Team Swayzee Game Plan: Developing and Implementing an Instructional Model

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Background That Led to Your Team's Inquiry:

Our 5th & 6th grade building consists of 292 students, 13 full time teachers and 11 Instructional Assistants. We are part of a 1700 student small town/rural corporation. Traditionally, we do not have very much teacher or administrator turnover. Our school is typically thought of and respected as a safe, student-friendly, reasonably high-achieving school. Over the past few years approximately 20% of our student population has been made up of non-resident students whose families are choosing to send them to our school corporation. Also, over the past few years our standardized test scores have steadily decreased as has our school letter grade.

With concern for our steadily declining accountability numbers, and our somewhat changing student population, our staff took the High Reliability Surveys very seriously and made an effort to learn from the data. Based on the first two surveys we discovered that we rated ourselves relatively low in two areas; A clear vision of how instruction should be addressed in our building and Regular discussion about instruction and learning among teacher teams.

Therefore, the purpose of our action research was to find ways to effectively and more intentionally address and improve ourselves in the above mentioned areas. Our thoughts centered around development of the PLC concepts in our Grade Level meetings and the exploration and development of an Instructional Model for our students, staff and building.

Statement of Your Team's Wondering:

With this purpose, we wondered "How will the development and implementation of an Instructional Model impact the instruction and learning in our building?". Two "sub" questions we asked were " Will the Instructional Model compliment our ongoing efforts to establish more of a PLC approach with our grade level teams?" and "Will the posting and explanation of the Instructional Model create more "buy in" from students and staff?"

Methods/Procedures:

To gain insights into our wondering, after having shared the HRS results with our entire teaching team, we (mostly facilitated and led by the teacher leaders that were part of the IPLI team) shared the concept of an Instructional Model with our team of teachers and led them through a brainstorming, exploration process of different types of models and what our priorities as a team were and which model may best reflect those priorities. Those ideas and lists were narrowed down (mostly by the teacher leaders and/or in grade level meetings) to a workable list and eventually into a workable Instructional Model (The 5 E Model was adopted and we titled it "Team Swayzee Game Plan".
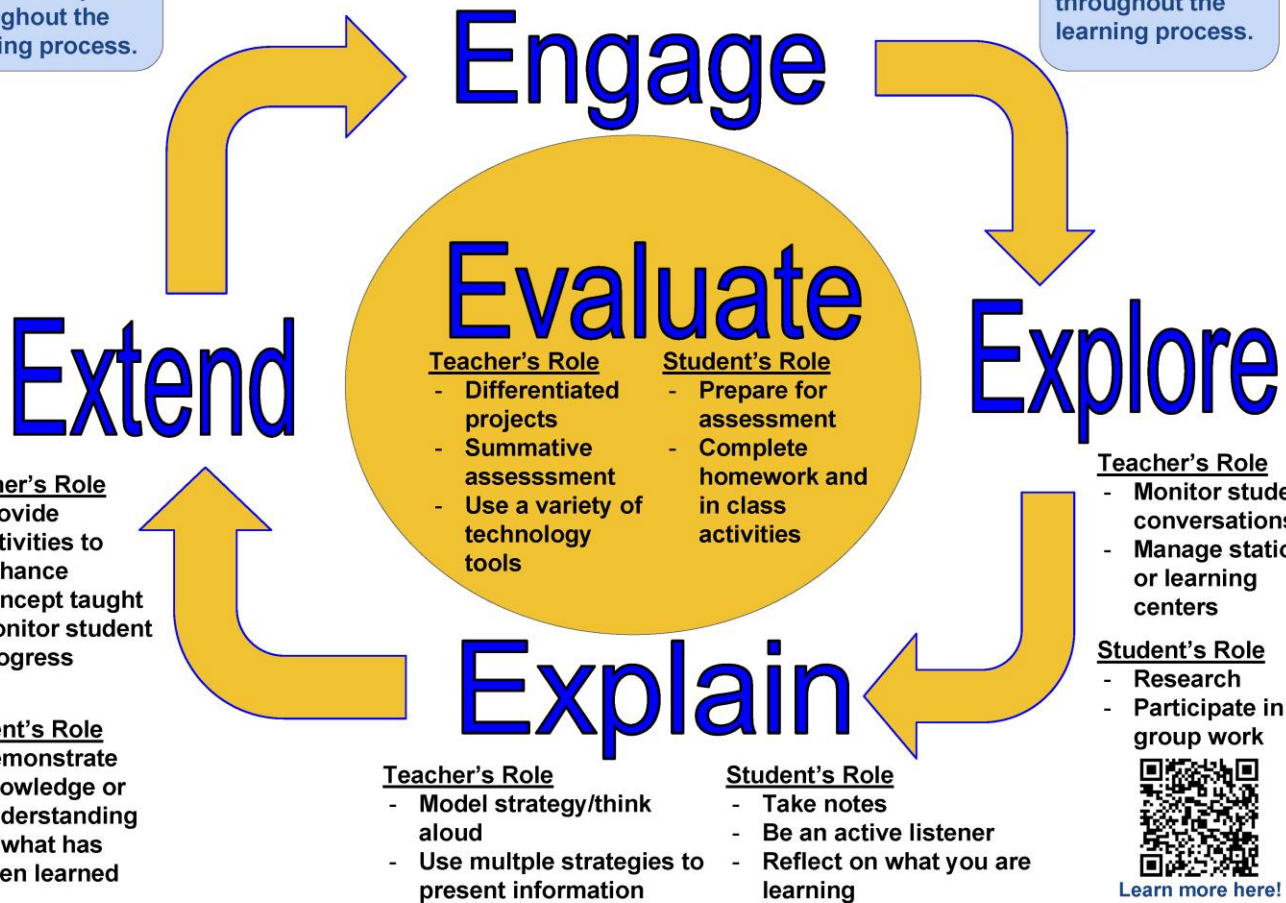
Team Swayzee Game Plan

