Virginia Support for School Improvement

Training for Instructional Leaders

Building School Success, One Student at a Time™

Session Four: Personalized Instruction

Effective Teaming
Collegial Learning
Instructional Planning
Classroom Culture
Instructional Delivery

Center on Innovation & Improvement

Information Tools Training

Positive results for students will come from changes in the knowledge, skill, and behavior of their teachers and parents. State policies and programs must provide the opportunity, support, incentive, and expectation for adults close to the lives of children to make wise decisions.

The Center on Innovation & Improvement helps regional comprehensive centers in their work with states to provide districts, schools, and families with the opportunity, information, and skills to make wise decisions on behalf of students.

The Center on Innovation & Improvement is administered by the Academic Development Institute (Lincoln, IL) in partnership with the Temple University Institute for Schools and Society (Philadelphia, PA) and Little Planet Learning (Nashville, TN).

A national content center supported by the
U. S. Department of Education's Office of Elementary and Secondary Education.
Award #S283B050057

The opinions expressed herein do not necessarily reflect the position of the supporting agencies, and no official endorsement should be inferred.

Design: Pam Sheley

Contents

The Mega System: Deciding. Learning. Connecting.

A Handbook for Continuous Improvement Within a Community of the School

Suggested Readings

Session 4

Review of Session Three

In session three, we covered Motivation and Metacognition, Instructional Delivery through Teacher-Directed Instruction, and Collegial Coaching to Hone Instructional Skills. Session three was our first session on instructional delivery, where the teacher applies in the classroom the Instructional Team's planned units of instruction.. Let's look at the Next Steps questions from the last session as a way to review what we covered and to report on each school's application of what was learned.

Next Steps

What do we do now? How can it be improved? What is our first step?

Motivation and Metacognition

1. How do teachers intentionally use strategies that enhance student motivation to learn?
2. How do teachers intentionally use strategies that build students' metacognitive skills?
3. How do teachers influence students' constructive attribution for their success and for their failures?

Teacher-Directed Instruction

1. How do teachers plan for their direct teaching, in both whole-class and small-group formats?
2. Do all teachers use a structure like the Guidelines for Teacher-Directed Instructions to plan their direct instruction?
3. How could the Guidelines be incorporated into professional development?
4. How would the Guidelines be useful in Instructional Team planning and sharing?

Collegial Coaching to Hone Instructional Skills

1. Review the Collegial Coaching Observation and Discussion Instrument. Could this be an effective tool to encourage self-assessment and shared-discussion of teaching and learning by teachers in your school?
2. How would you adapt the Instrument?
3. Review the Classroom Instruction Indicators. How would you incorporate the Indicators into your Collegial Coaching Observation and Discussion Instrument?
4. How would you incorporate the Guidelines for Teacher-Directed Instruction into your Collegial Coaching?

Why Personalize Instruction?

From the Student's Point of View

Jeremy's Story

My name is Jeremy. I'm in 4th grade. I had a good day at school today. Today is Monday. My teacher, Mrs. Brown, taught us about idioms today. She is so funny. When we start Language Arts, she always reminds us that smiling on the outside makes us feel good on the inside. We sit up tall, with our feet on the floor. Silent hands. Mrs. Brown likes that.

Mrs. Brown handed back our Student Learning Plans from last week. I can't wait to take mine home and show it to Mom. Mom always asks me what all the activities are about.

Today Mrs. Brown told us to pretend that we had just arrived in our town from Mars. We had little computers with us that listened to what people said in English and then translated it into Martian. When someone used words in a way that didn't fit the computer program's meaning, the computer beeped. Mrs. Brown asked us to raise our hands when we heard our computers beep.

She said, "I get a kick out of teaching you."

We all grinned. Then Mrs. Brown asked if our computers had beeped. We didn't get it at first. Then she asked if she *REALLY* got kicked from teaching us. We laughed. We said, "No, we wouldn't kick you."

Mrs. Brown asked, "Do you think a Martian would be surprised to hear a teacher say, 'I get a kick out of teaching'? That's what an idiom is," she said. "An idiom is a word or group of words that mean something different from what the dictionary might say."

"This is as easy as pie," Mrs. Brown said. Tanya raised her hand.

"What is it, Tanya?" Mrs. Brown asked.

"Well," Tanya said, "is pie easy? Would a Martian know what 'easy as pie' means?"

"Probably not, Tanya," Mrs. Brown said. "We know because we have heard it before. But if you looked up each word in the dictionary, you probably wouldn't get it. Especially if you were a Martian."

Mrs. Brown wrote a funny rhyme on the board. It was about synonyms, antonyms, and idioms. The words kind of sound alike. She had us all read the little poem out loud. Then we closed our eyes and said it from heart. Mrs. Brown likes us to know things from heart, like the quotes she gives us from famous people. "Hitch your wagon to a star!," she says. Or, I mean, Ralph Waldo Emerson said. What a crazy name, "Waldo."

Before we began Work Time, Mrs. Brown gave us our new Student Learning Plans. I always look at mine and try to guess what I'll be doing in my activities. Mrs. Brown knows just what I need to be working on.

Today, I started Work Time at the Teacher Group. I liked that. Travis and Holly were at the Teacher Group with me. Mrs. Brown went over synonyms and antonyms, which we had learned about last week. I keep getting them mixed up. Which one is which? It's crazy, but Travis and Holly said they had the same problem. So Mrs. Brown said, "A synonym is a word that means the same as another word. Remember that 'same' and 'synonym' both start with an 's.'" After that, all three of us remembered.

When we finished with the Teacher Group, I checked my Student Learning Plan. I had an independent assignment. That's when we work alone at our desks. I also had an assignment at the Exploratory Center. That's where you get to pick what you want to do from a bunch of different activities. I like Exploratory Center. So I decided to do my independent work first, saving the best for last.

My independent assignment was to read a story in our book and find at least three idioms. Then I was supposed to write the idioms on a piece of paper and tell what they mean. I got messed up. I didn't know if an idiom had to have a synonym in it. So I put up my teacher call and opened my Student Folder. My Student

Folder had new Wait Time Activities in it. Just about the time I started on my Wait Time Activities, here came Mrs. Brown to answer my question.

It didn't take long to finish my independent work, so I decided to go to the Exploratory Center. But two kids were already there, and that was the limit today. I checked over my independent work and did some more from my Wait Time Activities. Then I saw Derek check out of the Exploratory Center, so I checked in. Maria was already at the Exploratory Center. She was looking up idioms on the internet and writing them down. She giggled when she read them, but it didn't bother me. Maria has a goofy little giggle.

