

4/5 PLC Minutes
Mendenhall River Community School
February 28th, 2011

In Attendance: Eliza Lende, Elizabeth Kent, Sunshine Winn, Adam Berkey, Amy Witt, Dick Fagnant, Dana Blackwell, Lavair Swingle, Kim Janelle.

Agenda

1. Voice

Voice

Attempted to define voice. Voice proved to be particularly wiggly in the area of definition. Ms. Wright read an example of a student's writing that exhibited strong voice. Voice – has shown to be a strong characteristic in our student's assessments.

Question: Why do teachers tend to avoid teaching voice: 2 most common answers - not concrete, hard to explain,
Observation: Non-fiction writing is hard to teach to put voice in. Can be done through current events. One Idea For This: Teach students to add a hook at the beginning.

Mini Lesson Ideas: 1) Play different versions of the same song; 2) Voice in art – looking at different art prints of the same subject – same subject, different pictures; this is just like voice in stories; 3) Shopping list – trying to advertise products through writing.

Lucy Caulkins sets are available to our classes. Are they being used? Great writing but accountability and time for Writers' Workshop is tough – Ms. Kent (Berkey agrees thoroughly.)

Authors/books – what we use for voice: Roald Dahl; Watsons; True Story of the Three Little Pigs; Hip Hop Speaks to Children; Silent Thunder;

Secret Pen Pals – Disguising voice to discover voice.

Holding ourselves accountably productive – Bringing Maps scores and discussing data. Are we sharing data? What assessments are we using that are similar? How can we make these assessments more similar?

Should we have a PLC schedule? Back to using the assessments that we already use. Sounds like group wants to use MAPS data. Are we going to see the Spring drop in testing? School takes a drop every Spring. What can we do about it? Timing of Spring MAPS mentioned as possible problem. Less care after SBA's.

Using yellow stickers to show past scores gives them motivation to beat score.

Can't use accommodations on MAPS? Painful to watch. All 4/5 teachers agree that children who need accommodations should get accommodations because that's the expectation on the actual test.

Going to use sticky notes before the next MAPS.

Test taking strategies

Discussed Websites:

Alaska-tb.caltesting.org/sevlet/tb/index.html – Need password

AK anchorage test item bank: <http://www.eed.state.ak.us/tls/assessment/AnchItemBank/AnchItemBankLogin.html>

Discussed the need for test practice to be a continual, year-round activity!

Practicing Ritual Discussed – Shredding a list of fears, listening to the same song before each test, having a predictable pattern for testing.

Next PLC Time: Word Choice – Kathy Iliev – April 10th (Week of SBA's)