ABSTRACT
              Installation of a success-based model of learning
(that is, a mastery-learning-based system) will help superintendents
make education effective and efficient. Such a system follows a
number of concepts, including favorable learning conditions, teachers
qualified in learning-centered practices, clear learning objectives,
and alternative learning strategies for students, but it is
especially based on continuous, computer-generated diagnostic and
prescriptive data for tracking individual pupil progress. Installing
such a system means finding out what administrators, teachers, and
learners need to know and do to ensure learner success, and finding
out what must be done to maintain effectiveness. Among the political
requirements for such a system is school board commitment to learner
success and to the learning-centered performance system. Technical
requirements include teacher commitment to such a system and
awareness of the difference between learner-and teacher-centered
learning. In managing a mastery-learning-centered system, necessary
data will be supplied to teachers (for diagnosis and prescription),
principals (for support activities), central office administrators,
and the superintendent and the board (for revisions and new
objectives and resources). (RW)

INSTALLING A DISTRICT-WIDE LEARNING-CENTERED PERFORMANCE SYSTEM:

MEETING SIGNIFICANT POLITICAL AND TECHNOLOGICAL REQUIREMENTS FOR SUCCESS

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Gene Geisert

A revolution is taking place in public education. Propelled by
technological advances, thoughtful administrators are looking to a
breakthrough in professional practices and methods to provide answers
as to how to better assure that students will learn successfully.
The future is already here in a few lighthouse districts and will
quickly spread through the nation's schools.

The concepts of results-focused learning are spreading simply
because it delivers a more effective, efficient strategy for deliver-
ing success for the learner. Students are mastering the basic skills
in various environments at every grade level when results-focused
learning is implemented. Such a system is designed to deliver effec-
tive and predictable learning results.

As with the application of any new approach, however, the wide-
spread use of results-focused learning will require dynamic leadership
if we are to seize upon this opportunity and create a climate for
success.

Public educators are undeniably under attack. So pervasive is
the perception that American public schools are failing that non-
educator groups are seeking to replace the traditional role of the
superintendent by substituting a new cadre of instructional decision-
makers. Many school boards no longer look for or desire their chief
executive officer to be an innovator of "best educational practices."

State legislators frequently cite a crisis in public education as a
rational for passing mandated instructional approaches or for
supporting alternative educational structures. Community groups,
mayors, city councils, and the courts are all actively seeking to
influence the future direction of American education. And the
environment is particularly hostile to the superintendency. There
is a frightening similarity between modern innovative superinten-
dencies and the giant turtles of the Galapagos Islands - in a
striking documentary Jacques Cousteau vividly portrayed the dangers
fledging turtles faced from land, sea and air predators.

Hostile climate notwithstanding, it is my thesis that ultimately
only the superintendent, with the potential power base for monitoring
and initiating system change which that role carries, is in a position
to bring about comprehensive change resolving stated crisis. Aggressive,
skilled, local administrators hold the key to creating schools that work
effectively. Local superintendents have new tools which will enable
them to recapture the rapidly deteriorating leadership role. Their
heritage as school officers provides a strong foundation for the
winning approach. Superintendents have sought what is best for learners.
Rarely have they sought personal gain or political payoffs, or carried
hidden agendas. They are "up front" for learners. Successful learners
form the platform for building the ultimate rationale for the continued
existence of a strong public school system. Success-based learning will
be a powerful piece in helping superintendents to survive the future
(if not public education itself).

In essence, success models for learners follow these concepts:

1. Youngsters are provided favorable learning conditions, and are given sufficient time to achieve.

2. Professional educators are qualified to apply new learning-centered practices assuring the delivery of successful learning outcomes and the effective management of the delivery of learning results, i.e., performance objectives and standards.

3. Students are given clearly stated learning objectives that specify skills to be learned and that spell out standards of performance; and they are given required learning ladders (learning paths) to assure progress to success in achieving mastery learning objectives and standards.

4. Learners are offered alternative learning strategies to assure successful progression to the achievement of objectives and standards.

5. There is progressive computer managed assessment and analysis of student results by the teacher to chart each student's progress and to assist the teacher in selecting viable alternative learning strategies.

6. The teacher applies a continuous diagnostic, prescriptive, confirmation, and revision process at each step of the learning path to control the quality of learning results delivered.