One of our choices at the Exploratory Center was to listen to a tape with earphones. I decided to do that. The voice on the tape sounded like an old man, but it was really Mrs. Brown. She is good at imitating people. My activity was to listen to the story that the old man told about when he was a little boy. When I heard an idiom, I was supposed to stop the tape and write it down. It was a short story. I heard two idioms. Then my assignment was to write a sentence using each idiom. That wasn't too hard.

When I was done with the Exploratory Center, I scheduled myself back for independent work and started another Wait Time Activity. Mrs. Brown came around and checked my independent work. Then Mrs. Brown said it was time for lunch.

Before we went to lunch, Mrs. Brown asked what our favorite idiom was. Maria raised her hand. She said her favorite idiom was "get real!" She giggled when she said it.

I've got homework tonight. Mrs. Brown gives us homework almost every night. I don't mind. Mrs. Brown says that homework is habit forming. I think I've got the habit. I want to get my homework done before my favorite TV show is on. Mom will check to make sure that I do. She'll probably also ask me to read from my Harry Potter book and tell her about it. When I was a little kid, I didn't like to read much. But last summer, a lady from school came to our house and gave me a book to read. She talked to my Mom, and after that Mom saw to it that I read every day. Now I like to. Next week, our school is having a Family Reading Night. Even my little sister gets to go. That doesn't seem fair. She doesn't even go to school yet. But I think it will be fun.

Think and Share

How did Mrs. Brown plan and deliver instruction in a way that "personalized" it for Jeremy? How did she contribute to Jeremy's motivation to learn? His metacognitive skills? His focused attention to standards-based objectives?

Melissa's Story

Two years down and two to go. I'm a junior. My Mom says it is time for me to grow up. My grades stunk the first two years of high school. I didn't flunk classes or anything, but I just glided by, getting C's, a couple D's, a couple B's. When you are the younger sister of the great Heather, getting C's is a huge disappointment to your parents. Which is why my Mom says it's time for me to grow up.

I'm not making Mom any promises. Not yet. I know how many times I have "turned over a new leaf," as my aunt calls it. A fresh start. I always plan to do better in the next term, to get my grades up, and I really mean it. But then at some point I just start drifting. The teachers' lectures seem kind of interesting in the first week of the term, but after a while I find myself spacing out. Then I am doodling in my notebook. Then I am thinking about the weekend, and it is only Tuesday! Before you know it, my new leaf has flipped back over. It's still the same old leaf.

Like I said, I want to do better. I really do. I don't think anyone believes me when I say that, but I do. So what are chances that this year will be different? We are only in the third week of the school year, but I feel like something is different. No promises, yet. But two of my teachers are not like any teachers I have ever had before. Let me explain.

First of all, math is not my favorite subject. Here I am a junior, and I am taking geometry. I know, I know. Heather was doing algebra problems in eighth grade and took geometry her sophomore year. Well, I'm not Heather. And Heather didn't get stuck in general math her freshman year. Heather also didn't get D's in algebra. What can I say?

Mr. Barton is my geometry teacher. Instead of talking for an hour, droning on and scribbling on the board, Mr. Barton usually talks for about the first half of class. He is interesting and asks questions and keeps us on our toes. I stay with him and don't space out. At least not much. Then Mr. Barton starts work time. My Mom doesn't understand work time. I told her that during work time, we each work on our own Student Learning Plan. She has seen my Student Learning Plan, so she understands it. She thinks it's a good idea that Mr. Barton gives me things to do that are especially for me. I mean, he doesn't give every kid the same assignment like most teachers.

Mr. Barton also helps us in small groups during work time. Sometimes the small group is just what I need to really understand what he has been talking about. I like our cooperative station, too. That's when a small group of us work through a problem together. Mr. Barton makes it so that some whiz kid doesn't jump ahead and solve everything. We do the problem in steps, and we each have a part in finding the solution.

Most of all, I like deciding when I will do my independent work, when I will go to the activity station, and when I will go to the exploratory station. Deciding which work you do first may not sound like much, but it beats just doing exactly what everyone else does at the same time they are doing it. I like having my own learning plan. I like not being compared to other kids. I like variety.

Mrs. Martinez is my English teacher. English is my best subject. So I would probably get pretty good grades no matter what the teacher did. I like to read, and I like to write. I'm in college-prep English. Here's what bugged me about English last year' some kids hated to read, so the teacher slowed us all down to wait for

them to finish their reading assignments. It was boring. Mrs. Martinez uses Student Learning Plans, just like Mr. Barton. She seems to know that I like to read, and I like to write. She gives me harder things to read than some other kids. I am already writing a short story imitating the style of Eudora Welty, and I love it. I discovered Eudora Welty at the exploratory station, and Mrs. Martinez started giving me assignments where I could learn more about Welty.

Mr. Barton and Mrs. Martinez both give homework. Just like clockwork. Every night. Not tons and tons of it, but something every night. I never thought I'd say this, but the homework helps. I want to do well in their classes, and the homework helps me be prepared for each day. I can't believe I just said that I like homework. Maybe I'm becoming more like Heather. Yuck.

I shouldn't be so hard on Heather. She is a good sister. Heather is a senior this year. Heather is a math genius. This year Mr. Barton is her trig teacher. She says she can't get easy A's with Mr. Barton. Her Student Learning Plan really challenges her. I don't think she is complaining. And I know she isn't bored.

If I go to college . . . my Mom says there is no "if" about it . . . then I need to do well on my state tests this year. Mr. Barton and Mrs. Martinez explained to us that tests are based on standards and so are the assignments they give us. So when we complete our Student Learning Plans, we are learning the stuff that is on the tests. The unit tests are a way for the teachers and us to know if we really understand what we are supposed to. It all fits together. Kind of cool, isn't it?

Like I said, I'm not making any promises. Maybe I'll slip back into my usual pattern, spacing out and just getting by. But I don't think so. Something is different with Mr. Barton and Mrs. Martinez.

Think and Share

What did Melissa notice about two of her teachers that was different from others? Is Melissa's story convincing? Do high school students really respond positively to personalized instruction?