Teacher's Role
- Anticipatory set

Student's Role
- Share knowledge
- Ask questions

Engage

Evaluate

Teacher's Role
- Differentiated projects
- Summative assesssment
- Use a variety of technology tools

Student's Role
- Prepare for assessment
- Complete homework and in class activities

Extend

Teacher's Role
- Provide activities to enhance concept taught
- Monitor student progress

Student's Role
- Demonstrate knowledge or understanding of what has been learned

Explore

Teacher's Role
- Monitor student conversations
- Manage stations or learning centers

Student's Role
- Research
- Participate in group work

Learn more here!

Explain

Teacher's Role
- Model strategy/think aloud
- Use multple strategies to present information

Student's Role
- Take notes
- Be an active listener
- Reflect on what you are learning

After 3-4 weeks of regularly discussing, tweaking and adjusting the model, the two teacher leaders and the principal created a model that was shared back out with the entire team for final input. All of this occurred prior to Christmas break with the idea being that it would be introduced to the students in a uniform manner via a slide show and teacher explanation within the first two days they returned after break. On the first teacher work day prior to the start of second semester the teacher leaders led the entire teacher team through the slide show and modeled how the model should be shared with students. We wanted "buy in" from teachers without creating a "one more thing to do" attitude among them. They seemed supportive, receptive and very much "on board" with the planned kick off at the start of second semester. At this point (mid December) we were mostly depending on anecdotal type data and meeting notes to reflect on how well the new concept was being received and embraced by the staff. All indications were that the support was solid, but not necessarily strong.

With large poster size models posted in every classroom and in some common spaces throughout our building as well, our teachers presented the model to all students in homeroom settings during the first couple days back from break. The intro focused on not only what students could expect the teachers to be doing, but it also focused on what the students' "role" in the learning process should be. Although the 5 E terms (Engage, Explore, Explain, Extend, Evaluate) were described and defined for the students, the students were also encouraged to express their thoughts and ideas on what each could/should look like in the classroom.

Different teachers handled the intro in slightly different manners, but we were confident all students ..and Instructional aides...received the main message.

Within 3-4 weeks of introducing the model we gave a brief...4-5 question survey to all teachers asking them questions about how often they were using the "game plan" language in their instruction and/or lesson plans. We were really just trying to get a feel as to what degree it was being embraced and implemented. Survey results, general observations within classrooms and review of written lesson plans indicated there were varying degrees of "buy in" and/or implementation.

