

ESC Spotlight Putnam County ESC

As the 100th year of ESCs draws to a close, OESCA is proud to release the latest edition of *Inside OESCA*. Moving forward, each new edition will highlight one of Ohio's ESCs. This quarter, OESCA is highlighting the Putnam County ESC. Located in Ottawa, Ohio, the Putnam County ESC has a long, successful tradition of serving the smaller, rural school districts of Putnam County. To follow are just a few facts about the ESC, its staff, and the schools and students it serves:

- Putnam County ESC employs 95 full- and part-time staff, which is well below the statewide ESC average of 172.
- The ESC provides job-embedded services with eighty-seven percent (87%) of staff working in the buildings of client districts each day; central office staff only represent 13% of all staff.
- The ESC has high quality, experienced staff, with over 70% obtaining a Master's degrees or higher compared to 65% statewide.
- The ESC is an efficient and effective organization providing a tremendous return on investment. For every dollar received in state and local funding, the ESC obtains \$17.66 in state and federal grants for client districts; this is well above the statewide average of \$3.77.

Putnam County ESC is one example of the high quality, customer-focused, and cost-effective services of Ohio's ESCs. For more information on Ohio's premiere network of educational service providers go to www.oesca.org or follow us on Facebook and Twitter.

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SERVING THE NEEDS OF OHIO'S EDUCATION COMMUNITY SINCE 1914

Warren County ESC Receives Funding as LEA Partner with ODE to Build Statewide Mental Health First Aid Capacity

by the Warren County Educational Service Center

Warren County ESC is one of three ESC's in Ohio (including Wood and Cuyahoga) that will be part of a major national initiative to support teachers, schools, and communities in recognizing and responding to mental health concerns amount youth. Warren County ESC will receive \$487,500 per year over the course of five years for a total of \$2,437,500. The initiative's target population is student and families in "high need" district in Warren County school districts. "The partnering university in this initiative is Miami University," said George Sehi, Executive Director for University Relations at Warren County Educational Service Center. "We are pleased to be working with Miami University in delivering a quality program," Sehi added.



Since 2008, more than 250,000 individuals in the U.S. have completed the Mental Health First Aid course.

The educational agencies – including school districts in 28 different states and departments of education in 20 states – were awarded Project AWARE (Advancing Wellness and Resilience in Education) grants from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services to (among other activities) train teachers, school staff, and other community members in Mental Health First Aid.

Mental Health First Aid is an 8-hour course that teaches people to identify the signs of mental illnesses and addictions, how to provide initial help, and how to connect individuals in crisis with

appropriate care. Since 2008, more than 250,000 individuals in the U.S. have completed the Mental Health First Aid course.

The grant awardees were announced as part of \$99 million total grants from the Department of Health and Human Services, which also included funding to train new mental health providers and to increase access to mental health services for young people. All funds were included in the President and Vice President's Now Is the Time plan to reduce gun



violence, increase access to mental health services, and make schools safer. "Providing Mental Health First Aid programs is a top priority for us," said Tom Isaacs, Warren County Educational Service Center Superintendent. "This significant grant will allow us to work very closely with various school districts in Warren County in providing a quality training program in the next five years," Isaacs added. "The grant will be managed by Kim Sellers, Supervisor for the Warren County ESC Coordinated Care Department," said Tom Isaacs. ■

Reaping the Benefits of Partnerships within the ESC Consortium: Creating Advantages for Everyone

by Amy Gareis, Public Relations Coordinator, Jefferson County ESC

The Jefferson County ESC (JCESC) is committed to giving the best, most cost-effective advantages to the districts it serves and programs such as the Virtual Learning Academy and Jefferson Health Plan are just the tip of the iceberg.

A Win-Win Situation

By providing these tools, the JCESC is forging a partnership with other ESCs to make services accessible to their respective districts. This trickle-down effect offers access to programs that will help optimize operations while keeping expenditures to a minimum. That, in turn, creates advantages for everyone.



“The Jefferson County ESC consistently works with ESCs in the surrounding area and shares services and resources that inevitably help everyone in the end. We may have a program which best suits their needs or we could partner with them in the

consortium,” said JCESC Superintendent Dr. George Ash. “It’s a win-win for everyone.”

Physical and Fiscal Well-Being

A prime example is the Jefferson Health Plan (JHP), a non-profit, partially self-insured health care program operating under the auspices of the JCESC that enables eligible employers to provide individually designed benefit programs to employees in a cost-effective way. JHP began in 1985 and offers a bevy of benefit plans to political subdivisions through group purchasing. It presently involves 200 entities, namely school districts and municipalities, with an estimated 40,000 individuals receiving coverage. Plans include medical care, prescription drugs, life insurance and benefits, plus PPO’s and HMO’s.

Executive Director Jim Herring said there were several positives in participating, including buying power, discounts, and low rates.

“It gives you buying power and reduces your rates,” Herring explained. “The higher number of members can seek better discounts from vendors, so that’s a

plus. Members in our organization design their own plan and can negotiate rates and stop loss. They have the freedom to do what best fits their employees.”

High-Tech Learning Goes the Distance

Meanwhile, the Virtual Learning Academy (VLA) is an online curriculum delivery system with more than 100 courses for students in Kindergarten through 12th grade. It is e-learning that teaches required courses for graduation, fits all learning styles, appeals to students’ interests, and fulfills the needs of students and families. VLA is fully aligned with Ohio Academic Content Standards and nationally accredited through the North Central Association on Accreditation and School Development (NCA CASI), a division of AdvancED, and is used by more than 60,000 students around the country and the world. It is designed for cooperation with the school district and provides alternatives to students while they remain fully enrolled in their home districts, plus it allows districts to compete with for-profit online schools.



“The Jefferson County ESC consistently works with ESCs in the surrounding area and shares services and resources that inevitably help everyone in the end.”

“We have been working with other ESCs for many years,” said Teresa Silvestri, JCESC director of education and outreach. “We are pleased to provide our services and programs to them so they can offer more to their districts. We have a great relationship with those ESCs and hope to work with more as we continue to grow our services.”

Another offering is EZ-SLO, a computer application that manages SLO workflow. Using EZ-SLO provides administration the ability to monitor SLO completion

process, one-click submission for users, archival of completed SLO, and template-sharing ability.

Joining Forces to Improve Transportation

Finally, JCESC has joined forces with four ESCs and 20 school districts to implement a shared transportation plan intended to save time, money, and wear and tear on bus vehicles. The JCESC, Muskingum Valley ESC, East Central Ohio ESC, Ohio Valley ESC, and OME-RESA are among the participants in a \$1.76 million grant which aims to make operations more proficient. Among its goals are to implement a regional transportation model to shorten time in transit and maximize use of bus capacity; improve safety through electronic systems to scan student ID cards as passengers board and depart buses; and increase transportation quality through training and support of staff and parents and other means.

One aspect involves school districts working together to help shuttle students. For example, a bus would collect pupils from nearby districts that are headed to the same destination, filling more seats and eliminating the use of extra buses from those same districts. As it stands now, those buses generally carry a handful of passengers and the alternative would help reduce gas usage and wear on those vehicles. The safety factor comes into play via a scanning system for student ID cards to ensure they are on their designated bus, while school officials would have online access to that information if necessary. In addition, the quality of transportation would also be refined with one plan measuring idle time for buses, ultimately leading to less air pollution and more cost savings.

But Dr. Charles Kokiko, chief academic officer for the JCESC, believes cooperation among the organizations played a very significant role in obtaining those funds.



“It’s a mutual partnership between schools, their tech support, and the ESC collective. I think the collaboration was one of the things they looked at with the grant,” Dr. Kokiko commented. “The commitment and diversity among partners made it possible to be funded.”

He added that it also aids negotiating a purchase price for equipment and yields an economic benefit for all. Dr. Kokiko concluded that the interaction further benefits ESCs by pooling resources.

“From the ESC’s level, one group is taking charge but they can ask us members to assist with anything they need. It creates a pyramid effect and the ESCs engage the districts. We’re working together to make it happen and collaboration is the key to being successful.”



By providing resources, forming partnerships, and offering other assistance, the primary goal is to help ESCs, school districts, and education as a whole continue to thrive.

Conclusion

By providing resources, forming partnerships, and offering other assistance, the primary goal is to help ESCs, school districts, and education as a whole continue to thrive.

Amy Gareis handles public relations for the Jefferson County ESC and four school districts through a shared services program. ■

ESC of Lake Erie West Finance Office Presents Shared Service Webinars

by Richard Cox, Treasurer, ESC of Lake Erie West

The ESC of Lake Erie West Finance Office presented several shared service webinars for Professional Development for Treasurers, Grant Administrators, and support personnel for Federal Grant Management throughout October and November of this year. The ESC hosted the following webinars in their Collingwood Conference Center.

