An Action Guide for
Instructional Planning and Collegial Learning:
Effective Practices and the Common Core State Standards

November 2012

Preface

Teachers are accustomed to change. They are always open to more effective ways to teach, even while they know that many instructional practices stand the test of time. Teachers are always blending the best practices they have built through years of experience with new approaches that add to their effectiveness. Teachers are busy people. They want their students to succeed. Though they may not be professional researchers, they care about what works in the classroom. They glean what they can from new research and new methods. Teachers appreciate the knowledge of colleagues and savor opportunities to share. The practices in this guide are both current and time-tested. They seamlessly blend the new terminology and structures of Common Core State Standards with best instructional practice. This guide is most meaningful when applied by a group of teachers, bringing to it their own experiences and insights. So, pull-up a chair, and let's get started.

This Action Guide was written for teacher teams. The explanations are written in short, friendly format meant to encourage quick digestion, engaging discussion, and practical application. Framework examples are provided. This process is aligned to a list of effective practices that are time-tested and research-based. In addition, this guide is meant to assist teacher teams in the use of the Common Core State Standards.

The guide is divided into two parts. Part I: Instructional Planning establishes a framework for teachers working as a grade level or subject area team. In this process, teams assess and amend their current curriculum map and instructional practices based on the Indicators of Effective Practice. Additionally, they integrate the Common Core State Standards into their work. Part II: Collegial Learning promotes ongoing and systematic teamwork to continue the process, document collective planning, and measure and improve the results through observational support.

Instructional Planning by teacher teams ensures instructional alignment to standards that helps prepare students to succeed in college and careers. Team planning is a powerful form of embedded professional development in which teachers learn from each other and together. Team-based instructional planning goals:

1. Reduce the time necessary to put powerful teaching practices in place
2. Improve instructional planning and delivery with the Common Core Standards
3. Focus on effective practices
4. Meet the individual learning needs of each student in the classroom

Collegial Learning enables teachers to continue learning from one another, from the trials and errors of expanding their work, and from each student's story as they internalize the instructional methods that have been developed. Collegial learning contributes to the school's continuous improvement. Collegial learning will:

1. Keep the momentum for continuous planning moving and secure the teaming for future instructional planning
2. Ensure the quality of individual planning with collaborative documentation for the grade level and subject
3. Use an observation instrument for self-reflection and team support

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Part II: *Collegial Learning*

Indicators of Effective Practice

Planning

1. All teachers are guided by a document that aligns standards, curriculum, instruction, and assessment.
2. Units of instruction include specific learning activities aligned to objectives (learning statements).
3. All teachers develop weekly lesson plans based on aligned units of instruction.
4. All teachers individualize instruction based on pre-test results to provide support for some students and enhanced learning opportunities for others.

Instruction

5. All teachers use a variety of instructional modes (teacher-directed, whole class; student-directed group; teacher-directed group; independent work; computer-based; homework).
6. All teachers differentiate assignments (individualize instruction) in response to individual student performance on pre-tests and other methods of assessment.
7. All teachers maintain a record of each student's mastery of specific learning objectives (learning statements).

Interaction

8. All teachers interact instructionally with students (explaining, checking, giving feedback).
9. All teachers interact managerially with students (reinforcing rules, procedures).
10. All teachers interact socially with students (noticing and attending to an ill student, asking about the weekend, inquiring about the family).

Classroom Culture

11. All teachers maintain well-organized student learning materials in the classroom.
12. All teachers display classroom rules and procedures in the classroom.
13. All teachers correct students who do not follow classroom rules and procedures.
14. All teachers reinforce classroom rules and procedures by positively teaching them.
15. Students are engaged and on task.
16. When waiting for assistance from the teacher, students are occupied with curriculum-related activities provided by the teacher.

Communication with Parents

17. All teachers maintain a file of communication with parents.
18. All teachers systematically report to parents the student's mastery of specific standards-based objectives (learning statements).

Definition of Terms

Assessment: Represents a variety of means to measure student learning before, during and after instruction. Informative assessment helps the teacher adjust teaching strategies accordingly, and ensures that students work at appropriate levels of challenge to maximize learning.

Classroom Culture: The teacher's organization of the classroom environment (furniture, fixtures, and equipment); organization of learning materials; expectations for student behavior (rules and procedures); scheduling of Whole-Class Instruction and Work Time; and student responsibility for navigating the assigned learning activities.

Common Core State Standards: These standards define the knowledge and skills students should have within their K-12 education careers so that they will graduate from high school able to succeed in entry-level, credit-bearing academic college courses and in workforce training programs. CCSS for English Language Arts (ELA) content is designed and organized for the English Language Arts classroom and Literacy in History/Social Studies, Science and Technical subjects in a framework with framework terminology that includes sections, strands, anchor strands and grade-specific standards. CCSS for Mathematics is organized into domains, standards and clusters.

Communication with Parents: The teacher's communication with parents regarding student progress, behavior, accomplishments, and needs, including regular reporting of student mastery of standard and benchmark-aligned objectives.

Effective Practice: A teaching practice for which research evidence has demonstrated effectiveness in contributing to student learning outcomes.

Essential Questions: Focused questions developed by teachers to give meaning and connection to a unit of study. They serve to engage the students and give deeper meaning and purpose to what is taught and learned. They are broad in scope and aim at the big ideas in a unit of instruction.

Indicator of Effective Practice: Concrete, behavioral statement that provides one indication that an effective practice is being routinely exercised.

Instruction: The teacher's delivery of instruction in the classroom (including the instructional modes of teacher-directed whole-class instruction; teacher-directed small-group instruction; student-directed instruction; independent student work; and computer-based learning) and the extension of classroom instruction through homework.

Instructional Planning: Development of units of instruction, lesson plans, differentiated learning activities, and assessment methods by a team of teachers prior to the delivery of instruction.

Interaction: The teacher's interaction (academic, social, and managerial) with individual students and groups of students, as well as the teacher-orchestrated interactions among students.

Interdisciplinary Units: Units where integrated content, skills, thinking processes, and assessments are developed through exploring connections among many different disciplines. The Common Core State Standards encourage crossing disciplines of Literacy with History/Social Studies, Science, and Technical

subjects, increasing the range and content of student reading and significant time and effort assigned in writing toward college and career readiness.

Leveled Learning Statements:

- ***Target* learning statement** is derived from the standard and defined *at* grade level. It is stated in common words that are age-appropriate and includes an action that can be observed and evaluated. (Also known as, "I can" statement or essential learning statement.)
- ***Prerequisite* learning statement** (below grade level) assists students who require a building block to help reach the target level.
- ***Enhanced* learning statement** (above grade level) is written for students who show evidence of prior learning and mastery of the target learning statement.
- These leveled learning statements are named for instructional planning by teachers, alternative names or symbols may be used in the classroom to indicate the levels of work for students.

Modes of Instruction: Predetermined opportunities for learning, modes through which instruction is provided and students learn.

- ***Whole Class Instruction***: Introduction and review of learning material by the teacher through direct instruction to the whole class and aligned to the *target learning statement*.
- ***Student-Directed Group Learning***– students engage in cooperative activities based on the target learning statement in a unit of instruction, and arrive at a common end product
- ***Teacher-Directed Group Instruction*** – teacher-directed instruction to a small group of students determined by level or specific need that takes place during Work Time
- ***Computer-Based Learning*** – activities supported by technology accomplished during Work Time
- ***Independent Learning*** – traditionally known as "seatwork" where each student is engaged in work or activity assigned according to level of need during Work Time
- ***Homework*** – leveled work accomplished outside of the classroom

Personalized Instruction: Student-specific assignments completed in Independent, Computer-based, and Homework modes of instruction and assigned based on pre-test results and monitored level of achievement. These pre-planned activities align to the three levels of learning statements – *target*, *enhanced*, and *prerequisite*.

Pre- and Post-Test: A test or other assessment device, aligned with each *target learning statements*, and developed by the grade level/subject area teacher team in the Two-Week Plan. (*For further discussion, see Step 3 in the instructional planning framework.*)

Student Learning Outcomes: Evidence of student mastery of standards-aligned, grade-level learning statements.

Student Learning Plan: Typically a one week plan developed by the teacher indicating a student's specific assignments based on that student's assessed prior learning. Activities on the plan have been selected by teachers that share a common grade and/or subject.

Unit of Instruction: A sequence of lessons tied together with broad and bold essential questions. Each unit is aligned clearly to grade level standards, leveled learning statements, assignments and activities, with appropriate assessments that are determined to measure each student's level of mastery.

Work Time: Class time during which each student carries out learning activities assigned by the teacher, including teacher-directed groups, student-directed groups, independent work, and computer-based learning.

Part I: Instructional Planning

The instructional planning process in this action guide gives the team a framework that is sequential and succinct. It includes attention to the Common Core State Standards. This step-by-step approach is introduced below.

Step 1: Organize Instructional Units for the Year
Step 2: Align Units with Identified Standards
Step 3: Develop Two-Week Plan

The above steps are best accomplished by a team of teachers. And it is more fun.

Step 4: Create Daily Instruction Plans
Step 5: Personalize Learning Activities

Steps 4-5 can be completed by the individual teacher on an aligned Daily Instruction Plan. That's right, all of the instructional modes are there—whole-class instruction, student-directed groups, teacher-directed groups, independent work, computer-based, and homework. Each target learning statement and all instruction is neatly organized and identified efficiently on one page. The end goal is to have a differentiated and well-organized course of instruction created by the experts—the teachers!

In developing a standards-aligned Daily Instruction Plan, your quiver will be full of teaching and learning arrows, so to speak. Some will work better than others, so you will change or modify the ones that flub. Also, you may not actually use all the activities you have planned. But you will have plenty of choices so that you can meet the needs of each student.

Step 6: Manage Work time
Step 7: Record and Report Student Progress
Step 8: Use Student Learning Plans (*optional*)

Steps 6-8 are instrumental to the individual classroom environment. Each classroom is unique (K-12; different subjects), just as the classroom leader (teacher) is unique. While there are time-respected management procedures, each teacher needs to weigh possible strategies based on their teaching preferences, the age of their students, and the physical benefits and challenges that exist from classroom to classroom and from school to school. However, this guide suggests management strategies available for adaptation to many situations.

Maintaining organized and purposeful records is a task that makes this work manageable. Good recordkeeping is key to juggling instructional modes and leveled learning activities, and most importantly, ensuring that individual students are working at appropriate, challenging curricular assignments. Communicating the work of the student to their home is key to a strong and purposeful partnership with families, ensuring the best possible equation for school (and life) success. Using Student Learning Plans is a step beyond. Whether you choose to make this step (Step 8) may be optional, but definitely worth your consideration.