Instructional Modes for Personalization

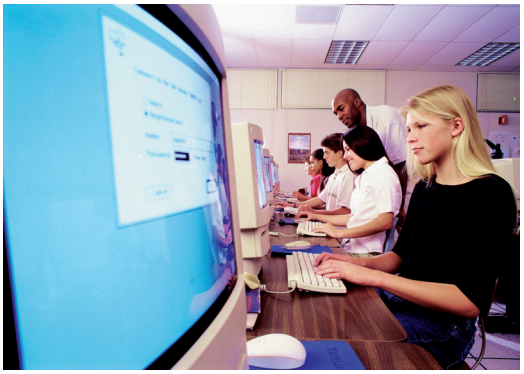
Student-Directed Groups, Independent Work, Computer-Based Instruction, and Homework

Student-Directed Instruction

Student-directed instruction serves several purposes: Students develop personal responsibility for their learning; they hone their learning skills and metacognitive skills; they learn from other students in group settings and in peer teaching arrangements; and the teacher is able to target different learning activities to meet the needs of specific students while also being free to assist some students directly. The most common form of student-directed instruction is independent work, when students complete their assignments individually. This does not mean that they are all completing the same assignment. Once again, the teacher is able, through a Student Learning Plan, to differentiate instruction by giving students assignments consistent with their demonstrated prior learning. With peer teaching, or peer learning, the teacher pairs students to help each other. The act of teaching and assisting another student strengthens the learning of the peer teacher. Instructional time is increased and made specific to the student in this arrangement, as opposed to a teacher instructing all students at the same time. The third type of student-directed instruction is found in small groups of students who complete assignments provided by the teacher for the group. This format provides the opportunity for cooperative learning techniques.

Computer-Based and Technology-Assisted Instruction

More and more, technology is used to individualize instruction, provide a well-organized presentation of material, offer feedback, and allow students to progress at their own rate. Computer-based instruction is successful when the program is carefully aligned with the same standards and objectives that the teacher is addressing within the designated unit of instruction. This requires the teacher to know the content of the computer program and to use it in concert with other modes of instruction. It also requires that the teacher check for mastery of objectives independent of the program's validation of mastery. When a computer program is successful, students are engaged, on task, and comfortable with the program and its navigation. The teacher travels about the room to assist students and monitor their work. When a student is in need of assistance from the teacher, the teacher provides curriculum-related activities to avoid "down time." In terms of classroom management, the students are taught to make orderly transitions to and from their computer stations.



With technology-assisted instruction, the teacher uses computers and other technology tools as a seamless part of the learning activity. Students use word processing programs to write and edit their written work. They develop projects with presentation software. They use the internet as a source of information. All this requires clear direction to gather, organize, and present information. To make technology-assisted instruction fruitful, teachers must be trained in the use of the software and must be supported in integrating the technology into the routine of instruction. Technology can also be a great asset to teachers in their record keeping.

Homework and Communication with Parents

Research has long established the strong influence of a student's home environment on that student's success in school. Less clear has been what schools can do to engage parents in their children's learning. We now have significant, new research that shows that schools can improve their students' learning by engaging parents in ways that directly relate to their children's academic progress, maintaining a consistent message of what is expected of parents, and reaching parents directly, personally, and with a trusting approach (Epstein, 1995; Henderson & Mapp, 2002;

Patrikakou, Weissberg, & Rubenstein, 1999; Redding, 2000). Homework is a primary point of interface between the school and the home, and parents are best able to support the school's purposes for homework when they understand what is expected of students and their role in monitoring their children's homework. Consistency from teacher to teacher and across grade levels and subjects contributes to teachers', parents', and students' understanding of the school's purposes for homework and also reinforces students' formation of independent study habits.

Guidelines for Homework

Homework is most effective when it is used in ways proven to contribute most to student learning and student acquisition of independent study habits. Guidelines for effective homework are:

- Homework must be monitored and followed up.
- Teacher comments on homework are vital; graded homework that counts is most effective. Prompt return of homework by teacher is essential.
- Practice and preparation assignments are primarily the responsibility of the students to complete themselves.
- It is unrealistic to expect parents to play significant instructional roles with homework, especially at the upper grades (Grolnick et al., 1997).

- In the elementary grades, brief forms of parental involvement are desirable (especially those assignments that call for students to show or explain their work to parents and get their reactions).
- Assigning homework for punishment is inappropriate.

Keeping Parents Informed

The most important information a parent can receive is how their child is progressing relative to learning standards, which means relative to the objectives-based standards included in the unit plan. By keeping track of each student's mastery of specific objectives, the teacher knows how to target instruction to specific students and notices objectives that several students may be having difficulty with. Keeping a Class Progress Chart (see below) is a good way for the teacher to maintain essential, formative, in-class assessment. The Class Progress Chart also provide the exact information that is most useful to parents. The Student Progress Report (see below) is merely one student's line from a Class Progress Chart, easily prepared by the teacher to include with a report card or in some other way convey the information to parents. This attention to mastery of standards, apart from other ways of reporting student progress—such as grades—helps educate parents to the meaning of learning standards, standards-based assessment tests, and their role in supporting their child's progress.

Class Progress Chart

Teacher: _____

Grade Level: _____ Unit of Instruction Code: _____

Subject: _____

Unit of Instruction: _____

Reporting Period: _____ Pre-Test Date: _____ Post-Test Date: _____

TARGET OBJECTIVES (code and descriptor)																						
Student's Name																						

Pre-Test Mastered Mastered in Activity Post-Test Mastered Pre- and Post-Test Mastered

Student Learning Report

Teacher: _____

Grade Level: _____ Unit of Instruction Code: _____

Subject: _____

Unit of Instruction: _____

Reporting Period: _____ Pre-Test Date: _____ Post-Test Date: _____

TARGET OBJECTIVES (code and descriptor)																							
Student's Name																							

 Pre-Test Mastered

 Mastered in Activity

 Post-Test Mastered

 Pre- and Post-Test Mastered

Teacher comments:

Personalizing Instruction

Next Steps

	What do we do now?	How can it be improved?	What is our first step?
What are the learning groups (i.e., Student-directed; Computer-based) one would expect to see in all classrooms at your school?			
How effective is computer-based and technology-assisted instruction in your classrooms?			
Are homework practices consistent across grade levels/subject areas in your school?			
How do teachers systematically communicate and report student progress to parents?			

Personalizing Instruction with Student Learning Plans

How Can a Teacher Personalize Instruction for Every Student?

