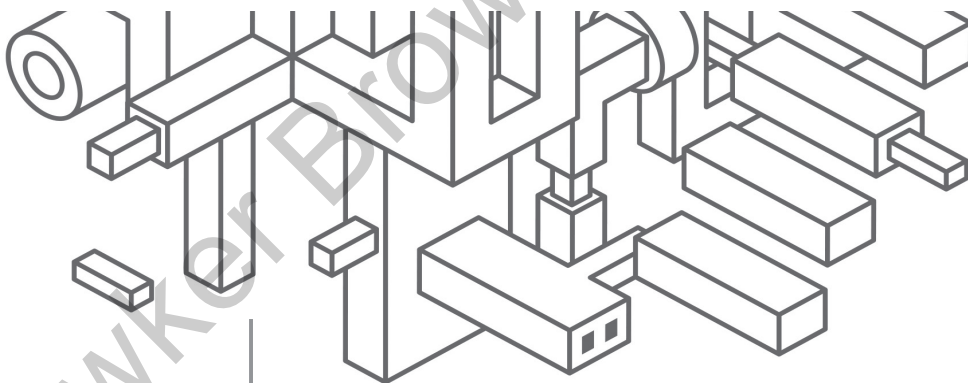




THE ARTISAN TEACHING MODEL

FOR INSTRUCTIONAL
LEADERSHIP

Working Together to Transform Your School



Kenneth
BAUM

David
KRULWICH



ASCD Alexandria, VA USA

THE ARTISAN TEACHING MODEL FOR INSTRUCTIONAL LEADERSHIP

Working Together to Transform Your School

Introduction: A School Built with a New Vision	v
1 The Foundation	1
Part I: The Artisan Teaching Model	
2 The Elements of Expertise: Who Are the Leaders?	13
3 Collaboration in the Artisan Teaching Model	31
4 The Effects of the Artisan Teaching System	48
5 The Leadership Pipeline	60
Part II: Customizing and Implementing the Artisan Teaching Model	
6 Customizing the Model to Fit Any School.	77
7 Implementation Strategies: Where to Start?	99
8 Strategies for Hiring.	108
Epilogue: How Did We Get Here?	124
References.	131
Index.	133
About the Authors.	137

1

The Foundation

Artisan Teaching is based on this seemingly simple principle: great teachers make the difference. Great teachers are those who engage all students in compelling, rigorous activities that require higher-order thinking and allow them to articulate understandings verbally and in writing. They inspire children to do new and difficult work, make learning relevant to students' lives, and still leave time for practice. They get students to think critically while inspiring confidence and building intellectual habits, as well as constructing, debating, and solving problems. Great teachers inspire on a daily basis, allowing students to have confidence in their own abilities, and measurable achievement results typically follow.

It's a truism supported by the latest research that students—not just the administrators who observe—know who the great teachers are (Gates Foundation, 2013). The students of great teachers cannot wait for the lesson to begin because they know that they will learn and have fun doing so. They behave appropriately because they choose to and because they are too busy to be sidetracked by distractions. The students of great teachers are engaged, they are energetic and working as hard as they can, and they take risks and willingly try new things. Great teachers accomplish these things wherever they teach—in any neighborhood, with any population of students, and regardless of students' achievement level when they arrive. Great teachers see success in students with disabilities and those without, with students who speak English at home and those who do not. Great teachers know that, regardless of a student's knowledge and abilities in September, every student can make progress by June. Finally, great teachers also provide social and emotional support

for their students—they get to know their students personally and support them when they need help with issues that are not directly related to the classroom.

This concept of teaching—that it is among the most challenging and also the most rewarding of professions—is complex and nuanced. To become a great teacher is an aspirational goal that is difficult to achieve. School leaders must begin with this foundation, and they must consider the types of school structures and systems that will help teachers move toward this vision. As Malcolm Gladwell (2011) points out, greatness in any skill or profession requires at least 10,000 hours of deep dedication and practice—and teaching is no different.

Although rubrics and checklists of actions may serve as “hallmarks” of good teaching, these actions, without more, do not make a great teacher. Teaching, indeed, is a craft. Great teachers must be treated as the artisans that they are, and school leaders must carefully consider the structures and supports necessary to develop artisanship within their schools.

The first step for a school leader executing the Artisan Teaching model is to articulate a strong, clear, and consistent instructional vision that values the importance, difficulty, and artistry of the work. The role of the leader is to hold on to this vision tenaciously and to gradually and methodically spread that instructional vision throughout the school. The leader cannot be distracted by short-term pressures and demands and cannot allow other priorities to overshadow the development of great teaching in the school. This belief in the importance of great teaching must precede any discussion of numerical outcomes, the percentage of students meeting standards, or the pace of reading-level changes. These metrics are part of—but not foundational to—a school that develops great teachers.