In the next 3-4 weeks, through their grade level PLC's teachers were asked to consider making a special effort to include the "5 E's" terminology in their written lesson plans. The teacher leaders suggested, discussed this and the meanings and application of the 5E's in their grade level meetings without administrative presence. The hope was to create a safe environment where teachers felt free to share the insecurities, lack of understanding or frustrations about this "Instructional Model" idea. Again, meeting notes and feedback indicated mixed results....in general support was present, but implementation/buy in varied.

Our final effort to collect data, prior to our IPLI Spring Showcase, came in the form of another brief....6-8 questions... teacher survey asking questions along the lines of how they felt the implementation of the "game plan" had impacted their planning, instruction and student learning. This feedback, which was collected in late March approximately 11 weeks after the introduction of the "game plan" to the students, was helpful in determining the impact of this initiative.

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

As a result of analyzing our data, three important things we learned include:
1) Although the initial response was supportive, teacher knowledge of and level of implementation of the model varied.
2) Teacher feedback about if/how the model had influenced their planning, instruction and student learning was positive overall.
3) Time to implement the instructional model is an important factor. We started implementing the model at the beginning of second semester. We hope to see an impact on student learning as we use the instructional model going forward.

Although the initial response was supportive, teacher knowledge of and level of implementation of the model varied. We drew this conclusion as a result of the surveys teachers completed and our own observations, notetaking etc.....from reviewing lesson plans, observing classroom lessons and participating in formal and informal conversations and discussions with teachers in grade level PLCs and in whole team meetings. Additionally, a limited number of conversations were had with students to see what their grasp of the "game plan" concepts were. Our first survey given approximately 4 weeks after the introduction of the model indicated that less than 33% of our 13 member teaching staff could identify all 5 "E's"/terms from the model without looking at the model, but 100% of the teachers indicated they could identify at least 3 of the 5 terms. The number of times teachers indicated they referenced or discussed something about the model with their students varied from none to 4. Many of their answers indicated they felt the implementation of the model had "slightly" or "somewhat" influenced their planning, instruction and student engagement/effort.

Teacher feedback about if/how the model had influenced their planning, instruction and student learning was positive overall. The survey we gave approximately 11 weeks after introduction and implementation provided data that showed teachers were positive overall about the game plan and it's impact on their planning,

instruction and student learning. It appeared to us that the teachers' view of the influence and impact of the game plan grew over time, because in the first survey given approximately 4 weeks after implementation much of their feedback indicated only "slight" influence. We believe over time the influence increased because our teachers continued to discuss, break down and give more thought to the game plan especially when we asked them to consider using the 5 E's in their written lesson plans. Comments from teachers on the second survey included; "It helps me to focus on what is most important and weed out of my plans what probably won't be helpful." "It does not take me much more time to include the 5 E's, but it does help me to process the steps I want students to work through during the lesson."

Time to implement the instructional model is an important factor. We started implementing the model at the beginning of second semester. We hope to see an impact on student learning as we use the instructional model going forward. Because teacher feedback, classroom observations, lesson plan review and conversations among teachers seemed to more regularly include the "game plan" concepts the further we progressed into second semester, we concluded that time was a key issue. Teachers needed time to process what the "game plan" was really about and how they could effectively implement those concepts. They discovered that they were already doing and using a lot of the ideas in their lesson planning and instruction, but the game plan provided some common language.   Based on the second survey feedback and the end-of-year Team meeting discussion it is apparent that the team felt with time the game plan's positive influence and impact did and will continue to increase. Comments received from teachers on the second survey included: "It has validated some of the things I was doing and given me more confidence to continue in that direction and push me farther in the 5 E's" "Adding 5 E's helps break my lessons into smaller more manageable chunks for myself and students. It helps me do less lecturing and focus more on student engagement and processing." "I hope it will increase student learning, but I haven't done it long enough to know for certain." "It's nice to have terms for what I'm doing."

