

Individual Project

The Ineffective Use of Pretest Scores to Guide the Teaching and Learning Process.”

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EDSU630-50

School Improvement

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### The Ineffective Use of Pretest Scores to Guide the Teaching and Learning Process

The Pseudo Name School is located within a prominent town in the parish of St. Catherine. This school caters to students with moderate/severe Intellectual Disabilities Persons who are classified as being intellectually disabled are those with intellectual impairments that affect their ability to learn at the same rate as their non retarded peers. (Dixon, M., McFarlane, 2009). Students within this school are between the ages of twelve (12) and eighteen (18) years old. Noting this disability, it is pertinent that students are instructed based on relevance, and their individual needs.

In addition to the curriculum provided by the Ministry of Education, administration has designed a document which compiles “core Skills/ functional skills”. This document outlines basic skills that are necessary for individuals to possess. To assess students’ grasp of the content of these, a pretest is designed, and administered at the beginning of the school year (September) and a posttest designed and administered at the end of the school year (June/July). It was however noted that when scores of the pretest and the posttest were compared, no improvement/ minimal improvement were noted. Observing this, it appeared as though students were not being facilitated during the assigned teaching sessions.

Observations revealed that though sensitized, most teachers were not using the analysis of the pretest to guide the planning of lessons. Teachers were instead “re-teaching” concepts that students had already mastered. As a result of this, disruptive behaviours were increasing, and students were graduating without basic skills, including requisite skills to function effectively in society.

It was noted that all academic and skill area teachers needed to do more to ensure the use of the pretest analysis to guide the teaching and learning environment. Senior teachers and administration also needed to do more to guide supervisees, and to encourage an environment of accountability.

A professional learning community (PLC) is one of several methods that may be employed to address this problem. Implementing a PLC will encourage team-work, it will allow for best practices to be shared among members of staff, and will allow time for more focused planning. Another method that would reap benefits is to encourage the use of differentiated lessons. By doing this, teachers will be able to group students according to their individual needs, and deliver instructions to reduce their shortcomings. The Individualized Intervention Plan (IIP) is a program developed to target identified deficits in students' academic performance, with the intention of eliminating or reducing this deficit. This method has been used to address specific learning disabilities, and I believe if adopted as a whole school approach, will be the most effective in combating the problem outlined.

To correct this issue, I would first allow stakeholders (teachers and administration) to recognize that there is a problem. This will be done by requesting that teachers present the analysis of their subject matter of the previous year in a visual manner (bar graph or pie graph). By doing this, teachers will recognize that they are all experiencing meager growth, and administration will place more emphasis on this when it is recognized as a school wide issue. Members of staff will then be engaged in a series of workshops, aimed at introducing/reinforcing the benefits of Individualized Intervention Plans. The facilitator of these workshops will demonstrate how to use areas that students have not mastered to design an IIP. During these workshops, teachers will also practice writing sample IIPs, and a plan (time table for IIP

meetings, how to organize target areas according to priority) will be developed to implement these.

Teachers will then be challenged to implement IIPs in their classrooms. That is, each child who scored a “non mastery” in any area on the administered pre-test, must have an IIP addressing that area. Each member of staff will also be aware of the area that is being targeted on the IIP, so the learning environment can take on an integrated approach. For example, if the pretest revealed that “student A” has difficulties identifying the letter “B”, when student A goes to Home Economics class, the teacher may have this student identify bread, biscuits and baking tins, while the Physical Education teacher will have the student play games such as basketball, and bat and ball.

The IIPs will be scheduled for evaluations every sixth week. When this is done, if the child has mastered the skill, a new skill will be added to the IIP, but if not, the IIP goal will remain, or be broken down into micro goals aimed at targeting the macro goal. Though time consuming, this method is guaranteed to record more progress overtime, as weaknesses will be addressed on a more intimate basis.

Reference

Dixon, M., Matalon B., McFarlane, S (2009). Exceptional Students in the Classroom

Smith, D, Introduction to Special Education. (Fifth edition)