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Achievement Team Newsletter

PROSE Improvements 2017-2018

- Lab Site students are selected from students who already attend our CBO program (CAMBA) to ensure better attendance

- Intervention groups and clubs are extended to a second day to give students more quality time with specialists.

- Collaborative time to examine student work is switched to Monday to give Achievement Teams time to use protocols effectively.

Making Collaboration Goal-Oriented

Teacher Teams have been rebranded this year as Achievement Teams. After attending a Visible Learning conference and working with Steve Ventura on using formative assessments to guide our teacher team inquiry work, we have a new focus on using data more consistently in our lab sites to create goals for student achievement.

The first thing that each team did was to use the data from their TC on-demand pre-assessments given in September to create a SMART goal for improvement of student proficiency on the post-test.

Next Achievement Teams analyzed their data from the on-demand pre-assessments to identify the specific standards and skills that needed to be addressed.

Our final step in launching our Achievement Team inquiry work was to align our lab sites focuses to a school instructional goal. A school-wide weakness identified through our observations last year was giving consistent, clear feedback to students and then following up to see if the feedback had been implemented.

All of the Achievement Teams decided to align with the following school goal: To engage our students in the feedback process so that they can understand the what, why and how (What am I learning today? What strategies am I using? How well are the strategies working? We will do this by improving teacher clarity - clear kid-friendly teaching points and/or goal-setting, establishing success criteria and constructing knowledge during cycles of feedback so that students take ownership of their learning .

By having SMART goals for our first lab site cycle, we hope to have concrete evidence of whether our strategies for
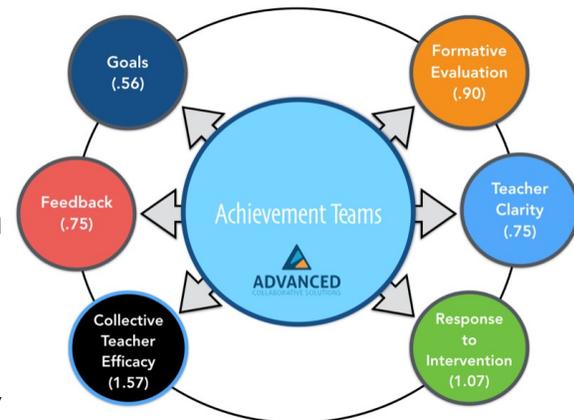
delivering feedback with clarity have been effective.

Danielson Identifies the Importance of Feedback

Our goal for this cycle is to improve the effectiveness of our feedback to students. This is a school-wide instructional goal because it was identified as an area of weakness in teacher observations (3d in the Danielson Framework). Here is what the Danielson Rubric described about feedback: "Feedback on learning is an essential element of a rich instructional environment; without it, students are constantly guessing at how they are doing and at how their work can be improved. Valuable feedback must be timely, constructive, and substantive and must provide students the guidance they need to improve their performance".

We want to put clear and actionable feedback (.75 effect size when done properly) into place in our classrooms throughout the day and specifically during Readers, Writers & Math Workshops.

Kindergarten Focuses on Phonemic Awareness

Kindergarten does not give an on-demand assessment in September, so they used TCRWP data from the Assessment Pro website to understand why at the end of the 2016-2017 school year, 32% of their Kindergarten students were below the independent reading benchmark.

After analyzing the data they saw that a majority of the students below the benchmark had struggled with phonemic awareness.

Based on this data analysis they came up with the following essential (Driving) Question: "Will providing small group phonics instruction to students below the benchmark in letter sounds help them meet the independent reading benchmark?"

Next they created the following SMART goal: The percentage of students scoring a level 3 or 4 in RF.K.3 (specifically letter sounds) will increase to between 65% and 75% by the end of November as measured by Teachers College's letter sound assessment.

The team read a phonics/phonemic research-based text by Wiley Blevins called "A Fresh Look at Phonics" Afterwards, the teachers worked in pairs to identify strategies to improve phonics instruction for the students.

After studying Blevins' strategies, Ms. Cameron created a data table that was student-friendly and which teachers will use to provide effective feedback to their students about their knowledge of letter identification and letter-sound identification. Also Ms. Jay planned to model three different phonics-based activities and a 2 minute warm-up that could be applied prior to teaching. These activities can be done during transitions or prior to lessons so that each spare minute of the day is used to reinforce letters and letter sounds.

1st Grade Takes a Closer at Narrative Writing

The 1st Grade also does not give an on-demand reading assessment in September, so they used TCRWP data from the Assessment Pro website to understand why At the end of the 2016-2017 school year, 22% of the 1st grade students were below the independent reading benchmark.

The grade does however give a writing on-demand pre-assessment and they decided to tackle the issue by working on clear feedback delivery during their Narrative Writing unit.

Their essential (Driving) Question is: How will giving feedback with clarity improve the number of students receiving a proficient score on the writing on-demand post-test?

Next they analyzed their writing on-demand pre-tests and found the following weaknesses: elaboration and craft. The team worked with the TC consultant to create student-friendly tools based on the Narrative Writing Checklist.