- Audits Under the Uniform Grants Guidance
- Subrecipient Monitoring Under the New Grant Reform Guidance
- The Procurement and Management of Property Under the OMB's Grant Reform Guidance
- Indirect Costs and the OMB Uniform Grants Reform Guidance: What to Expect
- Financial Management Under the Uniform Grant Guidance
- Time & Effort Documentation: Don't Get Caught off Guard by Grant Reform

The costs for this professional development opportunity were shared among attendees. The more attendees at each meeting, the less cost there was to the attendees. The individual cost for one of the above webinars was \$249.00. Sharing the costs among districts allowed multiple staff to attend each webinar, greatly reducing the overall cost for the webinar presentations. The ESC also saved additional professional development by utilizing a package cost program offered by the outside vendor of the webinar presentations. The ESC provided Professional Development certification to all attendees.



The ESC monitored the program through a program evaluation at the conclusion of each of the webinars and early indicators noted that the programs were a valuable tool for professional development and offered a cost savings approach to the attendees who participated.

Richard Cox has served as the Treasurer for the Educational Service Center of Lake Erie West since February 1999, overseeing fiscal and payroll services and has received a combined 17 Auditor of State Awards for exemplary financial reporting. ■

Optimizing Transportation Efficiencies in a Cross District Consortium: The Collaborative Role of ESC and ITC Partnerships

by Michael L. Fuller, PhD, Director, Muskingum Valley ESC

This project will save money for 20 school districts and one board of developmental disabilities by creating a shared services transportation consortium to streamline and eliminate bus routes; track student ridership; reduce time to transport students; and share parking and bus garage centers. In addition, an online multi-district transportation database to facilitate student scheduling and coordinate communication for various users will be developed. The partnership of four educational service centers and two information technology centers was critical in implementing this project, and will be equally important as the project unfolds.

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Background

The cost of transportation for all school districts is increasing. For rural districts the problem is compounded by a decline in state reimbursement for transportation, the unique problems of inadequately maintained rural roads, and the amount of miles traveled. In rural districts, buses travel more miles over rougher terrain and rarely reach bus capacity due to the length of time any individual student is on a bus, compared to suburban and urban districts.

\$4 million

The projected cost savings over the course of the five-year grant

Four years ago, the East Central Ohio ESC, Jefferson County ESC, Muskingum Valley ESC, and the Ohio Valley ESC, as well as the Ohio Mid Eastern Regional Educational Service Agency (OMER-ESA) and the Southeastern Ohio Voluntary Education Cooperative (SEOVEC), formed a collaborative group to explore local district transportation opportunities. Our group focused on a shared services model to increase transportation efficiencies. This eventuated in 20 local school districts and one county board of developmental disabilities agreeing to participate in a Straight A grant proposal to drive down transportation costs and to increase region-wide transportation efficiencies and effectiveness. As an aggregate, this consortium spends nearly \$21 million dollars a year transporting public and nonpublic students. While transportation costs continue to climb, enrollment in this consortium has declined by 11,000 students in the past 10 years, a 27 percent decrease.

The proposal failed on the first round, but was awarded a grant of \$1,763,900 on round two. By reducing the consortium fleet of more than 400

buses by five percent, and with an additional two percent reduction of transportation operating costs, we are projecting savings of nearly \$4 million over the course of the five-year grant.

To drive down costs or realize savings in transportation, bus routes must be reduced or eliminated, time spent in transit must be shortened, bus capacity must be maximized, and transportation centers situated and staffed for multi-district use. These principles are well understood and acted on in private industry, such as UPS and other global carriers. Without a well-integrated and continuously updated data system, cost analyses are often in error, resulting in staffing and busing that typically exceeds actual demands.

Most districts do not have the individual capacity or means to undertake a systematic overhaul of their transportation data infrastructure. They rely on historical management practices to set routes, staff buses and garages, and purchase buses. And they generally restrict their attention to the boundaries of their own districts.

Implementation

Our consortium members agreed to work together to map student addresses and routes, and associated transportation and school locations; to utilize a common transportation database; and to regularly meet to review and consider within and cross district routing and shared transportation locations.



The RFID system permits an accurate count of ridership – the time and place students board and exit the bus.

The grant allows us to equip each bus with a commercially available GPS hardware to track routes driven, bus stop arrival times, vehicle speeds, and

current location. An associated ground control software will provide continuous data aggregation and various analyses. In addition, a radio frequency ID (RFID) reader will be installed on each bus, and each student will be issued a passive swipe RFID card. No additional effort is required of the driver. The RFID system permits an accurate count of ridership and the time and place students board and exit the bus. A text can then be sent to parents via a cell phone application to inform them when their children are getting on and off the bus.



When combined, the potential for significant cost reductions and savings are greater than what can be realized by a single district working on its own.

Our GPS hardware and software will allow us to track established bus routes. We will use a separate commercially available software system to develop alternate routes to better accommodate routing efficiencies related to distance and bus stop groupings. All proposed route changes will be locally validated and approved prior to any route changes.

In addition, we will create a consortium-wide, web-based bus scheduler to permit districts to transport students from multiple districts on the same bus. Lastly, our analyses will facilitate cross district discussion of optimizing bus garage settings and staffing levels.

Although costs will be minimized through changes in routes and transit time adjustments, the greatest reductions will be realized through normal attrition, as transportation personnel retire or quit. When these cases occur, districts can eliminate routes or significantly alter routes through and between districts. In addition, districts will be better positioned to reduce their carrier fleet as routes become more efficient and personnel needs are

better aligned with the redrawn routes. Further, bus parking and garage locations can be optimized when multiple districts operate in a shared service model. When combined, the potential for significant cost reductions and savings are greater than what can be realized by a single district working on its own.

Critical Role of Partnerships

Most would agree that our shared services transportation concept makes sense and is timely; however, it is unlikely to have taken hold without the combined effort of ESCs and ITCs. Our emergent partnership over the past four years allowed us to reach out to our member districts in a trustworthy, credible, and convincing manner.

Our transportation concept is not without controversy or risk. Typically, districts do not work together in the manner envisioned in this grant. In our proposal, districts retain their local autonomy while considering meaningful and mutually beneficial opportunities to work across district lines.



In our proposal, districts retain their local autonomy while considering meaningful and mutually beneficial opportunities to work across district lines.

Our ESC and ITC partnership is pivotal here. We have instituted a number of communication and support mechanisms to keep districts current with grant activities and to measure the pulse at the local level of possible unrest or implementation difficulties. Our partnership meets monthly. We hired a transportation facilitator to hold monthly meetings with the consortium's transportation staff. We issue a monthly report to district superintendents, and we meet with senior district leadership at least quarterly. We also are available to meet individually with districts. We want our consortium members to

be well informed, to be open with us about their local implementation efforts, and to work with their school district neighbors to reduce transportation costs while improving transportation service.

We are off to a good start. The GPS hardware and software will be operational as early as mid-December 2014. The RFID system will launch in January 2015. Alternative bus routes will be available for district consideration as early as spring 2015. The multi-district bus scheduler will be in place by January 2016.

Our data system will provide the information needed to make informed decisions. In large measure, however, it will be our willingness to work together that will determine our success. ■

Gaining Control of Technology and Technology Costs through Shared Services

by Joe Prchlik, Director of Operation and Technology, NWOCA

In June of 2012 the Governor promoted the concept of gained efficiencies through shared services, breaking down boundaries between organizations, sharing expertise and eliminating duplication of resources. As an ITC, NWOCA embraces this concept, and like ESCs, understands that the “Beyond Boundaries” mission not only affirms our roles as shared services providers, but also challenges us to push beyond our own boundaries to gain further effectiveness and efficiencies. NWOCA has explored, and continues to explore, more efficient ways to provide technical services to districts throughout the state through seeking partnerships with “like minded” organizations.

Reaching beyond our boundaries meant dismantling barriers between our members and forming partnership roles with districts we serve. We shed traditional vendor relationships and developed long term strategic partnerships with shared goals. The eroding of these barriers helped us better understand and provide solutions to those we served, but also through strategic vendor relationships we have been able to provide a higher quality solution than if we had chosen to develop and provide the services on our own.



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For our solutions we developed a strong relationship with DataServ. This partnership required strong commitments from the leadership of both organizations with commitments to common visions and goals. It also required a great deal of collaboration and understanding of each other’s resources to best align the correct expertise to be provided by each organization. We are also keenly aware that the level of expertise required to provide technical services has grown far beyond any one individual or one organization to support. Through an audit of services needed to be performed to support educational institutions we have identified 42 categories of services requiring 28 unique skill levels. As a district that is a difficult job to fulfill; conversely, as an ITC serving multiple districts, we needed to expand their skills and offerings. We determined that they could only do that by augmenting our resources with an organization that could complement each other’s staff and provide a full range of services without adding the direct costs of personnel.

