

2014

Reducing The Dropout Rate Through A Ninth Grade Academy

Eric Venson Davis
Walden University

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Eric Venson Davis

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Walden University
2014

Reducing the Dropout Rate Through a Ninth Grade Academy

by

Eric Venson Davis

MA, University of Louisiana Monroe, 2003

BS, Miles College, 1996

Doctoral Study Submitted in Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree of

Doctor of Education

Walden University

February 2015

Abstract

Oftentimes, educators are not equipped to identify students who are at risk of dropping out in their first year of high school. High school students at a local school setting were having a difficult time transitioning into the ninth grade and maintaining passing grades. The purpose of this study was to investigate reasons why students leave high school before completion and whether the current interventions in the ninth grade academy are effective in decreasing the dropout rate at a local high school in northeast Louisiana. The research question addressed interventions that could help students remain in school, decrease the dropout rate, and provide opportunities for students to graduate from high school. Prior literature pertaining to improving student retention provided the conceptual framework for the study. The overall design of the study was a case study in which data were collected through interviews from 15 teachers who taught in the ninth grade academy and minutes from team meetings. Data were analyzed through coding to determine emergent themes. The key results of the study indicated that the tutoring program, adult mentor program, and credit recovery program did have an impact on keeping students in school but were not significant enough to have improvement in reducing the dropout rate. Based on the findings, a project was developed that would train teachers on how to incorporate teaching strategies in the curriculum that would engage students in learning. Recommendations include additional staff development on how to engage students in the classroom. The potential for positive social change includes teachers having multiple strategies on hand for improving student engagement in the classroom, thus producing better retention and graduation rates for students.

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Dedication

First, I would like to give all honor and praises to God, who without a doubt made this achievement possible. I dedicate the completion of this study to my wife and children. My wife, who was my biggest cheerleader, continued to encourage me in completing this journey, and my children were always asking did I have homework to do. To my church family, who believed that I was capable of such a task, thank you for your support and prayers. Lastly, to my students, this is result of hard work and determination. I hope I have set a wonderful example to you that you can achieve anything you want in life.

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I would like to thank Dr. Blue Robbins and Dr. David Weintraub, whom I think were a Godsend especially for me. I thank you for always having an encouraging word and pushing me to continue to strive for greatness. I am grateful that as a committee you pushed me not to have an ordinary study and challenged me to have the best product possible. Because of you, I have discovered so much about myself through this study and what it takes to be a promoter of social change.

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Section 1: The Problem

Introduction

Every 9 seconds in the United States, a student enrolled in high school drops out (Martin & Halperin, 2006). There is not any one clear and definitive reason for why students drop out of school. According to Rumberger and Lim (2008), relationships developed within the school environment, the family setting, and the local community can become a factor contributing to the dropout rate. The process of dropping out of school for some students can be traced back to a lack of motivation and disengagement in the educational process (Tyler & Lofstrom, 2009). Although there are multiple reasons why students drop out of school, the process often begins in early childhood with trying to overcome problems in academics and issues in family life (Meeker, Edmonson, & Fisher, 2008). Over the last 2 decades, African Americans and Latinos have had the highest dropout rates in the United States (Featherson, 2010). With the implementation of the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB), states have been given the charge of closing the achievement gap. This act requires stringent testing of students in order to prove that students are proficient on their grade level. In focusing on accountability through rigorous testing, graduation rates have been affected, especially due to those exams that are required to graduate from high school (Cohen & Smearon, 2009).

The high school dropout issue is one that has been well documented in both scholarship and popular media, particularly over the last 2 decades (Hickman, Bartholomew, Mathwig, & Heinrich, 2008). Even though efforts have been made to curtail the problem, the problem continues to escalate (Johnson, Strange, & Madden,

2010). High school students continue to drop out of school (Children's Defense Fund, 2005). Currently, efforts to encourage students to remain in school are continuously being pursued (White, Lare, Mueller, Smeaton, & Waters, 2007). Students who drop out of high school run the risk of having low-paying jobs and being unemployed (Tyler & Lofstrom, 2009). Dropping out of school affects their ability to secure employment and the possibility of future stability (Christle, Jolivette, & Nelson, 2007). With so many obstacles to overcome and with no or little employment opportunities, students who drop out are subject to more negative outcomes, such as crime and prison (Hansen & Toso, 2007).

In understanding the dropout problem locally, I not only looked at students, but also took into account the factors that precipitate the decision to drop out of high school. The review of the literature will further elaborate on these factors.

Statement of the Problem

The dropout rate at the local high school where the research took place is the highest in the Louisiana Parish School System (Louisiana Department of Education, 2012). Leaders of the school district have attempted to decrease the dropout rate through vocational and job training. With students living in neighborhoods that have high poverty and crime rates, many depend on income from full-time jobs to support their families (Louisiana Department of Education, 2012). In essence, the ability to have a steady income takes precedence over remaining in school. These students stay at home during the day and work in the evening to contribute financially to the household. For some students, the decision concerning whether to remain in school becomes difficult due

to having their own children to care for. The dilemma is that daycare is not affordable, so these students must be the caregivers for their children during the school day.

Rationale

Evidence of the Problem at the Local Level

Louisiana ranks among the poorest states in America. A high percentage of students attending the school where the research took place are at risk of dropping out. In the school district, the percentage of the student population that dropped out was 8.9% in 2005-2006, 7.1% in 2006-2007, 5.4% in 2007-2008, 4.8% in 2008-2009, 5.1% in 2009-2010, 6.2% in 2010-2011, and 5.4% in 2011-2012 (Louisiana Department of Education, 2012). In the academic year 2012-2013, the school district's dropout rate was 13.1% (Louisiana Department of Education, 2013). There is an indication that the inability of students at this institution to overcome problems at school and issues at home is presenting serious challenges for them, threatening their ability to not only graduate, but also graduate on time. Often, at this school, when students have reached the age of emancipation and have not progressed to being within a year or two of graduating, they drop out. The number of students who reached the emancipation age who dropped out was 27 in the school year 2009-2010, 18 in 2010-2011, and 11 in 2011-2012 (Ouachita Parish Schools, 2013). Some students make decisions that could benefit the family, such as working or becoming the caregiver for their younger siblings. Some are raising their own children and either cannot afford daycare or do not have anyone to care for the children while they are at school. The Louisiana Department of Education (2012) designed preventive measures by implementing programs to assist in decreasing the

dropout rate through the Dropout Early Warning System, which identifies students at risk of leaving school early but provided no definite evidence of why students drop out. In an effort to find solutions to this problem, there is a need to study factors that affect at-risk students at this high school that hinder them from graduating. This study identified variables that contribute to at-risk students dropping out of this high school. In conducting the study, I got a better understanding of why these students were dropping out of school.

Evidence of the Problem From the Professional Literature

Knesting (2008) gave indications of why students drop out of school. She noted that some students lack the ability to adapt to the environment of the school and the overall high school experience because of the transition from middle school to high school or a transfer from a different high school. There are studies that reveal that failing standardized tests, not meeting academic requirements, and repeating grades could be factors in students dropping out (Tyler & Lofstrom, 2009). The reasons given by dropouts as to why they left school early do not clearly indicate how they got to that point (Tyler & Lofstrom, 2009). In order to prevent students from dropping out of school, factors that can contribute to dropping out must be identified (Reddy & Sinha, 2010). The impact of the decision to drop out of school not only affects the student, but also can hinder the student's opportunities to become a productive citizen in the community (Schoeneberger, 2012).

To get an overall view of why students drop out of school, researchers must focus not only on the student, but also on the role that schools play in the student's success or

failure (Knesting, 2008). The literature has suggested several reasons that students drop out of school (Hansen & Toso, 2007). The reasons given by researchers include, but are not limited to, personal issues, difficulty functioning within the school setting, and external factors such as peer pressure and drug dealing (Hansen & Toso, 2007).

Although past research indicates that these factors are pivotal in the decision to drop out, there is a gap in the literature concerning the school's involvement in this process.

Definitions

The following terms are defined for this study:

Dropout: A student is considered a dropout when he or she is listed as a student in a high school (Grades 9-12) and meets the following criteria: attended a high school within the local school district the prior school year, did not attend school at the start of the new school year, did not receive any graduation credentials proving completion of high school, did not attend any other school, and stopped attending for circumstances other than being deceased or sick (i.e., unexcused absences; National Education for Statistics, 2011).

Louisiana School Accountability System: The state of Louisiana's initiative to promote steady improvement in academics and improve the dropout rate (Louisiana Department of Education, 2012).

Ninth grade retention: Refers to students who have failed the ninth grade and have been retained for the upcoming school year (Tyler & Lofstrom, 2009).

Significance

The purpose of this study was to identify factors that contribute to students

dropping out of school at a high school in northeast Louisiana. The problem of students dropping out of school has been an issue locally for the past 2 years (Louisiana Department of Education, 2012). Schools that have students who reside in communities with poverty and high crime are more likely to have students not graduating (Somers, Owens, & Pillawsky, 2009). The results of the study brought more awareness to educators about students dropping out of school and how to aid them toward graduation. In regard to promoting social change, this study played an important role in empowering teachers, counselors, and administrators to become better informed about the issues surrounding students who may be on the verge of dropping out and could provide them with the tools needed in order to keep these students in school.

Guiding/Research Question

The research question that guided the study was the following: What interventions will help students remain in school and help decrease the dropout rate? In conducting the study, school officials put plans in place that would increase the chances of students remaining in school.

Review of the Literature

The purpose of this study was to investigate reasons that students leave high school before completion. In an effort to examine causes for and solutions to the problem of student dropouts, this literature review covers the following topics: causes of the dropout rate, vocational education, and transitional support services.

Many descriptions apply to students who are in danger of not graduating and leaving school early. Suh, Suh, and Houston (2007) described the term *at risk*, which

refers to the external factors that can be detrimental to the success of a student in pursuing an education. Throughout the history of the American educational system, the phenomenon of students dropping out of high school has not been a surprising one. Suh and Suh (2010) concluded that there are multiple factors that can cause a student to drop out of school. Within the scope of the dropout issue, there are both internal and external factors that school and district officials have identified as possible causes, such as conflicts with teachers, living in dysfunctional homes, substance abuse, and making poor choices (Meeker et al., 2008). However, past research in this area has been conducted on a broad level and has included a great number of factors that occur outside the school, such as pressure to join gangs, drug and alcohol abuse, and teenage pregnancy (Bradshaw, O'Brennan, & McNeely, 2008). Research has also yielded valuable information about events or circumstances that occur at school that can affect whether or not students graduate from high school (Knesting, 2008). Additionally, the research could help in the development of proactive plans of prevention that schools can use in increasing the rate of students persisting in school to graduation. Dropping out of school cannot be factored down to only one cause. According to Featherston (2010), failing marks, poor attendance, and a difficult high school transition are some of the factors that could hinder a student from completing high school.

Causes for the Dropout Rate

In order to understand the reasons that students are dropping out of school, it is necessary to identify the factors that contribute to this problem (Monrad, 2007). The inability of some students to complete high school has prompted immediate concern from

school officials (Suh & Suh, 2011). For at-risk students, not graduating from high school is a definite possibility. Understanding why students drop out of school remains a concern for schools throughout the United States (Featherston, 2010). Students who are at danger of dropping out of school find themselves struggling to meet the attendance requirements for promotion through high school (Knesting, 2008). The pressure of preparing for school day after day begins to take a toll on at-risk students, especially when students lose interest in attending school. A report by Amos (2008) gave a view of the challenges that the United States is having with the dropout epidemic and the effect this epidemic has on the United States globally:

In the 21st century, the United States is no longer the model country that is producing the most graduates from secondary and post-secondary. In fall of 2008, hundreds of thousands of students entering the ninth grade will begin their matriculation into high school. Of those ninth graders, 33% of these students will not finish school with any graduate credentials. (p. 1)

The task is more than providing inspiration and encouragement to at-risk students to graduate; schools must prepare students for life after the high school experience, whether they move into the workforce or on to postsecondary education (Bowen, 2009).

High-Stakes Exit Exams

School districts and officials use exit exams in schools all over America in determining whether a student is proficient in the core areas of English, math, science, and social studies (Barnes, 2009). These exams are also used to determine whether a student will graduate from a traditional high school setting. School settings that have the

highest rate of students dropping out due to a failed exit exam usually contain minority students, such as African American and Hispanic students (Barnes, 2009). Beginning in the 10th grade, high school students begin the task of taking and attempting to pass these exit exams. If students fail these exams, they have the opportunity to retake them as often as they need to in order to receive a passing grade. After a number of failed attempts, some students can become discouraged and may give up on receiving a high school diploma (Angert, 2007).

Standardized Testing and the Dropout Rate

Graduation exit exams appear not to have any bearing on the average student quitting school, but the percentages increase when at-risk students are given the same test (Tyler & Lofstrom, 2009). If at-risk students feel that they are not adequately equipped to pass the exam, it gives them a reason to lean toward dropping out of school (Kim et al., 2011). In these assessments, all students are subject to the same testing material, whether they are low-performing students or gifted students (Hickman et al., 2008). One of the characteristics that can be attributed to at-risk students is that of being low performing (Balfanz et al., 2010). At-risk students who fall into this category are at least a grade behind, and if they fail in both the fourth and eighth grade years, they will enter high school as overage students, sometimes being 17 in the ninth grade (Phelps, 2009). Even though failure on the test does not halt promotion to the next grade, students cannot graduate until they pass the exam (Cohen & Smeardon, 2009).

Socioeconomic Status

Families' lack of financial stability can become an issue for students attempting to

graduate from high school. One of the most prominent predictors of high school dropout is socioeconomic status (SES; Henry, Cavanaugh, & Oetting, 2010). Students from lower socioeconomic settings leave school at much higher rates than students from higher socioeconomic settings (Hickman et al., 2008). In essence, students within this category become more likely to drop out due to lack of financial resources (Schoenberger, 2012). Students who live in poverty are in greater danger of dropping out of school than students who are better off financially. A high poverty rate in a community usually translates to residents who are on government assistance, are unemployed, or have low-paying jobs (Tyler & Lofstrom, 2009). Poverty can also indicate that there is a lack of educational attainment within the community. According to Neuman (2008),

Children born in poverty possess the characteristics of remaining in poverty. With these environments come the likelihood high teenage pregnancy rates, unstable households and guardians who were dropouts themselves. Unless local school districts invest in school facilities and highly qualified teachers, students will face the challenges of keeping up in school with an unfair advantage. (para. 7)

Students who have to work in order to contribute to the survival of their families are at risk of not completing school. Frequently, students are left with the choice of either going to school or earning an income. With at-risk students, the difficulty of understanding the benefits of staying in school versus earning a living usually ends in students working (Bridgeland, Dilulio, & Morrison, 2006). Students who decide to work in order to help the family are in greater danger of dropping out of school (Lofstrom & Magnum, 2009).

Students have to deal with more issues than just being of low SES (Archambault et al., 2009). With low SES may come the inability to wear name-brand clothes, have adequate shoes, or even have the means to bathe and eat (Lessard et al., 2008). These issues could lead to students wanting to avoid school in the wake of being teased by peers (Lessard et al., 2008). Schools that have freshman academies and educate students who are of low SES can provide much-needed support and reassurance that coming from a low-SES background does not have to be an indication of future success in graduating from high school. The reason that low SES becomes a major predictor of high school dropout is because it may lead to so many other smaller issues that students cannot overcome (Bornsheuer, Polonyi, Andrews, Fore, & Onwuegbuzie, 2011). In addition, school districts serving students from low-SES backgrounds have a higher percentage of at-risk students potentially leaving school before completion (Kim et al., 2011). A higher percentage of students from families living in poverty do not complete high school between the ages of 16 and 24 in comparison to students from families not living in poverty (National Center for Education Statistics, 2008). While the SES of students can serve as a factor in dropping out, it is only one factor out of many. In the next section, I discuss how race and gender can become factors in students' decisions to drop out.

Gender and Ethnicity

Gender and ethnicity can be determinants of whether students remain in school. Dropout rates are higher for Blacks, Hispanics, and Native Americans than for Asians and Whites (Schoenberger, 2012). The National Center for Education Statistics reported that White and Black females had greater success in finishing high school than their male

counterparts did. Historically, Black and White females have graduated from school 92% of the time compared to 87% of Black and White males (Chapman, Laird & KewalRamani, 2011). Also, within these groups are poverty and high crime rates. At-risk students are faced with challenges that can far exceed those of ordinary students. Some schools develop a freshman academy within the school in order to help with these challenges. A freshman academy can help to combat and overcome stereotypes of at-risk students failing to achieve success in school by bridging gaps associated with gender and ethnicity, as well as by developing, nurturing, and building students' self-worth (Ervin High School, 2013). According to Meeker et al. (2008), students at risk deal with circumstances called *pull factors*. Pull factors are issues or circumstances out of the control of the school that "pull" at students and, if successful, cause them to drop out. Black and Hispanic female students have a high teenage pregnancy rate that puts them in dire situations in which they must make a decision on whether to finish school, work, or take care of their child. Often, these students are still living at home with their parents with no support or financial means (Lee & Staff, 2007). They are most likely depending on government assistance, and the fathers of their children are likely to be absent (Meeker et al., 2008). In these situations, it is almost impossible to attend school, so the difficulty of attempting to finish school and the stress that comes along with it become too much for students to withstand (Bridgeland et al., 2009).

Of all the nation's low-performing schools, Blacks make up 48% of the dropout population, Hispanics 30%, compared to 22% of Whites (Alliance for Excellent Education, 2010). Within the Black and Hispanic communities are problems that exist

among individual families that have effects on students as early as kindergarten. There are major health, financial, and stability issues throughout these communities. Students often move from location to location, which causes students to move from school to school. Although sometimes change is good, frequent change that reflects a lack of ability to function in society due to poverty can be detrimental to students receiving a solid education and remaining in school. According to The National High School Center (2007), graduation rates indicate that female students graduate at a much higher rate than male students do.

Behavior

Early indicators in childhood behaviors can be predictors of students being on the verge of quitting school (Hickman et al., 2008). Students with behavioral issues are often disruptive in the school environment and have multiple discipline referrals (Stout & Christenson, 2009). More often than not, at-risk students exhibit behaviors in the classroom that prevent them from participating actively in the class (Lee et al., 2011). Students who consistently exhibit behaviors contrary to the rules of the school may find themselves being suspended or even expelled from the school site (Bornsheuer et al., 2011). For at-risk students, discipline problems do not come without attachments. It can be perceived that students who are at risk are more likely to cause disruptions to the learning process, participate in fights, and have disrespect for authority figures (Jones & Gregory, 2010). Those holding this perception often push for more stern discipline from administrators for these students, even to the point of suspension or expulsion (Lee et al., 2011). Teachers would rather eliminate a problem in the classroom than take the

necessary steps to enforce effective classroom management (Suh & Suh, 2007).

Administrators may grow weary in dealing with those students who are consistent visitors in the office for discipline, no matter what the offense, can grow weary with dealing with students and find it easier to suspend or expel students with behavioral issues. Black students had a higher rate of written referrals to the principal's office than any other ethnic group in the United States in 2006 (Rocque, 2010). Sometimes, at-risk students may feel that they are being singled out or labeled as problem children in school (Cohen & Smearnon, 2009). External factors and school factors can be a combination that is difficult for at-risk to surpass (Knesting, 2008). Students who are suspended or expelled from school because of discipline issues may solidify within them the emotions of being disconnected from the school culture, and that disconnection can increase the possibility of dropping out (Jones & Gregory, 2011). Students who are disengaged from the school culture and the learning process become prime candidates for not finishing school.

The Importance of Ninth Grade in Reducing the Dropout Rate

Based on research, it is evident that the ninth grade is the most important year of high school, especially for at-risk students (McCallumore & Sparapani, 2010). One of the most difficult tasks that ninth graders face is the transition into high school. School administrators have attempted to help students transition from junior high school to the senior high setting as smoothly as possible (Styron & Pleasant, 2010). Although students may be excited about being in high school, they face more stringent academic requirements, along with being introduced to a new school culture. According to Editorial Projects in Education (2007), students in the ninth grade often find themselves

out of place and account for more than one-third of all dropouts. Failure to meet expectations concerning school rules and coursework can lead to students having to repeat the ninth grade. It is quite possible that at-risk students entering the ninth grade had a valuable support system during their middle school matriculation (Featherston, 2010). With the beginning of a new school year, those support systems are not established yet; this situation can lead students to feel alienated and full of anxiety (Bowen, 2009). In the transition into the ninth grade, at-risk students, if not properly nurtured, can show high absenteeism and the failing of courses (Cohen & Smerdon, 2009). In a rural school district in Michigan, the graduation rate from ninth to 12th grade was only 50%, compared to the state rate of 76%. With the decline in the graduation rate has come the notion of developing a system that can offer some sort of support for ninth graders as they transition into high school. Research has shown that transitioning into high school is a tough task and can often lead to issues with self-esteem and maintaining an acceptable grade point average (Somers et al., 2009). Because the transition of ninth graders can be so overwhelming, there are a great number of students who cannot complete the ninth grade and have to repeat it (Herlihy, 2007).

Attendance

Being consistently absent from school can be a strong indicator that a student is in danger of becoming a dropout (University of California, 2011). In October 2007, the National Center for Children in Poverty released details in a report that connected students being absent early in education and the correlation of low SES and student achievement. According to Romero and Sun-Lee (2007),

- A significant number of students grades K-5 were absent 9% of the school year.
- In early education, the rate of not attending school begins a trend and follows students to the next grade.
- Children who do not behave on the same level as their peers are more likely not to attend school on a regular basis.
- Children that are consistently absent from school have excuses of why they do not want to go. (p. 2)

Absenteeism is a major concern for many students, but for students who are on the verge of dropping out of school, it can be the end of school, as they know it (Schoenberger, 2012). Sometimes high absenteeism can be traced back to the home environment, where there is little to no structure in the family (Bornsheuer et al., 2011). Other factors could be a lack of transportation to school, while it could simply be that students are not interested in school any longer (Menzer & Hampel, 2009). When students fail to attend school, they fall so far behind that it is almost impossible to recover and at this stage dropping out becomes the only option (Tavakolian & Howell, 2012). After they have missed so many days of school, students are reported as being truant from school (Ouachita Parish School Board, 2012). By law, a truant student is subject to arrest by law enforcement as well as parents and will be responsible for paying a fine for the offense (Ouachita Parish School Board, 2012). Children who are excessively absent from school lack sufficient social skills needed and find it difficult to function in society. In their personal lives, it may lead to the development of negative behaviors such as

being on time for work or appointments. Children's school attendance is based on the importance the family or guardians place on it, whether or not it is beneficial for children to attend (Baicai & Jingjian, 2010). With being absent from school, the life a dropout can turn quickly to crime and becoming unproductive.

Solutions to Decrease the Dropout Rate

Creating a Nurturing School Environment

A way to improve the likelihood that students graduate from high school is for the school to create a nurturing school environment (McCallumore & Sparapani, 2010). In this nurturing school environment, students felt safe, had a sense of belonging and became focused on the goal at hand (Knesting, 2008). Administrators, teachers, and staff share the responsibility of making sure students are learning in a comfortable environment. Oftentimes, students who are facing problems at home look to the school for comfort and a sense of belonging (Strom & Boster, 2007). According to Bowen (2007), children attend schools where they are valued, respected, have a voice, and where the staff is caring. The school environment has to be a place where students are free to be themselves and feel like a part of a community. Teachers play a critical role in the school environment because of the connections they make with students (Miron, Jones & Kelaher-Young, 2011). At-risk students can thrive and achieve in a nurturing school environment.

There have been many studies that indicate that there is a direct correlation between teacher behavior and students' dissatisfaction with wanting to learn and attend school (Shau & Baig, 2012). At-risk students are one wrong episode away from quitting

school and the school environment, if operating properly can serve as that one entity that can deter them from leaving school.

Vocational Education

Vocational educational programs have not had the notoriety of times past due to the negative connotation that derives from it (Domenech, 2011). Although the path to vocational education can come through students who are at risk of dropping out of school, the dynamics of the program can also serve as a powerful tool of keeping students enthusiastic about remaining in school and prepare them to be job ready when completed (Domenech, 2011). Over the past few years, the intent of improving vocational programs has yielded significant progress by increasing the use of more advanced level math and science to the vocational curriculum in order for students to be more job ready (Plank, DeLuca, & Estacion, 2008). Career offerings in a vocational education program can draw interest from students who are on the verge of dropping out and could allow them to become engaged in academic studies that could potentially improve attendance, grades, and an opportunity to complete high school.

Transitional Support

For many students, the transition from middle school to high school presents challenges (Cohen & Smeardon, 2009). Some of the challenges include but are not limited to, getting acclimated to new teachers, peers, and in some instances a different building. School districts nationwide are exploring and developing new strategies to incorporate at the middle school level to help ease the transition into high school (Cohen & Smeardon, 2009). The stakeholders that are crucial to the transition are the parents,

students, and school personnel (Cohen & Smeardon, 2009). It is important that in addressing students' needs entering into the ninth grade that all aspects of the students' needs have been addressed to include not only academic support, but also, social and emotional support. Overall, those who can manage the transition and perform positively in the ninth grade are more likely to finish high school and be a productive citizen in society (Geltner, Law, Forehand, & Miles, 2009).