> "[Expert teachers] seek the evidence of who has not learned, who is not making progress, and they problem solve and adapt their teaching in response."
>
> -JohnHattie

2nd Grade Examines How Students Describe Character Responses

After analyzing their reading on-demand pre-test, the 2nd Grade Achievement Team noticed that: 95 out of 146 students scored a 0-1 on question three which assessed the following standard: R.L. 2.3–describe how characters in a story respond to major events and challenges.

Next they made the following SMART goal: the percentage of students scoring a level 3 or 4 in R.L. 2.3 will increase from the current 35% proficient to 60% -75% by the end of October as measured by the grade-created short-cycle assessment.

The team then analyzed the tests and saw that students were struggling with describing how characters in a story respond to major events and challenges and with following

and identifying character's feelings throughout a story.

Next they made a Learning Progression and Pathway to a Learning Intention by deconstructing the standard, RL.3.2 and using Steve Ventura's Achievement Team guide.

Finally, they used Jen Serravallo's "Reading Strategies" book to create tools specific to each part of the learning progression.

4th Grade Helps Students Make Connections within the Text

The 4th Grade Achievement team identified the following problem of practice: At the end of the 2016-2017 school year, 52% of the 4th grade students were below the independent reading benchmark.

After examining the tests for their reading on-demand pre-test, they determined that the students struggled with: naming the story element being highlighted, connecting scenes to each other and connecting parts back to the whole (RL.4.3 Analyze how and why individuals, events and ideas develop & interact over the course of a text).

The team used Jen Serravallo's book, "Reading Strategies" and SRI (School Reform Initiative) text-based protocols to help students address these issues.

They created this tool to use with the protocol.

3rd grade Works on Summarizing

After examining the student answers on their reading on-demand pre-tests, the Grade 3 Achievement Team determined that the students struggled most with standard RL.3.2 (recount stories; determine the central message, lesson, or moral & explain how it is conveyed through key details in the text.

Next they made "I Can" statements using the TC learning progression and complied a student-friendly checklist to use during reading conferences.

After reading Robert Marzano and Jen Serravallo articles about ways to teach summarizing, the team focused on these instructional strategies:

- Somebody… wanted…but…so

- Story Retelling Rope
- Beginning- Middle- End
- Telling across your hand (character, setting, problem, events, solution)

5th Grade Examines How to Effectively Teach Identifying Themes

The 5th Grade Achievement Team examined their reading on-demand pre-assessment and found that their students struggled with standard RL.5.2: Determining a theme of a story, drama, or poem from details in the text, including how characters in a story or drama respond to challenges or how the speaker in a poem reflects upon a topic; summarizing the text.

The team made this SMART goal: The percentage of students scoring a level 3 or 4 in R.L 5.2 will increase between 10% to 60% by the end of cycle 1. They also had determined an essential question for their inquiry work: How can we put clear and actionable feedback (.75 effect size when done properly) into place in our classrooms throughout the day and specifically during Readers, Writers & Math Workshops?

Next they unpacked the standard and used Jen Serravallo's "Reading Strategies" book to make tools that would address predictable problems that students have when trying to identify themes.

> "Strategies make the often invisible work of reading actionable and visible."
> -Jennifer Serravallo

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Where College Begins in Kindergarten

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Coach's Corner

Ms. Coffey has provided an overview of what we will be doing once we have the students during Tuesday's lab site time: We will use research-based strategies to conduct feedback conferences where one teacher models while the rest of the grade observes. Next the student will go and practice the feedback he/she has been given. At this point, teachers will discuss the conference and then another teacher will try it with a different student while the others observe.

During each planning session on the following Monday, the Achievement Team will be looking at student work (this will be what the students wrote in lab site about reading after their feedback conferences). The teachers will look at the work together and discuss what each student is missing, and then set clear next steps for each student that they then will try out during Tuesday's lab site.

The teachers will be checking back to see if the strategies suggested during the lab site worked and then talking about the whole process with the other teachers on their grade. Also they will be discussing what the conference should look like and working on improving the feedback collaboratively. When the cycle is complete, the post-test will be taken and if the number of students who are proficient has improved enough to meet their SMART goal, then teachers will feel more confident in the effectiveness of the feedback they give because they will have data as their evidence.

Understanding Hattie's Research

At our 1st lab site meeting we read and studied the research of John Hattie so we can use high impact instructional strategies to promote high achievement and high growth as a school. We will continue to revisit his research and findings. **One of the most important things to understand about Hattie's work is the concept of "effect size" which measures the efficacy of instructional strategies**. This dial shows the categories for the effect sizes of pedagogical ideas and structures. We ideally want to focus on instructional strategies that have an effect size of: 0.40 (one year's growth) to 0.80 (two years' worth of growth).

We want to put clear and actionable feedback (.75 effect size when done properly) into place in our classrooms throughout the day and specifically during Readers, Writers & Math Workshops.