



LitTOGETHER

Teacher Leader Project

Welcome to another year of teacher leader study groups! Be on the cutting edge of teaching and learning, thinking with us!

Join our facilitators, who are teachers, coaches, and principals in many districts in New Jersey, to explore what matters most in teaching!

This year, we're looking at relevance in our learning: relevance in literacy, in innovation, and all throughout the school day at all ages.

We're also excited that we have even more groups in middle school and high school and in new districts throughout New Jersey, from Sussex County down to Gloucester County (and even one group in Pennsylvania, near the New Jersey border!)

Read all the choices carefully, as there is great variety. You may sign up for as many courses as you'd like. This exploration of best practices is offered to you—totally free! We only ask that you show up!

Teaching can be a lonely profession...
unless we learn together!

STUDY GROUP OFFERINGS

All study groups are from 4:15 to 6:15.

Session A: *Providing Choice that Pushes Student Thinking and Fights Fake Reading*

Intended Audience: Teachers of Grades 5-12

Facilitator: Matt Morone

Location: Pascack Valley High School, Hillsdale

Dates: February 1, March 1, March 22 (*all Thursdays*)

How can we support a student-driven learning environment that carefully balances choice and student growth? Along with Pascack Valley High School teacher Matthew Morone you will explore the development and implementation of a skill-driven, responsive teaching philosophy that yields middle school and high school student independence, high levels of engagement, and academic improvement at all levels.



Session B: *Using Illustration to Spark Our Youngest Writers*

Intended Audience: Teachers of Grades K-2

Facilitator: Lorraine Madden

Location: Hillside Avenue School, Cranford

Dates: January 11, February 8, March 1 (*all Thursdays*)

Can we empower young writers to do deeper work in writing workshop? Through inquiry, we can! Cranford literacy coach Lorraine Madden will teach you an illustration unit using inquiry to enhance the writing of our youngest students in Grades K-2. Not only will this inquiry study keep students engaged during writing, it will help improve their comprehension, too!

Session C: *Teaching Communication and Collaboration with Toys of Innovation*

Intended Audience: Teachers of Grades 3-8

Facilitator: Melissa Signore

Location: Woodside Elementary School, River Vale

Dates: January 18, February 15, March 8 (*all Thursdays*)

Anyone can be an inventor with the right tools! Anyone can be a communicator with the right tools! Bring these two key skills together in a study of that helps students navigate a technologically advanced society. Join River Vale principal Melissa Signore in an exploration of how these two seemingly different yet critical skills can be taught with resources including Little Bit Kits, Ozobots, Cublets, and Lego Education. All engineering resources will be provided.



Session D: *Fostering Independence, Ownership, and Agency in Secondary Grades*

Intended Audience: Teachers of Grades 5-12

Facilitator: Courtney Rejent

Location: Smith Middle School, Ramsey

Dates: January 24, February 7, March 7 (*all Wednesdays*)

Are you tired of kids feeling like school is being done to them? Learning should be an active endeavor, and when students feel like they own what's happening to them, the learning is just more real! Come study practical tips on how to make learning more meaningful for middle and high school students with Ramsey instructional coach Courtney Rejent. You'll find students caring more about their work, and that might make you find a new love for what you do as well!

Session E: *Hacking Project-Based Learning*

Intended Audience: Teachers of Grades K-12

Facilitator: Ross Cooper

Location: Salisbury Township School District Administration Building, Salisbury, PA

Dates: January 24, March 28, May 16(*all Wednesdays*)

Despite the hype surrounding project-based learning, it is seldom made a reality in our schools and classrooms. Due to its countless layers and complexities, and despite best efforts, educators often implement something only resembles PBL. Join Ross Cooper, Supervisor of Instructional Practice of the Salisbury Public Schools and co-author of Hacking Project-Based Learning to become empowered to cry, "I can do this!" If you're new to PBL, you'll learn manageable steps to getting started. If you're already familiar with PBL, you'll learn new facets about its use.



Session F: *Teaching Synthesis within Nonfiction Texts*

Intended Audience: Teachers of Grades 2-8

Facilitator: Margy Leininger

Location: Travell Elementary School, Ridgewood

Dates: January 16, February 13, February 27 (*all Tuesdays*)

Nonfiction reading used to be all about collecting fun facts. However, today, reading nonfiction is more about reading the world, growing new ideas about things around us, so we can then change the world around us. With so much careful work around interpretation in fictional texts, how do we teach students to interpret nonfiction at high levels also? Ridgewood principal Margy Leininger will help you explore how students can make sense of the world around them through nonfiction reading, igniting their thinking at even higher and higher levels than ever!

