**The Journey of Literacy Coaching: Choosing the Right Setting**

The Literacy Coaching Clearinghouse was indeed, a very worthwhile site. I enjoyed the ‘briefs’ section; a vast array of articles was presented. After reading several which I found to be interesting and stimulating, the one I ultimately opted to review is one that offered some thought provoking ideas and one that actually tied in very well with our chapter readings. It is entitled “*Professional Development Settings: More than Time, Place, Activity”* by Catherine A. Rosemary and Naomi Feldman.

There are several points from the text which are worthy of discussion in prefacing this article. Part 1 explains what coaches do and something is instantly obvious, as literacy coaches we can *craft* opportunities for ongoing and supportive learning. There are major implications here; if we are in a position to create these opportunities, the boundaries are potentially limitless! The onus then is on us not only to address specific needs and contexts, but to nurture the evolution of our role. The onus is on us to focus our work at the classroom and school level, as well as being the vital cog in the wheel for the district network. The onus is on us to understand what it means to be a role model. How do we serve as a role model yet live by a philosophy of being noticed as little as necessary? We need to be many things, humble, flexible, genuine, and open minded. By sharing and collaborating and working side-by-side rather than dictating and mandating, we can set the tone for meaningful and ongoing professional learning.

In keeping with the idea of ongoing learning Rosemary and Feldman state that “a great deal of continuous professional learning is required to teach effectively.” They efficiently guide us through a series of explanations surrounding the concept of *setting* and its place in the professional development continuum. Well-designed settings are essential in promoting ad supporting development. As coaches we are frequently challenged by the task of constructing meaningful and engaging PD. In their article the authors clearly examine the importance of setting as well as the professional development itself. How then, can Literacy Coaches build settings that support and sustain PD that makes a positive difference? A positive difference in both student and teacher learning.

The article invites us to view professional development in a different way – as ongoing in class perhaps – but also as a dynamic combination of the following elements, time, place, participants, activity and resources. Furthermore, the involvement of a more learned and knowledgeable person who assists through deliberate and supportive actions (Tharp and Gallimore, 1988 and Vygotsky, 1978) is seen as a critical to the successful delivery of PD. This view allows for key involvement on the part of the Literacy Coach.

For educators at every level improving student achievement is the central challenge. Involving the Literacy Coach here benefits everyone. Literacy Coaches need to know how to plan, implement, organize, monitor, and build on strengths of the teachers with whom they work. Katherine Casey (*Literacy Coaching, The Essentials*) talks about this being an evolving challenge and to handle it effectively you’ve got to be on your game; know your teachers’ strengths and needs as teachers *and* learners. This ties in well with the article which stresses the need to have a commitment from all to learn. The authors go on to state that settings for this require a lot of attention and in this way we can gather information that can help optimize learning.

There is a range of means for collecting information that Literacy Coaches have at their disposal. It is here that Rosemary and Feldman’s viewpoint on PD takes another turn; whilst teachers and coaches are actually in the throes of collaborating in a PD session, data can be gathered. Teachers need opportunities to discuss theory, to ask questions, and to engage in rich material. From there coaches can progress to working with the teacher to utilizing test scores to help discover strengths and to explore teaching approaches. Moreover, routine PD in an engaging setting fosters positive attitudes and desire to become self-aware. The authors effectively set out a number of points which indicate how good Literacy leaders have the knowledge to scaffold teachers’ analysis of instruction and assist in interpreting data. In this way, a regular and ongoing collaboration between teacher and Literacy Coach becomes a meaningful and prolonged connection. It needs to be *mutually respectful* and *then it will be mutually sustaining*.

Overall, the article provides a worthy explanation as to settings and their relationship in professional development. It presents some very useful and informative evidence that settings are much more than the physical space and do indeed impact the journey of learning. As thoughtful Literacy Coaches we need to navigate our way to creating opportunities where we consider elements of settings to shape, engage and support teachers in continuous learning.