Step 1: Organize Instructional Units for One Year (or one semester for semester courses)

A unit of instruction is a sequence of lessons tied together. The essential questions give foundation to these linked lessons through big ideas that offer meaning and conceptual understanding. Instituting these questions throughout the unit of instruction links facts and skills to critical thinking and deeper thought. Lively discussions and new understanding of these questions connects to prior knowledge and personal experiences that opens the door of the classroom to other situations and subjects.

In some districts, a curriculum map or scope-and-sequence has already defined unit topics and clustered standards within them. If a current grade-level curriculum guide (or map) is available and answers the following questions, move ahead to Step 2. If, however, something is missing from the current document, complete that piece before taking the next step.

Clarifying questions:

1. What is the length of time of a unit of instruction for your subject and grade level?
2. What "theme" will you give each unit? Think of a catchy phrase or title that will be meaningful to your students.
3. What are the essential question(s) for the units? Essential questions should be written so that students are able to understand terminology in the question. The questions identified for a unit of instruction should be logically sequenced. The collaborative exercise among teacher team members to create essential questions will enrich the content of the unit.

Step 1: Instructional Units Worksheet

School: _____

Subject: _____ Grade Level: _____

Length of Class Period for this Subject: _____ Days Per Week: _____

1. What is the length of time of a unit of instruction for your subject and grade level? (typically 3 to 6 weeks or two per grading period)? _____

2. How many units in your school year (typically between 6 and 12) or for the semester for semester courses? _____

3. What are the titles or themes of your units and the essential questions? What are the Essential Questions?

   Unit 1

   Title or Theme:

   Essential Question 1:

   Essential Question 2:

   Essential Question 3:

Add additional units as needed.

Step 2: Align Units with Grade-Specific (or Course-Specific) Standards

Now that you have organized instructional units for a full year (or semester course), determine all grade-specific standards that will be incorporated in the *first unit* at this time. (This may include Common Core State Standards, individual state standards/benchmarks as may be determined by the team to fully complement the unit. Also, consider other interdisciplinary opportunities to maximize learning potential, standards application, and a more efficient use of time.)

If you are currently using a map or scope-and-sequence that is fully aligned with grade-specific standards, you may choose to move ahead to Step 3. However, if you haven't accessed the Common Core State Standards before now, this is an excellent opportunity to become familiar and integrate or include with your work.

A word about Common Core State Standards

The Common Core State Standards have been built from the best and highest state standards in the country. English-language arts and math are the first subjects defined by these standards since these subjects represent skills which other subjects' area skill sets are built on. They were developed in consultation with specialists, teachers, and parents across the country. They include rigorous content and application of knowledge through high-order skills. They were designed to ensure that students, regardless of where they live, will be prepared with the knowledge and skills they need to succeed in college and the modern work force. If you need assistance in translating terminology fundamental to interpreting the CCSS, please see our Additional Resource section. For more information and the list of standards, go to: http://www.corestandards.org .

Clarifying questions:

1. Which grade-specific standards* will be highlighted in this unit?
2. How can you maximize teaching and learning potential by integrating subject areas and content standards to create interdisciplinary units?

*In the Common Core State Standards each "grade-specific standard" corresponds to the same-numbered College and Career Readiness (CCR) anchor standard that is identical across all grades and content areas. Put another way, each CCR anchor standard has an accompanying grade-specific standard translating the broader CCR statement into grade-appropriate end-of-year expectations.

Step 2: Align Units with Grade-Level Standards

Which grade-specific standards will you address for the identified units? As a team, begin this process by fully identifying one unit. Future opportunities to work together will allow the team to complete the other units.

Unit Title or Theme:

Essential Question 1:

Essential Question 2:

Essential Question 3:

Standard Code	Short Descriptor of Standard (2 to 5 words)
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

Continue with additional units as needed.

Step 3: Develop Two-Week Plan

Whether you teach to your specific state standards and benchmarks, or are transitioning to the Common Core State Standards, a framework for cohesive and rigorous content is the foundation for sound instruction. If you currently have a curriculum map, do you use it? Who developed it? How often do you review it? That may be a good place to start. If you do not have one or it is not current, with careful planning you can develop one. Remember that you will certainly incorporate a standard in more than one instructional block, and you may also cycle back through standards and target learning statements you have previously addressed. But first, let's get a plan.

Instructions for the Two-Week Plan Worksheet

1. Translating the standard into the *target learning statement* is a critical exercise to establish clear performance by students. Determine if the standard is too broad for one target learning statement, and if it should be divided and represented by more than one target learning statement. Include the appropriate verb (observable behavior) as indicated in the standard as well as specific criteria for demonstrating success to that standard. It may also be helpful defining the statements by referring to Bloom's Taxonomy of thinking skills, (Remembering, Understanding, Applying, Analyzing, Evaluating, Creating). Both "Applying" and "Analyzing" are a good rule of thumb for the target level. See http://www.odu.edu/educ/roverbau/Bloom/bloomstaxonomy.htm for additional information in the updated Bloom's Taxonomy.
2. Assessments are executed in a variety of ways. Much is determined by the subject and grade level and how the results will be used. The pre-test, as suggested in this process, is diagnostic and gives the teacher information for personalizing instruction. The post-test is considered summative for the unit, provides a score or grade while possibly signaling a re-teach to some students, or a return to the standard later to benefit all students. Within the classroom, formative assessment provides many opportunities to inform both teacher and student through the various modes of instruction. There will be more about those modes as we move to later steps. Good teaching and learning is served with a variety of classroom assessments. And, they are performed through an assortment of applications. You will use the same or very similar items for a post-test at the end of the last class session in this unit, just before the pre-test for the next unit.

   Prepare or identify the actual pre-test/post-test on the Two-Week Plan form below. On that form, be sure to identify the measurable outcome for each target determined by the Teacher Team that indicates the conditions and level of accuracy as evidence of mastery, (examples: 4/5; 80%). Determining this as a team ensures that all students in all grade level or same subject area classrooms are being measured by the same criterion.

3. For each target learning statement, write a *prerequisite* statement for students who are not quite ready for the target (grade level). Write these statements consistent with the "Remembering" or "Understanding" level of Bloom's Taxonomy or refer to the standard of the previous grade.

   The goal is not to create a static group of prerequisite learners. Remember, we are always working to have *all* students reach the target level, at least. Ongoing monitoring of each student's work

through a variety of instructional modes is meant to move students forward as soon as they are ready.

4. For each target statement, write an *enhanced* learning statement for students showing evidence of prior learning. You may consider the standard identified for a grade level above, or the "Evaluating" or "Creating" level of Bloom's Taxonomy to help identify the appropriate work for this statement.

Clarifying questions:

1. Are leveled learning statements stated in "student-friendly" language? Will you rename the prerequisite and enhanced statements for classroom acceptability? Begin to consider how those levels might be best represented based on age of students, subject matter, symbolic visibility for simplicity.
2. What is the best pre-test for assessing student's prior knowledge for each target learning statement? Is an informal, observable assessment (i.e., KWL) best? Or does that standard (statement) need something more contextual, paper-pencil assessment? How is the post-test designed to ensure testing congruency?

So far, so good. After completing the Worksheet, you will have a system with standards-aligned, leveled learning statements for the unit of instruction and assessments defined to measure evidence of achievement. Now that's thorough! The pre-test results will help you personalize instruction. The post-test confirms what students have mastered at the unit's end.

Step 3: Two-Week Plan Worksheet. Using the district-provided, or self-defined curriculum map, a teacher team is set to define that map through each unit's set of learning statements. Each ***target level statement*** should be stated in student and parent friendly terminology that includes an action that is observable and can be measured for mastery. Identifying the pre/post-test items aligned to that objective ensures well-defined instruction. Lastly, the team identifies learning statements at the ***prerequisite*** and ***enhanced*** levels. Referring to the CCSS strands (i.e. K-2; 6-8) and/or individual state standard benchmarks (grade above or below) will assist in this task.

Two-Week Plan

School: **Teacher:** **Subject:** **Grade/Class Level:**
Date of First Class Day in this Unit: **Date of Last Class Day in this Unit**: **Class sessions during this unit**:
Theme: **Essential questions:**

Standard ***Brief Descriptor***	**Leveled Learning Statements**	**Pre- and Post-Test Items** **(for Target Learning Statement Only)**
	Target: Prerequisite: Enhanced:	
	Target: Prerequisite: Enhanced:	
	Target: Prerequisite: Enhanced:	
	Target: Prerequisite: Enhanced:	
	Target: Prerequisite: Enhanced:	
	Target: Prerequisite: Enhanced:	

Standard ***Brief Descriptor***	**Leveled Learning Statements**	**Pre- and Post-Test Items** **(for Target Learning Statement Only)**
	Target: Prerequisite: Enhanced:	
	Target: Prerequisite: Enhanced:	
	Target: Prerequisite: Enhanced:	
	Target: Prerequisite: Enhanced:	
	Target: Prerequisite: Enhanced:	
	Target: Prerequisite: Enhanced:	
	Target: Prerequisite: Enhanced:	
	Target: Prerequisite: Enhanced:	

Indicators of Effective Practice:

1. **All teachers are guided by a document that aligns standards, curriculum, instruction, and assessment.**

Step 4: Daily Instruction Plans---Preview and sample plan

Whew! A big job has been accomplished. Aligning subject- and grade-level curriculum to standards and identifying an appropriate assessment for each named *target learning statement*. You have created the opportunity to meet that "target" with a *prerequisite* learning statement, as needed, to move students forward who need challenge and aligned expectation with an *enhanced* learning statement. Preparation is well-laid for the classroom. As a team, you are on your way in the creation of solid and challenging instruction for each of your students.

Take a look at the *Daily Instruction Plan* sample, (next page). What might you already have that can be plugged into this lesson plan and aligns to target learning statements cited in the team's Two-Week Plan? Often, teachers have already used successful instructional strategies and activities that align to grade-level learning statements. Working together is beneficial in so many ways. The richness of your individual experiences and expertise benefits all team members.

How much time do you have as a team to step to the next phase of instructional planning? What is the next step? The one after that? And after that? Again, how much time do you have…now? If team time is very limited perhaps going it alone, veering away from the teamwork for awhile, is best.

The Daily Instruction Plan allows the individual teacher to use the successful strategies and activities aligned to a target statement, and plug them in "on the go". At Step 4, we suggest you begin with the development of whole-class, teacher-directed instruction, a time-honored strategy, done well. The framework for proven strategies is suggested within the context—Behavior Check, Review, Think, Know, Show.

You may want to reserve team time to continue aligning objectives to standards and assessments for the year. When that is completed, begin to consolidate your independent plans into collaborative plans for your grade level or subject area. Efficient use of time. The results can be the same—rich, well-planned instruction.

