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Presentation

FULL DETAILS AND TRANSCRIPT

Organizing Instruction in Expanded Learning Time Schools

December 2010

Topic: Increased Learning Time: Beyond the Regular School Day
Practice: Structure Time

Highlights

- Experts suggest that two key components of effective instructional plans include tailoring instruction to individual and small-group needs and making instruction engaging.
- Aligned professional development, partnership with community-based organizations, and teacher collaboration can enable effective implementation of these instructional strategies.
- Classroom- and student-level data can inform instructional planning and monitoring of student improvement as a result of these efforts.

Full Transcript

Slide 1: Welcome

Welcome to the overview on Organizing Instruction in Expanded Learning Time Schools.

Slide 2: Expanded learning time schools

Schools can provide expanded learning time by lengthening the school day or year. Many schools that choose to lengthen the school day usually do so by about 25 percent, while expanded-school-year schedules can vary from a few additional days to year-round schedules. Research shows that it is not just the added time that promotes improved student outcomes—it is how that time is managed.

Slide 3: Knowing student needs

Experts have identified two key components of effective instructional plans:
- Schools tailor instruction to individual and small-group needs, and
- They make instruction engaging.

Slide 4: Individualizing instruction

There are a number of ways to individualize instruction.
- Classroom teachers can provide lesson plans that one student can use to teach or tutor another.
- They may break the class into small groups and provide assignments for cooperative learning.
- Teachers may have individual students and small groups complete practice pages and assessments appropriate to their readiness level.
- Computer labs can offer access to educational software that allows students to progress at their own pace.
- And schools can allocate a daily period that can be used for enrichment activities or targeted academic support, depending on the students' needs.

Slide 5: Student interest

Promoting student interest and motivation to learn is an important part of the instructional process and can be accomplished in a number of ways.

For example, project-based learning activities that give students hands-on experience exploring concepts and phenomena promote active engagement with learning.

As students learn concepts and solve problems, connecting classroom discussions, word problems, and academic assignments to students' interests and real-world news or experiences can grab students' attention and help them understand the importance of what they are learning.

Giving students a voice in selecting reading materials, types of projects, or other aspects of their schoolwork can increase students' interest, especially in middle school.

Slide 6: Reflection and understanding

With more time in class, students may receive greater opportunity to respond to questions that require higher-order thinking and to develop their analysis, comparison, and inference skills. Teachers can allocate more time for students to reflect on what they have learned and the progress they've made. Teachers also have more time to check for student understanding of past lessons and reteach concepts, incorporating informative feedback and varying their instructional methods accordingly.

Slide 7: Enrichment

Expanded learning time schools may allocate additional time for sports, art, social, and cultural enrichment activities. These activities may also be seen as learning opportunities to teach math, science, social studies, and English language arts skills and can be introduced as elective courses, schoolwide events, and clubs or leagues that students can participate in.

Slide 8: Community partnership

Community-based and nonprofit organizations can provide or support enrichment activities and special projects that promote student interest and engagement. For example, community volunteers can facilitate instruction of essential 21st-century skills like oral presentation, working with multimedia, and leadership.

Slide 9: Professional development and collaboration

Professional development opportunities can introduce staff to a variety of techniques and empower teachers to make an informed decision about the technique they would like to use. Professional development meetings or materials can introduce and compare key actions, benefits, and challenges of techniques such as assigning a tutor or a teacher aide to work with a student or crafting lesson plans for small-group cooperative learning.

Teachers can learn from each other's experience and form study groups to identify additional instructional techniques.

In middle schools, collaboration among English language arts, math, science, social studies, and other teachers can also help identify ways to individualize instruction and engage students.

Slide 10: Use of data

In order to promote student outcomes, it is essential to analyze classroom and individual student-level data so that schools and teachers know how to effectively allocate time and organize instruction. Teachers and data specialists can analyze standardized test results in conjunction with results of other periodic and day-to-day assessments.

Trends in data may point at subject areas that need a greater focus or subgroups of students that need additional support. As in any other school improvement effort, organizing instruction so that it is individualized and engaging is a cycle that includes assessing opportunities for improvement, implementing intervention strategies, progress monitoring, and refining instructional approaches.

Slide 11: Learn more

To learn more about Organizing Instruction in Expanded Learning Time Schools, please explore the additional resources on the Doing What Works website.