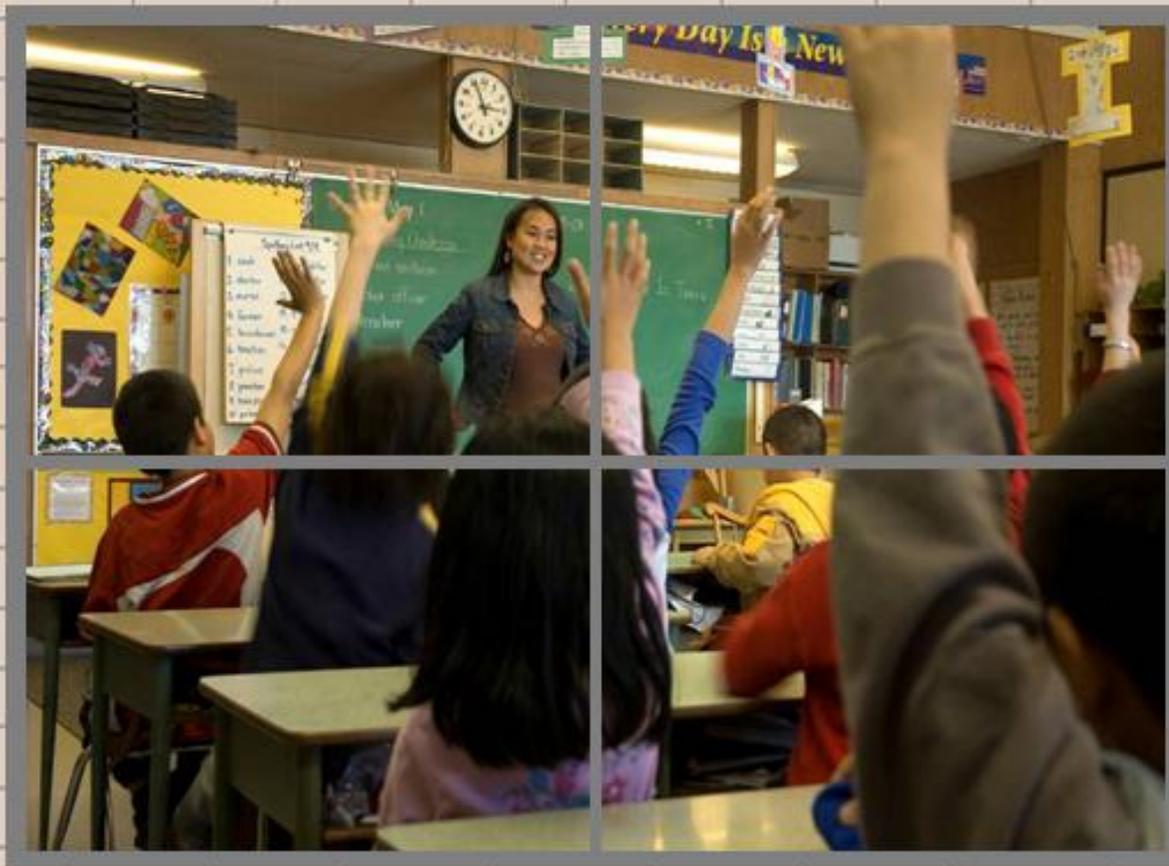


# Allen County Schools

## Windows of Common Practice



# Allen County Schools

## Mission Goals and Outcomes

### **Each member of the school district owns the success or failure of each student.**

We don't blame other factors when kids don't learn, we blame ourselves. We accept that we have the greatest power to inspire any student to be successful. We do not accept mediocre effort and demand that each student perform at the uppermost limits of his or her potential.

### **A common pedagogical language exists between all teachers and administrators within the district.**

Each member of the district can identify the five themes of common practice and works toward the development/refinement of each in their classroom and school.

### **All members are cognoscente of their use of the most effective teaching strategies.**

Teachers develop and maintain a deep level of knowledge around their content area. All members have an understanding of the most effective learning strategies, when to use them and how to use them effectively. On any given day, these practices can be observed in any classroom at any Allen County School. All administrative staff develops and maintains knowledge of and actively looks for these strategies. All administrative staff have an understanding of effective leadership practices and know when and how to use them.

### **All members seek first to learn then to measure.**

Grading practices are redesigned to focus on learning. Students are taught from kindergarten through the senior year that learning is most important. Challenging tasks and courses are favored by students. Hard work and persistence is recognized by all. Teachers provide feedback to students about their progress toward mastering standards.

### **Students are more engaged and have more ownership in their learning.**

Classroom focus is on what the student is doing. Teachers act as facilitators of learning by designing and sequencing the tasks. Students work together, self-assess themselves, set goals, and monitor progress toward meeting learning goals. There is a focus on higher levels of thinking (Bloom) and problem solving. Students can identify purpose of the learning experience, don't give up on tough tasks, take more rigorous classes, and seek help when they don't understand.