Collaboration between the middle school and high school can be a crucial component for the transition of students entering the ninth grade. Schools can plan activities for students by having an orientation day before the school year ends and before the beginning next school year so that students can become familiar with the environment of the school. The school could also plan parent nights in the summer and during the school year so that parents could get involved in the transition process. The collaborative efforts between the school and parents have been proven to have a positive effect on the transitioning of students into the high school setting (Geltner et al., 2009).

Freshman Academy

The development of a ninth grade academy can serve as a transitional tool for students entering high school (McDaniel, 2008). In the ninth grade academy, ninth grade students are separate from the upper classmen to help them establish a routine and structure for entering high school. The structure that derives from the academy by separating students from the upper classmen to aid in the transitional process can help students adapt to their new surroundings and give direction to students in the hope of completing their high school education (Page, 2010). The structure from the academy

also improves student behavior by having a concerted effort by school personnel to outline steps of intervention for students before school administration has to enforce disciplinary actions (Emmett & McGee, 2012). Hall (2006) found that the implementation of a freshman academy has improved discipline on campus and increased retention for 9th grade students in the state of Georgia. Today, freshman academies have been created in a large number of school districts throughout the country in order to meet the needs of 9th grade students entering high school (Styron & Pleasant, 2010).

Oftentimes, students who are of a low SES or experiencing issues with their gender or race can find success in freshman academies if the team members in the academy are willing to invest the time and support needed for each student to experience academic success despite any challenges they may face (Emmett & McGee, 2012). Students who fail to pass graduation exams after several attempts often dropout. Within the academy, students are required to take a freshman seminar class that not only prepares them for the transition into high school, but also focuses on how to take and be prepared to complete the exams required for graduation (Dedmond, 2006). The freshman academy develops organizational, study, and test taking skills that are essential in preparation for the graduation exit exams they will take in grades 10-12. The freshman academy also serves as a tool to help students on the verge of dropping out improve their attendance at school. Since the academy is structured around ninth grade students only, the bond that is established between student and teacher help to develop a desire for students to continue to press towards graduation (Kennelly & Monrad, 2007). A commitment to one another and shared responsibility to see the process of overcoming obstacles can serve as the

motivation needed for students to finish high school (Abbot & Fisher, 2012). In regards to high school transformation for students who are at risk of dropping out of school, the freshman academy increases the chances of students promoting to the 10th grade (Hall, 2006).

Implications

Based on the findings, a staff development model was created to identify warning signs for students who could potentially drop out of school. In these staff development sessions, teachers are trained on what characteristics and behaviors at-risk students' exhibit and what steps to follow in order to properly refer those students to the interventions that would best fit their educational needs. The staff development model demonstrated how successfully implementation of interventions in the ninth grade can provide support for students and increase the chances of them not dropping out of school.

Summary

The problem of high school students dropping out of school is and has continued to be at the forefront of the nation's school systems. The factors that contribute to the dropout rate may be the bulk of the problem, while a lack of prevention may also be a culprit. The review of literature demonstrated the available data researchers have published on the issue of high school dropouts. The review gave an in-depth look into the lives of students who may be at risk of dropping out. Section 2 dealt with the collection and analysis of data. In that section, the research design and approach is identified. The setting and sample has been given along with the justification for using such a sample. I outlined the procedures of how I the will collect and analyze the data.

Section 3 of the study interpreted the results of the study. This section also included the outcomes from the study which are consistent with the scope of the study. Section 4 is the reflection portion and highlighted the strengths of the study. This section also yields recommendations for further study on the topic. Section 4 offered the opportunity for the researcher to reflect on how the study promoted social change. Finally, the reflection section determined the growth as a practitioner for the researcher.

Section 2: The Methodology

Introduction

The purpose of this study was to investigate interventions that can help students remain in school. A qualitative case study design was used. In this approach, the researcher is attempting to gain insight into and a deep understanding of an individual, group, or event in order to develop a rich description (Lodico, Spaulding, & Voegtle, 2010). In looking at different interventions, I determined that the case study design was the most complete design to use because it allowed me to examine procedures and to acquire a better understanding of how interventions prevent students from dropping out of school. I used in-depth interviews that yielded valuable data that enhanced the study. The responses from the participants measured whether or not interventions in the ninth grade academy were making a difference in preventing students from dropping out of school. A phenomenological design was not feasible because I looked at interventions in the ninth grade academy and was not necessarily seeking to capture feelings or emotions from the participants. A grounded theory design would not have worked for this study because I did not collect data from a variety of sources and did not perform constant comparisons of data analysis to determine similarities and differences. Further, a grounded theory design would not have worked for this study due to time constraints.

Participants

The research took place at a high school located in rural northeastern Louisiana. The total school population is 561 students, with the ninth grade population at 181 students. The school demographics are 99.2% African American, 0.07% Caucasian, and

0.01% other nationality, with 95% of students receiving free or reduced-price lunch. The school is considered an at-risk school, with 21% of the total student population classified as special education and 25% of the ninth graders classified as such. The participants invited for the study were all the teachers who taught in the ninth grade academy at the high school in the Louisiana School System during the 2012-2013 school year. Out of the invitees, 15 teachers participated in the study. I chose these 15 teachers because they provided the most comprehensive data for the study. They interacted with the students of the academy and implemented the interventions of the academy on a continuous basis.

Within the dynamics of the academy, teachers have a period in the day that is dedicated to *teaming*. Teaming allows the teachers to plan for lessons, discuss curriculum or discipline issues, and hold conferences with students or parents about educational concerns. I attended some of the meetings to see how individuals interacted with one another and shared educational experiences with them that would not involve the study in order to establish a researcher-to-participant relationship. In addition to attending team meetings for interaction purposes, I scheduled a day when teachers were meeting in their teaming period in order to extend the invitation to participate in the study. In this meeting, I discussed the purpose of the study, including the possibility of incorporating the findings into the existing ninth grade academy, as well as what was required of individuals in order to participate. In the academy, there is a pool of 15 teachers who teach core subjects and electives. Krejcie and Morgan (1970), two of the early scholars in determining sample sizes, developed a formula that would indicate based on the population the sample size needed to deliver a proper confidence level. The

confidence level represents how sure one can be that the answers from the sample are a true representation of the population. In their formula, a population of 15 would need a sample size of at least 14 in order to have the proper confidence level. I informed the participants that they had a right not to participate or to withdraw from the study at any time throughout the study. The participants were made aware that there were no physical or safety issues that would derive from participating in this study. I also informed participants that the data collected would be kept confidential. No participant was identified by name to ensure confidentiality. The results of the study inspired the idea for the project (see Appendix A). In order to gain access to the participants, a letter of cooperation was drafted by me and signed by the superintendent (see Appendix B). Also, a letter of cooperation was drafted by me and signed by the principal of the school where the research took place (see Appendix C). These letters allowed me to conduct the study, have access to the participants, and access to the research site. Additionally, I received IRB approval (02-21-14-024-7569) to conduct the study. For confidentiality purposes, information such as names and other personally identifying information was not revealed in the study.

Data Collection

After researching several studies similar to this one, I discovered a pre-established instrument that matched this study called the Interview Protocol for Participants (Mulroy, 2008). With regard to reliability, the questions on the instrument were specific and clear. The instrument consistently measured factors, interventions, and fostered relationships that can help to keep students from dropping out of school. Additionally, the instrument

proved to be valid because the components of the instrument measured what needed to be measured based on the research question that drove the study. The instrument laid out the procedures for the interview process and questions that were asked to the participants. I contacted Dr. Mulroy, creator of the instrument, and gained permission to use the format. I added items that I needed for the study. Interview Questions 1-4 helped me to answer the research question. The instrument can be found in Appendix E.

Each question asked directly dealt with an intervention that could help students remain in school at this particular school. These questions allowed the participants the opportunity to give detailed information on the dynamics of these interventions within the academy through their own experiences and perceptions. In essence, the interview questions and the responses to these questions gave insight on the value of the interventions that were occurring at this school, and whether or not the interventions were meeting the goal of deterring students from dropping out of school.

Data came from participants' responses to interview questions located on the instrument. In addition, I collected data from team meetings and conferences to gain insight on how teachers implemented interventions for students. Interviews for the study took place during each participant's planning hour in the classroom. Although I collected the data in the participant's classroom, the data were not stored there. The data are locked in a secure location determined by me. There was one round of interview sessions lasting 30 minutes for each participant. I collected data through an audio recording session, backed with written transcripts. For confidentiality purposes, information such as names and other personal identification was not revealed in the study.

Role of the Researcher

Although I serve in the position of administrator for 10th-12th grade students at the school where the research took place, I have no direct daily interaction with the teachers in the ninth grade academy. However, my role as an administrator at the site where the research took place could have had an impact on data collection in regard to participants' answers in the interviews. I, the researcher, approached the participants about taking part in the study. In the invite to participate meeting, participants were assured that everything that was required of them to participate in the study was private and confidential, including their names. No other school staff knew the teachers were participants in the study, only the principal and I knew that they were participating in the study. Participants were not coerced or influenced to participate in the study. I informed the participants that at any time they could withdraw from the study and that their participation was strictly voluntary. As the researcher, I informed the participants that there were no physical or safety issues involved in participating in the study.

Timeline of Study Activities

Week 1, Day 1. I conducted an interest meeting with potential participants. The meeting convened in a central location within the school during the potential participants' teaming period. At the meeting, I discussed the study and the rationale behind the study, and I sought a response to the invitation to participate in the study.

Week 1, Day 2. I selected participants who had expressed interest. I informed participants by formal letter that they had been chosen to participate in the study.

Week 1, Day 5. After participants had received their acceptance letters, I met

with participants in a central location during their teaming period to complete informed consent forms (see Appendix D). In the meeting, I explained in detail the intent of the consent form and their rights as participants.

Weeks 2 & 3. On Day 1 of Week 2, I scheduled the interview dates and times for participants. Interviews took place at the school during the participants' planning period. The interviews lasted approximately 30 minutes. After the completion of the interviews, I allotted additional time for participants who might need more in-depth discussion. On Day 3 of Week 2 and throughout Week 3, I conducted the interviews of the participants along with collecting the data from those interviews.

Data Analysis

After completing the interview process, I transcribed the data for each participant into transcripts. In the coding process, I separated the text into different segments of information. I focused on student/teacher relationships, effects of failing grades and retention, post-high school opportunities, and the motivation to learn after normal school hours. These categories presented opportunities to gain insight into how interventions can help to reduce the dropout rate in the ninth grade academy. Once I identified the segments of information, I looked for text segments that were alike by identifying the sentence or paragraph and placing a box around it and then labeling the segment with a code word that best summarized what the participant was describing. I wrote codes in the margins and labeled the transcripts. As I reviewed each transcript, I noticed that some of the codes became repetitive. In these cases of repetitiveness, I noted on the transcript and a separate recording sheet that these particular codes could become potential themes. I

capped the transcripts at 30-40 codes, per Creswell (2012). I reduced the codes that continued to be repeated or overlapped to around 20 codes. At this level of about 20 codes, the codes were developed into themes that included supports, collaboration, relationships, and student engagement. The themes were categories that incorporated all that had been developed from the codes into order to derive a major idea. Through triangulation and member checks, I combined the different data sources. Data that included minutes from parent, student, and teacher conferences, along with minutes from team meetings, brought attention to potential problems that were occurring with students that could create the need for an intervention. From the conducted interviews, I was able to interpret the data from the student/parent perspective as well as the teacher perspective. These two entities combined provided possible interventions to keep students from dropping out of school. Jick (1979), one of the early scholars of triangulation, used a combination of data and data collection procedures to display a detailed and comprehensive picture of his studies. I disseminated a copy of each participant's transcript to verify that the data collected and transcribed represented a true and accurate account of what was said. The transcripts were reviewed by the participants through member checks. Member checking eliminated any researcher biases from the study.

Qualitative Results

The purpose of this study was to investigate how interventions within a ninth grade academy could help to decrease the dropout rate at a local high school in Northeast Louisiana. The data collected came from interviews of teachers who taught in the ninth grade academy. After I had collected, analyzed, coded, and member checked the data,

four major themes emerged. Additionally, a few minor themes were discovered to support the major themes. In the next sections of the study, these themes are discussed in detail.

Research Question

The research question in this study explored whether interventions used in the ninth grade academy would help students remain in school and help to reduce the dropout rate. The interventions used in the academy were an in-school/afterschool tutoring program, a credit/grade recovery program, and the use of adult mentors. These interventions were available at all times but were mostly incorporated on an as-needed basis.

The data provided insight on how supporting students entering the ninth grade for the first time can become a catalyst for them to remain in school. Often, students in the ninth grade are dealing with a new school environment and trying to make the transition into high school. The teachers in the study understood that supporting students, especially those who may be at risk, is a crucial element of an effort to deter them from dropping out of school. The teachers presented their perspectives on supporting students in the ninth grade academy. The first major theme that I derived from the data was supports. From the major theme of supports, two minor themes, extra assistance and guidance, were developed to better expound upon those perspectives given by the teachers.

The teachers in the ninth grade academy were fully aware of the challenges that their students had to overcome on a daily basis. The majority of the students enrolled in

this school came from low socioeconomic and poor academic backgrounds. Within the academy, there are interventions in place to help ninth grade students succeed and remain in school. Although teachers in the academy teach a full day in the academy, much more remains needed to ensure that the pathway to graduation is one that becomes attainable. One of the interventions that provided extra assistance and support for students was the in-school and afterschool tutoring program. Teacher 1 stated, “I think that afterschool tutoring is great for students who need assistance and actually utilize it. Having a smaller teacher-to-student ratio enables more interactivity and the opportunity to really narrow down where the problem with their learning is.” The in-school and afterschool program was open to any student in the ninth grade academy. However, not all students participated. Students in extracurricular activities such as band or athletics were required to attend at least one session a week for enrichment. Even though the mandated tutoring requirement for them to participate in extracurricular activities and athletics seemed like a great idea, for some teachers it created more of a distraction than a help. Students knew that they were required to come and only showed up because of the requirement. The actions of students who did not take advantage of the teacher assistance provided for them proved that the tutoring program was not beneficial to them. Teacher 2 stated, “Tutoring is only beneficial to those who actively want improvement. Student retention rates decrease when students really work hard during these intervention times.” However, for some students, having access to the tutoring program proved to be a very important resource and enhanced their learning. Those who were participants in the tutoring program became more confident in the classroom. Teacher 5 stated,

I believe that the in-school/afterschool tutoring intervention promoted student engagement by providing students with additional remediation in subject matters that are challenging for them. The additional remediation serves to help students gain an understanding of concepts being taught in the classroom. The direct result of student remediation increased academic confidence in the classroom for some students.

Although not all of the students took advantage of the tutoring intervention, it greatly benefitted those who participated. Teacher 14 replied, “Students who will spend extra time in the learning environment is more likely to get the help they need ... and have success.”

At this school, teachers realized that having the proper guidance plays an intricate role in students’ success. In order to set this foundation, the ninth grade academy was designed to foster guidance and to help ease the transition into the ninth grade with the help of adult mentors. During the interviews the teachers expounded on how adult mentors, their roles, and themselves could ease the transition into the ninth grade. Teacher 1 stated,

Mentors are provided to give students someone on the school campus to talk to and provide guidance to, especially when there is a noticeable lack of a guiding figure in their family. This can be very beneficial for the students if they heed the advice or recommendations of the mentor when it comes to their schooling. Theoretically, mentors should be able to have a decent amount of pull with their kids.

The mentors that serve the students in the ninth grade academy come from adults on the campus and off the campus. The teachers agree that the mentors on campus are more effective because of the rapport that mentors establish with students. Teacher 10 replied, “The role of the adult mentors is to provide guidance and encouragement to students who may be at more risk of dropping out of school and ... advantages of staying in school.” Because these students deal with issues that could become distractions to their schooling, the role of the mentor is vital. Mentors were extremely important to those students who are having trouble transitioning and struggling academically. Mentors were alerted and made aware of any problems students were facing at school and beyond. Within the structure of the academy, the mentors were encouraged to become active in helping students either cope or overcome any obstacles that may interfere with school and jeopardize graduating. Teacher 11 stated, “Mentors have been the difference in graduation and dropouts in several instances.”

Another intervention incorporated to help decrease the dropout rate was the dynamics and the structure of the ninth grade academy. The teachers at this school felt that the uniqueness of the structure in the academy gives students in the ninth grade an extraordinary opportunity to succeed and provides a solid foundational environment in which students can learn at a high level. This kind of structure not only positively impact their academic lives, but also could impact their personal lives. Teacher 9 states,

The ninth grade academy is designed to “watch over” the students as they enter high school. We as teachers keep track of attendance, grades, behavior, activities, and each student’s everyday school concerns. As a team, we are able to follow

student patterns, address any concerns, and meet with parents and student concerns. This allows us to potentially “catch” anyone who has previously fallen through the cracks and give help where needed.

The teachers make a collaborative effort and place a high emphasis on tracking each student and monitoring their progress in the classroom and even in extra curriculum activities.

The second theme that emerged from the data was collaboration that included the sub theme of teaming. Teachers in the ninth grade academy were afforded an extra planning period in their schedule that allows them to address any concerns or challenges students may be facing at school. Teachers agree that collaborating together as a team can be the catalyst that students need to help them maintain an academic focus. Teachers collaborate in their departmental meetings as well as in their teaming meetings in order to be proactive in derailing any obstacles that students may face in school. Teacher 2 states, “In teaming, we have the ability to stop major issues before they happen.” By collaborating together, not only do teachers create a support system for students , but also share in a common goal in preparing students for a future graduation.

The third theme that emerged from the data was relationships. The mission of the ninth grade academy is entitled “Staying on track to graduation”. It is a mission deeply embedded in the belief that every child that enters into the ninth grade academy will have the opportunity to graduate. According to the teachers, the relationships that students have with teachers, administrators, and peers were pivotal to the success of the students. Teacher 10 replied, “Having a good relationship with the faculty and administration can

assist the student's focus and desire to complete school. These social relationships can be the difference between a student succeeding or not." The teachers expressed the importance of the relationships they have with their students. The consensus of the teachers felt that it is important to establish positive relationships with their students. These relationships are not just limited to the classroom, but includes being active in their activities outside of the classroom, such as extracurricular activities. Teacher 12 stated, "Nothing thrills a student more than seeing his/her teacher at one of his/her activities." Often, it is the relationship that motivates them to continue to strive for academic excellence. In discussing the interview questions with teachers, it was discovered that relationships not a part of the academy, but connected to the school impacted their success in the ninth grade academy and kept them on track for graduation. In the absence of a father or mother, a coach becomes very instrumental in the life of these students. The relationships established not only with coaches, but also with other team sponsors throughout the school had a direct impact on the decision to stay in school.

Another intervention that the ninth grade academy incorporated that helped decrease the dropout rate was the credit/grade recovery program. This program was designed to allow students the opportunity to make up either a semester or a grading period of a class they have failed during the school year. Students retook the course in a computer lab away from their everyday classroom assignment. It took a collaborative effort on behalf of the teachers in the regular classroom and the credit/grade recovery teacher for students to have success in this setting. There were mixed reviews about this particular intervention because of the design of the program. There were teachers who

thought that the credit and grade program is an excellent resource for students who may be struggling, while others felt that students were taking advantage of the program and not adhering to the intent of what the program was designed to accomplish. Teacher 13 stated,

I am sure that credit recovery helped struggling students get on track to graduate from school. I personally do not care for the set up program that is in place now. I think that the program allowed students who are not concerned with passing the class to take the class in a quiet, low stress setting with a one-on-one “instructor” and keep the grade they “earn” on the computer.

Teacher 10 replied, “If students complete the recovery ... get a second chance to get it right.” Overall, the teachers in the academy agree that this intervention was a great one to have in the school. With many of the students already having academic deficiencies, the credit/grade recovery program provided a realistic hope for them to graduate and graduate on time.

The last theme that emerged from the data was student engagement. With the intervention of the credit/grade recovery program, it was the hope that after a student has seen the material twice, they can understand the lessons more clearly and become better engaged. However, teachers felt that if the curriculum could be taught to fit the learning style of the student, then students had a better chance of doing better in the classroom. Even if the student had to participate in the credit/grade recovery program or any other intervention, if the teacher were to teach the curriculum in a manner that was learner friendly to students, then the students overall learning experienced would be better.

Teacher 13 stated, “The curriculum should be structured in such a way to scaffold the needs of the students. If they learned the things that they needed to know before taking the next course, they should be successful in completing high school”. In this school, the structure of the curriculum had been the biggest factor that could potentially be a problem for ninth grade students in the academy. The new curriculum adopted by the Louisiana State Department of Education had developed a one-size fit all curriculum that expected all students to be at certain levels by the end of each school year. This curriculum does not take into account students with special needs, or students who are at-risk, and places every student on a college bound track. Teachers were aware of the changes that were coming but only to an extent. Teachers taught the curriculum with very little training. The expectation of the teachers was to adapt and implement the curriculum the best they could. With teachers attempting to adapt, students were trying to as well. The subjects taught by teachers were more rigorous than ever and required a different skill set for students to have than from previous school years. Teacher 2 stated, “Students do not have a say in curriculum structure ... frustrated students are not able to succeed.”

Lawmakers realized that the new curriculum was implemented too fast and that there should be have been choices or alternatives in place for students who would be attending college and those who were not. Additionally, teachers needed to be trained on teaching strategies to address the needs of students in the ninth grade academy and throughout the school in regards to the implemented curriculum. Those strategies should not necessarily take away from the rigor that is expected, but should provide teachers with strategies to reach all students. The curriculum calls for teachers to be more creative

in the classroom and allow for students to have more of a say in their learning.

This school had begun the efforts of dissecting the curriculum to be able to offer the students the opportunity to choose either a college bound track or a vocational track. No matter what track each student chose, they are still under the auspices of the Common Core curriculum and the rigor that came with it. With effective teaching strategies and every teacher on the same page, students adapted to the new requirements and helped dispel the idea of dropping out of school. Giving students a chance to have ownership in their learning positively impacted their decisions to stay in school. The key is to have trained staff ready and available to provide the information students in the ninth grade academy needs through effective teaching and instruction, even if they have to go through a series of interventions.

Discrepant Cases

In order to keep track of the data, I constructed folders for each participant that I maintained completed with notes, comments, and audio recording for each participant. For discrepant cases, I constantly reviewed the data to uncover any inconsistencies and any patterns different from what I discovered in the data. As the researcher, I allowed the participants the opportunity to verify, strike, or add to responses from the interview. As I reviewed the data, no such discrepancies were found.

Analysis of the Data

Evaluating the interventions of the credit and grade recovery program, in school and after school program, and utilization of adult mentors enabled me to develop a staff development program that would engage students in meaningful learning. Successful

schools or academies have transitions systems in place to help students transition into the ninth grade (University of California, 2008). Mentors are the first line of defense against the challenges that students face when school is no longer a priority and when dropping out becomes a legitimate option (Bottoms, 2008). The data from this study helped teachers further understand the importance of adult mentors for students in the ninth grade. The data collected helped teachers to see their roles as being not only teachers, but also mentors to students in the ninth grade academy. The data collected provided insight into the importance of student and mentor relationships and the importance of mentors in their lives. Where there is the presence of strong relationships among teachers, administrators, and peers with students, the chances of students dropping out of school significantly decreases (Unal & Cukur, 2011).

In reviewing the in school and after school tutoring program, the collected data helped me to understand the dynamics of the intervention and the intended use of it. The data allowed me to see how school officials and teachers were providing students with the tools necessary to be successful and to be on track to graduate on time. I understood the views of teachers both positive and negative about this intervention, and to what degree of how they thought the intervention was a help in preventing students from dropping out of school.

In data collection, I explored and understood the operations of the credit and grade recovery program. The data from this study I conducted produced some mixed emotions about the effectiveness of the program in regards to fairness. Overall, the data presented proof that the teachers agreed that this intervention was crucial in helping

reduce the dropout rate at the local setting, especially students who were on the verge of dropping out. With the data collected, I constructed a staff development plan to where students will have every opportunity to be successful in the classroom by being highly engaged in the classroom.

Evidence of Quality

Credibility

In qualitative research, the researcher must accurately validate the findings from the data through a number of means that could include member checking and triangulation (Creswell, 2012). It is of utmost importance that the researcher accurately depicts exactly what the participants wanted to convey (Creswell, 2012). In essence, only I and the participant can provide the data that can be deemed accurate. Credibility establishes the fact that the findings are plausible. This study addressed credibility through the triangulation of data through interviews, member checking, and minutes from team meetings and conferences.

Member Checking

Member checks is a process by which the researcher allows one or more of the participants to view their own transcripts to verify the accuracy of their accounts and to help eliminate any biases from the researcher (Lodico et al., 2010). After I had collected the data, I transcribed the data into transcripts. Each participant was able to view their own transcript and findings through member checking to validate that their responses from the interview were accurate.

Triangulation

Triangulation deals with the use of different sources of data collection to strengthen the accuracy of the data (Creswell, 2012). I combined the different data sources through triangulation. The collection of data included minutes from parent, student, and teacher conferences, along with minutes from team meetings, and teacher responses from the interviews. I combined these sources of data in order to strengthen the validity of the study. I examined the minutes from the conferences and compared them with the interview responses from the participants. The comparisons allowed me to understand and establish a foundation of how and why the school developed the intervention. With the triangulation of these sources of data, both the minutes from the meetings and the interview responses were closely aligned in determining whether a student was in need of one of the interventions of the ninth grade academy. In conducting the interviews, the teachers brought attention to potential problems that have occurred with students that can cause for the need of an intervention. These data provided insight from the student and parent perspective, while the teacher interviews from the school's perspective, and combined provided interventions to keep students from dropping out. The results of the triangulated the data allowed me to develop *codes*. In the coding process, several segments of information were reviewed and placed into categories and labeled with codes. I proceeded to create a chart that listed every code identified from the data. In this chart, I placed every code identified on the chart and the number of times that code was repetitive. There were a large number of codes labeled throughout the data. Some of the codes I eliminated because of redundancy. In reviewing

the remaining codes, I developed *themes*. Out of triangulation, four themes and three sub themes emerged. The themes included supports with sub themes of extra assistance and guidance, collaboration with a sub theme of teaming, relationships, and student engagement. Jick (1979), one of the early scholars of triangulation, used a combination of data and data collection procedures in his studies to display a detailed and comprehensive picture of his studies.