An alternative route

Of course there are other ways to accomplish the tasks that promise full and leveled instruction in any single classroom. Don't want to go it alone? But still don't have the kind of team time to go step-by- step? Determine an alternative route. Perhaps those tech-savvy teammates take charge of identifying the best computer-based instruction for the leveled learning statements—and plug them into the framework. And maybe there is one or more on the team that already does highly successful student-directed (cooperative) group learning in the classroom. Independent work and homework might be areas that other team members take on, and whole-class instruction is determined by individual teachers. Before the scheduled date that the unit begins, the team pulls all of the assigned elements together and proceeds to documenting the collaborative results. There. A lot accomplished in efficient use of individual and team time. The choices are endless. Whatever the direction your team determines, first examine the rest of this action guide to see what work lies ahead.

Daily Instruction Plan (Sample)

Subject: _____ Grade/Class Level: _____ Unit/Theme: _____ Week:_____
Standard(s): _____ Essential Question(s): _____

Student Directed
Topic:

Goal:

Independent
Target:

Enhanced:

Prerequisite:

Central Purpose: (Brief Descriptor)

Whole Class Direct Instruction
Review:
Think:

Know:

Show:

Computer-based
Target:

Enhanced:

Prerequisite:

Small groups will meet for teacher- directed instruction, as needed.

Homework

Target:

Enhanced:

Prerequisite:

Behavior Check: (*This generally remains constant for all Daily Instruction Plans*).

Classroom rules/procedures: (*This generally remains constant for all Daily Instruction Plans*).

Teacher: _____ **Pre-test (date): _____**

Date: _____ **Post-test (date): _____**

Step 4: Daily Instruction Plans---Whole-Class and Small-Group, Teacher-Directed instruction

The teacher directly teaches a lesson, sometimes with the whole class and sometimes with small groups of students assembled because they are at a common level of learning or need additional instruction on a particular topic. Often, and according to subject and students, information provided to the whole class may be short to engage prior knowledge, motivate, and activate students thinking around the main points of the lesson.

After conducting the pre-test, you will be ready to introduce the new material. The Whole-Class Instruction Plan outlines the lesson you will provide. First, think of each class period for this subject as divided into two segments: Whole-Class Instruction and Work Time. In Whole-Class Instruction, you deliver the lesson for the day. Then, in Work Time, the students carry out the assignments you will give them for independent work, student-directed group work, and computer-based learning. Teacher-directed small group instruction also occurs during Work Time. Work Time extends beyond the class period with homework assignments.

In early grades, Whole-Class Instruction may be only 10 or 15 minutes, with the majority of the class period given to Work Time. Follow-up or re-teaching to a small group of students may be required. Work Time offers the opportunity for the teacher to instruct small groups for more focused or leveled instruction while other students are engaged with student-directed small groups, independent work, or computer-based learning. In upper grades and high school, Whole-Class Instruction will usually be longer. We will discuss Work Time in greater detail later.

On the Whole-Class Instruction segment of the lesson plan below (*shaded area*), jot notes to yourself to guide you in providing the lesson. You may reference advance organizers, questions to ask, topics to introduce, models and materials to show, times to "think out loud." While there is not a Teacher-directed small group planning area included on the Daily Instruction Plan, the same or some of the strategies as suggested for Whole Class could be used during that direct instruction. Often the teacher will lead the small group less formally, and possibly on-the-fly. It is included as a general statement of use on the Daily Instruction Plan.

***Quick* Directions for Completing the Whole-Class Instruction Plan**

Central Purpose of Lesson: Consider your target learning statement.

Behavior Check: To set the psychological climate in the classroom; cue students to focus in; reinforce attentive behaviors. Be sure homework has been collected. A behavior check may be repeated later in the class time to reinforce engaged learning.

Review: To connect prior learning with new learning, briefly review the previous lesson as a bridge to the new lesson.

Think: To introduce a new lesson; continue activating prior knowledge; stimulate student cognition relative to the topic through cues, advance organizers, question sprinkling, stimulate interest in the topic.

Know: To directly teach the new skills or concepts through lecture, demonstration, modeling.

Show: To find out what students have learned and to rehearse their learning through verbal drills, recitations, discussion, quiz games.

Divide the time for each part of the whole-class lesson roughly as follows:

Behavior Check: A minute or two
Review: About 20% of the time. Review connects this lesson to the previous one and to students' prior knowledge.
Think and Know: About 60% of the time. This is the presentation of the new material, concepts.
Show: About 20% of the time. This is the summary segment and time to check if it is sinking in.

Now you are itching to teach these lessons! Whole-Class Instruction is magical time for a teacher and students, all learning together. Remember to do some "thinking out loud" to build students' meta-cognitive skill.

Note: Remember, we are only focusing on the Whole Class Instruction lesson at this time (shaded area). We will get to the other modes of instruction for completion of the Daily Instruction Plan in subsequent steps.

Step 4: Daily Instruction Plan – Whole Class Instruction

Subject: _____ Grade/Class Level: _____ Unit/Theme: _____ Week: _____
Standard(s): _____ Essential Question(s):_____

To be completed later.

To be completed later.	**Central Purpose: (Brief Descriptor)** **Whole Class Direct Instruction** ***Review:*** ***Think:*** ***Know:*** ***Show:***	To be completed later.

Small groups will meet for teacher-directed instruction, as needed.

To be completed later.

Behavior Check: (*This generally remains constant for all Daily Instruction Plans*).

Classroom rules/procedures: (*This generally remains constant for all Daily Instruction Plans*).

Teacher: _____ **Pre-test (date): _____**
Date: _____ **Post-test (date): _____**

Step 4: Daily Instruction Plans ---Student-Directed Group

In a Student-Directed Group, the teacher provides the group of students with instructions, and the group does the work. It is a good idea to establish group norms with your students for all of your Student-Directed Groups. These norms might be:

1. Name a group leader for this session.
2. Group leader reads the instructions to the group. [For non-reading age groups, the teacher does this.]
3. Think about the end goal or product you are to complete.
4. Be sure everyone participates.
5. Always be respectful of each other.
6. When the group's goal is met, go to your independent work if time permits.

The teacher's instructions include the topic and goal, to get started. The topic is related to the target learning statement. The goal is what the group is to achieve, together. It is a good idea for the goal to be a work product, such as a drawing or paragraph summary of the group's conclusions. However, there should be individual accountability determined for completion of the goal. Optimum work and habits are reinforced by the teacher that monitors the progress while offering guidance, corrections and coaching.

What are some things to consider when grouping students for cooperative learning?

1. The research suggests a group size of 2 to 5 students, depending upon the complexity of the task presented and the age of your students. It is wise to work with small groups when students are first practicing the collaborative process.
2. The nature of the task itself will often determine group size, but in general, the larger the group, the more skillful group members must be in positive interaction, fulfilling individual role assignments, and keeping on task toward goal achievement.
3. The shorter the time available for a task, the smaller the group should be.
4. Generally, the research recommends heterogeneous groupings of high-medium-low ability students, though there may be exceptions for certain kinds of tasks.
5. Teacher-designed groups create optimum conditions for long or complex tasks. Random groupings by means of such methods as "counting-off" may provide a good mix of students for short-term or easier projects.

What kinds of roles should be assigned to students in groups?

1. **Supplier**: Gets materials and supplies for the group.
2. **Reporter**: Reports to the class for the group.
3. **Recorder**: Writes down what the group does, completes the written part of the task or activity, and records the group's response during reflection time.
4. **Encourager**: Gives group members praise for the participation and collaboration on the group task or activity.
5. **Reader**: Reads directions, problems, and resource materials to all group members.
6. **Checker**: Checks for group members' comprehension of material to be learned or discussed.
7. **Timekeeper**: Keeps the group on task and gives time prompts so the group will complete their task on time.
8. **Artist**: Produces all the artwork.

Step 4: Daily Instruction Plan – Student-Directed Groups

Subject: _____ Grade/Class Level: _____ Unit/Theme: _____ Wee: _____
Standard(s): _____ Essential Question(s): _____

Student Directed
Topic:

Goal:

To be completed later.

Central Purpose: (Brief Descriptor)

Whole Class Direct Instruction
Review:
Think:

Know:

Show:

To be completed later.

Small groups will meet for teacher-directed instruction, as needed.

To be completed later.

Behavior Check: (*This generally remains constant for all Daily Instruction Plans*).

Classroom rules/procedures: (*This generally remains constant for all Daily Instruction Plans*).

Teacher: _____ **Pre-test (date): _____**

Date: _____ **Post-test (date): _____**

Step 5: Daily Instruction Plan---a word about Personalized Learning Activities

The modes of instruction during Work Time are: Independent, Teacher-Directed Group, Student-Directed Group, and Computer-Based learning. The planning for Teacher-Directed and Student-Directed have already been addressed. Now picture this in your mind. You may have a small group of students in a Teacher-Directed Group, where you are working with them to reinforce the Whole-Class lesson or hone in on a particular *leveled* learning statement. Teacher-Directed Groups are homogeneous, meaning that you select a group of students at a similar interest or level based on assessment of their work. While you are conducting your Teacher-Directed Group, another group or two of students may be clustered in a Student-Directed Group. This group is heterogeneous, and cooperative learning techniques are ideal here. At the same time the groups are engaged in their work, some students may be at the computers and others at their desks doing Independent work. Everyone is engaged.

We want each student to have the opportunity to be exposed to materials and learning experiences through grade-level curriculum and instruction strengthened by teacher groundwork. We also want each student to be able to soar ahead if ready. So we *personalize* instruction during *Work Time*. Work Time also builds the student's responsibility for learning.

Remember the leveled learning statements: *Target*, *Enhanced*, *Prerequisite*? Now if you plan Work Time activities for each level and for the different instruction modes, you will be ready to identify specific instruction for each student. In the classroom culture, these learning statement *terms* (Target, Enhanced, Prerequiste) should be changed so as not to let students see themselves in categories. Using symbols, pictures, or some other sign eliminates possible labeling or sensitivities students may experience. And the symbols can be changed from time to time. The terms are used in the guide only for the purpose of bringing clarity to the levels when planning. The pre-test gives you information for deciding which activities are most appropriate for individual students. And the opportunities are available for moving students to a higher level when they show evidence of mastery in one of the aligned activities. The Work Time activities follow the lessons you have outlined in the Whole-Class Instruction Plan, but may circle back to cover previous material later, and as needed to help students to be challenged, and successful.

Got that pictured in your mind? An active classroom culture is buzzing. Seems like a lot of activity for one classroom, doesn't it? Not to worry. We'll focus on management of this active teaching and learning time at the next step. But let's get back to some more quality planning.

Activities or assignments are personalized for homework, too, of course. More about that later.

Step 5: Daily Instruction Plan---Independent Work and Computer-Based Learning

Now it is time for planning a variety of learning experiences through the additional Work Time modes of instruction. The best way to personalize is to provide student-specific assignments aligned with that student's current level of achievement and the leveled learning statements. So Carla might be working on an activity for a ***target*** learning statement, while Juan works on an ***enhanced*** learning statement, and Jimmy works on a ***prerequisite*** learning statement. The teacher shouldn't lock a student into a "track," but nimbly adjust the student's assignments as the student shows mastery relative to each target learning statement.

