

Educational Empowerment Newsletter

Volume1 No. 8

Welcome the challenges. Look for the opportunities in every situation to learn and grow in wisdom.
Brian Tracy

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Magdalena Team

The leadership team at Magdalena Municipal Schools (New Mexico) has focused on English Language Learner instruction. As in many communities the ELL population at Magdalena has consistently shown lower academic performance than the remainder of the student population. Keri James is Grants and Indian Education Coordinator in this district and has translated a personal vision of support for Native American students into a program of school improvement based on ELL research and designed to create more meaningful instruction for all students in the district.

She has taken the following steps:

- Secured funding by English Language Acquisition Grant and via the Bilingual program at Public Education Department in Santa Fe



The ELA training team at Magdalena Municipal School. Dr. Betty Smallwood, Center for Applied Linguistics, Keri James, ELA Director and Richard Valentine, ELA Evaluator and Program Coach. The program is in its third year of operation.

- Tapped into local support found at the school administrative, board, community and tribal levels
- Develop an intervention that supports Principals Dwight Myers and Kitty Martin in their quest for improved instruction
- Created a team of consultants to guide the district and implement the program

Working with the administration, teachers, the board and district leadership and the “team”, Ms. James has seen impressive accomplishments....

- Creation of the first Navajo Language and Culture Class at Magdalena High School,
- Creation and support of a Bilingual program that addresses language and cultural issues at the Mid and Elementary Schools
- Development of a curriculum for Navajo Language instruction, Dine Culture
- Initiatives English Language Instructional processes for the district using training materials and personnel from Center for Applied Linguistics, Washington.

Dr. Betty Anson Smallwood is a nationally respected scholar and teacher and has provided professional development at the prestigious center for several years. Dr. Smallwood has been instrumental in advising and advancing the development of the curriculum and training teachers in ELL effective instructional practice. Currently her work is addressing ELL instruction at the high school and middle school levels in Magdalena and in supporting the development of Culturally relevant curriculum in the district. Dr. Smallwood is Manager, Professional Services for CAL and a contributing editor for *Integrating the ESL Standards into Classroom Practice*.

CAL is a private, non-profit organization: a group of scholars and educators who use the findings of linguistics and related sciences in identifying and addressing language-related problems. CAL carries out a wide range of activities including research, teacher education, analysis and dissemination of information, [and the] design and development of instructional materials. Betty can be reached at (202) 362-0700 x 540 or betty@cal.org.

Instructional Practices Inventory

We have long sought effective measures of the implementation of EE professional development programs. Effective measures mean research based, quick, reasonable inexpensive for the client and accurate. We have found such a measure in the Instructional Practices Inventory. The IPI provides a focused walkthrough, research gathering process that quantifies teacher implementation of Readers and Writers Workshop (and other scientifically proven practices found in Marzano's work.)

The **Instructional Practices Inventory** was developed in the Missouri Center or School Improvement by Dr. Jerry Valentine and Dr. Bryan Painter in 1995-1996. The categories of the IPI are valuable to principals and teachers in elementary, middle and high schools in urban, suburban and rural schools. It has been used throughout the United States and thoroughly grounded in the knowledge of best educational practice and research.

The IPI consists of 6 categories:

- Student Active Engaged Learning
- Student Learning Conversations
- Teacher-Led Instruction
- Student Work, with Teacher Engaged
- Student Work, with Teacher Not Engaged
- Complete Disengagement

The IPI categories are simple to understand, grounded in knowledge of best practice, and easily documented by a trained observer.

Richard Valentine (no relation to the developer) and Stephen Poling, Principal of De Gracia Elementary School in Tucson attended the IPI trainer workshop and are qualified evaluators using the IPI process and are as we speak documenting implementation of school improvement projects.



Dr. Jerry W. Valentine is a Professor in the Department of Educational Leadership and Policy Analysis at the University of Missouri-Columbia. Dr. Valentine serves as the Director of the Middle Level Leadership Center and the Coordinator of the Educational Specialist Advanced Principal Preparation Program.

If you are working with a project, consider this research activity that will document the frequency that instructional strategies are employed in a school. The process takes one day and at the end of which you will have at your disposal all the data from roughly 100 focused walk-through to support teacher conversations about school improvement strategies and when used each semester or annually IPI documents progress towards the implementation of the school improvement plan over time.

The good news is that as we advance our agenda of documented school improvement, this process is rather inexpensive for the client. Most schools can have usable information to support faculty conversations and document process in two consulting days. If you have a need, contact Yvonne Shay at yshay@cox.net or Richard Valentine at rvalentine@theriver.com for an immediate response.

Willy's Way

by Richard Valentine

EE is continuing to grow and learn about life and how to grow and how to enhance the standing of our clients. But it is an interesting journey and I would like to bring some of it to your attention. I call this particular connection, "Willy's Way". Willy is the owner and chief light of a salon in Tucson - his businesses is hair. His approach provides a lot of insight for us.