This partnership has yielded positive results for those we serve and the demand for these services

has expanded throughout the state. We have developed offerings around Information Systems and Technology Assessment, IP Telephony, Wireless, Data Center, Collaboration (web conferencing), Safety and Security and Technical Staffing. Last year our IP Telephony service processed over 7 million calls (3,400/hr). Our wireless service provides connectivity to over 31,000 devices daily, and with the collaboration suite of tools, we host 76 web conference and desktop sharing sessions per day.

NWOCA...

- Processed **over 7 million** calls (3,400/hr) in 2013.
- Provides connectivity to **over 31,000** devices daily.
- Hosts **76** web conference and desktop sharing sessions per day.

These services have expanded not only because they are of high quality, but more importantly because districts are learning that by leveraging

shared services, they are able to spend their time and energy directing their resources toward enhancing services in the classroom. The districts gained control of what the technology does for them! Our services allow the district to consume the technology which best support its educational goals, rather than spend the time and effort to keep the technology functional. We eliminate the stacks of failed technology initiatives (and costs) that do not support the long term by providing professional managed shared services so your curricular goals can be specified and achieved.

In summary, our managed services allow the district to budget on an annual basis for technology needs and avoid the “feast and famine” approach that has typically been the method to acquire and hold on to technology. Traditionally districts will make a large capital expense and infuse the district with new devices and infrastructure and try to extend the useful life past their technological lifetime. This cycle, while providing short term gains, hampers the

district from leveraging new technology as it becomes available. With our managed service solutions, districts can budget and consume only the infrastructure and support services needed at that time at an annual fixed cost. This consumption model is the best way to ensure that the school infrastructure and support remain current and the teachers and students can utilize the latest technology needed to provide the desired instruction, both in and beyond the classroom.

Continued technological innovation will push new and different ways to provide curriculum and classroom instruction. These challenges can be met by adopting the principles outlined in the Beyond Boundaries initiative outlined by the Governor’s office. Leveraging shared and managed services help districts gain control over technology, helps budget for the costs associated with the consumption of the technology and, most importantly, provides the ability to stay current. We have realized and have been able to accommodate increased demand for technology based services. However, we also recognize and seek partnerships to provide deeper curriculum integration as we continue to find ways to provide value based services in supporting your missions that are beyond current boundaries.

To learn more about what we are doing with shared services or to schedule a workshop at your organization, please contact me (prchlik@nwoca.org, 419-267-2515) or Dan Hairston (Sr. Account Executive, DataServ, dhairston@dataservtech.com, 440-835-7058).

Joe Prchlik is currently Director of Operations and Technology at NWOCA. During his 17 years at NWOCA Joe has worked closely with school districts, fellow ITCs and private entities to develop shared and managed services with school districts and the ITC. ■



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School Age Transition – Closing the Gap of Service Need

by Margaret Brady Hammeran, M.Ed. and Wendy Telatko, M.Ed., Warren County Educational Service Center, Greater Ohio Virtual School

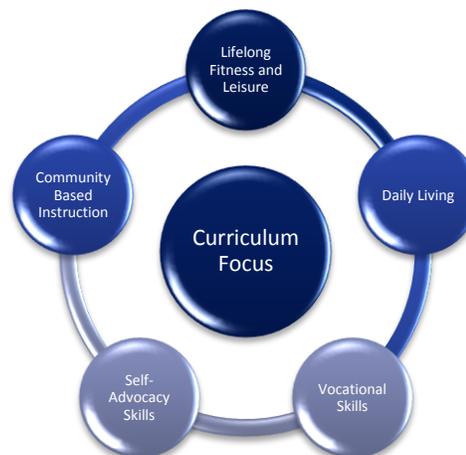
Current trends in special education transition continue to evolve from the Americans with Disability Act (1990) to the Ohio Employment First Initiative (2012). Both highlight the right for people with physical and mental disabilities to fully participate in employment and activities in their community. Schools and agencies continue to evolve their programs to engage people with mental and physical disabilities in the fulfillment of their life goals of full inclusion in society. The GOVS/Warren County ESC Transition Living Classroom bridges the gap between high school dual academic and transition programming and adult services models. This innovative program concentrates on student intern needs/interests, emersion in community employment internships, and family/agency/student intern involvement in the transition process.

The GOVS/Warren County ESC Transition Living Classroom bridges the gap between high school dual academic and transition programming and adult services models.

Program Description

The Greater Ohio Virtual School's Transitional Living Classroom is located in an apartment at Quaker Heights Care Community, in Waynesville, Ohio. This collaborative partnership seeks to transition skills from the classroom setting to real world outcomes. The program combines education and work experience for student interns with

disabilities who have completed their high school academic requirements, but have chosen to continue their education in the area of functional transition. It is designed to prepare individuals for their next appropriate post-secondary transition environment. The curriculum centers on lifelong fitness and leisure, daily living, vocational, self-advocacy skills and community based instruction.



The curriculum lessons and activities are based and determined by individual intern needs utilizing curriculum based measurements and differentiated instructional practices in a small group setting. Student interns receive instruction in career awareness, self-management and care skills, technology, money management, community safety, and social skills through daily practice and monthly themed units. Evidence based research, The National Secondary Transitional Technical Assistance, Aligning Predictors and Practices, (2014), has shown that these areas are predictors of post-school success (pgs. 1-10).

Vocational Opportunities

The interns typically participate in three non-paid job rotations during the course of the school year. In collaboration with adult service agencies, some student interns bridge the gap between unpaid and paid community work experience. According to National Secondary Transitional Technical Assistance, Predictors of In- and Post-School Success (2011), "Students in the School to Work

Transition Program (Oregon) with 2 or more jobs during the last two years of high school were more likely to be engaged in post-school employment” (pg.14). Interns are also rotated among job coaching staff for each job rotation. Rotations of job sites, business site supervisory personnel and job coaches help to expand the work skills of the interns and their ability to work for individuals with different communication styles.

The job coach to student intern ratio is 2:1. This allows support for the interns to learn specific job skills along with the vocational soft skills needed to be successful and maintain employment. Job coaches teach and model these skills. Some targeted skills of focus are; level of independence, attention

to task, work speed, attention to detail, work attitude, care of work equipment, getting along with others and task completion. The criteria used for determining these targeted skills were primarily taken from these

resources; Brigance Diagnostic Inventory of Essential Skills, Iowa Transition Assessment and LCE Curriculum Matrix.

Progress Monitoring

Data from classroom curriculum based measurements (CBM) and standardized assessments through such communal sites as Ohio Means Jobs and Employment First, assist in driving program direction and aid in transferring student intern information to other community agencies. Work evaluation rubrics measuring targeted vocational skills are administered on a weekly basis. Independence towards mastering daily living skills are monitored on a monthly basis and functional curriculum and IEP goals are measured through an ongoing evaluation process. Student interns reflect daily, with support of their job coach, on progress towards mastering their self-directed goals. Results from these CBM’s, as well as from interest and job

surveys on state websites, focus differentiation and effective instructional practices to meet individual student needs and progress towards achieving their post-secondary goals.

Collaborative Partnerships

The GOVS TLC program is a collaborative effort with several local community businesses in Warren County and surrounding areas, which provide opportunities for non-paid work experiences at their

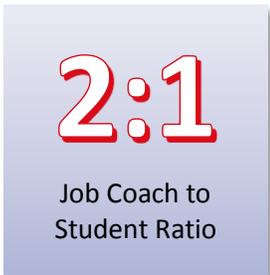
business site
or campus.
Many
student



interns are

eligible for services from County Boards of Developmental Disabilities (CBDD) and may be eligible for services of the Rehabilitation Services Commission (RSC) and Opportunities for Ohioans with disabilities (OOD) in the future, supporting job development and paid employment opportunities in the community.

A contributing factor to the program’s success in supporting young individuals towards meeting their post-secondary goals is the team work and collaboration between TLC staff, local businesses and local service agencies, in addition to the support of Warren County Educational Service Center and The Greater Ohio Virtual School. The community of Waynesville has embraced the student interns and vision of the WCESC/GOVS Transition Program. Research indicates, National Secondary Transitional Technical Assistance, Predictors of In- and Post-School Success (2011), “students who receive assistance from 3 to 6 community-based agencies (as compared to students with assistance from 0 to 2 agencies) were more likely to be engaged in post-school employment or education” (pg. 20). Student interns participate in supported vocational training at Quaker Heights Care facility for their initial rotations, working in the dining, laundry, housekeeping or activities department. These training opportunities are conducted in a controlled



and supported community environment. When skills have progressed, interns are able to expand their experience into Waynesville area businesses. The end goal is for interns to apply their experiences to a paid job in the community. We work with the county agency transition staff in making this shift to paid employment through job development and exploration.



“Students who receive assistance from 3 to 6 community-based agencies... were more likely to be engaged in post-school employment or education”.

-National Secondary Transitional Technical Assistance

Transition Planning Meetings

Another component and contributing factor to student interns’ successful outcomes is collaboration with families through three mandatory transition Team meetings throughout the year, along with ongoing dialog between meetings. The backwards planning model is utilized to support interns in reaching their post-secondary goals. Teams consist of student interns, families, TLC staff, and local agency personnel (transition and service coordinators).

