Literacy Design Collaborative

Intervention Brief | Teacher Excellence Topic Area

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Research has shown that teacher effectiveness is the most important school-based factor that influences student achievement. Studies have also shown that there is substantial variation in teacher effectiveness to improve student outcomes. *Literacy Design Collaborative* aims to help teachers improve their effectiveness in the classroom with a focus on supporting their literacy instruction. *Literacy Design Collaborative* provides professional development, coaching, and resources to support teachers to work collaboratively in their schools to create and use high-quality literacy instruction materials aimed at improving students' reading, research, and writing skills. Teachers across content areas–including English language arts, social studies, and science–can use the *Literacy Design Collaborative* program.

This What Works Clearinghouse (WWC) report, part of the WWC's Teacher Excellence topic area, explores the effects of the *Literacy Design Collaborative* program on student achievement. The WWC identified five studies of *Literacy Design Collaborative*. Three of these studies meet WWC standards. The evidence presented in this report is from three studies of the effects of *Literacy Design Collaborative* on racially, ethnically, and geographically diverse student samples–in grades 4 through 8–in schools in Kentucky, New York City, and a school district on the West Coast.

What Happens When Teachers Participate in *Literacy Design Collaborative*?

The evidence indicates that implementing *Literacy Design Collaborative*:

- **Has inconsistent effects on general literacy achievement.**
- **May result in little or no change in general social studies achievement.**

Findings on *Literacy Design Collaborative* from three studies that meet WWC standards are shown in Table 1. The table reports an effectiveness rating, the improvement index, and the number of studies and students that contributed to the findings. The improvement index is a measure of the intervention's effect on an outcome. It can be interpreted as the expected change in percentile rank for an average comparison group student if that student had received the intervention.

The evidence presented in this report is based on available research. Findings and conclusions could change as new research becomes available.

Table 1. Summary of findings on *Literacy Design Collaborative* from studies that meet WWC standards

		Study Findings	Evidence meeting WWC standards (version 4.0)	
Outcome domain	Effectiveness rating	Improvement index (percentile points)	Number of studies	Number of students
General literacy achievement	Mixed effects	+1	3	31,003
General social studies achievement	No discernible effects	0	1	19,962

Note: The improvement index can be interpreted as the expected change in percentile rank for an average comparison group student if that student had received the intervention. For example, an improvement index of +1 means that the expected percentile rank of the average comparison group student would increase by 1 point if the student received instruction from a teacher who used *Literacy Design Collaborative*. For general literacy achievement, the improvement index values are generated by averaging findings from the outcome analyses that meet WWC standards, as reported by Herman et al. (2015), Wang et al. (2018), and Wang et al. (2020). For general social studies achievement, the improvement index values are generated by the one analysis conducted within the domain, as reported by Herman et al. (2015). A positive or negative improvement index does not necessarily mean the estimated effect is statistically significant. General literacy achievement outcomes reported in these studies include the Kentucky Performance Rating for Educational Progress (K-PREP) tests in reading and writing, the New York State English Language Arts Assessment, and the Smarter Balanced English Language Arts Assessment used in a West Coast school district. The general social studies achievement outcome is the K-PREP social studies assessment. The effects of *Literacy Design Collaborative* are not known for other outcomes within the Teacher Excellence topic area, including general mathematics achievement, general science achievement, general achievement, English language proficiency, staying in school, progression in school, completing school, student social interaction, observed individual behavior, student emotional status, student engagement in school, instructional practice, teacher attendance, teacher retention at the school, teacher retention in the school district, teacher retention in the state, or teacher retention in the profession.

How is *Literacy Design Collaborative* Implemented?

The following section provides details of how districts and schools implemented the *Literacy Design Collaborative* program. This information can help educators identify the requirements for implementing the *Literacy Design Collaborative* and determine whether implementing this intervention would be feasible in their districts or schools. Information on *Literacy Design Collaborative* presented in this section comes from the studies that meet WWC standards and from correspondence with the developer.

- **Goal:** *Literacy Design Collaborative* aims to help teachers develop and use high-quality, standards-aligned literacy instructional materials that help build students' reading, research, and writing skills.

- **Target population:** *Literacy Design Collaborative* is designed to support teachers in kindergarten through grade 12 across subject areas.

- **Method of delivery:** Materials are provided online to support teachers in adapting or developing standards-aligned literacy tasks. In addition, schools provide collaborative planning time in a professional learning community, and trained *Literacy Design Collaborative* coaches provide virtual support and feedback. Participating teachers do not have to travel for the program though they may attend an in-district orientation for the program in the summer. School and district instructional leaders, including a teacher-leader, may attend virtual and in-person coaching institutes offered by *Literacy Design Collaborative*.

- **Frequency and duration of service:** Teachers develop and implement between one and four 2- to 3-week

Comparison group: In the three studies that contribute to this intervention report, students in the comparison group were taught by teachers who did not participate in *Literacy Design Collaborative*. Teachers may have participated in other training or professional development programs offered by their schools or school districts.

instructional modules over the course of a school year. Teachers participate in at least 45 minutes of collaborative planning time every week in a professional learning community. Every other week, the planning time includes virtual coaching from *Literacy Design Collaborative* coaches and time to engage in online course sessions. The amount of planning and coaching time varied across the studies that contribute to this report. In Herman et al. (2015), teachers were expected to participate in at least two professional development sessions–including classroom visits, coaching, meetings, or online courses–during the school year. Teachers in the other two studies (Wang et al., 2018, 2020) also received classroom visits and coaching, but formal professional development meetings were not listed among the activities occurring in those studies. Refer to Table 2 for additional details.

