FirstSchool

UNITING THE FIELDS OF EARLY CHILDHOOD, ELEMENTARY, AND SPECIAL EDUCATION

Promoting Rigorous and Robust Learning Environments: Building a Culture of Excellence

March 2, 2016
Minnesota

FirstSchool Instructional Practices for Achieving Equity

Culture of Competence

- Prioritize Communication
- Promote Peer Interactions
- Develop Self-Regulation
- Encourage Independence

Culture of Excellence

- Balance Teaching Approaches
- Integrate & Balance Curriculum
- Build Higher-Order Thinking

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FirstSchool Instructional Practices for Achieving Equity

Culture of Excellence

- Balancing Teaching Approaches
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A culture of excellence enables each learner to excel beyond minimal competencies.

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Definitions

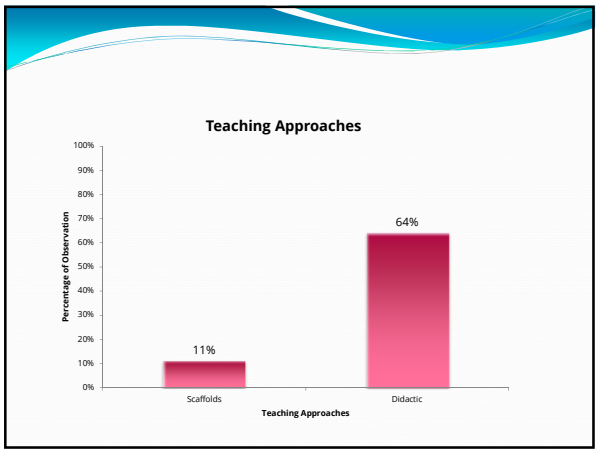
- Scaffolds – Recognizing and responding to children's needs
  - Open-ended questions
  - Conversations
  - Student speech
  - Active interaction
- Didactic – Direct instructional approaches
  - Giving directions
  - Providing information
  - Closed-ended questions

Predictors of Success

- Scaffolds
  - Formative assessment at its finest
  - Children articulating their thoughts, developing oral language
- Didactic
  - Efficient
  - Rote skills
  - New information

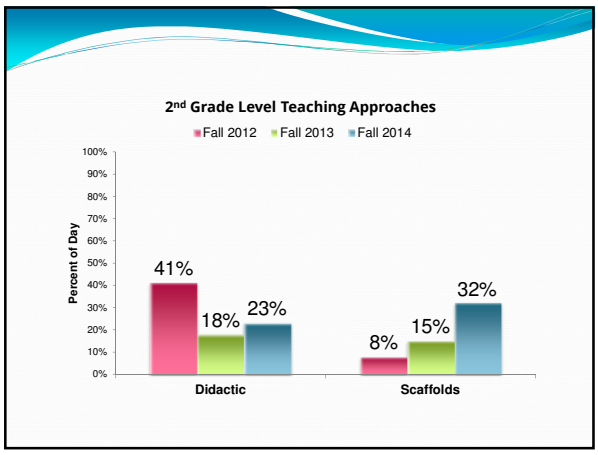
Seeking Balance

- Both didactic and scaffolded teaching are important
- Intentional choices maximize student learning
- The person who is talking is doing the most learning



Discuss

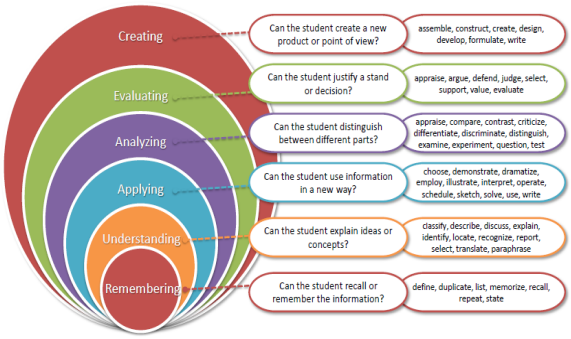
- Why do our classrooms look like this?
- What does it take to change it?
- How do leaders lead?