The backward planning approach supports student intern’s self-determination by being person-centered. This approach is framed around the student intern’s vision for their future. It encourages the student intern to reflect on what is meaningful to them. We encourage our student interns to focus on their abilities, not disabilities. It is important for student intern’s to have a voice, self-advocate, and be involved in their future plan. This is accomplished with the Team mapping out a charted course of supports working backward from the end goal. A backwards planning team meeting opens dialog for student interns (and their families) to create a vision for their future. The planning meetings focus on the future possibilities and what

the student intern can accomplish. It opens the door for the student intern to express where they want to be in 1, 3, and 5 years, and further into the future. The team then discusses direction and supports that can assist the student intern in reaching these goals that are meaningful to them. The focus of the meeting then becomes, “what support systems do we need to put in place in order to assist this student intern in achieving their goals and meaningful outcomes”? Having the student intern involved promotes self-determination and individualized planning. (We often remind our student interns that they are the most important member, voice, of this team). According to Flexer, Baer, Luft, Simmons (2013) “Kohler saw student intern-focused planning as inherently important in individualized planning as the main vehicle for determining appropriate goals, objectives and services”. The likelihood of success increases when a plan is in place and the individual student intern is a part of the plan. Self-determination promotes ownership in the plan and wanting to succeed.

Conclusion

The Transition Living Classroom utilizes the latest evidenced based practices to promote successful transition of student interns from school age to adult services. Through collaboration with local agencies and businesses, parents, educational staff, the student intern is supported in their quest to achieve their post-secondary goals. Direct involvement in their future planning, goal setting, and self-evaluation ensures the student intern a central role in their own life vision which is consistent with post school success.

Margaret Hammeran; Intervention Specialist and Program Coordinator, Warren County Educational Service Center, Greater Ohio Virtual School, Transition Living Classroom. Master’s in Education, Miami University, Oxford, Ohio.

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Ohio's New Graduation Requirements *Beginning with the Class of 2018*

by The Ohio Department of Education

Starting with the class of 2018 (this fall's freshmen), Ohio's new high school diploma requirements will ensure that our students are better prepared for success, whether they attend college, pursue other training or go directly into jobs.

What's New

- *Every student* will take a college entrance exam in the fall of 11th grade, at the state's expense. This will tell us what our students know and still must learn to be college or job ready upon graduation. Students will get results in time to seek help in certain subjects or change their course selections, if necessary.
- *Every student* who entered the ninth grade for the first time in the 2014–2015 school year will take seven end-of-course exams

based on Ohio's more rigorous learning standards, which are being fully implemented this school year.



The tested courses are algebra, geometry (or integrated math I and math II), physical science, American history, American government, English I and English II. These end-of-course exams will replace the Ohio Graduation Tests. Starting in the 2015–2016 school year, schools may choose to use the end-of-course tests to replace their own course finals.

In physical science, U.S. history and U.S. government, students can take Advanced Placement substitute tests instead of Ohio's end-of-course exams. In September, the State Board identified certain AP exams that can serve as substitutes. The State Board will review other potential substitute tests, such as International Baccalaureate and dual enrollment course tests, and release a final list of tests in the coming months.

- *Every student* will earn points toward graduation from their scores on the end-of-course exams.
- Students who earn a minimum of 18 points will become qualified to graduate.
- Students who it appears will not accumulate 18 points from their end-of-course exam scores have two additional options for graduating:
 - Earn a “remediation-free” score on a nationally recognized college admission exam, such as the ACT.
 - Earn an approved industry-recognized credential or state license to practice a vocation. Students who choose this option also must receive

a score on a job–skills test that shows they’re ready for employment.

- Many students may find that they qualify to graduate through two or all three options simultaneously, even though they are required to meet only one option to graduate. This may be particularly true of students who score well on their end–of–course exams in key subjects but also choose to explore career–technical training.

What Will *Not* Change

- Students who have exceeded Ohio’s graduation requirements can earn an honor’s diploma.
- School districts may still add additional requirements above the state minimum for graduation.
- Students still must accrue the same course credits as in previous years.
- Until July 1, 2016, students can meet alternative requirements in mathematics. An example is successfully completed applied mathematics or statistics instead of algebra II.

The state has designed these options to ensure that every Ohio high school student has access to a high–quality education and will be prepared for success in college and/or a career.

For more information, go to education.ohio.gov and search for “Graduation Requirements.”

Career Connections

What’s New

[State law](#) requires the department to publish model career advising policies and student success plans by Dec. 1, 2014. Districts can use these model policies and plans for localizing and meeting the new requirements in the 2015–2016 school year. To see details about the expectations for districts, visit

education.ohio.gov/CareerConnections. You also will find resources to support for district planning.

Career Connections helps to prepare students for successful transitions to their postsecondary destinations. This includes making sure students are ready and on track for success in elementary school, have more options to connect their learning to their interests in middle grades and multiple pathways to earn a high school diploma. ■

Dates to Remember

January 1-2 and February 16, 2015

The OESCA office will be closed in observance of national holidays.

March 6, 2015

ESC Progress Network

April 13-15, 2015

The OESCA Spring Conference will be held at the DoubleTree Worthington-Columbus. Wednesday, April 15, is the Franklin B. Walter All-Scholastic Awards program. Program agenda, registration materials, and additional information will be forthcoming from OESCA.

Membership Options for Public Employers and Political Subdivisions

POLITICAL ACTION | VENDOR CONTRACTS | RISK SHARING

Optimal Health Initiatives (OHI) was created by three stand-alone consortia that wanted to leverage greater purchasing power without losing local autonomy and local control. The formal structure evolved in an effort to diversify our program options and growth opportunities, and has grown to over 40,000 lives in Ohio, Indiana and Texas.

Testimonials

"...OHI allowed for our local autonomy with multi-state purchasing power..." *Tod Hug, Superintendent, Ayersville Local School District*

"...Our members will experience only a net 1% rate increase statewide in 2015 with no benefit cuts..." *Mike Davis, Treasurer, Talawanda School District*

"...A focused administrative team has brought us management reporting we need to understand future budget implications." *Sandra Mers, Superintendent, Green Local Schools*

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Tom Goodney	Superintendent, Educational Service Center of Central Ohio (absent from picture)

The "Top 10" List for Great Service – And the One that Most Companies Ignore!

by Anne Obarski

Everyone seems to have a "top ten" list these days. David Letterman was famous for his and I found myself trying to guess what his number one item was going to be.

I ran across this list that appeared on the Hawaii Business website a while back. Maybe it peaked my interest because I thought who would ever have to worry about giving good customer service in Hawaii? Everyone is happy to be there or live there, right?

No matter what "paradise" you live in, you must focus on customer service daily.

No matter what "paradise" you live in, you must focus on customer service daily. Consistency is the key. As you read this article, see if you can guess which one will be number one!

Top 10 List for Great Service

Number 10 – Never settle for average.

Customer service will remain a sustainable point of difference to competitors if it continually improves.

Number 9 – Don't take it personally. Find out what you can do to make whatever is wrong with a customer right again.

Number 8 – Renovate.

Everyone loves to see the results of a makeover project.

Number 7 – Build relationships.

You can't manage relationships you do not have.

Number 6 – Empower employees.

Don't make customers wait. Give employees the authority to take care of problems.

Number 5 – Learn how to speak on the phone.

Kevin Johnson, president, Hawaii Call Center Association says finding employees that will represent your company well starts during the job interview process. Mr. Johnson told Hawaii Business, "Start by hiring the right people. They need to be polite, well-mannered, and have the ability to manage conflict. But most importantly, they've got to be empathetic. We all want to feel like the person we're talking to wants to help us."

Number 4 – Give customers what they want.

The Bank of Hawaii developed a program that allowed customers to provide feedback directly to the company's chief executive. Mike O'Neill, the CEO of The Bank of Hawaii received 4,500 customer comments in the first three months. As a result the bank was able to make changes that have resulted in a higher level of customer satisfaction.

Number 3 – Exceed customer expectations.

The C.S. Wo Gallery, for example, gives customers a half-hour window to expect delivery of the furniture they purchased compared to "the usual eight-hour timeframe" given by others.

Number 2 – "Be available."

Superior customer service requires "being available whenever and however customers want to reach you – be it online, over the phone or in person."

And the number one idea for ways to provide great service is – "Invest in your employees."

Did this last one, or should I say, first one surprise you? It shouldn't. It is hard for employees to give great service when they are unhappy in their jobs. I read recently that 82% of American workers are experiencing job stress at least some of the time and that more than one third of workers say their job is negatively affecting their physical or emotional well-being. Stress can lead to illness, depression violence or a lack of productivity!

And you say, "Oh, no, not where I work!" Think again. We can take the "golden rule quote that says, "Do unto others as you would have them do unto you" and update it to say, "Do unto your employees as you would have them do unto your customers".



