



IT WORKED!

Using Quality Resources to Create Teacher Buy-In

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My story begins in a school where I had been a classroom teacher for four years prior to becoming the Math Interventionist/Specialist there. To help in that transition and build a different type of relationship with my peers, I decided to offer a school based professional learning group, using the resource *Number Talks* by Sherry Parrish. One of my first goals in my role was to help my peers see the impact deep understanding of conceptual fluency and understanding can have on a student's math ability. I felt the perfect expert tool to use was the *Number Talks* book: it would provide teachers with routines and strategies they could immediately use in their classroom.

The atmosphere at each meeting of the course was lively and engaging, due in large part to the fact that it only involved our school staff. This led to a comfort level during the meetings, a relaxed feeling where teachers could make mistakes and take risks. Teachers walked away from each session with something to use in their classrooms the next day. They also got a chance to spend time delving deep into a new set of standards to see where fluency began and ended in elementary school. At the end of the first offering of the course, many teachers explained what a benefit it was to have taken it and to collaborate with other staff members which they might not have otherwise done. The routines and strategies done in the course carried over into being used on a regular basis in the math room with success! The course was so successful that I offered it again in the spring.

This second offering of the course was where the real payoff took place. Before taking the course, my role, which is unfunded and replacing a classroom teacher, was being openly questioned by a kindergarten teacher, whose team was being reduced by one position the following year. She questioned the relevance and need for a math coach. This teacher decided to sign up for the course with some of her teammates. I was also concerned about this because of her attitude towards both the new set of standards and math in particular.

I was surprised how engaged this teacher was in the course and how positive she was about the content and strategies being presented. By the end of the course, it seemed like a tide had turned with her; however, the real evidence of the impact it had on her became apparent this school year.

Due to the success of the two sessions last year, I have decided to offer it again this year. When I sent out the email for signup, several teachers followed up the email with praise and recommendations. One of these emails was from that same teacher, who had previously questioned my role. She said how much she got out of it, and highly recommended others take it. I was surprised to get that feedback from her and recently went to thank her for the recommendation.

When I approached and thanked her, I was even more shocked by the additional information she provided. She thanked me and proceeded to say how much of a different view she now has on the content and curriculum because of taking the course. The routines and strategies are now a part of her daily instructional practice, and she even discusses the sense it now makes for her students with their parents. She shares with others why the shift makes good sense for all students, and the relevance the strategies have for students just beginning to understand numbers and computation. This blew me away: it truly showed me that what I did worked.

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