

Conclusion

Most teachers started with dreams of not just teaching kids who could be taught by anyone, but of being successful with students other teachers found too challenging. They would be able to motivate kids who never wanted to come to school before. They would be the teachers who would turn lethargic learners into animated ones. Their students would be amazed and proud of what they accomplished and learned.

Some teachers were lucky enough to be hired by the “Collaborative School,” where experienced and newly trained teachers taught each other, designed great lessons together, solved problems by creating interventions and enrichment opportunities, created engaging units of study and developed flexible ways of delivering instruction. These teachers probably came closer to realizing their dream of becoming master teachers each year they worked at this school.

Some teachers were hired by the “Isolation School,” where they were handed their textbooks, class rosters and expected to do their own thing. Many of these teachers have found that in the “Isolation School,” the following beliefs exist:

- Simply follow the texts and teach your favorite units. It’s too much work to go beyond doing what we have always done. It’s good enough.
- It’s more comfortable to blame the kids and their parents for not being motivated than it is to see our jobs as ones in which we create motivation.
- It’s easier to refer, label and jettison kids off to someone else’s class than to try to solve learning and behavior problems within our classes.
- It’s too time-consuming to plan and coordinate with other teachers. We have enough work of our own to do.

Meeting the needs of ALL students is exhausting and often frustrating work when teachers feel they are carrying the weight of the instructional world by themselves. Thoughts like these are not uncommon, even for good teachers who have not been surrounded by the strong support system of teams. Even in buildings where collaboration has been the norm, there will be staff members who are unaccustomed to thinking about using the professional resources around them to meet the needs of ALL students. The idea of accommodating and motivating every student may require shifts in thinking for some.

High-performing schools are not accidents, nor are they simply lucky enough to have hired the right teachers. High-performing schools are led by administrators with clear visions of what it takes to hit the mark of quality. They do not make or accept excuses for falling short; they develop a specific plan for making that vision a reality. These administrators know how to inspire people to accomplish things no one believed they were capable of doing. They help the faculty sort the important from the less important, rather than simply adding things to already “full plates.” They know when to direct, when to ask the hard-to-answer questions and when to get out of the way of people who are competent.

This book is designed to help administrators and faculties understand how the many complicated pieces of a high-performing school fit together. Trying to implement all the pieces at once may not be a solid plan for accomplishing a vision of quality. Taking steps to determine what is most critical for students is the logical starting place. The administrators must gauge the present capacity of the staff for change, and must determine the best ways for putting the essential elements into place. Often a three- to five-year plan makes the most sense.

As leaders, we know that focusing on a few things at a time increases the likelihood that true systemic change will occur. We also know that at the same time, we must carefully plan, and with input from staff, make decisions that will positively impact student achievement. Constantly reflecting on the needs and the growth of staff as standards-based instruction is implemented for all learners, not only results in professional development that is important, but staff that is empowered. Only when staff members work together to address the needs of all learners, can we call ourselves master administrators.



Glossary

“Access to the general curriculum” means providing an opportunity to learn the important content reflected in rigorous content standards. Access means different things for different students (Nolet and McLaughlin, 2000).

“Accommodations” are changes made in the way materials are presented or in the way students respond to the materials, as well as changes in setting, timing and scheduling, with the expectation that the student will reach the standard set for all students. (*Ohio’s Assessment System: Alternate Assessment for Students with Disabilities, 2003-2004, Administration Manual.*)

“Activity Bank” is a variety of activities designed to anticipate the diversity in any given class and enable all students to learn the skills and concepts of a given unit of study. These activities are designed to accommodate diverse styles, interests and levels of thinking

“Assessment” means the measuring of student achievement of performance goals and objectives. [*Operating Standards for Ohio’s Schools, Rule 3301-35-01(B)(1)*]

“Alternate Assessment” is an assessment designed for students with disabilities who are unable to participate in a regular assessment, even when accommodations are provided. (US DOE Non-Regulatory Draft Guidance, March 10, 2003)

“Authentic Assessment” allows teachers to see students’ thinking processes by challenging them beyond recall to application, refinement and reflection levels. These assessments should be designed so the target indicators can be clearly observed, but at a variety of sophistication levels and using several different styles. They can be designed as one task or a series of smaller related tasks that can be assessed in steps.