Integrating Curriculum/HOTS

- Direct Instruction vs. Situated Learning
- Start with a standard, lead to a question
  - Open-ended
- Teacher guides and facilitates
  - Provocations
- Have an end in mind, or not…
- Don't be boring

Bloom's Taxonomy (Revised)



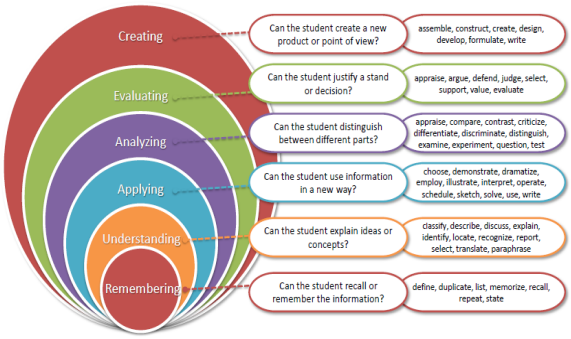
Make Learning Visible

- A shift in roles
  - Teacher -> Learner
  - Back and forth
- Documentation panels
  - Explore children's changes in thinking and understanding
  - Photography and product

Let's do it

- Democratic government depends on informed and engaged citizens who exhibit civic skills and values, practice civic discourse, vote and participate in elections, apply inquiry and analysis skills, and take action to solve problems and shape public policy.
- No class job elections/student council

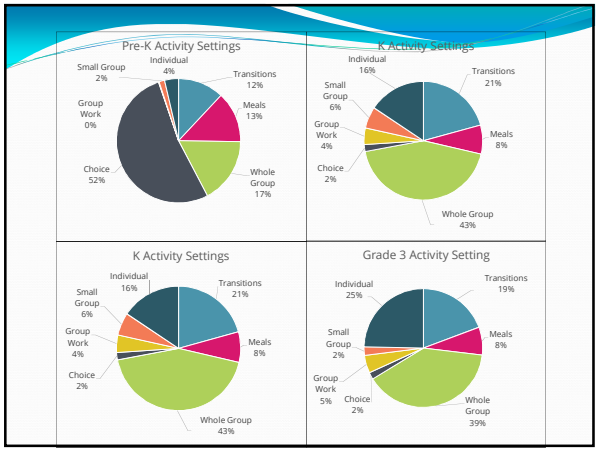
Bloom's Taxonomy (Revised)

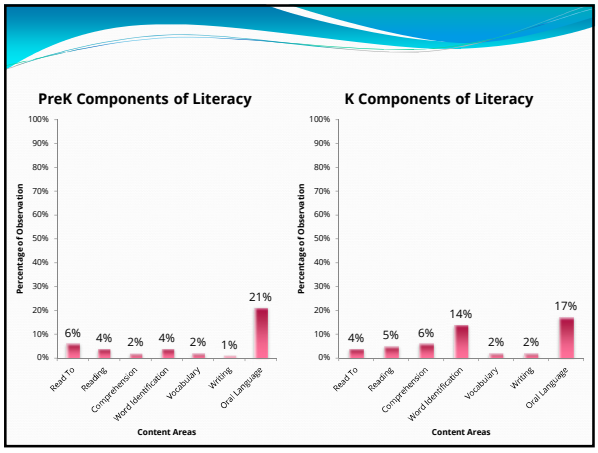


The Importance of Transitions

Discussion

- What is school readiness?
- What is a transition?





A Child's Perspective

- What skills promote success before and after the transition?
- What are the strengths of PreK?
- What are the strengths of K-3?

Going Beyond the Basics

- Bigger than learning objectives
- Shifting underlying perspectives
  - Color quizzing
  - Orange everywhere
  - Parent drop off
  - Just playing

Being a Leader

- Inspiration
  - Vision
- Permission
- Support
  - Demo classrooms
  - Professional development
  - Coaching

Discussion

- What's getting in the way?
- How do you move it out of the way?

Almost There

- Thanks for your thoughtful participation!
- Please continue to think through and digest what we've talked about.
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