Conclusion

The purpose of this study was to investigate what interventions can help students remain in school. In investigating what interventions can help students remain in school, I conducted a qualitative case study. I chose this design in order to answer the research question “What interventions will help students remain in school and help decrease the dropout rate?”

The data collected came from interviews from teachers in a ninth grade academy at the site where the research took place. In the data analysis stage, the data were reviewed on several occasions to get a better understanding on what the participants were trying to convey. The data went through the process of triangulation and member checking for accuracy and credibility purposes.

After completing the data analysis stage, there were four major themes and three subthemes that emerged from the data. The themes and subthemes are as follows:

Table 1

Themes and Subthemes

Themes	Subthemes
Supports	Extra Assistance
	Guidance
Collaboration	Teaming
Relationships	
Student Engagement	

The first theme that emerged from the data was supports that students in the ninth grade academy would need that would help them be successful in the ninth grade. Two minor themes emerged from theme 1: Extra Assistance and Guidance. The extra assistance for students in the ninth grade academy came in the form of the in-school or after-school tutoring programs that were offered to students so they could receive reinforcements to their academic studies. The second minor theme was guidance. Adult mentors shared and offered guidance in and out of the school for students who needed it. Mainly, teachers filled this role and were successful because of the rapport they build with their students.

The second major theme that emerged from the data was collaboration with a subtheme of teaming. Teaming in the ninth grade academy referred to a time set aside during the school day where designated staff met in the attempt to thwart any problems that may arise with students mainly for academic reasons. The staff included a guidance counselor, a core group of four teachers: English, Mathematics, Social Studies, Science, and a curriculum coordinator. Teaming is the most productive plan for helping students

move from middle school to high school and for giving them an opportunity to succeed (Habeeb, 2013). The ninth grade academy is a functioning body of educators operating in this school with the ultimate task of doing what needs to be done in order for students to have the best possible chance of remaining in school until graduation. Teaming in the academy was a very successful action where teachers can collaborate on students in the academy and be proactive in deterring anything that would hinder their success. In this collaborative environment, the teachers in the academy take an active role in doing what they can to keep students on track to graduate beginning in the ninth grade.

The third major theme that emerged from the data was relationships with teachers and administrators. The teachers knew the importance of students having positive relationships with their teachers and administrators. It was the belief of the teachers that with positive relationships, they have a chance at reaching students and keeping them in school.

The fourth theme that emerged from the data was student engagement. Through the credit and grade recovery intervention, teachers felt that if the curriculum was tailored to the student's learning style, then they could reach a level of success in the classroom. Even though the intervention was designed to help students recover a failed course, the teaching of the curriculum differently could help them as they retake the course through this program. If the course materials are understandable within the curriculum, then students can become engaged in the lesson. By being engaged, students can grow academically and may not have to rely on this intervention or any other interventions in the future.

From the results of the data, I created a professional development project (see Appendix A). I designed the project to provide professional development in applying effective teaching strategies that help students to be successful in the Common Core Curriculum. The professional development included strategies that teachers can use with students in both the college bound track and those who may choose a nontraditional track. The project not only address the curriculum, but also the strategies can be used in other interventions within the academy, mainly, the in school and after school tutoring program and credit and grade recovery program. Through collaboration, teachers were able to focus on students who were on the verge of dropping out and be in a position to offer interventions more effectively.

Section 3: The Project

Introduction

In a high school located in Northeast Louisiana, teachers in the ninth grade academy are facing challenges concerning what to do in order to keep students from dropping out of school. Interventions have been in place to help students who are on the brink of dropping out to remain in school. However, from the results of the collected data, teachers have a common stance that if the curriculum is tailored to address the needs of the students, they have a better chance of remaining in school. Because of the rigors of the new curriculum, teachers were not adequately prepared to teach every child in the class. Teachers felt that the curriculum was a one-size fit and did not address the learning styles of a diverse class. In order for students to be successful, a different approach to teaching is needed to engage students in the classroom. Out of these concerns, a professional development model was designed to incorporate the concept of meaningful engaged learning (MEL).

Description of the Project

Brief Description of the Project

Out of the results from the study, I developed a professional development plan called Rams in Pursuit of Perfection, also known as RPP. RPP is designed to provide specific teaching strategies that fall under the main goal of MEL. The strategies that teachers will learn are research based and come from the following resources: Instruction for All Students, Helping Students Motivate Themselves, and Kagan Cooperative Learning. The resources listed provide hands-on activities and instructional strategies

that teachers can use in the classroom for the benefit of engaging students in meaningful engaged learning. I contacted Kagan Publishing and requested permission to use its intellectual properties in the study (see Appendix F). Kagan Publishing granted approval to use their intellectual property as long as I cite the work in the study (see Appendix G). I also contacted Just Ask Publications and received permission to use their intellectual property in the study (see Appendix H). There will be one session dedicated to vocabulary development and incorporating it into the curriculum. The strategies that have been chosen serve in a two-fold manner: First, strategies will help teachers instruct their classes in a way that will engage students and give students the opportunity to be successful in the classroom. Second, the strategies will make the curriculum learner friendly by allowing the teacher to be creative in teaching without diverting away from the rigors of the curriculum, and the curriculum will be tailored for students who are on the college-bound as well as the non-college-bound tracks.

The training will take place on three full Saturdays during the first semester of the school year contingent upon all Walden University approvals. Prior to the beginning of the first training session, personnel from the Louisiana Department of Education will present teachers a calendar of events along with an overview of the professional development plan. To compensate for teachers' time during their off days, teachers will be presented a stipend the month following the completion of the last training. During the first training day, the instructor of the training will review the purpose of the trainings and explain the rubric for evaluation so that teachers may understand what is required to receive the stipends. Teachers will be under a contractual obligation to fulfill the

requirements of the training in order to receive the stipend. After completing the necessary paperwork to participate, teachers will begin the first session. In Session 1 of the training, teachers will focus on engaging students in learning. Before the next session begins, teachers will be required to incorporate what they learned in the previous training and to bring evidence back to the next training. The first session will be the second Saturday in September, followed by Sessions 2 and 3 in October and November, respectively, contingent upon all Walden University approvals. Teachers will be required to maintain a binder of all the resources given and notes taken, as well as examples of the strategies that have been incorporated to engage students in learning.

The last part of the project will consist of the evaluation of the binders by members of the administrative team from the central office. A completed binder that has been approved by district personnel will qualify teachers to receive the stipend for participation. If the administrative team does not approve a binder, the team will offer recommendations to participants in order to correct any errors. Once participants have corrected those errors, they will be eligible to receive their stipend.

Goals of the Project

Even if the curriculum seems to teachers to be a one-size-fits-all model, the strategies will give teachers access to an array of approaches to teaching so that each child is engaged in class, and these strategies will not detract from curriculum alignment. The overall goal of the project is to incorporate teaching strategies from the approach of meaningful engaged learning. The purpose identified in Section 1 of the study was to determine how schools use interventions to help students remain in school. In

interviewing teachers, the interventions used in the academy were an effective means of helping students be successful in the ninth grade. However, the interventions alone did not offer a significant change in reducing the dropout rate. When students took advantage of the interventions in place, they positioned themselves to remain on track to staying in school. On the other hand, teachers felt that if they could teach the curriculum in a manner tailored to the students' learning styles, the students would have greater chance of being engaged, which would lead to a higher probability that they would remain in school (Stout & Christenson, 2009). Teachers in the study echoed the sentiment that the current curriculum, being taught the way it is, presents more of a problem than a solution for students in the ninth grade academy. Students who are already struggling or have failed a grade previously have even a tougher time adapting to the rigors of the curriculum. Students who are engaged in the classroom have the opportunity to experience victories in the classroom and to develop a sense of self-worth.

Rationale

Rationale for Why This Project Genre Was Chosen

In an attempt to equip teachers in the ninth grade academy to be more effective with interventions that are in place to help students remain in school, this project involved the production of a professional development plan. Successful professional development plans align with current principles regarding how to enhance learning in the classroom (Hanover Research, 2012). The professional development plan evolved from the data that were collected and analyzed. The plan entails instructing and developing teachers so that they can incorporate strategies from the approach of meaningful, engaged

learning that will better help students to succeed in the new curriculum.

The curriculum that is in place at this school allows every student to be on a college-bound track. Although there are other pathways that students may choose, such as a basic diploma track or a career-options track, students are still required to be proficient in the new curriculum. The challenge for teachers is determining how to engage all students in the classroom, whether they are college bound or not. Teachers must be willing to change their teaching styles so that every child who enters their classroom has the ability to have classroom success (Branyon, 2012). Being that teachers have been subject to a new evaluation system based on student performance on standardized testing and have not had enough time for training in implementing the new curriculum, they have operated and taught in survival mode, teaching what needs to be known for students to pass the test. In this mode, a great number of students have fallen behind because of the pace and the benchmarks that students need to have reached by a certain date. From the results of the data, it was discovered that students who were not able to keep up with the pace of instruction became frustrated, especially students in Algebra I. These frustrations led to the implementation of the interventions discussed in Section 2. Even though the interventions were in place, the credit or grade recovery and in-school or afterschool tutoring program instructors were not prepared to employ the necessary strategies to help students and ease their frustrations. In the process, several students dropped out of school. Their decisions to drop out were a direct result of not progressing academically due to a lack of engagement. However, when students are engaged in the classroom, not only are they becoming active participants in the class;

teachers are also empowered to help students achieve their academic goals (Joselowsky & Asetine, 2009).

Rationale for How the Problem Will Be Addressed

For the project, I chose to develop a professional development plan that would give teachers strategies for how to teach the new curriculum by having students engaged in learning. The professional development plan will enhance the intent of the new curriculum by having students become more involved in the structure of how they learn and by prompting teachers to create a culture that will facilitate that. Student engagement will encourage students to take more of an ownership role in their learning (Joselowsky & Asetine, 2009). Teachers who make it possible for students to be successful in the classroom by aiding them in rising above academic challenges, helping them to grasp the concepts being taught, and developing a positive culture in the classroom create an atmosphere in which students feel valued, want to learn, and thus become engaged (Faria, Freire, Galvao, Reis, & Baptista, 2012). There have been studies that have linked how teachers design their classes and how students are involved in those classes to student engagement and reducing the risk of students dropping out (Faria et al., 2012). At this school, there are huge deficits in reading and writing that can have an effect on the success students can have in the classroom. The plan in choosing this project was to devise a way to improve academic success for students in the ninth grade academy by being able to engage students in the new curriculum. Many of the students in the ninth grade academy face academic challenges in adapting to the rigors of the new curriculum. Given these challenges, the academy has sought to implement interventions by

attempting to minimize frustrations and providing assistance to deter students from dropping out of school. Although these interventions have had some success, a huge turnaround of the dropout rate has not occurred. The professional development plan will give teachers the tools needed to address the deficits students may have and become catalysts of student engagement in the classroom. With the implementation of a new curriculum, teachers must be willing to collaborate on strategies and to participate in intense staff development (Main, 2012). Getting students to be more involved in their learning can greatly impact the environment of the school and students' decision to remain in school (Academy for Educational Development, 2011).

Review of the Literature

Research Associated With the Development of the Project

The literature review for the project begins with an overall view of *professional development*. The next section addresses the components of an effective professional development plan. The last section of the literature review identifies the activities that will occur during the proposed professional development plan.

Professional Development

Participating in professional development (PD) has been widely considered the most effective way for teachers to improve how they teach in the classroom (Lutrick & Szabo, 2012). There is a high demand for students to perform well on standardized assessments, and PD is essential in training teachers to meet those demands. However, PD is more than just teachers meeting to discuss meaningless jargon; it is constructive in training teachers to improve in instruction. PD for teachers is a necessary resource that

enhances quality teaching in the classroom, and when done effectively, it can improve academic growth for students (Petrie & McGee, 2012). The focus of PD is teachers refining their teaching skills and learning strategies for educating their students (Creemers, Kyriakides, & Antoniou, 2012). In PD, teachers must focus on learning best teaching practices and how to meet their own learning needs (Yuen, 2012).

Throughout the 1980s and 1990s, the federal government considered the inservicing of teaching staffs for training purposes to be an adequate means for teacher development (Blandford, 2012). By 1994, government officials understood the need to make PD meaningful and able to address the current trends and changes in education (Blandford, 2012). The government developed a number of initiatives to improve PD for teachers in all schools. Out of these initiatives, four major functions of PD were developed: PD in schools should enhance individual performance, rectify ineffective practices, establish the groundwork for the implementation of policy, and facilitate change (Blandford, 2012).

The majority of teachers believe that meaningful PD presents them with opportunities to incorporate strategies and ideas learned into their classrooms (Klein & Meagan, 2009). A school that makes PD a priority becomes focused on what it takes for teachers to teach at a high level so that students can also learn in the same manner (Carpenter & Sherretz, 2012). When PD is effective, opportunities for teachers to improve their skills and improve student outcomes dramatically increase (Darling-Hammond, Wei, Richardson, & Orphanos, 2009). Although the priority of PD may derive from the leadership of the school, teachers must be willing to adapt to new ideas

and alternative methods to improve their teaching skills in the classroom. PD requires that teachers become involved in the process of learning themselves in order to promote a greater learning experience for students (Avalos, 2011).

Components of an Effective Professional Development Plan

Effective PD is a crucial element in the overall scheme of improving the teaching skills of teachers and the attainment of achievement goals for students (Yuen, 2012). PD must be not a one-time occurrence, but an ongoing process for teachers to evolve into productive practitioners. Effective PD allows teachers to learn in a collaborative setting that fosters continuous learning and development as classroom leaders in instruction (Petrie et al., 2012). The National Staff Development Council (NSDC, 2011) designed a model of what effective PD should look like. In the development of this design, seven components were identified that can be helpful in planning PD. The seven components are: (a) learning communities, (b) leadership, (c) resources, (d) data, (e) learning design, (f) implementation, and (g) outcomes.

Learning communities. Research has revealed that teachers who are committed to mastering their craft of teaching through learning communities often contribute to developing students who perform at high achievement levels (Little, 2012). Learning communities should convene often to reflect on how teachers within the community deliver classroom instruction, and to discuss strategies that may enhance members' teaching skills (Lutrick & Szabo, 2012). In learning communities, teachers are able to interact with each other on a consistent basis. These interactions provide support and guidance for teachers, to grasp the learning they have obtained in order to incorporate in

the classroom (Eun, 2008). Learning community members share the responsibility of students reaching their potential in learning (NSCD, 2011). PD can have a significant impact on how teachers teach and how students learn when it is continuous and installed through learning communities (Darling-Hammond et al., 2009)

Leadership.

School administrators are solely responsible for the development of a culture in schools in which teachers are consistently provided opportunities to learn and to grow as educators (Blandford, 2012). Effective school leaders support teachers and provide them with opportunities to participate in PD activities within the local school setting and abroad (Zepeda, 2013). Effective leaders realize that meaningful PD is essential to producing quality teachers who can address the diverse needs of students in the classroom (Lutrick & Szabo, 2012). Such leaders understand that as teachers develop, so do students, and these leaders place a high emphasis on PD learning (NSDC, 2011). Insightful school leaders not only view school data to determine the needs of teachers for PD, but also gather information from teachers to get their views on needs for improvement (Moller & Pankake, 2013). Leaders who embrace ideas for PD from teachers create an environment in which leaders becomes active participants in and supporters of the PD program (Moller & Pankake, 2013). **Resources.** For PD to be effective, resources (human and financial) must be readily available to meet the needs of teachers who will be participating (Blanford, 2012). Resources that include funding, personnel, technology, and materials are essential to the success of PD sessions. Whether it is the school district or the local school investing these resources for PD, the resources have to be used in a manner that is wise and responsible in order to sustain the

effectiveness of the program (Luttrick & Szabo, 2012). Because teachers are considered life-long learners, school officials must be willing to invest the necessary resources to continue to develop their skills in the classroom (Hargreaves & Fullan, 2012).

Depending on the need, school officials must fully support meaningful PD activities that improve teaching. Although there are ways to trim operating costs of PD, this should not be done at the expense of implementing PD that fully serves the students and teachers of the school. Ideally, schools that are already technology-rich sites and have personnel on staff who can conduct PD can become valuable resources for school districts to lower operating costs. The goal is to get the best PD product available with the funds and resources that are available. Resources, or the lack thereof, can make the difference between a great PD program, a lackluster program, and no program at all.

Data. PD should be designed based on teacher and student needs that derive from the data of the school. Although data can come from a variety of sources, schools and school systems alike focus more on results from standardized testing (Lutrick & Szabo, 2012). However, teachers in an effective PD program not only view standardized test results, but also view student work samples and information gathered from observation visits to the classroom (Zapeda, 2013). The data collected from student work samples can help teachers in discovering possible deficiencies that students may have. PD becomes more effective when teachers can analyze these sources of data and make the PD sessions meaningful in addressing student needs (Darling-Hammond & Richardson, 2009). Data help teachers understand the students they are teaching and how best to meet their educational needs (Bernhardt, 2013). Since schools officials gather data

comprehensively, they would want to look at specifics in the data that could become a focus for improvement in a PD session (Bernhardt, 2013). School officials should not interpret data in a single setting, but collaboratively over several meetings to construct a PD session that would have a definite impact on the needs of the teachers and students.

Learning design. In being an educator, the expectation of being a life-long learner is no longer just a saying, but is a necessity in order to teach effectively with the growing changes in education (Bernhardt, 2013). However, because teachers are constantly learning more, research has shown that PD sessions have been designed to focus on content instead of teachers learning how to improve their skills in the classroom (Webster-Wright, 2009). Learning designs should boost teacher performance by incorporating theories and research into PD sessions (NSCD, 2011). When deciding on a learning design for PD, teachers or school officials must determine what will be the purpose and intended outcomes of the design (NSDC, 2011). Those in charge of creating PD sessions should develop the learning design to align with the needs and achievement goals set forth by school leadership. In the learning design, teachers provide assessment and feedback to one another to promote teacher growth (NSCD, 2011). In determining the learner design, developers must take into consideration the layout of the design and whether it would benefit the PD sessions. The design of the learning should develop or add new skills, transform practice, and motivate teachers to become better instructors (NSDC, 2011).

Implementation. The implementation of the PD activities should be continuous and have various forms of assessment, feedback, and support (Lutrick & Szabo, 2012).

School officials must support teachers that are implementing a change in practice and allow for teacher learning evolution over an indefinite period of time (NDSC, 2011). The school district and officials should monitor the progress of implementation and provide the necessary supports, time, and feedback needed to arrive at the intended goal of increased student learning. It is important for school officials and teachers to know that the results of the PD activities for implementation may not be a total fit for every class. School officials are charged with responsibility of providing continuous feedback and support to teachers in order to promote teacher development (Lutrick & Szabo, 2012). When school officials support teachers on a regular basis, teachers feel that they are making positive progress in teaching students and through collaborating with one another are able to develop new ideas or strategies for teaching that can benefit the entire school (Lutrick & Szabo, 2012).

Outcomes. Instructors should deliver PD in a manner by which a link between teacher involvement and student outcomes connect (Daugherty, 2009). PD that elevate student results address student outcomes and teacher performance (NSDC, 2011). When PD can combine the student outcomes with teacher performance, the link that connects is an indication that the PD has an effect on increased student learning (NSDC, 2011). In PD activities, outcomes for both teachers and students should match the standards established by the local school district (Lutrick & Szabo, 2012). Teachers participating in PD activities must have a clear understanding of what student outcomes should be (Timperly, Farrar, & Fung, 2008). The significance of knowing student outcomes prepares teachers for understanding exactly what items instructors should address in PD.

Teachers who participate in continuous and effective PD sessions share the burden of not only engaging their students, but also believing that all students will achieve their academic goals (Timperly et al., 2008).

Weekend PD Sessions

Being a participant in PD activities on the weekends presents a unique opportunity for teachers to learn away from the normal school setting (Baumgartner, Dicarlo, & Apavaloaie, 2011). Full-day PD on weekends provide teachers the time needed to absorb the material being presented and best practices on how to incorporate the learning in the classroom. PD instructors plan and deliver weekend sessions in a manner that teacher's time is meaningful. It is important that PD activities are meaningful and that teachers have bought into the vision of staff development on weekends. Teachers who are willing to pursue PD on weekends understand the importance of learning as a professional and the impact it can have on student learning.

Collaboration in PD

In the proposed professional development plan, teachers will collaborate often and consistently throughout the sessions. Research reveals that when all teachers collaborate with increased student learning in mind, then students learn (Darling-Hammond et al., 2009). In order to compare ideas and beliefs, teachers in these sessions will collaborate with not only those that teach the same content, but also across the content. The activities presented in the plan will cause for teacher collaboration in order for feedback and assessment of the things learned throughout the session can take place. Assessment and feedback in this manner will improve their teaching skills and overall

provide a better learning opportunity for students.

Teacher Modeling in PD Activities

During the proposed PD, teachers will model strategies from the PD sessions. Teacher will be able to observe through video models of teaching as examples of what implementing new strategies should look like in the classroom. For PD to be effective and assessment true to student learning, there has to be a model or guide of how to teach (Reeves, 2009). Modeling serves teachers in a two-fold manner; it allows teachers to examine strategies learned from the viewpoint as students, and provides opportunities for assessment and feedback from peers. With modeling, the lessons and activities are all hands-on. Teachers will discuss the different modes of teaching and discover ways that they can help improve their own students.

Critical Analysis of Research

Meaningful engaged learning is an approach that can be used to engage students in the classroom. Jones, Valdez, Nowaskowski, and Rasmussen (1994), leading scholars in MEL, have developed eight indicators of engaged learning that has revolutionized how MEL should look in today's classrooms. These indicators provide a roadmap for teachers to have a solidified focus on making a daunting effort in engaging students in the classroom. In the project, PD instructors will introduce these indicators so that teachers will incorporate the activities and strategies of MEL in the classroom.

The focus of the project is to develop ways to get students highly engaged in the classroom. The principle behind engaging students in the classroom is to encourage students through motivation and achieving academic victories in the classroom. The

dynamics of the project will shift the focus of teachers just wanting to see students do well in school to students taking control of their own learning. Engaged learners are in full control of how they learn and are high achievers. Engaged learners are focused on their academic success and at the same time willing to work with others to ensure that success.

In the project, teachers will learn how to develop class work and activities in the classroom to engage students in learning. Teachers will design activities that will not deviate from the rigors of the curriculum and at the same time challenge students to master concepts. Activities are not limited to just the classroom, but include activities outside of the classroom that require students to have interaction with other classmates and outside sources. The tasks are genuine, collaborative, and relate to real-life scenarios.

The teachers will incorporate strategies learned from the project and learn how to assess the engagement of students in the classroom. Determining what academic success will look like through assessing student engagement will be critical for students and the effectiveness of the project. Because we are promoting that students should have academic victories in the classroom, teachers will learn how to ensure that all students will have some form of academic success. The strategies and activities learned in the project will give teachers the confidence of making this happen. Teachers will spend a great deal of the time in PD collaborating and interacting with one another. In these collaborative settings, teachers complete these actions so that students in the classroom will learn to do the same. For effective engaged learning in the classroom to take place,

teachers must require consistent interaction between themselves and the students (Ladson-Billings, 2009). The interaction in itself produces the ability for students to learn together in a way that they can learn from each other and provide learner ownership for the entire class.

In the project, teachers will have several opportunities to model activities during the sessions. The rationale behind modeling is for teachers to experience the classroom environment as a student and to seize the opportunity to take control of their learning. In an engaged classroom, teachers create an environment by which students have the freedom to take the lead in the classroom. These environments invite students to be inquisitive, leaders in class discussions, and confident in class collaborations.

Teachers will enter the PD sessions with their own systems of beliefs and principles. Throughout the project, teachers will be grouped together to discuss concepts learned and to interact with each other during activities. Grouping students is an effective means of promoting engaged learning (Ireson & Hallam, 2009). Engaged learners are able to bring the strengths of each group member to the forefront whereby all who participate can be active participants in completing the requirements of the classroom. With grouping, engaged learners are accountable for the success of the task and are given an opportunity for each group member to enhance their learning.

Within the strategies of the project, teachers will learn how to become facilitators instead of only lecturers. For effective meaningful learning, teachers play the most important role in this process (Nystrom, 2014). It is the responsibility of the teacher to create an atmosphere where students are challenged to learn (Wang & Holcombe, 2010).

I designed the project in a manner that throughout the sessions teachers will learn strategies and the tools needed to engage students in learning. In learning how to engage students in meaningful learning, teachers will learn how the importance of engaging students can help students become successful in the classroom both individually and collectively. Engaged learners are able to take their experiences and perceptions from prior learning outside the classroom and apply them in the classroom (Boud, Keough, & Walker, 2013).

