

Interviews Regarding Instructional Coach Lynn Barnes, November, 2004

Date: November 23,2004 - Interviewer: Jim Knight - Respondent Cal Herman

...Well before she ever did anything official for me, **she was and continues to be very encouraging. Her office is actually just off of my classroom, but I see her often as she passes through. You know she always asks me how things are going and gives me tips, and tries to give me encouragement in being firm and such. I think that's part of what I had loved,** some encouragement through school and through other teachers, also to utilize the resources that she could make available like CHAMPS for one thing, and the Frame Routine for another....So, being a new teacher, I needed all the help I could get. ...I sometimes talked to her about discipline issues. I mentioned a problem I was having, and she would be very encouraging. ...I think it's helped me quite a bit. **Her presence as a mentor, I appreciate, but also her presence as our instructional collaborator. It really helps to know that there's somebody there, ready to help, ...and if she has that period free, try to be able to come in and model something for me, or help out, or observe, she's done that for me before, sat in my class and just observed normal procedures...Especially when I'm really, really struggling with classroom discipline, she was always available.**

...She is bluntly honest. There have been times when she's had something pretty negative to tell me, especially about discipline. **But, she doesn't sugar coat it. She says it; she doesn't do it in a mean way at all. She does it pretty directly.** Like when she was telling me about the hand-raising thing. "I stopped counting at 50." She usually says something good. She is very like, hey, that was really good. If she has something negative to tell me, she just tells me. So I feel like **I can count on her to be honest in feedback and not just make me feel good, telling**

me something that I need to hear.

...**I would be floundering on discipline** a lot more than, oh, a lot more. I can't say that things are perfect right now, and that's no reflection on her. But I think that it would be, a lot of my classes would not flow even as well as they do if she hadn't helped me out that way. **I think she has helped my kids, their learning.**

...She assesses the problem, especially with the discipline thing. She communicates directly and honestly... Lynn understands. She's been a teacher for so long. **The thing that has impressed me most, I would have to say is the feedback, communication.... I've been really glad she's been there.**

Date: November 23 2004-Interviewer: Jim Knight - Respondent: Vince Gregorio

It was just amazing working with her. She was willing to give a lot of feedback, both positive and constructive, and help you do better. Coming in as a new teacher, not having a whole lot of clue what really needs to happen in a classroom, she helped out with that and tried to structure the classroom.

...**she was right away saying, we're going to get you set up, especially in the sentence writing,** that was one of the big things that she wanted to help out with right away. **She was right away, right there, to help out with that, and that made an easier transition ... It made a tremendous difference.** To help me with confidence and even Lynn's helping me not to be such a nice guy, and trying to get me to be more firm in the classroom. Obviously, the CHAMPS modeling, helped out with that. Just having her be there... the support she was, helped with the confidence, She brings in a formal approach to teaching, discipline.

...**In the tone of voice she uses, kind of the enthusiasm you need to put into it, all the way**

into the exact order things need to go, to how much repetition the kids can't handle. One thing I did appreciate was how she would involve the students, which she does a lot, how that would function, what her expectations were for the students to be able to function with that, answering, repeating, not just having the kids recall things, saying things back, repeating stuff. Actually, how to circulate the room, make sure you call on boys and girls evenly, and try to shift from one side of the room to the other, she really showed how to teach it as a complete lesson not just a strategy.

...Tremendous. The main thing to me is how to manage the classroom and how do you interact with the students. And that **turns it from just lecturing, or showing them a strategy to actually involving them or engaging them in the learning of the strategy, and having them actually use it.**

...She would let it happen, and then she would ask, well how about this, have you thought about any of this, what did you think about that? She even put in some self-reflection for me into it, as opposed to her just coming at me saying this is what you did wrong. She goes how did you feel about that then let me hear the suggestions. She gave us very constructive comments and here's something that you can think about doing, but it never felt like a put down. Just in general, not just with the coaching, the experience of the different trainings that I've been through have really tried to put that forth that this is a great model, but there's still room to put your own personal touch into that. She allowed for that. She also encouraged me, like a fellow teacher would, to still be firm, and not be such a nice guy in the classroom, which was a challenge for me.

