

Leadership Support: Show the Research

School administrators often write to ask how they can support their teachers in implementing Daily 5 and CAFE successfully. Similarly, teachers often write to ask how they can get their district to “allow” or “support” them in their quest to implement Daily 5/CAFE in their classroom. Many districts and teachers are seeing great things happen in their Daily 5/CAFE classrooms and are encouraging others to read and implement Daily 5 and CAFE. Some districts have seen such a positive effect that it has become a district-wide initiative. School leaders understand the importance of implementing a program/idea with fidelity and want to support their teachers. The question is... HOW? We hope to provide some assistance to administrators through a series of articles touching on some fundamental ways to support teachers. We begin with a support suggestion that is essential to creating teacher and district “buy-in.”

Administrative Support Suggestion #1: Show the research!

One of the foundational principles essential to the Daily 5 is “creating a sense of urgency” (Boushey & Moser, 2006). Teaching students why we do something gives them a purpose and helps them understand the reasons they are putting forth the effort to learn something new. It assists students in accepting responsibility and ownership of their learning. This really is no different for adults. When given a plausible reason for a task, adults often become motivated to complete the task. Therefore, when looking to introduce a staff or district to Daily 5/CAFE, it is important to create a sense of urgency and provide them with the “why.” The best way to do this is by showing them the research!

Daily 5 (Boushey & Moser, 2006) and CAFE (Boushey & Moser, 2009) are based on current research in teaching and learning. The foundational principles, routines, and concepts of both Daily 5 and CAFE are supported by researchers such as Richard Allington, Margaret Mooney, Nancie Atwell, Michael Pressley, Ken Wesson, David Pearson, Regie Routman, Emmett Betts, Michael Grinder, Peter Johnston, Doug Fisher, Nancy Frey, Robert Marzano, and the list goes on. Many schools conduct informal action research projects on both Daily 5 and CAFE, and a few formal studies are in the process of being conducted. Below are a few highlights of research that will provide good discussion, and will help create the sense of urgency needed to motivate teachers and districts to make the leap into the Daily 5/CAFE approach to literacy instruction.

Skilled teachers use instructional scaffolds, such as posing questions to check for understanding, during small-group guided instruction (Frey & Fisher, 2010). Daily 5 sets up a classroom for effective small-group instruction to take place. CAFE provides an organizational tool and a menu of strategies for teachers to use in developing and implementing strategy group instruction.

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One way to teach our students to be independent learners is to gradually transfer the responsibility for learning to them (Fisher & Frey, 2008). In Daily 5, students gradually build stamina until they are successful at working independently on their reading and writing tasks.

Allowing children to choose their own books will encourage a love of reading (Atwell, 2007). Good-fit books are an essential component of Daily 5, and through a series of mini-lessons, students learn how to choose good-fit books for their book boxes.

Clear expectations and learning goals reduce student misbehavior and help create a positive learning environment (R. Marzano & J. Marzano, 2003). The use of I-charts in Daily 5 allows students to develop classroom expectations during the literacy block. A list of behaviors is created, modeled, and reviewed daily until students have mastered the expectations. The chart is posted in the classroom at all times, anchoring their learning to it. In Daily 5, students know what is expected of them and can spend their time focused on learning.

Allington (2012) highlights the importance of self-selected text that a student can read with 98 percent accuracy. He says students must read something they understand that is personally meaningful. In Daily Five 5 CAFE, students select books that follow the “I-PICK” guidelines. Students are reading good-fit books of their choice and writing about topics that are of interest to them.

Effective assessment that informs instruction matters (Johnston, 2011). The CAFE system allows a teacher to make meaning of student assessment data by organizing results and categorizing students by strategy needs. Through the use of a conferring notebook, teachers have individualized information on each child and can truly design instruction around each child’s specific needs.

The amount of research to support the ideas, concepts, and foundational pieces of both Daily 5 and CAFE is abundant. If your school is focused on RTI, differentiated instruction, formative/summative assessment, brain research, co-teaching, student-centered learning, or even best practices in teaching and learning, then Daily 5 and CAFE will prove to be a good fit. To find actual student data that supports the efforts of beginning Daily 5 and CAFE, visit the discussion board on www.thedailycafe.com, and talk with other educators who are using it in their classroom. Informal action research is continually going on in schools all over the world, and teachers are usually more than willing to share their results.

Leadership Support: Show the Research (continued)

If you are looking to spark curiosity or “create a sense of urgency” with your staff/district/colleagues, ask the following question: How would you like to have a classroom of independent readers and writers, where each student has individual goals and you have time to work with small groups and confer with students individually each day? They may not believe it is possible, but it is, and this thought should certainly spark their curiosity. Present the research that we know is true about reading, writing, and literacy instruction. Then, provide an opportunity for them to really let it soak in. Effective educators do what’s best for kids, and consistently strive to make a difference. After viewing, discussing, and understanding the research, the sense of urgency will be established and the true work can begin.

Even Further Reading

Read the other two articles in this three-part series by following the QR code.



Leadership Support: The Gift of Time (Part 2 of 3)

Allison Behne provides administrators with two ways instructional leaders can support the teachers who are implementing Daily 5 in their classrooms.



Leadership Support: Know What to Look For (Part 3 of 3)

Administrators wanting to support their teachers often want to know what to look for when they go in the classroom. What indicates that Daily 5 and CAFE are being used? Here are a few ideas.