Welcome to the 1st edition of the SPHS Teaching and Learning Newsletter!

In order to improve communication with all of you, this newsletter will be coming out weekly to your inbox. My goal is to pack it with strategies that might give a boost your instructional practice and learning success for our students, as well as to share all of the great things I get to see happening in our classrooms each day.

I have also created a weekly schedule to keep on track with classroom visits. I will leave you with what I noticed (teacher actions/student actions) on the "Equitable Classroom Practices Checklist" &/or collect walk-through data (digital & anonymous) and will follow up with an email. September 5-8, I will be visiting CTE classes and 11-15, the Arts. I will be in before the bell as to not interrupt and will not interact with students during instruction. If I visit during independent work times, I do talk with kids (can't help it). If there is anything in particular you would like me to look for or specific data you would like me to collect, please let me know!

I am looking forward to collaborating with and learning from all of you this year! If you would like to see something specific show up in the newsletter, have a great strategy you would like to share, or would like to meet for a conversation, feel free to contact me any time!

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Link to Instructional Resources on the SPHS Webpage

Relationships & Community

As the first day of classes quickly approaches, it is a great time to reflect on our core beliefs about teaching and learning. To kickstart your refection, check out this article from *The Master Teacher* outlining 6 'experience-tested' teacher beliefs and how they affect student agency and learning success.

https://masterteacher.net/six-beliefs-that-set-the-stageSfor-a-successful-year

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## *Collaboration in Action: Sarah Honn; Math*

Sarah began this lesson (Spring 2023) with independent observations as each student (in a team of 4) wrote what patterns they noticed in a sequence of circles onto one corner of a large poster paper. This think time allowed activation of background knowledge and led to an automatic transition into conversation. Sarah visited each group, asking for clarification about observations.

The students were then tasked with drawing representations of the next 2 rows of circles onto their poster paper. This required students to think critically using their knowledge of mathematical patterns and to work as a team to design a solution.

Again, Sarah walked the room and asked students questions to deepen their thinking: "Why do you think that one is orange?", What made you decide to divide that into 3 parts?". Students defended their patterns with specific equations and other mathematical relationships which showed that they were actively retrieving previous content learning.

At one point, it became evident that a team was stuck and questioning did not advance their thinking. Instead of giving them hints, Sarah did a quick whip-around the class and had each group share one pattern they were noticing. This was enough to give the stuck team some ideas without 'needing help from the teacher' which maintained their agency as thinkers and problem solvers.

Thank you, Sarah, for letting me observe and share about your lesson!
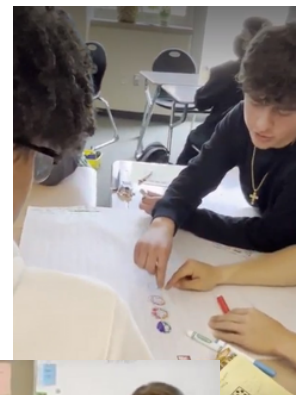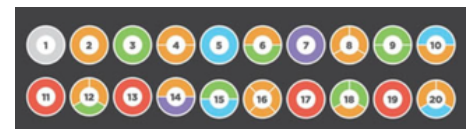
Easy Strategies - Positive Impact

"Here's a list of 6 weird little things that impact student behavior, engagement, and motivation."   – Tyler Rablin, Teacher

- Whenever I interact with a student at their desk, I make it my goal to be at the same height as them. I've found that doing this helps the information to be received more readily, whether it's academic support or a behavioral request.

- If I ask a student to do something they don't want to do in the moment (head back to their desk, put their phone on my desk, etc.), I make the request and then say "Thank you" before they can reply. It seems to make it less likely the student will respond negatively.

- In my feedback, I use "and" not "but". Instead of saying, "I liked X, but Y is something you need to work on", I switch "but" with "and". In writing conferences, this seems to help students value both the positive and negative instead of focusing on the negative.

- When correcting a student's behavior, I often just ask "What do you think I'm going to ask you to do?" instead of simply telling students what to do. They almost always name the behavior I'm looking for without it devolving into a power struggle.

- I have students pass out things without scores on them. I started doing it because I was being lazy, but what I realized is that it helps students to get to know each other's names more quickly. It seems to have an impact on the classroom community and how well group activities go, too.

- When students are working on something in Google Classroom, I have the assignment expanded so students can see how many assignments have been turned in (no names, obviously). This creates a slight bit of positive peer pressure as the turn in number goes up, increasing focus.

Effective vs. Ineffective PLC Meetings: Video Examples

If you are new to PLC's or would just like to see one in action, click the box on the left - it shows snippets of effective conversation & meeting structures. The second box shows ineffective use of PLC time & conversation. It is meant to be a parody but is true nonetheless.
Each video is about 4 minutes.   To view, click on the box. :)

AN EFFECTIVE PLC

AP Physics 1

A NOT so effective use of PLC time
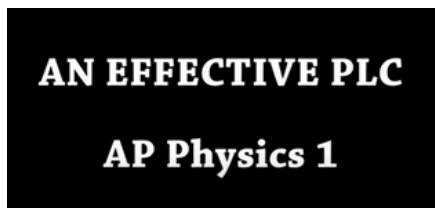
Thanks for taking the time!

I welcome feedback for how to make the newsletter work better for

you or if you would like to see something specific, please let me know!

Strategies may also be found on the SP Webpage under 'Learn' and

then 'Instructional Resources'.