Test Results Should Inform Teaching

Program Puzzler

Standardized testing is used to determine students' Educational Functioning Levels and to monitor their progress, but you are discouraged that your teachers do not seem to use the test scores to inform their teaching. Because the teachers have completed regional trainings on testing, you decide that some form of internal professional development is needed to address this problem. You also want to have specific documents to aid the teachers in using testing information as they develop lessons. As a director, how should you proceed?

Peer Perspective

Professional Development

–   Follow-up Resource Center Network (RCN) trainings with a local back to basics or boot camp around portfolios, tests, and alignments to reinforce basic concepts and to avoid a teaching-to-the-test approach in the classroom. Your local training could include:

   o   Having teachers take the test to become more familiar with the question types, time constraints, and general test content.

   o   Using samples of teachers' completed paperwork and student documentation to explain program practices and suggest improvements to processes.

–   Emphasize the importance of using the diagnostic profiles that result from testing. Profiles along with informal monitoring (e.g., through the use of writing samples and quizzes) can provide valuable information throughout the assessment process.

–   Provide concrete examples linking test results to planned lessons.

Timely Tips

Ask peers to coach other teachers. This can be an informal or formal process involving teacher to teacher conversations, classroom observations, sharing of documents, etc. Coaching can be especially helpful with new hires.

Make networking and sharing a priority in your program. Encourage students to share with one another. Give teachers time to share with each other, too.

Review the ABLE Professional Development (PD) catalog to identify trainings focusing on linking assessment results to lesson planning.

Added Insights

Remember that test results are not the only indicators of student learning. Think of your student's test results as one piece in a more complex puzzle, a puzzle that also includes learning style information, goals, interests, and previous experiences.

Much has been written about the necessity of a comprehensive assessment policy (including formal and informal assessments) for diagnosing and placing students when they initially enter the program and for evaluating their progress in reaching goals and determining their achievement at a later point in their education.

– Refer to *Connecting Policy and Practice: A Guide to the ABLE Portfolio System* (October 2009) on the Ohio Board of Regents (OBR) ABLE website (http://uso.edu/network/workforce/able/reference/standards/abe/Portfolio-Connecting-Policy-and-Practice-Oct-2009.doc) for specific information about Ohio's portfolio system and how the portfolio can aid you in monitoring student progress and planning instruction.

The *Program Administrator's Sourcebook* (National Center for the Study of Adult Learning and Literacy, 2005) offers each of the following suggestions:

– Work with teachers to use program data to assess effects of instructional change. Looking at assessment or retention data may help you and your teachers make decisions about effectiveness of instructional or curriculum approaches.

– Recognize innovative, research-based practice. When teachers make instructional or curriculum changes, recognize their efforts in staff meetings, newsletters, and so on.

– Work with teachers to use program data to assess effects of instructional change. Looking at assessment or retention data may help in making decisions about effectiveness of specific instructional or curriculum approaches.

Literature mentioned in the Added Insights of this document is drawn from reviews, reports, and papers housed on the National Center for the Study of Adult Learning and Literacy (NCSALL) website. Refer to http://www.ncsall.net/index.php?id=15 for more information. In addition, the reference below, also found at the NCSALL site, is more directly cited in this document.

Taylor, J., Smith, C., & Bingman, B. (December 2005). Program Administrators' Sourcebook: A Resource on NCSALL's Research for Adult Education Program Administrators. Cambridge, MA. http://www.ncsall.net/fileadmin/resources/teach/PASourcebook.pdf

ABLELink Accompaniments

- Annual Report Table 4 Educ. Gains and Attend. By Educ. Functioning Level
- Latest Progress Recorded for Students, by Class
- Latest Progress Recorded for Students, by Site
- Latest Progress Recorded for Students, by Teacher
- Progress Report – BEST
- Progress Report – CASAS
- Progress Report – PEP
- Progress Report – TABE
- Progress Report – WorkKeys
- TABE Test Scores by Site by Student
- TABE Test Scores by Site by Teacher by Student
- TABE Test Scores by Student

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