How to Improve Student Achievement and Produce Systematic Literacy Gains in Secondary Schools

UCF College of Education Literacy Symposium
April 6, 2012
Dr. William Gordon
Special Guests: Dr. Joe Miller, Principal, Legacy Middle School
Elvira Medina-Pekovsky, RtI, East Learning Community District Support
Jenny Hartwigsen, Learning Resource Teacher, Legacy Middle School
Marilee Amodt, Learning Resource Teacher, Legacy Middle School
Creating a Culture of Responsiveness in the East Learning Community

- Two Initiatives with multi-pronged approaches:
  - High Schools
    - Triage, a sustainable Tier 2 (reading programs) initiative, unwrapping the standards, and progress monitoring
  - Middle Schools
    - Implementation of progress monitoring systems, sustainable Tier 2 initiatives, and unwrapping the standards
On the Horizon

- The Common Core State Standards
  - Led by the Council of Chief State School Officers (CCSSO) and the National Governors Association (NGA)
  - Builds on the foundation laid by states in their decades-long work on crafting high-quality education standards
- The Standards draw on:
  - International models
  - Research and input from state departments of education, scholars, assessment developers, professional organizations, educators from kindergarten through college; and parents, students, and other members of the public
Partnership for the Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers (PARCC)

Leaders from 26 states formed the Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers (PARCC) to create a next-generation assessment system that will ensure students across the country are expected to meet common, high standards that will prepare them for their futures. **States in the Partnership share one fundamental goal: building their collective capacity to dramatically increase the rates at which students graduate from high school prepared for success in college and the workplace.**

The implementation of the Common Core State Standards necessitates a change in instruction; hence, there is concern that if a teacher thinks a new standard is like an old standard, the instruction will not change, and the old lesson will stay the same. In this scenario, students would not reap the benefits of improved instruction with a clear focus on the new more rigorous standards.
Standards-based reform or Standards-based curriculum?

In today’s public education environment, teachers must understand that the standards are the curriculum!
East Learning Community

- Learning gains of the lowest 25% of students in reading was a problem
- Reading classes were “program driven” and were not designed to meet the individual needs of students
The Team:
- Literacy Coach
- Assistant Principal
- Dr. Gordon and Dr. Taylor

The Target:
- The reading teachers at each high school

The Focus was to:
- Establish consistent research-based vocabulary
- Improve the fluency of students
- Incorporate student owned literacy strategies, improved thinking skills, and questioning techniques
- Encourage a collegial framework for each school
Professional Learning In-context Model

- There is a data identified need and leadership commitment to support enhancing expertise to achieve results.

- Develop common language, knowledge, and expectations among all—teachers, administrators, coaches—across schools.

- Maximize return on investment with fidelity to the research upon which the product was developed, not to the product.

- Administrators, teachers, coaches form a school team who hold each other accountable for implementation.

- In-context learning: teachers decide what they will model for their colleagues, identify “look fors”, and invite feedback and questions.

- Teachers plan as school collaborative teams and coach each other.
Collaboration in a Culture of Active Caring

- 7:15  Group is given the “look fors” by literacy coach

- 7:30  Groups (mix of different schools) visit 3 stations for 20 minutes each.
  - Group A  Ms. D, Room 466
  - Group B  Ms. B, Room 465
  - Group C  9th grade teacher team, Media Center

- Complete a, Create a Culture of Active Caring with authentic feedback for each station.
- I like the way you and/or students________.
- I wonder......?

- 8:45  Facilitated reflection and feedback

- 9:00  Book talks and sharing of quality non-fiction of various genres.
- What have you tried since our last meeting that has worked well?
- 10:00 *Research-based Vocabulary Instruction*, ppt, handouts, sticky notes, doc camera

- 12:45 Teams work together to infuse research-based vocabulary instruction and ideas picked up in class visits in instructional plans.

- 1:30  What am I committed to doing next week that I have not done previously?

Preview Dec. 2, High School B

Closure
The level of support depends upon the difficulty of the text/concepts and the ability of the learner to comprehend the text/concepts independently.