Session G: *Writing in Unique, New Spaces*

Intended Audience: Teachers of Grades 3-8

Facilitator: Patrick Higgins

Location: Sussex Middle School, Sussex

Dates: March 21, April 18, May 2 (*all Wednesdays*)

We constantly try to balance things when we teach writing: Is there enough time for students to fully grasp the genre they are writing in? Are they exposed to good examples of this type of writing? Have they the mechanical skills to do this type of writing? What we don't always ask is "where is this writing going?" Our students' writing appears in so many places outside of school: Instagram posts, Snapchat Stories, product reviews, and many other places. How might what we teach them about writing affect those spaces? Come study with Patrick Higgins, Director of Curriculum and Professional Development in Sussex-Wantage Regional Schools, and examine the ways in which we can expand our understanding of what writing is to include digital spaces so that we model safe, civil and ethical writing for students in digital environments.



Session H: *Supporting Our Neediest Learners with the Structures of Balanced Literacy*

Intended Audience: Teachers of Grades K-2

Facilitators: Christine Chiaramonte

Location: Ridge Ranch Elementary School, Paramus

Dates: February 6, March 13, March 27 (*all Tuesdays*)

Do you notice your kids aren't fluent enough when they read? Are they missing key information? Do the words get in the way? When we push the right buttons on the components of Balanced Literacy, we find that we strengthen each skill as is needed for each learner. Join Paramus reading specialist Christine Chiaramonte for the ultimate curricular balancing act that, when used just right, helps iron out the wrinkles in students' literacy work.

Session I: *Tapping into Student Strengths Across the Day*

Intended Audience: Teachers of Grades K-5

Facilitator: Angela Girvan

Location: Stony Lane Elementary School, Paramus

Dates: January 30, February 13, March 6 (*all Tuesdays*)

Shining stars. Strugglers and strivers. We all have them. It's so easy for kids to fall into these categories, and they follow these paths through their lives. However, when we look at how students shine in other parts of the day, we can hone in on undiscovered strengths. Join Paramus music teacher Angela Girvan in a study of how related subject areas can reveal hidden student strengths and curricular connections. This will add harmony to your classroom community and reignite your belief in all students.

Curiosity



Session J: *Teaching Independence in Structure with Essay Writing*

Intended Audience: Teachers of Grades 3-8

Facilitator: Laurie Pandorf

Location: Shongum Elementary School, Randolph

Dates: January 30, February 27, March 20 (*all Tuesdays*)

Yes, our students have to learn to write with structure. Yes, the five-paragraph essay has a predictable structure that students can follow. However, it steers far from the roots of essay, whose name comes from the French verb, “to try.” When we release control of this structure, we open up many doors to other writing skills that our writers might not otherwise discover. Come try this yourself with Randolph coach Laurie Pandorf, as she explores ways we can tailor our teaching of this important genre so it can empower students to be independent!

Session K: *Making Reading Real*

Intended Audience: Teachers of Grades 3-8

Facilitator: Kathy Doyle

Location: Stony Lane Elementary School, Paramus

Dates: March 7, March 28, April 18 (*all Wednesdays*)

Kylene Beers says, “The most rigorous reading is to find what those words on that page mean in our own lives.” Anything less means that students and teachers are just going through the motions. Join Kathy Doyle, whose classroom was the site of professional learning and discovery on this inquiry that will help you help your students connect with texts like never before. (You’ll also connect with your students like never before!)



Session L: *What’s Wrong? Addressing Social Justice Issues through Problem-Based Learning*

Intended Audience: Teachers of Grades 7-12, all subject areas

Facilitator: Susan Barry

Location: Clearview Regional High School, Mullica Hill

Dates: January 25, February 8, March 1 (*all Thursdays*)

“What’s wrong?” is a big question to ask middle or high school student...and it will yield a variety of responses. But what do we do with those responses, and how can teachers help students to turn injustice into action while incorporating content-specific literacy skills? Come study with Susan Barry to discuss students’ ideas, share frameworks for facilitating social justice and community change, and develop plans to integrate authentic literacy skill instruction in all content areas. Ideas, experiences, resources, and evidence-based practices will help get your students’ work to real audiences...and effect real change!

