

Case Study

Student's Name:

Institutional Affiliation:

Case Study

In the selected case study, the main issue concerns the 21st century's standards-based education and the manner in which it is affecting English language learners; especially the K-12 group. Notably, English language learners constitute non-native groups. Two of the major stakeholders relevant to standards-based education include teachers and school administrators. According to the National Governors Association Center for Best Practices, Council of Chief State School Officers (2010), standards-based education entails a system of academic reporting, grading, assessment, and instruction that is shaped by the ability of learners to demonstrate the mastery or understanding of the expected skills and knowledge while progressing through a given education system. In this case, the role of teachers concerns the need to ensure that the learners meet selected or target standards. Specifically, the teachers are expected to ensure that classroom instruction and assessment follows or abides by the standards-based model while tracking the performance of students. The eventuality is that the teachers stretch further to plan focused instruction to ensure that the students' needs are met while aligning the instruction and assessment procedures to the standards-based model's demands (Reeves, 2009). On the other hand, school administrators are expected to coordinate class curricula to ensure that the standards-based model is followed. According to Wormeli (2006), these school administrators ought to support teachers in structuring class curricula while aligning lesson plans with the needed content in the state and federal standardized tests (as deemed relevant to the age group of the class) (National Governors Association Center for Best Practices, Council of Chief State School Officers, 2010).

Despite the promising nature of standards-based education, various demerits have been documented. For instance, Reeves (2009) observed that one of the challenges of this model

entails the need for more time. In particular, most of the educators feel the need to allocate additional time in the school year, month, week, and day to re-teach and reassess opportunities. The implication for the K-12 group is that standards-based education leads to additional work on the part of teachers due to the need for assessment and subsequent reassessment grading that demands significant amounts of time (Wormeli, 2006). The need for more time has also been evidenced by classroom arrangements in which teachers re-teach during regular classroom time while providing room for learners who have mastered the content to, independently, proceed to concepts that are more challenging. Hence, the first question that arises is how can teachers embrace standards-based education for K-12 English learners while ensuring that the regular classroom time is used optimally?

Another problem is that the leading emphasis of standards-based education is whether or not the learners have met the required standards. The National Governors Association Center for Best Practices, Council of Chief State School Officers (2010) cautioned that this trend compromises the goals and objectives of education in settings such as those involving K-12 English learners because it fails to focus on the ability of the learners to achieve these standards. In particular, standards-based education provides room for “do-overs.” As such, Reeves (2009) observed that educational institutions end up rewarding learners who “game systems,” which sends the wrong message. In a similar observation, Wormeli (2006) documented that standards-based education emphasizes on content mastery at the expense of understanding the concept. A specific example is a case in which learners such as those in the K-12 English class are allowed to redo projects or retake tests and, in the end, are graded as being proficient; yet this trend ignores the fact that the learners may not have understood the concept in their first attempt. The second question that arises is how can standards-based education be tailored to ensure that it

shifts from the concept of concept mastery to the concept of concept understanding? Lastly, what role should the stakeholders assume in a quest to offer and implement lasting solutions to these problems?

Indeed, various steps could be implemented to accommodate standards-based education while ensuring that the teachers do not waste or demand additional time –with concept understanding emphasized, rather than concept mastery. According to the National Governors Association Center for Best Practices, Council of Chief State School Officers (2010), one of the steps entails the provision of separate grades for the respective characteristics. This recommendation is informed by the current state in which achievement and work habits continue to be conflated. An example is a case in which one of the learners does not turn in homework but excels in all tests while another learner works hard but fails to master the concept to the expected level. In such a case, the aforementioned ambiguity might be curbed by giving separate grades for achievement and work habits (Reeves, 2009). Regarding the creation of more work and the demand for more time for teachers, there is a need for learning management or student information systems that support the reporting and tracking of student progress towards the respective standards. Indeed, this step is likely to make it easier for teachers to adopt the resultant data and apply the same to the final reports of students, rather than create extra work. Overall, a dialogue-based and interactive environment (among stakeholders) forms a major predictor of success in accommodating the standards-based education for K-12 learners while ensuring that it is not only the mastery that is emphasized but also the understanding of concepts.

References

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