



Implementing An Instructional Model with Clear/Concise Vocabulary

Western Middle School
Russiaville, IN

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Background:

The IPLI team met and were reviewing the Level 2 Survey results and noticed a significant standard deviation in all areas of the level 2 HRS results.

These SD scores ranged from .63 to a 1.26.

The averages were around 1.15 SD. This meant we had some work to do in our building.

We chose to focus on developing an instructional model, but at the same time establish the vocabulary with the model.



Goal of the Inquiry:

To develop High Quality Instruction across all grade levels.



Wondering:

Can a School- Wide
Instructional model with
common vocabulary assist
in higher level of student
achievement?

*Our staff has intrinsic motivation
to achieve this goal. We began our
goal by a teacher-led discussion.*



Action 1:

At the next four PLC meetings the teachers were asked to generate statements they felt were the most critical to classroom learning.

The data from the Google Form was analyzed by the IPLI team to find the most common terms, then distributed to our staff to complete.

The Instructional Frameworks were shared with all academic teams and discussed.



Action 2:

Our 8 teams were assigned one of the critical topics.
They found quality research to back up their ideas.

We had the teachers complete the following statements:

In Brief:

What's the Why?

Teacher Expectations

Student Expectations

Resources

Instructional Framework
with the academic
vocabulary developed by
the staff.

<i>Should always see, hear, and observe</i>	<i>Should sometimes see, hear, and observe</i>	<i>Should never see, hear, and observe</i>
Engaged Students and Teachers	Group Activities	Disrespect
Consistent, Clear, Purposeful Instruction	Re-teaching	Bullying
Checks for understanding	Technology	Misuse of Technology
Developing Relationships	Co-Curricular Activities	Unsupervised Class
Clear, Consistent Expectations	Independent Work Time	Apathy
Objectives	Excitement/Fun/ Celebrations	Loss of control
Professionalism	Variety of instructional Materials	



Disrespect

In Brief: Not to treat others differently as you would want to be treated

What's the Why: to develop a safe and secure learning environment for all

Teacher Expectations:

- Be prepared for class
- Treat all students fairly and equally
- Don't talk down to students
- Having good attendance
- Establish Classroom Rules/Expectations
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Student Expectations:

- Listen
- Do not distract others
- Complete work
- Follow directions
- Ask appropriate questions
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Resources:

https://www.educationworld.com/a_curr/profdev/profdev137.shtml

<http://www.nea.org/tools/52062.htm>



Slides were developed for the most prominent statements from staff responses.

<https://drive.google.com/open?id=1rUGdEeyDLSKS2ddxPkofjeFExFqPfOP1>



Discoveries:

- Common ideas across staff
- Minimal resistance in the process
- Staff appreciated the clear and concise language



Next Steps:

- Monitor the instructional model and collect data of effectiveness.
- Provide professional development and support for difficult areas.
- Maintaining the model is the expectation.

Bibliography-

Marzano, Robert J., et al. *A Handbook for High Reliability Schools: the next Step in School Reform*. Marzano Research Laboratory, 2014.

Warrick, Dr. Phil. “Leading a High Reliability School IPLI 2018.” Indianapolis , MSD of Lawrence Township IPLI Cohort Meeting, Jan. 29th 2018

*Presentation and Powerpoint slides from presentation



Questions

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Instructional Framework with Academic Vocabulary

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Background That Led to Your Inquiry:

Currently, I am completing my 4th year as principal of Western Middle School. Prior to this position, I was serving as an assistant principal. This change required me to move away from a place that I had lived for 17 years and I had worked in the same building for all 17 of those years. I had grown close with my former coworkers and knew most of them personally.

Suddenly, I found myself in a new building with all new staff that had very different understandings from my previous building. In having conversations with staff and at staff meetings, when I would mention an education term to the staff, there seemed to be some confusion or a lack of understanding amongst them. It was as if I was speaking above them or their familiarity of educational terms was different than what I was accustomed to from my previous district. There was also evidence of this lack of common language as the Level 3 surveys were returned and our team reviewed the evidence.

