

Instructional Design Committee Report

Committee Members: Ms. Anderson, Ms. Atkinson, Ms. Barrus, Ms. Frampton,
Ms. Lowe, Mr. Morrell, Mr. Roberts, Mr. Winget

On Friday, February 17, 2012, the Instructional Design Committee met with the goal of evaluating Liberty Academy according to the rubric provided by the accreditation program. The rubric focused on four questions relative to instruction at Liberty. The four areas of inquiry are:

- Aligns instruction with the goals and expectations for student learning
- Employs data-driven decision making
- Actively engages students in their learning, and
- Expands instructional support for student learning

The committee discussed each of these areas in depth, explored related issues, and came up with suggestions. We recognized that there are great differences in instructional design excellence with different faculty members within the school, but tried to look at overall school effort in instructional design.

Interpretation of Rubric	Liberty Academy Strengths	Areas for Potential Growth
Aligns instruction with the goals and expectations for student learning We will use measurements and clear standards to determine student success.	Our Score: three (3). All teachers have essential skills and knowledge necessary for student learning. Teachers are aware and are actively aligning instruction with expectations for student learning. We are fully functional in implementing quality instructional design.	1. Improvement of resources, including time, training, and equipment. 2. Additional aides, such as parent aides and peer tutors.
Data Used All teachers are licensed or in the process of becoming licensed, and those in the process are highly skilled. Very few are charter-specific. CRT results show that Liberty Academy was within 4% of the State average for language arts, and within 6% in math. Science was 8% above average in science. Non-testing teachers indicate reading the State Core Curriculum, and planning their instruction accordingly. This data was discovered through informal survey. Other data includes ACT data, DIBEL data, the Direct Writing Assessments, and new common assessment data.		
Employs data-driven instructional decision making We will use the data we gather to improve classroom work.	Our Score: Elementary scores a three (3), but secondary is closer to a high two (2-2.5). Elementary classes have set and established assessments and have implemented them well. While the secondary side had a variety of assessments, they did not score as high.	1. More use of performance assessment, especially in secondary education. 2. Closer collaboration with special-education instructors. 3. Increased consistency. 4. Increased data (secondary)

Data Used Surveys, test scores, classroom assessments, school assessments, and state-mandated assessments are all given and reviewed. This year we have implemented new assessments and instruction based on last-year's data. Running records are kept for elementary students.		
Actively engages students in their learning Provides curriculum and stimulus that fosters student participation in their learning.	Our Score: three (3). Students are actively engaged, and great improvements have been noted. Most lessons are interesting with active participation expected. Students are producing projects which show interest and learning.	1. Improved quantity and quality of higher-order thinking tasks. 2. Consistency in the school and the classroom. 3. More input and education of parents and students.
Data Used We have anecdotal stories from teachers. We also have parent and student surveys indicating generally positive responses on learning from students. Also, our school is a school of choice, and so attendance and enrollment is indicative. Our growth numbers show willing student participation.		
Expands instructional support for student learning Makes available resources for students to learn outside class time.	Our Score: two (2). Liberty teachers have used the available resources to their full extent. Teachers have an open-door policy and help tutor students. Study halls are available.	1. More peer and adult help with in the classroom. 2. Increased resources such as books and Internet helps. 3. More home resources.
Data Used We have a few programs, such as a science club, literacy night, science fair, emails, festivals, and websites. We are lacking in these, and this is the reason we have a generally low score.		

Summary

Our suggestions for improving instructional design have to be tempered against the reality of life at a charter school. We do not have the degree of funding to provide all of the resources we need, but we still have found ways that we can improve without an influx of money. We make the following recommendations:

1. Time. Faculty members need more time to plan instruction, confer with other teachers, be trained, and problem-solve as a faculty. We recommend a few days over the summer for curriculum preparation, and time set aside for more work.
2. Peer Tutors. There is a need for secondary students to be more challenged, review basic lessons, and be responsible members of the community. Additionally, there is a need for young students to receive more individualized support. This can easily be achieved through trained peer tutors.
3. Material resources. This is still a great need at the school, and should be supplied as needed..
4. Training. Some teachers are not trained at implementing the needed changes, and could use examples, time, mentors, workshops, and help from outside professionals.

We believe that as we institute these changes, the overall instruction at Liberty Academy will improve. By periodically reviewing the rubric, our goals, and our desires, we feel our direction will be good, and we will improve in all areas of quality instructional design.