Great question. First, let's consider why a teacher should personalize (adapt, individualize, target) instruction for every student. The obvious reason is that no two students are alike. Whole-class instruction is an essential teaching mode for introducing new lessons, tying the new lesson to previous learning, forming necessary bonds of interaction between the teacher and students and among the students themselves, inspiring interest in topics, and modeling metacognitive skills. But whole-class instruction is not a good vehicle for bringing each student into a proper relationship with the content. Some students will master new material quickly and become bored if not allowed to move forward. Other students will take more time with new material, and need that time to master content that is a building block to what comes next. Grouping students also has its limits; each student will vary from subject to subject, topic to topic, task to task, in his or her readiness for learning. Even groups can become rigid and stifling. For all these reasons, the teacher must be nimble and attentive, constantly adapting instruction to each student's current level of mastery.

The pre-test, a quick assessment (written or oral) of each student's readiness for a new unit of instruction, provides the teacher with a beginning point to target instruction for each student. Questioning during whole-class and teacher-directed small-group instruction provides further feedback to the teacher. Each student's completion of assigned tasks during Work Time and on homework provides the teacher with information necessary for altering course and bringing content and activity in line with the student's prior mastery and readiness for new learning.

Because the Instructional Team has already leveled and differentiated learning activities for each objective in a the unit plan, the teacher begins with a reservoir of learning activities, aligned with standards-based objectives. The Instructional Team also prepares materials necessary for these activities, marks them with a code to align them with objectives, and stores them for easy access by all teachers.

Now the fun begins (or continues, since all of this is fun). The teacher knows his or her students, receives a flow of information about each student's progress (from pre-tests, questioning, and completed work), and is expert at personalizing instruction.

After the Unit Pre-Test

Reviewing the results of the Unit Pre-Test, the teacher knows how to adjust the whole-class instruction to emphasize areas where most students lack understanding and to give less weight to explanation of content that most students already grasp. Nothing is omitted, but the emphasis can be shifted in whole-class instruction based upon a review of the results of the Unit Pre-Test.

The Unit Pre-Test also provides a basis for individualizing Work Time activities, at least in the beginning of the unit. Students may also be grouped into flexible groups for both teacher-directed and student-directed group activities based on results of the Unit Pre-Test.

Planning Work Time Activities

Work Time is perfect for personalized instruction—each student or each flexible group of students can be working on different activities (leveled and differentiated) to best match their prior learning and readiness. How does the teacher differentiate assignments in an orderly way? The Student Learning Plan (see below) provides both a means for orderly differentiation of activity during Work Time and a means for building student self-responsibility for their learning. Activities assigned students on a Student Learning Plan come right off the Learning Plan Grid and Activity Instructions prepared by the Instructional Team.

All the careful preparation that goes into construction of units of instruction pays off most handsomely when the teacher individualizes instruction for each student with a Student Learning Plan. A master Student Learning Plan is prepared for the week (or, two weeks for high school and upper grades), with all possible instructional options included. The teacher then individualizes the master SLP for each student by selecting the specific learning activities appropriate to that student on that student's own SLP. The teacher levels the activities according to the student's demonstrated prior mastery (Unit Pre-Test and completed assignments) of the objectives. The teacher differentiates learning activities by assigning the right mix of independent work, various groups, centers (or work stations in high schools), and homework to match the student's motivational characteristics. The SLP provides the teacher a variety of learning activities for each target objective, and a means for individualizing instruction when appropriate.

The Teacher During Work Time

Work Time finds students carrying out the learning tasks assigned to them on their Student Learning Plan while the teacher interactively weaves through the classsroom, individual student desks, in-and-out of small group instruction and back through the business of independent learning. Monitoring the achievement of assigned tasks determines how each student works toward mastery of the aligned objective. It is opportunity to intervene as needed, check the completion of work, reinforce and extend "the student's learning through feedback and immediate instruction at the time when attention is needed and is most effective" (Wang, 1992). Attention to individual learning needs is at its peak when the teacher recognizes the success or difficulty each student displays in a prescribed task and modifies the Student Learning Plan "on the spot". Early curriculum planning has provided the teacher with variety and alternative options for learning. Monitoring those instructional tasks contributes to a teacher's formative assessment of each student, and keeps the learning targeted.

Using Groups During Work Time

The Student Group is a good time for cooperative learning strategies (see Appendix). The Teacher Group is an opportunity to directly teach leveled objectives to students with similar readiness. A row of computers or cluster of computers at tables may provide an area of the classroom for computer-based instruction. While students are working on their assigned activities in each of these areas, other students may be doing independent work at their desks. Students can move from area to area during a class session, engaging in a series of activities targeted to their need. So how does each student know what to do, which activities the teacher has planned just for him or her? Student Learning Plans are a perfect organizational tool for personalizing instruction and encourging self-directed learning in students.

Student Learning Plans (SLPs)

The unit pre-test gives the teacher a basis for individualizing the first Student Learning Plan of the unit. Then the teacher adjusts the Student Learning Plan, and each subsequent Student Learning Plan, in response to the student's demonstrated mastery of objectives in the assigned learning activities. The class progress chart helps the teacher keep track of how everyone is progressing in meeting the objectives of the unit. Scanning the chart also helps the teacher know where to re-teach, alter whole-class instruction, or focus instruction at the Teacher Group. When a Student Learning Plan is completed, it is sent home for review by parents and then returned to the stu-

dent's file. At the end of a unit of instruction (or the end of a grading period), the Student Learning Report is sent home to parents to report the student's progress toward learning objectives.

It is a good idea for the teacher to keep a copy of each different SLP used for the week, with the names of the students who were given that SLP attached. These are called student monitoring SLPs, help the teacher keep track of who is doing what, and provide a backup in case an SLP is misplaced. When the teacher changes the student's SLP during the week, the change can be noted on the student monitoring SLP. Of course, the student's copy of the SLP is a record of activities completed as well as assigned, and when finally placed in the student's file provides perfect documentation of what the student has done.

See the template for a Student Learning Plan on the following page. SLPs for kindergarten and early grades can be created using symbols and colors instead of words to direct the students to centers and activities. Activity packets can be similarly coded and colored.

Student Learning Plan

Student's Name: _____ Teacher's Name: _____

Pre-Test Date: _____ Post Test Date: _____ Subject: _____

Standards/Benchmarks Codes: _____ Objective Codes: _____ Week(s) of: _____

Sequence	Independent Activities	Other Activities	Homework	Teacher Check
	Activity Number and Title	(Check)	Activity Number and Title	Initial/Date
1	__P __T __E __Other	CB___ SD___ TD___	__P __T __E __Other	
2	__P __T __E __Other	CB___ SD___ TD___	__P __T __E __Other	
3	__P __T __E __Other	CB___ SD___ TD___	__P __T __E __Other	
4	__P __T __E __Other	CB___ SD___ TD___	__P __T __E __Other	

Other Activities: CB = Computer Based, SD = Student-Directed Group, TD = Teacher-Directed Group

Teacher Check indicates that sequence was completed by the student and checked by the teacher.