The Three Pillars: Expertise, Collaboration, and Time

With the underlying premise that teaching is a craft and that schools must develop true artisanship, what is required to allow this work to succeed?

What are the conditions that allow greatness to happen? How do we foster the development of artisan teachers? The role of school leaders is to create the three conditions—the pillars—that allow this craftsmanship to develop: (1) expertise, (2) collaboration, and (3) time.

Pillar 1: Expertise

The foundation of expertise is the ability to define and then consistently articulate a vision of great instruction—this is what will ultimately define the school. To achieve this pillar, a school must have at least one instructional leader who is an *expert* in all four of the following areas:

- academic content
- pedagogy
- youth development
- adult learning and locus of control

It is not good enough to have this expertise distributed among the members of a leadership team. Lee Shulman (2005), in his synthesis of what he called pedagogical content knowledge, has argued that content and pedagogy are deeply intertwined and that to treat the two as essentially mutually exclusive misses critical interplay between the two. We agree. Furthermore, when we get into teacher development, we believe that adult learning is in part a function of mindset. For example, a teacher's reluctance to try to engender higher-order thinking may stem from not knowing how (a combination of pedagogy and content), or it may stem from a (mistaken) belief that students do not have the ability, that it is beyond the teacher's "locus of control." Teasing this out can at times be difficult. A parallel situation can exist with youth development. A teacher (or administrator) may believe that students "can't handle" project-based or inquiry lessons, when the real issue is that the teacher has yet to become proficient at fostering student relationships and misses key aspects of youth development. Although learning specialists and content specialists can bring value, content mastery and teaching techniques often fall flat without a positive learning environment established, we believe, through respectful and authentic

relationships—not with regimented behavior. Again, the issue may not be a lack of knowledge (pedagogy or content) or even a lack of willingness (locus of control) but a lack of understanding of youth development. Good teacher-student relationships—where students increasingly and consistently make wise choices—are critical to Artisan Teaching.

At any one time, in any classroom, it is almost always the case that there is no one issue, and often it is the complex relationship among these issues that makes deep teacher improvement both so hard and so satisfying. It is seldom about the “right teacher move” by itself, the lack of teacher content knowledge, and the like. It is the inherent interrelatedness of these issues that makes the work of significantly improving teaching so difficult. Therefore, it won’t work to sequentially call in the content specialist to fill gaps in content, then call in the behavior specialist to fix student behavior, then call in the supervisor to fix the adult mindset, and so forth. This sequential approach often displaces issues rather than solving them.

For these reasons, we believe that any leader responsible for improvement of teachers must be expert in all four areas. Such leaders are called Team Leaders at AMS, and each of these Team Leaders designs, organizes, and influences almost all of the adult learning for a small group of teachers through the all-important team meetings (fully described later in the book). Defining the Team Leader role in this way has implications, examined further in Chapter 3, for other key school roles and assignments. For example, the “dean of discipline” does not attend these meetings or handle the so-called difficult kid issues for each team. The Team Leader does. There is no separate history expert who owns and clarifies key historical concepts and who then dispenses closely held knowledge. The Team Leader does. And generally, there is no supervisor who handles teachers that externalize and don’t take responsibility for improvement. The Team Leader does.

Pillar 2: Collaboration

Next, certain structures and systems need to be put in place to enable experts to collaborate effectively with other teachers in the school.

Craftsmanship is developed when newer or less-proficient members of the profession work together on the job with the experts. The standard preservice experience of student teaching can be helpful in a limited way, but student teaching does not accomplish the growth of artisans for several reasons. First, these experiences generally have a short duration, making any significant adult growth unlikely. Second, the supervising teacher, who is responsible and accountable for student growth in that classroom, is likely to deal with tensions that need to be experienced and learned by the new practitioner. Rarely would a supervising teacher let the classroom react authentically to the new teacher for any significant period because it might have consequences for the supervising teacher and students. As such, the student teacher often gets a false sense of the true classroom dynamic he or she will feel when taking the helm for the first time. Moreover, the student teacher is too safe: he or she is neither accountable nor responsible for the results of the teaching experience. As such, the experience is inauthentic—there is no real risk from the student teacher’s perspective because his or her work is not the work that really matters. It is this risk, tied to the success or failure of an important outcome, that is necessary for meaningful adult growth.

Thus, on-the-job expert-novice collaboration is needed, but how can you get this collaboration in schools? The fiscal realities of locally funded districts in the United States almost always dictate one teacher per classroom. In Chapter 4, we show how we have generated a powerful collaboration—one that successfully creates artisans—through effective and highly intentional organization. In this organization, all nonteaching time gets repurposed, traditional professional development workshops are eliminated, job responsibilities of some classic leadership positions are changed dramatically, long-established efficiencies that characterize most modern school schedules are abandoned, and the critical Artisan Teaching team system is defined and described.

