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MINI-MANUAL

Planning: Learning Maps



INSTRUCTIONAL
COACHING
GROUP

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For more detailed information regarding the information contained in this mini-manual, refer to:

High Impact Instruction: A Framework for Great Teaching

Chapter 4

By Jim Knight

Also view the High Impact Instruction introduction video:



Planning: Learning Maps

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Learning Maps

“A good map is both a useful tool and a magic carpet to faraway places.”

AUTHOR UNKNOWN

KEY CONCEPTS FOR COACHES

IMPORTANT UNDERSTANDINGS ABOUT MAPS

- 1 Seeing supports learning.
- 2 Maps show the big picture.
- 3 They keep students and teachers on track.
- 4 Maps can structure the beginning and ending of lessons.
- 5 They serve as a mechanism for repeated review.
- 6 Maps make connections explicit.
- 7 They can help struggling note-takers.
- 8 Maps serve as a living study guide.

Turning Ideas Into Action

STUDENTS

- 1 Allowing students opportunities to construct maps of what they are learning depends their understanding.
- 2 Teachers should discuss with their students why they are using maps and ask students for their feedback on the words chosen.

TEACHERS

- 1 The best way to learn about maps is to use them.
- 2 Learning maps are the most powerful when they are used *with* students and not just for planning purposes.
- 3 To get started, it may be easier to start small—at the lesson level.
- 4 Teachers can gather data and conduct action research to see if maps help clarify understanding of content.

INSTRUCTIONAL COACHES

- 1 Collaborate with teachers developing learning maps by using checklists available in this mini-manual.
- 2 Developing a deep understanding of learning maps and how they increase student learning is essential for coaches.
- 3 Modeling learning maps when working with teachers can deepen understanding.
- 4 Learning maps depict knowledge, skills, and big ideas. The amount of content knowledge a coach has will affect how a coach approaches teachers.

PRINCIPALS

- 1 Fight for time for teachers to reflect on and create learning maps.
- 2 Resist temptation of having a few teachers develop the maps and then “pass” them out to other teachers or new teachers

What It Looks Like



Learning maps will only make a difference if students see them and use them. Therefore, evidence of learning maps should be obvious. Students should be using learning maps routinely. The higher the quality of learning maps, the more likely learning maps will have profound effect.

SAMPLE LINKING WORDS

through	including	by analyzing
defined by	grounded in	caused by
by being	by creating	organized by
leading to	involving	by always
based on	embodied in	developed by

QUALITY MAP CHECKLIST

A QUALITY MAP...	CHECK
Answers all the guiding questions	
Has a starting map with only the core idea, paraphrase, and subtopics	
Has a complete ending map on no more than one page	
Shows connections through line labels	
Is organized in the sequence of the learning unit	

DAILY USE OF THE LEARNING MAP AND GUIDING QUESTIONS

TEACHING BEHAVIOR	YES OR NO
Students have their map open on their desk when the bell rings to start the class.	
Class begins with a review of the content covered up until the current point in the unit.	
The learning map is used to introduce the day's lesson.	
Students record new content learned on the learning map.	
Each day ends with a review of the material depicted on the learning map.	