



6 Hallmarks of Effective Instruction:

The Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) will take effect in the school year 2017-2018. This new design has transferred power and responsibility from the federal government back to states. Among the mandates, the law requires states to adopt rigorous standards that are aligned with the demands of college and careers, assess students annually, identify clear academic performance indicators, and set improvement goals. The Archdiocese of Hartford has followed and continue to refine these newly state adopted mandates for the past 12 years.

Based on decades of research and results of best practices, master teachers and educational experts summarize effective teaching that directly impacts student achievement. Edgenuity Research Foundation has outlined these strategies into 6 hallmarks for effective instruction. How does your school measure up in ensuring these practices are implemented on a *daily* basis?

1. Teach to a curriculum that is grounded in rigorous academic standards.

- Research confirms that student performance on assessments is best supported by instruction that incorporates the full body of knowledge and skills represented in (Archdiocesan) curriculum standards (Bishop & Davis, 2016; Bushweller, 1997; Crocker, 2005; Crocker, 2006; Mehrens & Kaminski, 1989; Miyasaka 2000; Perlman, 2003; Popham, 2001; Turner, 2009).

2. Provide differentiated instruction, scaffolded support, and formative feedback.

- Because every child learns differently and has different abilities and interests, experts agree that effective instruction should be differentiated based on students' unique learning needs (Subban, 2006; Tomlinson & Sousa, 2011; Tomlinson, 2014; Turner, 2009).
- School and teachers now effectively enlist technology to help them better meet the needs of an increasingly diverse student population. Research shows that the personalized online learning afforded by technology can be as effective as face-to-face instruction in improving academic achievement (Means et al., 2013; Pane et al., 2015).

3. Deliver explicit instruction.

- Explicit instruction, systematic instruction and intentional instruction all share the following characteristics: 1) setting well-defined goals; 2) building background knowledge; 3) addressing misconceptions; 4) providing direct instruction through a wide array of models, demonstrations, and worked examples; 5) guiding student thinking through the strategic use of questions, prompts, and cues; 6) offering students meaningful tasks that allow them to solidify concepts and skills; and 7) requiring students to apply what they have learned (Fisher et al., 2011).

4. Distribute practice using a wide variety of learning tasks and assessment item formats.

- Scientists have identified two main types of memory: working memory, where people consciously process information; and long-term memory, with a much larger body of connected information. After information has been organized and stored in long-term memory, it can be accessed again as needed without placing a large burden on working memory (Sweller, 2008). The knowledge in long-term memory is used to understand new memories.

5. Boost student motivation.

- Research indicates that motivation is a strong predictor of student achievement. Students who are motivated demonstrate greater conceptual understanding on high-stakes assessments, exhibit higher levels of satisfaction with school, and have more confidence than students who are unmotivated (Amrein & Berliner, 2003; Guthrie, 2002; Miyasaka, 2000; Usher & Kober, 2012).

6. Capitalize on formative assessment to improve student learning.

- Formative assessment involves diagnosing student learning needs and adjusting instruction to meet student learning goals. Studies show that formative assessment is most effective when data is used to “1) make learning goals clear to students; 2) continuously monitor, provide feedback, and respond to students’ learning progress; and 3) involve students in self-and peer assessment” (National Research Council, 2012, pp.6-19). In fact, a large body of research demonstrates that when teachers use data to shed light on learners’ strengths, challenges, interests, and aptitudes, and set instructional learning targets, student achievement improves (Black & William, 1998; Kingston & Nash, 2011; Lai & Schildkamp, 2013).

On **February 10**, the Office of Education, Evangelization, and Catechesis (OEEC) will sponsor a one-day workshop on the new requirements that effect non-public schools under ESSA for all schools in the Archdiocese of Hartford. Information on this workshop will be emailed directly to school leaders. Or contact Valerie Mara at Valerie.Mara@aoht.org for more information.

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