

# Collegial Circle Final Report

Please complete all information on this form. After it is complete, send it to the Teacher Center along with other supporting documentation. Electronic copies are preferred whenever possible.

## COLLEGIAL CIRCLE INFORMATION

Title of Circle: **Reading Nonfiction: Notice & Note Stances, Signposts, and Strategies** Standards Area: Reading, English, math, science, spec. ed., S.S., health, Shana Cutaia and Terry Seeler also attended

Facilitator: **Liesa Ehrlich** School(s): **BRMS**

Beginning Date: **2/26/16** Ending Date: **5/10/16** # of Hours: **10**

*Please submit copies of the following to this report:*

- ✓ Collegial Circle Attendance Log
- ✓ Collegial Circle Meeting Log
- ✓ Samples of strategies implemented, materials created, or student work samples where applicable
- ✓ Collegial Circle Reflection Sheets - completed by each participant

## COLLEGIAL CIRCLE DESCRIPTION

### What was the anticipated goal(s) of this Collegial Circle?

The goal was to familiarize ourselves w/the stances, signposts, and strategies delineated in Beers's and Probst's Reading Nonfiction with the hope that we could come up with some content (as opposed to disciplinary) literacy language and strategies that can be used across content areas.

### What grade level(s) and or subject area(s) will benefit from this Circle?

Our hope is that all middle grade levels/subject areas will ultimately benefit from this circle. A variety of teachers took part in this circle, and they have been talking with other colleagues about this work. At this time, we had participants from health (grades six and eight); 8<sup>th</sup> grade S.S.; sixth grade English, science, and math; 8<sup>th</sup> grade math; reading 6-8; special ed. grade 8; and both building principals.

## FINAL REFLECTIONS

### Was the goal of your Collegial Circle met? Please explain.

Our goal was met. Teachers not only familiarized themselves with the language and strategies put forth in this text, but they actually went beyond that, and every member tried embedding facets of what was learned into their teaching. Participants also gave a great deal of thought to and gained a greater understanding of concepts such as rigor, relevance, complexity and readability, and disciplinary versus content literacy.

### How did the members of this Collegial Circle assess whether the outcome was met? What evidence was utilized to assess your progress?

This group had rich discussion, and all members reflected on what they read as well as the thoughts of others. Many members came into meetings thinking one thing and then shifted their thinking after hearing other participants speak. Our discussion notes and attached student work provide evidence of this thinking and that the outcome was met. Note—one change I would have made to the "What Surprised Me/Really?" chart would have been to have students add to their responses after discussion. After hearing the thinking of others, their discussion went much deeper than what is documented on their papers.

### How did your work impact teaching and learning? [include student work samples, lesson plans, peer reviews, etc.]

One of my favorite things about this circle was that teachers repeatedly mentioned how reading this book impacted their own reading processes. For example, participants mentioned several times that they

are questioning the texts they read more, wondering why information is included and what might have been excluded, who the authors are, etc. Thinking about our own reading processes, something many people don't typically do, helps pave the way for making those processes more visible to students. Teachers further repeatedly mentioned the need for students to do more reading; to develop strategies to make sense of complex text; to question the authors; and to become more independent readers. They examined ways in which we (all adults—including text book authors) inadvertently enable our children by telling them too much of what they need to know rather than having students grapple with text and concepts in order to reach and defend their own conclusions. Participants also reported that students' were more engaged, and their thinking went deeper, and naturally (without prompting) made more thoughtful connections and asked authentic questions when using the strategies from this text. We have included some student work samples.

**Did your work align with the Level of Evaluation you identified in your proposal? Please explain.** [Refer to the document, *5 Levels of Professional Development Evaluation*, on the TC webpage.

Actually, I think the group exceeded the level of evaluation we had set since members went beyond familiarizing themselves with the stances, signposts, and strategies to applying them.

**Please include any additional comments you would like to share with the Collegial Circle Committee. This may include unanticipated outcomes, next steps, new learning, etc.**

We covered a lot of ground in a short time. Participants in the *Notice & Note* fiction circles loved the strategies presented, and had asked numerous times about ways to get colleagues from other content areas involved in this work, so I had planned to introduce the non-fiction version as soon as it was available. It took longer than expected for this book to come out, and that meant squeezing meetings into a shorter period of time than I had hoped—at the same time, I felt like this presented an opportunity to get different content teachers together to build shared knowledge around the importance of this work, so I did not want to wait. It is also worth noting that the fiction book was easier to move through—there were fewer “moving parts” since, as the authors point out, they were able to find some common elements that appeared in all adolescent fiction texts they examined, whereas, given the number of purposes for writing (and reading) nonfiction and the number of types of nonfiction, they were not able to come up with a neat list of signposts and anchor questions that would apply to all nonfiction texts. (It is worth noting, however, that the stances could apply to all nonfiction reading.)

Despite the challenges associated with this work, members of this circle were very enthusiastic about what we learned. Participants are in fact hoping to see others learn about and embed the stances, signposts, and strategies into their teaching as well. They love the notion of sharing this work across disciplines, and in both groups, we began brainstorming ways to revisit what we have done in these circles. In addition, we already have a list of colleagues who would like to take part in this circle.