

## Coaching Links Knowledge to Practice



"Literacy How has not only changed my life as a teacher, but has also enriched the lives of my students. Their reading success has flourished since I put into place the activities and lessons my Literacy How mentor has shown me. I will forever be grateful for all of the brilliant educators at Literacy How who work to make a difference."

~Katy Munno, Kindergarten Teacher, Toquam Magnet School, Stamford, CT

Many educators are re-examining their beliefs about reading acquisition and re-thinking their instruction, thanks to Emily Hanford's [APMReports](#) and the discussions that ensued. How can we help teachers shift their mindsets, enhance their knowledge, and refine their practices to align with the evidence about developing skilled readers and writers?

At Literacy How, we believe it is through mentoring and coaching, one teacher at a time.

## Coaching Works

A teacher's knowledge about reading development and approach to teaching reading matter. Although knowing effective literacy instruction strategies can override student disadvantages, many teachers are not taught how to teach reading. This disciplinary knowledge is not obvious, natural, or intuitive. Literacy How was established to provide teachers with knowledge about each component of comprehensive literacy instruction, while supporting them as they put it into practice.

As Joyce and Showers (2002) [demonstrated](#), and our professional development model confirms, peer coaching makes all the difference in translating knowledge into effective practice and producing positive outcomes for teachers and their students. Our own [work](#) has shown that coaching makes a difference.

## Supporting Teachers as Reflective Practitioners

The purpose of mentoring and coaching is to help teachers develop knowledge, thought processes, and practices for teaching, assessing, and planning. Literacy How Mentors meet teachers where they are in their beliefs, knowledge, and skills about reading. Mentors use insight and listening skills to influence a teacher's *internal* ideas, such as a readiness to change, that shape their *external* behaviors of teaching. They support teaching as a reflective process so that teachers become *diagnostic* and *prescriptive* in their instruction — understanding why and when to use specific methods, techniques, and activities.

Mentors collaborate with teachers in and out of the classroom. They provide knowledge about the best evidence-based literacy practices, model lessons, support teachers in the implementation of these methods, and assist with the collection and analysis of data for differentiated instruction.

## Gradually Releasing Responsibility Builds Confidence and Competence

Change takes time! Joyce and Showers have found that teachers must practice a new method 20-25 times to learn to use it effectively. Vital coaching support helps teachers persevere beyond shaky initial attempts when they might be tempted to give up.

Literacy How's coaching model—planning, teaching, reflecting, and applying—builds teachers' confidence and competence as they practice new methods of instruction. Mentors guide teachers through a gradual release of responsibility by modeling lessons, co-teaching, then observing the teacher and providing feedback. As new learning of content and application takes place, this progression cycles through the year.

## Margie Speaks

**March 7.** *IDA-Los Angeles Language and Learning Conference.* Margie will present the Keynote: "The Science of Teaching Reading: Why, How, and What to Teach" and breakout session "Reading Difficulties: What makes it challenging to treat them?."

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**March 20.** *Dyslexia Society of CT Conference.* *Early Identification and Intervention* with Keynote Fumiko Hoeft. Margie will present "Structured Literacy."

**Register to attend [here](#)!**

**March 21.** *Middle Tennessee State University Fox Reading Conference.* *Structured Literacy: All Children Can Read* with Keynote Louisa Moats. Margie will present "One Teacher at a Time: Supporting Teachers' Knowledge and Practice of Structured Literacy Instruction."

**Register for livestreaming [here](#)!**



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