The research indicates that learners who engage themselves are more apt to have positive student achievement (NCREL, 2014). Students increase the ability to learn when they become involved or motivated in things that are meaningful. *Motivation* is one of the key aspects of MEL and is needed to maintain and support students in the classroom. Motivation is the driving force behind the desire to get something accomplished. Motivation plays a vital role in the learning process. Motivation is not only the boost that propels students to learn, but also is the means that keeps learning active (Singh, Singh, & Singh, 2011). Students must be intrinsically motivated in order for them to be highly engaged in the classroom. Intrinsic motivation is an important component of learning at a high level by which positive academic outcomes derive (Spinath & Steinmayr, 2012). Being intrinsically motivated allow for students to take on tasks or activities in the classroom that gives them the freedom in developing their learning (Spinath & Steinmayr, 2012). Teachers who understand that motivating their students can impact achievement for their students. The determination for students to succeed far outweighs the current time, but could affect success in future endeavors (Hardre, 2012). Teachers

that place an emphasis on learning goals and not necessarily performance goals have a better chance at motivating their students in the classroom (Spinath & Steinmayr, 2012). Although a great focus in schools has been on achievement, more frequently than not, it does not improve motivation (Hardre, 2012). On the other hand, if schools could understand the importance of motivating students, motivation can be improved. Classrooms that are engaged in MEL advocate and support student's motivation to learn. Classrooms that embrace student's willingness to achieve promote an environment by which students will have academic success (Hardre, 2012).

Another aspect of MEL is the *relationships* between the teacher and the students in the class setting. Relationships are at the core of whether a student's educational outcomes are attainable or not (Giles, Smythe & Spence, 2012). There has been sufficient research performed that has established that positive relationships between students and teachers have a positive impact on achievement and motivation (Gehlbach, Brinkworth, & Harris, 2012). Additionally, there have been studies that linked teachers who enjoy their students and students that enjoy their teachers as positive forces that promote engagement and success in the classroom (Frenzel, Goetz, Lüdtke, Pekrun, & Sutton, 2009). Positive relationships between students and teachers develop trust between the two parties. Students who know that relational teachers will challenge them, show concern about their learning and their well-being, often are successful in these settings.

Finally, in MEL teachers must have activities that can be used for all learning styles and be able to connect that learning to real life context. Student learning should

serve as the ability for students to make sense out of what they have learned (Brophy, 2013). With learning activities, teachers must find ways to inspire students to produce the skills needed to progress through the activities so that the desired student outcome is consistent with what intention of those activities (Brophy, 2013). Student engagement levels are high when students are involved in an activity, especially when the activity involves group members, compared to independent activities where there are no social interactions and no understanding what is being taught (Shernoff & Csikszentmihalyi, 2009).

Description of the Project

Outline

The goal of this project is to implement teaching strategies into the curriculum that would help students be successful in the classroom by being engaged in the classroom through the approach of meaningful engaged learning. From the data collected, teachers agreed that the curriculum is not conducive for all the students in the ninth grade academy. The design of the curriculum takes the creativity out of the classroom. With the implementation of a new curriculum, teachers had to adapt to a new style of teaching their students. Unfortunately, there were only a few strategies at their disposal to be effective and ensuring academic success in the classroom. There was a commonality that all students should be challenged and meet the requirements as mandated by the Louisiana Department of Education, but there must be other means available to get the goal accomplished of every child being successful in the classroom. Therefore, I determined that teachers needed additional strategies to use with the new

curriculum so that students will have the opportunity to succeed in the classroom through engagement.

I created a professional development plan that would instruct teachers on how to incorporate teaching strategies from the approach of meaningful engaged learning that will engage students in the classroom. As the project developer, I composed a professional development plan that will be cover teacher training for three full days. Sessions will be scheduled in the first semester of the school year on the second Saturday of each month beginning in September followed by October and November respectively contingent upon all Walden University approvals. Due to the sessions being held on Saturdays, teachers will be awarded a stipend for participation. The three sessions of the professional plan cover the following topics: (a) engaging students in learning and grouping students to maximize learning, (b) understanding vocabulary, and (c) effective questions prompts and discussion to generate writing. The presenters will be personnel from the regional office of the state department of education of Louisiana. In these sessions, teachers will work hands-on with activities, complete sample items, and collaborate with one another on implementing strategies throughout all subject areas.

All sessions will have power point presentations in reference to strategies and activities to implement strategies. Session one will have introductory slides that deal with demographics and data about the school setting that sessions two and three will not have. The strategies and activities that will be used in the professional development plan come from researched based strategies from Kagan cooperative learning, instruction for all students, and helping students motivate themselves. The authors of these publications

have given me permission to use their intellectual property in the study. All strategies and activities are designed to engage students in the classroom and ties in overall to the approach of meaningful engaged learning.

At the end of the sessions, teachers will be given a professional development stipend for participating. Teachers will be required to keep a binder that includes all power point presentations with strategies, handouts, activities to incorporate in the class, and examples of strategies (student samples). The binder is a comprehensive portfolio that proves the use of the strategies in the classroom by the teachers and is a requirement to receive the stipend.

Needed Resources

In order to have these sessions for the professional development plan, there must be enough funding to cover the cost of such a plan. I will consult with the reading/math coordinator at the site to determine the cost and if the budget will allow. The school where the project will take place is a Title 1 school and funding is set aside in the budget for professional development. There must be enough funding available to cover the cost of the presenters, to pay stipends, and the materials needed for teachers. Teachers will need items such as highlighters, markers, pens and binders.

Permission from the local school board is needed to conduct these sessions on Saturdays. Since this is not during school hours, arrangements must be made to use the school site and account for utility use. Permission to use the site has to come from the superintendent.

Implementation

Implementation Plan

The professional development plan will take place in the school year following all Walden University approvals. The first round of the sessions will be geared toward teachers in the ninth grade academy. As the developer, I want to focus on the ninth grade academy teachers because the students in this grade are the most at need of being engaged in school. If needed, I will offer a refresher session in the spring semester to revisit the strategies so that teachers are still on track with implementing the strategies learned. Also, toward the end of the spring semester, I would want to convene a session with teachers in the academy to evaluate their successes and concerns they may have for improving the plan. If there are any suggestions for improvements, teachers are to bring to the session research based strategies or ideas that could improve the professional development.

Roles and Responsibilities of Teachers

I designed the project so that teachers would learn additional strategies to engage students in the curriculum through the approach of meaningful engaged learning. Teachers will be required to attend all sessions. At the beginning of the first session, teachers will be asked to sign a contract (see Appendix I) meeting the obligations of the professional development sessions and requirements of receiving the stipend. At each session there will be a sign in and sign out sheet (see Appendix J) and an evaluation sheet (see Appendix K) to complete. The sign in/sign out sheet indicates that the teachers were present and the evaluation sheet gives the teachers the opportunity to provide any recommendations for improvement to the professional development. After each session,

teachers are to implement the strategies learned into their classrooms. These strategies are to be noted in their lesson plans and listed on the board as daily learning objectives. Evidence of the strategies used by teachers will reflect in student sample works or activities along with informal observations of the administrative staff of the school. Teachers are required to include student work samples and observation reports for the evaluation of the binder to receive their stipends. The binder will serve as a completed portfolio of all the information noted in the binder.

Project Evaluation

Based on the implementation plan and roles of the teachers, the evaluation of the project will come from three areas: (a) the grading of the portfolio, (b) observation reports from the administrative staff (Appendix L), and (c) the teacher session in the spring semester following the incorporating of the strategies. The portfolio will have a rubric (Appendix M) that will cover the strategies taught, the implementation of those strategies, and every item that is required to be in the portfolio for teachers to receive their stipends. The observations from the administrative staff will give insight into whether the strategies learned are working in the classroom. Administrators will be looking specifically at how teachers are engaging students in the classroom and if teachers are creating an atmosphere by which engagement is taking place. The teacher session in the spring semester will give teachers the opportunity to evaluate the effectiveness of the professional development plan and whether changes are needed to enhance the plan.

Project Implications

With students at risk of dropping out in the ninth grade in this school district, a project that can engage them in learning is important for their hope of remaining in school (Sleeter, 2011). Dropping out of school is not just a schooling issue but carries over into adulthood and becomes a social issue as well (Khalkhali, Sharifi, & Nikyar, 2013). In promoting social change, this project serves as an opportunity for teachers in this school to reach and engage all students no matter their academic learning levels. It provides a chance for students to have some academic victories in the classroom. The project uses the approach of MEL by which students become active in their learning, builds confidence, and gives students ownership of how they learn. The project has components within it that teachers could use school wide and even on the district level. The project is diverse enough to use in all grades and not just the ninth grade. One of the greatest assets to the project is that it gives the teacher the freedom to teach students and at the same time hold them accountable to the rigors of the curriculum.

Social Change

In the local school community, students are faced with many challenges in trying to graduate from high school. With some trying to overcome learning deficits and grade retentions, this project addresses many needs and concerns of the local community. Students who have struggled academically now will have the opportunity to understand the importance and the meaning of what they learned. Having students engaged in learning makes learning interesting, eliminates boredom, helps develop relationships with teachers and peers, and develops a motivation to want to succeed. Students who may

have felt that graduating from high school was not an attainable goal can begin to believe that earning a diploma is within reach. For students, the project can serve as a means by which learning can be enjoyable and worthwhile. For teachers, the knowledge gained throughout the project will help them to continue in reinventing themselves and always striving to do what is necessary to engage their students in learning. For administrators, the process of developing and believing in the vision of the project and how potentially it could impact the school by helping students achieve academic success will validate the belief that despite obstacles and circumstances all students can learn. This project has the potential of reducing the dropout rate, especially in the current setting. This project can serve as a model to reduce the dropout rate not only at this school, but also throughout the district and even the state

Importance to Stakeholders

Locally, this project could help impact the number of students that are in danger of dropping out by giving teachers different avenues of teaching whereby students can be highly engaged in learning. At the district level, this project can lead to increase funding for schools to implement this professional development plan to their teachers so that they can have the available means to engage students in learning. This project allows for students to understand and comprehend what is being taught and that the learning has meaning to real world scenarios. In return, teachers can play a role in student thinking about becoming positive influences not only to their communities, but also by creating a positive future for themselves.

Conclusion

This project study was designed to instruct teachers on implementing strategies in the curriculum to engage students in learning through the approach of meaningful engaged learning. Because of a lack of students being engaged, some students failed and had to repeat courses, while others dropped out. Although there were interventions in place to help students remain in school, teachers felt that there needed to be a way to teach the new curriculum in a way that all students could have success in the classroom. Based on this need, the approach of meaningful engaged learning provides strategies that teachers can use to engage all students and promote academic success in the classroom.

One of the major goals of the project is for teachers to be equipped to teach in a way that engages students on a level that is comfortable to them without compromising the rigors of the curriculum. The second goal for the project is for teachers to be able to collaborate with colleagues in sharing these strategies that they could be of use in all subject areas. Lastly, the project will be able to help reinforce these strategies in the current interventions that are already in place, mainly the in school or afterschool tutoring and credit or grade recovery programs. In these sessions, the strategies from the project will allow teachers the opportunity to have more detail in their instruction.

It is the hope that this particular staff development plan could make a positive impact in the ninth grade academy and eventually to the whole school. Teachers must be willing to accept that the current curriculum is the guide they have in teaching students, however there are multiple ways that teaching the curriculum can occur. In teaching the curriculum, teachers must embrace that learning occurs with both them and the students.

By providing new strategies to teach in the new curriculum can be a rewarding experience for teachers as well as students. With this plan, students have the opportunity to be engaged in class, become motivated about not only being in school, but also remaining in school to graduation, and equip teachers with the necessary tools to bring meaningful learning to their classrooms. In Section 4, a summary of how the creation of the project impacted the researcher will be discussed.

Section 4: Reflections and Conclusions

Strengths and Limitations

I designed this project to provide teaching strategies for teachers to incorporate into the curriculum whereby students can engage themselves in learning through the approach of meaningful, engaged learning. With teachers switching to a new curriculum and trying to adjust themselves to it, there has not been enough time to train teachers on new strategies for engaging all students within the classroom. Through effective staff development in meaningful, engaged learning, the strategies learned would be a huge asset in engaging students and helping students remain in school.

The problem that teachers are facing is what to do and how to teach in a manner that will engage all their students in the classroom. In the local setting, there are many students entering the ninth grade who have trouble staying on course toward promotion to the 10th grade, not to mention graduation. Teachers have had to adjust to a style of teaching that is contrary to their traditional way of teaching. In adapting to a new way to teach, teachers have had to discover ways to engage their students. One of the strengths of the project is that teachers will have tools and resources that they need to reach every child in the classroom regardless of learning level. The strategies learned from the professional development will allow students to have academic victories in the classroom. At the same time, the lessons will be taught in a way that will not take away from the rigors of the curriculum.

An additional strength of the project is that teachers will be able to collaborate with one another on a more consistent basis. The teachers in the ninth grade academy

will be able to have their own mini staff development sessions during their daily teaming meetings. In collaborating, they will be able to discuss which strategies are working and whether there is a need for improvement. The collaboration of the teachers and the exchange of ideas will promote an atmosphere in which students become the only priority as learners.

A third strength of the project is that it will give teachers the opportunity to allow students to have ownership of their learning. In the new curriculum, a point of emphasis is students taking the lead in the classroom while the teacher becomes a facilitator. The strategies learned during the staff development plan will allow the teachers to be more creative in the classroom; when students are engaged, opportunities for student learning and growth will increase. Students will then become highly involved in every aspect of the learning process.

Finally, one of the major objectives for students in the ninth grade academy is to stay on track to graduate. Bloom (2010) indicated that 47% of students dropped out because of a lack of interest in the classroom. The project will provide many avenues by which teachers can teach and students can learn. There will be an influx of activities and techniques that will highly engage students in the classroom. When students are engaged and having success in the classroom, it is easy for them to be motivated to sustain that same level of success (Guilloteaux & Domyei, 2008).

Although the project has strengths, there are limitations as well. The project provides for three full sessions of training that will introduce strategies and provide a foundation on which teachers can build in regard to meaningful, engaged learning. For

the project to have a meaningful impact, follow-up sessions will be needed. In order to grasp a new way of teaching students, more time will be needed so that teachers may master the approach of meaningful, engaged learning. Teachers will need time to reflect on how the strategies benefitted their students and will need to be able to evaluate themselves on how to make the classroom better. To accomplish this, more training will be needed to reinforce strategies learned during the first round of sessions and to cover even more strategies in engaging students.

Another limitation of the project is that teachers may not be willing to incorporate what has been taught in the professional development sessions and change their teaching styles. The freshman academy teachers have cohesiveness and a sincere desire that all students in the academy have success. It is important that every teacher in the ninth grade academy buy in to the changes so that there will not be a group of students left out of meaningful, engaged learning in the classroom. If just one teacher deviates from the plan, this could hinder student growth and achievement in regard to student outcomes and expectations. A way to remedy this limitation is for teachers to have individual meetings with the principal and the instructional team to discuss what is taking place in the classroom since the professional development training took place, with evidence from exams, activities, and lesson plans. In the new teacher evaluation plan, there is a section solely dedicated to the engagement of students in the classroom. Teachers could have the implementation of the strategies for engagement tied to their annual evaluation plan.

Lastly, the project is designed to be implemented for students in the ninth grade academy. However, students in the ninth grade also take elective courses that may

include upperclassmen. The strategies learned for ninth grade teachers will not yet have been given to teachers in Grades 10-12. Because of the lack of training for these teachers, their classroom environment might not be as engaging as in the academy. As a result, the progress that has been made to learn in a different way may be compromised. To address this limitation, teachers could present the strategies during departmental meetings to the other personnel so that strategies are available for every classroom. With teachers implementing strategies in every classroom, student learning would improve in every class period. The school would then have students highly engaged in learning, making progress toward continuous academic victories in every classroom, and learning would become meaningful for students.

Alternative Solutions

With the implementation of a new curriculum, teachers have faced the task of reinventing the way in which they teach while figuring out a way to engage students in the classroom. The project will deal with teachers learning new strategies to implement in the curriculum that will engage students through the approach of meaningful, engaged learning. Although only one solution addresses the problem through staff development, teachers can address the problem of increasing student engagement by other means.

One solution to the problem of student engagement is assessment. Assessment can improve a student's desire to be engaged in the classroom if, rather than focusing on deficiencies, it involves providing feedback to motivate students, emphasizing to them that their learning is totally dependent on their desire to learn and providing a learning environment that encourages students to take academic risks in the classroom (Earl,

2012). I believe that constant interaction between students and teachers could promote engagement in the classroom. In order for this solution to work, there has to be solid rapport between teachers and students. Students must know that the teacher has their best interest at heart and wants them to succeed. In assessment, students would receive feedback on what needs improvement, and there would always be something positive to say to encourage students and to help build their confidence.

Another recommendation for addressing this problem is to change the way that team teaching is done in the academy in regard to increasing the engagement of students. Currently, students are split into two teams and receive instruction in those teams on a daily basis. I would recommend that we keep the two teams in place but also allow teachers to teach across both teams. School counselors would build time into the schedule that would allow for whole classes, according to subject area, taught by a teacher on a different team using the strategies learned in the professional development model. For teachers, this would provide an opportunity to incorporate the strategies with students whom they do not necessarily teach daily, offering an opportunity for students to become engaged learners. Students would be engaged not only within their normal class periods, but also in different class settings. The end result could boost the confidence of students, develop another level of motivation toward being successful, and, by ensuring that students are constantly engaged in meaningful learning, could become a deterrent to students dropping out.

Lastly, I would group teachers by content in the summer and send them on collaboration retreats. The chance for teachers to delve into more meaningful, engaged

learning in a relaxing locale is a major asset of retreats (Education World, 2012). I would want teachers to be able to bond and take ownership of the strategies learned while still learning themselves; through this experience, they would be able to provide the best instruction for students in their content area. A retreat would address the diverse needs of the students participants teach, how to identify those needs, and what strategies best meet those needs in order to engage students. Teachers would discuss and develop lessons to cover those needs and how the curriculum can become student friendly. A retreat for teachers would promote togetherness among faculty and would motivate teachers to be the best teachers that they can be.

Analysis of Learning

Scholarship

In the process of completing this study, I discovered a great deal about what scholarship means. The time spent in researching and reading articles about the topic was intense. As a beginning researcher, I was not aware of the dedication and discipline required to complete a doctoral study. I have learned to review the literature and to observe the literature in a scholarly manner. I began to think as a researcher by looking at different sources of information and being able to understand the viewpoint of each author while developing my thoughts about the subject matter.

One of the most intriguing aspects of the study was collecting and analyzing the data. The answers from the interviews reminded me of the importance a teacher has in the lives of students. Reading the transcripts and understanding the messages teachers were conveying made the study come to life. The responses and the concerns of teachers

helped me to develop a project that has the potential to motivate students to excel in their academic endeavors.

Project Development and Evaluation

In developing the project, I wanted to create a project that would be meaningful and effective for teachers and students. Project development is a tedious process. In the first part of the process, I had to determine what could be done to obtain the result of getting students engaged in learning, whereby both students and teachers would have success in the classroom. In the data, teachers identified needs for students and possible solutions to these needs. In order to meet needs in the classroom, teachers require more training. After identifying that engaging students in the curriculum had become a problem, I began to research literature to determine which best practices were available that would assist teachers in engaging students in the classroom.

In dialogue with the teachers, I was able to get more in-depth information about the problem of engaging students in the curriculum. From the outside looking in, there was an assumption that teachers were able to deal with this issue by attempting to engage students in methods with which they were familiar. However, a new curriculum had been implemented that required a higher level of rigor for students, and teachers were not quite prepared for the level of engagement needed for students to succeed. There was not only a new curriculum, but also a new teacher evaluation system tied directly to student performance. In understanding the dynamics of what the teachers were facing, I was better informed concerning what direction to go in with regard to developing the project.

In project development, I could have ventured in many directions. After some

brainstorming sessions and literature review, I decided that a professional development plan was the route to take. I even reviewed literature on professional development models and how to make them meaningful. In the final analysis, a professional development plan that rewarded teachers with a stipend and provided resources and strategies to engage students in the curriculum was established. To make the plan more effective, I decided to key on a specific level of engagement through the approach of meaningful, engaged learning. In this area of engagement, students will have academic success in the classroom because teachers will be equipped with strategies that can engage students in the classroom no matter the learning level. Although this was the idea of the project in theory, the process of development took time to come together. I had internal debates within myself on how to arrange the sessions, who would present strategies during the sessions, and the days to hold these sessions. It was a constant process of revising and making sure all the parts of the plan would come together. I learned that there are no perfect projects. All projects have room for improvement, and developers can create them better or differently.

The evaluation of the project is an ongoing process. Because the implementation of the project will occur in the future, I expect that after implementation, possible changes to the plan will help to determine the effectiveness reaching the goal of engaging students in the curriculum. The evaluation of the project will be crucial to the success of the teachers and the students. Developers must refine the project enough so that teachers have the tools necessary to make adjustments to the strategies they have learned in professional development for each class they teach. The evaluation will provide insight

concerning what developers can do to cover any deficiencies in the plan to create a more comprehensive plan that teachers can use at the local school and throughout the school district.

Leadership and Change

As the process of the study continued, I began to realize that change is a factor in getting the desired result of student engagement in learning. Change would not be limited to teachers but would affect leadership as well. I, as a leader in the school, must be willing to make the necessary changes to ensure that students receive the best academic environment possible. In my position of leadership, I have learned from this project that, ultimately, I serve as an instructional leader as well as an agent of change. For change to be effective, I must wholeheartedly believe in the concepts and the principles of the project and believe that this course of action will offer a great benefit for the students. In the leadership role, it will be important for me to get the staff to buy into the changes we must make in regard to what strategies we use and how we teach. Change is not always easy to implement, but sometimes it is necessary to adapt with the times. Within the realm of change in education, there will always be challenges that teachers and administrators must face. The study has given me direction in helping teachers through the challenges we face at the local setting. Through the research and development of the study, as a leader, I have become more aware of the importance of supporting teachers and the academic program. I have embraced the mindset needed to make the necessary changes to the academic program that will best benefit the students. I have accepted the fact that change is not always a bad thing, but a means to get a desired

result.

Self-Reflection

Analysis of Self as Scholar

I am a firm believer in the idea that a person is never too old or too smart to learn something new or how to do something better. The knowledge I have gained from the study has helped to develop me as a scholar. Although I was familiar with some of the subject matter, it became apparent that a deeper understanding of the subject matter was needed. For most of my administrative career, I shied away from the workings of the curriculum because we had others on staff who had more expertise in that area. I was comfortable with being a manager of everything else in the school. The doctoral study has totally transformed my thinking as an instructional leader. I am now thinking as a scholar who is also a manager of a school. Because of the experience of completing this study, I am now not afraid of reviewing the curriculum and providing insight on what is needed for our students to have a better experience in the classroom. The process of becoming a scholar involves being courageous and being able to persevere. As a scholar, I now have no fear of taking risks for the betterment of my students.

Analysis of Self as Practitioner

As a practitioner, I found that the project study seemed to close the gap between the time I taught in the classroom and my time in administration. It reminded me of the awesome task that teachers face in today's classroom. The study allowed me to immerse myself in the curriculum and to develop ideas on how to engage the students in the classroom. As a practitioner, I became passionate about the success the project could

have in helping students to remain in school and stay on track for graduation. Effective school leaders impact what goes on in the classroom and student success in learning (Horng & Loeb, 2010). In performing class observations of teachers, I began to think of ways in which teachers could instruct more effectively and how the strategies of the project would fit in with what teachers were doing in the classroom. As a practitioner, I could imagine myself in the classroom completing tasks so that all students would be engaged, as well as being able to share those things with the staff. The greatest thing I learned is that I was comfortable enough to go into any classroom and apply the strategies and activities from the project to engage students. Even as an administrator, I understood what it took to be the lead example in fostering student learning.

Analysis of Self as Project Developer

As a project developer, I discovered how detailed the project should be constructed in order to have a legitimate chance of being effective. Although initially it seemed as though the project could serve as a solo plan of mine, I learned the importance of analyzing the responses and feedback from the teachers would be helpful in addressing the problem. As a project developer, I had to research best practices on student engagement and make decisions on what would best to help the school. At first, I did not understand the concept of developing a professional development plan. I not only had to research the strategies needed for the professional development plan, but I also had to research the origins of professional development plans and the most effective way to deliver it. The professional development plan had to be meaningful and worth-while for teachers to have an interest in attending. In developing the project, I had to learn to

design the project so that it would address the needs for teachers and students. I learned to be creative in the project in order to maintain the attention of the teachers and for teachers to realize the importance of how change will affect their performance in the classroom. There were many phases in the development of the project. I had to become patient in the construction of the plan and to make sure that the activities and strategies were addressing the needs of the students. I had to make sure that the time spent in the project was being used wisely and efficiently. As a project developer, I gained a sense of ownership in the fact that I was constructing a professional development plan that could be used at the local setting and throughout the district.

