

Rochester School District

*"The Mission of the Rochester School Department is to ensure **quality** educational experiences."*

January 2013

District-Wide Early Release Days

April 10

By April Early Release Participate in Co-Planning a Unit of Instruction with Either a Colleague from the Same Content Area, Special Education or Other Specialized Area

*"There are no silver bullets in education. But **writing**— particularly **nonfiction writing**— is as close as you can get to a single strategy that has **significant and positive effects** in nearly every other area of the curriculum. Nonfiction writing is the backbone of successful literacy and student achievement." ~Doug Reeves*

What did your students write today?

The Phases of Teaching

One of the most powerful observations that can be made about the Rochester School District is the extent to which teachers go in order to personalize their instruction. We understand that students don't care what you know until they know that you care. It is through developing relationships and by establishing clear and safe rules & procedures in our learning communities that we are able to deliver high-quality instruction. This month we focus on that daily instruction through the lenses of the four phases of teaching, with awareness that 90% of our instructional time should be spent in phases 2 & 4.

District Goals Update

Rochester Road Signs 

It is hard to believe that over four months ago we opened our **"roadmap to excellence"** for this school year. So, as we navigate January's thaws and cold spells it is a great time for us as a district to evaluate where we are on our journey to **ensure quality educational experiences for all students.**

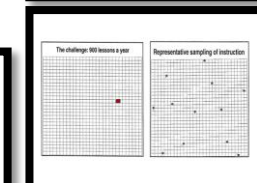
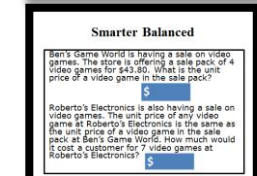
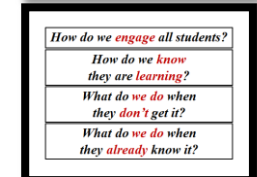
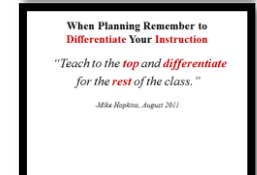
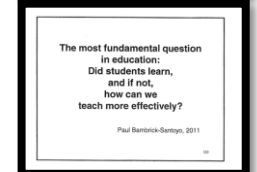
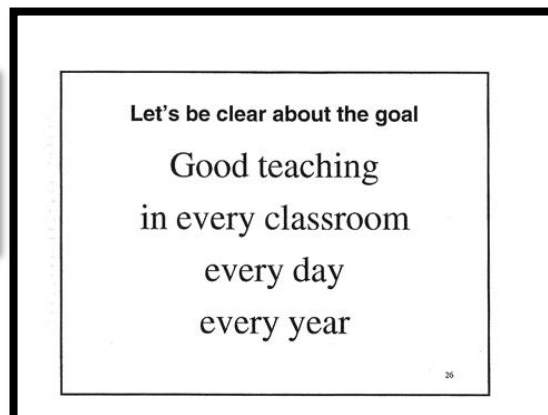
To the right of the page and below notice the road signs we saw ahead of us in late August and take into account what markers we have passed and will continue to pass. As we know some days our journey can feel like we are trapped in a roundabout because with a mission of excellence it ensures we are never done with our journey; however, the road we travel continues to improve!

Traffic reports indicate that folks feel overwhelmed with all the navigation our journey requires and the challenging detours that get in our way. However, it is important to take a moment on page two to review our itinerary to date and what we are looking forward to ahead us.

We are grateful and thankful to **Team Rochester** for traveling together on this journey to provide our students with **good teaching in every classroom every day every year!**

Thank you, **Team Rochester!**

Mike Hopkins
Mary Moriarty



Itinerary for Our Road to Excellence & Competencies

Keep in mind the change to competencies:

- Aligns our curriculum with the **Common Core State Standards**; this alignment is critical as students will be assessed on the Smarter Balanced Assessment Spring 2014 (pilot year).
- Identifies **clear learning targets** for students.
- Ensures **consistent** grading and assessment practices are in place throughout common grade levels and courses.