... **I think this is just wonderful. Everything. I've used several of the strategies,** and she's been very good about modeling it, asking questions of me, and being there to say Vince, do you need any kind of input, do you need me to come in and watch your classroom, she's been very open. And it's really helped, I

Date: - November 24, 2004 Interviewer:Jim Knight Respondent - Jim Edmiston

To be honest, I cannot say enough about the help I've gotten from Lynn. It's just wonderful that we're able to have someone with her experience and her qualifications to come and assist us, especially us new teachers, it made the transition a lot easier, I would have to use that word, just easiness, it was real comfortable to have someone like her there to help us with getting accustomed to the school, and the differences we might have had in our prior experiences, or the stuff that we learned from the schoolhouse. It was just great to have her there.

...When it came to the graphic organizers, we sat down, she showed me some examples, explained to me how to create them, and then after we did that, she actually came into the classroom, and demonstrated how to use each one of the content enhancement devices, and then allowed me to do it while she observed, and then when we were done, we met, and went over some of the good and bad, and how to improve the bad and sustain the good, and after that she would periodically come in and make sure things were going appropriately, and we would meet occasionally just to create new devices, or if she had something else that could further enhance the quality of the devices and even some of the classroom management problems I was having at the time. We would even discuss those.

...I think having her there, short term and long term, it's gonna make me a better teacher.

...Lynn's got a very out-going personality. She's an awesome listener, and I think what helps us the most, she has uncanny knack to sense when something's not going the way we expected, and offer some suggestions. But the other thing is, she is just a tremendous resource to have there. Her problem-solving ability is great. The way that she can present

information to us, and assist us is outstanding. And as far as her knowledge base, it's hard to describe, because she understands a lot. ...

...I would hate to not have her available, just because she is someone that is available to me that I can go to with any problems that I have or say hey I tried this today, what do you think about it. You could get somebody else to do that job, but it's the person in that job that really makes the difference. And Lynn's that person.

Date: November 22, 2004- Interviewer: Jim Knight-Respondent: Linda Lake

... She's (Lynn) been a real support...I felt like a first year teacher. So Lynn came in and showed me a little about CHAMPS, which I thought was real helpful. Also her teaching style with the students was real helpful to me. Just being able to watch her model the way she teaches was good... she's very supportive in her role as a mentor.

...She's just such a comfortable person to be around...And then **when she came into the classroom, that's what helped me the most. I could see that these students could be managed, and not controlled, but managed.** And so it was that role right there that, she didn't realize it, it was just one hour. Since I've had some experience, **I know what to look for, and this is like a miracle...**

...I think you picked the right person to do this job, because she is smart, intelligent, with it, and also has a very kind heart, and is able to manage a tremendous work load, in my opinion. Not that I'm campaigning for her or anything, just seeing how busy she is and how well she manages what she does. So I don't have anything more to say. I liked her the moment I saw her... you can tell that she's just full of fun and very likeable. Whereas a person who may be more stiff and not as positive...It's something you infer about a person rather than knowing

them for sure.

Date: November 24, 2004-Interviewer: Jim Knight-Respondent: Paul Gronquist

...So what Lynn has done for me, first with the discipline thing, well first we talked about CHAMPS and how it worked, and if I wanted to try that. And I said yes, I'm desperate, lets try anything. And she came in and modeled that, in fact she came in to observe one day. And my class was their absolute worse, and she basically took over and said, okay we're going to change something here, and she modeled CHAMPS at that time. And it was amazing the turn around in that class for her. It was about 15-20 minutes, and all of sudden that class was just quiet and they were doing exactly what she wanted, and I was floored. And I was really impressed with what she did. I guess I would say Lynn has been kind of a lifesaver for me

... I think it was very important for her to come in and model it, I think the value of actually seeing it happen, is you get to see how it works, and see how she interacts with certain kids that are the real problems, and you can see how she handles those kids and the way, or if they make certain comments how that's handled.. It also instills confidence in myself. Whereas if we had just sat down and talked and said this is what we do, and it's like okay I understand that but seeing it in practice is a whole different thing

...And you know **I think her value to me has been immense. I probably would have sunk without her**

... it seems to me that Lynn's kind of got a special personality that helps her do this job well...She has an ability with the students, as coming across as very, very tough, yet I really care for you. She kind of has that same thing with the staff, I think, being very tough, but you need to

be tough with the kids or firm, yet she shows you that she cares about you too. She's very unique.

