

LEADING with FOCUS: How to Accomplish MORE by Doing LESS

ASCD Webinar

February 4, 2016

Mike Schmoker

schmoker@futureone.com

480/219-4673

IMPACT OF EDUCATION

- ▶ Income
 - ▶ Social/political empowerment
 - ▶ Intellectual development
 - ▶ Family stability; health; life expectancy
- ...even more than previously thought

2014 Brookings Institution Study

IMPACT OF TEACHING QUALITY--on EDUCATION

- ▶ Effective teachers:
 - ▶ **six times** the impact as teachers in bottom third
Haycock & Huang 2001
 - ▶ achieve extra **6-9 months** growth per year
William 2007
- ▶ Students with effective teachers: from weak to highly successful in **3 years**
Marzano; Haycock; Bracey

IMPACT OF EFFECTIVE SCHOOL & DISTRICT LEADERSHIP

EFFECTIVE, *INSTRUCTIONAL*
LEADERSHIP ensures the consistent
delivery of effective teaching*...
more than any other factor

-- Leithwood, Wahlstrom & Anderson 2010
-- Hattie, 2015

*impacting **50 million students**

EFFECTIVE LEADERSHIP: SIMPLIFY

"There is too much overload and baggage on the current change journey. The skinny is about finding the

- smallest number of
- high- leverage,
- easy-to-understand actions

that unleash **STUNNINGLY POWERFUL CONSEQUENCES."**

Michael Fullan in *Motion Leadership*, 2010, p. 16

THE COST OF COMPLEXITY

- ▶ "Complexity kills"

Forbes

- ▶ "...complex machinations always fail."

Jim Collins

- ▶ "75 percent of principals feel that their job has become **too complex.**"

Michael Fullan

THE COST OF COMPLEXITY

- ▶ “The main reason there’s been so little achievement gain over the past few decades ...is precisely because neither curriculum nor instruction much changed – hence the students’ actual classroom experience didn’t much change, and hence the students didn’t learn much more.”

Michael Petrilli, 2015

SIMPLIFY: Less is More

“The first law of simplicity is: **reduce.**”

John Maeda

“The easiest and greatest increases in productivity in knowledge work come from redefining the task and **eliminating what need not be done.**”

Peter Drucker

LESS of *WHAT?*

- ▶ Innovation/PD
- ▶ Group work
- ▶ Technology
- ▶ Teacher Evaluation criteria

*The first law of simplicity is: **reduce***

John Maeda

LESS INNOVATION/PD OPTIONS

- ▶ “Neomania” (Tavernetti) vs. “depth and intensity” (Payne 2011); “repetition” (Wooden)
- ▶ Professional Development
 - ▶ Peter Block
 - ▶ *The Mirage*
- ▶ Jim Collins: **disciplined, sustained focus on fundamentals--not innovation--is the key to improvement**

LESS GROUP WORK

- ▶ **Prone to overuse** (Marzano 2001; Senechal 2014)
- ▶ Group work is typically “**Disguised inactivity**... students are provided with an opportunity to put their backs into doing nothing, all hidden inside the **smog of collaborative effort.**” (Bennet 2015)
- ▶ Berliner: **Pairs**--not groups--most effective
- ▶ Best “Default arrangement” for desks (Lemov)?

LESS EMPHASIS ON TECHNOLOGY

- ▶ “I used to think that technology could help education... I’ve come to the inevitable conclusion that the problem is not one that technology can solve. What’s wrong with education cannot be fixed with technology. No amount of technology will make a dent.” (_____?)
- ▶ Technology is not a “driver” of school improvement (M. Fullan)

LESS TEACHER EVALUATION CRITERIA

“**Nobody** can say that teacher evaluation efforts are going well. This was an unforced error of enormous magnitude.”

Michael Petrilli

SIMPLIFY/REDUCE EVALUATION TEMPLATES

The new, more elaborate teacher evaluation templates are “**way too complicated**. The rubrics are so complex that ...
they’ll just make you suicidal.”

Paul Vallas (former superintendent of Chicago and New Orleans schools)

SIMPLIFY/REDUCE EVALUATION TEMPLATES

The template is “**just too big** ...there’s just **too much detail** to permit [evaluators] to **focus on the important ideas about teaching**...When observing a lesson, whether as part of a coaching relationship or for evaluation, it’s **too cumbersome** for everyday use.”

