

## Building a handbook of best practices and resources for Language Arts

### PDIG 2022 - 2023

St. Willibrord's project was designated to provide teachers with much needed professional development for Cycle 1 and 2 ELA teachers, in 5 key areas; 1. Use of Sound-prints as a tool for teaching phonics. 2. Assessment practices including PM Benchmarks, Elementary Spelling Inventory, Elf and NFSB CFA's. 3. Classroom structure to accommodate one-on-one teaching and assessment, and differentiation. 4. Using levelled readers as a tool both in the classroom and at home. 5. Using picture books in the classroom for response to reading and reading for deeper meaning. As planned, the teachers were able to receive professional development in several key areas of Literacy intervention.

We began with Sound-prints training. Sound-Prints is a complementary resource developed to help teachers with inclusive (diverse) groups, to contextualize and enrich, and individualize, the word-study component of their language arts curriculum. To ensure deep understanding and rich use of more complex/specific tools, PD was required prior to use of resources in the Advanced Resources (password-protected) area. Most teachers have a good understanding of Sound-prints and will be using it in their ELA classes. We were able to order new tools and resources for Cycle 1 and 2. The program is bilingual, so we ordered the French materials as well. Professional development was given by our ELA consultant, Shannon Collin.

St. Willibrord has a large proportion of students at risk for literacy development. Several teachers received professional development in the Orton-Gillingham Approach, which is a direct, explicit, multisensory, structured, sequential, diagnostic, and prescriptive way to teach literacy when reading, writing, and spelling does not come easily to individuals, such as those with dyslexia. It is most properly understood and practiced as an approach, not a method, program, or system.

In order to accommodate one-on-one teaching and assessment, and differentiation, within our classroom structure, we had professional development on the Daily 5 approach. Daily 5 is a literacy framework that instills behaviors of independence, creates a classroom of highly engaged readers, writers, and learners, and provides teachers with time and structure to meet diverse student needs. Daily 5 classrooms produce productive, highly engaged students who develop a true love of literacy. During Daily 5, students select from five authentic reading and writing choices, working independently toward personalized goals, while the teacher meets individual needs through whole-group and small-group instruction, as well as one-on-one conferring.

Teachers participated in a workshop done by Dr. Karin Gazith. Topics included Evidence-Based Literacy Instruction in: Phonemic Awareness, Phonics Fluency, Vocabulary Comprehension and Morphology.

Using readers in the classroom is an integral part of literacy learning. The new approach is to use decodable readers. Our teachers had professional development on the difference between decodable and non-decodable words, and how to use decodable readers in the classroom. Through a grant, we were able to order several sets of decodable readers.

A lot of positive professional development for our teachers came out of this PDIG initiative. There are many more aspects of our literacy program at St. Willibrord that still need to be explored, so we will have to continue next school year. Our goal of “knowing and understanding what to teach, is important for positive effects on students' academic development and skills and will help teachers to improve their teaching techniques”, has been accomplished as we have learned so much that we can take back to our classrooms and share with new, incoming teachers.

The goals of our PDIG were only partially met. To participate in professional development and workshops, teachers require substitutes and larger amounts of PIC. In several cases there was a shortage of substitutes, therefore, we were not able to be released for professional development, or to have the PDIG teachers bring much needed resources that we learned, back to our Cycle 1 and 2 teachers.

Our final goal of creating a handbook to give teachers access to professional development as well as how and where to access the resources they will continue to use at St. Willibrord, is a work in progress. Data, information, and resources on the previously mentioned ways of teaching have been collected and are available. We intend to continue to add resources moving forward.

Links:

<https://www.shapesofmind.org/soundprints-resources>

<https://www.thedailycafe.com/daily-5>

<https://www.solutiontree.com/ca/karen-gazith.html>

<https://www.ortonacademy.org/resources/what-is-the-orton-gillingham-approach/>