

Farragut Elementary School Model Programs and Practices

School Information

CDS (County District School) Code: 19644446012694

County: Los Angeles

District (Local Educational Agency): Culver City Unified

School: Farragut Elementary School

Demographics

Enrollment: 565 students

Location Description: Urban

Title I Funded: No

School Calendar: Traditional

Charter: No

Overview

With a successful broad-based curriculum, Farragut Elementary enjoys continued support from its students, parents, staff, and the community at large. Farragut was opened as a small neighborhood school and today serves over 565 students from diverse ethnic and economic backgrounds. The school has an Arts and Technology focus, having a strong visual arts program with a curriculum that follows the K–5th VAPA standards. Farragut enjoys a dedicated art room. The music program consists of music appreciation classes for all students. Students K–2 also receive vocal music instruction. In addition, the 4th and 5th graders may choose to take band or orchestra classes, and all third graders receive lessons in playing the recorder. We have two Bell Choirs, advanced and beginning, which are available before school to students in grades 3–5 and a school choir for students in grades 1–5. In addition to visual arts and music, theatre arts, dance and media arts are weaved throughout each grade level through partnerships with local teaching artists and community partners.

Our technology focus has been enhanced this year through our Makerspace classroom. In the Makerspace, the learning happens through making, tinkering, art and engineering

real things based on an individual's interest. Students K–5 have opportunities to connect art, design, engineering, science, and technology in project-based challenges facilitated by the Makerspace teacher. Additionally, our computer lab and mobile carts provide technology opportunities K–5. All classrooms have LCD projectors and document cameras that allow teachers to enhance their lesson presentation visually. These tools also afford teachers to incorporate video streaming to enrich students' experience with the curriculum.

Farragut is fortunate to have several family nights throughout the year to connect families and build community. Our annual Family Math Night highlights our CGI Math practices and provides parents with strategies to continue the learning at home through math games and activities the whole family can enjoy. Our Science Night engages families in STEM activities and challenges students to solve real-life questions they have about the world. In addition to these academic family nights, Farragut hosts Family Game Night, BINGO night, Fall Festival, two Book Fairs, Choir, Bells, and Recorder concerts.

Farragut is proud to have many students actively engaged in service of the community. The Student Council, composed of student representatives from grades 3–5, meets twice a month and is the guiding force in organizing Community Service Projects. It is also responsible for monitoring the halls during lunch recess. The Buddy Reading Program pairs Kindergarten and Fifth Graders in a shared reading program. All stakeholders in the community work together to make Farragut an amazing place to go to school.

Model Program and Practices

Name of Model Program/Practice: Cognitive Guided Instruction in Math

Length of Model Program/Practice: 2–4 years

Target Area(s): Closing the Achievement Gap, Professional Development, Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics

Target Population(s): American Indian, Asian, Black or African American, Filipino, Hispanic, Pacific Islander, White, Two or More Races, Socioeconomically Disadvantaged, English Learners, Students with Disabilities

Strategies Used: Small Learning Communities, Data-Driven Decision Making, Professional Development

Description

In 2014, with the vision of meeting our students' needs in Mathematics in an even more comprehensive way, Farragut began its journey into Cognitively Guided Instruction. Having been accepted into Cotsen's The Art of Teaching Program, five of our classroom

teachers and a teacher placed on special assignment as their peer mentor, began the journey of CGI. Both the fellows and mentor received PD in CGI as a student-focused mathematical philosophy. This differed from the traditional math practice of direct instruction and rote memorization. To ensure a concrete implementation of CGI, each fellow received one-on-one coaching in which each teacher pre-plans, teaches, and debriefs weekly lessons with the mentor during their two-year journey. The mentor received additional training in peer coaching, classroom management and facilitation to guide teachers in a non-evaluative manner. In addition to time with their mentor and individual goal setting, the fellows were provided with: PD opportunities, lab time with UCLA researcher, Megan Franke, off-site observations of seasoned practitioners, attendance to the Cotsen Conference and evening workshops with Cotsen alumni. During the two-year program, the teachers and mentor practiced the cyclical process of training, implementation, reflection, and improvement based on student data analysis. The rigor embedded in the program facilitated the professional growth of teachers and students on a continual basis.

As the 2015 school year began, the fellowship continued and the staff's dedication to inquiry and understanding research-based practices revealed a disturbing fact: Students who began to develop a conceptual understanding in Math one year and then went back to a traditional model of learning math the next year actually made negative gains. Staff not in the Cotsen fellowship noticed the difference in the students who received CGI instruction the prior year and their students with no exposure to the practice. Through collaborative decision-making the staff agreed to make CGI the primary mathematics practice at Farragut, thus beginning their CGI journey. With the commitment and support of a principal with a best practices background, an outside math consultant (initially), and the instructional coach (TLP) CGI still flourishes today at Farragut Elementary.

