Online Learning Needs Assessment

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William B. Cruise Veteran’s Memorial School No. 11 is was originally named Memorial School, which was dedicated on May 15, 1924, in honor and memory of the 95 citizens of Passaic who made the supreme sacrifice for our country during World War I. This school has 125 teaching staff members and approximately 1200 students in grades K through eight.

Status

According to Elmore (2009), “what predicts performance is what students are actually doing. The instructional task is the actual work that students are asked to do during the process of instruction-not what teachers think they are asking students to do or what the official curriculum says that that student are asked to do” (p.2)

Four years ago, School #11 was the worst school in the district due to various factors including, low test scores, suspension rates, discipline issues, ineffective teaching, etc. Today, while there is still much improvement needed, school #11 is no longer the lowest performing school in the district. In fact, this school is not even ranked in the bottom three.

The current strengths of the school is that it is showing student growth at a faster rate when compared to other schools in the district. More students are “approaching or meeting expectations” on state assessments than ever before. The challenges that the school faces this year is that 35% of the teaching staff will be new teachers, new to education. Although, this is a good thing because new teachers often bring a lot of energy and positivity to a school, it is also a challenge because they need a lot of support and training on all of the school and district initiatives that they are not familiar with or were not exposed to during college.

Desired Outcome

In order to achieve success in student performance, the focus training for teachers for this year will be learning targets. According to Moss and Brookhart (2012), “the most effective teaching and the most meaningful student learning happens when teachers design the right learning target for today’s lesson and use it along with their students to aim for and assess understanding” (p. 2). Learning targets are written in student friendly format and are used to guide instruction, which are shared throughout the lesson with the students.

This current school year all teaching staff will be required to participate in a “Learning Targets” Google classroom, which will focus on developing learning targets that will assist students in understanding what they are learning in their daily lessons. Students will not only gain and understanding of the lesson, but will also be able identify the success criteria during the lesson. The learning targets classroom will be guided by a book titled, “Learning Targets: Helping Students to Aim for Understanding in Today’s Lesson” along with other technological resources. The “Learning Targets” classroom will run from October to May and will focus on the following topics:

1. Designing Learning Targets
2. Targeting Student Learning
3. Targeting Student Collaboration
4. Targeting Effective Student Feedback
5. Differentiating Instruction
6. Targeting Higher Order Thinking
7. Summative Assessments

The desired outcome for the learning targets initiative is for all teachers to be able to develop well written, standards-based, student friendly, learning targets that align to what the teacher is saying and doing, what the students are saying and doing, and the task given. “Task predicts performance” (Elmore 2009, p.2).

Technology Requirements

All teaching staff participating in the “Learning Targets” Google classroom will need a laptop or tablet, internet accessibility, and a G Suite for Education Google account.

Training Requirements

All staff members participating in the “Learning Targets” classroom will participate in a tutorial via a YouTube video on how to use Google classroom either as a teacher creating a class or as student joining a class. Participants will also be provided with the google classroom support center link, which provides answers to the most frequently asked questions in regards to Google classroom. The links provided to teachers are as follows:

* https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=M6L-nZGIUTE
* https://support.google.com/edu/classroom/?hl=en#topic=6020277

Potential Issues & Solutions

Potential issues that may identifiable with the learning targets initiative is that teachers will not buy in to it and therefore will be hesitant or reluctant to implement it. Teachers may see learning targets as an additional thing they have to do or the newest fad that will eventually come and go. Solutions to this potential issue is collaboration amongst school administrators and teachers learning alongside each other for the overall improvement of teaching and learning. The approach will strive to obtain teacher buy-in so that they do not feel that they are in this initiative alone. The administration will also establish an Instructional Leadership Team (ILT) comprised of teachers, coaches, and administrators to conduct weekly focused walkthroughs to assure that student friendly learning targets are posted and are aligned to the actual task given to the student.

References

About Classroom - Classroom Help. (n.d.). Retrieved August 16, 2019, from https://support.google.com/edu/classroom/topic/7175444?hl=en&ref\_topic=6020277

Elmore, Richard. Instructional Rounds in Education: A Network Approach to Improving Teaching and Learning. Cambridge: Harvard Education Press, 2009.

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