Session M: *Content Area Literacy—Integrating Reading and Writing Across the Day*

Intended Audience: Teachers of Grades 1-6

Facilitator: Pam Koutrakos

Location: Hamilton Elementary School, Glen Rock

Dates: March 15, March 29, April 19 (*all Thursdays*)

More and more, literacy is being infused into every subject. Teachers are looking for manageable and meaningful ways to integrate instruction and foster transfer of learning. Join Gravity Goldberg LLC consultant Pam Koutrakos to uncover ways to use well-known and loved components of Balanced Literacy in all subject areas. Explore genuine and playful vocabulary experiences, delve into inquiry-based research investigations, and find ways to support students in transferring what they are learning during literacy into science, social studies, and math!



Session N: *Leveraging Social Media and Mobile Learning Apps in the Classroom*

Intended Audience: Teachers of Grades 4-12

Facilitator: Chrissy Romano-Arrabito

Location: Nellie K. Parker Elementary School, Hackensack (*changed location!*)

Dates: March 7, March 21, April 25 (*all Wednesdays*)

Social interaction is one of the greatest motivators driving young people today. With this thought in mind, we need to harness the power of social media platforms and other mobile learning apps to reach beyond the walls of our classrooms so students find answers to their questions, and share their thoughts and ideas with the world. When done properly, social media can be a powerful tool for learning. Join Hackensack teacher and Google-certified trainer Chrissy Romano-Arrabito to discuss and learn the ins and outs of using social media and other mobile learning apps to create a classroom that honors kids' questions, allow students to make choices, and cultivate curiosity in the classroom.

Session O: *Making Homework Meaningful*
Intended Audience: Teachers of Grades K-6
Facilitator: Dana Clark
Location: Radburn Elementary School, Fair Lawn
Dates: January 30, February 13, February 27 (*all Tuesdays*)

Is homework a necessary evil, a missed opportunity, or a tool that connects the dots in students' minds? All too often, we give homework that feels like a burden and doesn't necessarily deepen learning. Bring new meaning to this ancient structure of school life in a study with Fair Lawn literacy coach Dana Clark. You'll explore easy ways to make this time at home an integral part of the recipe of meaningful learning. You'll never look at homework the same way again!



Session P: *Publishing Nonfiction Writing as a Wiki*
Intended Audience: Teachers of Grades 3-8
Facilitator: Colby Cavaliere
Location: Ridge Ranch Elementary School, Paramus
Dates: February 28, March 21, April 18 (*all Wednesdays*)

Technology is playing an increasingly important role in the way students learn and the way teachers teach. Finding meaningful ways to incorporate technology into our Balanced Literacy instruction and into the classroom in general is a new challenge we face as we blast head-first into an increasingly connected world. Come study with Paramus teacher Colby Cavaliere, and learn some practical tools not only to streamline and organize your practice, but also enhance the learning and engagement of your students in the framework of the reading and writing workshop environment.

LitTOGETHER TEACHER LEADER
KICKOFF WORKSHOP!!

START OFF YOUR TIME WITH US WITH A
SPECIAL LAUNCHING WORKSHOP!

SUPPORTING RELEVANT LEARNING

With Tom Marshall and members of the LitTogether Think Tank

WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 17TH

9:00am to 2:00pm

BARNES & NOBLE OF PARAMUS

765 Route 17 South, Paramus



*Come hear some fresh ideas on how to rev up student and
teacher engagement!*

Participation is free. Registration is required.

ABOUT OUR PRESENTERS

Susan Barry is currently on Intergovernmental Loan to the NJDOE as the ELA Coordinator for Grades 4-12. An educator and teacher-leader with 16 years of classroom experience, she taught English and Shakespeare Studies at Clearview Regional High School in Mullica Hill, Gloucester County, where she concentrated on readying students for post-secondary engagement and the workplace, developing students' problem-solving skills, and integrating project-based learning into the ELA classroom.

Colby Cavaliere is a 4th grade teacher in the Paramus Public Schools. During his entire 8-year career, he is always looking for meaningful ways to show students that technology goes beyond entertainment, and the learning and collaboration possibilities with it are endless.

Christine Chiaramonte is a reading specialist and literacy coach in the Paramus Public Schools. A former 1st and 2nd Grade teacher and K-4 special education teacher, she is adept at helping struggling readers make strides in their reading.

Dana Clark is a reading specialist and literacy coach in the Fair Lawn Public Schools. She writes literacy curriculum for the elementary schools in Fair Lawn and coaches in classrooms regularly. Dana has served as President of the North Jersey Reading Council. You can follow her @dana_dclark.

