

Implementing a School-Wide Literacy Program at XYZ Middle School



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Introduction

The "No Child Left Behind Act" has required the staff of XYZ Middle School to analyze the way the school operates. In recent years the school has managed to meet AYP requirements. However, as the requirements increase yearly, the staff wishes to remain proactive and increase achievement. While XYZ is meeting AYP in Reading and Math for ALL students, there is a marked achievement gap between these subjects. Currently 76% of students meet in Math, while only 64% meet in Reading. This trend is consistent over the last three years. The school presently operates using an eight period day: Four core classes: (Math, Language Arts, Science and Social Studies), Physical Education, two electives, and SRP. SRP is a shortened period immediately following lunch. "SRP has stood many different things through the years. Skills Reinforcement Period, Silent Reading Period, even Student Relaxation Period-a wind down time after lunch" (Robinson, 2009). As one might expect with such varying interpretations and lack of direction, this time is largely ineffective. While SRP could be tweaked to address this problem, the preceding years have resulted in a certain mindset among students, staff and patrons, regarding SRP. Furthermore, budget cuts necessitate the reduction of staff and subsequently electives to one per student, making now is the ideal time to change the middle school schedule to support a more academically rich schedule, including a school-wide literacy based schedule.

Proposed Schedule

The proposed schedule supports a Literacy Class for every student at the beginning of the day. Every student will begin the day in an academic mind set. In essence, Literacy will replace SRP in the instructional day with a new time, new name, and new purpose. Students will still receive instruction in each core subject and Physical Education, as well as having the option of one elective period.

Funding

XYZ Middle School currently receives Title I funding from the Federal Government because of its high rate of poverty. These funds are dedicated to the improving of instruction in Reading and Mathematics. Historically XYZ has used these funds to provide two periods of instruction for students not meeting benchmarks in Reading. However, the program has struggled for years to obtain student and parental buy-in. "Students feel like they are being punished for 'being dumb' and parents are not happy that their student must give up an elective" (Matovich, 2009).

A Literacy class for all students solves this feeling of inequity. All students receive one elective. All students receive a period of targeted Reading instruction. Title Funding will now support a Literacy coach at the middle school to support teachers in the transition to teaching a reading class. XYZ Middle school has failed to meet AYP in Reading for "Students with Disabilities" for two consecutive years. Accordingly, the school will slip into "school improvement" status. This title status is a boon for the school district, as it will provide additional funding to the middle school. It is our plan to use the increased funding to support the proposed Literacy Period in the form of textbooks and ongoing training. Both students and staff will receive the instruction necessary to flourish in an increasingly competitive educational arena.

Further implications of School-Wide Literacy

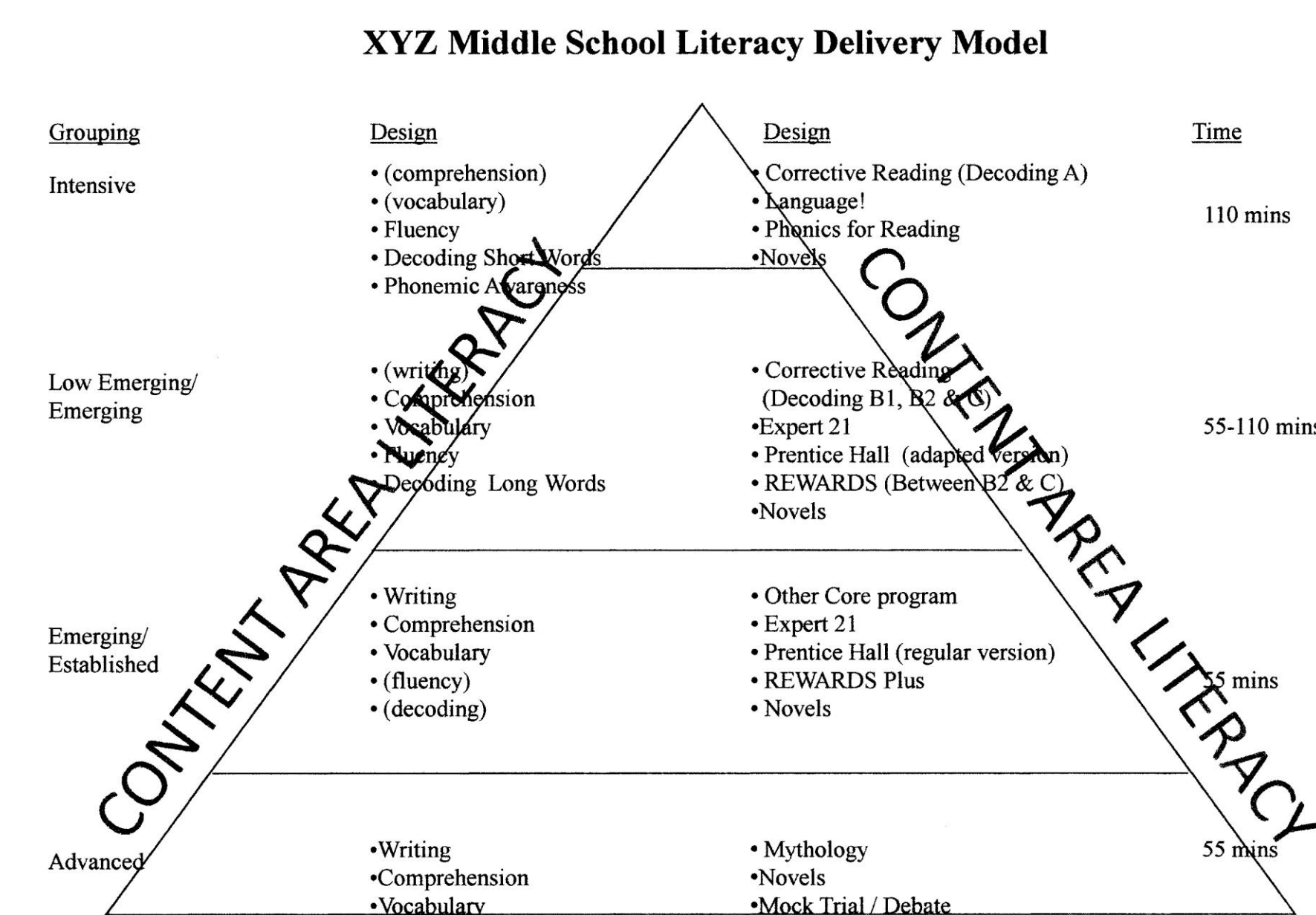
Research shows Literacy Programs need to address three areas to be most successful (IES, 2008). The proposed School-Wide Literacy program addresses all of these.