| | | Completed | | | In Progress |
|-----------------|----------------------|--|-----------------|--|--------------------|
| District | District | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Competency Camp held Summer 2012. • Competency Based Assessment Coaches established in each building. • CIA Website redesigned. • Rochester School District Assessment & Grading Philosophy Statement <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Check out the current document on the CIA website. • First draft created over the summer by K – 12 teachers and administrators. • Provided to all staff at the opening of the 2012 – 2013 school year. • Elementary feedback provided during October's Early Release Day. • Middle school feedback provided through PLC's. • High school feedback provided through Competency Based Assessment Coaches. • Revised draft created with K – 12 teachers and administrators. • Presented to Instruction Committee on December 20. | District | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • RSD Assessment & Grading Philosophy Statement will be reviewed by Instruction Committee on January 24 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Anticipate it will be voted on by the Rochester School Board at their February meeting • Monthly Competency Steering Committee meetings held; representation from all schools and levels are at these meetings (check with your principal for who represents your school). • Promotion Policy is being revised. • A <i>Special Education Summit</i> will be held shortly with administrators and others to address questions about special education and competencies; following this meeting some guiding information will be shared. • April – June – teachers will have training on how to use Infinite Campus. • A Grading Handbook will be developed by April to assist teachers in grading in a competency based system. | |
| | Elementary | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reading and mathematics competencies will be in place for the 2013 – 2014 school year; science and social studies competencies will be rolled out during the 2014 – 2015 school year. • Starting the 2013 – 2014 school year, all elementary teachers (K – 5) will use Infinite Campus. • Reading competencies drafts to be posted on CIA website by January 25 (working documents are on the website now). • Mathematics competencies drafts to be posted on CIA website by mid-February (working documents will be posted shortly). • January 25 (1/2 day Teacher Workshop) – each school will be reviewing the reading competencies and providing feedback. • A group of teachers will develop a <i>Model of Practice</i>, which is a complete unit plan and instructional model for working with competencies and core programs. This will include instructional, assessment and grading components. • March 15 (Teacher Workshop Day) – each school will review and provide feedback on the mathematics competencies and have a peer presentation on the <i>Model of Practices</i> for both reading and mathematics. • Alignment of competencies to core programs. • Each school is working on developing a process for relearning. | | | |
| | Middle School | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • PLC's have been working on creating their competencies and rubrics (check them out on the CIA website). • Beginning to work on examining current assessments and aligning them with the competencies. • Working on developing a process for relearning for the school. • A group of teachers will develop a <i>Model of Practice</i>, which is a complete unit plan and instructional model for working with competencies. This will include instructional, assessment and grading components. | | | |
| | High School | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continuing to implement competency based learning, instruction, assessing and grading. | | | |
| | | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Implemented Competency Based Learning & Grading 2011 - 2012 | | | |

Phases of Teaching



Phase 1: Getting their Attention,
*Freeze Body & Above Pause
Whisper*

Having consistent and predictable methods for getting the attention of your students produces results. The highly effective teacher's students react to their teacher's use of physical cues. How do you get your students' attention?



Phase 2: Teaching,
Raise Hand vs. Speak Out

Research indicates that 82% of all teacher communications are non-verbal messages. As such we would want to be sure those messages are clear, consistent, and elicit the desired behaviors. How do you unleash the power of non-verbal cues during teaching?



Phase 3: Transition,
*Exit Directions, Most Important 20
Seconds*

When providing instructions, enhancing them orally & visually provides greater clarity and doubles the length of memory. Allowing a few quiet seconds assists students in learning how to process internally. How do you empower your students to be more independent during classroom transitions?



Phase 4: Practice,
Off Neutral On

Research indicates that 80% of students' seatwork time is spent on 4-6 students. These 4-6 students are the ones who have not yet been "turned on", ready to engage in their practice work. How do you identify the students you help from those who you manage? Once identified, how are your responses to those groups of learners differentiated?

Advanced **Classroom Management Strategy**

Last month we talked about the **Conflict Cycle**, and if **not broken** it will **Spiral into a Crisis** for the student.

Seven Techniques and Strategies to Help Break the Destructive Force of the Conflict Cycle

1. View conflict as a natural and inevitable part of a student's life.
2. View conflict as neither good nor bad for the student, but as a function of the student's perceptions and thoughts.
3. Remember during conflict, the student's irrational beliefs trigger his/her feelings and emotions.
4. Remember during conflict, feelings and emotions usually drive the student's behavior which frequently is inappropriate causing problems between staff, peers, rules and most important student learning.
5. During a conflict, students are their own worst enemy and will defend, deny, blame, rationalize and regress from owning their behavior or having any responsibility for their behavior.
6. As a result, the student in conflict frequently creates in others their feelings, and if not trained the staff may not only pick up student's feelings/emotions but also may mirror the student's inappropriate behavior.
7. If we as adults allow the conflict cycle to follow its normal pattern, the initial stressful incident becomes escalated into a new and painful "Power Struggle" in which there are No Winners, especially the student involved.

Change the Conflict Cycle to a Coping Cycle

Below are a few "**Key**" **Concepts** and **Skills** the adult will need in order to change the Conflict Cycle to a Coping Cycle.

