

# PS 25 Collaborative Team Newsletter

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## First Grade Inquiry Results

Based on the phonemic awareness assessment, we selected a group of students that were struggling with blending and segmenting words. Findings: After analyzing the assessment results, we found that most students showed some progress. However, they still need continued support to master the skill.

Next steps: Integrate technology, such as Open Court e-activities, for blending and segmenting words; introduce strategies with visual supports to help students blend and segment words independently; use chants and rhymes to help reinforce the skills; blend, spell, and read words that contain short vowel sounds daily.

## Kindergarten Inquiry Results

Statement: To move L1 students to L2 in letter/sound recognition through a specific targeted practice.

During this period of time our findings is as follows:

Across the grade, the level of growth was different among the targeted students. Some students demonstrated growth in the area of phonemic awareness/phonics. Some other students have slightly improved, while others are still in the process. Some of the students have difficulty identifying letter/beginning sound/name of objects on pictures presented to them because they do not have prior knowledge or have not been exposed to them. Daily phonemic awareness/phonics activities do have an impact on students' learning and are effective in promoting growth.

Next Steps:

We will continue to daily use the Open Court Reading Program Foundational Skills activities. Reinforce the learning of the targeted letter/sounds correspondences throughout the day, highlighting those sounds in other activities. Use of iPads, Starfall online application, and small group instruction to continue to develop and enhance phonemic awareness and phonics.

## Second Grade Inquiry Results

Research Question: How can we identify strategies that will help students in the development of sight words and promote their reading and writing skills?

Findings: Our team found frequent sight words deficiencies among students. The assessments that our Second Grade Team is using for our inquiry are as follows: Inventory Spelling Assessment Weekly Pre and Post Assessments for eight consecutive weeks, Informal Assessment of homework/Classwork – The class was divided into First and Second Grade Sight Words. We begin a pre-test every week to assess their knowledge. They make index card with the words, make sentences and look for words in their daily reading. After a week using the words we saw an increase in their ability to read and identify the spelling pattern in other words.

## Third Grade Inquiry Results

One of the challenges for the third grade teachers is to optimize instruction and engagement time as students are departmentalized daily. Therefore, as soon as we switch, we have to begin the mini lessons and provide adequate time for students to practice skills or strategies. One of the strategies we are using is setting high expectations. Before teaching the lesson, we ask for good student habits. We provide direct instruction on what are good student habits, which are sitting up, looking at the teacher when she is providing a lesson, pencil in pencil holders, etc. We begin the days with asking for scholarly behavior most and sometimes all stay on task for the whole time. We set the setting for success. Secondly, we are writing into our lesson plans when to have brain power breaks, which is usually after the reading and writing workshop and again right after lunch or prep period.

## Fourth Grade Inquiry Results

Scholars can relate and connect their thinking to reality. Scholars have then been able to visualize what they are doing. The learning of the scholars has advanced due to the use of manipulatives within Math.

Next steps: To continue using manipulatives as a tool in order to differentiate topic areas addressed to our scholars. In addition, we can use drawings connected to the physical manipulatives to activate their

thinking in Mathematical representation. Using this representation, students can relate Mathematics to everyday life. The use of these tools and drawings will make Math more meaningful to our scholars. They tap into their prior knowledge and experiences in order to make connections leading to independence. The manipulatives are a foundation for the scholars leading to critical thinking and metacognition.

## Fifth Grade Inquiry Results

Assessments, such as rubrics, which are often used for final products can be used by students as they work on a project to determine how their work measures up to expectations. When students participate in the development of rubrics, they also must think about what excellence looks like in the field in which the product is created. They then learn to identify the discrepancies between their thinking and the thinking of experts in the field. This practice helps them develop the skills necessary to assess their own progress. When students assess their own thinking processes and the products they create, they are doing more than just looking for errors. Making self-assessment part of a daily classroom routine is critical for producing confident, independent learners, but it requires careful planning and consistency in instruction.

We noticed that rubrics provide guidelines for successful implementation of student self-assessment:

1. The criteria for evaluating any learning achievements must be made transparent to students.
2. Students should be taught the habits and skills of collaboration in peer feedback.
3. Students should be encouraged to bear in mind the aims of their work and to assess their own progress to meet these aims as they proceed.

When students assess themselves honestly, they can no longer see themselves as passive recipients of knowledge and skills instruction. They are, in very important ways, responsible for their own learning, for their response to instruction, and for their engagement in meaningful learning tasks. Providing student friendly checklists and rubrics before, during and after promote self-direction.

The value of self-assessment cannot be overstated. When this kind of thinking becomes an integral part of daily classroom activities, students learn more, are more intrinsically motivated, persist in challenging tasks, and attain higher levels of confidence in their ability to learn.