

Name:

Lecturer:

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Course: EDSU 630 School Improvement

Assignment: List all the practices that Marzano states “work in schools” then explain one that will work in your school.

School is an institution that learning and social interaction take place. It is built on three major frameworks; namely the social science, moral and to an extent the aesthetics. The social science framework is mainly based on the results of numerous researches which are conducted. These results are aggressively used to drive this whole framework. Strong emphasis is also placed on teacher and student achievement and most importantly, is the fact that teachers have to be ‘effective’ so as to enhance this achievement. A school that is built on moral framework practices certain aspects of the social science paradigm but more emphasis is placed on what is morally correct. Most times these institutions are aligned to a specific denomination. Last but certainly not least, is that institution that we are all envisioning, one that is built on the aesthetic framework where teaching is seen as an art and incorporates the six virtues; understanding, courage, strength of character, humility, generosity and imagination. Institutions that are aesthetically motivated will, as time progresses, appreciate the beauty of each situation.

As I have previously stated, almost all educational institutions are guided by the social science framework and Robert Marzano’s [2003] contributions in his book: “What works in Schools; Translating Research into Action” outlines it beautifully. It is no doubt that other researchers share the same sentiments of how schools should be improved. This has triggered Marzano to address the results of these researches and rank them according to priority, to prove his point about what works in schools. The following are some of the practices that he has stated ‘work in schools’. I will be focusing on what works in school, under the broad heading of the School-Level Factors which comprise five [5] categories. They are as follows:

1. Guaranteed and viable curriculum
2. Challenging goals and effective feedback
3. Parent and community involvement
4. Safe and orderly conduct
5. Collegiality and professionalism

As Marzano posits, “These categories represent the most current thinking on school-level factors, and the order in which I list them represents their order of impact on student achievement.” It is

obvious that all five researchers have focused on the same school levels, however; each has prioritized them differently. Another observation is that each researcher in his presentation, is highlighting the fact that for any school to display a level of improvement, these factors are paramount.

1. *Edmonds {1970s}*

- An emphasis on basic skill acquisition,
- High expectations for student success/Frequent monitoring of student progress
- Safe and orderly atmosphere conducive to learning
- Strong administrative leadership

2. *Levine and Lezotte {1990}*

- Focus on central learning skills
- High expectations and requirements/Appropriate monitoring
- Salient parent involvement
- Productive climate culture
- Strong leadership/Practice oriented staff development

3. *Sammons {1988}*

- Concentration on teaching and learning
- High expectations/Monitoring progress
- Home school partnership
- A learning environment/Positive reinforcement/Pupil rights and expectations
- Professional leadership/Shared vision/A learning organization.

4. *Scheerens and Bosker {1900s}*

- Content coverage/Time
- Monitoring/Pressure to achieve
- Parental involvement
- School climate
- School leadership/Cooperation

5. *Marzano {2003}*

- Opportunity to learn/Time
- Monitoring/Pressure to achieve
- Parental involvement
- School climate
- Leadership/Cooperation

After the presentation of the above findings, one might ask this question: “Would any of these factors work at my school?” My response would be; “Most definitely.” I believe the one that would work, and in fact is working at my school, is that of ‘Parental and Community Involvement.’ Why do I say this? I am by no means implying that the other factors are not important but in my opinion, parental and community involvement are the core foundation that the others are built on. If I were to use Marzano’s ranking as an example, I would say that the community has to play a major role in all aspects of what he has outlined.

In the delivery of the curriculum, we rely on parents as well as members of the community, in many instances to be our resource personnel and also to provide us with instructional materials. By so doing, students get a better understanding of the importance of community helper and the part they play in nation building. This topic is one aspect of the Grade Three syllabus. They are also parents who provide us with effective feedback in regards to how the wider community view our institution. From these feedbacks, we can implement the necessary changes so as to foster school-wide improvement thus creating a holistic environment.

What would we do in regards to us having a safe and orderly environment, if it were not for the parents and members of the community? Our school would be a target for unappreciative individuals. Our parents know the value of education, so it is with this mindset that they relish the idea of being ‘security guards’ so as to protect their investment. Parents make it their responsibility to help in every way possible to maintain the aesthetics of Ardenne Preparatory School. I can recall one instance in which the school yard was not of the usual impeccable standard. Did parents just go about their usual business all unconcerned? “Definitely Not.” They questioned why the school ground was not displaying its usual beauty. Parents have also get members of the community to assist with the grassing of the play-field and they themselves do repairs to the picket fences and the driveway. If this is not a demonstration of true community relation, I do not know what is.

Of course, one cannot ignore the most important and defining feature of parental and community involvement; communication. This is vital in the daily operation of school life. Because we are cognizant of this fact, we have implemented several ways of effective communication. These include email, texting, phone calls, sending of letters and most importantly, the face to face medium of Parent Teachers Meeting. Our parents always look forward to suggestions that can enhance the continuous interaction and community spirit that embody our noble institution.

In conclusion, I must admit that although Marzano’s theory of what works in school is basically social science oriented, he has put forward some valid points that will enable schools to be more effective in their overall performance thus enhancing students’ achievement. This will no doubt create something ‘beautiful’ in our schools which will further lead to the application of some of the virtues of aesthetic paradigm; understanding, generosity and strength of character.

Good report. Your grade is 4.