

DOINGWHATWORKS



Video

FULL DETAILS AND TRANSCRIPT

Skill Building in a Positive Learning Environment

Glover Community Learning Center, Ohio • November 2009

Topic: Increased Learning Time: Beyond the Regular School Day
Practice: Organize Instruction

Highlights

- As a site coordinator, Sandy Shoemaker finds intervention specialists to work for the after-school program.
- Instructors use a variety of instructional approaches such as manipulatives, books on tape or CD, and small reading groups in academic interventions.
- Pretests and posttests guide the selection of subskills to reteach and the extent to which instruction is individualized.
- The after-school program provides a safe environment for struggling students to progress academically and build their self-esteem.

About the Site

Glover Community Learning Center
Akron, OH

Demographics

48% Black

30% White

94% Free or Reduced-Price Lunch

7% English Language Learners

16% Special Education

Glover Community Learning Center operates the district's after-school program to help students progress academically at school. The school's approach includes the following:

- Students receive daily academic interventions followed by enrichment classes of their choice.
- The program director aligns the after-school instruction with the school curriculum.
- School-day and after-school teachers collaborate to identify students' needs.
- Students attend small classes aligned with their ability level.
- The district continually refines the program based on student data and feedback from parents.

Full Transcript

Teacher A to students: This is as much hair as you would get to keep as a child in Egypt.

Sandy Shoemaker: My job as site coordinator begins with first finding people to work in the program. We need intervention specialists. That might be teachers from Glover. They might be tutors from other buildings. They might be substitutes that we have come in contact with and feel would do a good job in the program. So before we can enroll a number of children, we need to know how much staffing we have.

Teacher B to students: We'll practice the fluency, remember? Take your finger. Go ahead: line to line. Okay? If you can't read it that way, use your finger to follow. Okay. "The team wanted to bring the puffins back to the uninhabited egg rock." Come on, together, "The team wanted to bring the puffins back to the uninhabited egg rock." That was nice.

Shoemaker: If you visited our classrooms during the after-school program, you would see a variety of activities going on. You would see math manipulatives in use. You would probably see the document camera being used. You might see the kids using books on tape or books on CD, although we still utilize our tapes. You might see a small reading group going on with independent reading, independent reader books, which are small books. You might see a teacher working one on one with a student while the rest of the class is working together on an activity. There is a lot of different scenarios you can see, and it would probably be different in every classroom. But the focus will be always on the math intervention or the reading intervention and the skills necessary to raise our students up.

Teacher C to students: What I would like you to do is hold up your first bear.

Shoemaker: We try to individualize instruction as much as necessary. We begin with a pretest and we end with a posttest. So that we don't repeat unnecessary skills, that is the purpose of the pretest. We go

through the pretest and we see what we need to throw out. There is going to be skills that we don't even need to teach. We are able to assess exactly where the students are and where the focus needs to be, and then we tailor the instruction toward that.

Teacher C to students: Hold up your sixth bear.

Shoemaker: We talk to the different teachers to find out what our greatest area of focus should be. For instance, in fifth grade, we know that the students in math have a very difficult time with the Ohio Achievement Test and story problems. So we try to put a focus on story problems, and that's nearly across the board.

Student: Splashed?

Teacher B to student: Splashed. Right in the middle. Splashed, and that also has an *-ed*, which means which tense is it?

Student: It's *-ed*. Able?

Shoemaker: We are not a high-achieving school—not yet, but we will be, and the after-school program is going to help us achieve that. That is our goal. But at least I think in the after-school program, you have the opportunity for these students to work in a small group, often with students who are struggling like they are. And it provides the children kind of with a little bit of insulation where they are not standing out amongst the bigger group of kids. It's more of a comfort for them. It's less of an embarrassment to not know the answer because they are struggling together, and I think that's a really important component of the after-school program. As much as we like to think the kids don't stand out, they know when they are behind and they know when they are struggling, and it's difficult for them to do that in front of a whole class. In the after-school program, they are all trying to achieve something and they can do that together without standing out amongst the rest of their classmates who are maybe achieving at a little bit higher rate than they are. So it's kind of self-esteem building.

Teacher D to students: Oh, let's try 12×12 .

Students (all together): 144!

Teacher: 144.

Students: You can't trick us.

Teacher: I'm trying, I'm trying! Um, 10×8 ?

Students (all together): 80!

Teacher: 5×0 ?

Students: Five! Zero! [Laughing.]

Teacher: That was a good one.

Shoemaker: In order to build the students' self-esteem, being part of a small group is part of that, where they are achieving together. The pace might be slower, but there is still a common goal. And also there is a lot of cheerleading that goes on where the teachers are so very positive, and maybe you are working in smaller steps and achieving littler goals, but they cheer each other on. The teachers are positive, the kids are positive, the whole atmosphere is one of being positive. If you feel good about yourself, you generally want to try harder and achieve more.