Parent's Signature: _____ Date: _____

Parent's Comments:

Student Learning Plan Rubric

The purposes of the Student Learning Plan are:

1. Organizational tool for teacher's instruction
2. Means for individualizing instruction to address student's demonstrated prior knowledge (particularly on the unit pre-test) and motivational factors
3. Way to encourage student self-responsibility for learning
4. Documentation of each student's opportunity to learn
5. Communication with parents
6. Map for flow of classroom activity during work time.

All SLPs should include:

1. Student's name
2. Teacher's name
3. Subject
4. Dates of unit pre-test and post-test
5. A reference to the standards/benchmarks covered.
6. A reference to the objectives covered.
7. Week of (or other indication of time SLP covers)
8. Sequence for student to complete activities
9. Independent activity options (target, enhanced, prerequisite and teacher's choice)
10. Group activities -- Teacher Group and Student Group
11. Computer-based learning activities
12. Homework options
13. Teacher check/date
14. Teacher comments
15. Parent comments
16. Parent signature and dates
17. Explanation of codes and symbols where necessary

Typically, one Student Learning Plan is filled out by the teacher for the time period it will cover (usually a week or two weeks). The SLP includes all options available for instructional activities related to the selected objectives. The options are taken from the learning plan grids (with full descriptions provided on activity instructions). The teacher then selects the activities to be assigned most students and makes copies of this targeted SLP for these students. The teacher then prepares individualized SLPs for students requiring prerequisite or enhanced activities.

Student Learning Plans

Next Steps

	What do we do now?	How can it be improved?	What is our first step?
What are the different ways students are assessed in classrooms at your school? How is that information applied to learning?			
What does "personalizing instruction" at the individual level look like at your school?			
How does a teacher monitor and direct learning in your classrooms? How do students monitor and assume responsibility for their own learning?			
Consider a personal document where each student monitors their own aligned subject work (i.e., Student Learning Plan). Is this a feasible application for classrooms at your school?			

Summing It Up:

From Team Planning to Personalized Learning

Where Have We Been?

In four sessions, we have covered a lot of ground. We began by looking at 55 "success indicators" that are aligned with research on effective practices. In some ways, the list seemed overwhelming: Fifty-five little details about how we should be teaching! But as we dug deeper, we found that . . . well, it was even more complicated than we thought. Behind each indicator was a ton of work—planning, aligning, creating, differentiating, teaching. The indicators helped us get beyond mere words, however, beyond the jargon that is so familiar to us, and toward the precision work that defines our craft.

Differentiation is a word we toss around every day in education. To truly differentiate instruction so that it is targeted to the needs of each student requires a huge amount of preparation, more preparation than any single teacher can do alone. So we do it in teams. We develop unit plans, create activities, share strategies, and prepare a reservoir of leveled and differentiated learning activities aligned to standards. We prepare the materials required for the activities. We do this as an Instructional Team, and then we each, as individual teachers in the classroom, draw from that collective work to provide just the right learning path for each student.

The unit plan also helps us frame our whole-class instruction, and we use a handy planning template to outline our whole-class lessons—Behavior Check, Review, Think, Know, Show. Concise, spirited, engaged instruction to introduce material and arouse student interest in the topics. Then we go to Work Time, when we can teach groups of students, meet with individual students, personalize learning through Student Learning Plans.

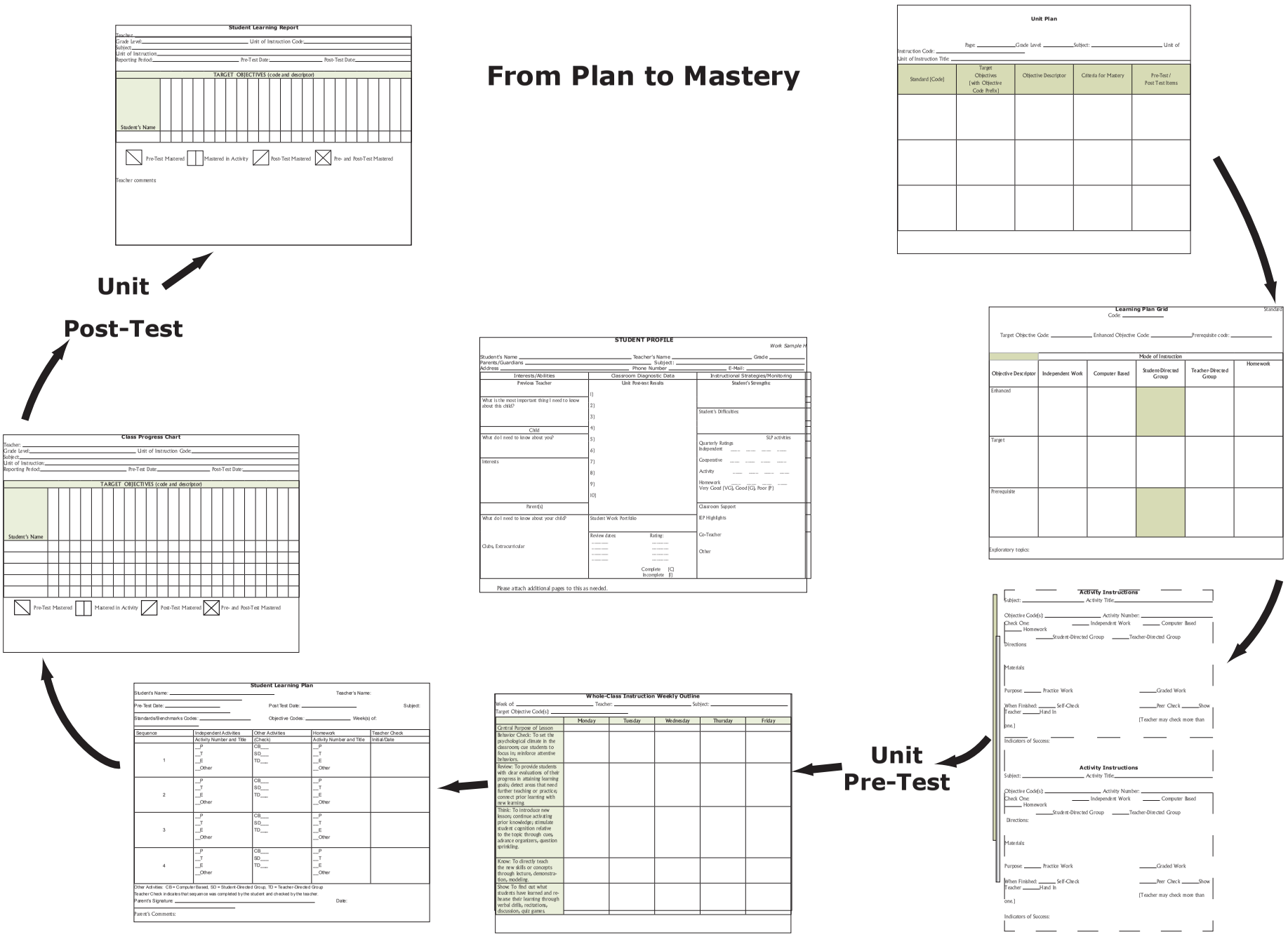
Communicating with parents about their children's progress in mastering standards-based objectives makes true allies of these parents, educating them to standards, and focusing their support on their children's learning. This is the relationship we want with parents, and they want with us.