- Knowledge of the Conflict Cycle (CC) raises our consciousness about conflict since we know in advance that a student in stress will create in us his/her feelings. "To be Forewarned is to be Forearmed"
- Knowledge of CC enables us to accept our own "Counter-Aggressive Feelings" toward the student. This is a genuine feeling that provides the adult with a useful indicator of how the Student must also be "Feeling".
- Knowledge of CC helps the adult to choose not to take part in a Power Struggle with the student. (This is a conscious choice by the adult).
- The Knowledge of using "I" messages instead of "You" messages when handling student's in conflict.
- The knowledge of focusing our energy on what the student Needs instead of what we are Feeling.
- Knowledge of CC enables us to help the student make the connection between the student's behavior, feelings/emotions and the original stressful situation.
- Knowledge of CC enables us to help the student focus on managing stress, coping skills, the Here and Now, Personal Responsibility and Self-Worth.

Learning and using the above information will begin to help us understand why the Conflict is starting and most important how we can help the student turn the Conflict into a Learning and Coping Experience.



**Remember, during a crisis,
we must
Act Like a Thermostat,
Not Like a Thermometer!**

Coaches' Corner



Heidi Zollman &
Erica Stofanek

Check out Power Points on the *Strategies* - go to the *Curriculum, Instruction and Assessment Website* found on the Intranet!

The Unit Plan

As Team Rochester continues striving toward our goal: **K - 12 Student learning in the Rochester School District will be fostered through a 100% Competency Based Instructional Model by September 2013**, we continue to make *exceptional* progress on our Competency Documents from K to 12! Competency Documents are being uploaded to the CIA site weekly! <https://sites.google.com/a/sau54.org/cia/home>

While that work continues, we now begin to deepen our own depth of knowledge of this work, as we begin to *apply* our learning to our instructional and assessment systems. At the district level this year, that product is the co-planned Unit Plan.

What are the expectations of the Unit Plan?

- **Collaborate!** You may choose to work with *one* other colleague, with your entire PLC, with your grade level, with a Special Education Teacher, with a Unified Arts Teacher, the list goes on! If you're working with at least *one* other colleague, you're meeting the expectation!
- **Aim to incorporate all 9 of the RSD Adopted Instructional Strategies!** These strategies are research-based, proven to produce significant gains in student learning. Last year we focused on each strategy in isolation. This year we make an effort to ensure that all 9 are intentionally embedded in each unit of instruction.
- **Assessment through Writing!** The expectation is to engage *all* students in assessment through writing. A great way to do this is to ask students to *explain* their thinking!

Your collaborative unit plan should be completed by April 10th.

Additional support materials, including a district-adopted Understanding by Design (UBD) template, can be found on the CIA site (under the header Instruction, click on RSD Student Engagement & Learning Plan)! <https://sites.google.com/a/sau54.org/cia/ubd-unit-design-materials>

Last year, we became familiar with Robert Marzano's high-yield instructional strategies. This year, as we continue to refine our practice, we will discover *when* to use particular strategies during our instruction. Marzano's research studies give us the evidence so we know which strategies work! High student achievement can be attained through planning *targets of learning*.

There are four major questions that we need to consider when planning a unit of study. The chart above outlines which strategies are the most effective at each stage of the planning process. *Cooperative learning, homework and practice, and reinforcing effort* are on the side to encourage us to use those strategies **throughout** instruction. These general strategies have a significant impact on students' overall attitude and perceptions of learning. As we ask the last question regarding assessment practices, we will continue to focus on effective formative and summative assessments.

Targets of Learning and The Nine Strategies

Targets of Learning & The Nine Strategies

What knowledge will the student be learning?

- Setting Objectives & Providing Feedback

What will be done to help students acquire & integrate knowledge?

- Questions, Cues, & Advance Organizers
- Using Non-linguistic representation
- Summarizing & Note-taking

What will be done to help students practice, review, and apply this knowledge?

- Identify Similarities and Differences
- Generating & Testing Hypotheses

How will you know if students have learned this knowledge?

January/February *Strategies Spotlight*

| High Yield Instructional Strategies | Research says | Examples |
|--|---|--|
| Generating and Testing Hypothesis | Students should generate, explain, test and defend hypotheses using both inductive and deductive strategies through problem solving, history investigation, invention, experimental inquiry, and decision making. | Thinking processes, constructivist practices, investigate, explore, social construction of knowledge, use of inductive and deductive reasoning, questioning the author , etc. |
| Cues & Questions | Teachers should use cues and questions that focus on what is important (rather than unusual), use ample wait time before accepting responses, eliciting inference and analysis. | Graphic organizers , provide guiding questions before each lesson, think alouds , inferencing, predicting, drawing conclusions, skim chapters to identify key vocabulary, concepts and skills. |