Do unto your employees as you would have them do unto your customers.

Care about them, build relationships with your employees, listen to what is stressing them, find solutions to their problems and create an "open-door" policy at all levels of management.

Finally, Gene Hoffman of Retailwire says "Persevere! (It was by perseverance that snails reached the ark.) If you don't sustain your promised efforts, you will become part of the passing parade of businesses who once gave great and personalized customer service."

Now how is that for living in paradise?

Anne works with organizations who want to focus on becoming CONTAGIOUS! Anne is an author and professional speaker who provides keynotes and breakout training sessions to savvy business audiences on how to develop strategies to effectively keep your customers coming back and referring

others along the way. Visit her website at <http://www.merchandiseconcepts.com>. ▣

Bridging Achievement Gaps through Personalized Learning

by Thomas G. Reed, Ph.D., Educational Service Center of Central Ohio

Introduction

One iconic scene in *The Raiders of the Lost Ark (1981)* shows Nazi soldiers in the foreground digging furiously in the Egyptian desert for the Ark of the Covenant while in the background Indiana Jones stands silhouetted atop a large sand dune searching for the same elusive treasure far away.

I can't help but recall that image as I witness the ongoing debate about the pros and cons of Ohio's New Learning Standards, a.k.a. the Common Core. Guaranteeing reading proficiency by third grade, ensuring college and career readiness for all of our high school graduates, and closing stubborn achievement gaps for minority student populations is not really about unearthing the right curricular content. Rather, attainment and readiness is all about demonstrations of competence achieved through personalized learning experiences.



Attainment and readiness is all about demonstrations of competence achieved through personalized learning experiences.

"It's the poverty, stupid"

A common fallback position for many defenders of the academic attainment that our current system of schooling yields is to point out that performance differences among minority groups are really more

about socio-economic status rather than race. After all, it is true that African-American students and Hispanic students represent disproportionately large numbers of economically disadvantaged enrollees in our schools. And adults in the system are quick to repeat the all too common phrases why minority students fair worse in schools. "They're too poor." "Their parents don't care." "They come to school hungry."



So when nearly twice as many African-American and Hispanic students are represented in Ohio's population of economically disadvantage students compared to their representation in the general student population, it conveniently helps to further the argument that this whole conversation of gaps isn't really about race at all. It's about poverty.

"But what if...?"

But what if racial performance gaps aren't just manifestations of economic gaps? What if we could actually test whether racial achievement gaps are real or perceived by controlling for all of the other factors that may inhibit student performance? What if we analyzed a subgroup of highly motivated, highly skilled, non-economically disadvantaged students whose only difference is skin color?

Fortunately, one such sample exists. Each year, there are nearly 275,000 non-economically disadvantaged (non-poor) identified gifted students enrolled in public schools throughout Ohio. Most of those students take some form of state assessment. Let's test some hypotheses.

Null Hypothesis #1: There should be no difference in the performance levels of non-poor gifted students on state assessments based on race only.

Finding: False

Nearly 25% more white, non-poor, gifted students score "Advanced" on Ohio's state assessments each year compared to their non-poor, gifted African-American counterparts. Interestingly, almost no gap exists between performance of non-poor white and non-poor Hispanic gifted students. For non-poor, gifted students, the racial achievement gap appears to be real.

Null Hypothesis 2: Gifted students who are served in gifted programs will score higher on standardized state tests than gifted students who are not served in gifted programs.

Finding: True, kind of.

On average, 20% more white gifted students who receive gifted services score "Advanced" on state tests compared to white gifted-identified students not served. Hispanic and Asian gifted students served in gifted programs generally score "Advanced" on average 15% more than their unserved gifted counterparts. These results certainly support the value of gifted programs as accelerators of student achievement.

Inexplicably, though, the effects of gifted services on state assessments for African-American students recede dramatically when comparing served and non-served gifted students. In fact, on many tests, the percent of African-American gifted students scoring "Advanced" was virtually identical between those gifted students who were served and those who were not.

Null Hypothesis 3: The racial proportion of gifted students reflect the racial proportions of the general student population.

Finding: False

A typical Ohio classroom of 25 students has about four identified gifted students. If all 25 students are white, the number of identified gifted students increases to five. If all 25 students are Asian, the number rises to about seven. But if all of the students in that classroom were African-American or Hispanic, the number of identified gifted students falls to only one or two.

White students make up 74% of Ohio's general student population but represent 87% of the total number of identified gifted students. Asians make up about 1.7% of the general population of Ohio students but represent nearly 3% of gifted students. African-Americans comprise nearly 17% of the general population but only about 5% of the identified gifted enrollment. Hispanics represent 3.5% of the overall enrollment in Ohio, but only 1.5% is identified gifted.



The ESCCO has embraced the concept of personalized learning to better identify the needs of all students and engage them in learning in ways that are most meaningful to the student.

It pains me to admit it, but I can offer no viable explanation for why these racial achievement gaps exist. It's not about poverty. It's not about ability. It's not about motivation. I have controlled for those non-school factors in the sample. Beyond that, I simply know too many competent, concerned, and caring teachers to conveniently declare that "institutional racism" is the culprit here.

But in light of the troubling evidence, I do have to acknowledge that race, not just poverty, remains a powerful predictor of student performance on achievement tests and gifted identification.

The Case for Personalized Learning

Like other ESC's throughout Ohio, the Educational Service Center of Central Ohio remains an ardent

champion for recognizing and closing achievement gaps in order to build a diverse workforce and engaged citizenry equipped with the skills necessary to succeed in a more complex, competitive world.

Absent a clear causal relationship between school factors and racial achievement gaps, the ESC of Central

4 in 25
Students are identified as gifted in a typical Ohio classroom

Ohio has embraced the concept of personalized learning to better identify the needs of all students and engage them in learning in ways that are most meaningful to the student.

Personalized learning refers to diverse programs, learning experiences, instructional approaches, and academic-supports intended to address the distinct learning needs, interests, aspirations, or cultural backgrounds of individual students.

The ESC launched its initiative in the spring of 2014 with a Personalized Learning Frameworks (PLF) Summit highlighting the work of thought leaders such as David Andrews from Johns Hopkins University, Chuck Schwan, author of *Inevitable: Mass Customized Learning*, Linda Laughlin of Maine's RSU 18. Other innovative educational leaders from school districts throughout Ohio also shared insights and perspectives as each has moved educational organizations toward more personalized learning policies and strategies.

The ESC's PLF initiative continued in October with a showcase featuring classroom teachers from Central Ohio who exhibit exemplary instructional strategies aligned to the "Customized Teaching and Learning Rubric." Teachers shared their practices, highlighted ways they use technology to target needs of individual students, and demonstrated ways they

use online learning resources to promote learning in authentic community settings.

The series will continue in February of 2015 with a focus on customized assessment strategies to facilitate authentic assessment tasks, show a complete record of learning accomplishments by exit outcomes, and produce data that are consistently and effectively used to provide feedback to continuously improve learning results.

Conclusion

The analysis above serves as a harsh reminder that, nearly 60 years after the US Supreme Court unanimously struck down racial segregation in *Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka, Kansas*, we still have a long way to go to achieve equality of opportunity, access, expectation, and attainment among all student sub-groups in Ohio.

Personalized learning may be the pathway that helps schools optimize student experiences and increase teaching effectiveness in support of 21st century competencies, not just content. PLFs hold the promise to promote information literacy, citizenship in a democratic society, and student resilience in the face of adversity or failure in authentic learning environments that are safe, culturally competent and engaging.

Near the end of *Raiders*, a lone government worker in dark, cavernous warehouse encases the Ark of the Covenant in a plain, wooden crate which he nails shut and stows indiscriminately among thousands of other unmarked crates. Once again the artifact is lost to the ages, this time in a modern-day entombment. Such is likely to be the fate of the Common Core Standards or any state learning standards. Whether that happens sooner rather than later remains to be settled, but undoubtedly, at some point in the future, a new curriculum will certainly come along and take its place.

However, amidst the man-made upheaval, what always endures is the human condition for learning. Long before there were schools, we learned. Long before there were textbooks, we learned. Long before there were state assessments and accountability systems and courses of study and standards, we learned. And what we learned were personal competencies in authentic settings that enabled us to collectively devise rocket science, modern medicine, jazz, poetry, and everything else we recognize today as uniquely human.

Dr. Thomas Reed is the Executive Director of the Center for Achievement and Leadership Services at the ESC of Central Ohio. ■

Raise Your Hand if You Want Engaged Students: Training Teachers to use Reward-Based Techniques that Work!

by Emma Judge, MA

Every school wants engaged students that work well together. What methods are you using for behavior? What training do teachers receive to keep students interested and on track? In this essay I share content from my professional development for teachers and some ready-to-use tools to help educators get practical about positive behavior.



Rewarding students who are behaving correctly gives teachers and students a workable system that is also encouraging.

