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## Feature Article

Application and Performance: The "Flip Side" of Planning

Application and Performance (AnP) are crucial for teaching success. Yet, school districts spend little time and money in perfecting instructional management and instructional delivery. The reason that only proclamations and directives target improved application of research-based skills improvement and performance is that improving education delivery is time consuming and expensive.

Note: See our previous article: The Flaws, Fallacies and Foolishness of Benchmark Testing Myths or Realities? Teachers are trained to plan, not to apply the plan and perform; College and university professors assign a report for the semester

Teachers-to-Be spend months creating a 15 to 20 minute PowerPoint(TM) presentation, maybe with some "Show and Tell" objects

In the real world, teachers spend 45 or 55 minutes teaching a lesson, and must be ready for another instructional delivery session the next day

Once the teacher is employed, the ability to plan, apply, execute and perform on cue is assumed

Administrators assume that because they pay more for one Teachers Edition than they can get by donating two pints of plasma, that they have provided the necessary and sufficient condition for teacher's instructional performance; As long as teachers turn in lesson plans on time in the required format

If instruction is shoddy, just push teachers to spend more time planning! But, Application and Performance (AnP) takes longer than planning. And, "AnP" takes more effort than just knowing what to do. Parameters of "AnP" "AnP" is a process, not an action or step. "AnP" is only effective when habits, knowledge, attitudes and skills of the teacher are integrated into a seamless performance.

"AnP" involves students in active dialogue and interaction, it has little to do with parroting (or paraphrasing) the words of the Teacher Edition. Obstacles to "AnP" There are many obstacles preventing "AnP" from becoming an integral, integrated, indivisible part of instruction. Here are some challenges; Changing is difficult

No one advised teachers as to how difficult or long the changes would take

Information sharing among teachers is not easy or automatic

Behavior and performance goals for improvement are vague and unclear

Directives and instructions are unclear because supervisors are not teachers, or cannot tell others what it took for them to learn successful instructional "AnP"

There is a lack of teacher training in "AnP"

Administrators don't sell the effort for improvement as a benefit for teachers and students. Stress for changing is often threatening, punitive or negative. And, even when the directive to improve is not negative, teachers perceive it as odious

There are no real institutional rewards for teachers who excel

Directors and principals have to know what to do before they can assist teachers; but some of the "help" that they provide to teachers is harmful to instruction, counterproductive or "just plain stupid" It's the Outcomes, not the Results, that Count This sounds like a play on words, but what it means is that the power of "AnP" comes from internalizing skills, attitudes and performance ("SAaP") behaviors at the habit level.

Here are some challenges; Teachers don't understand how difficult it is to improve "AnP", mainly because most of the improvement stems from other than cognitive skills

Teachers are left to their own devices to improve "catch as catch can", and they receive little informal help and almost no formal help

Colleagues provide help by "bragging about how well they do" under similar circumstances

School districts focus limited funds on professional development (See our article) Professional Development: Fast-Track to Empowerment or an Energy-Sapping Seat-Time Rut, but provide little funding of the follow up required to create changes in "AnP"

Changes toward "AnP" best practices are subtle and often take years to perfect, so a change process never launches

School districts and educational leaders fail to provide models of outstanding "AnP" These patterns mean that even talented teachers find that they are ill equipped to perfect their "AnP" skills in the world of work. What to Do? Here are the strategies that teachers need to take to build these capacities on their own. (Teachers cannot count on the school system employees to provide what they need for personal improvement. Develop a model for improving

"AnP" including: habit, skill, management, delivery and follow-up for effective instruction

Understand that the "Plan into Action" completes only part of the "AnP" process; there is an internal executive component to executing at a more proficient level

Change the culture of teaching so that teachers don't work alone

Change the roles of principals and "bosses" to one where these folks answer to teachers in terms of the delivery of

classroom support and instructional needs

Factor in student (and other influences) so that answers to the "What's in it for me?" provide student motivation

Develop structures for mandatory sharing, coordinating, "strategizing," and implementing a curriculum framework with a clear focus upon "AnP" best practices

Teach empowerment and leadership to teachers instead of squelching their initiatives through the "chain of command." The Role of Planning Planning creates a framework and guidelines, a model, a roadmap and a timeline for "AnP." The plan, the plan documents, the plan graphics (such as Graphic Organizers and Mind Maps) keep the "AnP" process on track.

Strategic planning ensures that the tools, tactics and techniques are targeted&hellip;efficiently and effectively. Strategy is the key. Key Strategies Use&hellip;Technologies

Resources

Mind-Sets

80-20 Rule Procedures&hellip;to&hellip;Manage Change

Coordinate Learning Attitudes

Develop Teacher Leadership

Build a Culture of Excellence in Learning

Provide Latitude (freedom) within Boundaries

Institute Controls and a Risk Management Plan A college or university education provides a diploma, a "Ticket to Play" in the educational arena. It is "On-the-Job" learning that molds a teacher's raw talent into elegant skills.

But, this process of building Application and Performance" (AnP) skills, habits and behaviors takes time.

Let's give our teachers all the help that they need to make these changes in their instructional planning, instructional delivery and instructional management.

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