The Project's Potential Impact on Social Change

There are many reasons why students choose to drop out of school. In this local setting, students face many challenges in having success in the classroom at the ninth grade level. With the implementation of a new curriculum, students were attempting to adjust to a more rigorous way of learning and teachers a new way of teaching. In this setting, there are ninth grade students who have deficiencies in learning, some are one or more years behind, and they can potentially become dropout candidates. In this project study, I was trying to help address this issue through engaging students in the classroom. In the curriculum, students are required to be more than just higher order thinkers but also discussion initiators. The implementation of the project will challenge students in the classroom at levels where they are both comfortable and uncomfortable. Students can be comfortable in the fact that some activities may give them instant academic success in the classroom and uncomfortable when the curriculum requires them to push beyond the

norm. In both instances, the project helps build student confidence in the classroom. In regards to impacting social change, a project of this magnitude can change the landscape on how schools view the disengaged student and those who may be potential dropouts not only in the ninth grade, but also in the tenth through twelfth grades. Within the project, there are enough strategies and activities that teachers can use for student engagement in the classroom. However, this is not to say that this project is the only means by which teachers can engage students in learning, but it does have the potential of being a model to help students become successful in the classroom and to decrease the dropout rate.

Implications, Applications, and Directions for Future Research

This particular project has been developed to assist the local school setting in getting students engaged in learning through the approach of meaningful engaged learning. Although the project can serve as an important resource for schools, there is still a great need for future research. Future research implications could include teacher training on a larger scale by observing schools in other states or attending recognized national conferences on meaningful engaged learning. A major change that will deviate from the project is that teachers in the local setting will lead the staff development sessions instead of personnel from the state department of education.

Another future implication and application might include the use of the project in the middle school and upper elementary grades. States have recognized the need for early warning systems for students in regards to being able to identify students who display characteristics of dropping out of school (O'Brien, 2012). Balfanz (2009) suggested that providing students with activities that promote engagement is effective and reduces the

chances of them dropping out of school. With incorporating the strategies learned from the project, teachers could use the same approach in engaging students at the lower levels. The idea is that if they are accustomed to being engaged in the classroom, then they will understand what it will take to have the desired results in the classroom.

A project of this nature can lead to many other avenues for future research. A study could be conducted to determine the effectiveness of the project with students in the ninth grade or in a ninth grade academy. Another study could be done to determine if the project has any bearing on whether students drop out of school or not. In regards to the curriculum, a study could be conducted to measure whether students became engaged in learning and progressed in the learning environment. There are unlimited possibilities for future research to add to the knowledge of what exists, as well as discovering new ideas.

My vision for academic success has greatly increased because of the project study. The mission is to offer every child that walks through the doors of the school an opportunity for teachers to engage them in learning and have academic success. I feel I have made a contribution to the field of education. The eagerness to provide a resource that can change the way students learn and offer them the reward of knowing that being in school and learning is meaningful has transformed my mind to believe that every child can learn.

Conclusion

The purpose of this project study was to address the need for teachers to learn strategies on how to engage students in the curriculum through the approach of

meaningful engaged learning. Through conducted interview responses, a staff development plan was created to address the need of being able to engage students in the new curriculum. The plan was designed to provide teachers with activities and strategies that would engage students in the class and to provide students with the opportunity to have academic success in the classroom.

In the completion of this study, I have learned valuable information about what it takes to be a researcher and how to develop a resource that will enhance the academic environment of students in the ninth grade academy. In completing the study, I now feel more of an instructional leader instead of just being a school manager. I feel that the completion of this body of work will promote social change. The study has the potential of having a positive impact not only at the local level, but also at the district level. It is my hope that students everywhere can be motivated and changed by being engaged in learning through meaningful engaged learning.

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Appendix A: The Project

Meaningful Engaged Learning: A Professional Development Plan

Designed for
9th Grade Academy Teachers

By: Eric V. Davis

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Purpose of Rams in Pursuit of Perfection (RPP)

A staff development plan in meaningful engaged learning

The overall purpose of the professional development is to give teachers access to strategies that they could use to insure Meaningful Engaged Learning within the classroom. RPP was developed to provide specific teaching strategies that fall under the goal of meaningful engaged learning. The strategies that will be used came from three sources: Instruction for all students, helping students motivate themselves, and Kagan cooperative learning. RPP was also designed to train teachers in engaging students in learning and grouping students to maximize learning, understanding vocabulary, and effective questioning prompts and discussions to generate writing in the Common Core curriculum. The sessions will run as follows:

- Session 1: Engaging students in learning and grouping students
- Session 2: Understanding Vocabulary
- Session 3: Effective questioning prompts and discussion to generate writing

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*Rams in Pursuit of Perfection
(RPP)
Calendar of Events*

Upon all Walden University Approvals

Engaging Students in Learning, Grouping Students to Maximize Learning, Understanding Vocabulary & Effective Questioning Prompts and Discussion to Generate Writing

Session 1 Upon all Walden University Approvals

(Engaging Students in Learning and Grouping Students to Maximize Learning)

Session 2 *Upon all Walden University Approvals*

(Understanding Vocabulary)

Session 3 *Upon all Walden University Approvals*

(Effective Questioning Prompts & Discussion to Generate Writing)

Portfolios Checked (Sessions 1, 2, 3)

Participants will be available for observation from any or all of the following personnel:

Campus Administration

Central Office-Instructional Team

**Upon All Walden University Approvals
RPP Agenda
8:00am-5:00pm**



Engaging Students in Learning and Grouping Students to Maximize Learning

Sign-In/RPP Materials and Information

Purpose.....Reading/Math Coordinator

Demographics and Data.....La. Dept of Education

Engaging Students..... La. Dept of Education

**Activity (I Have the Question, Who Has the Answer?).....La. Dept of Education
Teachers**

**Activity (Graffiti/5 card draw).....La. Dept of Education
Teachers**

Lunch

Grouping Students to Maximize Learning

Kagan Grouping and Structures.....La. Dept of Education

**Activity (Blackout).....La. Dept of Education
Teachers**

Grouping Matrix..... La. Dept of Education

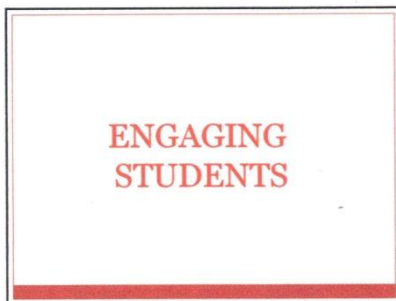
**Cooperative Learning Secondary Activities.....La. Dept of Education
Teachers**

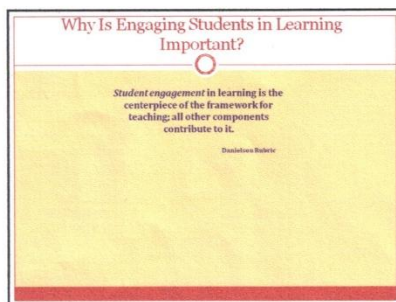
- Activity (Rally Robin)**
- Activity (Timed Pair Share)**
- Activity (Rally Coach)**

ABC Lesson Planning.....La. Dept of Education

Portfolio Review/Closing Remarks.....Reading/Math Coordinator

4/15/2014





A slide with a white top section and a yellow bottom section, separated by a red border. The title "Student Achievement Data" is in the top section. Below it is a table with two columns: "8th Grade LEAP ELA" and "EOC Results : English II".

8th Grade LEAP ELA	EOC Results : English II
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 2011/12-52.4% Below Basic	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Spring 2010- 73.7% Below Proficiency• Spring 2011- 57.1% Below Proficiency• Spring 2012 :- 43% Below Proficiency

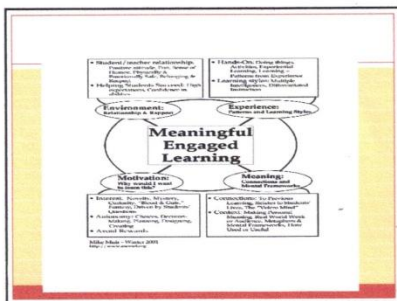
4/15/2014

Student Achievement Data	
Incoming Freshman Reading Comprehension Scores	Overage Incoming Freshman
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 7th Grade Level: 9 6th Grade Level: 5 5th Grade Level: 14 4th Grade Level: 11 3rd Grade Level: 78 2nd Grade Level: 14 1st Grade and Below: 7 80% of Freshman Below Desired Reading Level 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 17 yrs old: 18 16 yrs old: 44 45% of Freshman Entering Grade 9 Overage

Student Achievement Data Among Diverse Groups	
Economically Disadvantaged	Special Needs
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> GEE 2012/2013 Whole School ELA 41.2% Proficient (211 Students) iLeap 9th Grade 44% Proficient (128 Students) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> GEE 2012/2013 Whole School ELA 14.3% Proficient (7 Students) iLeap 9th Grade 25% Proficient (4 Students)

Meaningful Engaged Learning School Improvement Strategy
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 3 recognized models of MEL North Central Educational Laboratory (NCREL) Schlechty Center for Leadership in school reform Mike Muir of the Maine Center for Meaningful Engaged Learning (McMEL)

4/15/2014



Research Base:
Louisiana Department of Education

Mizr, M. (2009). What engages underachieving middle school students in learning? Middle School Journal, 32(2), 19-27-35

- Four case studies were conducted on two teams in two different schools. One student interview, teacher interview, field observations, and Aspirations Benchmarks Initiative data were coded, coded passages were synthesized.
- The goal of analysis was to discover common themes in what seems to motivate these underachieving students, to organize this information, and to build a richer theory about what motivates this population.

Codes fell within eight themes:

- student-teacher relationship
- hands-on activities
- choice and student autonomy
- making learning interesting and tying into student interests
- structure and consistency
- student goals and preparing for the future
- learning styles
- high expectations and helping students to succeed

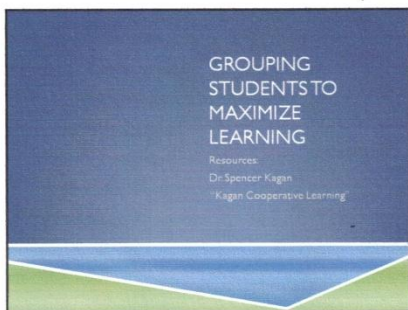
I Have the Question, Who Has the Answer?

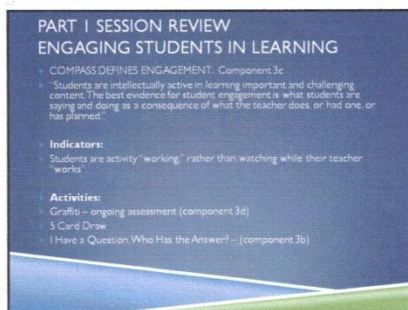
5 Card Draw

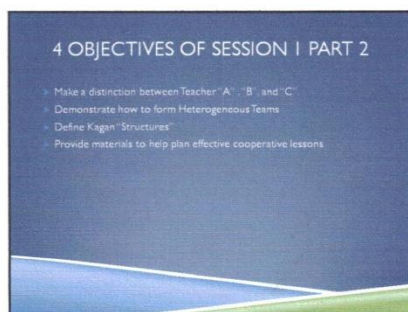
Graffiti

Group Activity

4/15/2014







4/15/2014

TEACHER A, B, C

- Teacher A: Traditional Approach**
 - Teacher A passes out individual worksheets and has students practice the skill alone, turning in their papers afterward for feedback. During the worksheet work, the teacher admonishes the students: "keep your eyes on your own paper."
- Teacher B: Group Work**
 - Teacher B has the students in small groups or pairs and tells them to "Help each other" or "Solve the problems as a group."
- Teacher C: Structures**
 - Teacher C has many structures to choose from. For example, Teacher C may use **Sage-N-Scribe**. One student the sage, states how to solve the problem, step-by-step, while the other student, the scribe, records the steps and the answer. The Scribe coaches the Sage if necessary and offers praise. Students rotate roles following each problem so the Scribe becomes the sage.

FAST TO GREAT

Group Work (G) <ul style="list-style-type: none">Students form a group, (usually 4)Each person has a "job", (reporter, materials collector, captain, recorder, etc.)Students are only concerned with "their job", and do not participate the entire time. (easy for them to hide)All students are not engagedLearning is not equal (one person may do all or most of the work)	Collaborative Learning (C) <ul style="list-style-type: none">Students are working in teams that display:<ul style="list-style-type: none">P- Positive Interdependence (on the same side, same goals)I- Individual Accountability (student's can't hide)E- Equal participation (equal status)S- Simultaneous Interaction (engagement)
---	--

MOVING FROM GOOD TO GREAT

TRADITIONAL → COOPERATIVE LEARNING

"A good class is a quiet class."	• "Learning involves healthy noise."
"Keep your eyes on your own paper."	• "Help your partner solve it."
"Sit quietly."	• "Get up and look at what others did."

4/15/2014

I KNOW...YOU HATE IT ALREADY!

We've already heard every line in the book....

- How can I cover the curriculum if I allow time for student discussion, team building and silly sports energizers during my class?
- Where does cooperative learning fit into my lesson plan?
- What do I do with students who are frequently absent or pulled out?

ANSWERS TO FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS.....

How can I cover the curriculum?
Stay talking on a regular basis and let the students do the talking.
We retain a great deal of what we say rather than what we hear.
It is through discourse and interaction of different ideas that students construct meaning.

Where does cooperative learning fit into my lesson plan?
By incorporating a few simple and quick learning structures into each lesson.

What do I do with students who are frequently absent or pulled out?
Spread around the most frequently pulled out or absent students. When the students leave form groups of four of remaining students.
Teachers are responsible for explaining what was missed, set up homework buddies and have a place set up for students to get there work, what they return without interrupting the teacher.

2008, ©Kagan

Distinctions
A joke will be rendered the funnier the longer you hold up your hand or raise your voice. If the person who the joke is about may not know the meaning, look to the funniest person in the room. The funniest person will be the one who the joke is about. The funniest person in the room will be the one who the joke is about.

Distinctions
A joke will be rendered the funnier the longer you hold up your hand or raise your voice. If the person who the joke is about may not know the meaning, look to the funniest person in the room. The funniest person will be the one who the joke is about. The funniest person in the room will be the one who the joke is about.

1. Something a joke might render!
2. A sound you hope your bones never make!
3. An older man with money!
4. Something a pitcher stands on!
5. Amount of money we will never make as teachers!

BRAIN BREAK

4/15/2014

**FORMING TEAMS
4-STEP PLAN**

- **Achievement – Ranked List Method**
- 1. Rank-Order Students
- 2. Select First Team
- 3. Select Remaining Teams
- 4. Assign 'Extras'

WHAT IS A STRUCTURE??

- These cooperative learning structures are step-by-step instructional strategies.
- They are used to deliver the regular academic curriculum.
- They also are used to learn teamwork and leadership skills.
- They are content-free and can be used over and over in an infinite number of activities.

3 Structures we will learn today:

- Rally/Round Robin
- Rally Coach
- Timed-Pair-Share

RALLY/ROUND ROBIN

- Students take turns talking/answering.
- One student listens as the other talks & vice versa.

4/15/2014

RALLY COACH

- Pair a "high" with "low/medium" & "high/medium" with a "low"
- Label students as student A and student B

Student Directions:
One sheet of paper & one pencil

Student A	Student B
Solve 1 st Problem (only person that writes)	Only watch & listen Correct- Praise; Incorrect- Coach

Students then switch roles.

TIMED-PAIR-SHARE

Description

The think, pair, share strategy is a cooperative learning technique in which students think through questions using three distinct steps: encouraging individual participation, it is designed to provide students with "food for thought" on a given topic enabling them to formulate individual ideas and share these ideas with another student. Rather than using a basic recitation method in which a teacher poses a question and one student offers a response, Think-Pair-Share encourages a high degree of pupil response and can help keep students on task.

NOTES THAT MIGHT HELP:

Providing "think time" increases quality of student responses. Students become actively involved in thinking about the concepts presented in the lesson.

Research tells us that we need time to mentally "chew over" new ideas in order to store them in memory. If we give students time to "think-pair-share" throughout the lesson, more of the critical information is retained.

When students talk over new ideas, they are forced to make sense of those new ideas in terms of their prior knowledge. Their misunderstandings about the topic are often revealed (and resolved) during this discussion stage.

Students are more willing to participate since they don't feel the peer pressure involved in responding in front of the whole class.


Teachers who give "think time" ask higher level questions.

Research tells us that students who have learned to use "think time" actually do better on standardized tests.

4/15/2014

BY YOURSELF LOOK AT THE PICTURE AND THINK ABOUT THE FOLLOWING AND WRITE YOUR ANSWERS.

What can you infer from the picture?
What kind of conflict is conveyed in the picture?
What is the mood in this picture? Explain your answer.
What is the tone of the picture? Explain your answer.
Share your thinking with a partner. (Write your notes on paper.)



Just try this. It is from an orthopedic surgeon..... This will boggle your mind and you will keep trying over and over again to see if you can outsmart your foot, but you can't. It is preprogrammed in your brain!

1. While sitting where you are at your table, lift your right foot off the floor and make clockwise circles.
2. Now, while doing this, draw the number '6' in the air with your right hand. Your foot will change direction!

BRAIN BREAK


PLANNING COOPERATIVE LESSONS

- » "Don't do cooperative learning lessons, make cooperative learning a part of every lesson."
- » Step 1: Pick a lesson
- » Step 2: Sequence the lesson
- » Step 3: Fill in Teacher and Student Actions
- » Step 4: Analyze for ABC
- » Step 5: Substitute Structures

4/15/2014


Structures at a Glance

Stand Up, Hand Up, Pair Up	Timed Pair Share
Mix Pair Share	Single RoundRobin
RallyRobin	Continuous RoundRobin
RallyTable	All Write RoundRobin
RallyCoach	Timed RoundRobin
Simultaneous RallyTable	Stand-N-Share
Quiz-Quiz-Trade	Fan-N-Pick
	Numbered Heads Together
	Single RoundTable
	Continuous RoundTable
	Simultaneous RoundTable




Stand Up, Hand Up, Pair Up

1. Teacher says "Stand up, hand up, pair up!"
2. Students: stand up with one hand in air until you find the closest partner who is not your teammate.
3. Teacher asks a question or gives an assignment.
4. Teacher provides "think time".
5. Partners share using:
 - RallyRobin
 - Timed Pair Share
 - Pair Discussion



Timed Pair Share



1. Teacher announces the topic and tells you how long each of you will have.
2. Teacher gives you "think time".
3. In pairs, Partner A shares as Partner B listens.
4. Teacher calls "time".
5. Partner B thanks and praises Partner A.
6. Partners switch roles.



4/15/2014



RallyRobin

1. Using the topic given, the partner that goes 1st.
2. After the 1st partner shares one thing, partner 2 shares one thing: repeat.
3. You "Rally" the topic like this until the teacher calls time.





Pair Discussion

1. Teacher announces the topic and tells you how long your pair will have.
2. Teacher gives you "think time".
3. In pairs, Partners share thoughts on topic.
4. Teacher calls time.



Mix, Pair, Share

1. Students stand up and silently mix around the room.
2. Teacher says, "Pair".
3. Students pair up with the person closest to you and give a high five. If you don't have a partner, keep your hand up until you do.
4. Teacher asks a question and gives "think time".
5. Partners share using:
 - RallyRobin
 - Timed Pair Share
 - RallyCoach




4/15/2014

RallyCoach


Partners take turns, one solving a problem while the other coaches:

- Partner A solves or answers 1st problem.
- Partner B watches, listens, coaches, and praises.
- Partner B solves next problem.
- Partner A watches, listens, coaches, and praises.
- Repeat starting with Step 1.




RallyTable

1. Teacher announces the topic.
2. Teacher gives you "think time".
3. In pairs, Partner A writes an answer to the topic then passes paper and pencil to Partner B.
4. Partner B writes an answer and passes it back to Partner A.
5. Steps 3 & 4 continue until the teacher calls "time".
6. Pairs compare their list with other team pair.



Simultaneous RallyTable

1. Teacher announces the topics/problems.
2. Teacher gives you "think time".
3. In pairs, Partner A writes an answer to topic A Partner B writes an answer to topic B.
4. Partners switch papers, read, then add on to the answer.
5. Steps 3 & 4 continue until the teacher calls "time".
6. Pairs compare their list with other team pair.



4/15/2014

Quiz-Quiz-Trade

Using question cards, students quiz a partner, get quizzed by a partner, then trade and repeat with a new partner:

1. Stand Up, Hand Up, Pair Up.
2. Partner A quizzes.
3. Partner B answers.
4. Partner A *coaches* and/or *praises*.
5. Switch roles.
6. Partners trade cards.
7. Repeat steps 1-6 until the teacher calls time.

QUESTION

BY

ON

RE

DATE

Single RoundRobin

Students take turns talking with their teammates:

- Teacher announces topic/ gives "think time".
- Teammate ____ begins with a clockwise rotation.
- Each teammate gives his/her short answer to the topic.
- Sharing is over after each teammate has spoken.

Continuous RoundRobin

Students take turns talking with their teammates:


- Teacher announces topic and how much time will be given/ gives "think time".
- Teammate ____ begins with a clockwise rotation.
- Each teammate gives his/her short answer to the topic.
- Sharing continues in clockwise rotation and is over when teacher calls time.

4/15/2014

Timed RoundRobin


Students take turns talking with their teammates:

- Teacher announces topic and how much time each teammate has/ gives "think time".
- Teammate ____ begins with a clockwise rotation.
- Each teammate talks for the given of time.
- Sharing continues in clockwise rotation and is over when teacher calls time.




All Write RoundRobin

1. Each teammate has paper and pencil.
2. Teacher announces topic and give "think time".
3. Teammate ____ begins with a clockwise rotation.
4. As each teammate says his/her short answer to the topic, each teammate writes the answers on own paper.
5. Sharing continues in clockwise rotation and is over when teacher says stop.



Stand-N-Share

1. All students stand with their own list [or with a team-generated list].
2. Teacher calls on 1 student to share.
3. Students add the shared item to their list if they don't have it, or check it off if they do.
4. Students sit when all of their items are shared, continuing to add each new item on their list.
5. When all students are seated, Stand-N-Share is complete.




4/15/2014

Fan-N-Pick


Each team receives a set of question cards:

- Student 1 holds question cards in a fan and says, "Pick a card, any card!"
- Student 2 picks a card, reads the question aloud and allows 5 seconds of "think time".
- Student 3 answers the question.
- Student 4 paraphrases [says in own words] and praises or coaches.
- Students rotate roles one person clockwise for each new round.



Numbered Heads Together


1. Students number off.
2. Teacher asks a question and gives "think time".
3. Students privately write own answers [solo time].
4. Students stand up, put heads together [huddle up], show answers, discuss, and coach if necessary.
5. Students sit down when everyone knows the answer or has something they can share.
6. Teacher calls a number; that numbered student from each group stands and simultaneously answers the teacher's question.
7. Teammates praise [CELEBRATE] students who responded.



Single RoundTable

Students take turns writing with their teammates using 1 paper and 1 pencil:

- Teacher announces topic / gives "think time".
- Teammate ____ begins with a clockwise rotation.
- Each writes his/her short answer to the topic then passes the paper and pencil to the next teammate.
- Writing is over after each teammate has written an answer or thought.




4/15/2014

Continuous RoundTable

Students take turns writing with their teammates using 1 paper and 1 pencil:


- Teacher announces topic / gives "think time".
- Teammate ____ begins with a clockwise rotation.
- Each writes his/her short answer to the topic then passes the paper and pencil on to the next teammate.
- Writing continues until the teacher says stop.



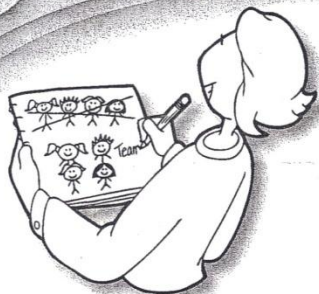
Simultaneous Round Table

Students take turns writing on own paper then pass it on to teammates:

1. Teacher announces topic / gives "think time".
2. Each teammate writes his/her short answer to the topic on own paper then passes the paper on to the next teammate.
3. Writing continues until the teacher says stop.



14 Planning Cooperative Lessons




Transforming Lessons into Cooperative Lessons

Almost any lesson can be improved by replacing an element of the lesson with a cooperative learning structure. You don't have to throw away your current lesson plans and start from scratch. Instead, keep your lesson plans that work well for you and make them better by infusing cooperative learning structures. For example, if we want our students to master a problem-solving algorithm, before students work independently on worksheets, we have them practice with RallyCoach: Students work in pairs and coach each other as they solve the problems. By having students work together to coach each other before they work independently, we dramatically increase the probability of their independent success. Madeline Hunter alerted us to the importance of guided practice before independent practice; RallyCoach provides the guidance. Or, to paraphrase Lev Vygotsky, "What children can do only with the assistance of others, they will later be able to do alone."

In her extensive work with teachers, Laurie Kagan developed a lesson planning process designed to help teachers replace traditional (Teacher A) instruction and group work (Teacher B) instruction with cooperative learning (Teacher C) by inserting structures into their preferred lesson sequences. For a detailed description of Teachers A, B, and C, see *Chapter 6: Structures*.

Using the Teacher ABC Lesson Planning Form

Step 2. Sequence the Lesson



Teacher ABC Lesson Planning Form

Instructions. Use this form to transform lessons into cooperative learning lessons.

Teacher ABC Key
Teacher A. Traditional Instruction—Direct instruction or independent practice.
Teacher B. Group Work—Students working in groups without structured interaction.
Teacher C. Cooperative Learning—Structured cooperative learning.

