



# Advanced Academics in Action

## Have You Seen This Child?

**Birdville ISD**

September 10, 2012

The Advanced Academic Specialists assist in the identification of gifted students. Sometimes these children hide in a classroom of on-level students. They often do not want their peers to notice their differences. Teacher

awareness of gifted characteristics helps with the identification process.

### *A Few Characteristics of a Gifted Child*

- Extensive Vocabulary
- Sense of Humor
- Curious

- Unique Point of View
- Visualizes Images
- Bored with Routine Tasks
- Procrastinates
- Likes Research
- Extensive Memory
- Learns Quickly
- Solves Problems

- Reflects about Learning

Please let your AA Specialist know when you have seen this child.

*All students have the right to learn at their highest potential.*



## PLCs: Zoom in on Learning

Effective PLC teams use test data to help them focus on the learning, the main purpose of the PLC. Data disaggregation is the lens that zooms in on the needs of the campus, the department, and the individual student. According to BISD's "Portrait of a Graduate" each graduate must possess a rigorous and extensive foundation in core academic areas... Each PLC must use data to ensure that students who are not learning receive support, and those who have already mastered the

content be provided opportunities to extend their learning through differentiated instruction. Viewing data is an essential component of the PLC for continuous improvement.

(BISD, Curriculum Management Plan, 2012)

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## QUOTE OF THE WEEK

"When data points to a weakness in students' academic skills, gap-closing schools are more likely to focus in on that area, making tough choices to ensure that students are immersed in what they need most."

(Symonds, 2004)

## Three Tips for Using Data:

- Create assessments that provide measureable results.
- Use data to create assessments that help with back loading the instruction (backward design).
- Use AWARE: the data system in Eduphoria. Use it as soon as you receive your training (teachers may want to begin exploring).



# Creating Common Based Assessments

PLC teams have already begun creating Common Based Assessments. CBAs are necessary because they help teachers identify individual needs of students, proved teaching strategies and

structures, and program concerns. They are one part of the overall assessment needed for effective learning. When a team creates a CBA the members must consider the following:

- Is each question standard driven?
- Is a standard overemphasized while others are left out of assessment?
- Does every question reach at least the applica-

tion level of thinking?

- Are all the answer stems similar in length?
- Do the distracters look like plausible answer choices?
- Are there at least three to five answer choices?

Remember to reflect on the CBAs as a team. Create strong assessments that paint the best picture to aide learning.

**The CBAs help each team member work to ensure every student acquires essential knowledge and skills.**

**The purpose is to "form" the current lesson and future lessons.**

## Examples of Formative Assessment

### Four Corners

This assessment structure allows the students to get out of their chairs and move to an answer choice. The teacher will designate each corner of the room as one of the answer choices "A,B,C or D". The teacher will provide the question stem with the answer choices on an overhead screen. Once a student determines his/her answer, they will walk to the corner that matches their answer. A student will count how many are in his/ her corner and report to the teacher. The teacher will then have an idea of how many students know or do not know the answer.

Another way to use the Four Corners structure is to designate each corner as "Highly Agree, Somewhat Agree, Somewhat Disagree, and Highly Disagree". The teacher will place statements on the overhead screen. Once a student determines how he/she agrees with the question, he/she will move to the appropriate corner. The students in the corner must discuss their positions and concede on a rationale for their decision. A member of the corner will report the rationale to the class. Find the statements from the unit's generalizations and guiding questions. You may want to use this structure before a unit of study begins.

# Examples of Formative Assessment

Anecdotal Notes enable teachers to monitor a student's progress over a period of time. They may also be used to determine who needs to receive a GT nomination. This system need not be burdensome for the secondary teacher. Below you will find two ways to create a system that is teacher friendly.

## Observation Folder

Observation Folders will allow the secondary teacher to keep all the notes in one file for each class. First, you will need a standard manila file folder and enough 5" x 7" index cards for students in your largest class, plus a few extras for transfer students. Place the file folder on a flat surface and beginning at the bottom of the folder tape (not glue) each index card above the next, leaving about  $\frac{1}{2}$  inch on which to write the student's name. By taping the cards on each side of the folder you can flip the cards up to write on the card below it. As the students are working, write on the student's card as you observe an area that shows progress, needs intervention, or demonstrates a GT characteristic.



Remember to  
date the  
observations.

<http://wvde.state.wv.us/teach21/Observations.html>

## Skills List/Class List

Set up a chart that lists skills, concepts, or GT characteristics. When a student shows evidence of a characteristic or skill listed in the box, jot down the student's name in the box. Each time you see that characteristic or skill, place a tally mark next to student's name. Change to a new list of skills each new unit.

Another way to keep records for assessment is to create a roster with the names of the students in descending order with a list of skills or characteristics moving horizontally across the top of the page. Check the box that corresponds with the student's name and skill as you observe a specific behavior.

### SOURCES

Dufour, Richard, Rebecca Dufour, et al. *Learning By Doing*. 2nd. Bloomington: Solution Tree Press, 2010. Print.

Johnsen, Susan K. *Identifying Gifted Students: a practical guide*. Waco TX: Prufrock Press Inc, 2004. Print.