Instructional Consultation Teams: Your “Partners in Building Full Potential”

by: Renee Thelen, Planner/Monitor

Across the county our Instructional Consultation Teams (ICT) are looking forward to another great school year and are eager to continue serving the students and staff in our local school districts! ICT is a research based problem-solving process with a long history in Ionia County. Our program evaluation data consistently demonstrates high levels of implementation, student growth, and teacher satisfaction. But what speaks louder than the data are the individual stories from those involved in this work. The three stories below illustrate the impact that ICT has had at the student, classroom, and building level.

Trisha Hassett, ICT Facilitator, shared the following story about a student she worked with in Saranac. *“A teacher initiated a case on a quiet, shy girl that we will call ‘Julia’.  The teacher presented concerns about the student's reading skills, math skills, processing, and friendships.  Although ‘Julia’ seemed to have friends on the playground, she was extremely quiet and shy in the classroom. Instructional assessments were completed and ‘Julia’ was extremely hesitant.  Despite the assessors best efforts to make ‘Julia’ comfortable, she often did not respond to questions or only shrugged her shoulders.   The teacher implemented a reading intervention in which several students read the same book, found their ‘NEED to KNOW’ words, discussed the story, and then completed reading response forms that included who, what, when, where, and how of the passage that had been read.  The books selected for use were within the typical range for the grade level.  A couple of weeks later she implemented a similar intervention in math.  Students worked together as a team to increase their basic multiplication fact mastery, reviewed subtraction with borrowing skills, and continued to practice double digit multiplication problem solving.  A few weeks into the intervention the teacher sent these email messages to the case manager.*

*"They all just AR tested on their book, The Sleeping Giant of Goll.  They all got 100%!"*

*"Julia raised her hand to do a review multiplication problem (which she has not done all year!) She did it correctly and the class cheered.  She beamed!"*

*Later in the case, another instructional assessment was completed using grade level text. ‘Julia’ participated with confidence and pride. She looked directly at the assessor, smiled, answered open ended questions without hesitation and demonstrated an understanding of the text. ‘Julia's’ confidence and success was evident throughout her entire day, both on her work and in her attitude and mannerisms.”*

Jocelyn Rockey, Kindergarten teacher at Oakwood Elementary in Portland, shared the following about her experiences as both an IC team member and requesting teacher. *“The IC team at Oakwood Elementary has been a very positive experience for the students and teachers in our building. An IC team is a group of school professionals, trained to support classroom teachers in applying best practices through instruction and assessment. As a general education teacher, I became part of the IC team with the intention of joining a group of my colleagues that collaborated efficiently and effectively. What I have actually received from my training and 6 years of service is much more than that. I have received a repertoire of effective, research based practices that allow me to reach all of my students with more individualized instruction and progress monitoring of their skills. The benefits of ICT in my professional career have been two fold. First, as a member of the IC team, I find collaborating in a group of professionals to be very rewarding and inspiring. My role as an IC case manager has brought me in contact with research based interventions that I would not have typically been involved with. I also find the relationship between the referring teacher and myself to grow as the case moves through the IC process. Secondly, (as a referring teacher myself) I find that the IC process and case managers help me find research based interventions that not only benefit the students for which I refer, but also future students that may have similar needs in the classroom. Through the IC process, both as a case manager and a referring teacher, I have had personal success with students by documenting improved academic and behavioral achievement for students. The data-driven process and progress monitoring of these skills has allowed me to maximize my resources and receive on-going professional development that will enhance my delivery and integration of curriculum.”*

Tiffany Jackson, Principal at Ellis Elementary in Belding, shared the impact that ICT has had on the building as a whole. *“ICT is an integral part of our student success at Ellis Elementary.  We have a large team of general ed staff, special ed staff, administrator, facilitators, interventionists and a specials teacher.  We meet weekly and are excited when new strategies are taught and shared.  We read articles and books together, we role play, we give demonstrations to the entire staff at meetings and best of all support the students in multiple areas.  Over the last couple of years our staff changed the perspective that IC is the means to qualify for Special Education, and more of an opportunity to support students in the general education setting with proper skills and instructional strategies to increase learning. We have continued to grow with the process and have taken out all of the EXCUSES!  We WILL teach them how they come to us and BELIEVE that ALL students can and will learn!”*

Our Instructional Consultation Teams look forward to continuing as your “Partners in Building Full Potential” this school year!

