

"Omaha, Omaha", The Development of an Instructional Playbook

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Background That Led to Your Team's Inquiry:

As the new principal of a high school, the purpose of this action research project was to evaluate my staff's level of understanding of high quality instructional practices and determine which practices are implemented consistently and with fidelity. In addition, our hope was to identify high quality instructional practices that need further attention through professional development.

Statement of Your Team's Wondering:

With this purpose, we wondered how can the development of an instructional playbook (what we should always see; what we should sometimes see; what should we never see) improve instruction and student achievement in our school?

Methods/Procedures:

To gain insights into our wondering, we began by collecting data from all teachers in our school with regards to their opinions on what instructional practices should be seen everyday, sometimes and never. We created a google survey that we had each PLC complete during a PLC meeting to answer these questions. This process started in November and ended in December. After the data was collected, our team began to analyze PLC responses by sorting the data and ranking the number of responses into categories and strategies. Once the data was analyzed and sorted, we organized the information into a chart in preparation for a staff meeting in which we would share this information.

In February, our team shared these initial results at a staff meeting and asked our staff to provide feedback in the meeting. During this meeting, we did receive great feedback that resulted in a few changes to the Instructional Playbook. In addition to the feedback, we learned that we needed to provide additional clarity for each strategy by creating a definition that would help teachers understand how to implement each strategy. Our building leadership team spent time developing definitions for each strategy in May and have plans to refine these definitions during the summer in anticipation of presenting to the staff at the start of the next school year. Once the Instructional Playbook is presented and understood by our staff, we will begin planning days to collect data through instructional snapshots that will help us monitor instruction in our building and plan future monthly professional development based on observational data.

Stating Your Team's Learning and Supporting it with Data:

As a result of analyzing our data, we gathered two important learning outcomes. First, we learned that the staff of Penn High School, which includes approximately 175 teachers, all were very much in agreement with most of the data that was collected and presented. Our team believes this is a result of several years of professional development over the years with a focus on quality instruction and best practice. The survey

data we collected supports this statement. The other big learning outcome is we realized that while our teachers agreed with what strategies we should see everyday and often, there was some variation in how teachers interpreted and defined each of these strategies. This realization came from our discussions during our staff meetings as we spent time to think about what does each strategy look like in practice. These learning outcomes will drive change in our school that will benefit our students and overall achievement in the future. With a large staff, it is imperative that we have an instructional model that is know by all teachers and consistently implemented for the benefits of our students.

Providing Concluding Thoughts:

As our team reflected on our journey this year, we came to a few important conclusions. The most important realization was confirmation that the teachers of Penn High School are still committed to the quality instructional practices that have resulted in high levels of achievement for our students for many years. Ten year ago, the entire staff was trained on these best practices for quality instruction and many of these strategies came through again as we collected data from our staff this year. As a first year principal in this building, this data was reassuring and demonstrates that the teachers of Penn High School are committed to our students and what works best. I feel lucky to have such a committed staff.

This journey has also set the tone for a laser like focus on professional development in the coming years. We started a new professional development program this year that focused on best practices that also allowed teachers choice on several different sessions that would meet their needs. Next year, our PD program will be able to support the instructional playbook model and provide for a more narrow focus that will help our school not only refine our practices but insure that we are addressing any needs that we identify during our instructional snapshots and observations.

We believe as we get started with this work next year, we of course will be sure to evaluate the process and make necessary changes. I do believe that we will find that our professional development schedule will be driven by our observational data. I believe that we will then wonder to what degree individual teacher's instruction will improve as we identify needs through instructional snapshot data. This is exciting work!

References:

N/A