Subject Math Time Frame 1 period

Lesson Sequence	Teacher	Student	ABC	Structure
Seat Work/Read				
Do over Homework				
Teach a Concept				
Check for Understanding				
Practice				
Problem a Day				
Wrap				
Homework Assignment				

Step 3. Fill In Teacher and Student Actions & Step 4. Analyze for ABC

Lesson Sequence	Teacher	Student	ABC	Structure
Seat Work/Read	Take Bell	Seat Work	A	
Do over Homework	Review Questions	Classroom	A	
Teach a Concept	Lecture	Listen, Take Notes	A	
Check for Understanding	Sample Problems	Work Solo	A	
Practice	Assign Book Work	Work Solo	A	
Problem a Day	Assign Problem	Work in Groups	B	
Wrap	Summarize	Listen	A	
Homework Assignment	Assign Homework	Take Notes	A	

Using the Teacher ABC Lesson Planning Form

Step 5. Substitute Structures

Lesson Sequence	Teacher	Student	ABC	Structure
Seat Work/Recit	Take Roll	Seat Work	A	
Go over Homework	Review Questions	Observe	X C	RoundRobin
Teach a Concept	Lecture	Listen, Take Notes	A	
Check for Understanding	Solve Problems	Work Solo	A	
Practice	Assign Book Work	Work Solo	X C	Sage-N-Scribe
Problem a Day	Assign Problem	Work in Groups	B	
Wrap	Summarize	Listen	X C	Timed Pair Share
Homework Assignment	Assign Homework	Take Notes	A	

The basic lesson planning process is to fill out a lesson planning form with an existing lesson or lesson pattern, then analyze the lesson to see where in the lesson to substitute one or more cooperative learning structures. See the Teacher ABC Lesson Planning Form on the following page. Let's walk through five steps together to plan a lesson using the form.

Step 1. Pick a Lesson

As a first step, pick a lesson or a typical lesson pattern that you'd like to improve with structures.

Step 2. Sequence the Lesson

Determine the sequence of the lesson. For example, the pattern might be: 1) seat work, 2) review the homework, 3) teach a new concept, and so on. Fill in the first column, "Lesson Sequence," of the form as shown at left.

Step 3. Fill In Teacher and Student Actions

In the second and third columns, fill in what the teacher does and what students do for each step of the lesson. See columns two and three on the sample form on bottom of the previous page.

Step 4. Analyze for ABC

Analyze each step with respect to what the teacher and students are doing and label each step as A, B, or C in the "ABC" column using the following key:

- A) **Traditional Instruction.** Direct instruction or independent practice
- B) **Group Work.** Students working in groups without structured interaction
- C) **Structures.** Structured cooperative learning. See the "ABC" column on the form on the previous page.

Step 5. Substitute Structures

Finally, examine the lesson or lesson pattern and replace one or more of the Teacher A and B steps with a Teacher C cooperative structure. Write the name of the structure in the last column, "Structure." In our sample lesson planning form above, we've substituted in three structures: RoundRobin, Sage-N-Scribe, and Timed Pair Share.

This lesson planning process is relatively easy because we start with what we're already doing. We're simply looking for opportunities to inject cooperative learning structures into the lesson. With just one substitution, the lesson becomes more engaging and successful. As we become fluent in more structures, additional substitutions are made. A Teacher ABC Lesson Planning Form is provided (on the next page) to help you transform your lessons into more cooperative and engaging lessons.

Teacher ABC Lesson Planning Form



Instructions. Use this form to transform lessons into cooperative learning lessons.

Teacher ABC Key


Teacher A. Traditional Instruction—Direct instruction or independent practice
Teacher B. Group Work—Students working in groups without structured interaction
Teacher C. Cooperative Learning—Structured cooperative learning

Subject _____ Time Frame _____

Lesson Sequence	Teacher	Student	ABC	Structure

ACTIVITIES FOR SESSION 1

Chapter IV: Active Learning



I Have the Question, Who Has the Answer?

Purposes

- To review concepts through active student participation
- To heighten attention and engagement
- To check for understanding

Materials

- Two sets of index cards or slips of paper. One set contains questions related to the unit of study. The second set contains the answers to the questions. Hint: To keep students engaged, prepare more answer cards than question cards.

Process

- Distribute answer cards to students.
- Place a stack of question cards face down in the middle of each of the student tables.
- Designate a student to turn over a question card. The student says "The question is... ? Who has the answer?"
- All students check their answer cards to see if they have the correct answer or a possible one. If a student thinks he/she has an answer, she reads the answer. If it is a match, the student with the answer turns over the next question card, reads the question aloud, and the process continues.

Variations

- The whole group owns the answers distributed to individuals and they collaborate in deciding if they have a good answer.
- Start with just a few questions and answers for students and add to the collection as the unit progresses.
- Have students prepare the cards.
- Use the question/answer cards for individual/small group review.

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Just Ask Publications

Rutherford, P. (2008). Instruction for all students. *Alexandria: Just Ask.*

Chapter IV: Active Learning

Graffiti

Purposes

- To gather pre-assessment data
- To access prior knowledge
- To have students summarize their learning
- To build in movement
- To promote critical thinking

Process

- Write problems, formulas, sentences to be translated, or ideas to brainstorm on pieces of large chart paper and post around the room. Students move in small groups from chart to chart.

or

- Give each piece of chart paper to a group of three or four. Students work at their tables and the charts move from table to table. Kathy Anderson of New Trier High School, Winnetka, Illinois calls this version **Ready...Rotate**.

In either case,

- each group works on a different question, topic, issue, or statement related to the concept being studied and writes responses or "graffiti" which can be short words, phrases, or graphics on their chart paper.
- After the allotted time period, have the students or the charts move.
- Repeat the process until all groups have reacted to all charts.
- Post the charts and have students react to the statements or topics, identify patterns, and/or make predictions based on what is written/drawn on the charts.

Variations

- This strategy can be used any time during a lesson or unit. At the beginning you and your students can find out what they already know and can do; in the middle it is a useful way for you and them to check on their learning. At the end of study, it can serve as a great review for an exam or even for predicting what might be on the exam.
- Individuals or groups can use different color markers to track contributions.
- See and Hear chart

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President

Senate



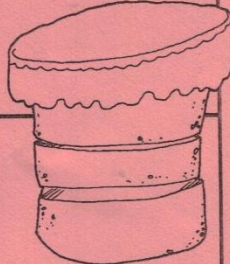

House of Reps.

Supreme Court

Blackout

Student One picks a square and reads it aloud to teammates. He or she calls on a teammate to answer the statement. After the teammate answers, the square is covered up with a marker or bean. Student two reads a different square. The game is complete when all squares are blacked out.



Your Birthplace or Hometown	Your Best Memories	Places You've Lived	Schools You've Attended
Your Dreams or Goals 	Your Favorite School Subject	Awards You've Received 	Vacations You've Taken
Your Favorite Music	Your Favorite Color	Summer Camps You've Attended	Your Favorite Dinner 
Your Hobbies 	Sports You Play	Your Nickname	Your Favorite Dessert

RoundRobin 97



Card Categories Five Card Draw

Purposes

- To place students in working groups
- To review/preview content specific vocabulary
- To have students practice categorizing skills
- To have students handle their learning

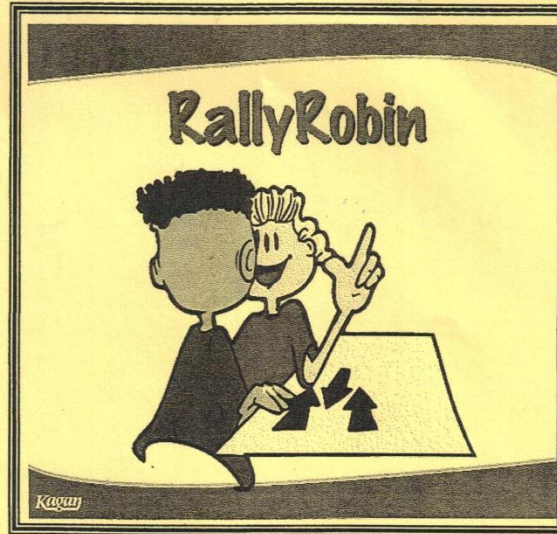
Process

- Prepare cards with vocabulary words, geographic locations, components of mathematical equations or formulas, or items from any set of categories. To fit the name, **Five Card Draw**, identify five items/cards for each set and prepare the number of sets you need to have one card per student.
- As students enter the room, have them draw a card or have them draw (from a deck) as you circulate around the room.
- Students are to move around the room to find four other students who "fit" with the category represented by the item on the card.
- Once the groups have formed, students sit together and study/review material and categories represented by their cards. They are expected to figure out exactly how they fit together and prepare to present/explain their material to the class. Each member should be able to define, explain, or demonstrate all the concepts the group represents.
- The discussion and/or review can continue using one of several formats. To continue the random selection format, you could have students number off at each table, then spin a spinner or draw a straw, and have the selected student answer a question related to the material being studied.
- Other students could have listening logs, learning logs, or journals in which they are recording the information presented.

Possibilities

- Countries on a continent
- Types of numbers (prime, negative, ratios)
- Books in a genre
- Musical pieces by a composer or group
- Events in a decade

HANDOUTS FOR SESSION 1



1. Teacher poses a problem to which there are multiple possible responses or answers.
2. In PAIRS, students take turns stating responses or solutions.



1. Teacher assigns topic or question.
2. In **PAIRS**, students share for **SET TIME** period.
3. Partner **A SHARES** while Partner **B LISTENS**.
4. Switch roles.



1. Partner A **SOLVES** the first problem.
2. Partner B **WATCHES & LISTENS, COACHES & PRAISES.**
3. Partner B **SOLVES** the next problem.
4. Partner A **WATCHES & LISTENS, COACHES & PRAISES.**
5. Repeat --- when assignment is complete --- pair gives **SIGNAL.**

Teamformation Pocket Chart Method

A Teamformation Pocket Chart is available from Kagan Publishing to easily form and re-form heterogeneous teams. The nice thing about the pocket chart is how easy it is to adjust teams and to evaluate prior team assignments.

To make switches, move up or down one student from the middle to readjust. Once you have selected the first team, check off the students' names on your list so you know not to select them again.

Recommended Resource

Teamformation Pocket Chart

Form teams using color-coded T-Cards that slip into a team sheet to post

Step 3. Select Remaining Teams.

Repeat the procedure to select the remaining teams of four.

Step 4. Assign "Extras." Assign one extra student to one team of five, two extra students to two teams of three, and three extra students to one team of three.

Achievement-Ranked List Method

In this method, the teacher ranks students on a list by achievement level. Then the teacher uses the list to select a high, two mediums, and a low for each team. Use the blackline, Forming Heterogeneous Teams (on the next page).

Step 1. Rank-Order Students. Produce a numbered list of students, from highest to lowest achiever. The list does not have to be perfect. To produce the list, use one of the following (in order of preference): pretest, recent past test, past grades, or best guess.

Step 2. Select First Team. Choose the top student on the list, the bottom student on the list, and two students from the middle of the list. Assign them to Team 1, unless they are:

- All one sex;
- All one ethnicity in a mixed ethnicity group;
- Worst enemies or best friends;
- Incompatible (e.g., all chatterboxes, all bossy, all introverts, all easily distractible)

Achievement-Ranked List Method
Forming Heterogeneous Teams

Class Rank List

<input type="checkbox"/>	1. Sue				
<input type="checkbox"/>	2. Dave				
<input type="checkbox"/>	3.				
<input type="checkbox"/>	4.				
<input type="checkbox"/>	5.				
<input type="checkbox"/>	6.				
<input type="checkbox"/>	7.				
<input type="checkbox"/>	8.				
<input type="checkbox"/>	9.				
<input type="checkbox"/>	10.	H	M	L	
<input type="checkbox"/>	11.				
<input type="checkbox"/>	12.				
<input type="checkbox"/>	13.	M			
<input type="checkbox"/>	14.	H			
<input type="checkbox"/>	15. Pete				
<input type="checkbox"/>	16. Mary				
<input type="checkbox"/>	17.	H			
<input type="checkbox"/>	18.				
<input type="checkbox"/>	19.	M			
<input type="checkbox"/>	20.	H			
<input type="checkbox"/>	21.				
<input type="checkbox"/>	22.	M			
<input type="checkbox"/>	23.	H			
<input type="checkbox"/>	24.				
<input type="checkbox"/>	25.	M			
<input type="checkbox"/>	26.	H			
<input type="checkbox"/>	27.				
<input type="checkbox"/>	28.	M			
<input type="checkbox"/>	29.	H			
<input type="checkbox"/>	30.				
<input type="checkbox"/>	31.	M			
<input type="checkbox"/>	32.	H			
<input type="checkbox"/>	33.				
<input type="checkbox"/>	34.	M			
<input type="checkbox"/>	35. John				
<input type="checkbox"/>	36. Jack				

Heterogeneous Teams
• H=High • M=Medium • L=Low

Diagram showing team formation: Team 1 (Sue, Dave, Pete, Mary), Team 2 (Sue, Pete, Mary, Jack), Team 3 (Sue, Pete, Mary, Jack), Team 4 (Sue, Pete, Mary, Jack), Team 5 (Sue, Pete, Mary, Jack), Team 6 (Sue, Pete, Mary, Jack), Team 7 (Sue, Pete, Mary, Jack), Team 8 (Sue, Pete, Mary, Jack), Team 9 (Sue, Pete, Mary, Jack), Team 10 (Sue, Pete, Mary, Jack), Team 11 (Sue, Pete, Mary, Jack), Team 12 (Sue, Pete, Mary, Jack), Team 13 (Sue, Pete, Mary, Jack), Team 14 (Sue, Pete, Mary, Jack), Team 15 (Sue, Pete, Mary, Jack), Team 16 (Sue, Pete, Mary, Jack), Team 17 (Sue, Pete, Mary, Jack), Team 18 (Sue, Pete, Mary, Jack), Team 19 (Sue, Pete, Mary, Jack), Team 20 (Sue, Pete, Mary, Jack), Team 21 (Sue, Pete, Mary, Jack), Team 22 (Sue, Pete, Mary, Jack), Team 23 (Sue, Pete, Mary, Jack), Team 24 (Sue, Pete, Mary, Jack), Team 25 (Sue, Pete, Mary, Jack), Team 26 (Sue, Pete, Mary, Jack), Team 27 (Sue, Pete, Mary, Jack), Team 28 (Sue, Pete, Mary, Jack), Team 29 (Sue, Pete, Mary, Jack), Team 30 (Sue, Pete, Mary, Jack), Team 31 (Sue, Pete, Mary, Jack), Team 32 (Sue, Pete, Mary, Jack), Team 33 (Sue, Pete, Mary, Jack), Team 34 (Sue, Pete, Mary, Jack), Team 35 (Sue, Pete, Mary, Jack), Team 36 (Sue, Pete, Mary, Jack).

Forming Heterogeneous Teams

Achievement-Ranked List Method

Instructions
Step 1. Fill in your students' names in rank order by ability.

Class Rank List

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

4. _____

5. _____

6. _____

7. _____

8. _____

9. _____

10. _____

11. _____

12. _____

13. _____

14. _____

15. _____

16. _____

17. _____

18. _____

19. _____

20. _____

21. _____

22. _____

23. _____

24. _____

25. _____

26. _____

27. _____

28. _____

29. _____

30. _____

31. _____

32. _____

33. _____

34. _____

35. _____

36. _____

Step 2. Select a High, Low, and two Mediums to assign the first team.
Check off the students' names from your list.

Step 3. Assign the rest of the teams to teams of four.

Step 4. Assign extra students using the following guidelines:

- 1 Extra Student—1 team of 5.
- 2 Extra Students—2 teams of 3.
- 3 Extra Students—1 team of 3.

Heterogeneous Teams

• H=High • M=Medium • L=Low

M _____

H _____

M _____

H _____

M _____

H _____

M _____

H _____

M _____

H _____

M _____

H _____

M _____

H _____

M _____

H _____

M _____

H _____

M _____

H _____

Team 1

Team 2

Team 3

Team 4

Team 5

Team 6

Team 7

Team 8

Team 9

L _____

M _____

L _____

M _____

L _____

M _____

L _____

M _____

L _____

M _____

L _____

M _____

L _____

M _____

L _____

M _____

L _____

M _____

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**Upon All Walden University Approvals
RPP Agenda
8:00am-5:00pm**



Understanding Vocabulary

Sign-In/RPP Materials and Information

Building Vocabulary..... La. Dept of Education

Review of Effective Strategies (Handouts).....La. Dept of Education

Introduction to G.I.S.T.ing.....La. Dept of Education

**G.I.S.T.ing Group Activity.....La. Dept of Education
Teachers**

**Review of Sample Writing Prompts.....La. Dept of Education
Teachers**

Lunch

Introduction to ABC Format.....La. Dept of Education

**Group Activity.....La. Dept of Education
Teachers**

Carousel/BrainstormingLa. Dept of Education

Portfolio Review/Closing Remarks.....Reading/Math Coordinator

6/30/2014

Building Academic Vocabulary

RPP
October 10, 2015

Teaching word meanings should be a way for students to define their world, to move from light to dark, to a more fine-grained description of the colors that surround us.

-Steven Stahl

What do we know about vocabulary?

- Vocabulary assists students in expanding their knowledge to raise achievement
- Vocabulary development increases when students have visual images of word meaning and when the words are categorized into groups.
- In order to understand spoken or written words a student must know 95% of the words.
- The creation of labels is a tool for fostering new perceptions and increasing learning
- It takes a minimum of 15 encounters with a new word for a student to understand and apply the word independently.


Thompson, M. (2006). Learning-focused research.

4/15/2014

WHAT DOESN'T WORK?????

- Look them up.
- Use them in a sentence
- Use them in context
- Memorize definitions

What is missing from all of these approaches?



WHAT DOES WORK?????

Integration- connecting new vocabulary to prior knowledge

Repetition- encountering / using the word / concept many times

Meaningful use- multiple opportunities to use words in reading, writing and soon discussion

4/15/2014

For students in the 9th grade academy,
we know we must:

Keep it personal
Keep it active
Be flexible
Be strategic

G.I.S.T.ing

Is a strategy to help students paraphrase and summarize information. Students are required to limit the gist of a paragraph to a set number of words. Individual sentences from a paragraph are presented one at a time while students create a gist that must contain only the set number of words.

Brozo, W. (2012). Content Literacy strategy descriptions for the Louisiana comprehensive curriculum. Louisiana Department of Education. Retrieved from: www.louisianaschools.net/lde/uploads/11056.doc

4/16/2014

**Training for Success:
G.I.S.Ting & ABC Format**

3 Types of Readings

- › Before
- › During
- › After

Before Strategies

- › Anticipation Guides
- › Gallery Works
- › Pre-teaching Vocabulary
- › SQPL

4/16/2014

During Strategies

- Re-Reading
- Split-Note-taking
- Reading response journal
- G.I.S.T.ing

Summarizing & Paraphrasing

- At its core, comprehending is based on summarizing (Marzano, 2010).
- Summarizing is restating content in a succinct manner that highlights the most crucial information
- Paraphrasing is putting content into one's own words (Kletzein, 2007)

Summarizing & Paraphrasing

- Summaries
 - Reduce length of information to one-third the original
 - More formal than paraphrasing
 - Find and/or create a main idea
- Paraphrases
 - Precursor to summarizing
 - Access prior knowledge
 - Use words already known about a topic

Kletzien, S. (2009). Paraphrasing: An effective comprehension strategy. *The ReadingTeacher*, 63(1), 73-77. doi: 10.1598/RT.63.1.7

Marzano, R. (2010). The art of and science of teaching/summarizing to comprehend. *Educational Leadership* 67,(6), 83-84.

4/16/2014

G.I.S.T.ing

- › A strategy for teaching summarizing and paraphrasing
- › Limits the gist of a paragraph to a set number of words which forces students to think about only the most important information in the paragraph.

Probable Passage:
A Variation of GISTing

- › Select ten to fifteen words from a story, passage, or poem.
- › Prior to reading, provide the list to the students
- › The students "guess" where the words belong on the Probable Passage page
- › After placing the words in the box, the students write a GIST statement which predicts what the story, passage, or poem will be about.
- › After reading the students return to their GIST statements to see how close they were to the actual reading assignment. They write on the back about the actual story.

POST Reading STRATEGIES

Learning Logs

R.A.F.T.ing

Reciprocal Teaching
(may also be considered a through, or during, strategy)

Kletzien, S. (2009). Paraphrasing: An effective comprehension strategy. *The Reading Teacher*, 63(1), 73-77. doi: 10.1598/RT.63.1.7

Brozo, W. (2012). Content Literacy strategy descriptions for the Louisiana comprehensive curriculum. Louisiana Department of Education. Retrieved from: www.louisianaschools.net/lde/uploads/11056.doc

4/16/2014

What happens when you ask your students to answer a question with textual support?

Sixth Grade Sample Prompt

Think about the types of field trips you have taken as a student. Where did you go? What did you learn?

Write a multi-paragraph composition for your teacher explaining whether you think schools should or should not have field trips. Use details from the passage.

Seventh Grade Prompt

Write a multi-paragraph composition for your teacher explaining which plant, the Queen of the Parasites or the Dutchman's Pipe, you would choose to study in your science class. Explain why you chose one plant over the other. Then convince your teacher why your choice is the best. Use details from both passages to support your opinion.

4/16/2014

Eight Grade Prompt

Write a multi-paragraph composition for your teacher that states your opinion about whether electronic communication helps or hurts people's ability to communicate. Clearly present your position and use details from the passage to help you support your opinion.

The Solution?

ABC FORMAT*

*Larry Ferlazzo's *Helping Students Motivate Themselves*

What is ABC Format?

Answer the Question

Back it up with a quote

Comment/Connect

4/16/2014

Example:
Would you want to climb Mount Everest?

I think I would like to climb Mount Everest before I get too old. The article, "The Oldest Man to Climb Mt. Everest," is about a man who is over seventy years old and is planning to be the oldest man to ever climb the mountain. It says, "Yuichiro Miura is in the midst of a three year training regimen that will include the climb to the top." I don't want to reach that age and regret not having done something I always wanted to do. Taking risks to accomplish one's goals is what life is really all about. Plus, I don't want to spend three years training for anything! It won't take me as long to train now since I'm young and strong.

So how do you teach this to students?

ABC Format

Answer the Question

Back it up with a Quote

Comment/Connect

4/16/2014

1st Exposure to the Concept

Question: Do you believe that intelligence is fixed or can grow?
Why? Use evidence from the text to support your answer.

I believe that the brain can grow. In the article "You can grow your intelligence, it says the brain is like a muscle." In page 2 of the article, it says "When you learn new things these tiny connections in the brain actually multiply and get stronger." When I was younger my mom used to read to me, I think it prepared me for learning new things. Nobody was dumb or smart, you just have to try and apply yourself at school. If you read and do math problems your brain will get stronger. I just hope I don't lose my intelligence when I get older.

1st Exposure to the Concept

Question: Do you believe that intelligence is fixed or can grow?
Why? Use evidence from the text to support your answer.

I believe intelligence can grow because whether you dumb you can fix your problems. You can grow your intelligence to be much better, and smarter

Scoring

Think about what you need your students to be able to do at the end of the year.

Select criteria that will reinforce those skills as important at each level

Confer vertically as well as horizontally about what each level needs

4/16/2014

Criteria Ninth Grade Teachers Selected

Answer the question
 Logical/sensible/correct
 Clearly expressed
 Complete sentence

Back it up with a quote
 Does quote support the answer?
 Title of text or author cited
 Seamlessly incorporated
 Properly punctuated

Comment or Connect
 Does comment or connection
 further explain or support the
 answer the question
 Clearly & logically expressed
 Grammatically & mechanically
 correct

Rubric

Category	Criteria	Score
Answer	Clearly expressed to answer the question that was asked	0 1 2 3 4
Quotation	Quote supports answer	0 1 2 3 4
	Seamlessly incorporated into writing	
	Title of work &/or author cited	
Comment/Connect	Clearly & logically expressed	0 1 2 3 4
	Supports or further explains the answer	
Grammar/Mechanically	Complete sentences	0 1 2 3 4
	Transitions	
	Proper Punctuation	

2nd Exposure to Concept

What have you learned so far about the way Millicent used to see herself and the way she sees herself now?

I have learned that Millicent used to be always to herself and left alone. Now, Millicent is outgoing and social. She is adventurous and wants to find out about life from her own perspective. Apparently, "Millicent had waited a long time for acceptance, longer than most." This proves that Millicent once used to feel alone but she wasn't because everyone in the world is different. No one is just alike, but, any share the same feelings and stories.

4/16/2014

2nd Exposure to Concept

What have you learned so far about the way Millicent used to see herself and the way she sees herself now?

The way Millicent changed with Millicent is that she found out she doesn't have to be in a club to talk or laugh with people. The way she's different is she talked to him and realized that it doesn't take this initiation to be related to other humans, to be recognized and be related is all she wanted until the heatherbirds came and changed her feelings.

Your Turn to Score

Question: Do you believe that intelligence is fixed or can grow? Why? Use evidence from the text to support your answer.

Your Turn to Write

Read the passage and respond to the question, using textual evidence to support your answer.

Write your group's response on chart paper.

Select someone to present

4/16/2014

Question

Should law enforcement agencies be able to track and search your phone without your consent, if there is a justifiable reason? Clearly present your position and use details from the passage to help support your opinion.

6/30/2014

CAROUSEL BRAINSTORMING

U. Department of Education November 1-4, 2015

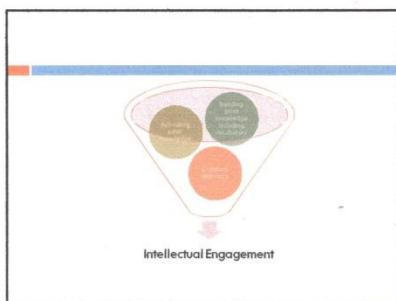
What is Carousel Brainstorming?