This is the kind of work that inspired us to enter the teaching profession in the first place: Contributing our individual, professional skills and experiences to the Instructional Team's collaboration; thinking carefully about the learning needs of each student, motivating students to learn, assigning just the right lesson for each student, realizing the joy of a classroom filled with students engaged in the learning we have orchestrated for them.

Figure 1 on the following page illustrates these concepts through the practical tools we have discussed. This is how the process all comes together—from instructional plan to student mastery.

Now, let's take a quick look at all those indicators again (pgs. 35-37). Do they make more sense to us now? Do we understand both the work required to meet each of them and the way they relate to one another? Do we have some practical tools to put all these pieces together into a coherent system of instruction in our classrooms, in our school?

From Plan to Mastery



Instructional Leaders

Success Indicators

I. Instructional Teams	
Instructional Team Structure	
ID11	Teachers are organized into grade-level, grade-level cluster, or subject-area Instructional Teams.
ID13	Instructional Teams meet for blocks of time (4 to 6 hour blocks, once a month; whole days before and after the school year) sufficient to develop and refine units of instruction and review student learning data.
Professional Development	
IF04	Professional development for teachers includes self-assessment related to indicators of effective teaching and classroom.
IF05	Professional development for teachers includes self assessment related to indicators of effective teaching and classroom management.
Aligned Instruction	
IIA01	Instructional teams develop standards-aligned units of instruction for each grade level and subject.
IIA02	Units of instruction include standards-based objectives and criteria for mastery.
Classroom Assessment	
IIB01	Units of instruction include pre-/post-tests to assess student mastery of standards-based objectives.
IIB02	Unit pre-tests and post-tests are administered to all students in the grade level and subject covered by the unit of instruction.
IIB03	Unit pre-test and post-test results are reviewed by the Instructional Team.
IIB04	Teachers individualize instruction based on pre-test results to provide support for some students and enhanced learning opportunities for others.
IIB05	Teachers re-teach based on post-test results.
Differentiated Instruction	
IIC01	Units of instruction include specific learning activities aligned to objectives.
IIC03	Materials for standards-aligned learning activities are well-organized, labeled, and stored for convenient use by teachers.
Periodic Assessment	
IID08	Instructional Teams use student learning data to assess strengths and weaknesses of the curriculum and instructional strategies.
IID09	Instructional Teams use student learning data to plan instruction.
IID10	Instructional Teams use student learning data to identify students in need of support or enhancement.
IID11	Instructional Teams review the results of unit pre-/post-tests to make decisions about the curriculum and instructional plans and to “red flag” students in need of intervention (both students in need of tutoring or extra help and students needing enhanced

II. Preparation and Classroom Management	
Instructional Preparation	
IIIA01	All teachers are guided by a document that aligns standards, curriculum, instruction, and assessment.
IIIA02	All teachers develop weekly lesson plans based on aligned units of instruction.
IIIA05	All teachers maintain a record of each student's mastery of specific learning objectives.
IIIA06	All teachers test frequently using a variety of evaluation methods and maintain a record of the results.
IIIA07	All teachers differentiate assignments (individualize instruction) in response to individual student performance on pre-tests and other methods of assessment.
Classroom Management	
IIIC01	When waiting for assistance from the teacher, students are occupied with curriculum-related activities provided by the teacher.
IIIC04	Students raise hands or otherwise signal before speaking.
IIIC05	All teachers use a variety of instructional modes.
IIIC06	All teachers maintain well-organized student learning material in the classroom.
IIIC08	All teachers display classroom rules and procedures in the classroom.
IIIC09	All teachers correct students who do not follow classroom rules and procedures.
IIIC10	All teachers reinforce classroom rules and procedures by positively teaching them.

III. Teacher-Directed Whole-Class and Small-Group Instruction	
Instructional Delivery	
IIIA08	All teachers review the previous lesson.
IIIA09	All teachers clearly state the lesson's topic, theme, and objectives.
IIIA10	All teachers stimulate interest in the topics.
IIIA11	All teachers use modeling, demonstration, and graphics.
IIIA13	All teachers explain directly and thoroughly.
IIIA14	All teachers maintain eye contact.
IIIA15	All teachers speak with expression and use a variety of vocal tones.
IIIA16	All teachers use prompting/cueing.
IIIA17	All teachers re-teach when necessary.
IIIA18	All teachers review with drilling/class recitation.
IIIA19	All teachers review with questioning.
IIIA20	All teachers summarize key concepts.
Teacher-Student Interaction	
IIIA21	All teachers re-teach following questioning.
IIIA25	All teachers encourage students to paraphrase, summarize, and relate.
IIIA26	All teachers encourage students to check their own comprehension.
IIIA27	All teachers verbally praise students.

IV. Other Modes of Instruction	
Student-Directed Group or Individual (Independent) Work	
IIIA28	All teachers travel to all areas in which students are working.
IIIA31	All teachers interact instructionally with students (explaining, checking, giving feedback).
IIIA32	All teachers interact managerially with students (reinforcing rules, procedures).
IIIA33	All teachers interact socially with students (noticing and attending to an ill student, asking about the weekend, inquiring about the family).
Computer-Based Instruction	
IIIA35	Students are engaged and on task.
IIIA40	All teachers assess student mastery in ways other than those provided by the computer program.
Parent Communication and Homework	
IIIB01	All teachers maintain a file of communication with parents.
IIIB02	All teachers regularly assign homework (4 or more days a week).
IIIB03	All teachers check, mark, and return homework.
IIIB06	All teachers systematically report to parents the student's mastery of specific standards-based objectives.