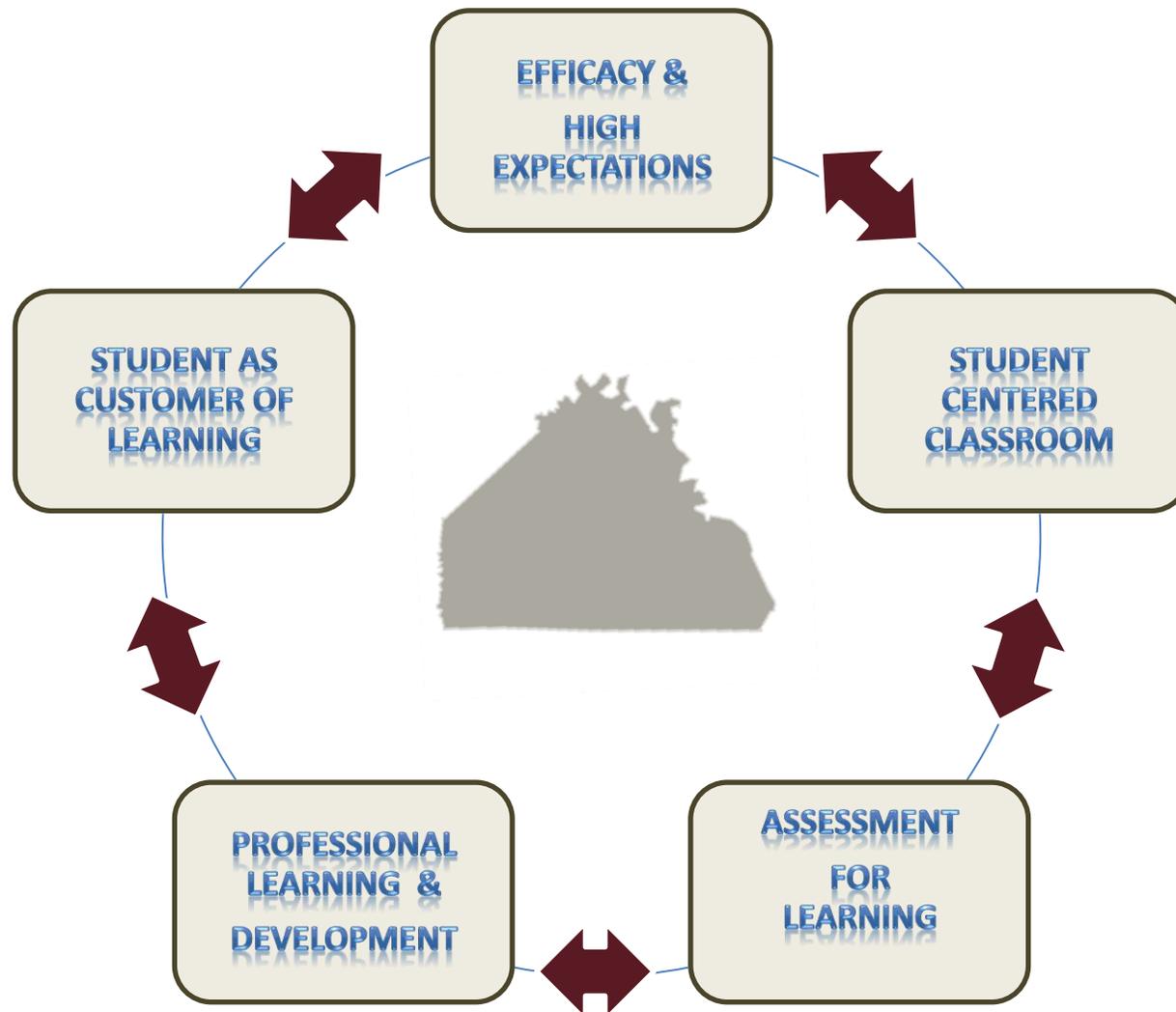
### **All training focuses on the mission of the district and school.**

Faculties meet regularly each month to develop/refine teaching practices. Teachers practice strategies and collect samples. Peer observations and learning walks (Rounds) are conducted regularly. Teams meet to debrief and plan next steps. All training revolves around the five themes or content knowledge.

### **All decisions are data informed.**

Members collect student data on formative, pre/post unit tests, quarterly tests, and standardized tests and discuss outcomes with colleagues and plan next steps. Everyone takes time to celebrate improvements and accomplishments.

## Windows of Common Practice



## Allen County Schools

# Windows of Common Practice

Windows are gateways into our minds. Through them we can view the world from a distance while imagining ourselves being there. Sometimes we use windows as protection to peek at that which we fear. Other times we raise the window to bask in the warmth of the sun, enjoy the smell of Spring, or catch a gentle breeze. We use them to contemplate our problems, think about past memories, and ponder the future. Sometimes we knock excitedly to call attention and with exuberance we say “let us in”!

The Windows of Common Practice is meant to appeal to the senses. Each window is based on the most advanced educational thinking known at this time. Each window showcases a best practice idea and is designed to paint a picture in the reader’s mind of what it looks like, and would be like in any classroom as viewed from the eyes of the teacher, principal, or student. It is our hope, to create a common language and set the best practices across the entire district, and unite us as one.

# High Expectations

I believe that I am responsible and capable of helping every student reach proficiency.

## BOARD OF EDUCATION

- Govern effectively and with integrity, emphasize student achievement and practice good stewardship of the District's human, financial and property resources.
- Act as a staunch advocate for high quality schools, instructional curricula and professional staff dedicated to the educational welfare of all children, regardless of their ability, race, creed, sex or social standing and maintain knowledge about educational advances as they evolve.
- Help their constituents to understand the importance of broad community support and involvement in the public schools, and in turn, serve their constituents by helping ensure accountability of the schools to the community.
- Provide community insight to the Superintendent and evaluate the administration's responses to community expectations, work to adopt effective policies which give the administration authority commensurate to its responsibilities, demonstrate the support and respect due the District's skilled, professional employees.

**"ALL OF US ALONE ARE WEAKER,  
BY FAR, THAN IF ALL OF US  
ARE TOGETHER"**

## CENTRAL OFFICE

- Define the District Mission.
- Establish/Oversee training opportunities commensurate with the mission and vision.
- Be present in schools assisting with development.
- Conduct classroom visits and offer feedback.
- Evaluate programs for effectiveness.
- Make recommendations based on data collection.
- Assist building administrators with struggling teachers.
- Assist with the development of highly effective teachers.
- Keep supplies and materials flowing.
- Develop/sustain budgets to maintain needs.
- Collaborate with building administrators.
- Monitor progress of mission objectives.
- Sustain a quality substitute teaching program – components include screening applicants, and formal training.
- Develop/sustain a rigorous teacher candidacy program.
- Develop a leadership candidacy program.
- Ensure effective, ongoing problem-based dialogue with administrators.
- Meet Quarterly with Principals to review data and progress toward school goals.
- Model and promote a growth mindset

# High Expectations

I believe that I am responsible and capable of helping every student reach proficiency.

## PRINCIPALS

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- Is aware of undercurrents running within the school and uses this information to address current/potential problems
  - Adapts leadership behavior to needs of situation, is comfortable with dissent from staff and creating a healthy tension for continuous improvement toward goals.
  - Protects teachers from issues that detract their time and focus away from teaching
  - Monitors the effectiveness of school practices and their impact on student achievement
    - Data gathering and analyzing
    - Academic goal development
    - Unit Planning
    - Learning team – Instructional Rounds
  - Is an advocate for the school to all stakeholders
  - Actively challenges the status quo
  - Fosters shared beliefs and a sense of community and cooperation
  - Involves teachers in design and implementation of important decisions and policies
  - Demonstrates knowledge of curriculum, instruction, and assessment practices
  - Establishes a set of operating procedures and routines
- Recognizes and rewards individual accomplishments
  - Defines clear school goals and keeps them in the forefront
  - Operates from the school mission and vision
  - Leads staff professional development
  - Regularly visible in classrooms and around school
  - Inspire and lead new innovations (Leads Change)
    - People first - Guiding Coalition
    - Keep in mind the implementation dip
    - Keeps plan short and focused – Clear vision
    - Change behavior before beliefs – Build in culture
    - Communicate, communicate, communicate
    - Learn as you go
    - Keep emotion static - Short term wins
    - Take risks
    - Be assertive - Urgency
  - Establish/maintain a continuum of support strategies for struggling students
  - Develop/sustain a rigorous teacher candidacy program
  - Establish procedures to hold all students accountable for doing school work
- Portions adapted from *School Leadership that works* by Robert Marzano  
Portions adapted from ideas of Douglas Reeves – *The Learning Leader*  
Portions adapted from the ideas of Michael Fullan – *Motion Leadership*  
Portions adapted from the ideas of John Kotter - *Leading Change*

# High Expectations

I believe that I am responsible and capable of helping every student reach proficiency.