Pillar 3: Time

Finally, the work of training artisans takes time. If we had only two or three years with teachers before they moved on to their “real”

careers, we could not implement the Artisan Teaching model. With a short teaching horizon, investment in developing artisans won't pay off. Similarly, using short-term human resource strategies with teachers you expect to stay 7, 8, or 12 years also does not make sense. Our teachers stay because they feel like artisans who are constantly honing their craft. Their students don't always achieve great assessment results in their first or second year of teaching. But that is not our intent. Our intent is to create proud artisans who stay in the classroom and get students to become better critical and creative thinkers. Our aim is to graduate students who are well prepared intellectually and emotionally in the long term and who are prepared for college and career success. A byproduct is that our students score extremely well on all sorts of measures, including standardized tests.

As we explain in detail in Chapter 6, true success in these areas requires a deliberate and dramatic repurposing of a teacher's typical week. Central to our vision of developing artisans is the formation of microprofessional learning communities that continually work together to improve instruction. Every lesson plan is discussed, challenged, and improved, and then it is taught by more than one teacher. Every difficult issue that a teacher faces becomes part of a wider discussion among his or her teammates and mentors. Every new teacher shares the stress and difficulty of the new profession with at least one veteran who supports that teacher on a daily basis. In every discussion, both mentors and mentees are present and learning from each other—indeed, everyone is learning.

The confluence of expertise, collaboration, and time creates meaningful collaboration that is neither quick nor easy, requiring a major commitment on behalf of the entire organization. The collaborative relationship must serve as the central, defining feature of the school's system for hiring, training, mentoring, and professional development. In school systems where teachers and administrators are too often burdened by time constraints, a school must make fundamental, structural changes to the way it functions to create the time necessary to achieve this goal.

The Organization of This Book

Part I opens with three chapters in which we discuss how AMS created its Artisan Teaching system to help develop teachers into great craftspeople. The goal was to train teachers in a collegial, supportive manner, working together in teams. In doing so, we sought to provide a system of support for newer members of the profession that parallels those in many other professions and that treats the “craft of teaching” with the respect that it deserves. This collaborative team system requires a rethinking of many of the supports that schools normally provide for teachers. It requires a restructuring of roles and the time teachers and administrators spend on various tasks.

In Chapter 2, we look more closely at the four areas of expertise that comprise the craft of teaching and at the development of the artisan teachers who serve as teacher leaders in the Artisan Teaching apprenticeship model.

In Chapter 3, we describe the processes that allow the Artisan Teaching model to function smoothly and how they are necessitated and supported by the underlying philosophy of the approach.

Chapter 4 looks at how the model plays out over time and results in student success. As teachers progress through this system, they learn how to work effectively with others on a team; they learn how to support other teachers with less experience; they learn how to mentor and share their expertise; they learn how to observe and provide feedback; they learn how to develop a strong internal locus of control; and they work with a variety of different teachers, all with different successes, struggles, and learning styles. They learn all of this over the course of several years of teaching, even before they begin any formal role in school leadership.

In Chapter 5, we discuss another important result of the focused, embedded professional development provided within the apprenticeship system: teachers are simultaneously learning to teach and learning to lead. In designing a system to improve classroom teaching by focusing on rich, authentic, and intensive collaboration among teachers, we

also set in motion a system that trains teachers to step into new roles as the school's instructional leaders. The Artisan Teaching system accomplishes both objectives at the same time—and results in an overflowing pipeline of well-qualified leaders.

In the second part of the book, we present a blueprint and strategies on how to bring the Artisan Teaching model to any school—big, small, urban, rural, district, or charter. Each chapter closes with one or more frequently asked questions that we have received over the past several years.

In Chapter 6, we show how to free up the time to create the structures and systems for implementation. We provide suggested time reallocations for key personnel and suggested changes to traditional roles and responsibilities. We also offer solutions to programming challenges and include sample schedules to ground the work in the day-to-day operations and realities of running a school.

In Chapter 7, we display the flexibility of implementation by detailing several strategies that can be employed given a wide variety of school conditions. For example, we explain how implementation is actually easier in larger schools. Strategies are given to implement all at once or gradually over time by either grade or subject.

In Chapter 8, we address the most frequently asked question we have received to date: “Can all teachers benefit from this system?” or its companion question “Do certain teachers benefit more in this system, and how do you find teachers to fit the model?” Even though we are certain that this system can help all teachers and make many of them into artisans, we also firmly believe that certain character traits are ideal. Although these traits are not in and of themselves original to us, what we have done over the years is develop a hiring process—counterintuitive and unique—that does a reliable job of identifying these future artisans. In this chapter, we share what we have learned about hiring, detailing every step of what it takes to hire future artisans.