

# STUDENT SUCCESS: February 2009

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## Differentiated Instruction and Technology

Intermediate teachers participated in a professional development session which focused on next steps in differentiated instruction and the use of technology. While the intent of the session was to focus on differentiated instructional strategies across the curriculum the use of technology focused on the healthy living and media literacy expectations of the curriculum. As was identified during the session while differentiated instructional strategies are meant to meet the needs of our struggling students the strategies engage all learners and provide the opportunity for all students to demonstrate their best work.

The session began with a review of the role mentor texts serve within the literacy program, most specifically in writing. Participants participated in a jig saw reading on the purpose of mentor texts and how to use them effectively. Each school was provided with a set of mentor texts to take back to their schools. Mentor texts in a variety of forms were discussed and this became evident when participants reviewed the lesson plan from the Guide to Effective Literacy for Media Literacy. The intent of the lesson was to have students create a public service announcement using technology and relating to an issue relevant to students. The healthy living expectations assisted with identifying possible topics such as bullying, peer pressure, smoking, drinking, drugs etc. The lesson plan in the guide lists public service announcements which are web based so teachers can view these with their students as mentor texts to assist students with understanding the form, persuasive language and content required in a public service announcement. The purpose in walking participants through this lesson and later the actual creation of their own announcement with movie maker or I movie was to add another option teachers can provide to students to demonstrate their learning in a variety of subject areas.

As a follow up to the two day session in September with Karen Hume participants discussed where they are in terms of using the backward design model for planning instruction and the implementation of the unit they planned over the two day session. The implementation of the actual unit varies from full implementation to partial implementation to we tried some of the strategies and are continuing to work on greater use of some differentiated instructional strategies. Regardless of where the implementation of the actual unit lies the victory is in the fact that many teachers identify a shift in their unit planning. As a result of the session, teachers are now moving away from planning based on the content of their textbooks and beginning with the curriculum expectations, the readiness of their students, and using a variety of resources to fit student readiness and need. This is a real shift in practice. Congratulations to those who took the plunge and continue to persist with this planning model! We will continue to share feedback in regards to how this planning model impacts on student achievement in Superior North Catholic DSB.

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## Coaching for Math Gains Regional Steering Team

Through the Coaching for Math Gains initiative Superior North Catholic has been provided an additional \$2000.00 to support mathematics work in our board for intermediate teachers. The funds are in addition to funds already allocated for mathematics activities currently funded through the Student Success Action Plan. The intent of these funds is to initiate more activity or build on /increase participation of teachers in already planned activities. These funds will be used to extend the activities around the increased use of the TIPS4RM resources and to support initiatives determined by the Math Focus group findings in early March. While it is evident that \$2000.00 will not go far it will assist with further supporting teachers in planning for and implementing effective mathematics instruction. The plan for the use of these funds will be submitted by Joy Magee as the Student Success Leader and board representative on the Coaching for Math Gains regional steering team. Approval of this plan will be by the provincial Coaching for Math Gains team.

In discussions with other boards in the Thunder Bay region it was decided by Gains steering team members that we would submit a plan as a region in addition to individual board plans. It is the intent that as a region we could provide training to teachers by provincial math coaches which would assist with ensuring individual plans meet with success regardless of funding amount. This regional plan is outside of the proposed model presented by the Coaching for Math Gains Provincial team, but was accepted for consideration. We are hopeful it will meet with success.

What will this look like for Superior North Catholic? Hopefully, the additional funds will allow for teachers to work together in terms of co-planning and possibly co-teaching of TIPS4RM lessons. In addition based on interest, teachers will be provided the opportunity to visit each others classes to engage in lesson study around effective mathematical instruction.

## Portfolio Assessment (Assessment for Learning Strategy)

A portfolio is more than a procedure for gathering samples of student work; its use changes the climate of the classroom and the nature of teacher-student interaction. Portfolios permit instruction and assessment to be woven together.

When engaging in portfolio assessment students:

- Identify the knowledge and skills related to the learning goals
- Self-assess their performance based on predetermined criteria
- Review their work and select piece (s) that represent significant learning based on learning goals and criteria
- Reflect on their strengths, weaknesses, needs, and goals
- Conference on their progress in pursuing their learning goals

Information Resource: Differentiated Instruction Cards— Ontario Ministry of Education

## Student Success Activity Report - January and February

January 9 - School College Work Initiative Teleconference	February 23- Oral Language (Thunder Bay)
January 27 - Principal's PLC - Engaging Parents (Terrace Bay)	February 24 - Math GAI NS Board Plan Due
January 28- Coaching for Math GAI NS (Toronto)	February 27— Co-operative Education Toolkit (Thunder Bay)
January 29 - Student Success Leaders Regional Meeting (Thunder Bay)	February 16 - 20 Updating of Student Success Action Plan
January 30- Professional Development Day : Facilitated D.I. Session)	February 23- 27 Updating Student Success Section of Board Web-Site
February 2 - Growing Success - Assessment and Evaluation consultation (Terrace Bay)	
February 10 - Principal's Congress - Toronto	
February 17 & 18 - Growing Success Assessment and Evaluation (Thunder Bay)	
February 20- Coaching for Math GAI NS Regional Steering Team (Thunder Bay)	