## TEACHERS

- Teachers say “It is up to me and the tasks I design in my classroom, not student home-life, which will determine if my students are successful”.
- Set and defend a high standard for answering questions – Use Right is Right strategy – Hold out for the correct answer to the question, expect critical vocabulary to be used.
- Expect students to answer questions – Use no opt out strategy instead of letting kids have final answer of “I don’t know” – teachers, stick with them to get a correct answer.
- Extend knowledge by following up on student answers to questions using the stretch it strategy.
- Expect students to write and speak using complete sentences (Grades 1 – 12)
- Raise the expectation of content – Avoid saying things like, “I know you may find this boring”. Avoid blaming, “We are required to teach this by the State”.
- Use random calling during questioning and call on students regardless of whether they raise their hand – Cold Call Strategy.
- Increase the chance of success by using wait time to hold student attention or write time – everyone writes down answer before someone is called on.
- Hold the same high expectations for all ability students
- Confront the brutal facts of their situation but maintain an unwavering belief that they will prevail with all their students.
- Develop as a professional – continue to learn and refine teaching practices
- Do everything in their power to ensure that their students are successful.
- Seek to develop their own skills to handle students who are in need.
- Don’t blame students for not learning, instead look for tools and strategies to overcome.
- Talk with colleagues who may be having success with a particular student to see what is working for them.
- Expect students to do school work and take measures to correct when they don’t.



# High Expectations

## Critical Vocabulary

- **Cold Call** – Is an engagement strategy where the teacher calls on students regardless of whether they have their hand raised. It is effective for several reasons. Cold call helps you to formally assess students, increases class speed since you are not waiting on volunteers, and helps you distribute the work among more students. It is most effective as a tool for engagement since it keeps students alert, knowing they could be called upon at any time.
- **No Opt Out** – An approach where students who are unable or are unwilling to answer a question do so correctly even if they repeat the correct answer. Prevents students from using the “I don’t know” strategy to avoid engagement and accountability. There are four different formats. The bottom line is that students know they are expected to answer correctly Example: Teacher - What is  $3 \times 8$ , Johnny?  
Student - 32  
Teacher - What is  $3 \times 8$ , Mark?  
Student - 24  
Teacher – Good. What is  $3 \times 8$ , Johnny?  
Johnny – 24
- **Right is Right** – The practice of not accepting partially correct answers from students. We teachers often get partially correct answers from students, tell them they are right and then we embellish the answer to make it exactly right. Using right is right, we expect students to give the full correct answer, even if we have to cue, or use a no opt out strategy.
- **Stretch It** – A tool for assessment and differentiation. Helps rule out the factors of luck, coincidence, or partial mastery leading to the correct answer. It is the practice of probing to check for deeper understanding after a student correctly answers a question. It also serves as a tool to stretch your stronger students’ thinking thus making class more challenging for them. Adapted from the book *Teach Like a Champion* by Doug Lemov.
- **Wait Time**- 3 to 5 second pause after asking a question. Gives students time to process information and form an answer in their mind.



# High Expectations

## In the Words of the Teachers and Education Researchers

- I know most of you can't spell your name. You don't know the alphabet, you don't know how to read, you don't know homonyms or how to syllabicate. I promise you that you will. None of you has ever failed. School may have failed you. Well, goodbye to failure, children. Welcome to success. You will read hard books in here and understand what you read. You will write everyday...But you must help me to help you. If you don't give anything, don't expect anything. Success is not coming to you, you must come to it." Marva Collins
- Reluctant students quickly come to recognize that "I don't know", is the Rosetta stone of work avoidance. (Lemov, 2010)
- If you could call for a few minutes every day, students will come to expect it and change their behavior in advance. (Lemov, 2010)
- Effort-based ability is the belief that all students can do rigorous academic work at high standards, even if they are far behind academically and need a significant amount of time to catch up. Educators who carry this belief into their practice are not unrealistic about the obstacles they and their students face. They simply have not given up. (Jonathon Saphier)
- Expectation is defined as the confidence that something will happen. (Robyn Jackson, 2009)
- Standards are not the same as expectations. A standard is the bar and the expectation is our belief about whether students will ever reach this bar.
- Low expectations (belief that some students just can't do the work) of students says more about what you think of your own abilities than they do about what you think of your students' abilities. When you say that you don't think the students can achieve a goal, what you are really saying is that you don't think you have the skills to help them achieve it. (Robyn Jackson, 2009)



# Student Centered Classroom

## Student as Thinker and Worker, Teacher as Facilitator of Learning Experiences

### TEACHER CHARACTERISTICS

- Teacher facilitates the work. (Work is meaningful, rigorous, and grounded in real world applications)
- Intentionally plans work to deepen student understanding.
- Designs classroom learning experiences based on effective practices, (Thoughtful Ed.) that extend into the higher order of Bloom or PISA, and connect to real situations. (Experiences are designed to scaffold learning from the knowledge to the synthesis level of thinking)
- Create learning experiences that challenge students to think and understand deeply and attack complex tasks.
- Plans for and asks student questions that extend into the higher levels of Bloom.
- Plans for students to use technology as a tool for higher order thinking. (Analysis, Synthesis, Creating)
- Creates learning experiences which allow students to collaborate and work together to solve problems and complete tasks. (Teacher establishes structure, routines, rituals, and celebrations)
- Models their own thinking to students – Use Think Alouds.
- Use workshop model as main delivery system – Plan learning experiences around student work time. For example, in a 45 minute period, students should be able to work for 25 minutes as teacher facilitates. Components include: mini lesson, work time, catch, release, debrief. Goal: Support students to reach independence. (Students doing work/thinking)

### STUDENT CHARACTERISTICS

- Does most of the work (thinking, writing, etc.) for most of the class time.
- Students persist on difficult activities. (Build stamina)
- Actively seek understanding by asking and answering questions posed by themselves, teachers, and peers.
- Use technology to create, communicate, synthesize, analyze, & advocate for new ideas in the process of learning critical content.
- Student products meet or exceed the level of the task as measured by rubric, checklist, model, etc.
- Students self-assess and peer assess progress toward learning targets.
- Students chart their progress toward learning goals.
- Explain their understanding using details, content vocabulary, and can provide examples/evidence. (connect to real situations)
- Use developed writing skills in a variety of ways to support learning. (Writing to Learn activities)
- Students can make sense of the content they learn and can apply it to real world situations. Students engage various texts using annotations to hold their thinking and develop meta cognition. (Making Connections)
- Students are able to apply their thinking to new and more complex problems. (transfer learning to another subject or situation)

# Student Centered Classroom

## Student as Thinker and Worker, Teacher as Facilitator of Learning Experiences

### TEACHER CHARACTERISTICS

- Within Workshop, use gradual release of responsibility – Plans allow students to take ownership of their learning and high levels of thinking. Components include I do, We do, You do. Purpose: Teachers gradually release responsibility for learning to students. Students become independent thinkers/ learners.
- Provide students with opportunities to practice using literacy strategies as a common tool for thinking.
- Writing for understanding is used regularly (authentic/real contexts...social studies students might write editorials; PE might collect data and set goals, etc. explain, deepen understanding vs. regurgitation)
- Provide opportunities for students to ask and answer their own questions instead of bailing them out by telling them or doing it for them.
- Allow students to struggle some with finding solutions.
- Model a growth mindset for students by emphasizing processes of learning and teaching students to embrace challenging work as an opportunity to learn and develop skills.
- Emphasize to students that learning/intelligence is not fixed and is attained by work. (Studying, note taking, etc.)
- Emphasize that all students can think and learn at high levels in spite of learning differences.

