

**The Challenge of Writing for
More than One Audience:
Our Experience with the
Schools of Promise Case Studies**

**Ohio Program Evaluators' Group
2007 Spring Evaluators' Exchange
May 18, 2007**

**Institutional Research Consultants
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OPEG – Challenge of Writing for More than One Audience
Begin: 2:00 p.m. End 3:00 p.m.

Lead	Topic	Time	Minutes
Jan	Set-up & Introduction – Slides 1-2	2:00 – 2:05	5
Janice	Project Background - Slides 3-9	2:05 – 2:15	10
Jan	Assumptions & Adjustments – Slides 10-13	2:15 – 2:22	7
Tania	Major Challenges – Slide 14	2:22 – 2:27	5
Jan with Janice and Tania	Presentation Solutions – Slide 15 Handout – pages 9-13	2:27 – 2:39	12
Jan with Janice and Tania	Lessons Learned / Discussion – Slide 16	2:39 – 2:59	20
Jan	Wrap-up and Thank You	2:59 – 3:00	1
	TOTAL	1 hour	60

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PRESENTERS

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PROJECT BACKGROUND

- Ohio Department of Education (ODE) project
- Eight *Schools of Promise* case studies were done in spring 2003 and 2004
- 2005 RFP requested 6-8 more case studies

PROJECT BACKGROUND

-Continued-

Five projects were funded in 2005-2006

- Reading/Language Arts – IRC (8 schools)
- Students with Disabilities – OSU (13 schools)
- Rural and Mathematics – Ohio Univ. (6 schools)
- Teacher Effectiveness – Strategic Research Group (8 schools)
- Urban Schools – RMC Research Corp. (6 schools)

TOTAL Case Studies = 41

CASE STUDIES AVAILABLE

Ohio Department of Education

www.ode.state.oh.us

Search for keyword PROMISE

CASE STUDY BACKGROUND

- Randomly Selected 8 Schools
- Two-day School Visits
- Classroom Observation – English and Math
- Interviews
 - Principal
 - Teachers
 - Other Applicable Staff
 - Parents
 - Two Student Focus Groups
- Surveys

SCHOOLS SELECTED

4 High Schools

- Alliance HS (NE Ohio)
- Bucyrus HS (NC OHIO)
- Dawson Bryant HS (SE OHIO)
- New Lexington HS (C OHIO)

4 Elementary Schools

- Essex Elem (NE OHIO)
- Jackson Elem (SE OHIO)
- Kyle Elem (W OHIO)
- William C. Bryant Elem (NE OHIO)

RESEARCH SUMMARY

We had lots of information

- Total Interviews – 248
- Teachers Interviewed – 83
- Teachers Observed – 90
- Teachers Surveyed – 97

GENERAL FINDINGS

We had lots of findings

- Staff Characteristics
- Practices Impacting Students
- Instructional Characteristics
- Staff Development Characteristics
- Parent/Community Characteristics

BIG QUESTION: How were we going to communicate everything to several different audiences?

INITIAL ASSUMPTIONS

- 1) We would adopt a similar presentation style
- 2) We would use existing interview protocols
- 3) We would be working with ODE staff previously involved with case studies

Well, we all know what it means to **ASSUME**...

ADJUSTMENTS TO OUR PLAN

- 1) We would adopt a similar presentation style
 - Public relations versus research
 - Collected much more information than initial case studies
 - Audience possibly more diverse: researchers, educators, and parents

ADJUSTMENTS TO OUR PLAN
-Continued-

- 2) We would use existing interview protocols
 - Too many questions
 - More focus needed on our assigned topic
 - Adjustments made beginning in the middle of our first site visit

ADJUSTMENTS TO OUR PLAN

–Continued–

- 3) We would work with ODE staff previously involved with case studies
 - Turnover in ODE point person position
 - Point of contact was initially a program manager and then two evaluators
 - Project became more research focused
 - Presentation still needed to be applicable to educators and parents

MAJOR CHALLENGES

- 1) Overwhelmed by amount of information
- 2) Began to run over budget
- 3) Needed to come up way of presenting information that would be useful to:
 - Educators (Administrators and teachers)
 - Parents
 - Researchers

PRESENTATION SOLUTIONS

Developed tools that built on prior research

"Five Lessons Learned from Successful Schools" on page 9

IRC Products

- 1) 1-pager of highlights introduced each report (page 10)
- 2) School (page 11) and cross-site (pages 12-13) matrices
- 3) Detailed reports (each school and cross-site)

ODE Products

- 4) ODE executive summaries
- 5) ODE public relations pieces

LESSONS LEARNED / DISCUSSION

- Case study research can easily get out of control
- Pre-existing data collection tools need pre-testing
- Need clear project goals: public relations vs. research
- Variety of presentation approaches can help make findings assessable to diverse stakeholders

Previous ODE Research that Informed IRC's Presentation Tools

Five Lessons Learned from Successful Schools¹

- Lesson 1:** Ohio Schools of Promise deliver rigorous instruction aligned to the State's academic content standards.
- Lesson 2:** Ohio Schools of Promise provide leadership that leads to the continuous improvement of the school.
- Lesson 3:** Ohio Schools of Promise design instruction to ensure every student's success.
- Lesson 4:** Ohio Schools of Promise engage parents and the community to support student success.
- Lesson 5:** Ohio Schools of Promise create a culture where each individual feels valued.