- 1) Direct comprehension strategy instruction (Keene, 2010),
- 2) Direct Vocabulary Instruction (David, 2010), and
- 3) Intensive, individualized interventions for struggling readers (Smith, 2010).

Research confirms strong relationship between vocabulary size and Reading Comprehension. Now, as in past decades, teachers have devoted little time to explicit vocabulary instruction (David, 2010). Accordingly, an important part of a School-Wide Literacy program is the direct instruction of vocabulary, including Content Area Vocabulary. Teachers who use a the right tool to teach vocabulary are able to enact remarkable results that not only further understanding of their own subject, but also increase student comprehension and understanding across content areas (Smith, 2010). Each teacher at XYZ Middle School will develop a toolkit of strategies to teach vocabulary in Literacy Class and Content Area Vocabulary within the regular classroom.

Literacy – A Three Prong Approach

XYZ Middle School will implement a Three Prong Approach to promote school-wide Literacy: First, direct reading and vocabulary instruction for all students during the Literacy Class. Accelerated Reader and Battle of the Books programs will be promoted school-wide. Second, explicit vocabulary instruction for all students in the content area and reading and writing instruction in their Language Arts class. And third, targeted interventions for struggling readers. Targeted interventions will be provided in two ways: Small break out groups within the Literacy class, and additional targeted instruction in the resource room for qualifying students. Schools using similar models have seen great gains in Reading achievement scores (Smith, 2010), and it is anticipated that XYZ Middle School will likewise see significant gains and meet AYP in Reading within 2 years of implementation.



Contact Information

For further information, contact David Welker at XYZ Middle School

Literacy Class Fluidity

Because Literacy Class is taught first period for all students, moving students between classes is easily accomplished as students needs are identified. As data suggests students need help on one Reading Strand or another, groups can be easily realigned. Teachers will be able, to some degree, specialize and use the same lessons for multiple groups of students.

How Will Students be Divided for Literacy?

Multiple data points will be used to place students in the most appropriate Literacy Class. These data points include: OAKS Reading Score, Oral Reading Fluency data, common assessments, and teacher input.

The Oregon K-12 Literacy Framework (2009) recommends students be placed into certain curriculum based upon the percentile rank of their OAKS Reading Score. Oral Reading Fluency scores will be further utilized to place students with similar needs. Staff will be trained to assess Oral Reading Fluency using EasyCBM. Each student will be assessed three times per year.

Curriculum

The Curriculum for each Literacy Class will be rich and varied. Every class will have similar components of direct vocabulary instruction and ability adapted AR Reading requirements. Additional curriculum will be driven by student need.

All reading curriculum is selected from research proven programs. Additionally, all students will receive motivational lessons to enhance the desire to read. As students obtain the desire to read, their skill and mastery levels will increase (Gallagher, 2003). The overall program is designed to be fluid vertically, allowing for easy movement and adaptability.

Students with emerging reading skill, those in most need of reading invention, will receive appropriate from the Corrective Reading Series. Students will learn phonics, decoding skills and comprehension strategies. As students reading abilities increase, their course of study will adapt. Many of these students will receive additional reading instruction in a resource room setting.