### STUDENT CHARACTERISTICS

- Students are heard using the comprehension strategies (Questioning, Inferring, Determining Importance, Make Connections, Visualize using sensory image, Synthesizing) while thinking and interacting with text, problems, issues, etc.
- Students articulate and understand learning intentions/targets and criteria for success. (Rubrics)
- Students set some of their own learning goals.
- Students are supported in their struggle and encouraged to take risks as learners to develop problem solving and thinking skills.
- Work collaboratively while engaging in a task. Indicators include sharing ideas, asking questions, debating, work diligently to solve task operations.
- Believe they can contribute – Don't bail out during tasks or deflect questions with escape tactics. (silence, I don't know, etc...)
- Believe that it is the work they put into their learning experiences that determines their success.
- Do not shy away from challenging problems, courses, or assignments because they are afraid of failure.
- Shares themselves as a higher-order thinker exhibiting resilience, resourcefulness, reflectiveness, and reciprocity.

# Student Centered Classroom

## Critical Vocabulary

- **Understanding** – The ability to think and act flexibly with what one knows. In keeping with this, learning for understanding is like learning a flexible performance—more like learning to improvise jazz or hold a good conversation or rock climb than learning the multiplication table or the dates of the presidents or that  $F = MA$ . Learning facts can be a crucial backdrop to learning for understanding, but learning facts is not learning for understanding. (David Perkins, 1998) The ability to transfer what we have learned to new settings. (Wiggins)
- **Gradual Release of Responsibility** – A framework that gives teachers a structured way to think about how to best support students in becoming independent thinkers. It is characterized by six stages: Direct Instruction, Modeling (I do, you watch), Guided Practice (I do, you help), Collaborative Work (You do with peers), Independent Work, Sharing and Reflection. (You do, I watch)
- **Workshop** – A process of scaffolding student learning, characterized by a mini lesson followed by independent student or group work followed by teacher bringing class back to whole group to debrief, then releasing back to individual or group work. Often called catching and releasing.
- **Thinking** – **\*Thinking** is active, it is not something that happens, but an activity that **makes meaning**. **\*Thinking** is strategic; it is not automatic, inspired, or random, but **learned**. **\*Thinking highlights what is important**; it does not treat all material equally - **\*Thinking** is focused; it **creates foreground and background**. (Plaut, 2009)
- **Teaching Thinking** – **\*Empower** students by helping them see the role thinking plays in the world. **\*Provide** them with material worth thinking about. **\*Give** time and space to practice the skill of thinking about material. **\*Give** them time to reflect on their own work and own thinking, and reassess their positions. (Plaut)
- **Problem Solving** – A process, not a skill, which engages students in a task for which the solution method is not known in advance. In order to find a solution, students must draw on their knowledge, and through this process, they will often develop new understandings. Students should have frequent opportunities to formulate, grapple with, and solve complex problems that require a significant amount of effort and then be encouraged to reflect on their thinking.

# Student Centered Classroom

## Critical Vocabulary

- **Teaching Problem Solving & Reasoning** – Use complex word problems/scenarios. Model a strategy; Read and Reasoning (Plaut), Braid Model of Problem Solving are examples (Hyde). Assess and name students’ thinking as they work. Plan next steps of instruction. (Plaut)
  - **Tasks** - A set of problems or a single complex problem which focuses student attention on a particular idea.
  - **Low-Level Tasks** - Involve memorization and procedures without connections, have specific procedures, have very little ambiguity about what needs to be done and how to do it, focuses on producing correct answers, require no explanation or limited solely to procedure.
  - **High- Level Tasks** – Procedures with connections and doing mathematics, no predictable approach to or pathway suggested, requires considerable cognitive effort and may involve anxiety for student due to unpredictable nature of the solution, students use past learning experiences to help solve problem.
  - **Standards for Mathematical Content** - A balanced combination of procedure and understanding. Expectations that begin with the word “understand” are often especially good opportunities to connect the practices to the content. Students who lack understanding of a topic may rely on procedures too heavily. Without a flexible base from which
- to work, they may be less likely to consider analogous problems, represent problems coherently, justify conclusions, apply the mathematics to practical situations, use technology mindfully to work with the mathematics, explain the mathematics accurately to other students, step back for an overview, or deviate from a known procedure to find a shortcut. In short, a lack of understanding effectively prevents a student from engaging in the mathematical practices.
- **Resilience** – perseverance, manage distractions, absorption; an incremental learning mindset.
  - **Resourcefulness** – Make connections, question, imagine, reasoning.
  - **Reflectiveness** – Planning, revising, distilling, meta-learning.
  - **Reciprocity** – Interdependence, collaboration, empathy and listening, imitation.
  - **Growth Mindset** – A student’s belief about learning:
    - I can increase my intelligence
    - I understand people learn at different rates
    - I love to learn something new
    - I am excited by challenge
    - I feel clever when I am exerting effort to learn something new – stretching my skills

# Student Centered Classroom

## Critical Vocabulary

- **Fixed Mindset** – A student’s belief about learning:
  - I cannot increase my intelligence
  - Perceives challenges as threats, so avoids them
  - (Includes challenging courses (AP) as well as some tasks
  - Worries that others will not think they are smart.
  - May disengage or quit when confronted with difficult tasks to avoid feeling less intelligent than peers.
- **Student Centered Classroom** – A classroom where students do most of the thinking and doing during learning experiences and the teacher is the primary facilitator of those learning experiences. It is not independent study and does involve the teacher as presenter on a regular basis. The aim is to shift classroom time to less teacher talk, more student talk. Follows the premise that the one who is doing the talking, doing, and thinking, is the one who is doing the learning.
- **Think Aloud** – Process of modeling one’s thinking out loud to students. Used to create an example of how to accomplish a task. Helps students learn how to think through different situations.
- **Thinking Strategies** – Making Connections, Asking Questions, Inference, Visualizing, Determining Importance, Synthesis.
- **PISA** - The Program for International Student Assessment (PISA) is a system of international assessments that focuses on 15-year-olds' capabilities in reading literacy, mathematics literacy, and science literacy. PISA also includes measures of general or cross-curricular competencies such as problem solving.



