



Helping School Leaders Foster a Culture of Writing

Tip #3: Informal Conversations

Educators are constantly being inundated with professional development opportunities and new initiatives. Sadly, many programs fall by the wayside if teachers feel unsupported or succumb to the belief that “this too shall pass.” In *Swimming in the Deep End: Four Foundational Skills for Leading Successful School Initiatives*, Jennifer Abrams emphasizes the importance of repetition and clarity when building accountability for any new initiative. Thus, school leaders can and should make it a habit to weave Collins language into their informal conversations with teachers. Abrams goes on to encourage school leaders to look for ways to highlight what teachers are doing well and then give some options for reaching goals.

In other words, if you want to see Collins Writing stick in your school (and we sure do!), it’s important to keep Collins a part of the conversation.

Tip #3

During informal conversations with teachers, ask questions like the following:

- Are students able to produce more text in the same amount of time when you give a Type One assignment, as compared to earlier in the school year?
- Have students come to expect frequent Type Two quizzes? Why is that?
- Do students ever suggest Focus Correction Areas (FCAs) for assignments that you give?
- How do students react when you ask them to read their paper out loud to themselves or to have another student read a paper back to the author?
- Do you ever modify FCAs for different students in your classes? How? Do you change FCAs to challenge the most advanced students in your classes?
- Have you put into practice any of the Collins Writing Program highly recommended assignments: The Short Persuasive Essay, Ten Percent Summary, Comparison and Contrast, and Vocabulary Cards? How do students react to these assignments?

These quick interactions show teachers that you are aware of their efforts in the classroom and offer them new ideas to implement.

Follow-Up with Faculty

Consider following up this series of conversations with a brief Type One-inspired activity at your next monthly faculty meeting. Select one of the questions above and ask teachers to respond to the following prompt, and then discuss in small groups:

- How would you respond to this question (from the list above)? Provide two examples of how this strategy is working for you or share two questions you have about implementing this strategy.

By keeping Collins part of the conversation, you demonstrate your commitment to the program and provide teachers with the ongoing support they need for success.