Providing Concluding Thoughts:

This action research cycle was very enlightening for our IPLI team. We learned a lot about our team of teachers and their perspectives on what we do well in our building and what we don't do as well. The process seemed to help prod us towards being better rather than just being comfortably good. We, as the IPLI team, were challenged individually to reflect on our own practices and perspectives and we were able to be vulnerable with the whole teaching team while challenging them to do the same type of reflection themselves. We believe we accomplished that to varying degrees with the teachers.

The greatest lesson or insight we gained about our school and teaching staff is that we have not regularly considered, discussed, assessed and evaluated our instructional practices and learning expectations. And, addtionally, there has been some uncertainty about what the specific expectations are in terms of what should be happening in classrooms day in and day out.

With those insights in mind we, as an IPLI team enlisting the input and support of our whole teaching team, have proceeded to learn and implement PLC concepts as well as establish and implement an Instructional Model which are intended to provide focus, expectations and frames for discussion, planning, and instruction and learning. We already have planned for a re-introduction of the "game plan" at the beginning of next school year and the continual reflection, discussion and improvement on the model, its components , its application in the classroom and teachers' attitudes about it through our grade level PLC's and whole team meetings next school year.

References:

Marzano, R. J., Warrick, P., Simms, J.A. (2014). A Handbook for High Reliability Schools...The Next Step in School Reform. Bloomington, IN:Marzano Research.

Fitchman Dana, N., Yendol-Hoppey, D., (2016). The PLC Book. Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin

IPLI "Team Swayzee Game Plan" Questionnaire Feb '18

Team : In an effort to assess to what degree the introduction and implementation of our "Team Swayzee Game Plan" Instructional Model has impacted instruction and learning in our classrooms our IPLI team has put together a brief questionnaire. Please openly and honestly answer the questions. Responses will be anonymous, so no worries. This is simply one piece of the "data collection" step in our Action Research Process, but more importantly this could be something that helps us continue to GROW ourselves and our skills so we can in turn help students GROW!
PLEASE COMPLETE THIS BEFORE YOU LEAVE SCHOOL TUESDAY and if you totally forget please complete no later than 8:00am on Wednesday.   Feedback from each of you is very important! Thanks for all you do.

Without looking at the model, how many of the five "E" words that make up our "Team Swayzee Game Plan" can you name?

13 responses

- All five — 30.8%
- Four — 30.8%
- Three — 38.5%
- Two
- One
- None
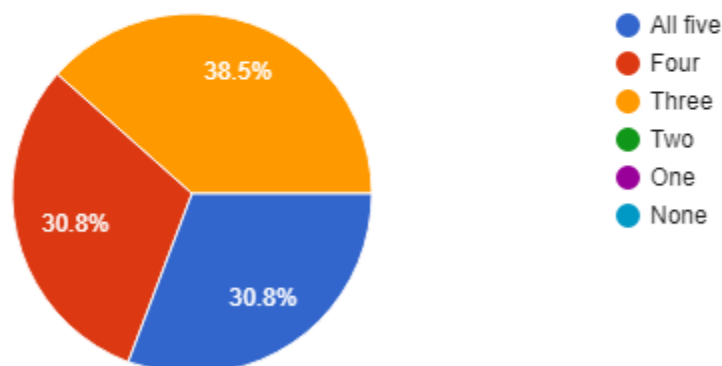
How many times during the past week of teaching have you directed your students' attention to or specifically ... about a component of the "Game Plan"?
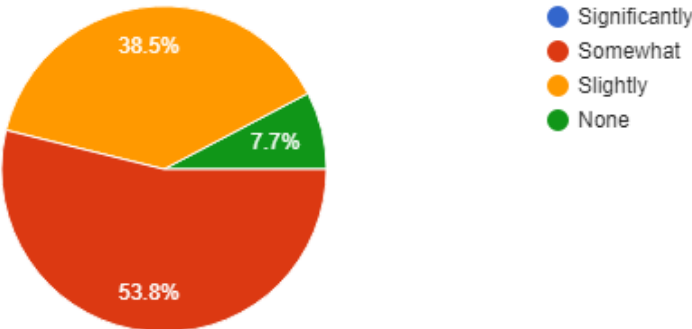
13 responses