Because we are personalizing the instruction, we show respect for the readiness level of *each* individual student. That respect is based on the belief that all students are expected to grow, and their individual growth will be supported. In addition, due to the careful planning of instruction, all student tasks look—and are—engaging, interesting and important. That is the message that gives strength to a classroom, and success for all students.

The teacher might write each day's Independent and Computer-Based Learning assignments on the board, with a different assignment for each group. Or, the teacher might provide a weekly assignment sheet that is distributed to students. Another way to do this is to place the three assignment sheets at a center or work station, and when a student goes to that center or work station, the student chooses the assignment according to his or her group for the week. The computers would be considered centers or work stations, if Computer-Based Instruction is used. Regardless of the method you use, keep the age or grade level of the student in mind.

If you use assignment sheets, one assignment sheet is for each of your three groups for the week—***target, enhanced, prerequisite***. Remember, these terms are primarily for the purpose of teachers in planning. Hence, you may choose to use some more colorful designation for each group (i.e. shapes, pictures, or symbols specific to your classroom or subject) in the classroom. As stated earlier, using the terms target, above target, and below target with students should be avoided.

Independent Work and Computer-Based Learning

Now let's create the learning activities for Independent Work and Computer-Based Learning for this two-week block. If you don't use Computer-Based Learning, then just create activities for Independent Work. Later we will add Homework to complete the three modes of personalized instruction: Independent Work, Computer-Based Learning, and Homework.

Remember that students may complete their Independent Work and Computer-Based Learning at different rates. Also, the learning activities do not have to be completed in a day. You may give assignments that will take most students several days to complete, or even the entire two-week block. If you expect a learning activity to take more than a day, it is a good idea to give the students a deadline for its completion, even knowing that some students will complete it well before the deadline and will move on to the next activity. Students will learn to manage their time to get things done, and that is a great lesson in responsibility for learning. Clear directions, and concise procedures for accomplishing tasks, will lay the ground and set the classroom for on-task learners.

You have aligned your learning statements to standards. You have pre-tests and post-tests. You have an outline for your Whole-Class Instruction and Student-Directed Group activities, and you have prepared personalized Independent Work and Computer-Based Learning by identifying activities that complement the readiness of

students in the three different levels. These alternative activities allow you, the teacher, to be flexible and accurate in the instruction of each student. Careful monitoring along with fluid application of the options will help each student meet the target, and often, go beyond. The variety of modes help “scaffold” the instruction, and allow you the teacher to bridge student learning, as needed. Just remember Jimmy (up above in the first paragraph) may start at the ***prerequisite*** level based on his pre-test results, but wanting all students to reach ***target*** level, these different learning modes should each give him the opportunity to show understanding and move forward with more challenging work.

What will you be doing this time next year? Oh, yes, tweaking your plans.

Step 5: Daily Instruction Plan – Independent Work and Computer-Based Learning

Subject: _____ Grade/Class Level: _____ Unit/Theme: _____ Week: _____
Standard(s): _____ Essential Question(s):_____

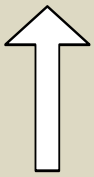
Student Directed
Topic:

Goal:

Independent
Target:

Enhanced:

Prerequiste:



Name the activity or assignment each level must accomplish during Work Time.

Central Purpose: (Brief Descriptor)

Whole Class Direct Instruction
Review:
Think:

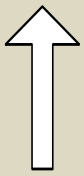
Know:

Show:

Computer-based
Target:

Enhanced:

Prerequisite:



Name the activity each level must accomplish during Work Time.

Small groups will meet for teacher-directed instruction, as needed.

To be completed later.

Behavior Check: (*This generally remains constant for all Daily Instruction Plans*).

Classroom rules/procedures: (*This generally remains constant for all Daily Instruction Plans*).

Teacher: _____ **Pre-test (date): _____**
Date:_____ **Post-test (date): _____**

Step 5: Daily Instruction Plan---Homework

Learning doesn't end with the school day. Darn it. Homework is a great way to practice lessons, master learning statements, and exercise self-directed learning. Homework builds independent study habits. We suggest that a student should do about 10 minutes of homework each night for each grade level, at least four nights a week. In other words, a first-grader would have 10 minutes of homework and an eighth-grader would have 80 minutes of homework. Ah, the poor 12th grader—closer to college and the real world, it seems. But this is for all subjects, from all teachers. This is a guideline that steadily builds homework habits over time. Keep in mind that as you develop leveled homework assignments, the student will be getting assignments for other subjects, and perhaps from other teachers.

Homework should be personalized, so that it is appropriate to each student's current level of achievement of the learning statements. Completing the Homework Plan on the following page is the last step in this instructional planning.

Homework assignments, like the leveled assignments for Independent Work and Computer-Based Learning, can be written in a designated public place (i.e. board, white board, etc.) each day or given to students on assignment sheets along with their Independent Work and Computer-Based Learning. One assignment sheet for each of your three groups for the week—***target***, ***enhanced***, and ***prerequisite***, and as indicated previously, you may choose to use symbols or some more colorful designation for each group.

Lots of planning. But the payoff is in the classroom, and for you and your students. Job well done. You will have a complete Instructional Plan in no time.

Step 5: Daily Instruction Plan – Homework

Subject: _____ Grade/Class Level: _____ Unit/Theme: _____ Week: _____

Standard(s): _____ Essential Question(s): _____

Student Directed

Topic:

Goal:

Independent

Target:

Enhanced:

Prerequisite:

Central Purpose: (Brief Descriptor)

Whole Class Direct Instruction

Review:

Think:

Know:

Show:

Computer-based

Target:

Enhanced:

Prerequisite:

Small groups will meet for teacher-directed instruction, as needed.

Homework

Target:

Enhanced:

Prerequisite:

Behavior Check: (*This generally remains constant for all Daily Instruction Plans*).

Classroom rules/procedures: (*This generally remains constant for all Daily Instruction Plans*).

Teacher: _____ Pre-test (date): _____

Date: _____ Post-test (date): _____

With this step, the lesson planning process has been completed, and the following "Planning" *Indicators of Effective Practice* has been accomplished:

1. Units of instruction include specific learning activities aligned to objectives.
2. All teachers develop weekly lesson plans based on aligned units of instruction.
3. All teachers develop weekly lesson plans based on aligned units of instruction.
4. All teachers (*have the plans to easily*) individualize instruction based on pre-test results to provide support for some students and enhanced learning opportunities for others.

Additionally, personalized instruction is confirmed with the following "Instruction" *Indicators of Effective Practice* implemented:

5. All teachers use a variety of instructional modes (teacher-directed, whole class; student-directed group; teacher-directed group; independent work; computer-based; homework).
6. All teachers differentiate assignments (individualize instruction) in response to individual student performance on pre-tests and other methods of assessment.

Now, let's put it to work in the classroom. What does all of this planning actually look like with so much teaching and learning going on…at once. How can it be done? You definitely don't want to miss Step 6!

Step 6: Manage Work Time

Do you like your students to assume responsibility for their learning? Do you believe that they benefit from the practice of self-management? Do you think a classroom that has strong procedural management promises greater opportunity for learning?

During Work Time students are engaged in different activities simultaneously. There is lots of movement in the room. Certainly, a teacher's "withitness" is important all of the time, but crucial in Work Time. Connecting positively with each student and helping them to self-manage is vital during Work Time. The physical environment of the classroom is also important. Well-marked areas of the room and organized learning materials help students navigate their learning environment.

We will assume that you can determine your Teacher-Directed Group activities each day as you decide to cluster a group of students for a particular purpose to reinforce the lesson or address a specific need for moving the group of students forward in their assigned work. Student-Directed Groups work effectively with clear directions, and assigned roles. In Independent Work and Computer-Based Learning students are working on leveled activities in different modes throughout the classroom. In between teaching moments the teacher moves through the classroom, monitoring and responding to questions. Maintaining the working order in this culture requires some clear and very distinct management skills. Guidelines that are established and practiced by teachers and students collectively, ensures greater positive outcomes and classroom management cohesion. Following are several strategies that you might want to consider to help manage a successful Work Time in your classroom.

Teacher calls are signals by the student to show that assistance is needed. The traditional classroom signal of raising a hand is appropriate during whole class instruction, but not during Work Time when the teacher is likely to be teaching a small group of students, or working with an individual. "Flags" that indicate the student needs teacher assistance are located where students are on task in learning activities (i.e. student desk, computer station, student-directed groups).

Wait-time activities are curriculum-related activities that students can do while waiting for teacher assistance. Combined with the teacher call, they eliminate "down-time" that can lead to discipline problems, may provide additional practice of skills for learning, and promotes a habit of student self-responsibility.

Student folders are an effective organizational tool similar to a class notebook where necessary learning materials are kept, and accessed. Wait time activities may be included in the student folder. The student folder can represent another conduit of communication between school and home.

Posted rules and procedures serve to remind students of the expectations for accessing learning materials and activities, and applying appropriate behavior in the Work Time segment of class. When proper procedures are practiced and learned, student classroom behavior becomes ***routine***, and guarantees the well-managed classroom where important work takes place. The instructions for accomplishing an activity might be posted for students' self-direction, as well.

Leveled Learning Plan Take a look at the example on the following page. Look familiar? Looks a lot like the Daily Instruction Plan framework, right? Previously, "three assignment sheets at a center or a work station" was suggested. Well, here's the tool that students can refer to, based on the "level" you have assigned them. Yes, they can be posted at the computer station or learning centers. Three levels…three sheets of paper…easy access. And only the work or activities are written down. That is what students need to know. For the youngest students, or non-readers, symbols and pictures can be used, and matched to the appropriate learning materials for them to access. On the backside, or as a second page, the targeted learning statements, standards, and essential questions for the plan can be listed. This is a great tool for helping students become more responsible for their learning and self-management. Giving you more time to teach.

Step 6: Leveled Learning Plan

Subject: _____ Grade/Class Level: _____ Unit/Theme: _____

Teacher: _____ **Pre-test (date): _____**

Week: _____ **Post-test (date): _____**

Student Directed

Target 1
Topic:
Goal:
Target 2
Topic:
Goal:
Target 3

Target 4
Topic:
Goal:
Target 5
Topic:
Goal:

Independent : *Target*

*Statement 1 – *activity or assignment*
*Statement 2– *activity or assignment*
*Statement 3– *activity or assignment*
*Statement 4– *activity or assignment*
*Statement 5– *activity or assignment*

*Teacher may choose to name Day 1, Day 2, etc.

Computer-based: *Target*

*Statement 1 – *activity or assignment*
*Statement 2 – *activity or assignment*
*Statement 3– *activity or assignment*
*Statement 4– *activity or assignment*
*Statement 5– *activity or assignment*

*Teacher may choose to name Day 1, Day 2, etc.

