Project SMILE:
The Standards Movement and the Inclusion of Learners with Exceptionalities

Deborah L. Voltz
Center for Urban Education
University of Alabama at Birmingham
Goals of Project SMILE Pilot

• Impact teacher attitudes
• Enhance teacher knowledge and skills
• Enhance general-special educator collaboration
• Ultimate goal—enhance student achievement
Format of Professional Development Sequence

- Teachers participated in school-based teams including at least one special education teacher
- Three six-hour Saturday sessions over a three-month period
- Two lesson-revision team meetings
Saturday Sessions

• Standards-based reform—the big idea
  Regardless of who students are or where they came from, we believe that they can achieve at high levels; and those responsible for nurturing that achievement should have some accountability for it.

• Video—Standards and Inclusion: Can we have both?—Lipsky and Gartner
Saturday Sessions

- Learning needs of students with disabilities
  - Characteristics and implications for learning
  - Discussions and simulations “QTLD”
- M²ECCA framework for designing enabling instruction
M²ECCA Framework

• Considers needs of diverse learners
  – Students with disabilities
  – Gifted students
  – Culturally diverse students
  – English Language Learners

• Integrates ideas associated with:
  – Multicultural Education
  – Sheltered Instruction
  – Universal Design for Learning
  – Differentiated Instruction
M²ECCA Framework

Methods
Assessment
Collaboration
Materials
Content
Environment
Work Group Meetings

• Before the meeting:
  – Select focus student(s)
  – Develop a lesson plan
    • Grounded in a content standard
    • Apply M²ECCA framework
• During the meeting:
  – Discuss student and lesson plan
  – Make suggested changes based on M²ECCA framework
• After the meeting:
  – Revise and implement lesson plan
  – Complete reflection form
• At the next seminar:
  – Share lessons and work samples
Modified Tuning Protocol

1. Presenter overview
   • Briefly review student and lesson
   • Discuss work samples
   • Identify lingering questions/concerns
   • Participants are silent

2. Clarifying questions
   • Participants ask clarifying questions

3. Participants jot down responses to presenter’s questions/concerns

4. Participants share responses
   • Presenter is silent

5. Presenter reflects on participants’ responses
Participants

- 44 teachers from nine elementary schools
Participant Demographics

- **Gender**
  - Female 95.5%
  - Male 4.5%

- **Race/Ethnicity**
  - African-American 86.4%
  - White 13.6%

- **Highest Degree Earned**
  - BA/BS 43.2%
  - MA/Med 54.5%
  - Doctorate 2.3%

- **Teacher Type**
  - General education 72.7%
  - Special education 27.3%

- **Teaching Experience**
  - Mean number of years 11.63
Methods

• Pretest
  – Battery of items related to standard based reform and inclusion
  – Concept maps

• Intervention—three Saturday seminars plus team meetings

• Posttest
  – Battery of items related to standard based reform and inclusion
  – Concept maps
Findings

- It is possible for a teacher to successfully implement both standards-based reform and the inclusion of students with disabilities in general education classes.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Mean</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pre</td>
<td>9.1</td>
<td>50.0</td>
<td>3.43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Post</td>
<td>4.5</td>
<td>81.8</td>
<td>4.02</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Findings

• Standards-based reform will enhance educational outcomes for non-disabled students.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Mean</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pre</td>
<td>2.3</td>
<td>38.6</td>
<td>3.34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Post</td>
<td>2.3</td>
<td>72.7</td>
<td>4.02</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Findings

- Standards-based reform will enhance educational outcomes for students with disabilities.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Mean</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pre</td>
<td>2.3</td>
<td>29.5</td>
<td>3.25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Post</td>
<td>2.3</td>
<td>79.6</td>
<td>3.98</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## Findings

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Mean</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The M²ECCA framework is useful in generating ideas about lesson adaptations.</td>
<td>97.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Working in school-based teams on lesson adaptations improved my expertise in this area.</td>
<td>95.4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Concept Map Analysis

- Percentage of teachers including items in each category of M²ECCA framework
- Quantity rating—mean number of items included
- Variation rating—mean number of categories included
## Findings

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Pre</th>
<th>Post</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Percent</td>
<td>Rank</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Methods</td>
<td>75.0</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Materials</td>
<td>61.4</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Environment</td>
<td>22.7</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Content</td>
<td>36.4</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Collaboration</td>
<td>27.3</td>
<td>4.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assessment</td>
<td>27.3</td>
<td>4.5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## Findings

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Pre</th>
<th></th>
<th>Post</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Variation</td>
<td>Mean</td>
<td>SD</td>
<td>Mean</td>
<td>SD</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2.43</td>
<td>1.04</td>
<td>4.00</td>
<td>1.56</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quantity</td>
<td>5.64</td>
<td>3.24</td>
<td>9.56</td>
<td>5.50</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Implications

- Greater teacher confidence in standards-based reform
  - In general
  - In inclusive classrooms

- Enriched teacher thinking about differentiating instruction in inclusive, standards-based classroom
  - M²ECCA framework
  - School-based teams
  - Teacher report of lesson impact