

LFHS Foundation

LFHS Foundation Funds Faculty Workshop with Reading Specialist

First, our children learn to read. Then our children read to learn. How do we know if they are reading well enough to get them where they want to go in life?

The Lake Forest High School English Department wanted to answer this question. This past summer the department conducted a seminar funded by the LFHS Foundation featuring Jim Burke, a reading specialist and fellow educator. Over 25 LFHS educators from the English Department (and a few other departments as well) explored various ways to develop a common language regarding reading strategies that could be applied in various areas of study.

During breakout sessions after the seminar, educators discussed the most effective ways to instruct students at all levels of the curriculum (Skills, CP, Honors) using reading strategies to achieve a higher level of comprehension. LFHS educators learned the importance of finding ways to weave reading comprehension strategies into their daily lesson plans.

Did you hear about the 5-minute tests your child took in his or her English class last month? These tests were one of the “action items” from the workshop following Jim Burke’s seminar. The English Department knew that all students entered the high school at varying reading abilities. Determining the population that could use some extra help was the first step. Each English student participated in a reading comprehension screening and three vocabulary tests using words found in the literature, science and social studies textbooks used at LFHS. The vocabulary screening took about 5 minutes for each test. Results were used to identify a smaller group for fluency (number of words correctly read per minute) screening. The attention has now turned to finding ways to integrate explicit reading instruction for these students into existing curricula.

Diane Clark, English Department Chair and one of the architects of the workshop, said,

“Lake Forest High School is a wonderful place to be, for students and for teachers alike. We are fortunate, indeed, to have the membership of the Foundation working to support our efforts to become not only teachers of literature, but teachers of literacy as well.”



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