Post-Training

Next Steps

	Indicators	What do we do now?	How can it be improved?	What is our first step?
Describe your plan for systemically applying **Effective Teaming** Indicators at your school.	IDII, ID13; IIA01; IIB03; IID08-09			
Describe your plan for systemically applying **Instructional Planning** Indicators at your school.	IIA02; IIB01-02; IIC01, IIC03; IIIA01-02, IIIA05-07			
Describe your plan for systemically applying **Instructional Delivery** Indicators at your school.	IIB04-05; IIIA08-11; IIIA13-20; IIIA21, IIIA25-27; IIIA35, IIIA40; IIIB01-03, IIIB06			
Describe your plan for systemically applying **Classroom Culture** Indicators at your school.	IIIA28, IIIA31-33; IIIC01, IIIC04-06, IIIC08-10			
Describe your plan for systemically applying **Collegial Learning** Indicators at your school.	IF04-05; IIB03; IID10-11			

Appendix:
Cooperative Learning

Cooperative Learning

Q & A on Cooperative Learning

A. What is a good working definition of cooperative learning?

Academically: Each individual is accountable for both his or her own achievement of the set goals and for the success of the entire group.

Socially: Along with accountability for academic achievement, every student is responsible for actively supporting and contributing to the positive social interaction within the group.

B. What are the benefits of cooperative learning?

1. More meaningful, life-like experiences that better prepare students for the work force.
2. High academic achievement! Research shows that working together to achieve a common goal produces higher achievement and greater productivity than does working alone.
3. Development of leadership skills.
4. Enhanced self-worth and sense of belonging.
5. Better retention of learning concepts and ideas through discussing, grappling with, and sorting the ideas and opinions within the collaborative setting. The more interaction with the ideas, the more memorable and meaningful the ideas become to the individual's life learning.
6. Development of respect for others.

C. What is the teacher's role in cooperative learning?

Before students begin:

1. The teacher outlines clear objectives for each task or lesson.
2. The teacher places students in groups appropriate for optimum working conditions and goal achievement.
3. The teacher clearly explains each task and its goals.
4. The teacher asks students to demonstrate their understanding of the expectations by repeating instructions.

While the students work:

1. The teacher's role is that of active observer and chief encourager and praiser of any social and academic success.
2. The teacher moves about the classroom, functioning as the "trouble shooter" and "resolver of conflicts." However, in the cooperative learning setting, the goal is to facilitate group members' interactions so they may solve their own problems if possible.
3. The teacher evaluates student achievement and helps students evaluate their own progress daily.

D. How does a teacher prepare for cooperative learning?

1. Know your students!

2. Move slowly and deliberately into the Cooperative Learning Process. Introduce the process in small doses, clearly defining and reinforcing roles, emphasizing responsibility and evaluation.
3. Plan the cooperative learning activity very carefully. Be sure that instructions are crystal clear. Be sure the activity is organized so that students MUST cooperate in order to complete the task successfully.
4. Remind yourself that no teaching method is ever 100% successful 100% of the time. Prepare not to become discouraged, but rejoice in every small step toward success.

E. What are some things to consider when grouping students for cooperative learning?

1. The research suggests a group size of 2 to 5 students, depending upon the complexity of the task presented. It is wise to work with small groups when students are first practicing the collaborative process.
2. The nature of the task itself will often determine group size, but in general, the larger the group, the more skillful group members must be in positive interaction, fulfilling individual role assignments, and keeping on task toward goal achievement.
3. The shorter the time available for a task, the smaller the group should be.
4. Generally, the research recommends heterogeneous groupings of high-medium-low ability students, though there may be exceptions for certain kinds of tasks.
5. Teacher-designed groups create optimum conditions for long or complex tasks. Random groupings by means of such methods as "counting-off" may provide a good mix of students for short-term or easier projects.

F. In what ways can teachers prepare students to move into cooperative learning?

1. Human beings tend to achieve success most easily and happily if they know exactly what is expected of them. As you develop the cooperative learning process with your students, outline each specific expectation clearly and ask your students to repeat it back to you.
2. Explain the cooperative learning "big idea" to your students. Explain why this new method of learning has been chosen and how it will affect their success in jobs, friendships, future relationships, etc. Students must see the need for each skill.
3. Enumerate for students some of the specific differences. The rules students have experienced to date include: Keep your eyes on your own paper. Do not share homework. You are responsible for your own work, your own behavior, your own grade, etc. Now the concept changes somewhat, and you are asking each student to be responsible for not only the student's own learning, but for the learning of every member of his group. Give specific examples of how things will be different in a collaborative effort.
4. Begin small – probably in pairs.
5. After careful orientation, demonstrate the practical, operational procedure of a collaborative process by walking the class with their assigned groups and group roles through a short-term activity. A good skeleton plan is:
    - Direct-teach ONE SINGLE process or concept.
    - Divide students into cooperative groups to complete a short assignment.
    - Grade only ONE paper from each group.

- Then test students individually to see if ALL members of the group have truly succeeded in grasping the process or concept.
- Make all results known to the whole class. Discuss and review the entire process so students can see how it works.

G. What kinds of roles should be assigned to students in groups?

1. Supplier: Gets materials and supplies for the group.
2. Reporter: Reports to the class for the group.
3. Recorder: Writes down what the group does, completes the written part of the task or activity, and records the group's response during reflection time.
4. Encourager: Gives group members praise for the participation and collaboration on the group task or activity.
5. Reader: Reads directions, problems, and resource materials to all group members.
6. Checker: Checks for group members' comprehension of material to be learned or discussed.
7. Timekeeper: Keeps the group on task and gives time prompts so the group will complete their task on time.
8. Artist: Produces all the artwork.

H. What are some specific classroom management techniques that can be employed to make cooperative learning easier and more attractive for both students and teachers?

1. Ensure:
   - that students understand expectations.
   - that students practice situations in which they function in assigned roles and use needed skills.
   - that ample time is given for task completion, evaluation, and FEEDBACK.
   - that students continue to use collaborative skills until they become naturals.
2. Insist:
   - that students remain in their groups. Allow no wandering – no physical separation of the group – while task is in progress.
   - that students function in their assigned roles.
   - upon equal participation.
3. Set up a system in which positive reinforcement among group members becomes the norm.
4. Reward good listening skills.
5. Reward completion of tasks.
6. Place special emphasis on group- and self-evaluation at the completion of each task.
7. Handle discipline problems in exactly the same manner which you have found most successful in any other setting.

