Staff Development Newsletter

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Welcome Fall!

Every day and every month is important in the school year, but I am a firm believer that October is one of our best months for deep learning. Our students understand routines and procedures, there are few interruptions, and we are able to focus on the most important reasons we are all here, to help students succeed academically, emotionally, socially and physically. Welcome Fall, and may this season be fruitful for you as we pursue excellence.

Instructional Design Area

This month I selected the element of Providing and Communicating Clear Learning Goals to explore with all of you. Let’s begin with the questions that should drive our thinking regarding this area:

* How will I design scales or rubrics?
* How will I track progress?
* How will I celebrate success?

John Hattie(2012) states in his research that the single greatest indicator of academic success is that the student understands the objective, can describe where they are at in relationship to the objective, and they can describe what they need to do in order to achieve the objective. When you think about this research and you reflect on your practice, do you think your students understand what is expected of them every lesson and what they need to do in order to achieve success?

At our staff development day in September we learned more about scales and rubrics. Are you wanting to give scales and rubrics a try? I recommend a strategy that combines all three of the design questions that I mentioned previously.

* Choose one subject or section that you really want to focus on.
* Write the objective for the class on the board in student-friendly words.
* Teach the lesson to the best of your ability and engage students.
* At the end of the lesson have students rate themselves on their understanding of the objective using a sample scale below. Students can make a mark on the whiteboard, give you a silent signal, place a sticker on a chart, or write in their notebook to record their progress.
* On a day that your students show great effort and/or they mark themselves with high levels of understanding, consider doing an extra brain break or academic game to celebrate success!

**Sample Scale**

*3) I understand the objective, I can connect this objective to past learning and could teach it to peers.*

*2) I understand the objective, but I am not ready to teach it to my peers.*

*1) I do not understand the objective yet, and I am going to need more time and support.*

Hattie (2012). *Visible Learning for Teachers*. London: Routledge