7. Teachers are provided with computer supplied performance

data to track pupil progress on an individual basis, and to
provide need-to-know information so that appropriate decisions
can be made by learning managers to assure progressive success
by learners.

Providing the teacher with continuous micro computer generated
diagnostic, prescriptive data that free the teacher to teach, based
on prepared learning blueprints for delivering successful learning,
is the most exciting and challenging cornerstone of all.

In turn, utilizing a system-wide learning management system,
teachers will have at their fingertips precise data which will not
only assist them in managing classroom activities, but, further, will
provide for the selection of appropriate instructional media to
supplement teaching strategies for delivering predictable learning
success.

Imagine knowing where each pupil is in terms of his or her learning
needs, having multiple learning approaches inventoried for prescription
by the teacher, and, having the pupil's progress monitored at every step
of school life leading to his or her predictable success.

Think of a learning-centered management system that further groups
children by need and by capability and by learning style; and offers
methods by which the group can be taught or reinforced in the achieve-
ment of those skills the teacher is presenting with resulting predict-
able success for learners.

To survive the future, public education must show significant and
timely improvement toward meeting the demand that schools be, first,
EFFECTIVE in delivering predictable learner success and, second,

EFFICIENT in the management and in the use of limited resources when
delivering successful learning results.

Sharing real-world experiences and requirements for installing a successful learning-centered delivery system in the schools

In retrospect, my five years (1975-1980) directing the New Orleans
SCIP Program has taught me valuable lessons which can have an impact on
the success of other mastery-learning system installations. These
lessons refer to both POLITICAL and TECHNICAL requirements.

Rethinking for the design and installation of a district-wide Learning-Centered Performance System

It must be initially understood that the successful installation of
a district-wide learning delivery system will require major changes by
all educational partners in ways of thinking about, planning for, de-
signing for, and managing the delivery of predictable learner success.

Following is a series of critical questions which must be asked
and answered, in the sequence presented in order to install a successful
district-wide Learning-Centered Performance System.

    Question 1 asks: What must administrators know and do in order
                       to do for teachers and learners?

    Question 2 asks: What must teachers know/do to insure student
                       success?

    Question 3 asks: What must learners know/do to be successful
                       in schools and life? (K-12)

    Question 4 asks: What must be done (added/deleted/revised) to
                       maintain learning system effectiveness?

The answers to these significant questions are presented in Table
I (Appendix A).

Political and Technical Requirements for
Installing a District-Wide Learning-Centered
Performance System

In order to achieve success for learners, the school board must understand the concept of learning-centered practices to be installed in a school district and must commit itself to these professional practice requirements.

o The school board must be committed to learner success as the prime business of the schools.

o The school board must make a multi-year (long-range) commitment to the installation of a district-wide Learning-Centered Performance system; i.e., every partner committed to the success of each learner as the first order of business.

o The school board must see this commitment as its top priority and see dollars as a MUST-DO investment requirement.

o The school board must commit sufficient resources to accomplish these requirements.

o The school board must establish realistic time requirements to install an effective and successful learning delivery system.

The installation of a district-wide learning delivery system also requires that the concepts of outcome-based learning be differentiated from traditional schooling processes. Professionals must be committed to new Learning Centered competencies based on new instruction/learning requirements. Predictable learning does not simply mean achieving

priority learning objectives and criterion measures. This commitment
has major implications for change, including (A) advancement of
students based only on each learner's achievement of measurable
performance (standards), and (B) reporting to parents on the achieve-
ment of learning objectives.

The most crucial, technical requirement for installing a district-
wide learning system is that every teacher, teacher-aide, and/or those
responsible for delivering predictable learning results be committed to
and qualified in learner-centered professional competencies as follows:

A. Each teacher understands the difference between a TEACHING-
    CENTERED instructional learning process, and a LEARNING-
    CENTERED instructional process; and, that each teacher commits
    himself or herself to the use of the new professional practices
    required for the delivery of predictable learner success.

B. Each professional teacher teaches with learning blueprints
    "DESIGNED THROUGH THE EYES OF THE LEARNER" - not through the
    eyes of the teacher.

C. Each teacher agrees to his or her accountability for the
    daily application of learning-centered practices in his or
    her classroom; and, each professional will agree to be
    evaluated on his/her performance in delivering outcomes for
    learners.