# Student Centered Classroom

## In the Words of Teachers and Educational Researchers

- “Each year I seem to be burdened, a bit broken by “silver bullet” programs . . . the latest and greatest way to fill students’ minds. I share this with you because these are issues that so often beat us down, break us, and burden us. **How do I wade through it—keep from drowning?** I become increasingly knowledgeable grounded in best practices (practices that have a history . . . have stood the test of time, not just stand the time of tests). I’ve focused on best practices that advocate for the students who fill my classroom; those that support, initiate, and invite learning both in and out of my classroom. I know my negotiables and my non-negotiables. There are foundational beliefs that I use as my filter: the thinking strategies, units of study, understanding, inquiry, the gradual release of responsibility, and workshop model.” *Troy Rushmore 3<sup>rd</sup> grade teacher, Frontier Valley Elementary, Colorado*
- “As I reflect over my years of teaching, I can see a clear change in my teaching style from past years. It was as if a light bulb came on when I realized that I was doing most of the talking and thinking in my classes. I was learning a great wealth of information while my students touched only the surface. Through the Workshop Model and the Gradual Release I realized that my students should be the ones thinking and

discovering for themselves to allow for more meaning in the content. To allow for these moments to occur, I begin planning my lessons by asking myself, “What do I want the kids to know before they leave my classroom today?” “What products can they create as evidence to prove their understanding?”

*Melissa Stephens - 7<sup>th</sup> grade Math, JEBMS*

- When I read, I have learned to ask my own questions and find the answers. I don't need a list of questions from my teacher. I need my teachers to know that I'm smart, that I can think. *Sam, 6th grade*
- “Since my involvement with [thinking strategies], I have been able to create lessons that make my students think more about their learning. This has increased their understanding, independence, and motivation to think scientifically. One of the greatest challenges for me during this learning process has been to “relinquish control” of the learning in my classroom to the students. My biggest “AHA” moment so far has been the people who are doing the talking, are also doing the learning. Although I have a wealth of background knowledge to share with my students, I now realize that it is crucial to their development as lifelong learners for them to “sit in the driver’s seat”. It is my hope that today you will see active, engaged learners who are motivated to think about complex

# Student Centered Classroom

## In the Words of Teachers and Educational Researchers

ideas in science and preserve through tough challenges. I have faith that if I provide my students with the right tools and model proficient thinking, they will rise to the challenge and can achieve understanding without me “telling them the answer”.”

*April Craft – 8<sup>th</sup> grade Science, JEBMS*

- “When I finally took into consideration the statement, “The person doing the talking is the person doing the learning,” I realized I was doing most of the talking; therefore, maybe I was also doing most of the learning. That’s when I realized I was denying my students the opportunity to use a valuable learning strategy. I wasn’t allowing them to think for themselves. I was telling them what to think, when to think, and how to think. They were only passive participants in my world of thought. With this realization, I decided it was time for me to become a learner myself; a learner of my students’ own capabilities. In the beginning, it wasn’t easy for me stop providing answers to my student’s many questions. I remember the first time I answered a student’s question with, “I don’t know, what do you think?” The look I received was quite humorous! The comment was even more humorous. The student replied, “I don’t know, that’s why I asked you, you’re the teacher.” This was the big eye opener for me. I was asking the questions and

then answering them too. It was time for change, a change that has caused me some very frustrating moments, lots of plan changes and many sleepless nights. However, I’m proud to say I wouldn’t go back to the “good teacher” I thought I was and had been for several years, because the learning and thinking I’ve seen take place in my classroom this year has been amazing! It hasn’t been easy for me, but the changes have been worth every struggle and doubt.”

*Rita York - 8<sup>th</sup> grade Language Arts, JEBMS*

- If we want students to develop the capacity to think, reason, and problem solve then we need to start with high- level, cognitively complex tasks. (Stein & Lane, 1996)
- “When I was in 3rd grade I thought reading was saying the words. I had no idea that reading is thinking. Now when I read, I ask myself questions and find the answers, I see pictures in mind. Reading takes me places” *Sarah, 4th grade*
- **Where I am as a Teacher/Learner...**  
“Ultimately, I want my students to be successful when they leave my classroom, both in next year’s math class as well as for the rest of their lives. I have been grappling with how to really get at what they need to know and be able to do and then relate it to their lives. I want students to see a purpose for every single topic and to help them see connections to the

# Student Centered Classroom

## In the Words of Teachers and Educational Researchers

math they've already learned. I also want them to recognize the patterns found in mathematics. Backward planning and learning targets have been helping me with this. Another thing I am focusing on is really increasing the time that my students are doing the reading, writing, and talking and thus the thinking! The workshop model has been so useful for this." *Tracey McCumber Smokey Hill High School Algebra II Honors class*

- There is no decision that teachers make that has a greater impact on students' opportunities to learn and on their perceptions about what mathematics is than the selection of or creation of the tasks with which the teacher engages students in studying mathematics. (Lappan & Briars, 1995)
- Effective mathematics teaching requires understanding what students know and need to learn and then challenging and supporting them to learn it well. (NCTM, 2000)
- "I have been teaching using the thinking strategies as an instructional underpinning for over 20 years. Each year I try to refine and redefine each strategy. I look for the wisest ways to guide students to use them independently [and please hear this – it looks different *every year*] sometimes with more

success than others. I don't look at the strategies as a "philosophy, a lesson a minute, a program. My goal is to be authentic, not cute; deep, not surface [I mean depth in study – not surface versus deep structures]; explicit, not implicit; flexible, not controlling; mindful, not mindless. I've come to realize that by teaching my students how learners *think not just do* has had an amazing effect on our learning lives.

*Patrick Allen – Frontier Valley*



# Assessment for Learning

Each of my students and I can identify what they know and can do on each learning target

## TEACHER CHARACTERISTICS

- Shares learning targets and essential questions with all students as part of daily practice. (Unit Organizer, Post)
- Helps students set personal learning goals.
- Provides students with examples of strong and weak work.
- Provides feedback that is clear, descriptive, and timely.
- Teaches students to self-assess progress toward learning targets and personal learning goals and provides time and resources to do so.
- Models the revision of an answer, product, etc.
- Teaches students how to analyze work for quality and make suggestions for improvement.
- Uses various methods that allow students to reflect on their thinking and learning.
- Teaches students to track their own progress and provides time for students to monitor regularly.
- Monitors student progress regularly during a unit with various formative assessment tools.
- Adjusts instruction based on results of formative assessments. (Re-teaching, pause days, etc..)
- Allows/Expects students to re-test over learning targets that are missed so a level of mastery is achieved by the student.