- At least 5 times
- 3-4 times
- 1-2 times
- not at all

69.2%
7.7%
23.1%
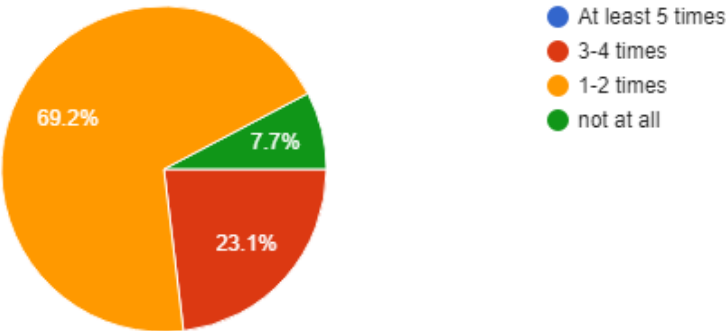
How many times, on average, have you included any of the "5 E" terms in your written weekly lesson plans during this semester?
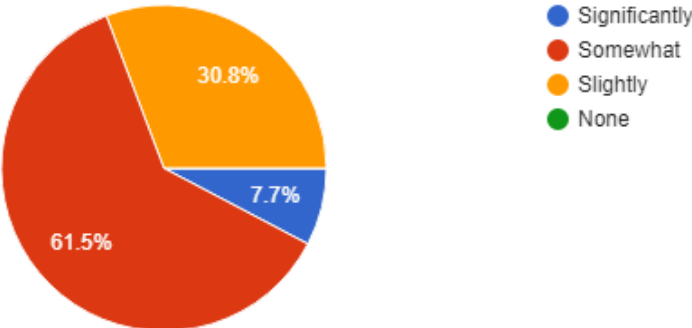
13 responses
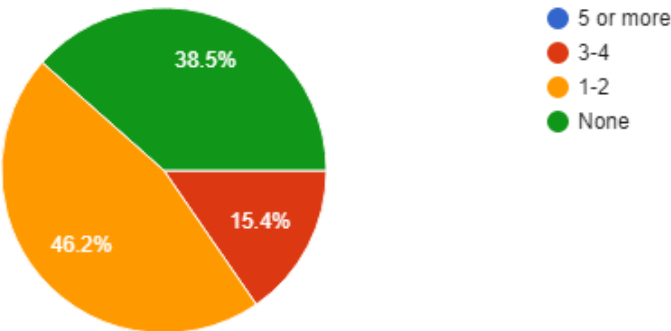
- 5 or more
- 3-4
- 1-2
- None

38.5%
15.4%
46.2%

To what degree do you feel the introduction/implementation of the "Game Plan" has positively influenced your lesson planning?

13 responses

- Significantly
- Somewhat
- Slightly
- None

38.5%
7.7%
53.8%

To what degree do you feel the introduction/implementation of the "Game Plan" has positively influenced your in-class instruction?

13 responses

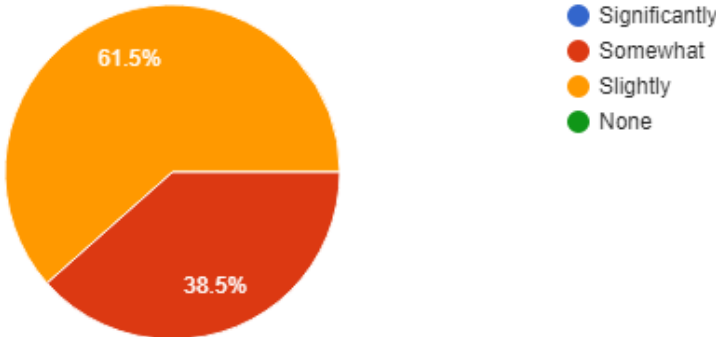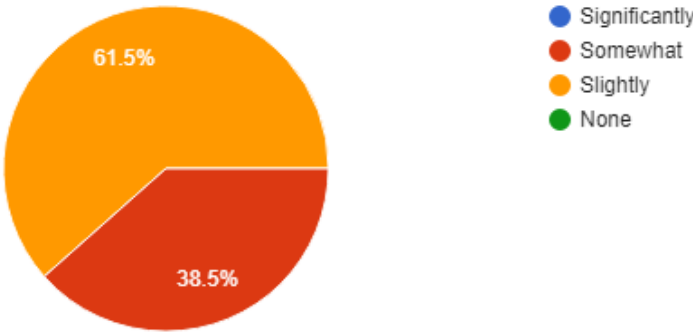- Significantly
- Somewhat
- Slightly
- None

30.8%
7.7%
61.5%

To what degree do you feel the introduction/implementation of the "Game Plan" has positively influenced stude...ort and engagement in your classroom?

