

# Literacy Collaborative

## **Teacher Buy-In to a Whole School Literacy Reform Model: What Predicts Successful Buy-In to Literacy Collaborative?**

Teacher support, also called “teacher buy-in,” has been found to be a key element in successful implementation of school reform models. To examine what factors affect teacher buy-in to Literacy Collaborative (LC), we analyzed survey data of teachers from a random sample of 25 schools, stratified by training year, that were implementing Literacy Collaborative at the intermediate level. The sample included schools that had begun training during 1999, 2000, 2001, and 2002. We then ran a series of multivariate linear regression models to predict teacher buy-in, a composite variable created from responses to three survey questions. To complement the regression findings, we also examined open-ended survey responses to determine how teachers think model developers and trainers could increase teachers’ support for the LC model.

The final sample consisted of 223 teachers from 25 schools in six states (a 74% response rate). Since being able to participate in the decision to adopt a reform model has been found to be a significant predictor of buy-in, we ran parallel regression analyses using two subsamples of teachers – those who were present at the school when the decision to adopt Literacy Collaborative was made and those who were not present at the time of the decision. These two subsamples of teachers (pre- and post-LC) were very similar in terms of racial/ ethnic background (the majority were white) and level of education (the majority had a Master’s degree or higher), but differed in age distribution and professional experience, with pre-LC teachers tending to be older and have more years of teaching experience and years at their school than the post-LC teachers.

Results of the quantitative analyses revealed similarities and differences in predictors of buy-in among pre- and post-LC teachers. The largest and most statistically significant predictor of teacher buy-in for both groups was the level to which teachers think Literacy Collaborative has a positive impact on student learning. Effect sizes for this predictor for pre-LC and post-LC teachers were moderate to large.<sup>1</sup> For pre-LC teachers, having the opportunity to participate in the decision to adopt the LC model was also highly significant, with a moderate effect size.<sup>2</sup> In terms of resources, pre-LC and post-LC teachers differed on what predicted buy-in. For pre-LC teachers, having adequate materials to teach the language and literacy framework positively impacted teacher buy-in, while for post-LC teachers, having enough time available for planning and

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<sup>1</sup>  $r = .42$  and  $r = .51$ , respectively.

<sup>2</sup>  $r = .28$

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preparation for teaching the language and literacy framework was a significant predictor. In terms of support for implementing the model, there were also differences among the two subsamples. For pre-LC teachers, the level of support a teacher reported receiving from his or her principal and the intermediate teaching staff were both statistically significant predictors of buy-in. For post-LC teachers, however, the level of support post-LC teachers felt they were receiving from their literacy coordinator and other intermediate teachers in their school were marginally significant predictors of buy-in. In terms of individual characteristics, how long a teacher had been teaching and whether or not he or she held an advanced degree were both non-significant predictors of teacher buy-in for pre- and post-LC teachers.

Results of the qualitative analyses revealed that teachers believe that the main way model developers and trainers at Lesley University can increase teachers' support for the Literacy Collaborative model is by providing more materials and helping to ensure that more time is available for training and planning. In the materials category, the main materials requested were lesson guides, followed by books or guides for specific lessons and parts of the language and literacy framework. In the time category, respondents mentioned that teachers' support for the model would increase if they were given more time for planning. Respondents also mentioned that more communication -- with Lesley, within the school, and between Literacy Collaborative schools -- would increase teacher support for the model.

The qualitative and quantitative findings from this study indicate that the positive impact of Literacy Collaborative on student learning is the strongest predictor of teacher support for the model. In addition, higher levels of support for the LC model were also associated with teachers feeling more empowered in the decision-making process, more empowered and efficacious in the classroom, less overworked (more time and materials), and more supported at all levels.



**For more information contact:**

Linda Caswell, Director of Research  
Center for Reading Recovery &  
Literacy Collaborative  
1815 Mass Ave, Suite 378  
Cambridge, MA 02140  
E-mail: [lcaswell@lesley.edu](mailto:lcaswell@lesley.edu)