- An instructional strategy that involves group learning
- A rotational learning exercise that builds on students' prior knowledge and interactions
- "...wonderful things can happen when they are given the opportunity to brainstorm without criticism, and the structure to discuss opinions and controversial issues...." ~ Marsha Tate

Purposes:

- Assessing knowledge, needs, interests and attitudes
- Building a common language for communication
- Collecting and analyzing data
- Exploring multiple perspectives on the topic
- Reflecting on the practice of learning
- Starting various types of conversations
- Providing structure to the task of learning
- Tapping into prior knowledge and beliefs

4/15/2014



Our roles as the educator:

- Prepare materials for subject matter that will stimulate discussion.
- Set up classroom.
- Teach the students the process and procedures needed to make the activity a success.
- Divide students into basic groups.
- Time group rotation.
- Facilitate group discussions.

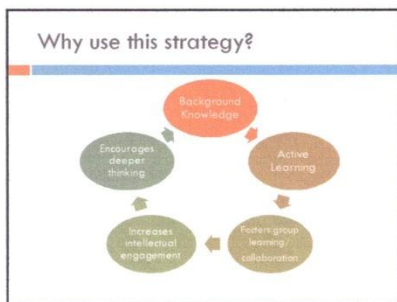
Their roles as the students:

- Group members assign roles (facilitator, recorder, time keeper, etc...)
- Group facilitator begins the discussions.
- Time keeper helps groups to rotate quickly when the time arrives.
- Recorder writes the groups answers/questions on the sheet of poster paper neatly.
- Members make sure all groups have visited all stations.
- Everyone must make sure that each member has time to participate in the discussions within the groups.

4/15/2014

Final stages of the process:

- Teacher/facilitator brings everyone's attention back to the whole group.
- Each groups' REPORTER reports out that groups' findings/work/questions.
- This process continues until all groups have "answered out" for the whole group to hear.



Advantages:

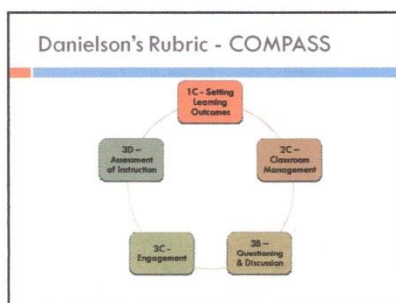
- Produces a large number of responses to a question/inquiry
- Provides a good base to enable future learning
- Helps learners stay intellectually engaged
- Simple but effective way of sharing information
- Allows students to cover a lot of subject matter in a small amount of time

4/15/2014

Disadvantages:

- Does not work well for students who refuse to engage
- Students must have some background knowledge of the material
- Difficult to use in large groups (+35 students) unless you have two or more teachers to help facilitate





Danielson, C. (2009). *Implementing the framework for teaching in enhancing professional practice*. ASCD.

Sejnost, R. (Ed.). (2009). *Tools for Teaching in the Block*. Corwin Press.

ACTIVITIES FOR SESSION 2

Sample 1.

I believe that intelligence can grow because, your mind has to develop more skills in order to get better communication between these brain cells is what allows us to think and some problems from the article, You Can Grow Your Intelligence, “Everyone knows that when you lift weights, your muscles get bigger and you get strong.” I think everybody has their own mind to think.

Sample 2.

I believe intelligence can grow. When you learn new things, connections in the brain multiply and get stronger. Some people are intelligent in their own way. “If you try new things, your brain will get stronger and develop more.” But most people don’t know that when you practice and learn more your brain is getting smarter and stronger. “Use it or lose it”. Your brain can grow over time you just have to use it.

Sample 3.

I think that intelligence is something that can grow. I think if you don’t work yourself and maintain intelligence, you won’t have it anymore. I once read an article that had a quote saying, “use it or lose it.” That’s why I believe in this and feel strongly about my opinion.

Sample 4.

I believe that intelligence can grow, because if it didn’t we would still act like babies. As stated in “You Can Grow Your Intelligence,” “The brain is more like a muscle—it changes and gets stronger when you use it.” If I still had the same knowledge I did since I was a baby, I wouldn’t know anything right now. It is a proven fact that intelligence is not fixed because if it was I wouldn’t be writing this paper right now, expressing my thoughts.

Brozo, W. (2012). Content literacy strategy descriptions for the Louisiana comprehensive curriculum. Louisiana Department of Education. Retrieved from: www.louisianaschools.net/lde/uploads/11056.doc

Title of Selection _____

Characters

Setting

Problem

Gist Statement ...

Outcomes

Unknown Words

To discover ...

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

Writing Topic

Think about the types of field trips you have taken as a student. Where did you go? What did you learn?

Write a multiparagraph composition for your teacher explaining whether you think schools should or should not have field trips. Use details from the passage to help you explain your opinion.

As you write, follow the suggestions below.

- Be sure your composition has a beginning, a middle, and an end.
- Use details from the passage and include enough information so your teacher will understand your response.
- Be sure to write clearly and to check your composition for correct spelling, punctuation, and grammar.

GRADE 6 Sample Writing Prompt

Directions: Read the passage about school field trips. As you read the passage, think about whether or not you think schools should have field trips. Then use the passage to help you write a well organized multiparagraph composition.

Field Trips: Worth the Money?

Field trips have been a part of sixth-grade education for many years. They allow students to take information from the classroom and link it to the real world, and they are fun. Students and parents alike are in favor of field trips. Who wouldn't want to visit a space observatory after learning about the universe in science class? Or visit a museum to see Chinese art after a unit on China in social studies class? These are surely positive experiences for kids. The question is, at what cost?

"Seeing something in person helps it come alive for students in a way that textbook learning can't do," says sixth-grade teacher Marco Hernandez. Indeed, field trips provide students an opportunity to learn something different from what they can do within the walls of their classrooms.

To make sure a field trip is successful, teachers should be instructing before, during, and after the trip. In preparation for the trip, teachers should tell students what they will be seeing and learning. Teachers should also help students make connections between what they are going to see and what they have been learning in school. During the trip itself, students should be given time to explore and should complete a journal or task. This helps keep them engaged. When field trips are well-planned and executed, they provide students with the visual aids and hands-on opportunities that build their understanding.

In school districts across the country, however, the budget for field trips is being slashed. With schools facing budget shortfalls, field trips are an easy thing to remove. Critics agree that field trips can provide valuable educational experiences, but, they argue that often they are treated as just a day off of school by both the teachers and students.

Principal Jean Simms argues that field trips seem to be an unnecessary expense when classrooms don't have money for textbooks and other school supplies. "What some students and parents don't seem to understand is just how expensive field trips are for districts. There is the cost of gas, insurance, and admission fees. That can add up to tens or even hundreds of thousands of dollars district wide," she states. In addition, "There are just so many time constraints," argues teacher Phillip Johnson. "Teachers have so much information to cover. Maybe experiences like field trips have to fall more to parents, camps, and after-school programs. Maybe they need to happen outside of the school day."

Districts have to operate within their budgets. That much is clear. However, schools also have a duty to students to provide the best learning opportunities possible. They will have to make tough choices on whether these kinds of educational experiences are the best way to spend limited funds.

The Deceiving Plant

The Dutchman's Pipe is an interesting and often confusing plant. Some call the plant a Dutchman's Pipe because its unopened bud curves like a saxophone. Others see a different shape and call it a Pelican Flower. It also goes by the name of Calico Flower and Virginia Snakeroot.

The plant is confusing in other ways, too. It has a heart-shaped flower the size of a dinner plate with a long tail like a ribbon, but when one of its purple and white flowers opens, it releases an unpleasant odor. That smell lures insects, such as flies and butterflies, to enter the tube in the flower's dark purple center. The tube is a flytrap, and the unsuspecting insect cannot turn around. It has to keep going until it is coated with pollen; then the plant releases the insect. At that point, the insect can then pollinate. The plant's toxins also make the butterflies poisonous, which saves them from being eaten by birds.

Even the uses of the Dutchman's Pipe can be complicated. It has been an ingredient in medicines in the Caribbean and South America since ancient times to treat problems from snakebites to coughs. However, the plant's acid, used in some herbal products, has also caused serious kidney damage and even death. All of these issues raise questions for scientists to investigate.

Brozo, W. (2012). Content Literacy strategy descriptions for the Louisiana comprehensive curriculum. Louisiana Department of Education. Retrieved from: www.louisianaschools.net/lde/uploads/11056.doc

Grade 7 Sample Writing Prompt

Directions: Read the passages about two exotic plants. As you read the passages, think about which plant you would choose to study in your science class. Then use the passages to help you write a well-organized multiparagraph composition.

The Queen of the Parasites

Unbelievable! This plant has the largest flower in the world, but the plant itself is invisible! This strange plant, a symbol of the rainforests of southeastern Asia, is called the "Queen of the Parasites," which is part of the genus *Rafflesia*.

This plant has no leaves, stem, or roots, and it cannot produce its own food, so how does it thrive? Because it is a parasite, it must find a host plant to provide it nutrients and water to live, so it makes itself comfortable inside a vine plant that supplies its food. It cannot even be seen until a bud appears from inside the vine. When it finally blooms, its flower is definitely noticeable because it grows to be three feet wide, with five dark red petals dotted with white. Instead of a fragrance, it has a stench like rotting meat. Fortunately for the plant, it attracts flies and carrion beetles (flesh eating beetles) that love the smell and pollinate the plant.

Its flowers were not always giants; 46 million years ago its blooms were only about the width of a penny. Scientists are eager to know why the size of its flowers increased so much, much faster than other members of its family. Scientists could use that information to help them study other plants. The plant is also used in traditional medicine to help reduce pain. Scientists are just uncovering some of its mysteries, but the plant's secrets may soon disappear with its rainforest home. This may be the last opportunity scientists have to research this fascinating plant.

Writing Topic

Write a multiparagraph composition for your teacher that states your opinion about whether electronic communication helps or hurts people's ability to communicate. Clearly present your position and use details from the passage to help you support your opinion.

As you write, follow the suggestions below.

- Be sure your composition has a beginning, a middle, and an end.
- Use details from the passage and include enough information so your teacher will understand your response.
- Be sure to write clearly and to check your composition for correct spelling, punctuation, and grammar.

Grade 8 Sample Writing Prompt

Directions: Read the passage about electronic communication. As you read the passage, think about the advantages and disadvantages of electronic communication. Then use the passage to help you write a well-organized multiparagraph composition.

Electronic Communication

A recent study confirmed what most Americans had already suspected: teenagers send and receive numerous text messages every day. The average number was 60 messages sent daily. If you include all the replies, an average teen is sending and receiving over 3,000 text messages per month. How does all this texting affect personal relationships?

To answer this question, one must consider both the positive and negative aspects of electronic messages. Though 3,000 text messages sounds excessive, electronic messages actually have many benefits. Electronic messages, such as text messages, emails, or social network posts, are convenient. Messages can be sent and received instantly. Need to know which chapter you must read for the history test? Send a quick text message and find out in seconds!

Electronic messages also allow people to share and discuss ideas with different groups of people no matter how far they live from one another. Teens near and far can all access the same information and can be part of the same conversation. People who are separated by various circumstances in their lives are still able to communicate with each other. Electronic communication allows people to instantly send an email or text message rather than arranging a certain time to call someone who lives in another state or country. Traveling or moving away from friends does not have to mean losing contact with them.

One advantage of electronic messages is that because they are written, they can be edited before being sent or posted. Yet, many authors of electronic messages do not always do this. Thus, an advantage to electronic messages can become a disadvantage if sent too quickly and without review. Sometimes this results in a silly typo. At other times, however, messages become confusing, and create misunderstandings. Another disadvantage to the written message is that it is permanent and reproducible. One person's confidential message may be forwarded to innumerable, unintended recipients.

With the increase in electronic messaging, verbal and interpersonal skills may be suffering. Many people are having fewer face-to-face conversations because they are using electronic communication instead. Being competent in skills such as listening, making eye-contact, speaking clearly, and interpreting visual clues of your audience is important. Without practice, these skills can be lost. Is electronic communication really worth it then?

Brozo, W. (2012). Content Literacy strategy descriptions for the Louisiana comprehensive curriculum. Louisiana Department of Education. Retrieved from: www.louisianaschools.net/lde/uploads/11056.doc

HANDOUTS FOR SESSION 2

Word Analysis

Word Analysis for _____	
Definition (Like)	Contrast (Unlike)
Examples	

West Virginia State Department of Education (2012). Teach
21strategybank. Retrieved from <http://wvde.state.wv.us/strategybank/>.

<u>What I KNOW</u>	<u>What I WANT to Know</u>	<u>HOW I will find the information</u>	<u>What I LEARNED</u>

West Virginia State Department of Education (2012). Teach 21strategy bank.
Retrieved from <http://wvde.state.wv.us/strategybank/>.

Linear Arrays

Linear arrays are a strategy to extend vocabulary by asking students to extend their understanding of words. Using opposites on each end, students add words that are in between.

Beautiful	○	○	○	Ugly
□	○	○	○	□

West Virginia State Department of Education (2012). Teach 21strategy bank.
Retrieved from <http://wvde.state.wv.us/strategybank/>.

Vocab-O-Gram

Use Vocabulary to make predictions about...	
The Setting	What will the setting be like?
The Characters	What will the characters be like?
The Problem or Goal	What might the problem or goal in this story be?
The Actions	What might happen in this story?
The Resolution	How might this story end?
Questions	What Questions do I have about this story?

PAVE Map

Sentence from the text:

Word

Predicted Definition:

Association or Symbol

One Good Sentence of My Own:

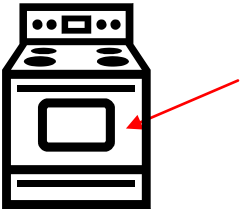
Verified Dictionary Definition:

Another Good Sentence of My Own:

4-Fold Vocabulary

In this activity, students fold their papers into rows of 4 sections each. The number of row can relate to the number of words to be studied. In the first section, the student writes the word. In the 2nd section, the student writes a definition of the word in their own words. In the 3rd section, the student draws a picture or symbol to represent the word. In the 4th section, the student writes a sentence with the word based on their definition.

After completing the page, the students cut apart the sections and put them in an envelope. The words are review by having student reassemble the word rows. Students can trade rows/envelopes with others.

Word	Definition	Picture	Sentence
Oven	kitchen appliance used for baking or roasting		We baked cookies in the oven.

West Virginia State Department of Education (2012). Teach 21strategy bank.
Retrieved from <http://wvde.state.wv.us/strategybank/>.

GUESS THE MEANING

<u>Word</u>	<u>My Guess</u>	<u>Context Meaning</u>	<u>Dictionary's Meaning</u>

Language Collection Sheet

As you read on your own, fill in this chart with words that fit each category.

Words that make me smile or laugh	Sounds, sights, or smells that bring tears to my eyes	Words or phrases that paint a picture
Words that make noise	Forbidden words	Action words

West Virginia State Department of Education (2012). Teach 21strategy bank. Retrieved from <http://wvde.state.wv.us/strategybank/>.

Name _____

Date _____

Meeting New Vocabulary

Word	Drawing Or Symbol For Word

Predicted meaning of word:

Based on that meaning, use this word in a sentence:

Definition from dictionary:

Based on the dictionary's meaning, use this word in a sentence:

Student VOC Strategy

Vocabulary Word: _____

1. Write the sentence where the word is found in the text.
2. Based on the sentence, what do you think the word means?
3. Consult an “expert” for the actual definition (friend, text, dictionary).
Expert:
Expert’s Definition
4. Write the word in a sentence of your own.
5. Choose one of the following ways to help you remember the word’s meaning: draw a picture; create a movement; connect the word to a story, song, or news report you’ve heard. Write down how you are going to remember this word.
6. Explain why you chose this method to remember the word.

Kinesthetic THIEVES

Because you will have many students who are kinesthetic learners, here is a way for them to learn the THIEVES technique through movements.

TITLE – Explain that a king or queen has a title and they wear a crown. Make the crown by circling the fingers of one hand and placing in on the top of the head.

HEADING – Do the *Home Alone* face that students may remember from the movie. Place both hands on the cheeks of the face and open the mouth wide.

INTRODUCTION – Explain to students that usually when we are introduced to someone, we shake his or her hand. For this movement, extend the right hand and act as if you are greeting someone.

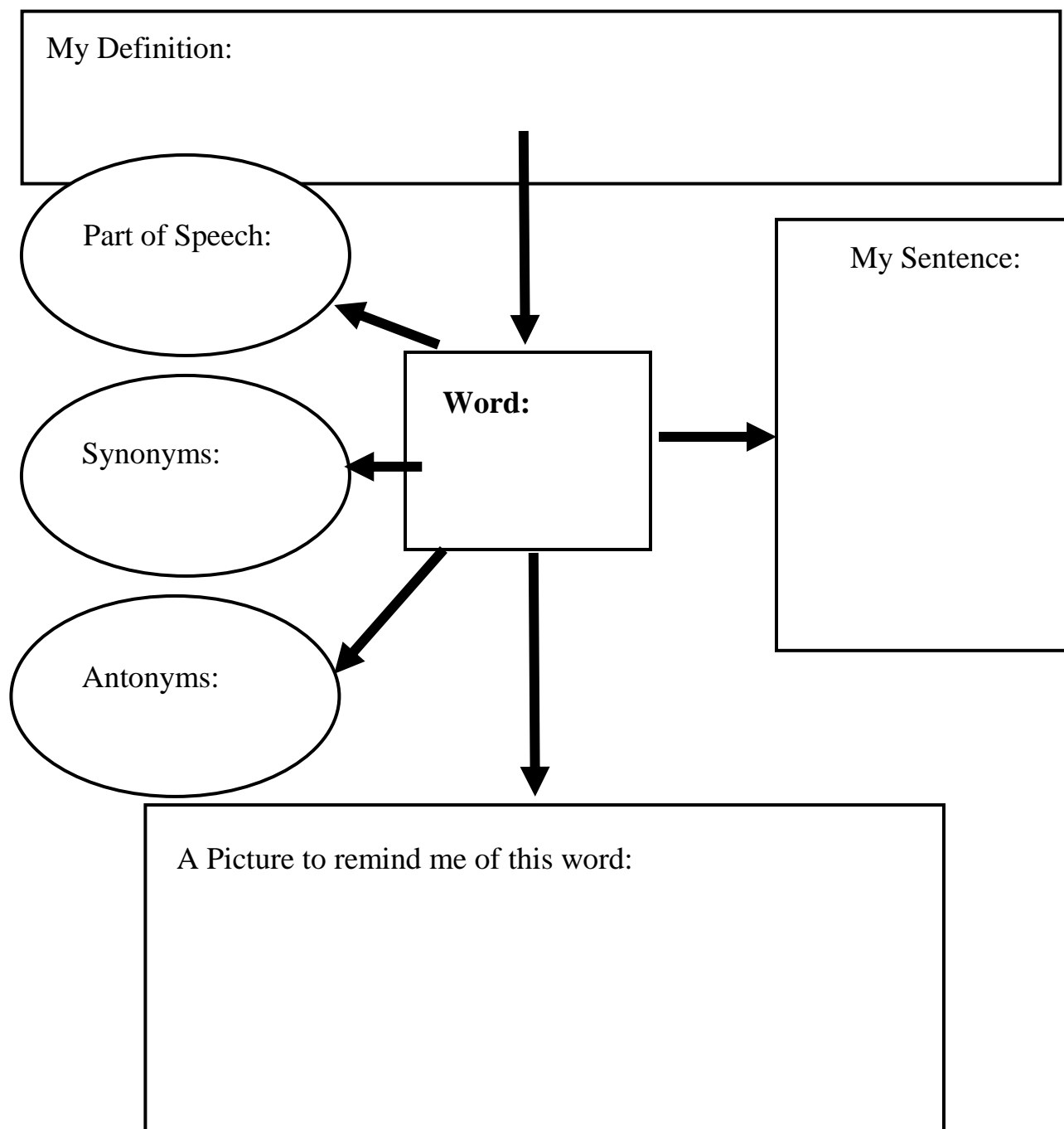
EVERY FIRST SENTENCE – We read from left to right. Extend the right hand to the left side of the body and bring it back to the right as if you were reading word by word and pointing to them.

VISUALS AND VOCABULARY – Form a V with two fingers on each hand and place them under each eye. Remind students that these are two things they must “look” at in the text.

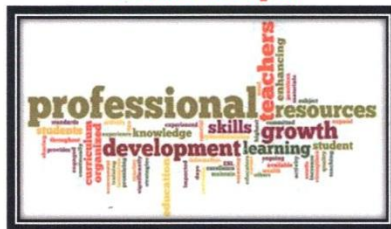
END OF CHAPTER QUESTIONS – This usually gets a giggle. Place one hand on your hip near your behind.

SUMMARY – Explain that a summary gives an overview of the whole thing. Make a huge circle with both hands. Make sure that students say the steps in the THIEVES technique as they are doing the motions. The more repetition students have with this the more familiar they will become, and the more easily they will be able to use it.

Own the Word



**Upon All Walden University Approvals
RPP Agenda
8:00am-5:00pm**



Effective Questioning Prompts & Discussions to Generate Writing

Sign-In/RPP Materials and Information

Effective Questioning..... La. Dept of Education

Discussion on Higher order thinking words (Handout).....La. Dept of Education

**Group Activity (Developing proper Questioning Techniques).....La. Dept of Education
Teachers**

Collaborative Breakout Session (Improving Writing in the Common Core).....Teachers

Lunch

SQE/5-5-5.....La. Dept of Education

Group Activity by Content (Reading Assignment).....La. Dept of Education

ABC Writing.....La. Dept of Education

Portfolio Review/Closing Remarks.....Reading/Math Coordinator

4/15/2014

Effective Questioning Prompts and Discussions to Generate Writing

Questions I can ask that will make my students talk and write *insightfully* about the text.

What makes an effective question effective?

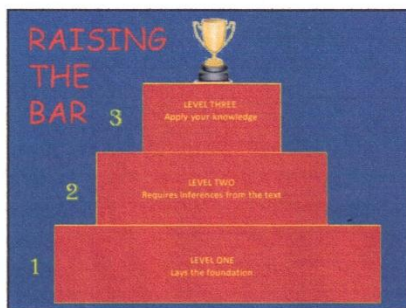
Effective questions are those that require the student to form and illustrate a *thought process*. Its not teaching students what to think- but *HOW TO THINK*.

If we are able to teach them a process for critical thinking and forming organized thoughts, they will be able to apply this process across the board and be successful in all classes.

THE PROCESS

There are three levels of questions that work together to gather information, read between the lines, and then apply the information that has been acquired.


4/15/2014



LEVEL 1

SHOW ME THE FACTS!!

You can point to the answer in the passage



and the Cow Jumped over the moon

EXAMPLE
The passage states that the cow jumped over what?


Answer
The cow jumped over the moon.

Level 2

KEEP CALM AND READ BETWEEN THE LINES


READ BETWEEN THE LINES
What is gathered from the text, but not worded verbatim in the text

Example:
What can be inferred from this picture?
What is wrong with this lady?
Who is she talking to?



4/15/2014

Level 3
 Discussion or essay questions suggested or inspired by the text.



Examples:
 In the Lion King, Simba was faced with a decision to face his past or continue to run from it. Describe a situation in you had to make a similar decision.

Question	Definition	Question Word	Example
EVALUATION	Judgment making value decisions about issues	Judge, appraise, value, assess, estimate, evaluate	How might the story have ended differently if Simba had returned to Pride Rock before his reunion with Nala?
SYNTHESIS	Combining ideas Creating an original model	Compose, construct, design, formulate, create, model	Create a character in your own story that has the same characteristics as Simba.
ANALYSIS	Subdividing into component parts, breaking down a whole, determining structure	Compare, contrast, analyze, examine, relate, differentiate	Differentiate between the character traits of Simba and Scar.
APPLICATION	Problem solving, applying information	Interpret, apply, demonstrate, use	What is the conflict in the Lion King?
COMPREHENSION	Interpreting and paraphrasing	Relate, discuss, describe, explain	Explain the meaning of Nala's phrase.
KNOWLEDGE	Memorizing, recalling information	Who, what, when, where, define, recall, list	Who is Simba's uncle's name?

3.2.1. Strategy


- 3
 - students write 3 facts that they need to remember/interesting facts they learned
- 2
 - write 2 new vocabulary words and the definition
- 1
 - 1 LEVEL ONE question they have about the text
 - 1 LEVEL TWO question
 - 1 LEVEL THREE question

4/15/2014


5-5-5/SQE Method

While in collaborative groups, members are given two different articles to read for 5 minutes. Next, they are to explain the gist of the article there to their peers for 5 minutes. Finally, students are given 5 minutes to write down relevant information from both articles for discussion.

In groups, 3 members will read article #1 while the other 3 members read article #2

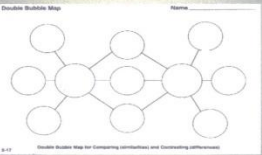


Within a 5-minute time frame, explain the gist of your article to another group member



4/15/2014

Using a Double Bubble map, write down contrasting information about each article.



Double Bubble Map for Comparing Similarities and Contrasting Differences

Allow students to formulate question for SQE

State the Question:

Provide Quotations or Citations:

Explain using evidence from source document(s).