“Diagnostic Assessment” is a test designed to measure student comprehension of academic content standards and mastery of related skills for the relevant subject area at each grade, kindergarten through eighth. [Ohio Administrative Code 3301-51-01(A)(5)] Diagnostic assessments are administered to give teachers and parents detailed information as to the strengths and weaknesses of individual students. They provide teachers with important information for instructional planning. They also help identify students needing additional help meeting the content standards and preparing for the achievement tests. (*Ohio’s Academic Content Standards*)

“Formal Assessment” includes all types of standardized testing, as well as unit and teacher-made tests. (*Differentiated Instruction Practice Series, Video and Viewer’s Guide*, National Professional Resources, Inc., 2003)

“Formative Assessment” is analogous to “dip-sticking” – a simple check for growth along the way.

“Informal Assessment” incorporates observation, conferencing and various kinds of performance assessments such as reports, demonstrations and performance. (*Differentiated Instruction Practice Series, Video and Viewer’s Guide*, National Professional Resources, Inc., 2003)

“Summative Assessment” is a check to see if all the pieces are still there and are able to be applied and explained.

“Assessment Map” is an ongoing conversation among all faculty members who are charged with implementation of the standards for a given grade level or course about how the indicators will be clustered, focused and assessed. (See Chapter 1)

“Baseline Data” describes the starting point for instruction regarding a skill or behavior from which change can be measured.

“Backward Design” is the process of designing lessons by starting with the question, “What are the students going to be able to know and do by the time we are finished with this unit of study?” The teacher may start by planning the assessment or by listing the essential understandings, skills and concepts before deciding which activities and resources to use.

“Benchmark” means a specific statement of what all students should know and be able to do at a specified time in their schooling. Benchmarks are used to measure a student’s progress toward meeting the standard. (*Ohio’s Academic Content Standards*)

“Chunking” is a strategy for helping students see the relationships among the concepts and skills being taught. It also relates what is being taught to prior knowledge and experience of the student (e.g., mnemonic devices, charts, patterns and analogies).

“Consultant System” is a plan that arranges for two or more teachers to plan lessons together developing necessary accommodations to help all students be successful in meeting their goals. The teachers may implement these plans independently.

“Co-Teaching” is a strategy in which two or more teachers plan and work together jointly to meet the needs of all students. Generally, they deliver these plans as a team.

“Curriculum” means the way content is designed and delivered. (Ohio Department of Education, Center for Curriculum and Assessment, Office of Curriculum and Instruction)

“Curriculum Mapping” is the process developed by Heidi Hayes-Jacobs (1997) used by individual teachers to show how the content, skills and assessments will unfold over the course of a year. This differs from an assessment map in two ways:

1. It is a personal teaching plan rather than a group-developed one.
2. It shows where things will be *taught* rather than where indicators will be assessed by the group-developed assessment. The teaching and assessing maps may coincide for some teachers, but teachers are free to introduce and extend ideas beyond the assessment map agreements.

“Differentiated Instruction” is a process to approach teaching and learning for students of differing abilities in the same class. To differentiate instruction is to recognize students’ varying background knowledge, readiness, language, preferences in learning, interests and to react responsively. The intent of differentiating instruction is to maximize each student’s growth and individual success by meeting each student where he or she is, and assisting in the learning process. (National Center on Accessing the General Curriculum)

“Essential Understandings” are full-sentence statements that identify the insights students are to be able to explain and demonstrate by the end of a unit of study. They are timeless and cultureless “life lessons” or patterns of the discipline.

“Essential Questions” are engaging, deep questions that lead a student to the insight of the essential understanding for the unit of study.

“**General Curriculum**” refers to the curriculum that is used with nondisabled children. [34 CFR Appendix A to Part 300, Ohio Administrative Code 3301-51-01(S)] It is whatever the regular education students are learning. (*What a Great IDEA! Effective Practices for Children with Disabilities*, Conference Materials, 2000)

“**Grade-level Indicators**” are specific statements of knowledge that all students demonstrate at each grade level. These indicators serve as checkpoints that monitor progress toward the benchmarks. (*Ohio’s Academic Content Standards*)

“**Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA)**” is the successor of Public Law 94-142, the federal “special education” law. Reauthorized in 1997, it requires that students with disabilities be involved in and progress in the general education curriculum, with needed accommodations and modifications, with nondisabled peers to the greatest extent possible.

“**IMS**” is Ohio’s web-based Instructional Management System, the vehicle for communicating Ohio’s State Board-adopted model curricula aligned with the academic content standards.

“**Interventions**” are strategies designed to address specific learning problems as identified by diagnostic assessment data.

“**Intervention Assistance Team (IAT)**” is a team that engages in a process for designing a support plan to help teachers, parents and students who are attempting to solve student learning problems and other related issues. The process assembles the most powerful resources to develop a plan and then assesses and modifies the plan as needed.