I. How can teachers help uncooperative students learn to work effectively in cooperative groups?

1. Verbally reinforce with the whole group the concept of interdependence and praise positive effort and behavior.
2. Assign the uncooperative student a role that is essential to the success of the group.
3. Force the group to work more closely by providing only one paper or pencil or set of materials, thus allowing less freedom to separate or wander.
4. After the completion of each task or activity, review and discuss with the uncooperative student both his self- and group-evaluations. This provides opportunity to encourage his or her positive participation, encourage his or her self-esteem and discuss his or her value to the group.
5. Occasionally it may be necessary to isolate a student temporarily or place him or her in an alternate group.

J. How does cooperative learning differ from traditional project grouping?

Forming cooperative learning groups is not unlike traditional classroom grouping in that the goal is to facilitate efficient and effective learning. There are some differences. Cooperative group members have specific roles to perform (recorder, reporter, etc.) and leadership does not just evolve naturally as it does in traditional group settings where the same people often assume the same roles. In the cooperative learning classroom, everybody's cooperation is necessary to successfully complete the task at hand, and a system of positive reinforcement constantly rewards group efforts to achieve social as well as academic goals. Assessment or evaluation is both individual and corporate.

Cooperative Strategies

(Simple to More Complex)

A. Turn to Your Neighbor (say, write, draw)

- the branches of the government
- types of sentences
- conjugate a verb

B. Think-Pair-Share

Partners privately think about a question (issue, situation, idea, etc.) and then discuss their responses with each other. Think-Pair-Share can be incorporated into almost any form of instruction. It is particularly useful for actively involving all students during a lesson. (A writing element can be inserted between think and pair at the teacher's discretion.)

C. Learning Buddies

A base group of three to four students meet frequently to:

1. clarify and process information
2. ask questions
3. translate information to practical situations.

D. Jigsaw Puzzle

Each student in a group has several parts of the whole. Each student brings his or her part of assignment to make up the whole assignment.

E. Roundtable

Each student does one problem, sentence, or question then passes the worksheet to the next person in the group. Variations include having each student in the group use a different colored writing tool when it is his or her turn. This visually reinforces that all partners are contributing equally.

F. Pairs and Learning Activities

Each partner works through the same set of problems or questions and then compares answers. Where they differ, they discuss why and attempt to find one solution. Or, partners can compare answers with other groups and discuss which answers are correct, which are incorrect, and why. This work is followed by a quiz to check individual students so the emphasis is on learning rather than just having the right answer.

G. Round Robin

Each teammate verbally contributes an idea to the group in a systematic fashion. (This is an oral form of roundtable.)

H. Four-Step Interview

Students teach and learn from each other. Students are in groups of four. In pairs, one student interviews the other. The interviewers tell the group what they just learned and then the pairs re-form. The interviewer becomes the interviewee and the process repeats.

I. Gallery Tour

Students work in teams to brainstorm and share answers to a particular question. The groups post their list in different parts of the room. The groups then view and react or add to the other groups' list.

J. Literature Circle

Students are involved in an on-going small group reading activity. Groups read and react to various pieces of literature. The unique feature of this activity is that each member of the group is assigned and responsible for a particular function. These functions include discussion director, recorder, reporter, timekeeper, etc.

K. Wagon Wheel

Students are involved in large group activity. The class forms two equal concentric circles. The inside circle faces the outside circle. The group is given a topic for discussion. Each member of the group discusses the topic with a person across from him or her for a particular period of time. At the signal, the outside group moves on to the person to the right and the discussion resumes.

L. Fishbowl

Students are involved in a large group activity. Students form a small inner circle surrounded by a larger outer circle. The inner circle discusses an assigned topic while the outer circle observes. When the discussion is complete the outer circle reacts to the discussion they observed.

Grouping

Grouping is the use of flexible organizational patterns to achieve specific goals in the classroom; teaching students as a class, in heterogeneous and homogenous groups, in pairs, and individually.

Types of Groups	Reasons to Use	Sample Activities
Heterogeneous	To improve social skills and to promote tolerance	To combine leaders/experts with followers/novices; to prevent low-ability students from always being relegated to "low" groups
Cooperative Learning	Group discussion that draws on different background knowledge	Group activity that calls for a variety of roles and interests such as putting on a play; tutoring
Homogeneous	To do "specialized" work; to use students' similar ability levels, work habits, prior knowledge, or interests	To give students a chance to work with friends
Exploring a topic of interest	Skills instruction in a common area of need;	Getting enrichment or extra help in a particular area of study

Specific Groups	Hetero/Homogeneous	Sample Activities
Whole Class	Heterogeneous	Read a story; sing; choral reading; direct instruction; introduction to a new subject; class presentations; solve a classroom problem; class discussion
Large Group (5-8 students)	Either	Divide up tasks on a research project; undertake a survey; prepare a panel discussion; design and practice performances; create murals
Small Group (3-4 students)	Often homogeneous	Practice a skill; discuss literature; tape record a story; work in class activity center; create a poster; design and practice a "small" performance
Pairs	Either	Retell a story; tutor; exchange letters; conduct reciprocal interviews; combine skills to produce a product
Individual	Homogeneous	Read silently; complete a personal response; write in a journal; teacher conference; paint a picture

References

Wang, M. C. (1992). *Adaptive education strategies: Building on diversity.* Baltimore: Brookes Publishing Co.

Epstein, J. L. (1995). School/family/community partnerships: Caring for the children we share. *Phi Delta Kappan, 76(9),* 701-712.

Grolnick, W. S., Kurowski, C. O., & Apostoleris, N. H. (1997). Predictors of parent involvement in children's schooling. *Journal of Educational Psychology, 89(3),* 538-548.

Henderson, A., & Mapp. K. (2002). *A new wave of evidence: The impact of school, family, and community connections on student achievement.* Austin, TX: Southwest Educational Development Laboratory.

Patrikakou, E. N., Weissberg, R. P., & Rubenstein, M. (1999). School–family partnerships. In A. J. Reynolds, H. J. Walberg, & R. P. Weissberg (Eds.), *Promoting positive outcomes* (pp. 95-127). Washington, DC: Child Welfare League of America.

Redding, S. (2000). *Parents and learning.* Geneva: UNESCO Publications.

For resources on School Improvement and other topics see:

www.centerii.org

ARCC
Appalachia Regional
Comprehensive Center
at EDVANTIA

CENTER ON
INNOVATION & IMPROVEMENT
Twin paths to better schools