prior experience, but altered over time to meet the unique needs of the district.