Some of the popular behavior management used in classrooms today are punishment-based methods that are sometimes ineffective. On the other hand, when we use reward-based techniques, teaching becomes constructive, hopeful, and workable. When

training and coaching teachers I find it is extremely helpful to make a clear distinction between punishment and reward strategies.

How Punishment Works on the Mind and in the Classroom

Punishment-based strategies start students at a neutral behavior status, and if misbehavior happens their status worsens. Let's take the example of color charts, which normally use three colors to rank students' behavior. They start out in Green and if they misbehave, teachers might give a warning and move them into Yellow and eventually into Red. This is a descending method in that students go from good to bad. A variation of the color chart contains more colors, which is a similar concept. Another method is putting names and checkmarks on the board for misbehavior. It signals that a worse punishment is coming, such as no recess, an office referral or extra school work. In one school students carried a folder that teachers and staff signed if students misbehaved, affecting their self-esteem and motivation. Negative verbals and non-verbals such as frowns, arguments, or empty threats are also punishments. Students can detect disapproval and disappointment and can sometimes become scared or demotivated.



Reward methods that are interactive, personalized, or playful are very good motivators to initiate and sustain good behavior.

I like to ask teachers, What happens when students reach Red? They generally answer that students get more punishment, such as an office referral or a note home. Punishment can be exhausting for teachers and discouraging to students. However, rewarding students who are behaving correctly gives teachers and students a workable system that is also encouraging. More about reward-based techniques below, but Why not use punishment?

I find that it is very hard to build and expand on punishment. I signed your folder, sent you to the office, or put you in the Red. What do I do with you next? In one school I observed that at any given time there were several students waiting to see the principal for their punishment, missing instructional time, and feeling gloomy. How do you help those students get back in the classroom, get motivated and learning again? Teachers that use clear, systematic reward systems contain misbehavior inside the classroom and see positive classroom atmosphere and student engagement.

What are reward strategies and how do they work?

I have found that reward methods that are interactive, personalized, or playful are very good motivators to initiate and sustain good behavior. A reward-based system starts students at a neutral behavior status that can only get better! Students can expand, improve and stay motivated. Rewards help them to stay on track and engaged, and more important, it helps teachers keep time and energy for instruction. One strategy that works is reward charts.

Reward charts are teacher-friendly and colorful boards that can be moved around the room, and contain interactive pieces for each student. Imagine a chart in elementary where students have rockets that move through the atmosphere with each correct behavior, reaching space for an extra reward. Reward charts are a great support for teachers because they provide pre-planned, clear expectations and consequences. Teachers don't have to improvise, repeat themselves and waste time. For students, charts can be fun, motivating, even competitive when appropriate.

Here are some tips on how to get started using rewards.

1. Stay creative, open-minded and moving with the students, because they develop and learn fast. One strategy that worked three months ago will not work the entire school year. No need for frustration with the students, instead be happy that they have developed and moved on, needing something new to keep their interest. Maybe have different methods that you use at the same time, for example, verbal encouragement, paired with a reward chart. Plan this ahead and you will find that the effort upfront pays off generously as you move forward

2. Decide what behaviors you want your students to display. You can choose good classroom behavior, target problem areas in your room, or personalized behavior goals. Work with approximately three behaviors at one time in K-2nd, five in 3rd-5th, and up to eight in Middle and High School. Make sure the behaviors are specific and broken down clearly. "Be polite" is not a clear behavior. Instead teach, "Put books back where you found them so other students can use them when you are finished." Co-create the desired behaviors with students, explaining and practicing them together. Ensure students understand what the behavior is and what it is not, and clarify how they get rewarded, when and what for. Update your set of desired behaviors because learning plateaus, so once students have perfected one set of behaviors, quickly introduce another.

3. What rewards will you use? It can be a verbal reward, an extra privilege, a small gift, or a combination of these (avoid using candy as rewards). Students respond well to smiles, high five or a quiet comment in private. Using rewards is more about a teaching style than it is giving "stuff" to students. Here are some examples, "Good job following

directions the first time" or "You can move your rocket into the Stratosphere, because you did what I asked" or "You earned extra computer time today." One teacher I observed rewarded students by tables, "Table one is seated and quiet. Excellent." Make your rewards age appropriate and easy to track! How about becoming the teacher's helper in elementary, sending a great note home for middle school, or extra privileges in high school. Even with college I find that rewards are productive. I reward students with extra points for leadership or invite them to coach other students when they show mastery of a concept.



Reward-based tools create a constructive atmosphere and can protect from escalation and conflict.

Combining reward and punishment techniques

Is punishment ever needed or useful? I get best results when I mix rewards with punishments, approximately one punishment for every five rewards. In other words, focus on the rewards and make it your teaching style. If punishment is needed, resort to it cautiously. Punishment must be well planned and used sparingly, and avoid resorting to punishment out of frustration or impulsivity, because this can scare students, bring down school morale or even escalate some students. Several educators have told me that escalation is a problem in their schools, so make sure the system you use is student-friendly. Reward-based tools create a constructive atmosphere and can protect from escalation and conflict. If you incorporate punishment into your behavior management, define it as clearly as the rewards, explain it to your students ahead of time, and administer with empathy and care.

FAQ's

School has already started, can I add rewards now?

Yes. You can improve classroom atmosphere by making a switch to rewards at any time. After one training a teacher told me that she stopped using punishments and gave only rewards, from one day to the next. She was beaming at the end of the first day!

What if the rewards don't work? Try changing the desired behaviors, changing the rewards, or making it easier or more difficult to get the reward. Ask the students what they think. The key is to stay creative and flexible

What if some students respond to the rewards and others don't? Not all students are the same, so you might use several different reward methods at one time – maybe a grade doesn't motivate a student, but he is motivated by a smile or a caring comment on his exam. Adapt the desired behavior for certain students, making it more personalized. Involve the students for great buy-in.

How does a school training work? Training is customized to each school, but I find the best combination is practical, experiential training sessions for a group of teachers, followed by classroom observations and coaching for individual teachers or small groups. Email emma@emmajudge.net for more details.

Putting it all together:

Good behavior management does not happen in a vacuum. Successful correction comes in the context of relationship. I tell teachers to find something they like about each student before they even consider correction, or it might backfire! Learning to connect and work with families and involving school staff in the process are other important topics we don't have space for here.

We learn by reward more than by punishment. Become trained in using proper reward methods and

learn to catch students doing things right instead of doing things wrong! Be creative with your rewards and step back to watch the students enjoy coming to class. Using reward is a great investment of time and energy that will pay off as the school year progresses.

Teacher, counselor and trainer for 20 years, in Europe and the U.S., Emma Judge, MA, trains in schools and at Kent State University. ■

The Impact of a Teacher-Leader Model of Professional Development on Student Achievement and Value-Added Scores

By: Ronald J Iarussi, Superintendent, Mahoning County Educational Services Center and Mahoning County Career and Technical Center and Karen H Larwin, Youngstown State University

Teacher-leader Model of Professional Development
Educational reforms in America today argue that states cannot be compared to each other regarding student achievement because of a lack of common core of standards and assessments. The Ohio Department of Education (ODE) has chosen Ohio's system of educational service centers to provide teachers with professional development regarding implementation of those standards. The focus of this recent investigation examined the impact of the teacher-leader model of professional development that is being used to prepare educators for these reforms. The teacher-leader model is one fiscally efficient method of professional development, however, its potential impact on teacher practices, and ultimately student achievement was unknown.

The train-the-trainer model (or teacher-leader model) is being used by some states to implement Common Core State Standards (Kavanaugh, 2012).

In Tennessee and Ohio for example, the state selects exemplary educators to serve as core coaches who facilitate training sessions across the state (Kavanaugh, 2012). Prior to this investigation, there was no known research that directly links the achievement levels of students to specifically common core professional development using the teacher-leader model. There is also little known about the other types of professional development and the methods used to deliver Common Core State Standards in each of the states that have participated (Center, 2013). A preponderance of the existing research on the impact of a train-the-trainer type of professional development is related to some qualitative evidence that links an increase

(Pollnow, 2012). In this case, a mixed method design was used to measure quantitative and qualitative results. In the Arizona study, the *number* of formative assessments increased for those teachers who participated in the teacher-leader professional development (Pollnow, 2012). Unfortunately, Pollnow did not examine if a relationship existed between formative assessment results and increased achievement, but merely concluded that it was assumed that increased formative assessments would be beneficial in allowing teachers to provide more informed and individualized instruction resulting in higher achievement.

Teacher-Leader Model Impact in NE OHIO

The current investigation examines student achievement and value-added scores in reading and math for grades four through eight in 17 districts throughout Mahoning, Columbiana, and Trumbull counties. Thirteen districts were used in the treatment group and the remaining districts were included in the control group. The treatment group consisted of districts that participated in the professional development provided by the local ESC using the teacher-leader model of delivery. The control group included the districts that did not participate. The dependent variables of student achievement scores and value-added scores were the measures of the effects. The overall student sample size was $n = 13,391$, from $n = 17$ schools. Scores were drawn from those students in both reading and math.