**Check for understanding throughout instruction.**

© Do not reproduce without written permission from Rosemarye T. Taylor.
High Expectations Modeled to Scaffold Students to Independence

Criteria to work towards and evaluate own work
Who is the author of the non-fiction?
Quick student level data to inform instructional decision-making.
Students have different work and recently arrived ELL students are working on Rosetta Stone software beyond the photo.

Guided Practice & Data-informed Differentiation
Independent Practice
Motivation: Student Owned Data with Clear Goals and Strategies—Passed FCAT!
Colleagues Visit Classes and Provide Feedback—Culture of Active Caring
Student Made Interactive Word Walls
Twilight themed classroom adds to the already positive student-teacher relationship.
Outcomes

- Teachers’ classrooms dramatically changed with enhanced expertise, clear expectations, and high level support!
- Students became more engaged!
- Ongoing Collaboration across campuses
- Lowest 25% in each high school made learning gains!
East Learning Community

- 7 Middle Schools
- All considered high performing (6 schools with straight A’s and one school with straight B’s) for the past 5 years
- Data analysis showed stagnant performance in the seven schools for the same 5 years
- Achievement gap analysis for schools showed gap was widening in most areas over the same 5 year period
Common Thread (Middle Schools)

- Systems and structures for progress monitoring were geared to understand school data but were not teacher owned or student specific.
- The RtI process was in name only.
- The instructional capacity at each school is strong; however, the knowledge and understanding of the high expectations of the new standards was not pervasive.
The Plan

- Design and implement a progress monitoring system that incorporates mini-assessments and benchmark assessments
- Institute the consistent use of an instructional focus calendar in language arts and mathematics classes
- Adjust instruction, based on student data, to meet the individual needs of students
- Refine the RtI process at each school
The Plan

- Establish bimonthly meetings at each school with administration and the RtI team
- Honor site specific initiatives; however, the initiatives had to be steeped in data and responsive to student needs
- Gradually release the process so it becomes school-owned and culturally embedded
Legacy Middle School
Responding to School Needs

- Values
- Culture
- Structures
- Fidelity
- System of progress monitoring
The coaching goal was to support the School RtI Leadership Teams during data-based problem solving in order to accelerate the performance of ALL students, change the stagnant performance trend, and diminish or close the achievement gaps.

The coaching activities and tools fostered the use and gradual mastery of the Florida 4-Step Problem Solving Model through the definition, development, implementation, and evaluation of multi-tiered instructional and assessment infrastructures geared to provide increasingly intensive supports based on student needs.
## Multi-Tiered System of Supports (RtI)

### At each Tier consider:

**TIER I**
- Is data used to identify target students?
- What is the student/teacher ratio?
- Frequency of support: days a week? Minutes a day?
- Is instruction differentiated? Is there flexibility to amend schedules to match needs?
- Are instructional materials and strategies research-based? Aligned to NGSSS standards? At what level of complexity?
- As students move to Tier 2 or 3, is instruction more explicit, targeted, and intensive than before? Are there increased opportunities for direct intensive instruction?
- Are there written intervention plans for each intervention group? For specific students?
- Is the instructor highly qualified? If not, is coaching support available?
- Are all needed materials and technology easily accessible?

**TIER II**
- How do you measure learning gains?
- Are you assessing what is taught at each Tier?
- Do you use a common assessment plan/cycle?
- Is it aligned to the Order of Instruction/Focus Calendar?
- What types of assessments are used? Formative or Summative? Curriculum-embedded? Standardized probes or teacher made?
- Are assessments aligned to NGSSS? At what level of complexity? At what instructional level?
- Is assessment data used to determine the magnitude of student needs?
- If diagnostic data is needed, who collects it? How do you identify baseline skills?
- Is student data used to design differentiated intervention or acceleration plans?
- How do you determine the skill(s) to monitor? What is a reasonable and rigorous aim? What will be considered sufficient growth?
- Is progress monitoring data analyzed to guide instruction?