Who said this...?

SO: MORE OF *WHAT?*

- ▶ Laptops for all/Smartboards in every classroom
- ▶ Common, content-rich curriculum
- ▶ RTI
- ▶ Commercial Math/Literacy “programs”
- ▶ Differentiated instruction
- ▶ Smaller classes
- ▶ Frequent, strategic circulating & other “checks for understanding” which inform adjustments to instruction
- ▶ Various small/school-within-a-school “Academies”
- ▶ 90-120 minutes of purposeful reading & writing per day
- ▶ “Turnaround” strategies (new faculty; school design etc.)

CASE for “Guaranteed & Viable Curriculum” (Marzano 2003)

- ▶ Hirsch: key to literacy and learning
- ▶ PLCs *impossible without curriculum* (DuFour, Marzano 20???)
- ▶ Essential to effective instruction (Darling-Hammond 2010)
- ▶ “Viable” curriculum = more time for reading; writing; discussion @ **content**
- ▶ NUMBER ONE factor (Marzano; Hirsch; Porter)

CURRICULUM/LITERACY

- ▶ Mostly common topics/texts/skills taught in (approximately) the same sequence for **entire school year***
 - ▶ liberally-infused with reading, writing and discussion (especially in English, Social Studies & Science)

*occupying 60—90% of total curriculum

US HISTORY

Templates at <http://www.ascd.org/ASCD/pdf/books/SchmokerAppendixB.pdf>

1 st Quarter: American Revolution	WEEK	TOPIC	TEXT	QUESTIONS for close reading; discussion; writing, i.e. ASSESSMENT
	ONE	Taxation without representation	Textbook, Ch. 5: pp. 148--151	What were the best arguments for and against taxation without representation?
...		British attitudes/treatment of the colonists	Proclamation of 1763 (which forbade Western settlement)	Was the Proclamation of 1763 fair or unfair to the colonists? Native Americans?

“GUARANTEED” CURRICULUM? BRUTAL FACTS (Jim Collins):

- ▶ ROSENHOLTZ: teachers provide a “self-selected jumble” of standards
- ▶ BERLINER/WALBERG: wild variation from teacher to teacher; no alignment with agreed-upon curriculum/standards
- ▶ GOODLAD; LITTLE; SIZER; ALLINGTON; CALKINS: “curricular chaos” in English/Lang. Arts
- ▶ HIRSCH: **60 YEARS WITHOUT CURRICULUM**

CURRICULUM LEADERSHIP:

- ▶ *Share evidence for primacy of curriculum*
- ▶ Enlist prototype teams to create **clear, user-friendly** curriculum models for each discipline
 - ▶ with appropriate amounts of reading and writing for respective courses
- ▶ Develop plan and deadlines--for completing **simple, easy-to-use** curriculum for every course (PLC meetings etc.) Templates available at: <http://www.ascd.org/ASCD/pdf/books/SchmokerAppendixB.pdf>

LITERACY

- ▶ "Literacy is the most important single goal of schooling in any nation...the earnings gap between racial and ethnic groups in the US largely disappear when language competence in standard English is factored in." E.D. Hirsch
- ▶ "Underdeveloped literacy skills are the number one reason why students are retained, assigned to special education, given long-term remedial services and why they fail to graduate high school." Ferrandino & Tirozzi, NAESP/NAASP

AUTHENTIC LITERACY?

“Reading & Writing vs. ‘stuff’ ratio” (Allington)

- ▶ **“Literature based Arts and Crafts”** (Calkins):
dioramas; game boards; worksheets; posters;
coats-of-arms; mobiles; movies; cutting, gluing;
coloring; drawing; designing book jackets; collages
- ▶ **Multiple choice curriculum:** short passages &
questions about “external (or) internal conflict?”;
“elements of literature”; “identify main idea” etc.
- ▶ Coffee shop encounter

LITERACY LEADERSHIP: REDUCE, CLARIFY

COMMON CORE ELA “Instructional Shifts”:

- ▶ **Building knowledge through content-rich nonfiction**
- ▶ Reading, writing and speaking **grounded in evidence from text**, both literary and informational
- ▶ Regular practice with **complex text** and its **academic language**

see: Schmoker & Jago 2013

Schmoker & Graff 2011

LITERACY (especially ELA, SS, Science)

Read 3 [complex, non-fiction] texts about Amelia Earhart. All three include the claim that she was a brave, courageous person:

- ▶ "Biography of Amelia Earhart"
- ▶ "Earhart's Final Resting Place Believed Found"
- ▶ "Amelia Earhart's Life and Disappearance"

Write an essay that analyzes the strength of the arguments about Earhart's bravery in at least two of the texts. Remember to use textual evidence to support your ideas.

