



Becoming a Literacy Leader: Supporting Learning and Change

Jennifer Allen

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Becoming a Literacy Leader chronicles the work of Jennifer Allen, an elementary teacher who moved to a new school and a new job as a literacy specialist, and found herself tackling everything from teacher study groups to state-mandated assessment plans. The book is rooted in Jennifer's belief that teachers know what they need when it comes to professional development in literacy, and the best literacy leaders are those who listen to and respect the educators in their midst. Grounded in research but thoroughly practical, Jennifer shares advice on:

- organizing a literacy room with resources for classroom teachers, including book lists, bins of children's books tied to craft and strategy lessons, bulletin board ideas, and files with instructional materials;
- developing intervention classrooms for struggling readers and writers built on collaboration between teachers and literacy specialists;
- setting up assessment notebooks for teachers, and preparing new and veteran teachers for student assessments across grades;
- creating model programs for dealing with schoolwide problems like reading fluency, and then moving from the pilot to implementation in many classrooms;
- coaching new and veteran teachers in the latest literacy practices, without taking on the role of expert;
- analyzing and using books, videos and journals in professional development programs;
- infusing routine staff meetings with discussions of new literacy curricula;
- leading teacher study groups using a variety of formats;
- finding and budgeting money for professional development programs in literacy;
- protecting time and scheduling priorities, to ensure the literacy specialist position doesn't become a "catch-all for the random needs of teachers or administrators.

At a time when all administrators are urged to be literacy leaders, this insider's view helps to define what leadership looks like and shows how to create an environment that fosters professional development. Jennifer Allen shares the balance leaders struggle with, as they strive to support and honor the fine practices of teachers, even as they nudge colleagues to improve their literacy instruction. Ultimately, *Becoming a Literacy Leader* is a hopeful book, an optimistic and realistic portrait of life in schools among teachers committed to doing their jobs well.

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