

Running Head: Student Achievement and Changing Roles

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Changing Roles of Teachers and Learners

My view of the traditional classroom is from reflections of my grade school years. The teacher's desk was in the front of the room facing three or four rows of student desks. The teacher lectured and I listened. Writing consisted of copying off the board. I do not remember any creative writing during my school years. Math was memorizing facts. Reading was reading from the basal readers. I was able to learn in a traditional classroom, but I remember some of my classmates struggling.

Classrooms today are more learner-centered with the teacher as a facilitator encouraging students to become independent learners as they seek out solutions to problems and draw upon prior knowledge. Children are much more likely to succeed in a differentiated classroom where the learning environment is created for all types of learners.

The research articles below summarize how effective classrooms today are shifting from traditional to learner-centered.

Article #1

The Six Ts of Effective Elementary Literacy Instruction

by Richard L. Allington

Effective literacy instruction was researched through hundreds of days of classroom observations and interviews with students and teachers. Six ts were found to be evident in the high student reading achievement classrooms that were researched. The ts included time, texts, teach, talk, tasks, and tests. Children in these classrooms spent 50 percent of their classroom day actually reading or writing compared to only 20 percent or less of a

typical classroom. Teachers in the classrooms encouraged much more student talk than typical classrooms.

We saw fundamental differences in the nature of the classroom talk in the exemplary teacher classrooms and the talk typically reported in classroom observational studies. First, we observed these teachers fostering much more student talk – teacher-student, student-student – than has been previously reported. In other words, these exemplary teachers encouraged, modeled, and supported lots of talk across the school day. This talk was purposeful talk though, not simply chatter. This talk was problem-posing, problem-solving talk related to curricular topics (Allington & Johnston, 2002; Johnston, Woodside-Jiron & Day, 2001). (Allington, Talk, 2002, ¶ 2)

Article #2

Improving Classroom Instruction and Student Learning for Resilient and Non-resilient English Language Learners by Yolanda N. Padrón, Hersh Waxman, Ann P. Brown, and Robert A. Powers - University of Houston

Research was conducted to compare the behaviors of resilient and non-resilient ELL learners. This study was done by observing and interviewing approximately 1000 4th and 5th grade ELL students. Teachers were interviewed also on the best teaching methods for ELL students. It was found the resilient students were on-task 83% of the time compared to 63% of the non-resilient students. According to the findings, 60 % of the resilient students indicated they had positive relationships with their teachers, whereas only 28 percent of the non-resilient students reported positive teacher relationships.

The teachers reported that almost any instructional approach worked with resilient students, whereas they said that cooperative learning, a structured curriculum, and "hands-on" activities were the most effective strategies for non-resilient students. The teachers also reported that teacher-directed instruction was the most ineffective instructional approach for both resilient and non-resilient students. It is noteworthy that these are the same teachers who were observed using teacher-directed instructional approaches most of the time. In other words, there is a great discrepancy between what teachers say are the most effective instructional practices and the actual instructional practices that they typically use in their classrooms. (Padrón, 2002, ¶ 8)

Article #3

Two Schools: Two Approaches to Personalized Learning

By John M. Jenkins and James W. Keefe

Two schools, one in Canada and one in the United States, are described in this article.

Both schools personalize instruction for their students.

The schools are somewhat different in philosophy and structure, but they share several characteristics. Both are committed to a personalized form of instruction that includes self-pacing, project learning, coaching and mentoring, advisement, experiential learning, community-based learning, and many of these strategies in combination. (Two Schools, One View, ¶ 2)

The school in the United States scored in the top 80% of the 25 school districts on the state mandated testing. The school in Canada was ranked at the top of the list of all high

schools on the provincial final examinations administered to all 12th-grade students in the province.

Article # 4

Project Star Fact Sheet

by Health & Education Research Operative Services, Inc.

The Project Star Fact Sheet reveals the results of the Tennessee K-3 grade research study on class size. Small classes were found to make the highest scores on the Stanford Achievement Test and the Basic Skills First Test and in all locations including rural, suburban, urban and inner-city schools. The research also revealed effective teacher characteristics and strategies in the smaller classrooms that included:

- Creative Writing, Hands on Experiences, Learning Centers, Use of Manipulatives
- Good Listener, Immediate Feedback, Monitoring, Preplanned Instruction, Well Organized
- Assertive Discipline, High Expectations, Peer Tutoring, Reteaching
- Effective Communication with Parents, Love of Children
- Enthusiasm, Flexibility, Patience, Sense of Humor

Article # 5

In-School and Out-of-School Factors That Build Student Achievement: Research-Based Implications for School Instructional Policy

By Reginald Clark, Ph.D.

Several factors regarding student achievement are discussed in the article. The factors include teacher instructional actions; teacher expectations for students; students' total weekly out-of-school time in high-yield activities; activity quality; parental standards,

beliefs, and expectations; and teacher-parent communication actions. The amount of time spent in engaged activities in relationship to student achievement is noted below.

Two key hypotheses are pertinent here. The first is that high-achieving students spend more time engaged in academic lessons in the classroom than low-achieving students, and they spend more time engaged in structured literacy-enhancing activities out of school. Second, and conversely, low-achieving students spend less total time engaged in structured learning activities (which include combined in-school and out-of-school time). (Clark, 2002, p.6 ¶ 2)

Conclusion

The five researched based articles discuss the characteristics of high achieving students in classrooms today. According to Newby teachers need to carefully plan out instruction. The PIE model describes the six ingredients necessary for the instruction plan; students, objectives, learning environment, instructional activities, methods and media , and instructional materials (p. 88). The teacher is now the facilitator for the learners in the classroom. The changing roles of teacher and learner in today's classroom will increase student learning and success of all students.

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