Ross Cooper is the co-author of *Hacking Project-Based Learning* (Barnes 2016). A self-proclaimed "curriculum nerd," he blogs for teachers at www.rosscoops31.com. He is the K-12 Supervisor of Instructional Practice at the Salisbury Public Schools in Pennsylvania. You can follow him on Twitter @RossCoops31.

Kathy Doyle taught 5th Grade in the Tenafly Public Schools. She also taught grades 1 through 4 and now works extensively with middle and high school students. Her work in teaching writing and reading has been featured in many books on literacy instruction. She studied, learned alongside staff developers, and instructed in many Summer Institutes at the Teachers College Reading and Writing Project.



Angela Girvan teaches music education in the Paramus Public Schools and private music instruction at the Village School in Waldwick. She served as curriculum coordinator and teaching artist with the Paterson Music Project in Paterson 2013-2016. For two years, she was the assistant manager of the All North Jersey Elementary Honors Orchestra Festival, a program for advanced elementary strings students in New Jersey. She is currently enrolled in an educational leadership program at Montclair State University. You can follow her at @angela_girvan.

Patrick Higgins is the Director of Curriculum and Professional Development for the Sussex-Wantage Regional School District. He is a former teacher of English and Social Studies and technology coordinator. He presents for teachers and principals on many teaching and learning topics, and is the editor of *One Stop Resources*, an online support resource for teachers. He is the recipient of ISTE's 2016 Making IT Happen Award. You can follow him on Twitter @pjhiggins.

Pam Koutrakos is a staff developer with Gravity Goldberg, LLC. A former classroom teacher and literacy coach in Teaneck and Allendale, she has attended many summer institutes at Teachers College. Some of the work of her classroom is featured in *Mindsets and Moves* by Gravity Goldberg (Corwin 2016). She is a member of the Littogether Think Tank. You can follow her @PamKou.



Margy Leininger, Ed. D. is the Principal of Travell Elementary School in Ridgewood. A former literacy staff developer in Ridgewood, she has participated in study groups at Teachers College with Lucy Calkins, and is a member of the Littogether Think Tank. You can follow her @mdleing.

Lorraine Madden is a literacy coach in the Cranford Public Schools where she guides teachers across her district in their literacy instruction. She is active in NCTE, ILA and many other professional organizations. You can follow her @Sissy66Madden.

Tom Marshall is the Principal of Stony Lane Elementary School, leader of the New Jersey Literacy Leaders' Network and Paramus Coaching Course, and a former staff developer and national consultant for the Teachers College Reading & Writing Project. He leads the LitTogether community in a Think Tank and on his blog, www.littogether.com. Tom is the author of *Reclaiming the Principalsip: Instructional Leadership Strategies to Engage Your Learning Community and Focus on Learning* (Heinemann 2018), and is the recipient of NCTE/CEL's 2017 Innovative Leadership Award. You can follow him @tomlittogether.

Matthew Morone is an English teacher at Pascack Valley High School in Hillsdale, New Jersey where he currently teaches Grades 9 and 10. Matt presently serves as Member-at-Large for the Conference on English Leadership (CEL) and has been published in their *English Leadership Quarterly*. He is a member of the Littogether Think Tank. You can follow him @MrMorone.

Laurie Pandorf is a literacy coach and specialist at the Randolph Public Schools. She has attended many institutes at Teachers College, writes curriculum for her district, and facilitates teacher and parent workshops. As an English teacher, she has taught in a variety of grade levels both in elementary and middle school. You can follow her @LitCoach21.

Courtney Rejent is an instructional coach in the Ramsey Public Schools. She is a former middle school teacher, and is an active member of NCTE and CEL. Some of her work is featured in *Mindsets and Moves* by Gravity Goldberg, and she is a member of the Littogether Think Tank. You can follow her on Twitter @c_rejent.

Chrissy Romano-Arrabito is a teacher in the Hackensack Public Schools with over 25 years of experience in elementary and middle school. She specializes in *G-Suite for Education*, effectively integrating technology and inquiry-based instruction. She is a Google for Education certified trainer and provides professional development and consulting services to educators nationally. She is a co-host of #CoffeeEdu, an informal monthly gathering of educators, in Westwood, co-director of NJASCD North, a lead organizer of EdCampNJ and overall EdCamp enthusiast!

Melissa Signore is the Principal of Woodside Elementary School in River Vale. She is a former instructional coach and curriculum coordinator for the Pascack Hills Public Schools.

