Contextual Fit Group Activity

Mountain Top 300 - Synopsis

Overview: The district is rural, small, has a handful of schools, demographically white and Hispanic mainly, low income, and is struggling academically, especially in K-5 among ELs. Several of its schools have been identified under federal and state accountability frameworks for low EL student growth and literacy.

CNA Findings: This district has conducted a Comprehensive Needs Assessment using the UIP, and identified student disengagement and behavioral issues in late elementary, middle, and high school to be a top challenge, as well as English Learner development in elementary and middle grades.

Potential EBI solutions: EL student development and growth

Peer Tutoring and Response Groups

Goal: To improve the language and achievement of English language learners by pairing or grouping students to work on a task. The students may be grouped by age or ability (English-only, bilingual, or limited English proficient) or the groups may be mixed.

Core Features: Peer tutoring consists of two students assuming the roles of tutor and tutee, or "coach and player" roles. Peer response groups give four or five students shared responsibility for a task, such as editing a passage or reading and answering comprehension questions. When working in a small group to edit a writing assignment, one student edits punctuation, another edits spelling, and another provides overall feedback on writing focus and clarity. Both peer tutoring pairs and peer response groups emphasize peer interaction and discussion to complete a task.

Evidence: Three studies across three states met the What Works Clearinghouse (WWC) evidence standards. WWC rates Peer Tutoring and Response Groups with ++ rating, meeting the highest level of evidence for significant and positive outcomes on student English Language Development.

> **Peer Tutoring and Response Groups – At a Glance**
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> **Evidence Strength**: Strong (ESSA Level 1)
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> **Applicable Grades of program**: 1-6
>
> **Students participating in studies:** Hispanic, Asian
>
> **Research Location(s):** Urban

Instructional Conversations and Literature Logs

Summary: To help English language learners develop reading comprehension ability along with English language proficiency. Instructional Conversations are small-group discussions. Acting as facilitators, teachers engage English language learners

Core Features: Acting as facilitators, teachers engage students in discussions about stories, key concepts, and related personal experiences, allowing students to appreciate and build on each others' experiences, knowledge, and understanding. *Literature Logs* require students to respond in writing to prompts or questions related to sections of stories. These responses are then shared in small groups or with a partner.

> **Instructional Conversations and Lit Logs – At a Glance**
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> **Evidence Strength**: Moderate (ESSA Level 2)
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> **Applicable Grades of program**: 2-5
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> **Students participating in studies:** Hispanic, Non-Hispanic
>
> **Research Location(s):** Urban

Evidence: Two studies of Instructional Conversations and Literature Logs met the (WWC) evidence standards with reservations, showing potentially positive effects (rated +). Studies included over 200 Hispanic ELs grades 2–5.

Potential EBI Solutions: Student disengagement and behavioral incidents

Caring School Community

Goal: To promote core values, prosocial behavior, and a schoolwide feeling of community. Caring School Community (CSC) is a modified version of a program formerly known as the Child Development Project. The Caring School Community™ program has been recently revised to eliminate some elements of the Child Development Project that were shown in evaluation studies to be inconsistently or poorly implemented.

Core Features: The CSC program consists of four elements originally developed for the Child Development Project: class meeting lessons, cross-age "buddies" programs, "homeside" activities, and schoolwide community. Class lessons provide teachers and students with a forum to get to know one

CSC – At a Glance
Evidence Strength: Promising (ESSA Level 3) for behavioral impact
Applicable Grades of program: K-6
Students participating in studies: Not available
Research Location(s): Urban, Rural, Suburban

another, discuss issues, identify and solve problems collaboratively, and make a range of decisions that affect classroom life. Cross-age buddies activities pair whole classes of older and younger students for academic and recreational activities that build caring cross-age relationships and create a schoolwide climate of trust. Homeside activities, short conversational activities that are sent home with students for them to do with their parent or caregiver and then to discuss back in their classroom, incorporate the families' perspectives, cultures, and traditions, thereby promoting interpersonal understanding. Schoolwide community-building activities bring students, parents, and school staff together to create new school traditions.

Evidence: Two studies of the Caring School Community program met the What Works Clearinghouse (WWC) evidence standards with reservations. The two studies together included more than 5,600 students from grades K–6 in seven school districts across the country, demonstrating strong to moderate evidence impact on behavior.

Check and Connect

Summary: To reduce dropping out of school. It is based on monitoring of school performance, mentoring, case management, and other supports.

Core Features: The "Check" component is designed to continually monitor student performance and progress. The "Connect" component involves program staff giving individualized attention to students in partnership with other school staff, family members, and community service organizations. Students enrolled in Check & Connect are assigned a "monitor" who regularly reviews information on attendance, behavior, or academic problems and intervenes when problems are identified. The monitor also advocates for students, coordinates services, provides ongoing feedback and encouragement, and emphasizes the importance of staying in school.

Check and Connect – At a Glance
Evidence Strength: Moderate (ESSA Level 2) for dropout prevention
Applicable Grades of program: 9-12
Students participating in studies: Majority Black, FRL
Research Location(s): Urban

Evidence: Two studies met WWC standards without reservations, and included students that receive special education services for a learning, emotional, or behavioral disability. Check & Connect was found to have positive effects on staying in school, potentially positive effects on progressing in school, and no discernible effects on completing school for high school students with learning, behavioral, or emotional disabilities.