Peer-led professional development is strongly perceived... as increasing faculty togetherness or community.

-Hickey, 2005

in school culture variables such as collaboration, self-efficacy, and professionalism.

An example of the type of research that has been conducted is a study in rural Texas. The district conducted surveys of both the teachers who conducted the professional development as well as those who were active participants. The results showed that peer-led professional development is strongly perceived by the presenters as increasing faculty togetherness or community (Hickey, 2005). As is the case in much of the existing research, no additional investigation examined impact on student achievement in the district for those teachers that expressed an increase in professionalism and collaboration as a result of the professional development they received using the train-the-trainer model.

One exception is a study from Arizona that used results from student *formative* assessments to measure the professional developments impact

The complete study of this investigation and reference are available at:

https://etd.ohiolink.edu/!etd.send_file?accession=ysu1401788812&disposition=inline

The results reveal that there is a significant increase in mean achievement scores in reading and math among the treatment group when compared to the mean achievement scores of the control group.

However, when math and reading scores are examined by grade level, district, and group, results reveal that there is no significant pattern difference in scores for both reading and math across both groups.

Research does suggest that use of the teacher-leader model, which increases the positive achievement variables such as culture and self-efficacy, should impact student achievement (Pollnow, 2012). This is the first known study that specifically demonstrates the impact that professional development through the teacher-leader model is associated with higher achievement. The results of this investigation support Pollnow's conclusions. In the current study, a positive and significant correlation was revealed between math and reading achievement scores. While most research focused on K-8 suggests a correlation exists (Konstantopoulos, 2013, Larwin, 2010), there is research that suggests the correlations are not as significant as one might assume (Villa, 2008).



Research does suggest that use of the teacher-leader model... should impact student achievement.

- Pollnow, 2012

The current investigation yield similar results when examining value-added scores. Overall, value-added scores are higher for the treatment group compared to the control group. Results depicted by grade level show higher value-added scores in grades five through eight in reading and math for the groups receiving the teacher-lead professional development. The fourth grade results are different in reading and math where the treatment scores are only slightly lower than the control group. These slighter differences may reflect the recent implementation of the third grade reading guarantee. Schools are now required to implement interventions at the third grade level for those

students who are low achieving. If the control group scores are lower than the treatment group scores, this may reflect that more interventions were in place for that group resulting in higher value-added scores as evident with one particular control group school.

In addition, eighth grade value-added math results that were higher for the control group schools. A possible explanation for this result is that two schools in the control group had abnormally high calculated value-added scores, significantly impacting the average results. Removing these outlier schools changed the overall results in favor of the treatment group. Unlike achievement scores, value-added math scores are not as highly correlated to reading value-added scores.

Consistent with expectations, the current investigation found that variables such as income, mobility, and race are highly correlated to achievement in both reading in math, across both groups. As expected, the same correlations do not exist for value-added scores and the independent variables. Research has determined that correlations exist between reading achievement and math achievement can be attributed to reading ability. Usually poor reading ability automatically undermines a student's likelihood of success in math achievement, due to the nature of standardized mathematics assessments (Konstantopoulos, 2013, Larwin, 2010).

Limitations

Many contributing variables influence the outcomes of achievement testing. To say that one variable is the sole cause of an outcome is not defensible. Existing research suggests that there are many variables that affect achievement (Louis et al., 2010). For example, efficacy of the classroom teacher and teacher-leaders can positively affect achievement while poverty and mobility can negatively affect achievement. Macro level factors such as economic instability or political influences can also impact achievement. For this reason, directly linking

achievement scores to any independent variable has its limitations.

As a causal-comparative approach, this investigation simply utilized existing student data from school districts that participated in the intervention. No manipulation of the data or selection of the participants occurred. Therefore, the results reflect the differences seen for those who received the intervention as opposed to those districts that did not participate. Based on conducted analysis, the independent variables that may have confounded results were relatively balanced across both the control and treatment groups.



The teacher-leader model is the most cost effective and the most efficient means, educationally, to deliver professional development.

Second, there are limitations to using test scores as a measurement of an indirect intervention, such as events that occur outside the classroom that might impact one aspect of the educational process. While test scores are not the best measure of student achievement, currently, it is generally accepted for accountability and measurement (Bell, Wilson, Higgins, & McCoach, 2010). According to Thomas (2013), it is rare to connect student achievement to interventions that are not directly delivered to students. However, the current investigation was, in fact, able to demonstrate a link between an indirect intervention and differences in student achievement via test results.

Conclusion

The teacher-leader model is the most cost effective and the most efficient means, educationally, to deliver the professional development. There is limited research about the effect of the teacher-leader model directly related to student achievement. This investigation is the first of its

kind. The contribution of this research will benefit educational entities that are in the decision making process as to which model of professional development would be most effective in relation to raising student achievement. Timely, ongoing, and effective professional development will be instrumental in implementing the standards (Center, 2013).

Based on the results of this investigation, the local ESC was effective in providing professional development for the school districts that participated. Also based on the results, there are opportunities for the ESC to improve the model and add components to provide a better investigation and evaluation such as a qualitative type of feedback from teachers who participated regarding the model and the implementation within the school districts. That type of information would allow for more in depth analysis of other independent variables that might have an effect on the outcomes and would provide the evidence needed to most effectively improve the ongoing professional development delivery.

The complete study of this investigation and reference are available by request or can be found at:

https://etd.ohiolink.edu/!etd.send_file?accessio

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INFOhio Announces Storia: Ohio's 4th Grade eBook Collection!

by INFOhio

Ohio's 4th grade teachers have free access to a special collection of 160 eBooks through Scholastic's Storia as part of an INFOhio pilot program for the remainder of the 2014-15 school year. The 160 titles were specially chosen to support Ohio's 4th grade standards in English, math, social studies, and science.

In a nutshell, Storia: Ohio's 4th Grade eBook Collection:

- Gives 4th grade students and teachers free access to 160 fiction and nonfiction eBooks that support Ohio's New Learning Standards.
- Gives students special features—such as vocabulary look up, highlighting, and electronic notes—that increase comprehension.
- Gives teachers data about the active reading strategies students use and their scores on reading comprehension challenges for each book.

160

The number of eBooks found in
INFOhio's 4th Grade collection

- Lets teachers assign books to the entire class, a small group, or an individual student.

To get access to Storia:

1. Complete this brief form (www.infohio.org/goto/getstoria) to request your teacher access code from INFOhio.
2. Use the teacher access code to create your account.
3. Set up your class or classes.
4. Choose the eBooks you want to use and assign them to your students individually, in groups, or to the whole class. When searching the collection, you can limit results by Lexile, genre, standard, and more.
5. Track your students' reading progress.

The steps are outlined in the [Storia Getting Started Guide](#).

More information—including an FAQ, a Title List, and getting started videos and webinars—is available on the [INFOhio Storia: Ohio's 4th Grade eBook Collection information page](#).

Please email support@infohio.org with questions or comments. ■

Are You Power-Listening?

by Phil Stella, Effective Training & Communication, Inc.

Power-Listening? What does that have to do with your job as a business professional? Well ... a lot, when you get out of your own box and view your role

as a workplace communicator and problem-solver for your internal and/or external customers.

You spend a large part of your day verbally communicating important messages to important people – customers, staff, colleagues, bosses, suppliers, partners, etc. And listening is a critically important part of that verbal communication process. Yet, we tend to be terrible listeners, remembering very little of what we hear.

Power Listening Best Practices

1. Stop Confusing Hearing with Listening
2. Listen on Three Levels
3. Don't Multi-task
4. Manage Your Feelings
5. Focus on the Message
6. Take Brief Notes
7. Don't Confuse Empathy with Sympathy
8. Talk Less/Listen More
9. Tell Less/Ask More
10. Follow up in Writing

So, here are 10 simple – but not easy – Best Practice strategies for becoming Power Listeners at work.

1. Stop Confusing Hearing with Listening

“I hear you ...” we like to respond. Well, of course we hear you. Hearing is a constant automatic physiological activity. We hear everything all the time. Listening is very different. Listening is a conscious decision to pay attention to and deal with what we are hearing. Hearing doesn't take practice – listening does. To be a Power Listener, you must commit to do it ... and to do it correctly.

2. Listen on Three Levels

There are three components to any face-to-face interaction – the words we say, the tone of voice

used to deliver those words and the visual cues from body language that accompany those words. Research conducted years ago by Stanford University psychologist Dr. Albert Mehrabien shows that words account for only 7% of the impact and retention of the message, tone of voice accounts for 38% and visual cues 55%. Over the [phone](#), we lose the visual component. The impact of words increases to 18%, but the impact of tone of voice more than doubles to 82%.