## STUDENT CHARACTERISTICS

- Can identify/explain what the intended learning is for the class today.
- Sets personal learning goals for each unit of study
- Can identify characteristics of good and bad examples of work.
- Responds to feedback by making necessary adjustments to increase learning or develop skills.
- Self-assesses work results compared to certain criteria and determines cause and effect and identifies next steps to improve.
- Analyzes work (self or peer) for quality and suggests areas for improvement.
- Makes thoughtful reflections about their learning.
- Regularly tracks progress of learning targets and keeps this data where it is easily pulled for use.
- Studies missed learning targets until an acceptable level of mastery is obtained.
- Re-tests over targets formerly missed but recently mastered to prove targets have been learned.
- Understands that practice is not for punishment but for learning. They persist to do the work even when it is not for a grade.

# Assessment for Learning

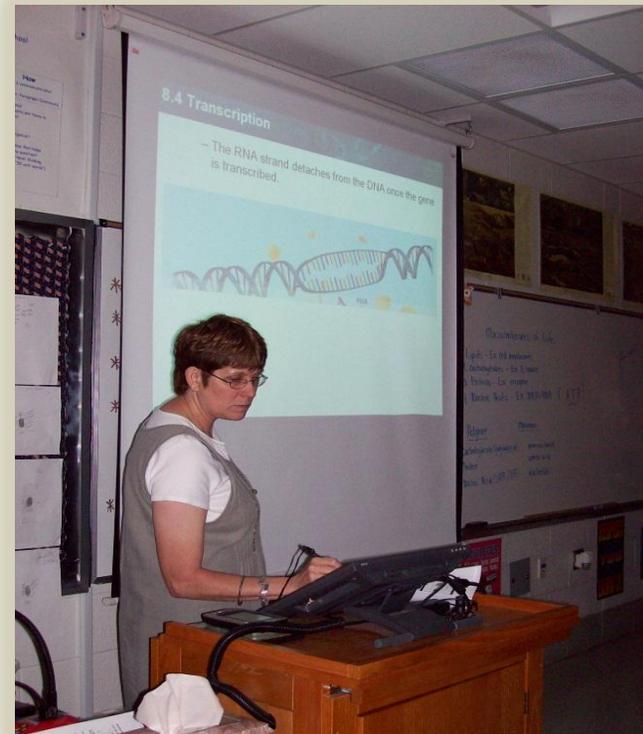
Each of my students and I can identify what they know and can do on each learning target

## TEACHER CHARACTERISTICS

- Gives academic grades only for academic tasks.
- Focuses students on intended learning by offering feedback as opposed to grades for practice/developmental work.
- Regularly assesses student progress then pauses to reteach concepts/targets not learned.
- Use common formative and summative assessments along with standardized common tests to determine student needs.
- Plans instructional next steps based on various data.
- Uses flexible grouping to differentiate instruction following a formative assessment.
- Develops unit assessments based on common core standards.
- Develops learning experiences around the unit assessment.
- Develops unit assessments that check for student understanding of specific learning targets.
- Develops unit assessments that are in line with the rigors of state and national tests.
- Develops quarterly tests to check for mastery of concepts.

## STUDENT CHARACTERISTICS

- Understands that when learning targets are not mastered, time and opportunity will be provided and effort is expected to make improvements.



# Assessment for Learning

## Critical Vocabulary

- **Assessment for Learning** – Process of using tests, quizzes, etc. for the purpose of checking for understanding. Information gained is used to adjust instruction to recover any deficit in student learning. Tests at this stage are not punitive so no grade is assigned. It is also good practice to let the students peer and self-assess.
- **Assessment of Learning** – Process of measuring the end result of all learning experiences. Usually defined by a summative test given at the end of a unit and or quarter of instruction.
- **Feedback** – Descriptive information for students that details how they are doing and what they can do to improve.
- **Flexible Grouping** – Groups formed by the teacher based on an assessment for learning. Each group receives some type of intervention on missed learning targets, or gets some enrichment, stretching their thinking about a topic. Also referred to as a “pause” day.
- **Learning Target** – What the student is supposed to know and be able to do at the end of instruction. Usually seen in student friendly form as an “I can” statement.
- **Model strong and weak work** – The process of showing students work that best illustrates the quality standards they are expected to meet and work that does not. It is considered best practice to allow students to analyze samples for quality and justify their evaluations.
- **Self-Assess** – Involves students looking at their own work and or performances to identify strengths and weaknesses. Helps students to see where they are in the learning process and what they need to do to improve.
- **Seven Strategies of Formative Assessment:**
  - Provide an understandable vision of learning target.
  - Use examples of strong and weak work.
  - Offer regular descriptive feedback.
  - Teach students to self-assess and set goals.
  - Design lessons to focus on one aspect of quality at a time.
  - Teach students focused revision.
  - Engage students in self-reflection and keep track of and share learning.

\*Rick Stiggins – *Classroom Assessment for Learning*

# Assessment for Learning

## In the Words of Teachers and Educational Researchers

- Show us what good work looks like and what we have to do to get there. An 8<sup>th</sup> grade student
- In a standards-based accountability system, achievement alone should be the basis for grades. If behavior or effort is to be related, it should be reported separately. (Trumbull, 2000)
- For grades to have real meaning, they must be relatively pure measures of each student's achievement of the learning targets.
- Bonus points and bonus grades distort true achievement since they factor in other behaviors so it is better not to use them. (O'Connor, 2002)
- Strong effort, active participation, and positive attitudes are highly valued attributes, but they are reporting variables, not grading variables. (O'Connor, 2002)
- We know that students will rarely perform at high levels on challenging learning tasks at their first attempt. Deep understanding or high levels of proficiency are achieved only as a result of trial, practice, adjustments based on feedback, and more practice. Performance-based instruction underscores the importance of using assessments to provide information to guide improvement throughout the learning process, instead of waiting to give feedback at the end of instruction. (McTighe, 1996/1997)
- Many assessments are designed to provide information so that teachers can adjust instruction and students can improve performance. This should be the prime purpose of quizzes.
- Words open up communication whereas numbers close it down. (O'Connor, 2002)
- What does count for grades are the performances students give to demonstrate the knowledge, skills, and behaviors they have acquired as a result of instruction and practice.
- Give students opportunities to practice before undertaking assessments that count directly in grades.
- If students demonstrate achievement at any time that, in effect, renders past assessment information inaccurate, then you must drop the former assessment from the record and replace it with the new. To do otherwise is to misrepresent that achievement. (Stiggins, 2001)
- For knowledge or skills that are cumulative, teachers need to look at the more recent information to determine grades.
- As life provides second chances (and more) so should school.
- Second chances do not mean an endless set of opportunities for students.
- The consequence for a student who fails to meet a standard is not a low grade but rather a requirement to re-submit his or her work. (Reeves, 2000)
- We must devise other ways to deal with students whose work is late or missing rather than giving zeros.
- The consequence for a student who fails to complete work is to complete the work. (Reeves, 2000)