Statement of Your Wondering:

Recognizing there was some disconnect amongst the staff when it came to academic language it was clear that providing some professional development around common academic language would be necessary. I developed my wondering around this idea: **Will the development of an Instructional Framework and common language across the school improve communication and instructional practices happening in the classroom and school?**

- **Do we have a common language we use in the building?**
- **Do we all understand academic vocabulary associated with the framework?**
- **When we are having professional dialogue within our professional learning communities, does everyone on the PLC teams know what terms mean and look like in a classroom setting?**

Methods/Procedures:

The IPLI team met and were reviewing the Level 2 Survey results and noticed a significant standard deviation in all areas of the level 2 HRS results. These SD scores ranged from .63 to 1.26. The averages were around 1.15 SD. This meant we had some work to do in our building.

We chose to focus on developing an instructional model, but at the same time establish common academic vocabulary within the model.

Our IPLI team decided to incorporate improving academic vocabulary concerns within the instructional framework process. Developing a framework will also allow us all to have a common understanding of essential academic vocabulary and understand what each term or word means. This understanding includes what that term would look like in the classroom setting, not just a basic understanding of the simple definition.

Action 1

When developing the Instructional Framework, we organized it into the following categories: “What We Should Always See”, “What We Might See”, and “What We Should Never See.” These statements were a starting point for our research. We had groups of teachers that typically would not work together to identify the top seven academic terms they felt should be the top priority in the framework. We stuck to the top seven to set a limit, as the list could go on and on.

Action 2

Next, we took all of the group's feedback and identified the top seven common academic terms that as a whole school we valued and wanted to see or not see in the classroom. Our 8 teams (or PLCs) were each assigned one of the critical topics. They found quality research articles and websites to support the importance of their topic/academic vocabulary term.

We had the teachers complete the following statements:

- *In Brief:*
 - *What's the Why?*
 - *Teacher Expectations*
 - *Student Expectations*
 - *Resources*

Together, as a staff, we were able to create an instructional framework that defined these terms in actionable ways that made sense and brought commonality to everyone in the school.

Stating Your Learning and Supporting it with Data:

As the principal, I then took the framework and conducted walkthrough observations in the classrooms. I was comparing the framework of what we said was important and if it was actually observed in practice. This was tracked by doing 52 walkthrough observations for 3-5 minutes in a classroom, resulting in the top 5 strategies observed. Surprisingly, these practices, listed below, did not match the framework that was developed.

Top 5 Instructional Strategies Used at Western Middle School

- Lecture
- Teacher Questioning
- Mini-Lessons
- Guided Practice
- Review

Learning Statement #1:

Even though the framework was developed and common language as to what each educational term is and should look like in the classroom, there is still a discrepancy as to what we think should be happening and what is actually happening. The instructional framework needs continued professional development and refinement throughout the coming year.

Learning Statement #2:

Throughout the process, the entire staff rallied behind the need for such a framework, providing minimal resistance throughout the process. The staff appreciated the clear and concise language as to what was to be expected across all classrooms at Western Middle School and felt empowered to develop the framework.

Providing Concluding Thoughts:

In conclusion, the staff saw value in such an endeavor. Providing common language and examples as to what a classroom should and should not look like also provided some common communication and common understanding among the different teams and throughout the school. As we continue to develop our framework, teachers will continue to be a part of the process in helping refine the framework.

Looking ahead, the need for ongoing professional development is a priority in order to create true implementation and buy-in of the instructional framework. By putting such a framework in place, we are communicating and ensuring that all students who attend Western Middle School are getting a quality and engaging education where all students learn at high levels.

References:

Marzano, Robert J., et al. *A Handbook for High-Reliability Schools: the next Step in School Reform*. Marzano Research Laboratory, 2014.

Warrick, Dr. Phil. "Leading a High-Reliability School IPLI 2018." Indianapolis, MSD of Lawrence

Township IPLI Cohort Meeting, Jan. 29th 2018

*Presentation and Powerpoint slides from the presentation