When we listen, we must decode the factual content of the words, be sensitive to the feelings expressed by the tone of voice and observe the visual cues from body language. If all three “messages” are consistent, the message is reinforced and understood. But, if the tone and/or body language contradict the words, we get confused and typically believe what we feel or see the most. This tri-level of listening takes concentration and effort. So does transmitting a consistent tri-level message.

3. Don't Multi-task

You can't talk to yourself and listen effectively to someone else at the same time. When you daydream, think of more interesting things than what you're hearing or make decisions too quickly about the message or the messenger, then you're talking to yourself and not listening completely.

Multitasking is an easy trap to fall into because our brains can process more bits of data than we have to process when listening to someone speaking at 120 words per minute. It's what we do with that extra brain capacity that gets us in trouble. If we commit to listen intensely on three levels, that should take about all the brainpower we have.

4. Manage Your Feelings

When we feel the message is boring or too long or we've heard it all many times before ... we get in trouble. When we feel the messenger is not worthy of our respect because he or she is different from us – different gender, generation, race, ethnic

background, educational or experience level ... we get in trouble. When we feel we already know the answer to the question and begin “rehearsing” it before the person finishes talking ... we get in trouble. When we feel the person is criticizing or attacking us and we get mad or defensive ... well, you get the point.

5. Focus on the Message

Use your excess brainpower productively to avoid getting in trouble. Keep focusing on the facts, tone and visual components, but don't jump ahead. Regularly pause to “play back” what you've heard by repeating or rephrasing the words and recognizing the feelings expressed by the tone or visual cues. Ask for validation. For example, “Let me make sure I understand what you're saying. You're not happy because the project is two weeks behind schedule and 20% over budget already. Is that correct?” Whatever answer the messenger gives you is the correct answer. Don't argue – take ownership for the miscommunication – even when it's not your fault – clarify and move on.

6. Take Brief Notes

When listening to someone describing a situation or a problem, take notes to capture important facts and feelings. But, keep them brief so you can devote most of your attention to the messenger, not the note pad. Use your notes for your periodic repeat/rephrase “playbacks”. Ask for a short pause when you need one to catch up with the messenger.

7. Don't Confuse Empathy with Sympathy

When the messenger is expressing strong feelings or complaining about a problem, it's important to acknowledge those feelings. Sympathy suggests a shared experience ... “Been there, done that.” We feel compelled to say, “I understand what you mean.” But, if we can't directly relate to the situation because we've never experienced a similar one, we can't really understand. The upset messenger is

likely to know that and throw our words back at us. How do you respond to ‘How do you know how I feel when you’ve never _____?’

Empathy suggests recognizing the messenger’s feelings and acknowledging them without necessarily agreeing with these feelings or even relating to them. “I can see how upset you are with the project delay and cost...” is responding with empathy, not sympathy.

8. Talk Less/Listen More

You can’t listen effectively if you’re talking to yourself. You can’t listen effectively if you talking to the other person too much, either. You enhance the interaction and get to the outcome faster and better when you talk less and listen more to the words, tone and visual cues. Then it will be he easier for you to conclude the conversation successfully, solve the problem or deal with the situation. When you’re talking – you aren’t listening. Silence is golden.

9. Tell Less/Ask More

Ask lots of good questions that draw out important facts and feelings. Use open ended questions – “What didn’t you like about the candidate?” and closed questions – “How many other people do you want to interview?” Ask probing questions to get beyond the venting of frustration or anger – “Give me another example of Joe’s unprofessional behavior” or “Why is that important to you?” If you’re telling too much and not asking enough, you make it difficult to listen effectively.

10. Follow up in Writing

To minimize miscommunication or misunderstanding, quickly follow up on the conversation with a brief written summary. Include key facts, issues, solutions or outcomes. If the other person doesn’t remember the conversation the same way you do, the written summary will uncover that discrepancy quickly. The extra time you take to

send a written summary is always worth the effort and makes the communication process easier.

Simple – Not Easy

“So what you’re suggesting is that you’re very enthusiastic about these 10 Power Listening strategies. You realize they are simple and worth embracing, but they’re not easy. Did I get that correct?” Yes, I did.

Make the commitment to integrate these techniques into your natural interacting style. Focus on gradual but consistent improvement. You have the most to gain from improving your listening effectiveness and efficiency. And your increasing image as a Power Listener will enhance your value and worth to your internal and external customers. Do you hear what I’m saying?

Phil Stella runs Effective Training & Communication, www.communicate-confidently.com, 440 449-0356, and empowers business leaders to communicate confidently. A popular trainer and executive coach on workplace communications and sales presentations, he is also on the Cleveland faculty at the University of Phoenix and the Goldman Sachs 10,000 Small Businesses Initiative. ■

We Want to Hear from YOU!

Your feedback is important to us!

We’d like to get your input on OESCA’s communication efforts. What information do you want to know? How do you want it delivered? With what frequency?

Help us serve you by getting the right information to you in the way you want it. Simply complete the 6 question survey by clicking [here](https://www.surveymonkey.com/s/oescacomunications).
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29th Annual Ohio ESC Association Capital Conference Award Winners

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Mary Jean Theaker

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The Honorable Lou Gentile, Ohio Senate

OESCA Teamwork Award

Ohio Valley, Muskingum Valley, East Central Ohio,
and Jefferson County ESCs
The North Coast Shared Services Alliance
Jefferson County ESC

OESCA Torch Award

Dr. Laura Meeks

OESCA Lifetime Achievement Award

Peter G. Tolan
Dr. Charley Joyce
C. Eric "Rick" Metzger
Larry Morgan
Dale Lennon
Bryan O'Hara

Inside OESCA Article and Advertisement Submission Guidelines

Article Submission Guidelines

- Article maximum length is 750 words. Exceptions can be granted at the discretion of the editor.
- Write about a timely and relevant topic of interest to Ohio ESCs and the Ohio education community (e.g., Leadership, Organizational Management, Child Nutrition, Governance, Accountability, Curriculum & Instruction, Standards and Assessment, Gifted Education, Special Education, Shared Services, etc.)
- Include a brief abstract (approximately 40 words) and a bio (approximately 20 words) with the article.
- Attach any related electronic pictures, charts or diagrams if possible and desired.
- Use headings and subheadings.
- Include an introduction and concluding section or paragraph.
- Format any relevant citations according to APA style.

Advertisement Submission Guidelines

- Size: Max – 4.25" high by 3.75" wide.
- In .JPEG, .GIF, .BMP, or .PDF format.

Publication Dates and Deadlines for Submission

- The newsletter is published in September, December, March, and June of each year.
- Submission deadlines are August 15, November 15, February 15, and May 15.

Send articles and advertisements to membersupport@oesca.org prior to the deadlines outlined above. Questions? Contact Jessica Madison (madison@oesca.org) or Donna Burge (dburge@oesca.org) at 614.846.3855 or via email.

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Ohio Educational Service Center Association

2014 – 2015

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About OESCA

The Ohio Educational Service Center Association (OESCA) represents the superintendents, teachers, supervisors and other personnel of Ohio's Educational Service Centers and seeks to promote excellence in education through the quality services provided by its member organizations.

OESCA provides legislative updates, coordinates member lobbying efforts and organizes communications among its member organizations. OESCA also provides professional development opportunities for service center administrators and personnel through issue-related seminars and major conferences.

Mission

OESCA and its members provide leadership and services that enable school districts to increase student achievement and improve Ohio's educational system.

Vision

OESCA will be recognized at state and national levels for educational leadership and superior member services.

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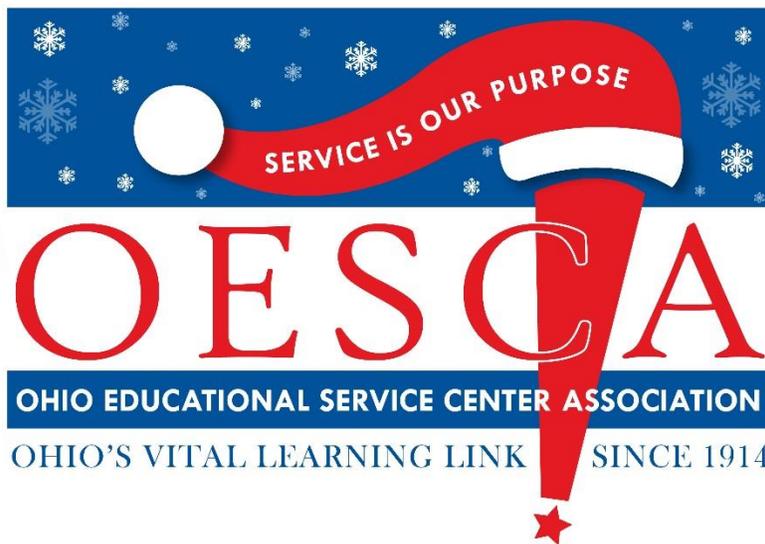
Happy Holidays!



May you have a warm and memorable holiday season!

Dana Bunge

Jessica Madison



Craig E. Buzard



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