13 responses

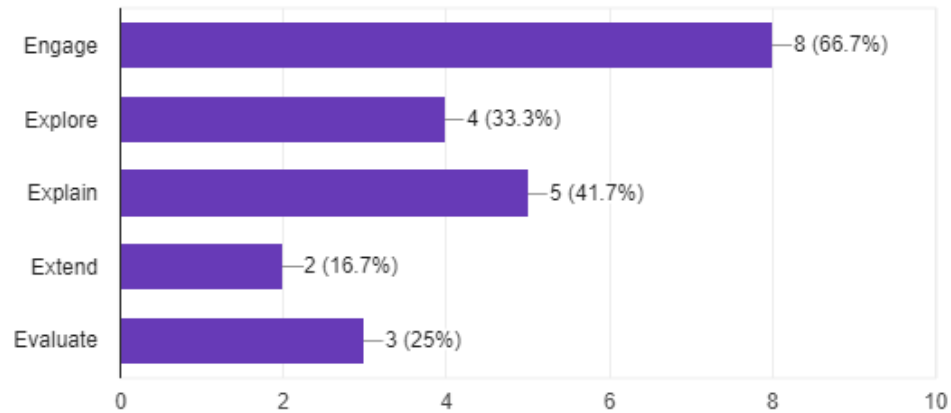
- Significantly
- Somewhat
- Slightly
- None

61.5%

38.5%

To what degree do you feel the introduction/implementation of the "Game Plan" has positively influenced stude...arning/achievement in your classroom?
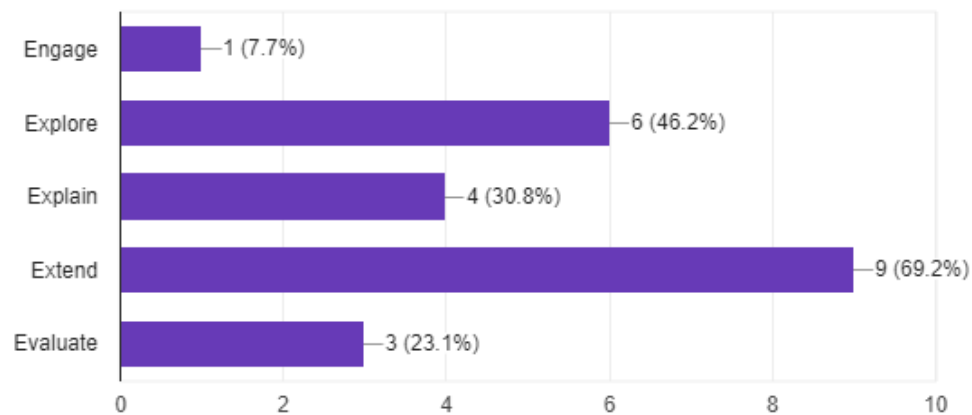
13 responses

- Significantly
- Somewhat
- Slightly
- None

61.5%

38.5%

Which two of the 5 E's do you feel most comfortable planning for?
12 responses

E	Count
Engage	8 (66.7%)
Explore	4 (33.3%)
Explain	5 (41.7%)
Extend	2 (16.7%)
Evaluate	3 (25%)

Which two of the 5 E's do you feel least comfortable planning for?
13 responses

E	Count
Engage	1 (7.7%)
Explore	6 (46.2%)
Explain	4 (30.8%)
Extend	9 (69.2%)
Evaluate	3 (23.1%)

Please provide any additional thoughts or comments about how the introduction/implementation of the "Game Plan" has impacted instruction and learning within your classroom and/or our school in general. 3 responses

I feel the game plan is what we do. I do not see a huge difference other than we are using words that begin with E to describe what we already do as teachers. I think the poster and the E words help students with giving a name to what we are doing in class.