ABC Format

- Answer the question
- Back it up with a Quote
- Comment/Connect

4/15/2014

Answer

- Does it answer the question?
 - Is the answer logical/sensible/correct?
 - Is the answer clearly expressed?
 - Is the answer a complete sentence?

Back it up with a Quote

- Does the quote support the answer?
- Is the title of the text or the author cited?
- Is it seamlessly incorporated?
 - Transition words/phrases

Transition words/phrases

- for example,
- for instance,
- namely,
- specifically,
- to illustrate,
- _____ states, (the author or a character)
- Likewise (when showing similarities)
- Contrarily (when showing differences)

4/15/2014

Comment/Connect

- Does the comment or connection further explain or support the answer?
- Does the comment or connection fully explain the connection between the quote and the answer?
- Is it clearly and logically expressed?
- Is it grammatically & mechanically correct?

Question

- After reading/discussing the two articles, answer the following question:
- Should teens be tried as adults when they commit "adult" crimes? Use information from the articles to support your answer, making sure to properly identify the source. Thoroughly explain your answer choice.

4/16/2014

Writing Framework


- Answer the question
- Back it up with a Quote
- Comment/Connect

Our connection to the researcher's indicators / instructional practice guidelines:

Instruction actively engages learners and encourages them to construct and produce knowledge as meaningful work.

Students are producers of knowledge as they integrate what they've learned.


The role of the teacher in the classroom is that of facilitator, guide, and learner / investigator.



Research of North Central Educational Laboratory
Taken from Louisiana Department of Education Institute BEST PRACTICES
p. 52

ABC Writing Framework

- ABC writing framework supports teaching reading and writing together across content
- ABC writing framework introduces students to the level of rigor required by the CCSS.
- The use of the ABC framework is a continuation of the PD that is already in place.



Depth of Implementation

- All teachers will create a portfolio documenting 4 student work samples from ABC writing framework.
- Evidence in lesson plans and walk-throughs observations of ABC Writing

4/16/2014

Technology

- Computers: Emailed surveys
- Projectors: PowerPoint presentations
- Computer program: Testing reading levels of incoming Freshman
- Computer program: EOC testing

Future Plans

Step 1:
Extend our current use of MEL to include hands-on learning activities that connect to the reading choices, and monitor implementation through grade-level meetings.

Step 2:
Focus on PARCC assessment and ACT prep when developing classroom activities.

Step 3:
Begin implementing Common Core State Standards in a manner to support professional development that already exists.

Future Plans: Step 1

• Extend our current use of MEL to include hands-on learning activities that connect to the reading choices, and monitor implementation through grade-level meetings.

-The Journal of Educational Research
Influence of Stimulating Tasks on Reading Motivation and Comprehension

"we confirmed the basic expectations of this study—that a high number of stimulating tasks could increase motivation and that motivation would increase reading comprehension." (Guthrie et al., 2006)

```

    graph TD
      A[Stimulating Tasks] --> B[Reading Comprehension]
      B --> C[Motivation]
      C --> D[Quality of Instruction Practices]
  
```

FIGURE 1. Model of effects of stimulating activities on motivation and reading comprehension.

4/16/2014

Future Plans: Step 2
Focus on PARCC assessment and ACT prep when developing classroom activities.

Visit Louisiana Eagle and PASS to locate practice items.

Future Plans: Step 3
Begin implementing Common Core State Standards in a manner to support professional development that already exists.

• Utilize the "Teacher Toolbox" to begin writing curriculum outlines that join ELA and Social Studies content.
• Continue the use of ABC writing framework.

Reflection

• School Improvement Plan
• Collaboration
• Data Analysis
• Professional Development as a whole

ACTIVITIES FOR SESSION 3

I probably know the answer, if you explain the question

ANALYZE- define what something is made up of and or how its parts fit together

SYNONYMS: study, investigate, consider, question, explore

COMPARE- tell how things are the same

SYNONYM: link, relate, equate

CONTRAST: tell how things are different

SYNONYMS: distinguish, separate, differentiate

DEPICT: show your knowledge of something by acting it out

SYNONYMS: portray, show, represent, describe, illustrate, model

DESCRIBE: use words to tell about something in depth

SYNONYMS: define, illustrate, tell

EVALUATE: based on what you know or have been given, tell the value of something

SYNONYMS: judge, estimate, calculate, approximate

EXPLAIN: make clear or understandable

SYNONYMS: clarify, simplify, justify

FORMULATE: make a guideline based on information you know

SYNONYMS: prepare, plan, originate, create

INFER: make an assumption based on the given information

SYNONYMS: form, create, assume, hypothesize, conclude

PREDICT: To state what one believes will happen beforehand.

SYNONYMS: guess, expect, foresee

SEQUENCE: to put in order

SYNONYMS: order, classify, categorize, arrange

SUMMARIZE: To tell briefly what happened, to sum up.

SYNONYMS: review, recap, condense, overview

SUPPORT: to help prove or defend.

SYNONYMS: defend, encourage, assist

TRACE: to follow the track, course, or trail of; to follow the stages in the history or development of

SYNONYMS: outline, follow, mark

TECHNOLOGY

PLACING A SUSPECT AT THE SCENE
Police get cellphone data from phone companies to challenge a suspect's alibi.

FINDING A MISSING PERSON
Using the GPS locator in a victim's cellphone, police can track the person in real time.

CASTING A NET
By getting lists of all cellphones using a particular tower at a particular time, police can find out who was in the vicinity of a crime scene.

MISSING
REWARD

ARE YOU BEING TRACKED?

That cellphone in your pocket is actually a sophisticated tracking device, and police departments are using this technology to solve crimes. What does that mean for your right to privacy?

BY PATRICIA SMITH

On the morning of Nov. 16, 2011, a student was kidnapped in a parking lot at Southern State Community College in Sardinia, Ohio, as she made her way to class. Her attacker threw her in the back of a pickup truck, locked her under a fiberglass cover, and sped away undetected.

But the young woman was saved by her cellphone. Using software that tracks someone's whereabouts by the GPS signal on their phone, police were able to intercept the truck on a remote country road—just 21 minutes after she called 911.

"Without it, she would have never been found," says Lt. Jim Heitkemper of the Adams County Sheriff's Office in West Union, Ohio. "She had no way of even knowing where she was because she couldn't see where she was going."

Until recently, cellphone tracking technology was used mainly by federal agents in counter-terrorism operations and drug investigations. Now, police departments across the country are increasingly using cellphone surveillance—often with little or no court oversight.

Public Safety vs. Privacy Rights

The practice is raising concerns about civil liberties in a debate that pits public safety against privacy rights. The Fourth Amendment of the Constitution protects against "unreasonable searches and seizures." That's traditionally meant that police must have either a court-issued warrant or "probable cause" to search someone's property.

But the Framers couldn't have imagined technology like cellphones and global-positioning satellites. Both store

vast amounts of personal information that can be accessed remotely and without the owner's knowledge. This raises the question of what constitutes an "unreasonable search and seizure" in the 21st century.

Existing laws do not provide clear guidance: Federal wiretap laws have been outpaced by technological advances; they don't explicitly cover the use of cellphone data to pinpoint a person's location, and local court rulings vary widely across the country (see box, facing page).

Police say phone tracking is a valuable weapon in emergencies like child abductions and suicide calls and in investigating things like drug cases and murders. In Wichita, Kansas, for example, police were recently able to track and rescue a young girl who was being taken out of state to be forced into prostitution. And cellphone records were key to the 2009 murder

Appendix B: Letter of Cooperation From Superintendent

Letter of Cooperation

Ouachita Parish Schools
Dr. Robert Webber, Superintendent
100 Bry Street
Monroe, La 71201
(318) 432-5000

January 14, 2014

Dear Eric V. Davis,

Based on my review of your research proposal, I give permission for you to conduct the study entitled Reducing the Dropout Rate Through a Ninth Grade Academy within the Ouachita Parish School District. As part of this study, I authorize you to conduct interviews, collect data, conduct member checking sessions, and results dissemination activities. Individuals' participation will be voluntary and at their own discretion.

We understand that our organization's responsibilities include: Providing access to the school and school personnel. We reserve the right to withdraw from the study at any time if our circumstances change.

I confirm that I am authorized to approve research in this setting.

I understand that the data collected will remain entirely confidential and may not be provided to anyone outside of the research team without permission from the Walden University IRB.

Sincerely,



Dr. Robert Webber, Superintendent
Ouachita Parish Schools
(318) 432-5000
superintendent@opsb.net

Walden University policy on electronic signatures: An electronic signature is just as valid as a written signature as long as both parties have agreed to conduct the transaction electronically. Electronic signatures are regulated by the Uniform Electronic Transactions Act. Electronic signatures are only valid when the signer is either (a) the sender of the email, or (b) copied on the email containing the signed document. Legally an "electronic signature" can be the person's typed name, their email address, or any other identifying marker. Walden University staff verify any electronic signatures that do not originate from a password-protected source (i.e., an email address officially on file with Walden).

Appendix C: Letter of Cooperation From School Principal

Letter of Cooperation

Richwood High School
Dr. Sharilynn Loche, Principal
5901 Highway 165 South
Monroe, La 71202
(318) 361-0467

January 14, 2014

Dear Eric V. Davis,

Based on my review of your research proposal, I give permission for you to conduct the study entitled Reducing the Dropout Rate Through a Ninth Grade Academy at Richwood High School. As part of this study, I authorize you to conduct interviews, collect data, conduct member checking sessions, and results dissemination activities. Individuals' participation will be voluntary and at their own discretion.

We understand that school's responsibilities include: Providing access to teachers for interviews and access to classrooms for the invite meeting and member checking sessions. I reserve the right to withdraw from the study at any time if our circumstances change.

I confirm that I am authorized to approve research in this setting.

I understand that the data collected will remain entirely confidential and may not be provided to anyone outside of the research team without permission from the Walden University IRB.

Sincerely,



Dr. Sharilynn Loche, Principal
Richwood High School
(318) 361-0467
loche@opsb.net

Walden University policy on electronic signatures: An electronic signature is just as valid as a written signature as long as both parties have agreed to conduct the transaction electronically. Electronic signatures are regulated by the Uniform Electronic Transactions Act. Electronic signatures are only valid when the signer is either (a) the sender of the email, or (b) copied on the email containing the signed document. Legally an "electronic signature" can be the person's typed name, their email address, or any other identifying marker. Walden University staff verify any electronic signatures that do not originate from a password-protected source (i.e., an email address officially on file with Walden).

Appendix D: Informed Consent for Participants

I, _____, hereby agree to participate in this research project on interventions that can reduce the dropout rate through a ninth grade academy. The study is to gather feedback from teachers who teach in a ninth grade academy and whether interventions used in the academy can help reduce the dropout rate. The study will involve interviews to understand how some interventions can encourage students to stay in high school until completion. Results of the study may be beneficial to the school district, as well as other schools in their efforts to develop effective interventions.

My participation in this study will involve discussing interventions through interviews in the ninth grade academy that are related to helping students remain in school. It is estimated that the time involved will be no more than 30 minutes.

I understand that there will be little or no risk to me and that all of my responses will remain confidential. Data will be combined so that individual responses will not be able to be identified.

I understand that I may not receive any direct benefits from participating in this study, but involvement may help increase knowledge of effective interventions related to helping students complete high school.

I understand that my participation in this study is completely voluntary and that I may withdraw at any time without penalty.

If I have any questions at any time about this study, I may be contacted directly:

Eric Davis (318) 380-7097 or eric.davis4@waldenu.edu

I have read and understand the information in this letter and have had the opportunity to ask questions related to the study and my participation. I agree to participate in this study.

Date _____ **Teacher Signature** _____

Appendix E: Interview Protocol for Participants

Time of Interview:

Date:

Place:

Interviewer:

Position of Interviewee:

The purpose of this study is to identify interventions in a ninth grade academy that can help reduce the dropout rate. Because few studies have explored in detail what can interventions do for schools with ninth grade academies and how implementing these interventions can keep students from leaving school prior to completion, a case study devoted to understanding what keeps students engaged is the best qualitative tradition for examining this phenomenon.

Questions:

From your perception:

1. What are the dynamics of the ninth grade academy and the purpose of how it is designed to help students stay on track for remaining in school?
2. How does the credit/grade recovery intervention work and what role does it play in students remaining in school?
3. How does the In-School/After School tutoring intervention promote student engagement and increase student retention?
4. What are the roles of adult mentors to students in the ninth grade academy and how does this intervention help students remain in school?
5. Communicate the importance of having the journey to careers curriculum that is mandated for 9th grade academy students to take and what influence does this curriculum have on possibly keeping students in school.
6. Describe how social relationships with peers, faculty, and administration

affect a student's decisions to stay in school until completion.

7. Communicate the pressures of standardized testing and its influence on a student's decision to stay in school until completion.
8. Share how required remedial course taking influences a student's decision to stay in school until completion.
9. Describe how the structure of the curriculum relates to a student's decision to stay in school until completion.

Appendix F: Kagan Publication Request Form



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Use this form to request permission to copy or adapt Kagan publications or products.

Please fill out this Permission Request Form and email to copyright@kaganonline.com or fax to (949) 545-6347.
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General Contact Information

First Name Eric Last Name Davis
 Title/Position Assistant Principal
 School Email edavis@opsb.net
 District Ouachita Parish Schools
 School Richwood High School
 School Address 5901 Highway 165
 City Monroe State La Zip 71202
 Home Address 46 Northgate Drive
 City Monroe State La Zip 71201
 Home Phone (318) 503-4797 Cell Phone (318) 503-4797
 Email edavis1421@gmail.com

Publication Information

Organization Name Walden University
 Publication to Reprint or Adapt Kagan Cooperative Learning
 Page Numbers 6.2-6.3,6.29-6.34,7.9,9.1,10.1
 Title of Intended Publication _____
 Use of Intended Publication I am a doctoral student at Walden University and I am asking permission to use these items as a part of my dissertation involving student engagement.

 Estimated Number of Copies Made 1
 Books Only—Estimated Annual Sales Quantity 0.00
 Additional Comments _____

Appendix G: Approval to Use Kagan Intellectual Property

8/13/2014

Gmail - FW: Permission to use materials



Eric Davis <edavis1421@gmail.com>

FW: Permission to use materials

1 message

Parker Steel <parker@kaganonline.com>
To: Eric Davis <edavis1421@gmail.com>

Fri, May 16, 2014 at 9:54 AM

Dear Eric,

Thank you for your request and endorsement of Kagan Structures. We very much appreciate your support and use of the materials that we have developed. We are glad to hear that you have found them useful and would like to incorporate them into your doctoral dissertation.

*Please accept this email as **approval** of the request outlined on the submitted Permission Request Form!*

We appreciate the usage of the citation formats that are listed in Part IV. of our Copyright policy which is outlined here.

Again, thank you for both your support and inquiry about proper usage of Kagan Structures. If there is anything additional I can do to be of assistance, please let me know.

Sincerely,

Parker Steel
Sales & Customer Service Manager

Kagan Publishing & Professional Development

P.O. Box 72008, San Clemente, CA 92673-2008

Direct: (949) 545-6311

Faxes: (949) 545-6301 or (949) 369-6311

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1/2

Appendix H: Approval to Use Just Ask Publications Intellectual Property



Date: August 14, 2014
To: Eric Davis, Doctoral Candidate
From: Laura Pavlock-Albright, Just ASK Publications
Re: **Permission to cite resource**

Eric Davis has permission to use material from *Instruction for All Students 2nd edition* by Paula Rutherford. He will cite and reference this title appropriately in his body of work and references. We thank Eric for contacting Just ASK Publications and Professional Development for permission.

Regards,
Laura Pavlock-Albright

Appendix I: Contract for Stipend

Contract for Rams in Pursuit of Perfection (RPP) Stipend

The following agreement is entered into between the local school board, hereinafter referred to as “the Board”, and an employee of the local school board, hereinafter referred to as “Employee,” to render professional services at the local high School, in Northeast Louisiana for the position of certified teacher.

Length of Contract:

The contract will effective the school year following all Walden University Approvals.

Eligibility Requirements:

In order to qualify under this agreement, the Employee must be employed at the local high school as a certified teacher for the current school year. Employees hired after the beginning date of the current school year may receive a partial stipend, prorated with regard to the amount of participation in professional activities. Teachers on sabbatical are not eligible to receive the stipend due to the fact that they will not be available for classroom observations that are a vital part of the professional development process. Teachers leaving the local high school for personal or professional reasons before the completion of a semester will not be eligible for the stipend.

Employee Duties:

In addition to the duties of teacher for the local school board outlined in the Job Description for the position held, the Employee must:

1. Attend a monthly, **extended school day** following student dismissal on selected Thursdays (*full day attendance at school is required*).***
Hours on dates to be determined by the principal;
 - A) The teachers and administrators will use this time for participation in various forms of staff development provided by Regional Service Center Staff.
 - B) Teachers **arriving late** and **leaving early** will not be given credit for attendance.
 - C) **One absence** with a doctor’s excuse is allowed for the semester.

3. Agree to implement instructional programs and strategies for which professional development is provided.

4. Work collaboratively with the local high School staff.
5. Be subject to additional observations for the purpose of monitoring the implementations of staff development provided by consultants.
6. Be subject to additional observations for the purpose of monitoring the implementation of staff development that is usually conducted in the local School System.
7. Compile a Professional Growth Portfolio consisting of: (1) notes from each workshop and in-service, (2) examples of lesson plans incorporating strategies discussed in the workshops, (3) examples of student work, and (4) copies of classroom observations. Portfolios will be rated according to the Portfolio Rubric. **If components are missing, the portfolio will not be accepted. Funds will be prorated based on completion of portfolio requirements.**

Compensation

The Employee will be paid One Thousand Three Hundred and Fifty and no/100 (\$ 1350.00) Dollars (before deductions) for the school year following all Walden University Approvals in addition to his/her base salary as a teacher at the local high School during this contract. This sum will be paid in one payment, \$1350.00. Monies will be provided through Federal Title I funds.

All other benefits available to teachers with the local school system will be paid and accrued to the Employee, including seniority.

Termination of Agreement

This agreement will terminate upon the following occurrences:

- A. This agreement will terminate if the supplemental salary funding is eliminated or if the program is ended due to lack of sufficient participation.
- B. Employee shall be removed from this position for any of the following reasons:
 1. Any cause sufficient to warrant demotion, suspension and/or termination under tenure laws for the State of Louisiana
 2. An evaluation of "Needs Improvement" requiring intensive assistance
 3. Intensive Assistance cannot be performed at the local high

school and the Employee must be transferred to another school to perform it

- 4. Failure to participate in the required extended day schedule
- 5. Failure to **compile the Professional Growth Portfolio according to Portfolio Rubric.**
- 6. Any cause sufficient to warrant transfer out of the school, but not for demotion or termination under (1) above, as determined by the principal.

C. Procedure for removal under paragraph (2) above:

- 1. The policies and procedures of the local school Board and the laws of the State of Louisiana will be followed for removal for any cause sufficient to warrant a demotion, suspension and/or termination of employment under the tenure laws for the State of Louisiana
- 2. The parties acknowledge that “demotion” under the teacher tenure does not apply to a transfer to another position as a teacher in the system resulting in the loss of supplemental payments granted under this contract

D. The standard policies and procedures for the imposition of an intensive assistance program will be followed upon an evaluation of the Employee stating that the Employee “Needs improvement”;

E. For any reason, a special personnel conference will be conducted by the principal stating the reasons for the desired transfer from the school. The Employee will be given the opportunity to respond to the complaint(s). The principal will then state the recommended action to be taken.

III. Miscellaneous

Employee: _____(signature) Date: _____

Employee: _____(print) SS # _____

Date _____

Appendix K: Evaluation Form

*Engaging Students in Learning, Grouping Students to
Maximize Learning, Understanding Vocabulary &
Effective Questioning Prompts and Discussion to
Generate Writing*

RPP Evaluation Form

Strongly Agree	Agree	Strongly Disagree
-------------------	-------	----------------------

This session was well organized.
The ideas, activities, and/or materials are practical
and useful for me.
This session was a worthwhile professional
development experience.
I will use the strategies or ideas presented in this
workshop to improve student achievement.
Overall, this session was beneficial to me.

What information or ideas presented in this workshop do you think you will readily
implement or use in your current assignment?

How will you use this information or implement the ideas presented in this workshop?

Appendix L: Observation Report

Teacher: _____ Date: _____ Pd. ____ Time _____ Subject _____

I. 1c SETTING INSTRUCTIONAL OUTCOMES (Value, sequence, & alignment /Clarity /Balance /Suitability for diverse students)

Indicator/Attribute (Outcomes)	Comments	+/-
Have Rigor/ High expectations		
Teacher ties past/future learning (the big idea)		
Written in terms of <i>what will be learned</i> not done		
Outcomes are central to subject being taught, related to other subject areas		
Suitable to the students; differentiation where necessary (encourages individual students to take educational risks)		
Logical lesson sequence		
Varied modes of assessment	Written, Q & A, games, taking notes, etc.,	

II. 2c MANAGING CLASSROOM PROCEDURES (Mgt of: groups, transitions, materials, supplies/non-instructional duties)

Indicator/Attribute (Procedures)	Comments	+/-
Students productively/ actively engaged		
Smooth transitions		
Efficient routines for distribution/collection		
Smooth classroom routines		
Respectful behavior/behavior reinforce/redirected		

III. 3b USING QUESTIONING AND DISCUSSION TECHNIQUES (Questions/prompts quality/discussion techniques/participation)

Indicator/Attribute (Questioning)	Comments	+/-
Teacher HOTS/open-ended questions		
Teacher makes effective use of "wait time"		
Questions build on student responses		
Student-led discussion		
Teacher calls on most students even non-volunteers		
Relevance of questions/prompts		

IV. 3c ENGAGING STUDENTS IN LEARNING (Activities/assignments, grouping, instructional materials/resources, structuring/pacing)

Indicator/Attribute	Comments	+/-
Students intellectually engaged in the lesson		
Activities aligned with lesson objectives		
Materials/resources support the learning goals		
Activities address HOTS		
Utilizes instructional grouping		
Effective pacing of lesson provides time needed to be intellectually engaged		

V. 3d USING ASSESSMENT IN INSTRUCTION (Assessment Criteria/Monitoring learning/feedback/Student self-assessment)

Indicator/Attribute	Comments	+/-
Instruction adjusted based on student responses		
Teacher actively monitors students for understanding throughout lesson		
Feedback is specific and timely		
Students understand characteristics of high quality work		

Appendix M: Portfolio Rubric

Portfolio Rubric 1

Sections	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
Teacher (T) Counselor (C) Administrator (A)	Personal Information	PGS Calendar	Copies of Lesson Plans	Session 1 Engaging students in learning/Grouping students to maximize learning Notes Lesson Plan 1 (1) Photo documentation of activity & sample of materials used Lesson Plan 2 (1) Photo documentation of activity & sample of materials used Lesson Plan 3 Notes (1) Matrix used to create groups with seating chart used for grouping Lesson Plan 4 (1) Teacher ABC Lesson Planning Form with structures documented			Session 2 Understanding Vocabulary Notes Lesson Plan 5 G.I.S.T.ing (4 work samples) Lesson Plan 6 ABC Format (4 work samples) Notes Lesson Plan 7 Lesson Plan 8 Carousel/ Brainstorming (8) work samples		Session 3 Effective Questioning Prompts & Discussion to Generate Writing Notes Lesson Plan 9 (1) Open Response Higher Order Thinking question including evidence from informational text (4) work samples Lesson Plan 6 Documentation that a rubric is used/reviewed for grading assessments Artifact (4) Graded projects including rubric

*Acceptable – all components applicable to your job assignment
Teacher (1-9 components) **OR** *Not Acceptable – any missing component applicable to your job assignment

NOTE: Have a partner check your portfolio before submitting to Title I Staff. FUNDS WILL BE PRORATED ACCORDING TO CORRECT ENTRIES.

Appendix N: Certificate of Participation

CERTIFICATE OF PARTICIPATION

THIS CERTIFICATE IS AWARDED TO _____

**ENGAGING STUDENTS IN LEARNING & GROUPING
STUDENTS TO MAXIMIZE
LEARNING, UNDERSTANDING VOCABULARY &
EFFECTIVE QUESTIONING PROMPTS AND
DISCUSSION TO GENERATE WRITING**

PRESENTED BY: LOUISIANA STATE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
REGIONAL SERVICE CENTER

24

Continued Learning Units

Curriculum Vitae

Eric Davis

Education

Doctor of Education, Expected graduation, February 2015

Walden University

Dissertation: Reducing the Dropout Rate Through a Ninth Grade Academy

Masters of Education, Administration and Supervision August, 2003

University Louisiana Monroe

Bachelors of Science, Business Administration May, 1996

Miles College

Educational Work Experience

Assistant Principal October 2005 to Present

Administrative Assistant August 2005 to September 2005

Instructional Practitioner (Assistant Principal) August 2004 to May 2005

Teacher/Head Basketball Coach August 1998 to May 2004

- Taught grades 9-12 in the Special Services Department
- Taught grades 9-12 in the Business Department
- Head Girls' Softball coach 1998-1999
- Assistant Varsity Football Coach / Head 9th grade coach 1998-2001
- Assistant Varsity Basketball Coach 1998-2003
- Head 9th grade Basketball Coach 1998-1999
- Head Junior Varsity Basketball Coach 1999-2003

Teacher/Coach December 1997 to May 1998

- Taught ninth grade World Geography and Home Economics grades 9-12
- Assistant Baseball Coach
- Assistant Varsity Basketball Coach
- Head 9th grade Basketball Coach