

APRIL STAFF DEVELOPMENT NEWSLETTER

== A NEWSLETTER FOR SEWARD STAFF BY DR. DOMINY ==

BE ON A MISSION!

Staff,

We are in the month of April and during this month, I think it is a good time to remember our Motto: Every Student, Every Day, a Success! Our students need us, and whether they tell you or not they appreciate you. I was reading Jon Gordon's book about Positive Leadership and I came across the quote that I included below. It reminded me that all of us, regardless of position, can make a huge impact on the life of a child every day. I hope you can join me on this mission as we finish the school year with success.

"It's wonderful if you want to volunteer for a charity or feel called to go on a mission trip, but you don't have to go on a mission trip to be on a mission. You can bring your mission, passion, and purpose to the work that you do each day. You may not build libraries around the world, but you can find bigger purpose in reading to your children. You may not feed the homeless every day, but you can nourish your employees and customers with a smile, kind word, and care. And while you may not start your own non-profit organization, you can begin a charity initiative at work. After all, charity means "love in action." You can make a difference every day and touch the lives of everyone you meet. While these people may not be starving because of a lack of food, you can provide them with a different kind of nourishment that will feed their souls and feed your own in the process"

Gordon, Jon. *The Power of Positive Leadership*

INSTRUCTIONAL MODEL ELEMENT- REFLECTING ON LEARNING

Staff, now is the time of year that we are all doing a great deal of reflection on what went well for us this year and what we need to do differently next year. In the classroom, reflection should happen every day with the teacher and the student. There is a great deal of research that would support that if a student can reflect about where they are at in the learning continuum and can identify what they can do to learn more, they are well on their way to deep learning. Dr. Marzano gives us more information below about reflecting on

learning, take a moment to assess where you are at on the rubric and what you might be able to implement in your classroom to achieve better reflection.

Research has shown that asking students to identify and record what they are confused about enhances their learning. Reflection data are also useful for diagnosing errors or gaps in students' knowledge (Butler & Winne, 1995; Cross, 1998).

Teachers can use the following scale to reflect on their use of this element. Ideally, teachers will aim to operate at the Applying (3) level or higher. For more information about how to move up the levels of the scale, please consult the folio for this element.

4 Innovating adapt behaviors and create new strategies for unique student needs and situations.

3 Applying engage students in reflecting on their own learning and the learning process, and I monitor the extent to which students self-assess their understanding and effort.

2 Developing engage students in reflecting on their own learning and the learning process, but I do not monitor the effect on students.

1 Beginning use the strategies and behaviors associated with this element incorrectly or with parts missing.

0 Not Using am unaware of strategies and behaviors associated with this element.

Strategies

Reflective Journals

Students use a portion of their academic notebooks to respond to reflection questions. Questions might prompt students to reflect on what predictions they made about the day's lesson that were correct or incorrect, what information in the lesson was easy or difficult to understand, how well they understand the major material the class is studying, how well they think they did during the day, or what they think they could have done better during the day. Reflective journals are not intended to be complete, finished products; instead, they are living documents that give students the freedom to change, revise, and restructure their understanding.

Think Logs

Students reflect on specific cognitive skills (for example, classification, drawing inferences, decision making, creative thinking, or self-regulation) that were emphasized during a lesson. Prompts might include asking students how they would explain classification to a friend, asking them to describe an inference they drew during the day, or asking them how comfortable (or uncomfortable) they are with the decision-making process.

Exit Slips

At the end of a lesson, students respond to specific reflective questions on an "exit slip" that they fill out before leaving the room. Exit slip questions might include:

- What are the main ideas of today's lesson?
- What do you feel most and least sure about?
- Do you have specific questions about today's lesson?
- With which aspects of today's class work were you successful?

Knowledge Comparison

Students compare their current level of knowledge on a topic, or level of competence with a procedure, to their previous levels of knowledge or competence. Students can use diagrams or flowcharts to show the progression of their knowledge gain. For example, students might create a chart showing the increase in the number of vocabulary terms they have learned.

Two-Column Notes

Students use two-column notes as an extended reflection activity at the end of a lesson. In the left-hand column, students record facts or other information that they found interesting from the lesson. In the right-hand column, they record their reactions, questions, and extended ideas related to the facts or information in the left-hand column.