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Walk into Willy's salon and he avoids rush to judgment - content - approaches. He does NOT bombard the potential client with: Ok, what do you need? We have haircuts, we do tinting, and Maria over there is great with nails. Look at these colors? Do you want holiday theme? We can draw a Christmas tree on each nail. Waxing? Marissa can rip those unsightly brows right out of your forehead. Now, set down, let me do SOMETHING with that mop!

This is not Willy's way.

Instead of relying on what he had prepared, the client sits in the chair and Willy starts a conversation. How do you feel about hair, he asks. When you have had good haircuts, what about them did you like? How do you want to present yourself? What about the hair could do that? When you were disappointed, what about the haircut made you uncomfortable?

Willy's way is that he understands the client and solves the problem the client identifies. This approach has a ton of implications for teacher consultants.

Consulting as a business is a bit different than teaching as a profession. Among the differences are in teaching as a profession one begins with a curriculum, a set of standards or a collection of content and then so arrange the learning experiences so that the students will find the content has some personal meaning and a connection to them.

We, as professional educators are conditioned to start with the content, the standard, the best practice of research and at EE we gave notebooks full of process, content to enhance leadership practice, train teacher leaders, develop school plans, increase student achievement and teacher efficiency.

Having this expertise we have sought clients who need the content and have learned methods that presents this content in effective ways. Willy's Way however, has a good deal to teach us. Perhaps we should ascertain the problems that drive potential clients towards some change. Perhaps we should involve the client in examining options to solve the identified problem and then modify our "content" to meet that need. If that is the case, we should not ask who needs Comprehensive Literature instruction, but *how* can we help a client to meet his/her goals. What log can we remove from their jammed up creek?

We need to start with a conversation to determine what the individual or organization..... We need to focus on identifying that log. Finding it, fixing it, removing it and then standing on the creek bank while our client boasts of his/her renewed productivity. Just as our hair stylist does as folks compliment his client's new do.

Perhaps this approach is the business of consulting.... Willy's Way.



Dr. Judy Tanner Named New Principal at Columbia Elementary

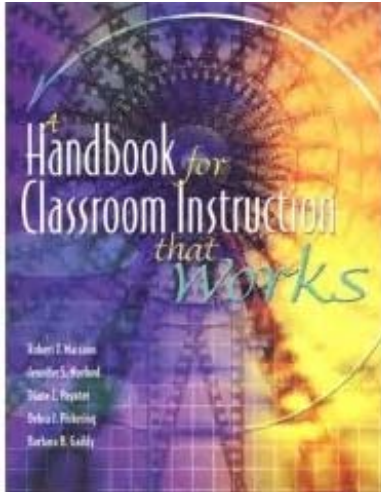
Judith Tanner, Ed.D, has been named as the new principal at Columbia Elementary School, Las Cruces, New Mexico. She will join the Columbia staff October 31.

Dr. Tanner has extensive experience as an educator, currently serving as the federal and state programs, special education and human resources directors for Magdalena Municipal Schools. She has also been an elementary school principal and a director of curriculum and instruction.

“Dr. Tanner is a very talented woman with a wide range of experience in both building-based and district-level positions. She will be a valuable edition to Las Cruces Public Schools,” said LCPS Chief Academic Officer Dr. Joann Patton.

“I am very excited to be named principal of Columbia Elementary School and I am looking forward to meeting students and staff! I understand that Columbia Elementary School is an exemplary school with an outstanding staff and I am eager to begin working together as a professional learning community,” Tanner said.

Congratulations Judy!



A Handbook for Classroom Instruction That Works

By Robert J. Marzano, Jennifer S. Norford,
Diane E. Paynter, Debra J. Pickering,
and Barbara B. Gaddy

What types of instructional strategies work best to improve student achievement? Where can I learn about those strategies? How can I use them in my classroom?

Whether you address these issues alone or as part of a study group, you'll find the answers in this book. These strategies can be applied to all content, in all grades, with all students.

After briefly reviewing the research base for these instructional strategies, the authors advise you to choose among strategies presented for those that interest you and fit your classroom needs. They guide you through each strategy, showing how to reflect on your current beliefs and practices and recommending how to use the strategy. Exercises help you check your understanding; rubrics help you to assess the effectiveness of the strategy with your students.

Worksheets, black line masters, and other materials are supplied to help you envision how to use the strategies in your classroom. Also included is a section on instructional strategies for specific types of knowledge, such as learning vocabulary terms, organizing ideas, and developing processes. To improve effectiveness in planning units, the authors describe a framework for using the strategies.

This handbook is designed to help you begin using effective instruction strategies immediately. If you are interested in a synthesized account of the research that undergirds these practical, proven strategies, refer to *Classroom Instruction That Works: Research-Based Strategies for Increasing Student Achievement* by Marzano, Pickering, and Pollack (ASCD 2001).

