



Introduction

Teacher-friendly. Collegial. Highly collaborative. Simpler processes that take less time and money.

These are all phrases that can be applied to the aha! Process School Improvement Model for Low-Performing Schools. As more and more schools face the consequences of not making the required growth in student achievement, a simpler yet comprehensive model is required. The work of Dr. Ruby K. Payne and her colleagues provides such a model, which has been used for nearly a decade. Results have shown that when the model is implemented with fidelity, student achievement increases and achievement gaps have even been narrowed at some sites.

The Model

Nine processes comprise the model for high-poverty schools. Each process has specific classroom applications aligned to the process that can be monitored by the school leader. The result is artifacts that reflect the processes, along with applications that extend strategies into the classroom.

The processes apply to all levels of schools, beginning with 4-year-olds and continuing through Grade 12. These processes can be taught to teachers in two-hour increments of time after the founda-

tional workshops, *A Framework for Understanding Poverty* and *Research-Based Strategies*, are used. Key understandings are included in *Framework for Understanding Poverty* and *Research-Based Strategies* that are essential for success with the model. An optional but important training that schools may wish to consider is *Understanding AYP with Six Simple Processes*. While only six of the nine processes are included in this training, the pace at which the processes can be implemented can be increased with this additional training. The nine processes that actually comprise the model are:

1. Gridding student data
2. Developing time and content grids, based on the standards and students' needs
3. Understanding assessment context, standards, assessment glossary, academic vocabulary, and the assessment blueprint
4. Developing 10-question tests that measure students' progress against the standards at the end of the first semester
5. Identifying interventions based on analysis of 10-question tests and analyzing grade distribution or failure/passing rate
6. Understanding content comprehension and incorporating processes, step sheets, planning, and mental models into lessons. Response to intervention also is addressed in this step

- Allows you to determine how individual students are performing in relation to the overall population
- Helps predict your AYP (adequate yearly progress)/school rating
- Provides an approach to address federal mandates that require analysis of performance by student subgroups—and patterns of equity and excellence to be determined
- Allows you to quickly identify students needing intervention(s)
- Allows you to identify targeted populations for AYP goals
- Allows you to identify target standards

- Many districts now have computer programs that can generate the grids; however, our experience has been that the usefulness of the information is diminished unless teachers themselves construct the grids. We have been told that the act of writing the student's name on the grid helps create a connection with the student and makes the information more meaningful to the teacher.

Benefits to Teachers

Provides a simple process to the teacher

- To understand individual student data
- To understand students that “count” in more than one category
- To understand areas of strengths and weakness so that instruction can be targeted

- When instruction is targeted to specific needs of students with appropriate interventions, student achievement increases.
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1. Which students missed the passing level by a slim margin?
2. Why is this student in this category?
3. Which students impact more than one subgroup?
4. Which students have been identified for specific remediation?
5. What specific interventions will be provided?
6. How can a resource analysis help identify interventions for targeted students?
7. Which students have not passed and need to pass to graduate from high school?

- Gridding data is a mandatory first step when working with this school improvement model. It
- not enough, however, to just grid the data. Rather the analysis and the professional dialog that
- occur when teachers collaborate over their data are what begins to happen to create needed change that will lead to improved student achievement.

The questions listed above can be used for this professional dialog, but this list is not exhaustive. What other questions might you add when analyzing the data?

As you begin to focus on interventions, keep in mind that a resource analysis is a first step when determining interventions, as it tends to be a waste of time to make an intervention that utilizes a resource that the student is missing. For more information about resources and resource analysis, see *A Framework for Understanding Poverty* (2005).

Student Name	5.1	5.3	5.4	5.5	5.6	5.8a	5.9	5.10b	5.11	5.13a	Total
Sam	-	-	+	-	+	+	-	-	-	-	-7
Pete	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	-0
Juan	-	-	+	-	+	+	-	-	-	+	-6
Natasha	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	-	+	-1
Kelly	+	+	+	+	+	+	-	-	-	+	-3
Erin	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	-	-	+	-2
Anthony	-	-	+	+	+	+	+	+	-	+	-3
Elena	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	-0
Denise	-	-	+	+	+	+	+	-	-	+	-4
Renee	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	-0
Thomas	-	-	+	+	+	+	+	+	-	-	-4
Nathan	+	+	+	+	-	+	+	+	+	-	-2
Jared	-	+	+	+	+	+	+	-	-	-	-4
Bobby	-	-	+	-	+	+	-	-	-	-	-7
Totals by Standard	7	6	0	3	1	0	4	7	10	5	

- This tally sheet, identifying students who need intervention and standards that need to be retaught is a simple means to make the assessment meaningful and useful. According to Guskey (2000)
- “The best classroom assessments also serve as meaningful sources of information for teachers, helping them identify what they taught well and what they need to work on. Gathering this vital information does not require a sophisticated statistical analysis of assessment results. Teachers need only make a simple tally of how many students missed each assessment item or failed to meet a specific criterion.”

	Beginning	Developing	Capable	Expert
Fluent	Rate of reading interferes with meaning	Occasionally rate of reading interferes with meaning	Analyzes selection and uses most effective reading	Can articulate demands of reading task
Constructive	Has trouble understanding meaning of text Vocabulary slows reader	Can understand text but has difficulty formulating questions Can use text to make meaning of new vocabulary	Can explain why text is important and can summarize main points Can ask questions about text	Assigns meaning and relates information in larger context of knowledge Applies vocabulary outside of text and uses it to refine understanding
Motivated	Does not read for information; concentrates on decoding Can provide some details about selection Reading is initiated by teacher	Holds as much beginning information as possible and forgets the rest May describe what selection is about and provide some detail Reading is initiated by student	Identifies main idea; determines fact and non-fact Compares/contrasts information with/to other events and experiences Shares reading with others	Knows specific information he/she needs from text Develops questions unanswered by selection Actively seeks reading opportunities