Students with basic reading skills will use REWARDS as their primary curriculum. Direct instruct and focus on root words, prefixes and suffixes will further augment students' vocabularies. Students will receive direct instruction on comprehension skills, and learn to interpret graphs and charts, as well as non-fiction text. Students reading at grade level will be instructed with REWARDS PLUS as their basic curriculum, enhancing their reading with non-fiction reading based in the hard and Social Sciences. These will be augmented by Scholastic's Expert 21.

Students with higher than grade level reading abilities will receive a challenging curriculum based in literary classics, and exploring position writing and debate. Students will participate in Literary Circles. Student led projects and presentations will be prevalent.

Impact on Current Middle School Schedule

The proposed schedule supports a Literacy Class for every student at the beginning of the day. Every student will begin the day in an academic mind set. In essence, Literacy will replace SRP in the instructional day with a new time, new name, and new purpose. Students will still receive instruction in each core subject and Physical Education, as well as having the option of one elective period. Due to reduction in staff, elective classes for each student will be reduced by one.

Current Schedule

XYZ Middle School
Current Schedule

Teacher	1st Period	2nd Period	3rd Period	4th Period	5th Period	6th Period	7th Period	8th Period
Intermediate Band	40	Advanced Band	10					
Social Studies 8	21	Social Studies 8	31	Health 7	SRP	Health 7	Health 7	Teacher Prep
							Bag Choir	Intermediate Choir
Social Studies 7	21	Teacher Prep	Social Studies 7	Social Studies 7	SRP WE B	Social Studies 7	Social Studies 7	Social Studies 8
Teacher Prep	0	Computer Apps	Computer Apps	Web Page Design	SRP	Science	Science	Science
Special Resources	13	Special Resources	Partners	Special Resources	SRP	Partners	Special Resources	Special Resources
Teacher Prep	21	Resource	Interventions	Resource	SRP	Resource	Resource	Resource
Pre-Algebra B	0	Pre-Algebra A	6	Pre-Algebra B	3	Pre-Algebra A	Pre-Algebra A	Interventions
Algebra	22	Pre-Algebra A	25	Pre-Algebra A	24	Pre-Algebra B	Pre-Algebra B	Interventions
Language Arts 8	23	Language Arts 7	Language Arts 7	Library Aide	1	Library Aide	Library Aide	Library Aide
Office Aide	1	Office Aide	2	Office Aide	2	Office Aide	Office Aide	Office Aide
Counseling	1	Counseling	Counseling	Counseling	Counseling	Counseling	Counseling	Counseling
Art	11	Art	Office Aide	Art	SRP WEB	Art Partners - Room Art	Art	Art
Teacher Prep	PE	PE	PE	PE	PE	PE	PE	PE
Admin	0	Admin	15	Admin	17	Admin	Admin	Admin
Language Arts 7	22	Language Arts 7	Language Arts 7	Teacher Prep	SRP	Language Arts 7	Language Arts 7	Interventions
Total students by period	234	224	228	231	223	233	232	233
OPP School students	0							
FTE	14.7							
Avg students per class	25.4							

Proposed Schedule

XYZ Middle School Proposed 2012-2013 Master Schedule

Teacher	1st Period	2nd Period	3rd Period	4th Period	5th Period	6th Period	7th Period
District Assignments				Intermediate Band		Advanced Band	
District Assignments				Intermediate Choir		Advanced Choir	
Literacy 7 (High)	Social Studies 7	Social Studies 7	Social Studies 7	Social Studies 7	Social Studies 7	Social Studies 8	Prep
Literacy 7 (Med/Low)	Social Studies 8	Social Studies 8	Social Studies 8	Social Studies 8	Social Studies 8	Prep	Web
Literacy 8 (High)	Science 8	Science 8	Science 8	Prep	Science 8	Science 7	Science 7
Literacy 7/8 (Emerging)	Resource LA	Resource Math	Special Resources	Special Resources	Prep	Special Resources	Special Resources
Literacy 7/8 (Emerging)	Prep	Co Teaching	Co Teaching	Co Teaching	Resource	Resource	Resource
Literacy 7/8 (TAG/High)	Pre-Algebra A	Pre-Algebra A	Pre-Algebra B	Pre-Algebra B	Science 7	Prep	Prep
Literacy 8 (Medium)	Algebra	Pre-Algebra B	Pre-Algebra A	Pre-Algebra A	Pre-Algebra B	Prep	Prep
Literacy 7/8 (TAG/High)	Language Arts 8	Language Arts 8	Language Arts 8	Language Arts 8	Language Arts 8	Prep	Prep
Literacy 8 (Med/Low)	Language Arts 7	Language Arts 7	Language Arts 7	Language Arts 7	Prep	Language Arts 7	Yearbook/Lit Magnet
District Assignments				Counselor		Counselor	
Admin	Admin	Admin	Admin	Admin	Admin	Admin	Admin
Prep	Wellness	Wellness	Wellness	Wellness	PE 8	PE 8	PE 8
Total Projected	250	250	250	250	250	250	250
FTE	12.5						
Avg. Students per class	21.25						

Sources

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