“**Intervention Specialist**” is a special education teacher. *Ohio’s Teacher and Education Licensure Standards*, effective January 1998 (updated 2003), makes provision for intervention specialist licenses to be issued in the following areas: mild/moderate educational needs; moderate/intensive educational needs; hearing impaired; visually impaired; gifted, and early childhood. These licenses replace former special education certificates that were issued based on categories of disabilities.

“**Individual Education Program (IEP)**” is a written commitment on the part of the school for the provision of specific services to be delivered in order to meet an individual student’s needs.

“**KWL Charts**” are graphic organizers that ask the students to list:

1. What they already **Know** about the topic being discussed;
2. What they **Want** to know about the topic;
3. What they **Learned** about the topic after the lesson is completed.

Some teachers add an “H” to the list, making the organizer a KWHL chart. The “H” asks **How** the student intends to find the information in the “W” section.

“**Least Restrictive Environment (LRE)**” is the environment in which learners with disabilities can succeed, which is most similar to the environment in which nondisabled peers are educated. Students with disabilities are to be removed from the general education setting only when the nature and severity of their disability is such that education in that setting, with appropriate aids and services, cannot be achieved satisfactorily. (*Inclusion: A Service, Not A Place*, Alan Gartner and Dorothy Kerzner Lipsky, 2001)

“**Lesson Plans**” are used to guide instruction and focus on what is to be learned. Sample standards-based lesson plans are available on the IMS.

“**Learning Styles**” means how students access, process and express information most easily. The learning-style model developed by Rita and Ken Dunn classifies learning styles and learners as auditory learners, visual learners, tactile learners, kinesthetic learners and tactile/kinesthetic learners. (*Differentiated Instructional Strategies: One Size Doesn’t Fit All*, Gayle H. Gregory and Carolyn Chapman, 2001)

“Modeling” is a strategy that allows the student to see an example of how the desired learning can be demonstrated. Often the teacher verbalizes what questions and thinking processes an effective learner uses as he/she goes step-by-step through the learning process.

“Model Curriculum Program” means a non-binding, sample curriculum provided by the Ohio Department of Education that contains a scope and sequence of course objectives that are aligned with academic content and performance standards. [*Operating Standards for Ohio’s Schools, Rule 3301-35-01(B)(9)*]

“Modification” means change made to the content that students are expected to learn where amount or complexity of materials is significantly altered from grade-level curriculum expectations. (*Ohio’s Assessment System: Alternate Assessment for Students with Disabilities, 2003-2004, Administration Manual*)

“No Child Left Behind (NCLB)” is the legislation that holds educators accountable for the academic growth of every child.

“Ohio Graduation Tests (OGT)” are the achievement tests, aligned with academic content standards, designed to measure the level of skill expected at the end of the 10th grade in writing, reading, mathematics, social studies and science. [Ohio Administrative Code 3301-13-01(A)(11)] These tests will eventually replace the Ohio Ninth-Grade Proficiency Tests and ensure that students who receive a high school diploma demonstrate at least high school levels of achievement.

“Parallel Teaching” is a system where teachers are planning together and working together to meet student needs. In this system, the same indicators are being worked on in different groups and generally in different rooms. Student grouping is flexible and is shared among the partner teachers.

“Paraprofessionals” are instructional staff hired to support student learning, who do not necessarily hold a teaching certificate or license.

“Power Indicators” are the indicators that serve as the building blocks around which many other smaller indicators are easily clustered. These indicators lend themselves to authentic assessment and will most likely be included as important skills on the state achievement tests.

“Research-based Strategies” are teaching techniques backed by valid, scientifically-based research studies that have been proven to be effective.

“Rubrics” are scoring guides that provide a breakdown of the specific criteria the teacher intends to use to judge the quality of the work submitted. It often provides a descriptive scale for various levels of performance (e.g., beginner – sentences are short and have few sensory words; adequate – sentences vary in length and have several sensory words; advanced – sentences are a mix of simple, complex and compound and sensory words are plentiful and powerful). When given to students before the assignment, rubrics tend to focus students on the important aspects of learning.

“Standard” is a general statement of what all students should know and be able to do. (*Ohio’s Academic Content Standards*)

“Standards-based Education” is a process for planning, delivering, monitoring and improving academic programs in which clearly defined academic content standards provide the basis for content in instruction and assessment. In standards-based education, the standards help to ensure that students learn what is important, rather than allowing textbooks to dictate classroom practice. Student learning is the focus of standards-based education. Standards-based education aims for a high and deep level of student understanding that goes beyond traditional textbook-based or lesson-based instruction.

Although standards define individual skill, standards-based education does not promote a skill-by-skill methodology. Multiple standards can and should be integrated in instructional activities. (Ohio Department of Education, Instructional Management System)

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