Homework : *Target*

*Statement 1– *activity or assignment*
*Statement 2– *activity or assignment*
*Statement 3– *activity or assignment*
*Statement 4– *activity or assignment*
*Statement 5– *activity or assignment*

Reverse side of Learning Plan, or can be separate and alongside wherever displayed.

Unit Name:

Target Learning Statements

Statement 1:

Standard:

Statement 2:

Standard:

Statement 3:

Standard:

Statement 4:

Standard:

Statement 5:

Standard:

Statement 6:

Standard:

Essential questions for the unit:

-

What do you think? There are other ways you can use this tool. How about on the classroom website? Now that's easy. Posted at the front of the classroom for the week…that works. Students absent for days in the week…easy way to mark or indicate missed work. Okay. Numerous purposes for having a document that helps students become better self-directed learners.

The following *Indicators of Effective Practice* are accomplished when all of the planning is put into action in the classroom. They are confirmed if a team chooses to make collegial observations with instrument (i.e. checklist). ***See observation checklist example in last section of this guide.***

Interaction

8. All teachers interact instructionally with students (explaining, checking, giving feedback).
9. All teachers interact managerially with students (reinforcing rules, procedures).
10. All teachers interact socially with students (noticing and attending to an ill student, asking about the weekend, inquiring about the family).

Classroom Culture

11. All teachers maintain well-organized student learning materials in the classroom.
12. All teachers display classroom rules and procedures in the classroom.
13. All teachers correct students who do not follow classroom rules and procedures.
14. All teachers reinforce classroom rules and procedures by positively teaching them.
15. Students are engaged and on task.
16. When waiting for assistance from the teacher, students are occupied with curriculum-related activities provided by the teacher.

Self-Directed Learners

"*The most effective learners are metacognitive*; *that is, they are mindful of how they learn, set personal learning goals, regularly self-assess and adjust their performance, and use productive strategies to assist their learning,"* (Tomlinson & McTighe, 2006). We know that metacognition can be taught. We recognize that for our developing learners, our students, we can provide an environment that encourages and teaches these lifetime skills.

Leveled learning statements that are clearly stated in student-friendly language help students understand what is required, and how the target is to be reached. In the leveled work found in the variety of instructional modes, students are invited into an active role of ongoing self-assessment in the learning statements as they exercise the work. Teachers that monitor their work give timely feedback. Students become more confident and self-directed in the standards and work that are identified for their grade or subject.

Classrooms that provide for diverse learners while insisting on respectful community instill the habits and mindfulness required to move forward and grow. Leveling the work in the classroom ensures the task difficulty appropriate to the individual student. Offering challenges to move forward encourages students to set improvement goals and assume ownership. Providing a variety of modes for learning engages and enlists the ability of all learners to think about their learning preferences, and adjust their goals.

One more step remains to fully engage all of the effective practices. Teachers need to manage the learning outcomes of *all* of the students, and parents need reports to help support the learning from home. Step 7 will show ways to record and report all of the work that's being accomplished by each student.

Step 7: Record and Report Student Progress

You sure have a ton of instruction planned for this subject. Now, how do you know what your students are learning? How can you adjust their assignments to account for their mastery?

Your data sources for tracking student mastery of standard/benchmark-aligned objectives are:

1. The pre-test
2. Your observation in Teacher-Directed Groups
3. Their work in Student-Directed Groups
4. Each student's successful completion of Independent Work and Computer-Based Learning
5. Each student's successful completion of Homework
6. Tests that you administer that are aligned with the target learning statements
7. The post-test

You may use a variety of methods to check student work. For Independent Work and Homework, you may give the student a rubric for self-scoring. You may have students exchange work with peers to check with a rubric. You may collect the work and grade it. You may simply have the student show you the completed work and check that it has been successfully completed or in simple observations recorded by the teacher. You may use these approaches also for Computer-Based Learning, or your computer programs may have a built-in system to track student progress. It is a good idea not to rely only on the computer program to confirm mastery.

In keeping track of mastery, you are concerned about the ***Target*** *learning statements*. If a student has successfully completed activities aligned with ***Enhanced*** *learning statements*, so much the better. If a student has only completed activities for ***Prerequisite*** *learning statements*, that isn't mastery of the Target learning statements. That is why you try to get every student up to Target activities by the end of the two-week block. For students who don't make it, you must consider appropriate interventions—tutoring, more time for this subject, re-teaching using different strategies, etc.

In addition to whatever system you use to determine student grades, keep a simple ***Class Progress Chart*** to mark when you are sure a student has mastered a leveled learning statement, based on your examination of their work. All expert craftsmen need the right tools to give excellence to their work. Use of this recordkeeping tool in a busy classroom with the great variety of learning opportunities going on *simultaneously* keeps ongoing information of student mastery at your fingertips. Keep the Class Progress Chart with you as you conduct a Teacher-Directed Group or navigate the room during Work Time. You use it also when you check homework and score tests that you have administered. You can also indicate the student's apparent mastery from the pre- and post-test, but remember that these might be quick methods for determining a student's mastery and not reliable alone to ensure that the objectives have been mastered.

In order to report to parents on their child's progress in mastering objectives, you simply take that students information from your Class Progress Chart and record it on a ***Student Learning Report***. Nice.

Now reach back and pat yourself on the back. Applaud for your team members. Get ready to teach!

Step 7 **Class Progress Chart**

School: **Teacher:** **Subject:** **Grade/Class Level:**

Date of First Class Day in this Unit: **Class sessions in the Unit**: **Theme:**

Standards:

Code: ***Each teacher or teacher team determines coding that makes sense, or establishes universal coding with electronic symbols when used in system.***

	Target (Grade-Level) Learning Statements									
Student's Name										

Indicator of Effective Practice

7. All teachers maintain a record of each student's mastery of specific learning objectives.

Step 7 **Student Learning Report**

School: **Teacher:** **Subject:** **Grade/Class Level:**

Date of First Class Day in this Unit: **Class sessions in this Unit**: **Theme:**

Standards:

A Check in the box indicates that the student has mastered this objective to the teacher's satisfaction.

	Target (Grade-Level) Learning Statements									
Student's Name										

Teacher comments: (Example) *Your child's mastery of each identified objective during this two-week period is indicated on this chart. That can be during pre-testing, within an observed assignment or activity, or during post-testing. Please contact the teacher for any necessary clarification of this report.*

Parent comments: _____

_____

Indicators of Effective Practice

17. All teachers maintain a file of communication with parents.

18. All teachers systematically report to parents the student's mastery of specific standards-based activities provided by the teacher.

Step 8: Use Student Learning Plans (*optional*)

Interested in going a step further? How about *individual student learning plans*? Yes indeed, putting the plan into the hands of *each* student gives increased opportunity for self-management and self-directed learning. Just as the teacher's lesson plan serves as the map for executing powerful teaching, an individual student learning plan becomes the student's map for learning. How does it look? What are the benefits? Let's take a peek…

Sure, you can give each student a copy of the above Leveled Learning Plan to guide their work, but not very efficient. What happens if a student shows mastery of one target learning statement in the Two-Week Plan, but assesses at the *below* target on the next? How many papers can a student carry? Not just inefficient, but confusing.

Take a look at the following plan. Still looks pretty familiar, right? Only notice that *all three levels of activities* are identified. How will a student know what to do? Of course, the teacher must direct the student based on the level of achievement however, the student is capable of *marking or highlighting* the plan as directed by the teacher while ignoring the other leveled activities. It conveniently allows a teacher to redirect the student as learning is monitored through the different modes and activities simply by re-marking the plan…and off she goes.

Yes, you will need to decide if this seems an important means to helping your students assume responsibility for their work, and, if you believe that having each student possess their own plan makes sense in accomplishing the tasks for personalized instruction. Maintaining a student learning plan gives each student the work for inside the classroom, as well as outside (homework), and generally alleviates the need for a separate assignment book.

That's one piece of paper for each week's work. By traveling from school to home, and home to school, the Student Learning Plan provides just one more way that the communication is open and clear. And, including the target learning statements for the entire unit on the back of the student learning plan serves all well in understanding what is being taught, and the expectations required to achieve the grade level standards.

Please note: There are different ways to indicate the levels of work in the classroom and on the Student Learning Plan. The sample below shows the use of *symbols* as one way. Using the *Student Learning Plan* with students in different grade levels and subject areas can take on a variety of appearances. In the example below:

△ = Enhanced

○ = Target

□ = Prerequisite

And remember, it is the *activities or assignments* that are listed next to the symbols…that is what the students need to know to do their work. The connection to the target learning statement (grade level expectation) is listed along with the standards and unit and classroom information on the backside of the plan (*following*) for student and parent awareness. It also provides a connection from school to home with teacher and parent signature. All eyes are on student work well in advance of a report card.

Step 8 **Student Learning Plan (optional)**

Subject: _____ Grade/Class Level: _____ Unit/Theme: _____
Week: _____

Student-directed group
Target 1: Topic
Target 2: Topic
Target 3: Topic
Target 4: Topic
Target 5: Topic

Independent
Statement 1
△-
○ -
☐ -
Statement 2
△-
○ -
☐ -
Statement 3
△-
○ -
☐ -
Statement 4
△-
○ -
☐ -
Statement 5
△-
○ -
☐ -

Computer-based
Statement 1
△-
○ -
☐ -
Statement 2
△-
○ -
☐ -
Statement 3
△-
○ -
☐ -
Statement 4
△-
○ -
☐ -
Statement 5
△-
○ -
☐ -

Homework
Statement 1
△-
○ -
☐ -
Statement 2
△-
○ -
☐ -
Statement 3
△-
○ -
☐ -

Homework
Statement 4
△-
○ -
☐ -
Statement 5
△-
○ -
☐ -

Reverse side of Learning Plan

Behavior Check:

Classroom rules/procedures:

Teacher: _____ **Pre-test (date): _____**

Date: _____ **Post-test (date): _____**

Unit Name: Target Learning Statements

Statement 1:

Standard:

Statement 2:

Standard:

Statement 3:

Standard:

Statement 4:

Standard:

Statement 5:

Standard:

Statement 6:

Standard:

Statement 7:

Standard:

Statement 8:

Standard:

Essential questions for the unit:

-
-

Parent _____ Date _____

Part II: Collegial Learning

The purpose of a learning community is "*realized when all its members are engaged in learning. Some of teachers' learning is called professional development, but that, of course, is only one avenue for learning; teachers also learn from each other, from the trials and errors of plying their craft, from each student's own story*," (S. Redding, 2005). Simultaneously, individual teachers are at work in their classrooms and teams collaborate toward cumulative plans. Collegial Learning happens when a district and school ensure the quality time that allows teams of teachers to work together.