Date: November 24, 2004-11-24 Interviewer : Jim Knight - Respondent: Hannah Waldy

...(Lynn's) been a big help in the English classes... First of all, Lynn has always been really good about when can I meet. It's not that she gives me a time, it's that we work out a time that's acceptable for both of us. And this is helpful, right off the bat., My second hour is the first hour that I have English, so that's always been the hour that she's modeled error-monitoring, theme-writing and CHAMPS...So, she's been really good about coming in and watching me teach and then giving me feedback. And I've never felt like it's, her sitting back there, criticizing, it's always been very respectful and constructive and things that have actually helped. And it's been very helpful to watch her with that same class, because I've seen, oh okay, wow she gets that student to say something that's amazing. Or that student is sitting down for her, that's amazing...she didn't even blink an eye. ...And taught/modeled all the things, has checked in periodically but not to the point where I'm like, get off my back. But checks in to see how things are going, if I need anything, has come in other hours to kind of see how things are going...a really good balance between being supportive enough and not, so, just really good to work with.

... Well, part of it is just her personality. I mean I think it might be a difficult thing to duplicate or to, I don't know, to teach some else. Because part of it is just her reminding, like, **I remember the first time I saw her really do well with that second hour. And I told her that I was very frustrated, because I have not been able to do some of those things with them. And she would remind me how long she'd been teaching, and how difficult her first year**

was, and just some of the things that, well I'm sure you've seen her in action, but she doesn't put up with anything. And she's just, I don't know, very respectful. I never felt like I was being talked down to. **I always felt like we were equals, even though she's got experience out the wazoo.**

... I always feel like she's coming from a standpoint of really wanting to help the students learn and help the teacher be successful in the classroom,

And she's really good about being very understanding, and not judgmental

... But, **I have found that the material that she's brought in has been very helpful. And I think that the students have bought into it.**

...(Having Lynn) It's probably meant on a couple different levels, one thing is that, if I'm able to come into the classroom with materials that are already prepared, not that I would want everyday to be like that, but if I'm able to come in especially with a big topic like theme writing, I'm more likely to be more creative, to have more time to help individual students, it kind of frees me up, to be real honest. To be able to help them either when they struggle, or to see oh they really get this, let's move on.

Date: November 24, 2004-11-24-Interviewer:Jim Knight--Amber Sheritts

...anytime I have any questions, she's right there. We do the unit organizers...I'm 100% for them. if you've been taught them and taught them right and taught them how to use them, they're for them. This picks up the kids whose brain really does go in those little synopsis all of the place. I worked with that with her, And, my kids, like they're totally, they love it, I had three kids who wrote me thank you that said thank you, I finally understand how it connects.

She came in and modeled, and ... it was funny because I could see the look on the kids'

faces, like this is so not what you had us do. So I was like, okay, I'm learning too. And it was wonderful. Because she could bounce off math things to me that needed discussion as we did it, and I could bounce off the organizational stuff to her. they got the big picture. **I could never have gotten that if it hadn't been modeled for me. NEVER could have gotten it ...As a first year teacher to a new district, I can't begin to express how grateful I am to everything Lynn has done. She is the calm when there is a storm...** I can't sing the praises of this program and what it's done for us.

...and I asked the kids one day, what do you guys think of these? And they're like, we like them. And one of the kids said, math's hard for me, but I can do these, and I know I'm gonna get my points on this. And you know, that's right.

J: Now what would have happened if she hadn't been there?

A: I'd have failed miserably at it and given it up.

J: The unit organizer?

A: Or I'd have done it another unit, if it had gone as bad as I had tried to do it the first time I tried it on my own. I'd have never done it again. Because even when she said when would you like me, tell me when you're gonna do it this month, I thought okay. I'll do it if they make me do it, but I'm not gonna do it after this. Next week, if next year we don't have to do this, I'm not gonna do it, because I can't see any benefit to it. Because I didn't know how to use it.

J: Then when you saw her...

A: That was just like wow...when Lynn came in and coached me, it was like, I look for that the light on the kids faces, it was like oh my god the light just went on - I see this.