**TIER III**
- Are you assessing what is taught at each Tier?
- Do you use a common assessment plan/cycle?
- Is it aligned to the Order of Instruction/Focus Calendar?
# Multi-Tiered System of Supports (RtI)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reading Grade: 7</th>
<th>Fall-Winter Movement on Benchmark test</th>
<th>Power Strands/Benchmarks Needing Improvement</th>
<th>% OT at High Complexity</th>
<th>Question Types Needing Improvement</th>
<th>Action Plan/Focus Calendar - Tier 1</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>All students</td>
<td>-7%</td>
<td>LA.7.1.7.5 - Text structures</td>
<td>30%</td>
<td>Moderate complexity, Reading Application</td>
<td>Share results with grade level content area PLC. Revise Focus Calendar and Mini-Benchmark Schedule. Plan common lessons to reteach text structures &amp; features. Use item specifications with content area benchmarks. Assess learning gains through differentiated products.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AYP Subgroups</td>
<td>Difference</td>
<td>Additional Target Areas</td>
<td>Additional Actions</td>
<td>at Tier 2</td>
<td>at Tier 3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Black students</td>
<td>-5%</td>
<td>LA.7.1.7.5 Text Features</td>
<td>30%</td>
<td>Moderate complexity</td>
<td>Reteach at instructional level with targeted materials. Progress monitor twice a month with lexiled materials.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bottom 30%</td>
<td>Difference</td>
<td>Additional Target Areas</td>
<td>Additional Actions</td>
<td>at Tier 2</td>
<td>at Tier 3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Students with previous Year FCAT Scores at Levels 1 and 2</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>LA.7.1.7.2 - Author's purpose</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>Low complexity, Reading Application</td>
<td>Reteach at instructional level with targeted intervention materials. Progress monitor with embedded probes according to program recommendations, minimum once monthly.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Re-teach targeted pre-requisite skills at instructional level, using explicit intensive program. Progress monitor weekly. Assess formatively daily to guide teaching.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## Multi-Tiered System of Supports (RtI)

### Summary of Tier 2

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>March 2012</th>
<th>TIER 1: RESPONSE TO GRADE LEVEL INSTRUCTION</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Fall Benchmark</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>% On Target</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Winter Benchmark</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>% On Target</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Fall SRI Lexile</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>% On Target</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Winter SRI Lexile</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>% On Target</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Fall FAIR Lexile</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>% On Target</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Winter FAIR Lexile</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>% On Target</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>8%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Tier 2: Rationale for Retention

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>READ 180 Rdg Comp 11/11</th>
<th>38%</th>
<th>43%</th>
<th>51%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>READ 180 Rdg Comp 12/11</td>
<td>46%</td>
<td>22%</td>
<td>39%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>READ 180 Rdg Comp 1/12</td>
<td>44%</td>
<td>26%</td>
<td>37%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>READ 180 Rdg Comp 2/12</td>
<td>42%</td>
<td>36%</td>
<td>44%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Next Steps

High School:

- Continue to develop the reading programs in the 4 high schools
- Incorporate progress monitor of Tier 2 program and eventually the core
- Build capacity of instructors to address the expectations of the Common Core
- Continue to develop the capacity of the administrative and instructional support teams
- Begin to unwrap the standards
Next Steps

Middle School :

- Build capacity of instructors to address the expectations of the Common Core
- Continue to develop the capacity of the administrative and instructional support teams
- Develop reading programs in middle school for Tier 2 support
- Continue to unwrap the standards
In general, teachers need high-level, long-term support from instructional leaders to make major changes in their behaviors, habits, and knowledge. Hirsh and Killion (2007) recommend that this support should come in several forms:

- Building the capacity of individuals and teams to be leaders and learners
- Improving teachers’ knowledge of pedagogy and student learning
- Promoting collaboration among educators to build shared responsibility for student achievement (http://www.learningforward.org)

Ideally, districts will hire new faculty to infuse needed skills, but principals can improve the effectiveness of the current faculty by providing time and resources for ongoing professional development. Principals can use teacher effectiveness data to plan appropriate professional development and make teacher assignments that maximize student learning (Carey, 2004; Carnegie Council on Advancing Adolescent Literacy, 2010; Hamilton et al., 2009)
Questions??