Moving away from independent planning to work again as a team should not slow the momentum. It will confirm the quality of individual planning with the collective thinking-- validating the best of teaching and learning. As you will see, with a solid plan for working as a team, the pace will be consistent and the quality of well-planned lessons and solid implementation of the Indicators of Effective Practice guaranteed.

Following are suggested steps to Collegial Learning:

Step 1: Continue to align instructional units for the year

Step 2: Collaboratively review individual plans to define and document collective grade level/ department/subject instruction plans

Step 3: Develop a plan for supporting colleagues using an interview and observation tool

Step 1: Instructional Units for the Year

Secure the teaming that began the process to align instruction to standards, curriculum and assessment, and continue this planning. Yes, even while teachers may be applying the first well-planned unit in their individual classrooms, the need for the next unit is just around the bend. It is necessary that the team move forward with the management of a future unit to arrange all the parts for a well-aligned document. Remember, it is only with the right map that all other instruction and learning can be effective in this systematic planning.

Okay, so you've already accomplished this task once. Keep it rolling using the same framework for developing Units of Instruction and Two-Week Plans as first introduced. Standards, leveled objectives, pre and post test. The second round is always faster! Ready, set, go!

Step 2: Document Plans

Teachers work to develop instructional plans. When time allows they return with those plans to the team, and compile and synchronize the work to establish the official record for that grade level and subject.

"*The business of schools is to invent tasks, activities, and assignments that the students find engaging, and that bring them into profound interactions with content and processes they will need to master to be judged well educated*" (Schlechty, pg. 53). In this collaborative approach of curriculum development, the value in knowledge and experiences of two, three, or four people outweighs the isolation found in traditional instructional planning and teaching.

Additionally, teams can determine the quality of the pre- and post-tests after reviewing students' accomplishments of the target learning statements. Analyzing the results of those tests not only confirms the quality of the assessment, but encourages a team to consider the quality of the activities assigned as instructional interventions for the students they teach between pre- and post-testing. This may also become part of the team discussion.

Ultimately, a systematic team review of the developed units of instruction is suggested. Deciding how to create a steady, continuous improvement in the future should be the goal. That goal can be reached from different paths, just as the original development, but it is that kind of consistent improvement that marks true professionalism.

Following are forms suggested for use in Collegial Learning.

Whole Class Instruction Plan

School: **Teacher:** **Subject:** **Grade/Class Level:**

Date of First Class Day in the Unit: **Class sessions in this unit period**: **Theme:**

	Target 1	Target 2	Target 3	Target 4	Target 5
Central Purpose of Lesson					
Behavior Check					
Review					
Think					
Know					
Show					

Essential Questions: _____ _____

_____ _____

Student-Directed (Heterogenous) Groups

School: **Teacher:** **Subject:** **Grade/Class Level:**
Date of First Class Day in the Unit: **Class sessions in this Unit**: **Theme:**

Standard **(Brief Descriptor)**	**Assignment to the Group** **(as you would explain it to the students)**
	Topic: Goal: Essential Question:
	Topic: Goal: Essential Question:
	Topic: Goal: Essential Question:
	Topic: Goal: Essential Question:
	Topic: Goal: Essential Question:
	Topic: Goal: Essential Question:
	Topic: Goal: Essential Question:

Independent and Computer-based

School: **Teacher:** **Subject:** **Grade/Class Level:**

Date of First Class Day in the Unit: **Class sessions in this Unit**: **Theme:**

	Learning Activity (as you would explain it to the students) Reference worksheets, pages in textbooks, lessons on computer, etc.			
	Independent Work	Estimated Days for Completion	Computer-Based Learning	Estimated Days for Completion
Leveled Learning Statements				
Target:				
Enhanced:				
Prerequisite:				
Leveled Learning Statements				
Target:				
Enhanced:				
Prerequisite:				

Essential Questions:

Homework

School: **Teacher:** **Subject:** **Grade/Class Level:**

Date of First Class Day in the Unit: **Class sessions in this Unit**: **Theme:**

	Homework Activity **(as you would explain it to the students)** **Reference worksheets, pages in textbooks, etc.**
Leveled Learning Statements	
Target:	
Enhanced:	
Prerequisite:	
Leveled Learning Statements	
Target:	
Enhanced:	
Prerequisite:	

Essential Questions:

Step 3: Support Colleagues

A "Teacher Interview and Classroom Observation Checklist" gives a snapshot glimpse to the Indicators of *Effective Practice* within an individual classroom. Used as a tool for self-assessment, or a guide for mentoring and supporting colleagues (team members), it enriches the conversation and interpretation of the Indicators.

Self-reflection is a powerful strategy that, practiced consistently, produces healthy adjustment and change or confirmation in practice. Some teachers do this as a natural strategy in their self-learning. The Teacher Interview and Classroom Observation Checklist is a tool that might guide that self-reflection regarding the effective practice indicators.

Teachers "*are researchers, students of teaching, who observe others teach, have others observe them, talk about teaching, and help other teachers. In short, they are professionals*," (Barth, 1990). Teachers have always shared with one another. The purpose of this Team Track goal is merely an extension of that natural sharing. Organizations (schools) determined to build capacity in the implementation of the *Indicators of Effective Practices*, encourage members in the grade level/subject/department teams to observe one another. The experience enriches their conversation and determination. The following "Teacher Interview and Classroom Observation Checklist" helps to guide the discussion.

This checklist is an instrument that can also be used by any visitor during a classroom visit to indicate the extent to which the teacher and classroom exhibit effective practices. The resulting information can be used to guide an individual professional development plan, or collective professional development. The information might also be used by a principal to supplement observations in the classroom, or by a new teacher that is encouraged to utilize the Indicators of Effective Practices in order to build capacity in the school.

The use of this tool in a classroom observation will *confirm* attention to the following *Indicators of Effective Practices*:

Instruction

5. All teachers use a variety of instructional modes (teacher-directed, whole class; student-directed group; teacher-directed group; independent work; computer-based; homework).
6. All teachers differentiate assignments (individualize instruction) in response to individual student performance on pre-tests and other methods of assessment.

Interaction

8. All teachers interact instructionally with students (explaining, checking, giving feedback).
9. All teachers interact managerially with students (reinforcing rules, procedures).
10. All teachers interact socially with students (noticing and attending to an ill student, asking about the weekend, inquiring about the family).

Classroom Culture

11. All teachers maintain well-organized student learning materials in the classroom.
12. All teachers display classroom rules and procedures in the classroom.
13. All teachers correct students who do not follow classroom rules and procedures.
14. All teachers reinforce classroom rules and procedures by positively teaching them.
15. Students are engaged and on task.
16. When waiting for assistance from the teacher, students are occupied with curriculum-related activities provided by the teacher.

Indicators of Effective Practice
Teacher Interview and Classroom Observation Checklist

Teacher: _____ Date: _____
Observation by: _____ Grade Level: _____
School: _____ Subject(s) observed: _____
City: _____ State: _____

DIRECTIONS: Following are the *Indicators of Effective Practice* best reviewed with the classroom teacher before the observation. Mark "Available" if teacher exhibits document, otherwise mark "Not Available".

Teacher Interview	**Available (X)**	**Not Available (X)**
<u>Planning</u> 1. Teacher is guided by a document that aligns standards, curriculum, instruction and assessment.		
Explanation:		
2. Unit of instruction includes specific learning activities aligned to objectives.		
Explanation:		
3. Teacher develops weekly lesson plan based on aligned unit of instruction.		
Explanation:		
4. Teacher individualizes instruction based on pre-test results to provide support for some students and enhanced learning opportunities for other students.		
Explanation:		

<u>Communication with Parents</u> 17. Teacher maintains a file of communication with parents.		
Explanation:		
18. Teacher systematically reports to parents the student's mastery of specific standards-based objectives.		
Explanation:		

DIRECTIONS: Mark "Observed" if the item is seen during the classroom visit. Mark "Not Observed" if the item is not seen during the classroom visit. If an item is "Not Observed", it should be discussed with the teacher after the observation, and an explanation provided in the Comments Section.

Classroom Observation	Observed (X)	Not Observed (X)
Instruction		
5. Teacher uses a variety of instructional modes (teacher-directed, whole class; student-directed group; teacher-directed, small group; independent work; computer-based; homework).		
6. Teacher differentiates assignments (individualize instruction) in response to individual student performance on pre-tests and other methods of assessment.		
7. Teacher maintains a record of each student's mastery of specific learning objectives.		
Interaction		
8. Teacher interacts *instructionally* with students (explaining, checking, giving feedback).		
9. Teacher interacts *managerially* with students (reinforcing rules, procedures).		
10. Teacher interacts *socially* with students (noticing and attending to an ill student, asking about the weekend, inquiring about the family).		
Classroom Culture		
11. Teacher maintains well-organized student learning materials in the classroom.		
12. Teacher displays classroom rules and procedures in the classroom.		
13. Teacher corrects students who do not follow classroom rules and procedures.		
14. Teacher reinforces classroom rules and procedures by positively teaching them.		
15. Students are engaged and on task.		
16. When waiting for assistance from the teacher, students are occupied with curriculum-related activities provided by the teacher.		
TOTAL OBSERVED		

Did the observation include Whole Class Instruction? YES NO
Did the observation include Work Time? YES NO

For each item marked "Not Observed," provide a brief explanation below.

Item Number	Explanation

.

Indicators

Planning

7. All teachers are guided by a document that aligns standards, curriculum, instruction, and assessment.
8. Units of instruction include specific learning activities aligned to objectives (learning statements).
9. All teachers develop weekly lesson plans based on aligned units of instruction.
10. All teachers individualize instruction based on pre-test results to provide support for some students and enhanced learning opportunities for others.

Literature Review Summary

If teaching is a primary responsibility in educating children, then "planning" for that teaching is at the core of effectively meeting that responsibility. Planning is a deliberate process (Stronge, 2007) and does not leave to chance the stringing together of activities or tasks that may or may not address what students should learn. It indicates that a teacher walks into a class prepared. It ensures that a district curriculum, state standards and more recently, the Common Core State Standards (see below) are effectively considered when teachers identify the content and skills that will be taught at a specific grade level in a subject of study. Using the resources available to the teacher (i.e. district curriculum; standards) the arduous task of creating a framework of teaching and learning begins. The availability of modern technology and the psychological research shift from behaviorism to neuroscience in recent years has moved the focus from "the teacher" and more perceptively on "the learner".

The unit was first validated by Benjamin Bloom as a way to organize instruction. More recent research confirms that task design and the organization of academic tasks, affects student learning. That task design helps facilitate deeper levels of learning and higher engagement. It is that craft knowledge along with flexibility that are the critical components of effective planning and teaching, (Marzano,2007).

Along with high expectation promoted for all students, the focus on quality instruction supports high achievement. The concentration on instruction guides the teacher's planning as well as prepares the intended classroom environment to be organized and consistent. It is an environment that maximizes the time spent on the teaching and learning process. Dedication and disclosure of those goals creates an enthusiasm for learning that students reflect in their own behavior and practice, (Stronge, 2007).