In the last two years, CGI Math has become a signature practice K–5 with ongoing coaching with the TLP. In the classrooms, students are counting daily, engage in math discussions, and share strategies for solving real-world problems. With grant and site funding, teachers hone their CGI math practices through participation in collaborative lab days to “practice” current developments in CGI in classrooms at the site. CGI pioneers guide teachers in inquiry discussions and student-centered lessons, advancements in counting collections work, and in depth instruction through number choice and number talks based on student progress in real time.

Implementation and Monitoring

As the 2014 school year began, teachers in grades K–2 administered mathematics pre-tests, and 3–5 teachers administered mathematics self-evaluative perception surveys to begin our district-wide baseline data collection. Early observations in the fall revealed that students in the Cotsen classes were developing a more in depth understanding of mathematics concepts, with our youngest learners being able to explain and represent complex concepts. Farragut was in a unique situation, with 3 out of its 4 Kindergarten teachers having participated in Cotsen, we were able to immediately see the difference in student conceptual understanding. To maintain continuity, the fourth kindergarten

teacher began working with the Cotsen mentor and her PLC team to provide her students with CGI as well. Additionally, the entire staff discussed measures to avoid the negative gains being seen across the district at sites that were ending their Cotsen fellowships. Proactively, teachers across grade levels used their release time to observe colleagues practicing CGI. With district support, all Farragut Elementary Teachers opted to participate in the “Phase 2” voluntary CGI training offered by the district.

As the first and only site to have all teachers “opt in” to the district’s offer of site sustaining professional development, the site administration team (the principal, TLP, and outside consultant) revised the district’s “Phase 2” PD model to best meet the needs of the Farragut Staff. Teachers were provided with 3 hours of intense training beginning in October and ending in June, inclusive of coaching with the math consultant individually or in PLC partnerships. To increase sustainability and depth, the staff also received professional development in CGI at monthly staff meetings and have access to instruction and coaching assistance from the on-site Cotsen mentor.

Ongoing professional development, annual Cotsen grant lab days, and PLC collaboration times are provided for PLC teams to plan with their team and the math coach to enhance their CGI journey. The journey continues today with the TLP supporting teachers in CGI and bridging the new curriculum to ensure students develop a deep understanding of math.

Monitoring:

Farragut continuously monitors the model through ongoing formal and informal common assessments, student data collection, analysis of student work products and performance on high stakes CAASPP testing. Student outcomes are shared through PLC collaboration, staff professional development, and district benchmark data collection. At each grade level, teachers have developed and continue to refine a library of CGI math problems for daily use and formative assessments. During PLC time, teachers review student work, reflect on their own practice, and monitor the math conceptual understanding of the students. Continual professional learning opportunities are provided based on learning outcomes revealed during these discussions.

Results and Outcomes

The impact of the CGI philosophical model on teachers shows a transformational shift in our school. The survey data and analysis conducted by the Mathematics Leadership Core (MLC) indicates an increase in student engagement and content knowledge through the use of Cognitive Guided Instruction in Math. The student self-evaluative surveys for grades 3–12 shifted from uncertainty in seeing one’s self as a mathematician to definitely viewing one’s self as a member of the math community over the life of the surveys given from 2013–2015. This impact on students led our site’s unanimous decision to embark on this journey.

Additional MLC data shows positive trends in teacher perception towards a culture of continuous improvement as well as improvement in overall teacher instruction and

delivery of mathematics content. Initially, teachers were uncertain of the sustainability and long-term effects of CGI on students. Evidence of improved number sense and mathematical reasoning and teacher instructional practices validated the impact of CGI.

Farragut's Results

In 2014 and 2015, Farragut students in kindergarten and first grade classrooms scored higher on the administered post-tests than their peers using traditional methods at other sites. To determine the depth of the first grade population's math conceptual understanding, the pioneer first grade CGI classroom was administered the 2nd grade end of the year assessment. 90% of the students passed the test with 75% of the questions or more correct. This litmus test led to the entire first grade abandoning all pre-made curriculum to practice "pure" CGI alongside the first grade teacher who participated in the Cotsen fellowship.

Now, our current data shows a clear improvement in student performance in all grade levels: 73% of our students score at meeting or exceeding the state standards in mathematics, in comparison to the 37% state average. As that first group of 2014 kindergarteners move up through the grades, teachers are deepening their CGI practice and becoming more "student-centered" educators to meet the needs of these and future mathematicians. Another result of CGI is our teachers' expertise in understanding the needs of our students and adapting curriculum to meet those needs.

Prior to becoming a CGI signature school district, CCUSD adopted the Bridges Mathematics curriculum. As teachers learned more about how students think, they realized that quality instruction involves quality questioning and conversations on the part of the teacher. As teachers learned more about "noticing" and facilitating, they embedded CGI techniques into all math instruction. CGI has had the unexpected result of our teachers becoming facilitators of learning, allowing students who would not traditionally be able to share, to become the "guides" in their own learning.