

Learning Plus Associates Case Study Using Standards Plus Intervention System as part of a Comprehensive Rtl Approach

San Bernardino City Unified School District–Wilson Elementary School

Targeting learning challenges when students lag

Challenge

Wilson Elementary school is not unlike many urban schools in the state with 90% of the students designated as low socio-economic status and 49% as second language learners. This neighborhood school in the city of San Bernardino is one of many in the district committed to increasing students' achievement and exiting from Program Improvement status. With the NCLB mandates looming and the "Response-to-Intervention" (Rtl) model supported by the district, Wilson's new principal, Nelson Togerson, decided to take action. There was no debate as to "if" they'd make changes and make progress; the only questions to be answered were the "what" and the "how" this was to be accomplished.

Wilson started using the Standards Plus daily lessons in the spring of 2007 as one strategy to ensure that grade level standards were being taught consistently in all classrooms. Staff development was focused on implementing the Standards Plus program, using Step Up to Writing and effective instructional strategies that are supported by research. Simultaneously, Wilson staff recognized that another intensive intervention was needed for students functioning below grade level.

Solution

The Learning Center instruction was standards based and specifically targeted to the students' needs. Principal Togerson developed a Response to Intervention Student Plan that was completed for each Special Education student that participated in the Learning Center. It contained an individualized schedule for each student that identified their learning needs, the focus of instruction, and where the instruction was provided. Additionally, a student instructional analysis was completed by the staff in the Learning Center for every student assigned to them. Each week the Learning Center staff added information to the analysis, engaged in a dialogue about each student's progress, and developed learning targets for the next week.

Wilson piloted the Standards Plus Intervention System® in mathematics and language arts because the mini lessons provided the Learning Center staff with tools to easily scaffold instruction. It also afforded them the ability to document the grade level at which the students were performing. The staff liked the flexibility that the variety of lessons provided. Within those lessons, students practiced applying the learning strategies found on the Standards Plus Test Taking Strategies Cards. Frequently students were taught more than one lesson during their 50 minute block of instruction.

"The Intervention System helps to fill in the gaps in students' learning experience. The lessons are also a great help in modifying the instruction for our Special Education students."

–Nelson Togerson, Principal
Wilson Elementary School

Results

Asked what he's most happy about, Togerson says, "Students are exiting the Learning Center. That's our goal. And, due to the Learning Center intervention, we've only identified two additional students for special education services this year. Many students have learned that someone cares about them and is helping them to learn." Theresa Morales adds, "Students are enjoying coming to the Learning Center. It motivates them to attend school regularly."

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Without specifically identifying it, the school used the systematic Plan, Do, Check, Act process as they built the Learning Center and served their students.

- Plan: An analysis of student data was done and target students and their needs were identified. The initial starting level of instruction was determined.
- Do: Lessons were selected and taught based on the students' needs and to fill their identified gaps in skills.
- Check: Students' progress is continuously being assessed and instruction and services adjusted to meet their needs.
- Act: Services are revised and/or added and students are exited based on new performance data.

Every school wants to improve student achievement and help children remain in mainstream education. To accomplish this goal, every school needs to examine its student data, determine staffing, select appropriate materials and organize their tiered interventions to directly target student learning gaps. No Rtl Tier 2 model is the right one for every school. The Wilson Elementary School staff demonstrated their commitment to research and sought the best possible intervention model for their students and their site.