

The Adams 50 Instructional Model

Executive Summary by Dr. Robert Marzano (September 23, 2011)

What Have We Learned?

During the 2010-2011 school year, Adams County School District 50 initiated a process to develop a common instructional model. From the outset, the model was *not* intended as a checklist of instructional strategies and activities that all teachers must employ. Rather the Adams 50 educators who helped develop the model recognized the fact that teachers across the district can have very different teaching styles and strategy preferences but still produce substantial learning in their students. Stated differently, the model does not imply that all teachers in the district should address instruction in the same manner. At its core the Adams 50 Instructional Model is intended to become the common language used throughout the district to discuss and interact about effective teaching. Thus far, the model has gone through two phases of development.

Phase I involved the development of an initial instructional model, specific to the Adams 50 School District. During this phase, Adams 50 educators (teachers and administrators) were trained in the instructional model *The Art and Science of Teaching* (ASOT) to establish an initial, common way of conceptualizing effective classroom instruction. Then Marzano Research Laboratory (MRL) worked with a team of Adams 50 educators to adapt the ASOT model to the special requirements of a standards-based system. An initial Adams 50 Instructional Model was created and distributed in December, 2010.

Phase II took place in the winter, spring, and summer of 2011. During this phase the validity of the Adams 50 instructional model was examined using survey data collected from teachers and students, videotapes of classrooms, and student achievement data. This study has produced some interesting findings. About 500 teachers and 6,000 students provided answers to the survey questions. About 150 teachers provided video tapes of their classrooms.

What Did Teachers Say?

Before drawing hard and fast conclusions about the responses to survey questions reported by teachers and students it is important to remember that survey items represent perceptual data. However, perceptions are an important part of school and classroom dynamics and can provide a useful perspective.

Teachers reported the highest scores (presented in rank order) for their responses to the three questions below. A high score means they thought they were doing quite well in these areas.

- *I exhibit behaviors that demonstrate value and respect for both high expectancy and struggling students.*
- *When appropriate, I use verbal and nonverbal behaviors that indicate caring for students.*
- *I behave in an objective and controlled manner.*

Teachers reported the lowest scores (presented in rank order) for their responses to the three questions below:

- *I organize the class in such a way as to facilitate students working on cognitively complex tasks that require them to generate and test hypotheses.*
- *I engage students in complex tasks (e.g., decision making, problem solving, experimental inquiry, investigation) that require them to generate and test hypotheses.*
- *I provide a clearly stated learning target accompanied by a capacity matrix or scoring guide that describes levels of performance relative to the learning target.*

What Did Students Say?

Different surveys were administered to primary, upper elementary, middle school, and high school students.

Primary Student (K-2)

Primary students provided the highest scores for the following two items:

- *I do my best to learn something new*
- *I work hard in class*

All items were scored very high by primary students; therefore, it would be inaccurate to conclude that the lowest scored items were substantively different from the highest scores in terms of student perceptions.

Intermediate Students

Intermediate students reported the highest scores for the following two items:

- *My teacher re-teaches material I don't learn right away.*
- *I am allowed to 'double dip' (work on multiple content areas at the same time).*

They reported the lowest scores for the following two items:

- *I cooperate well with others in this class.*
- *Students in this class respect each other most of the time.*

Middle School Students

Middle school students reported the highest scores for the following two items:

- *The teacher does not allow inappropriate behavior in class.*
- *I know what the teacher expects of me in this class.*

They reported the lowest scores for the following two items:

- *I feel comfortable reporting bad behavior to my teachers.*
- *My teacher and I talk about how I am doing in this class.*

High School Students

High school students reported the highest scores for the following two items:

- *I know what the teacher expects of me in class.*
- *I cooperate well with others in this class.*

They reported the lowest scores for the following two items:

- *My teacher takes time to build a relationship.*
- *My teacher and I talk about how I am doing in class.*

How Valid Is the Adams 50 Model?

Using video tapes of Adams 50 teachers, use of specific instructional strategies was analyzed. The extent to which teachers used specific strategies within the model was then correlated with measures of student achievement using CSAP scores and other district assessments. The highlights of the findings from this analysis include:

- The overall model predicts student academic achievement. In general the more strategies from the model teachers use and the better they use them, the better is student achievement.
- Providing clear learning targets and helping students understand these targets is one of the strategies most strongly associated with student achievement.
- Using scoring guides and capacity matrices is one of the strategies most strongly associated with student achievement.
- Asking students to make predictions or test hypotheses and then determining if their predictions and hypotheses are correct is one of the strategies most strongly associated with student achievement
- The extent to which teachers engage in the following activities while working with individual students or with small groups represents a set of strategies most strongly associated with student achievement:
 - Demonstrating a concern for and interest in students
 - Demonstrating high expectations
 - Offering help, guidance, and support

What Might You Do with These Findings?

Discuss the findings for the Adams 50 model in light of teacher and student perceptions using the following questions as a basis for your discussions:

- Is your school doing a good job at those strategies that are most strongly associated with student achievement?
- Are you as an individual teacher doing a good job at those strategies that are most strongly associated with student achievement?
- What might be a focus area for improvement for the whole school?
- What might be a focus area for improvement for you as an individual teacher?
- How can you find and share examples of best practices in the areas of the Adams 50 model that are most strongly associated with student achievement?