PRESENTATION TOOL 1
 Kyle Elementary School
 Superintendent David A. Dolph
 Principal Kimbe L. Lange

Case Study Report Highlights: Kyle Elementary School

PROVIDING LEADERSHIP THAT RESULTS IN CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT

- **Strong and Experienced Leadership** - The principal has been at the school four years and has successfully worked with the teachers to develop more specific school goals, establish common planning time, move special education and Title I teachers into regular classes, use data to more systematically inform instruction, bring in more intervention teachers and academic coaches, and introduce all-day kindergarten.
- **Experienced, Collaborative, and Flexible Teachers** - Teachers have an average of 14 years of experience, two are nationally board certified, 67% hold a Master's degree, and 47% had been at the school for 20 years or more. Teachers work closely together, especially since the intervention teachers provide instruction in regular classrooms. The fourth and sixth grade teachers team-teach. Teachers are open to new strategies.

CREATING A CULTURE WHERE EACH INDIVIDUAL FEELS VALUED

- **Committed Teachers** - Teachers are aware of the hardships faced by many of their students. They care about the children, enjoy the challenge of producing results, and involve other staff in efforts to meet students' needs.
- **Efforts to Address Needs of All Students** - Classrooms have 2-5 adults available to work with students. Intervention and Title I teachers are in the regular classrooms. The school offers after-school tutoring ("Homework Helper"). Volunteers do one-on-one reading (OhioReads) and mentoring ("lunch buddies").
- **High Expectations** - All grades have homework. Teachers develop individualized handbooks by grade level that outline expectations for students and parents. Teachers regularly do timed tests and set goals for performance.
- **Male Role Models** - Four of six teachers in grades 4-6 are male as is the music teacher.
- **Arts Program** - The music teacher is on site three days a week and works with all grades. The school brings in several arts related programs throughout the year, including The MUSE Machine from Dayton.
- **Sixth Grade Trip to Washington, D.C.** - Sixth graders raise money for an annual education trip to the capital.

DESIGNING INSTRUCTION TO ENSURE EVERY STUDENT'S SUCCESS

- **Reading Program** - Kyle began using the Houghton Mifflin reading series, adopted by the district, in 2003-2004. Most teachers are continuing to supplement with various resources. The reading block is 90 minutes.
- **Math Program** - The math block has been increased to 90 minutes. Fifth graders are introduced to Algebra.
- **Overall Educational Approach** - Teachers are encouraged to challenge students with material that may be slightly above their grade level. Younger grades constantly revisit concepts and some K-2 classes have students rotating through centers. Almost all classes use group work, which is aided by having several adults in each class.
- **Teacher Differentiation** - In grades K-3, there are two teachers for each grade and each has a distinctive teaching style. One is highly active and the other is more traditional. This setup helps meet student needs.
- **Use of Data to Target Instruction** - Kyle uses STAR Reading (a computer program) and the *Dynamic Indicators of Basic Early Literacy Skills* (DIBELS) to test students' reading skills. Teachers use the *Yearly Progress Pro* each week to monitor math progress of the fifth and sixth graders. Students also track their own performance.
- **Intervention** - The school's Learning Assistance Team reviews the cases of students having academic or behavioral issues. Three Title I teachers assist students working below level within their regular classroom and all special education students are in regular classes. Additional one-on-one pullout assistance is provided as needed.

PROVIDING RIGOROUS INSTRUCTION ALIGNED TO STANDARDS

- **Attention to Standards** - Teachers are well aware of the standards and many check weekly that they are appropriately covering all benchmarks for their grade level. District pacing charts have been helpful.
- **Professional Development** - There is ongoing professional development, led by several teachers and the district academic coach. Teachers also learn about new strategies at waiver days and the school's annual retreats.
- **Grants** - OhioReads has been the school's major grant. It has provided additional materials and a coordinator to recruit volunteers for one-on-one reading.