Provided with the information of standards and curriculum resources the teacher develops units of instruction that represent a repertoire of effective instructional strategies that are appropriate to the content and instructional goals. Within that planning, preparation is designed for the variety of learners that comprise a classroom. This planning is complex and time-consuming. Much like the learning in the classroom that encourages collaborative work,

the current world recognizes similar value in adult-work. Teacher teams benefit with instructional planning when the curriculum is broken down to what they need to teach and students need to learn. Exercising the opportunities to address both horizontal (across grade level) and vertical (grade levels below and above) planning improves the framework of unit plans. Districts and schools that provide opportunities for collaborative work with appropriate professional development, support, resources and leadership will help teachers and students to be successful, (Carter, 2007).

A unit of instruction is a sequence of lessons tied together. With standards in hand teachers, or teams of teachers, determine the grade level standards that will be addressed in each unit based on sequential congruency. Often, teachers will determine the assessment(s) for the unit first, in a backward design. Establishing what students must know at the end of the unit of instruction and the type of summative assessment that meets the criteria. Determining a level of criteria for mastery helps to make a sharper assessment, (Pollock, 2007). Designing other forms of assessments (i.e. diagnostic, formative) to be used during the unit of instruction may be determined as teachers create instruction and activities.

Developing the curriculum and instruction must begin with appropriately written instructional objectives aligned to the specific grade level standard. Writing the objective too broadly does not help students understand exactly what is expected of them. And while the activities aligned to the objective go hand-in-hand, the two should not be confused. At the planning stage, it is a wise teacher that recognizes the significance of sharing instructional objectives in the classroom. Studies have shown that communicating instructional objectives has a positive effect on student achievement (Marzano, 2011). Consequently, at the development stage, the effective approaches to *using* instructional objectives should be established. A restatement of the instructional objective in terminology that students will understand can be achieved during the planning stage, or the teacher may include students in a translation of the objective into their own words in the classroom. That would likely be limited by the age and developmental stage of the students. Nevertheless, it is critical that students understand what it is they're supposed to be learning. Creating a statement that not only helps students, but likely parents and others who support their school learning, invites a solid understanding of what is expected and how the learning can be mastered. A *target learning statement* presents language that is accessible and understandable. It states the intention of the lesson in explicit language that tells what the students need to learn, how deeply to learn it, and how to demonstrate the new learning, (Moss, Brookhart & Long, 2011). The commitment to share lesson expectations using the target learning statement must be routinely exercised. Sharing them with students, and talking about them, clarifies the purpose of the learning. The criterion that is required to be successful becomes part of the conversation. Use of terminology such as "I can"; examining work samples with various levels of quality; and/or applying a rubric with student interaction and interpretation empowers every student to exercise self-regulation and become motivated and intentional learners, (Moss, Brookhart & Long, 2011).

Additionally, an effective approach in the application of objectives is for the teacher(s) to construct objectives at multiple levels in order to individualize instruction, (Marzano, 2011). Scaffolding the target level work with a simpler objective may support a student not-quite-ready for grade level work until the offered learning experiences prepare him for the step forward. Similarly, students whose prior knowledge indicates mastery in a diagnostic

assessment (pre-test) are benefited with a more complex and challenging objective. Clearly, a teacher who enters a classroom with lesson plans to support students that learn at different rates is armed with "effective vehicles for instruction", (Stronge, 2007).

"Good teachers devise activities or assignments that provide students with opportunities to practice a skill or apply content," (Walberg, 2011). The planning to align curriculum and instruction to standards and assessments engages the creativity of the teaching craft. Collaborative teams that share this common purpose employ collective inquiry as they question the status quo; seek new methods; test those methods and reflect on results, (Marzano, 2007). Energized in their willingness to work together, the organizational framework is renewed and refreshed. During the planning stage, effective teachers consider a variety of techniques that involve individual, small group and whole class instruction based on the needs of students, (Stronge, 2007). No single strategy can be used in all situations with all students. Thorough planning requires depth of content knowledge, resourcefulness and creativity in the approach to instruction. Simply put, careful planning determines what students are expected to learn, and the resolution for the best instruction.

With the intent to respond to learners' needs, during the planning stage teachers think about the different classroom elements that can be used, including—space, time, resources, student groupings, instruction for learning, presentation, teaching strategies and partnerships, (Tomlinson & McTighe, 2006). Teachers use their professional judgment in this process model of curriculum design, and ultimately link research from their own classrooms. Among those strategies found effective in promoting student achievement are direct teaching, as well as guided and independent practice; using manipulatives along with an integrated approach to problem solving in math; concept mapping and graphic organizers that promote student understanding and retention; problem solving across the curriculum; modeling and coaching; and, lecturing to quickly cover the material, (Stronge, 2007). Project-based learning is surging as a means to connect students' years of education with the complex challenges they will meet in the real world. Simultaneously developing cross-curriculum skills while working in small collaborative groups, students are encouraged to solve problems and think innovatively as they explore real world problems. Connecting academic work to real-life issues, research indicates that students are likely to retain knowledge gained through these longer and more complex assignments, (www.edutopia.org).

Indicators

Instruction

19. All teachers use a variety of instructional modes (teacher-directed, whole class; student-directed group; teacher-directed group; independent work; computer-based; homework).
20. All teachers differentiate assignments (individualize instruction) in response to individual student performance on pre-tests and other methods of assessment.
21. All teachers maintain a record of each student's mastery of specific learning objectives (learning statements).

Literature Review Summary

Inside the classroom, a variety of instructional modes is made possible with strong and well-practiced classroom management procedures. The prior instructional planning prepares the learning environment for meeting the needs of a diverse group of learners. Leveled learning statements (objectives) help to meet each student where he or she is. Assessments before the unit of instruction with a diagnostic tool (pre-test), during instruction (formative), and after instruction (post-test; summative) allow the teacher to monitor and measure student learning. A repertoire of instructional techniques gives flexibility to address at risk and gifted students, and all those in between. Students in this classroom culture are engaged in a variety of activities, including individualized or small group instruction, student-centered work and technology learning experiences. Learning within an environment such as this provides students with the opportunities to review reflect and apply new knowledge throughout the day. Student-directed work (cooperative learning) promotes strong benefits in groups of two to four students. While each group member is held accountable for accomplishing the activity---their motivation, task engagement, ability to work with individuals different from themselves, and verbal processing of subject matter is enhanced, (Walberg, 2011). Thoughtful determination of group members requires careful planning and classroom management strategies to maximize the potential for well-designed, intentional social interaction with others. Small group instruction is successful when there is high expectation for all ability groups that are not static, and they are engaged in meaningful instruction and conversation. Technology in the classroom is no longer a novelty but a major tool of the trade. Availability within the classroom greatly varies from school to school, but with strong management and recordkeeping even a one-computer classroom can be highly effective, (Evertson, 2006). Homework is an additional means to address the learning needs of the broad range of students in the classroom. Quality homework that is clearly explained and related to the unit of study is more important than the quantity. Personalizing (differentiating) homework that is based on the needs of each student helps ensure that quality. Outside of the classroom students independently engage in constructive tasks. Parents may be involved and are greater informed of the content of curriculum and instruction. Students spend additional time practicing material without school distractions as homework is a viable alternative to electronic entertainment. In a comprehensive review of research studies on the influence of various time effects on academic learning, 88% showed positive correlations between time and learning, (Walberg, 2011) . Diversifying opportunities in the classroom in meaningful assignments and activities increases the opportunities for time and learning. The completion of homework allows students to practice, prepare or elaborate classroom instruction. The teacher that gives feedback to student homework that is timely and informative increases the effectiveness, (Stronge, 2007).

Games are an excellent way to address even difficult content in an entertaining way. Designed for instruction, games have been associated with a 20 percentile point gain in student achievement when used purposefully and thoughtfully, (Marzano, 2010). From the earliest age, games are a part of children's lives, and can be used in the various instructional modes. Certainly games with technology are a common form of use and available for targeted learning content in most/all areas of study. Adaptations of popular game shows can be used in the whole class instruction, or in small groups of learners. Classrooms that showed the greatest gains using games as instruction, had teachers that focused on specific strategies: use of inconsequential competition; targeted essential academic content; debriefing at the game's conclusion; and, expectation that students revise their class notes as a result of their game-

learning.

Teachers use a repertoire of instructional strategies in their classrooms based on what has proven successful for them with students that represent a diverse group of learners. More effective teachers use direct instruction, but most effective teachers use both direct instruction and experiential learning techniques, (Stronge, 2007).

The more frequently students are assessed, the more information teachers learn about their students. Research indicates that using assessment *for* learning vs. assessment *of* learning improves student achievement. In classrooms that use assessments to support learning, teachers adapt instruction to meet student needs, (Siobhan, Lyon, Thompson & Wiliam, 2005). In the planning stage of instruction, teachers have determined the criteria for mastery for each instructional objective, or target learning statement. Exercising the availability of a variety of classroom assessments, a teacher establishes assessment as information *for* learning that guides decisions for instruction and personalization. Both informal and formal assessments must be considered for determining the best fit and purpose. Too often, teachers are quick to dismiss a pre-test at the beginning of a unit of study. Teachers that use this diagnostic information gain insight into each student's prior knowledge to verify what to teach and what skill gaps to address, or by skipping material previously mastered---how to teach, by using grouping options and defined activities; as well as how to connect to students' interests and talents, (McTighe & O'Connor, 2005). These informative assessments ensure that students work at appropriate levels of challenge. Ongoing in the classroom during the unit of study are other forms of informative assessment that continue to update teachers and students toward the purpose of pushing learning forward. Teachers are better able to adjust instruction and students become better at self-monitoring, self-managing and self-modifying, (Tomlinson, 2007). The summative assessment (post test) or assessment *of* learning summarizes what students have learned at the end of a unit of study and tend to be evaluative. By themselves, summative assessments are inadequate for maximizing learning, (McTighe & O'Connor, 2005). Effective teachers not only assess student learning during and after instruction, they adapt instruction to meet students where they are even before the unit begins, (Stronge, 2007).

Personalized (differentiated) learning helps to maximize each student's growth and individual achievement in classrooms that include students of differing abilities. Easily, today's classrooms can be identified with students of diverse aptitudes and talents---including culture, linguistics, cognition, prior knowledge and learning preferences. A growing body of research is showing positive results for full implementation of differentiated learning in mixed-ability classrooms, including effectiveness for keeping high-ability students challenged, and optimistic results for students with mild or severe learning disabilities. Solid research validates the following practices with differentiated learning: promotes effective classroom management procedures; encourages student engagement and motivation; assesses student readiness; responds to learning styles; flags student groupings for instruction; and teaches to the student's proximal development, (Huebner, 2010).

