

Creating an Instructional Model That Actually Makes Sense

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Background That Led to Your Team's Inquiry:

Our Superintendent, working with several members from each tier, created an Instructional Model for the entire corporation. When this was presented to our high school staff, it was received with mixed emotions. As we talked to everyone after the fact, it became clear that this IM was very well done, but was much too broad to mean much in our building. We thought that we could make an Instructional Model that was just for Greenfield-Central High School. Therefore, the purpose of our action research was to take the things we did really well and put them down on paper in our own Instructional Model.

We did not want to recreate the wheel from scratch. Everyone agreed that we already do so many wonderful things at GCHS - we just needed to get those down and point out what is a priority to us. We studied some of the models that IPLI provided us, and found one that we thought would be easy to understand for parents, students, and staff members.

Statement of Your Team's Wondering:

With this purpose, we wondered if we could create our own Instructional Model that was geared specifically for Greenfield-Central High School.

Methods/Procedures:

To gain insights into our wondering, we brought the staff together to talk about what this would look like. We were very careful to explain this in a way that didn't seem like a new initiative - we are simply taking the best things we do and putting them in a form that is easy to understand. We provided them with a skeleton of an Instructional Model that we liked, and we gave them an example of each category to point them in the right direction. We then gave them time in their PLC's to create their own list for each heading that mattered to the group.

After the groups submitted their answers, Chris, Michelle and I got together to look at the data and begin making our lists. Some answers were close enough that we worked on the phrasing to cut down on excessive wording, while others were removed just for pure silliness. We then took that list and again met with the staff. This time, we get them the new list and asked them to rank the answers by what were most important to them as individual teachers.

The last part was the true data collection and analysis. Chris, Michelle, and I sat down with the answers and their ranking points. We averaged each answer's rankings and put them in order from most important to least important. Again, we looked at the data to see any trends in a given column. We had to decide, based on the numbers and responses, where we cut the columns off. A big part of the decision-making process was the visual aspect: we wanted this instructional model to look professional and to have a good flow. We talked

about the relationship between the different columns, and how making a change to one would influence the others. In the end, we were happy with our finished product and felt it was an actual representation of how our staff felt. It truly was an Instructional Model for GCHS by GCHS teachers.

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

As a result of analyzing our data, we learned two important things: the teachers were on the same page with their answers and they all agreed that we needed to create our own Instructional Model. When we analyzed our data, there were clear delineations between how popular the answers were. The top answers all had a median rating within the standard deviation. This told us that the vast majority of our teachers agreed on the rankings and what was important to them.

The other learning was brought to our attention after the fact: our staff was happy we did this project. We received more positive feedback in the form of emails, phone calls, and conversations in the building than anything else we did this year. They were very happy with the finished product, and they are excited to get them printed out and in their classrooms.

Providing Concluding Thoughts:

When we started our action research project, we were worried that this project would not be worthwhile for our staff. We did not want this to be something else we brought in that we made the teachers do. And for the most part, we were very wrong in our assumptions. We learned that the teachers not only wanted to complete this, they were all very much on the same page with their answers. We learned that, even with a teaching staff of over 80 very different people, that overall we are very much on the same page.

As we look towards the future, everyone was in agreement that this is a living document. We don't want this to collect dust in a classroom. We want to revisit this Instructional Model every 4-5 years and see if it is still relevant. It is OK to make changes and mold this document, even if that means some major changes. We want it to be an honest reflection of what we want to see in our classrooms at Greenfield-Central High School.

References:

N/A