- **Intervention components:** The key components of *Literacy Design Collaborative*–including the instructional modules, student assessment, collaboration in professional learning communities, and coaching–are described in Table 2.

Table 2. Components of the *Literacy Design Collaborative* program

Key component	Description
Instructional modules and tasks	Teachers work collaboratively and with support from coaches to develop new or implement existing instructional modules and tasks aimed at building students' reading, research, and writing skills. The modules are 2- to 3-week instructional plans for teaching literacy that are aligned with Common Core State Standards and address a particular theme or content area like English language arts, social studies, or science. At the end of each module, students complete a culminating writing task. Teachers implement one to four instructional modules over the course of a school year. Modules may also include mini-tasks, which are short literacy tasks that may occur during a single class period.
	To develop the modules and tasks, teachers use a framework created by the *Literacy Design Collaborative* that guides teachers in using fill-in-the-blank templates available in an online portal called CoreTools and illustrates the requirements for designing Common Core-aligned assignments using the templates. Teachers can access vetted literacy modules, tasks, and other resources through CoreTools. When choosing from the instructional modules and tasks on CoreTools, teachers can review assessments of the resources from other teachers who have used it in their classrooms, including descriptions of the quality, coherence, and alignment to Common Core standards.
	Nearly all teachers in Herman et al. (2015) taught two instructional modules related to *Literacy Design Collaborative* during the school year. The authors do not describe the implementation experience of the sample of teachers in the other two studies that contribute to this intervention report (Wang et al., 2018, 2020).
Rubrics to assess student work	*Literacy Design Collaborative* provides five rubrics that teachers use to assess the disciplinary content of student work on the culminating writing task and whether the work meets literacy standards. The five rubrics—argumentative writing; informational writing; Next Generation Science Standards; National Council for the Social Studies College, Career, and Civic Life Framework for Social Studies State Standards; and Common Core State Standards for reading—were designed by the Stanford Center for Assessment Learning and Equity.
Professional learning community	Schools implementing the *Literacy Design Collaborative* program create professional learning communities by reserving at least 45 minutes every week for common planning time for teachers to collaborate on instructional modules and tasks. A teacher-leader at each participating school, with support from a *Literacy Design Collaborative* coach, provides local leadership for the professional learning community and coordinates learning community meetings.
	In Herman et al. (2015), three-fourths of teachers participated in common planning time, but only 26% did so every other week or more frequently. The authors do not describe the implementation experience of the sample of teachers in the other two studies that contribute to this intervention report (Wang et al., 2018, 2020).
Remote coaching	A *Literacy Design Collaborative* coach provides remote support to teachers implementing the program. During learning community meetings, coaches participate every other week by video conference to help teachers prepare instructional modules and tasks. Coaches may present course content related to *Literacy Design Collaborative* templates and tasks and direct teachers on how to access course content independently using CoreTools. In addition, coaches vet teachers' newly developed instructional modules and tasks to assure their quality before they are used in the classroom.
Leadership support	School and district instructional leaders may attend a coaching institute or coaching sessions, periodically participate in the learning community, and observe instruction and provide feedback to teachers.

What Does *Literacy Design Collaborative* Cost?

This preliminary list of costs is not designed to be exhaustive; rather, it provides educators an overview of the major resources needed to implement the *Literacy Design Collaborative*. The program costs described in Table 3 are based on the information available as of July 2020.

Table 3. Cost ingredients for *Literacy Design Collaborative*

Cost ingredients	Description	Source of funding
Personnel	Classroom teachers implement *Literacy Design Collaborative* with their students. Teachers are supported in doing so through participating in a professional learning community and receiving remote coaching support. Schools must provide common planning time for teachers to participate in the learning community and schools may need to increase the total amount of planning time for participating teachers. No information is available how schools provided teachers with common planning time.	Schools provide time for teachers to participate in common planning time for *Literacy Design Collaborative* activities. No information is available on how schools or school districts covered any costs associated with this additional planning time.
Facilities	Learning community meetings occur in a physical space within the school. Internet-connected computers are required to access intervention materials and remote coaching support.	School districts or schools provide the meeting facilities and Internet access.
Equipment and materials	Teachers obtain the materials needed to participate in *Literacy Design Collaborative* on the CoreTools online portal. Teachers can access these materials and the online professional learning community platform through a 1-year license which costs $3,999 per school.	The developer may have grant funding available to support the cost of the 1-year license fee.

In What Context Was *Literacy Design Collaborative* Studied?

The following section provides information on the setting of the three studies of *Literacy Design Collaborative* that meet WWC standards, and a description of the participants in the research. This information can help educators understand the context in which the studies of *Literacy Design Collaborative* were conducted and determine whether the program might be suitable for their setting.

WHERE THE STUDY WAS CONDUCTED

3 studies, 34,816 students and 4,169 teachers in three **States**

Kentucky, New York City, and a district in a West Coast state

Race
55% White | 9% Black | 2% Asian | 34% Other

Ethnicity
67% Non-Hispanic | 33% Hispanic

Free & Reduced-Price Lunch: 60%

Special Education: 12%

Gender: 49% Female
51% Male

Grades
PK — K — 1 — 2 — 3 — 4 — 5 — 6 — 7 — 8 — 9 — 10 — 11 — 12 — PS
Grades 4–8

LEARN MORE

Read more about the *Literacy Design Collaborative* intervention and the studies that are summarized here in the Intervention Report.