Managing for the Delivery of District-Wide Predictable Learner Results

Given the achievement of the above stated requirements, the
Learning-Centered management system can be effectively designed and

installed. The larger the school district, the greater the com-
plexity in operation, management, and quality control requirements.
One will see the increasing requirement for quality control proced-
ures in order to provide timely and necessary data for teachers,
principals, and senior school administrators in order to deliver
precise learning successes in a school district. The quality control
checks allow managers to evaluate performance results against pre-
stated standards at a specific time; to identify deviation from
expected achievement of preplanned outcomes; and, where necessary
to remediate for performance discrepancies in learning and/or manage-
ment outcomes. This latter process (quality control) is defined as
control of the quality of the results-to-be achieved—not of the
professionals involved.

A computerized mastery learning-centered management system
responds to the needs of each manager for results as follows:

o   For the classroom teacher as the accountable manager for
    delivery of learning success: Management data provide him
    or her a diagnostic, prescriptive data base for making
    appropriate instructional/learning decisions; and, selec-
    tions from among alternative strategies and means in order
    to coordinate delivery of predictable mastery learner
    results.

o   For the principal as the accountable manager for supporting
    the successful delivery of successful learners in each
    classroom: Data are provided for decisions as to those need-
    to-know and/or do support actions to be performed to maintain

quality assurance of learning results in each classroom.

o   For the central office administrator as the accountable

manager for major programs, the overall school's per-

formance, and all district level goals and objectives:

All required performance data are provided in the correct

form, at the required time and frequency as related to

required decisions specific to the major focus of the

district, i.e., successful learners.

o   For the <u>superintendent and the school board</u> as the ultimate

accountable managers for district-wide results to be

reported to the community-at-large: The data base is

provided for annual revisions, for new objectives, and

for new resource requirements. (Educational Performance

Audit - EPA).

Each of the levels of management and operation defined above has

its unique need-to-know (data) and need-to-do (action) requirements

in order to make appropriate decisions specific to (a) defining

priority targets for action; (b) committing itself to the achievement

of priority results as expressed by performance objectives and criteria

and (c) monitoring performance effectiveness "along-the-way" and "at-

the end" of implementation programs.

Given the ongoing management/decision-making requirements stated

above, the installation of a computerized learning-centered management

system becomes most rational in order to deliver the desired and most

cost-effective results for learners, teachers, principals, senior

administrators, board members, and the community. Hopefully,

some superintendents will, like the turtles of Galapagos, stick

their necks out and take a first step toward a brave new world

where "The voice of the tyrtle(s) will be heard throughout the

land." (The Bible, Song of Solomon, Capter 2, Verse 10-12.)

TABLE 1: Questions to be Asked and Answered to
Design and Install a District-Wide
Learning-Centered Performance System

APPENDIX I.

Question 1	Question 2		Question 3	Question 4
What must administrators know and do in order to do for teachers and learners?	What must teachers know/do to insure student success?		What must learners know/do to be successful in schools & life? (K-12)	What must be done (added/deleted/revised) to maintain learning system effectiveness?
Acquire specialized skills in: - planning - management ⎤ for results - evaluation ⎦ to install, support and manage a Learning-Centered delivery system assuring predictable learning success. Prepare and Learn: to monitor, control and revise system to deliver predictable results for learners. Install and operate a computerized learning-centered management system to assure efficient operation.	Acquire: Professional practices for delivering predictable learning success - Knowledge of content in subject matter area Acquire: Skills required as a teacher to deliver success for learners Acquire: Management skills: diagnostic/prescriptive/confirmation/revision steps to control the delivery of predictable learning success	Apply Learning-Centered skills to develop predictable mastery learning outcomes (Learning Paths designed to assure learner success). Implement professional practices to design program success for learners. (Closed-Loop Learning-Centered steps: - Diagnosis - Prescription - Confirmation - Revision	Achieve learning outcomes specified in the K-12 Learning Paths designed "through the eyes of the learner" to produce mastery of progressive learning objectives and criteria Achieve Graduation Objectives and Standards for exit from schools designed to: - Get and hold a job - Generate at least sufficient resources to be self-sufficient - Generate quality life outcomes.	Identify change requirements specific to: - new priority needs - new professional competencies to be learned - more effective management/organization - more effective: - management decision-making evaluation procedures Initiate actions to revise as required to increase overall learning system effectiveness and efficiencies