Getting Gains in Student Learning

What strategies have you incorporated into your instruction plan today?

| Instructional Strategy | Percentile Gains |
|---|------------------|
| Identifying Similarities and Differences Compare/Contrast/Creating Metaphors/Creating Analogies | 45 |
| Summarizing and Note-Taking | 34 |
| Reinforcing Effort and Providing Recognition | 29 |
| Increasing Value in Homework and Practice | 28 |
| Using Non-Linguistic Representations Visual Learner Digital Learner | 27 |
| Incorporating Cooperative Learning Effectively | 27 |
| Setting Objectives and Providing Feedback (Goal Setting) | 23 |
| Generating and Testing Hypotheses | 23 |
| Utilizing Questions, Cues, and Advance Organizers | 22 |

A Handbook for
Classroom Instruction that Works
Marzano, Norford, Paynter, Pickering & Gaddy

Focus *Instructional Strategy*

In each of our newsletters this year, we highlight one instructional strategy and celebrate our vertical work. This month we place that focus on **Identifying Similarities & Differences, Comparing & Contrasting, and Creating Metaphors & Analogies**. As we **celebrate the K- 12 vertical work**, we reflect on the following questions:

WHAT is the purpose of identifying similarities and differences?

WHEN do I ask students to compare and contrast concepts?

Let's take a peek into some classrooms!

Submitted by **Debbie Cooper**
Reading Teacher
East Rochester School



This lesson occurred in **Nicole Merrigan's 1st grade class** to review the characteristics of insects. The class did an oral review and Mrs. Merrigan recorded on the white board the characteristics that the students mentioned. The students then did a picture sort where they cut out the pictures and organized them into insect/non insect categories according to the characteristics reviewed.

Why do I use this strategy?

Provides multisensory opportunity for students to demonstrate their learning/knowledge

Allows students to implement organizational skills independently
Reinforces class discussion

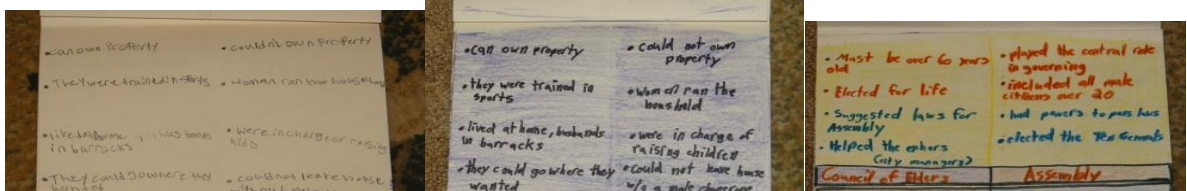
How does it impact student learning?

Accommodates tactile learners
Affords differentiated student participation

When do I use this strategy?

Woven throughout lessons to reinforce the concept with 1st grade
Re-teaching concepts

Grade 6 Social Studies Professional Learning Community
Rochester Middle School



Why do I Use This Strategy?

Making a foldable is a nice strategy to use with students because this allows them to not only to outline similarities and differences between two concepts, but this also allows them to use their creativity by making a visual presentation. In the case of this foldable, students were to compare and contrast the parts of the governments of Sparta & Athens.

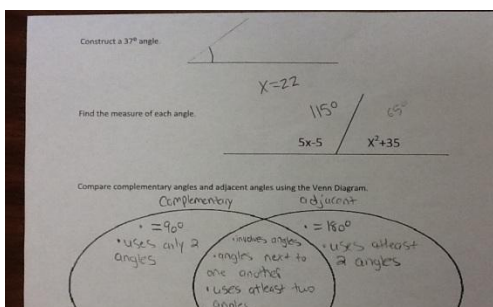
How does it Impact Student Learning?

When students have to make comparisons between sets of information, they need to read about the different pieces of facts from each set. For example, while both Sparta and Athens had a Council and an Assembly, these bodies were not structured in the same way; in Sparta's case the Council was more important, while in Athens' case the Assembly played the central role in governing. Such comparisons our PLC feels result in a deeper level of understanding than simply looking at the two government systems separately.

When do I use this strategy?

Our PLC will use some form of this strategy (Similarities and Differences), whenever there are two sets of information that can be compared and contrasted. While the foldable is one avenue that our PLC can use to accomplish this goal, we also use Venn Diagrams, tables and charts. This strategy could be used in virtually any Social Studies Unit.

Karrie Brady
Mathematics Teacher
Spaulding High School



Why do I use this strategy?

I want to know that students have internalized the meanings of the words beyond the textbook definition.

How does it impact student learning?

It asks students to place ideas in their own words & understand the properties of different terms.

When do I use this strategy?

When two terms have a relationship or could possibly be confused by students.