# Assessment for Learning

## In the Words of Teachers and Educational Researchers

- No studies support low grades or marks as punishments. Instead of prompting greater effort, low grades more often cause students to withdraw from learning. (Guskey, 2000)
- We must constantly remind ourselves that the ultimate purpose of education is to have students become self-evaluating. If students graduate from our schools still dependent on others to tell them when they are adequate, good, or excellent, then we have missed the whole point of what education is about. (Costa & Kallick, 1992)
- The time has come to de-emphasize traditional grades and to demystify the entire grading process. We need to focus on the process of learning and the progress of the individual student. (Kaye Burke)
- I am thoroughly enjoying this new way of teaching! My students are plugged-in to US history more than I've ever seen! One of my students told me yesterday, "This is the first thing I've been interested in all year." (Glory hallelujah!). (ACSH Teacher)
- Formative assessment well done has the power to double the speed of students learning (William, 2008)



# Professional Learning and Development

Each of my students and I can identify what they know and can do on each learning target

## TEACHER CHARACTERISTICS

- Plans units of instruction using the standards, targets, and assessments as a guide to create learning activities.
- Works within the professional learning community (PLC) to analyze: Student work, assessment data (Teacher made tests, Think Link, quarterly assessments, Dibbles, GRADE/G-MADE) and units of study.
- Working with PLC, makes informed instructional decisions based on data from student assessments.
- Works with the PLC to conduct learning walks (rounds) each quarter.
- Works with the PLC to develop common formative and summative assessments.
- Develops curriculum maps which identify the grade level, what content will be learned, when it will be presented (by nine weeks), and the length of the unit. (days or weeks)
- Monitors curriculum maps and make adjustments as needed annually as related to what when, and how long.
- Openly shares successes, failures and mistakes.
- Works to keep updated on best teaching practices and latest knowledge/practices in their content area.
- Constructively analyze and criticize practice and procedure.
- Meet with department and or team at least monthly to discuss progress toward goals.

## STUDENT CHARACTERISTICS

- Plans and coordinates ongoing opportunities for professional learning communities to engage in their work.
- Monitors the effectiveness of the PLC work.
- Creates ongoing professional development opportunities that are:
  - Intensive and connected to everyday practice
  - Focused on teaching and learning specific content
  - Connected to school initiatives
- Establishes/Maintains induction programs for new staff.
- Openly shares successes, failures and mistakes.
- Provides opportunities for staff to share successes and ideas that worked well.
- Constructively analyze and criticize practice and procedure.
- Establishes clear, specific, measurable, elevated goals for the school with a results driven structure.
- Helps establish problem of practice and rounds process.



# Professional Learning and Development

## Critical Vocabulary

- **Instructional Rounds** – Process of getting all members of the school community organized around a shared language and common practice, then focusing energy on gathering information about its implementation and effectiveness. The team is usually composed of teachers and administrators from the school who visit classrooms with intent to collect data about the problem of practice. Rounds is a four-step process: Identifying a problem of practice, observing, debriefing, and next levels of work.
- **Problem of Practice** – The specific problem the school is focused on gathering feedback about. For example: If the school is wondering what levels (Bloom’s) of questions are being posed in classrooms, the team would visit classrooms and gather data on the types which are being used.
- **Professional Learning Community (PLC)** – A group of teachers and administrators working together to improve instruction for students. PLCs can be a content specific department, an interdisciplinary team, a pilot group or other ad-hoc committee who are looking at student work, sharing ideas and strategies, learning new or refining practices, analyzing data (assessment information), conducting rounds, etc. Members will usually be involved in multiple PLCs at any one time.
- **Induction Programs** – Aimed at providing intense training and support by a mentor for all new teachers at each building level. (In addition to District new teacher cohort)
- **Unit Plans** – Two to three week blocks of instruction focused on student learning of common core standards and skills in each content area. Characterized by essential questions, learning targets, differentiation, vocabulary development, and learning experiences.
- **Analyze Student Work** – The process of looking at student performance work to see if it meets an acceptable standard. Specifically, it tells the teacher what skills and literacy strategies, a student is using (or not) to complete tasks.
- **Analyze Student Data** – The process of looking at student assessment scores. (Pre/post, summative, formative, Think Link, state tests, etc.)
- **Unit Reviews** – The process of meeting with grade level, content area peers to reflect on the assessment results of a unit pre and post, the activities used, and make adjustments or plan changes for next time.



# Professional Learning and Development

## In the Words of Educators and Teachers...

- Teachers learn best from each other. (Rosenholtz, 1991)
- The image of the future would be a group of teachers sitting around a table talking about their student work, learning and asking “What do we need to do differently to get the work we would like from the kids”. (Sparks, 1998)
- Learning teams should meet at least monthly if improvement is to continue.
- Data are to goals what signposts are to travelers; data are not end points, but are essential to reaching them-the signposts on the road to school improvement. (Schmoker, 1999)
- The use of common assessments is essential to learning communities. Without them, teams cannot discern or enjoy the impact of their instruction on an ongoing basis. Celebrating and enjoying these short term results is the key to progress, to achieve momentum toward improvement. (Collins, 2001) (Schmoker, 2006)
- Learning to make effective, standards based units and assessments require teamwork. I have worked with teams who within a meeting or two, were able to produce lessons that enabled 100% of the students to master standards where the majority had previously failed. Collective planning...will produce far better assessment results. (Schmoker, 2006)
- The single most important step a school will take on the journey to becoming a learning community will be the adoption of learning (not teaching) as the central purpose of the school. (Dufour, 2004)
- Professional learning communities **shift focus to three critical areas**. It is impossible to improve the achievement levels of large numbers of students across all abilities and backgrounds unless **teachers are clear and consistent regarding what they expect students to learn in each course, grade level and unit of instruction**. It is also imperative that **teachers frequently gather evidence of each student’s learning using multiple forms of collaboratively developed assessments**. Finally, the **staff must develop a plan to identify students who experience initial difficulty in learning and provide additional time and support in a systematic way**. (Dufour, 2004)



# Students as Customers of Instruction

## Students are My Customers and I Must Offer Experiences They Want to be Engaged In

### TEACHER CHARACTERISTICS

- Views teachers as leaders and inventors. Views students as customers and seeks to improve the learning experiences in their classroom. (See critical vocabulary)
- Views students as customers and understands they must earn students' attention and commitment to the learning tasks.
- Designs learning experiences upon which students will place value and thus be engaged. (see critical vocabulary)
- Link activities to outcomes that students care about.
- Gain commitment from students by providing clear standards for work that students see as reasonable and significant.
- Provide feedback to the extent that students see that with effort they can be successful at meeting the learning target.
- Provide protection to students from initial failure by letting them practice new skills without penalty.
- Provide students protection from humiliation when they take a risk such as asking questions, making comments, testing a hypothesis, etc.
- Provide opportunities for students to affiliate with each other during the learning process. (Cooperative Learning)
- Teach students what is and what is not, effective collaborative learning.
- Provide students with some degree of choice or personal control over their working arrangements. (Choice to work alone, with a partner, or small group)