Keeping track of all of the information in a differentiated classroom can seem overwhelming until a teacher devises or determines a system for organizing the valuable data. Reconsidering the framework that began with planning the unit of study, teachers need to organize the data

using grade level academic standards and objectives previously defined. Including the assessments that occur before, during and after instruction helps identify each student's mastery of the criteria. Outcomes for activities that align to the standard can be included for monitoring progress. There are many resources available that adapt to the needs of an individual classroom and for reporting feedback to students. Modifying grade books to meet the needs of individual students completes the circle of record-keeping that benefits teachers and students, (Pollock, 2007).

Common Core State Standards

Born out of a combined effort of specialists, teachers, and parents the Common Core State Standards are the outgrowth of increased knowledge learned from the original standards movement, and have been built from the best and highest state standards in the country. They are evidence-based, aligned with college and work expectations, include rigorous content and skills, and are informed by other top performing countries, (www.corestandards.org). This combined effort and participation of 46 states and the District of Columbia (as of 9/1/2012) promotes the fact that American students now, and in the future, compete with students from around the world. Efforts have begun in Mathematics and English Language Arts. In addition, there are literacy standards that serve to integrate reading and writing into the areas of history/social studies, science, and technical subjects. These integrative standards are meant to complement rather than replace content standards in those subjects. Teachers in these content areas are responsible for corresponding CCSS.

Robert Rothman, senior fellow at the Alliance for Excellent Education, cites that while the Common Core State Standards share many features and concepts with existing standards, the new standards also represent a substantial departure from current practice in a number of respects, (Rothman, 2012). Paramount in the emphases in the English Language Arts standards of the Common Core is the goal to increase each student's knowledge through content-rich informational text. Much of our knowledge base comes from informational text, and it makes up the vast majority of required reading in college and the workplace. Informational text is harder for students to comprehend than narrative text, yet they are asked to read very little of it in elementary and middle school. Students will be asked to read and write in more expository samples of content through the English Language Arts, and social studies/history, science and technical subjects. It is this increased experience that will better prepare them for work at the college level, and in the workforce. Greater exposure and experience with complex text and demonstration of stronger speaking and listening is emphasized in the Common Core, as well.

Research regarding the effectiveness of an integrated studies approach found that students receive positive educational outcomes, including:

- Increased understanding, retention, and application of general concepts.
- Better overall comprehension of global interdependencies.
- Increased ability to make decisions, think critically and creatively, and synthesize knowledge beyond the disciplines.
- Enhanced ability to identify, assess, and transfer significant information needed for solving novel problems.
- Promotion of cooperative learning and a better attitude toward oneself as a learner and as a meaningful member of a community.
- Increased motivation

(Source: www.edutopia.org)

Mathematics standards in the Common Core focus on fewer topics and address them in greater depth. They are designed to build on students' understanding by introducing new topics from grade to grade instead of the state standards' tendency to include same topics year after year. Consequently, greater coherence is simultaneously built within grades. The Mathematics standards in the Common Core balance the knowledge of skills, understanding, and application evenly. And lastly, the standards for mathematics content provide multiple opportunities for students to balance mathematical practices (i.e., reasoning abstractly and quantitatively; using appropriate tools strategically; constructing viable arguments; critiquing the reasoning of others; making sense of problems and persevering to solve them), (Rothman, 2012).

Indicators

Interaction

8. All teachers interact instructionally with students (explaining, checking, giving feedback).
9. All teachers interact managerially with students (reinforcing rules, procedures).
10. All teachers interact socially with students (noticing and attending to an ill student, asking about the weekend, inquiring about family).

Classroom Culture

11. All teachers maintain well-organized student learning materials in the classroom.
12. All teachers display classroom rules and procedures in the classroom.
13. All teachers correct students who do not follow classroom rules and procedures.
14. All teachers reinforce classroom rules and procedures by positively teaching them.
15. Students are engaged and on task.
16. When waiting for assistance from the teacher, students are occupied with curriculum-related activities provided by the teacher.

Literature Review Summary

Creating positive social dynamics and strengthening interpersonal relationships is one segment of managing a classroom. Indeed. The behavior of students is more positive in classrooms when teachers generate an atmosphere of belonging, support, relevance and engagement and where students feel they can influence what happens to them. Managing space, materials, movement, lessons and discipline is also included in the broad spectrum of classroom management. (Evertson & Weinstein, 2006).

A recent meta-analysis (Marzano, 2003) found that the keystone for all other aspects of classroom management is the teacher-student relationship. In that analysis, teachers with high-quality management strategies had 31% fewer classroom disruptions, including fewer discipline problems, rule violations, and other related problems. Students prefer strong teacher guidance and control over the more permissive types of teacher behavior. It is the balance of teacher authority and the ability to communicate clear expectations of student behavior and academic goals for students that establishes a classroom culture that is productive, cooperative and respectful.

Equally important in exercising the healthy classroom's physical and managerial practices, is the monitoring of student work. A teacher's "with-it-ness" in a busy classroom includes the

necessity to explain clearly the expectations of the work and monitor each student's understanding. Whether it is checking and providing feedback for homework or independent work within the classroom, gauging the accomplishments of individuals within group work or assessing student mastery within computer instruction, an effective teacher recognizes that student achievement is positively impacted when specific explanations include not only what is right and wrong, but how to correct the errors. Constructive criticism can be taught. Rubrics are an excellent tool for teacher and student to interact on an assignment, and as an instructional tool for students to learn how to receive feedback from oneself. Constructive self-criticism is a powerful and lifelong learning tool, (Stronge, 2007).

Offering choices in the classroom requires students to take ownership for their work. With the understood procedures of work in the classroom, students are challenged by the responsibility and motivated knowing that the teacher has confidence in their ability to make good choices. Self-regulated learning within the carefully constructed and managed classroom seems a natural conduit to the workings of the classroom environment that is adaptive and coordinates shared-tasks. Reflective teachers that value student self-responsibility, commitment, and self-control may choose to consider the hypotheses of self-regulated learning, (Evertson & Weinsten, 2006).

Determining and defining classroom rules and procedures is best accomplished at the beginning of the school year. Even as the teacher is considering the physical layout of the room (i.e., different modes of instruction including small group work and computer-based learning) require special arrangements, and the rules and procedures to access those areas for study. It is recommended that only five to eight rules and procedures are needed for students in elementary to secondary classrooms, (Marzano, 2007).

Effective teachers not only plan for classroom management before the school year begins, but take classroom time in the early days of the school year to teach and practice the rules and procedures with the students, (Evertson & Weinstein, 2006).

Teachers, or teachers and students collaboratively, that invest the time to establish clear rules and procedures for work within the classroom, transitions in and away from the classroom, and the use of materials and equipment shared in the classroom ensure the cohesiveness necessary to accomplish the work in that classroom community. Well-practiced procedures become routine, and routines ensure that everyday tasks establish the environment for greater achievement gains (Stronge, 2007).

"Consequences are the other side of rules and procedures", (Marzano, 2007). A classroom culture that first defines the rules and procedures of the community, and allows appropriate time to practice them has been proactive in creating a well-managed environment. While both negative and positive consequences may follow to reinforce those defined rules and procedures, it is the teacher's "with-it-ness" that ensures the greatest outcome for maintaining the well-thought-out management. Indeed, it returns the greatest percentile decrease in disruptions, (Marzano, 2007).

Additionally, it is the prepared and skilled teacher that not only recognizes the needs of some

students in the cross-section of people that arrive in the classroom, but develops a repertoire of techniques to manage those often demanding high needs. A positive learning environment invites positive relationships, and all students, especially those at-risk, are benefited. It is a far greater ability to capture the attention of students poised to misbehave using inconspicuous techniques such as a hand on the student's desk, a directed nod, or soft whisper. Tangible rewards for good behavior reinforce the positive with all students, but especially those at-risk (Stronge, 2007). While consistently maintaining the order and functions of the classroom, practicing or revising the procedures established, and culling the relationships that influence the dynamics of the classroom, the work of that community, learning, is not left to chance.

Taking a personal interest in students by interacting and reacting to them socially and genuinely increases their cooperation and enhances the attitude to work successfully. Exerting teacher behavior that shows interest in the whole class and the individual student requires a reminder that how one acts, not thinks or feels, establishes and maintains relationship. An effective student-teacher relationship is grounded in the ability of the teacher to know something about each student and engage in behavior that indicates an interest and affection for each student. Elementary teachers in self-contained classrooms may have more opportunities with 30 students day-to-day, but secondary teachers could develop a schedule to connect with individual students in a variety of settings throughout the day. It is a quest that is more challenging, but not impossible (Marzano, 2007). "Teacher behavior, then, is the language of relationship", (Marzano, 2007).

It is the wise teacher that weaves elements of social emotional learning (SEL) into practices in the classroom and the lives of children. Beyond the necessity of establishing trustful relationships, engaging opportunities to teach social emotional skills, sharing classroom responsibilities and setting firm and fair boundaries must be seen as a responsibility of all educators. Creating classrooms that exercise these kinds of skill-building help students to become capable adults, (Evertson & Weinstein, 2006).

Indicators

Communication with Parents

17. All teachers maintain a file of communication with parents.
18. All teachers systematically report to parents the student's mastery of specific standards-based objectives.

Literature Review Summary

Learning does not conclude at the end of the school day. And it is parents, or families, that provide the opposite cornerstone that supports the student in academic work. On a daily basis that is through the attention and completion of homework. And despite the mixed-opinions of the importance of homework, it has been identified as an influential school-based factor contributing to student learning and student participation, (Stronge, 2007). Additionally, "…homework may assist students in developing achievement motivation and self-regulation, competencies essential for students to manage their behaviors and emotions to reach academic goals," (Redding, Murphy, Sheley 2011). Teachers cannot assume that parents automatically understand and support their child in this venue. It is necessary that they

communicate certain guidelines and equip parents with tools to make homework (and school) successful. Parent engagement in the student's academic learning, including homework, helps to ensure that the student is motivated to achieve, (Stronge, 2007). Along with well-created and engaging assignments, teacher-parent communication is needed to help support this learning experience, (Redding, Murphy, Sheley, 2011). Through consistent and varied communication, teachers can offer clear suggestions for how parents can help their children in school. Part of that is making clear to parents the specific skills and abilities that children should be able to display toward the successful mastering of the requirements of the grade level by the end of the year. Along with providing clear suggestions for how parents can help their child in school, teachers should be encouraged to inform parents about specific attitudes and behaviors they are likely to influence, (Evertson & Weinstein, 2006).

Much like the culturally responsive classroom, teachers and the school need to find techniques to communicate and engage with immigrant parents; provide school community support to minority families; and, develop opportunities to enhance parental involvement and resources for families with special needs and exceptionalities. Respect for and listening to family perspectives and establishing and maintaining ongoing communication between families and schools lays the path for active engagement in the classroom and school communities.

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