

# EFFECTIVE INSTRUCTIONAL PROGRAM

## Case Study #2

### Questions

1. How can leaders implement plans for student achievement and foster support from the staff?
2. How can teachers from all departments effectively plan to improve the writing of students across the curriculum?
3. How can students benefit from writing across the curriculum?

### Situation

In an effort to improve the students' declining Georgia High Graduation Writing Test scores, Mr. O., the principal at Oaks High School, encouraged writing across the curriculum. He asked the Instructional Coach to propose a plan to improve test scores and to present the plan at the next faculty meeting.

The Instructional Coach proposed that for the ten weeks prior to the administration of the Graduation Writing Test, all teachers must assign persuasive writing topics in all of their classes. Students were expected to write for a minimum of 20 minutes. Teachers were encouraged to provide feedback on the writing topics.

To ensure that the persuasive topics related to the standards of the course, each department should have collaboratively planned and created 10 generic persuasive topics to submit to the Instructional Coach. In an effort to encourage the students to take the writing prompts seriously, students were to receive at least three grades on the assignments.

Teachers from departments other than the English Department resented being required to write across the curriculum. The Instructional Coach had a difficult time getting the writing topics from the other departments.

Eventually, all departments submitted writing topics. Two department chairs expressed that they would not require their teachers to assign the writing topics. They argued that they too have standards to meet and could not sacrifice time to assist the English Department. The department chairs questioned whether the English Department would reciprocate when their students are tested on their component of the Graduation Test? Ironically, the English Department members did not want non-English teachers attempting to teach writing.

When the Instructional Coach expressed the other department chairs' dissention, Mr. O. stated that he really could not force the teachers to write across the curriculum since persuasive writing was not a part of the other courses' Georgia Performance Standards. Hence, the Instructional Coach felt the assignments were not effective.

## Answers

1. The administrator should have exhibited leadership by presenting the plan to the faculty as opposed to the Instructional Coach.
2. The principal should express to the teachers why writing across the curriculum promotes student achievement in all disciplines. Moreover, the principal could have spoken with the department chairs and asked them to look at their standards and report how writing can be incorporated into their curriculum.

## Evaluation

Mr. O's leadership style can be characterized as rudimentary. He did not offer leadership for the writing across the curriculum. Although he assigned the Department Chair as the lead, he could have communicated his endorsement of writing across the curriculum to the faculty members at the meeting. Furthermore, he should have met with the dissenting department chairs and encouraged them to create writing prompts that aligned with their standards.

He missed an opportunity to express how the success of the students on Writing Test is best practice for the students. It is not a departmental victory but a school victory, which promotes a positive school culture.