### STUDENT CHARACTERISTICS

- Can be heard having intense discussion over a topic.
- Can be heard posing new questions about a topic.
- Can be seen persevering with difficult content/problems.
- Can identify the learning targets being learned today.
- Can identify personal learning goals when asked.
- Can describe his or her progress toward mastery of learning targets.
- Can be viewed participating in discussions, asking questions, etc. as everyday behavior in both small and whole group situations.
- When learning targets are not mastered, student puts in time to prepare and then re-take tests.
- Can identify their individual learning style and the positive and negative effects it has on their learning.
- Knows practice work is not taken for a grade.
- Those who fall behind academically attend during after school hours to catch up.
- Celebrates success with peers.
- Can articulate that the summative grades they receive are a result of the effort they put forth during learning experiences.
- Students have frequent opportunities to display their work and or highlight their thinking to peers and others.
- Students can articulate the importance of concepts/skills they are learning.

# Students as Customers of Instruction

Students are My Customers and I Must Offer Experiences They Want to be Engaged In

## TEACHER CHARACTERISTICS

- Know which students find school boring and attempt to compensate by adding learning experiences that are attractive to these students.
- Makes sure that each student experiences some level of success. (pre/post-test, feedback, spotlight, etc.)
- Allows students to set goals that are meaningful to them.
- Teach students that effort leads to a level of success.
- Teach students that learning is not a product of luck.
- Celebrate moments of student success.
- Identifies student learning styles as defined by Carl Jung and uses this information in the development of learning experiences.
- Articulates the best practice research and uses it during instruction. Reeves 90/90/90, Marzano Strategies, Thoughtful Ed. Stiggins, Chappuis Formative Assessment, Schlechty, etc.
- When failure occurs, teacher works directly with the student to determine the reason and correct it.
- Frequently explains/reminds why a given content is important to students in the real world.
- Design the pattern of activity in the classroom to keep students authentically engaged. (See types of engagement)
- Holds to a rigorous standard of learning for all students.
- Maintains a highly engaged classroom.
- Finds ways to give students hope that they can succeed.

## STUDENT CHARACTERISTICS

- Is authentically engaged for most of a class period
- Exhibits a sense of hope, optimism that they can succeed.



# Students as Customers of Instruction

## Critical Vocabulary

- **Engaging Tasks – Three Characteristics:**

**Present manageable challenges** – Tasks challenge current capacity but student has some control over level of challenge

**Arouse curiosity** – Tasks are complex enough to keep the outcomes uncertain

Use the element of **fantasy** – Create imaginary circumstances that allow students immerse in the role

(Covington, 1992; Marzano, *What Works In Schools*)

- **“Best Practice”** is defined as a process that proved to be highly effective in achieving the intended outcome.

- **Types of Student Engagement –**

**Authentic** – The learning experiences or work that a student is assigned is associated with an outcome that has clear meaning and immediate value to the student. (Reading a book on a topic of special interest to the student)

**Ritual** – Completing the learning experience has no personal meaning or direct value to the student. The student associates the work to extrinsic outcomes that are valuable to him or her. (Reading a book in order to pass a test)

**Passive Compliance** – The student expends only enough effort to avoid negative consequences. Student sees little meaning in the work or any value of doing it.

- **Types of Student Engagement – Cont’d.**

**Retreatism** – The student is disengaged from the task, expends no energy attempting to comply. The student does not disrupt others or substitute other activities for the assigned task.

**Rebellion** – The student refuses to do the assigned task. The student disrupts others and participates in activities to which they are committed instead of those held by the teacher and school.

\*From the work of Phil Schlechty – *Working on the Work* (2002)

- **Highly Engaged Classroom** – A classroom where all students are engaged most of the time. It has very little or no retreatism, rebellion, or passive compliance. (Schlechty, 2002)

- **Teachers are Leaders** – They are known more by what they are able to get others to do than by what they do themselves. (Schlechty, 2002)

- **Teachers are Inventors** – They are creators of school work that authentically engages students. They must ensure the work created results in students learning what is intended that they learn. (Schlechty, 2002)

- **Rigorous** – Challenge. Tasks that challenge students (Their knowledge, creativity, skills) are the ones most likely to increase motivation and engagement.

# Students as Customers of Instruction

## In the Words of Teachers and Educational Researchers

- We don't have to rely on students entering our class already interested in our content, and we can build our repertoire with strategies for tickling their interest. (Quate and McDermott, 2009)
- If students doubt their competency, they lose interest, divert attention away from their limitation, or flee. (Smith and Wilhelm, 2006)
- Class is the place where you don't feel left out because everyone knows who you are. (10th Grade Student)
- If I have the belief that I can do it, I shall surely acquire the capacity to do it even if I may not have it in the beginning. (Mahatma Gandhi)
- Students don't thrive in environments in which they feel judged. Instead, they thrive in supportive, challenging environments, particularly when they have someone to mentor them. (Dweck, 2006)
- Students will not exert effort in academic work if they are convinced that they lack the capacity to succeed or have no control over outcomes. Students are more likely to do school work when they have some choice in the courses they take, the material they study, and the strategies they use to complete tasks. (National Research Council, 2004)
- A teacher's goal is to teach just slightly beyond where a student is. This is where engagement is most likely to occur. (Smith and Wilhelm, 2002)
- 60% of students failing in middle/high schools are related to mismatch in teaching style and student learning style.
- Celebrations illuminate competence rather than flaws. By naming what students do well, teachers provide the scaffolding for developing an "I can do it" attitude, which leads to the self-efficacy necessary for engagement.
- Celebrations must be about accomplishments: earnest, authentic accomplishments. Students need to have accomplished something that is meaningful, challenging, and substantive if celebration is to have the desired effect of motivating students and engaging them in future work. (Quate and McDermott, 2009)
- The business of schools is to produce intellectually demanding and rigorous tasks that engage students, inspire them to persist when they have difficulties, and produce in students a sense of satisfaction and accomplishment. Educators, like business leaders, must understand that to produce their desired results, they must get customers, keep customers, and satisfy customers. Their focus therefore must be on the customer (student) and on the products (learning experiences we provide) that will meet the needs of the customer. (Schlechty, 2001)
- It is critical that we know and understand the learning styles of students. Below is the population of each group and their susceptibility to failing your class. (Silver and Strong)  
Mastery student population is 35 %, 12% are at risk of failing.  
Understanding population is 10%, 1% is at risk of failing.  
Interpersonal population is 35%, **65%** are at risk of failing.  
Self-Expressive population is 20%, **22%** are at risk of failing.