ENGAGING PARENTS AND COMMUNITY TO SUPPORT STUDENT SUCCESS

- **Parent Communication and Involvement** - Teachers have ongoing communication with parents, including having parents sign their child's progress report weekly. Parent involvement is somewhat mixed, but the school has an active Parent Teacher Organization and numerous activities.
- **Business and Community Involvement** - The business community funds a program that provides ongoing support (including after-school tutoring and mentoring) to 15 needy students (five each at 4th, 5th & 6th grade) at each school through college graduation. The business community pays for a teacher to tutor each night.

PRESENTATION TOOL 2

Kyle Elementary: Summary of School Characteristics by Five Lessons Learned

Five Lessons Learned					School Characteristics
Providing leadership that results in continuous improvement	Creating a culture where each individual feels valued	Designing instruction to ensure every student's success	Providing rigorous instruction aligned to standards	Engaging parents and community to support student success	
Staff Characteristics					
X					Strong and collaborative principal
X					Strong previous principal
X					Senior/experienced staff
X					High staff commitment
X	X				Caring teachers and staff
X	X	X			High expectations
Practices Impacting Staff					
X					Common Planning Time
X					Creative use of staff
Practices Impacting Students					
	X	X	X		Tutoring at-risk students, in-school or after-school
X		X	X		Analysis of test data to inform intervention
		X	X		Frequent testing
	X	X	X		Small reading groups
	X	X	X		Extensive use of small groups
	X	X	X		Collaboration of intervention, special, and regular
Instructional Characteristics					
X		X	X		Strong Reading Program
X		X	X		Strong Math Program
			X		Change in math classes
	X	X	X		Teachers use wide variety of instructional strategies
	X	X	X		Use of centers
		X			Focus on early childhood education
	X	X	X		Gifted and talented program
Staff Development Characteristics					
		X	X		Attention to state standards
X		X	X		Extensive professional development
X		X	X		Grants (Ohio Reads)
X		X	X		Opportunities for teachers to observe each other
Parent and Community Characteristics					
				X	Extensive communication with parents
				X	High level of parent involvement
				X	High percentage of parents attended the school
				X	Staff are graduates or part of community
				X	Strong business/community partnerships
		X	X	X	Alliance with area colleges
Institutional Characteristics					
				X	Open Enrollment

PRESENTATION TOOL 3
IRC Cross-site All Eight Schools - Summary of School Characteristics by Five Lessons Learned

Five Lessons Learned					School Characteristics	Elementary				High School			
Designing instruction to ensure every student's success	Providing rigorous instruction aligned to standards	Providing leadership that results in continuous improvement	Engaging parents and community to support student success	Creating a culture where each individual feels valued		Essex	Jackson	Kyle	W.C. Bryant	Alliance	Bucyrus	Dawson-Bryant	New Lexington
Staff Characteristics													
		X			Strong and collaborative principals	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
		X			Senior/experienced staff	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
		X			High staff commitment	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
		X		X	Caring teachers and staff	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
X		X		X	High expectations	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Practices Impacting Staff													
		X			Common planning time		X	X	X	X			X
		X			Creative hiring practices or use of staff		X	X	X		X	X	
Practices Impacting Students													
X	X			X	Tutoring at-risk students, in-school or after school	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
X	X	X			Analysis of test data to inform intervention	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
X	X				Frequent testing	X	X	X	X		X	X	X
X	X			X	Small class size (small reading groups for Elem.)	X	X	X	X	X		X	X
X	X			X	Collaboration of intervention, special, and regular	X	X	X			X		X
				X	Incentives	X	X		X		X	X	X

PRESENTATION TOOL 3
IRC Cross-site All Eight Schools - Summary of School Characteristics by Five Lessons Learned
—Continued—

Five Lessons Learned					School Characteristics	Elementary				High School			
Designing instruction to ensure every student's success	Providing rigorous instruction aligned to standards	Providing leadership that results in continuous improvement	Engaging parents and community to support student success	Creating a culture where each individual feels valued		Essex	Jackson	Kyle	W.C. Bryant	Alliance	Bucyrus	Dawson-Bryant	New Lexington
Instructional Characteristics													
X	X	X			Strong reading program or English Department	X	X	X		X	X		X
X	X	X			Strong math instruction or Math Department			X		X	X	X	
	X				Change in math classes			X		X	X	X	X
Staff Development Characteristics													
X	X				Attention to state standards	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
X	X	X			Extensive professional development	X	X	X	X	X		X	X
X	X	X			Grants (OhioReads for Elementary)	X	X	X		X		X	X
X	X	X			Research-based professional development program				X			X	X
Parent and Community Characteristics													
			X		Extensive communication with parents	X	X	X	X	X		X	
			X		High level of parent involvement	X	X	X	X	X		X	
			X		High percentage of parents attended school		X	X	X	X	X	X	X
			X		Staff are graduates or part of community	X	X	X	X	X		X	X
X	X		X		Alliance with area colleges	X		X		X	X	X	X