



Cultivating Personal Instructional Practices

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Background Leading to Our Inquiry

Crawfordsville Middle School developed a school-wide instructional model in 2018-2019. The model is posted in all classrooms as a model of what effective instruction always, sometimes, and never looks like in the classroom. In order to take the instructional model to the next level we wanted to look for ways to make it a living, breathing, and applicable document.

The Purpose of Our Inquiry

The purpose of the inquiry was to bring the instructional model back to the forefront of teacher focus and to advance it into a more effective and resilient pedagogical tool.

Our Wondering

With this purpose, we wondered if the school-wide instructional model would be more effective if there were specific strategies listed within the document?

Our Actions

We began with diving into the 43 elements from *The New Art and Science of Teaching* and decided to pilot this inquiry with the language arts department. Teachers initially individually identified a few elements from the list they would like to prioritize. Teacher then collaborated through sharing their thoughts and narrowed the focus to a collectively agreed upon six elements to focus.

Next, teachers brainstormed together specific strategies that related to the 6 areas that were selected as a focus. Teachers then identified one area of strength (to be a resource to others) and one area for growth to focus on.

Lastly, teachers implemented strategies in the area of growth that they chose over a 3 week period and monitored results through reflection of the implementation.

Data Collection

Teachers reflected each week while implementing strategies by responding to the following questions at the end of each week.

- Which area did you focus on?
- What strategy(ies) did you implement?
- How often did you use the new strategy?
- Did you notice any benefit?
- Notes on progress/implementation:

Our Data

Overall, approximately 17% of the teachers noticed great benefit, 61% of the teachers noticed some benefit, while 22% noticed no change. Some qualitative data was also collected with the following comments as a couple takeaways:

- “It was a good and gentle change. Covid has changed some of my teaching habits, so it was good to focus on some strategies I was neglecting”
- “Spending a few minutes of one-on-one time with each student (a couple times a week) allowed me to really show and pinpoint each students’ successes in class, with their homework, with their peers, &/or with me.”

Our Discoveries

Teachers appreciated the consistent framework for examining their pedagogical practices and reflected that even more frequent reminders of instructional strategies and practices would be beneficial. A focus on clear strategies also brought improvement to the school-wide instructions model, as it helped take it to a more applicable resource.

Where We Are Headed Next

Next year, each content PLC will identify areas for growth. We will construct a robust set of strategies that will allow staff to identify areas for improvement and cultivate teacher-led professional development. This will also allow for strengths of teachers to be identified for resources for teacher colleagues as well.

Bibliography

Marzano, R.J. (2017). *The New Art and Science of Teaching (More than Fifty New Instructional Strategies for Academic Success*. Solution Tree Press.

Solo S.W.I.M.

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Background Leading to this Inquiry

In the 2018-2019 school year, the staff at CMS created a school-wide instructional model (S.W.I.M). The model is posted in all classrooms and is used to guide classroom instructional practices.

Should See and Hear Almost Daily	Might See and Hear Almost Daily	Should Not See or Hear
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Teachers providing consistent routines, procedures, and expectations for their students.• Teachers providing students with an engaging environment that allows class discussion, exploration, questioning, and reflection.• Teachers providing a positive, caring, and encouraging environment.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Teachers incorporating or providing opportunities to use technology.• Teachers providing a mix of whole group, small group, one on one, or self-guided instruction.• Teachers incorporating personal experiences, connections, and humor in their lessons.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Teachers providing unsafe activities.• Teachers using negative sarcasm.• Teachers having low expectations for their students.

Purpose of this Inquiry

The purpose was to bring the S.W.I.M back to the forefront of teacher's instruction focus. The goal is that it will be a more effective and resilient pedagogical tool.

Our Wondering

Would the S.W.I.M. be more effective if there were specific strategies listed?

Our Actions

- Using the chart of 43 elements from *The New Art and Science of Teaching*, language arts PLC teachers identified salient for effective instruction
- The group selected six elements to focus on, and brainstormed specific strategies in each area (see chart [here](#))
- Each teacher then identified one area of strength (to be a resource for others) and an area for growth to focus on
- For a three week period, teachers were asked to work on implementing strategies in the area that they picked for growth
- Each Friday, the teachers filled out a Google reflection form

Data Collection

Questions in the Google Form:

- Which area did you focus on?
- What strategy(ies) did you implement?
- How often did you use the new strategy?
- Did you notice any benefit?
- Notes on progress/implementation:

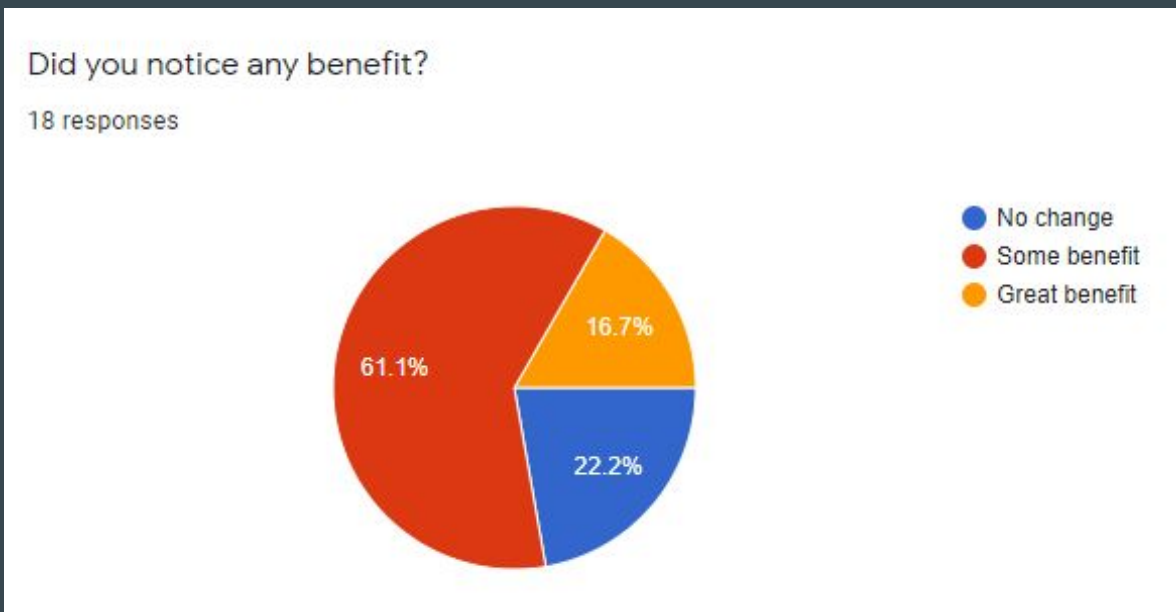
Our Data

Which area did you chose to focus on?	What strategy(ies) did you implement?
Noticing when students are not engaged and reacting	Using increased physical proximity as opposed to direct interaction.
Establishing rules and procedures	Turn passing out papers into a one shot deal. I tried passing them out before class began, having them pick up their own papers, and passing everything out in one packet.
Celebrating success	I made sure to reach out to students who were really putting in great effort!
Maintaining a lively pace	Instead of leaving a minute or two between activities, I really tried to have smooth and effective transitions between the 3-4 things we did to make sure the students who often act out during that time had less opportunity to do so.
Celebrating success	I have been trying to praise students that rarely submit work. When they submit work, even if it is late, I congratulate them and tell them I am proud of them.
Noticing when students are not engaged and reacting	Physical presence; asking students who were not engaged to help with tasks
Probing incorrect answers with reluctant learners	I worked on taking what information they gave me and leading them to the correct answer through more questioning.
Using physical movement	Having students move when they have completed a certain task or activity
Noticing when students are not engaged and reacting	Tried to address this at the beginning of a lesson and reengage them rather than just ignoring those who are visibly not engaged.
Noticing when students are not engaged and reacting	Randomly calling on students (with or w/o hand raised), rephrasing of questions, etc.
Establishing rules and procedures	Having conversations at the start of class what expectations are with clear consequences when they are not met. Trying to be as consistent as possible enforcing these consequences. Meeting with individual students that are struggling that would not benefit being called out in class.

Our Data

“It was a good and gentle change. Covid has changed some of my teaching habits, so it was good to focus on some strategies I was neglecting.”

“Spending a few minutes of one-on-one time with each student (a couple of times a week) allowed me to really show and pinpoint each students' successes in class, with their classwork, with their peers, &/or with me.”



Our Discoveries

Teachers appreciated the consistent framework for examining their pedagogical practices. They said even more frequent reminders would be beneficial.

Focus on clear strategies brought about improvement in areas related to the S.W.I.M.

Where We are Heading Next

Next year, each department PLC will identify areas for growth. We will construct a robust set of strategies that will allow staff to identify areas for improvement and cultivate teacher-led professional development.

Bibliography

Marzano, R. J. (2017). *The New Art and Science of Teaching (More Than Fifty New Instructional Strategies for Academic Success) (The New Art and Science of Teaching Book Series)*. Solution Tree Press.