It is going well so far, and I anticipate it having more of an impact of my planning and student achievement as the year goes on.

I like using term "engage" with kids. Kind of a way to encourage them to take ownership in their learning.

IPLI - 5 E's in Lesson Planning April 2018

Team: During the past few weeks the idea of including the 5 E's from our

Team Swayzee Game Plan in your lesson planning was suggested to you at your grade level PLC meetings.   Although we doubt that all have "added the 5E's" in the same way or to the same degree, we still want feedback from all of you.

Please respond to each question in this survey with honesty so we have accurate data to use in our IPLI Action Research Project.   Thank You! Rob, Mary & Kellie

How has adding the 5 E's to your lesson plans affected your planning?

10 responses

It helps me to focus on what is most important and weed out of my plans what probably won't be helpful. (2)

I try to cover them all so that I have a mix and don't just focus on one or two of them in a weeks time.

I don't think it has affected my planning, but I'm more aware of what Es I am implementing.

I believe it has made my planning more thoughtful. When thinking about which of the E's something fits under, it makes me think through my lesson more.

My student teacher has been using them in her lessons. She refers to the poster often. I have a tendency to forget when I'm teaching. Even when I remember earlier....I forget later. It hasn't become automatic, yet.

It does not take me much more time to include the 5 E's, but it does help me process the steps I want students to work through during the lesson.

Now that I have added the 5 E's at the top of my lessons it impacting my lessons more. It serves as a good reminder

It makes me more focused on including all the parts of our 5e's in my lessons. It keeps me mindful of my role and the students'.

It has helped me to narrow my focus in planning.

How has adding the 5E's to your lesson plans affected your instruction?

10 responses

It has validated some of the things I was doing and given me more confidence to continue in that direction and push me farther in the 5 E's. (2)

It let's me have a snapshot of how I teach and what the focus is. If I have to many of one "E", I try to come up with other lesson ideas to branch out into the other "E's".

It has not affected my instruction. However, I need to do a better job of using that language with students during lessons.

It has made my instruction more effective by giving more thought to what I am doing.

I think it is being more intentional with saying what we as teachers are doing and what students are doing.

Adding the 5 E's helps break my lessons into smaller more manageable chunks for myself and students. It helps me do less lecturing and focus more on student engagement and processing.

Students are becoming more engaged

I use the terminology more often. I'm more intentional on covering all the parts of our plan.

I was already doing the 5E's in my planning and instruction, but adding them has made me more aware of my goals in instructing students.

How has adding the 5E's to your lesson plans affected student performance/learning in your classroom? 10 responses

I think as I am more confident in why I do what I am doing, it transfers to my students. I also think it is helpful that all teachers share the same language (5 E's) and that kids understand they have a responsibility to their learning as well. I believe most grasp the concept that their learning is a team effort. (2)

The students like doing different activities under each topic/lesson which helps with engagement and can help those that might learn a different way than others.

I honestly don't think it has.

I hope it will increase student learning, but I haven't done it long enough to know for certain.

I think it gives a boost to whatever it is students are doing when you put expectations of being engaged, exploring or an evaluation...

I think that it is helping. I feel like my planning is better, so naturally implementing those plans should make my instruction better.

By students being more engaged performance is up.

Because I use the terminology more often, the students are more aware of their part, too.

With my focus on elaborating on lessons, my students have been given more opportunities and different ways to learn the material.

What other thoughts do you have about adding the 5E's to your lesson plans? 7 responses

It is nice to have terms to what I am doing. For example, I am doing this because we are exploring the topic, or extending our learning with this activity. I often find categories overlap, and I think that is a win for my students.

I also like that you periodically question us about it to help keep us focused on them :) (2)
None
It has been pretty smooth and has not required much difficulty.
It is not that difficult to do and I think it is a good habit to get into. With more practice it will get easier.
I think by having them in the lesson plans it will become automatic to use them in the lessons. It is just beginning to use them is the hardest.
I think more than anything, adding the 5E's has given me more of a focus on what is important in planning, instructing, and overall learning in my classroom.