



CAPE's Literacy and Numeracy Programs

For a number of years, CAPE has worked to provide personalized programming in pursuit of student success. Differentiated literacy and numeracy was part of this. Student personal academic achievement, at grade level and above, seemed to elude us in spite of the sustained focused efforts of each of the staff members. In some cases, we had classes that required 5 or more years of graded curriculum. A more efficient and effective system of delivery needed to be identified and implemented so that students were showing a year or more growth in a ten month period.

After a year of intense research and planning, CAPE implemented daily literacy and numeracy blocks to teach focused skills to homogenous groups of learners. Our defined literacy program combines reading and comprehending with writing and representing. Students investigate the four purposes of writing; read samples, discuss and work to model their own writing from the examples. Numeracy blocks blend basic math skills that require daily practice with focused math work that can be applied to real world contexts.

During the research phase, time was dedicated to selecting assessments to determine the current achievement of students, and to pinpoint tools that would identify areas of concern and track student progress. Standardized tests from three different sources were used: some online, some paper tasks, some group administered, some individually administered.

To assess literacy, we used Star Reading, Easy CBM, and the San Diego Quick Read. Star Reading provides a grade level of achievement, diagnostic reports for programming, access to online comprehension and vocabulary tests through Accelerated Reader, and a growth tracking system. The Easy CBM provides information on reading fluency. Reading accuracy for independent reading, instructional language, and frustration levels is determined using the San Diego Quick Read. To assess numeracy, we used Star Math and Easy CBM paper tasks. Star Math provides a grade level of achievement, diagnostic reports for programming, access to online practice and mastery tests through Accelerated Math, and a growth tracking system. The Easy CBM groups skills into three batteries for each grade. The percentile ranked scores indicate the level at which a student's skills in written math present.

Cross referencing the data from standardized tests, with input and observations from teachers, the students were divided into fairly homogenous groups. These groups are therefore not grade level assigned, but are current skill level assigned. Skill grouping means that it is possible for students in grade 4 and grade 8 to be working on the same concepts.

Our literacy and numeracy team of four was tiered so that it was very clear who was overseeing each tier of student intervention. Tier 1, overseen by the principal and one teacher with a background in assessment, focuses on strategies for all. This means promoting strategies that can be used in all classrooms, by all teachers, for all learners. Tier 2, overseen by the principal,

the Director of Student Services, and the Literacy Support Educational Assistant, focuses on targeted strategies for small groups and for students who are not demonstrating expected growth. Tier three, overseen by the Director of Student Services and the Literacy Support Educational Assistant, designs and delivers targeted 1-1 or 1-2 interventions and frequent assessments for students who are far below expectations and not showing growth.

Groupings are fluid. Students are assessed both by teachers and by standardized measures. Graded benchmarks were created and provided to teachers to track student growth by demonstration of skills. The groups, being fluid, allow for students to grow at their own pace. Once a student meets the skills in one group, he/she is advanced to another. At a minimum, students are reassessed 3 times a year with standardized assessments. With each report card, parents will know if their child is working below, at or above grade expectations and if the growth demonstrated is limited, expected, or above expectations in both literacy and numeracy. As such, we are focused on student growth and demonstration of competencies.

This literacy and numeracy program is school-wide and is supported by the timetable. Assignment of responsibilities to teachers is done according to teacher strengths and areas of expertise. Literacy and numeracy is the responsibility of all teachers and educational assistants. Even though it is the responsibility of the teachers to design, implement, and assess literacy and numeracy programming, they are supported by educational assistants, the administration, the Director of Student Services and the Superintendent.

After the first year of our literacy and numeracy strategic plan, it was subject to review and revision in June 2018. Instructional staff, both teachers and educational assistants, contributed anecdotal and qualitative data for evaluation. Using both quantitative and qualitative data, revisions were made to the planning, implementation, supervision and support aspects of literacy and numeracy.

The programs will again be reviewed and revised at the end of years two and three. It is expected that successful implementation and delivery will take three years minimum.