CLARITY

"If you do nothing else as a leader, **be clear.**"

Marcus Buckingham
The One Thing You Need to Know

EFFECTIVE LESSONS/LECTURE: **CLEAR?**

100% ATTENTIVENESS/ENGAGEMENT and...

- ▶ Clear learning objective/target
- ▶ Anticipatory set/background/purpose/preview of lesson
- ▶ Teach/model **in small, manageable chunks**
- ▶ Guided practice-- for *each small "chunk"*
- ▶ **Multiple** checks for understanding ("formative assessment")
- ▶ Independent practice/**assessment**

** Hunter; Popham; Marzano; Fisher & Frye; Lemov; Burns; Archer; William; Hattie; Saphier; Ripley*

IMPACT of such lessons...?

- ▶ **"among largest gains ever recorded"**
(Popham)
- ▶ 3 consecutive years: **35-50** percentile points
- ▶ DYLAN WILIAM:
 - ▶ Extra 6-9 months growth per yr./**400%** faster learning
 - ▶ 20-30 times the impact of most popular initiatives
 - ▶ From @ #18 to top 5 in math on PISA
 - ▶ Effect sizes similar to one-on-one tutoring (Stiggins)

EFFECTIVE LESSONS and the FOSBURY EFFECT

- ▶ “Effective practices never take root in more than a small proportion of classrooms and schools”

Tyack and Cuban

- ▶ “Effective teaching is quite different from the teaching that is typically found in most classrooms”

Odden and Kelley

CLARITY through REPETITION and PRACTICE:

“I created eight laws of learning, namely: explanation, demonstration, imitation, **repetition, repetition, repetition, repetition** and repetition.”

John Wooden

SIMPLE, EFFECTIVE LEADERSHIP in the Professional Learning Community

- ▶ “No institution can survive if it needs geniuses or supermen to manage it. It must be organized to get along under a leadership of average human beings.”

Peter Drucker

MONITOR* 1. INSTRUCTION and 2. COMMON, COLLEGE-PREP CURRICULUM

LEADERS (administrators, dept. heads): conduct regular, single-focused data-driven* walkthroughs; ***respond systematically to needs in these areas***

- ▶ Essential elements of an effective lesson (e.g. “clear—*posted*--learning objective”)
- ▶ Implementation of essential “guaranteed” curriculum
- ▶ College/career literacy: text-based discussion & writing

*September: 35% of lessons → October: 80%

LEADERSHIP: QUARTERLY TEAM/DEPARTMENT REVIEW

EACH QUARTER, LEADERS and TEAMS discuss...

- ▶ unit assessments (success rate;
areas of strength/weakness)
- ▶ scored papers/projects (success
rate; areas of strength/weakness)

FOCUSED LEADERSHIP → “STUNNINGLY POWERFUL CONSEQUENCES”

- ▶ Flowing Wells School District
- ▶ Orange Grove Junior High
- ▶ Brockton High School

FLEXIBLE PLAN for MOVING FORWARD

- ▶ District Office: Constantly clarify/monitor/support **priorities**
- ▶ Form a small, like-minded leadership team at each school
- ▶ Inform/persuade staff—share evidence/impact of coherent curriculum, traditional literacy and soundly-structured lessons
- ▶ Offer a course on elements of effective instruction—and **repeat training until all have adequately mastered them**
- ▶ Enlist teams to create simple curriculum exemplars*: use as model s for development in every course (with deadlines)
- ▶ Monitor routinely: e.g. walk-throughs and quarterly team reviews (see previous two slides) and respond with targeted, timely support
- ▶ Focus PLC teams primarily on continuous improvement of curriculum and instruction—*not* excessive data analysis
- ▶ **Celebrate small, measurable “wins” immediately and continuously for all the above via email, faculty and department meetings**

* Templates available at: <http://www.ascd.org/ASCD/pdf/books/SchmokerAppendixB.pdf>