

Strategies That Work

Advancing Literacy and Math Achievement

MAY 1, 2016



Beginning With the End in Mind



Katrina Zimmerman is a science and technology teacher at **Turrentine Middle School in Burlington, North Carolina.**

Zimmerman spearheads STEM (science, technology, engineering and math) at her school and is creating a whole new curriculum for it. She began using the Literacy Design Collaborative (LDC) strategies in February 2015, adding it as a curriculum tool for her classroom.

Right from the start, LDC had a profound effect on how Zimmerman planned her classes. She recognized this when planning which skills her students would need to master her course. “LDC has helped me to be more thorough in breaking down teaching skills for my students. I break lesson plans into more digestible parts, and I am more cognizant about teaching my students the skills required to do what I’m asking them to do,” says Zimmerman.

“For example, even though my sixth-grade students, during the first nine weeks, were academically behind my last class of sixth-graders, they were able to construct the more efficient solar ovens,” Zimmerman says. “I believe this was because I scaffolded more in-depth and intentionally took more time to help them with their synthesizing skills.”

During LDC training, Zimmerman collaborated with peers across her district of Alamance-Burlington and in Rowan-Salisbury. “Having so many teachers learning the same process has been very helpful. Plus, the online interface is so easy to handle, so I can easily see what other teachers have done and use what they’ve already created. Not only that, I’m able to get feedback to help me improve my modules. It’s the next best thing to having a peer in the classroom with you!” After she began teaching her first module, she saw an immediate reaction in both student engagement and how the students learned.

Envisioning the End Product

Zimmerman immediately saw the impact of LDC on student engagement when teaching her first LDC module, particularly the importance of beginning with the end in mind. “It is truly helpful for them to know the end product and the goal they are working toward. I love problem-driven instruction because it gives students a purpose. When they know why they’re doing something, they are much more likely to be engaged.

“Students find it disheartening when they are taught information with no idea of why they are learning it. Give them a goal, however, and you get to watch everything click into place,” she says. Once they understand where the learning process is going and why certain skills are necessary, Zimmerman’s students become immediately invested in the course content.

The Southern Regional Education Board (SREB) provides middle grades and high schools in member states with intensive professional development in leading edge literacy and math strategies that enhance students’ abilities to meet new college- and career-readiness standards. The training is offered at no cost to qualifying schools in member states except Florida, Kentucky and Tennessee.*

Pass this information on to your peers: superintendents, principals, math and literacy supervisors, and others who might consider offering this professional development to teachers. Contact us to share your successes.

Read on: Find out how your school and district will enhance students’ creative thinking and problem-solving abilities while enhancing their skills to meet state standards and succeed in school and life.

This Week: A STEM teacher in North Carolina finds more effective methods for planning.

No-cost teacher training: We are offering training in your area now; contact us to register your school team.

* Training fees negotiated separately for direct contract states.

FOR INFORMATION, CONTACT

Gene Bottoms

Senior Vice President
gene.bottoms@sreb.org
 (404) 875-9211

Dan Mollette

Director of Training and
 Mathematics Lead
dan.mollete@sreb.org
 (404) 962-9623

Daniel Rock

Lead Literacy Design Collaborative
dan.rock@sreb.org
 (404) 879-5527

These strategies also accent student learning in her STEM class. Given the hands-on nature of STEM, it is always more student centered than most other classes. Zimmerman believes that LDC takes this even farther "...because they are beginning with the end in mind, they know the information they have to collect to achieve their goal. Then, once they find the information, they have a way to immediately apply it." She says LDC helps students not only be student-centered but also takes their knowledge to a higher level. This fundamentally changes how students learn by putting the work in their hands and giving them that responsibility. LDC training and strategies give her access to myriad instructional strategies that she uses to support students while they work.

Instant gratification

Turrentine Middle School has adopted a school literacy plan that encourages teachers to use the same strategies in all classes to promote consistent analysis of student skills. Close reading and Cornell Notes are the two major strategies used, and both pair effectively with LDC. Zimmerman finds these effective because, "...these strategies help students break texts down into easy-to-digest chunks ... and then they immediately use them on all of the products we create throughout the module. Instant gratification is something that definitely helps students see the benefit of using strategies they are inclined to dislike."

With students' buy in, the LDC module helped Zimmerman's class produce quality work.

After going through the process of reading and writing with effective instructional strategies, "Students produce better writing. The instructions they write for projects has become more cohesive, as well."

LDC is a success story in Zimmerman's STEM class. Effective planning that identifies key skills, combined with in-depth student engagement and student-centered learning, results in writing that surpasses past efforts. She continues to utilize LDC in her classroom because she sees the impact it has, especially in students' content knowledge. "I can tell that LDC is effective because my students remember the information better. After having to slog through all the research and pre-planning and organizing and the actual writing, they know their content backward and forward," she says.

Don't miss the opportunity to send your teaching and leadership team to the most important professional development conferences of the year.

Networking Conference

Can your district benefit from planning strong math assignments to meet college- and career-ready standards? Join us for the **Fourth Annual College- and Career Readiness Standards Networking Conference**, July 11-13, in Louisville, Kentucky.

HSTW Conference

Share and learn best practices for engaging your students while preparing them for life after graduation. Join us for the **30th Annual High Schools That Work Staff Development Conference**, July 13-16, 2016, in Louisville, Kentucky.

SREB Readiness Courses Institute

The **Readiness Courses Institute** will be held July 11-15 during the 30th Annual HSTW Staff Development Conference in Louisville, Kentucky.

[Click here](#) to learn how you may receive up to **\$600 in stipends** to attend the Readiness Courses Institute. **Bonus:** Attend and receive complementary registration for the High Schools That Work Staff Development Conference.

Ready for High School courses in literacy and math prepare eighth- and ninth-graders for high school and strengthen their critical thinking, problem-solving and communication skills. They will be available at no cost to schools starting in 2016-17. For schools interested in implementing these courses, we encourage you to attend the Readiness Courses Institute.

***Educators'
Value Bundle ***

**Attend both
the Networking
and HSTW
Conference for
Only \$375.**

Register here.

