

Oxford Preparatory Academy South Orange County Model Programs and Practices

School Information

CDS (County District School) Code: 30664640124743

County: Orange

District (Local Educational Agency): Capistrano Unified

School: Oxford Preparatory Academy South Orange County

Demographics

Enrollment: 800 students

Location Description: Suburban

Title I Funded: No

School Calendar: Traditional

Charter: Yes

Overview

Oxford Preparatory Academy South Orange County (Oxford SOC) is a center for higher learning where students from Transitional Kindergarten to eighth grade are inspired to pursue university level academic studies. Our students gain skills to be successful in the global community of the 21st century. Students will meet grade level expectations and become critical thinkers, as they are engaged with dynamic teaching that makes them self-motivated, competent, and lifelong learners. Staff collaboration, continual reassessment of practices based upon on-going performance measures, and recognition of the special learning needs of every child, make Oxford a place where achievement is the norm, challenges are viewed as temporary obstacles, and success is applauded.

OPA-SOC is authorized under the Capistrano Valley Unified School District. The current enrollment is just over 800 students. Oxford's significant student subgroups consist of 12.8% Special Education, 3.9% English Learners, and 8.9% Socio-Economically Disadvantaged. The significant student race/ethnicity subgroups at Oxford SOC include 16.7% Hispanic, 10.2% Asian, 10.3% Two or More Races and 60.0% White.

Consistently all students, including specific subgroups, are the target of Oxford SOC's school-wide learning goals for the Local Control Accountability Plan.

Model Program and Practices

Name of Model Program/Practice: Theory of Multiple Intelligences

Length of Model Program/Practice: 5–8 years

Target Area(s): Closing the Achievement Gap

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

Multiple Intelligences (MI) is the key instructional philosophy embraced by all stakeholders, enabling our students to recognize that they are gifted in a multitude of ways. Harvard University professor Dr. Howard Gardner proposed the belief that there are eight different intelligences: Linguistic Intelligence, Logical-Mathematical Intelligence, Spatial Intelligence, Bodily-Kinesthetic Intelligence, Musical Intelligence, Interpersonal Intelligence, Intrapersonal Intelligence, and Naturalist Intelligence. Providing instructional strategies that address all eight of the intelligences ensures that differing needs are met and that students comprehend and retain a significantly higher degree of information.

Oxford Prep believes that learning is most effective when children are known and understood as individuals. The Theory of Multiple Intelligences is a way to reach and empower all learners. Our students benefit from the natural differentiation that is possible through Multiple Intelligence teaching and learning strategies. Our Special Needs (Scholar Academy), English Learners (EL), Highly Gifted and at-risk students derive a significant benefit from being able to demonstrate their knowledge in ways that reflect their identified learning strengths.

At the beginning of the school year, our professors assess each Champion's MI attributes by using a personal inventory system to determine their areas of strength. These results are reviewed with both Champions and their parents during Parent/Professor conferences. Professors share the dominant MI strength(s) with parents so they may use that understanding to assist their child in reaching their maximum academic potential. For example, parents whose child is a Bodily-Kinesthetic Learner (Body Smart) would receive information about that Domain of Intelligence.

Once our Champions learn about their MI strength(s), they are given opportunities to demonstrate and apply their knowledge in a variety of ways. Examples of these opportunities may include an oral presentation utilizing the Linguistic Intelligence. Providing students unique opportunities to exhibit their mastery of the skills being taught through their Multiple Intelligence strengths supports our Scholar Academy, EL, Highly Gifted, and at-risk Champions as well.

Instructional strategies and the physical environment are both positively impacted by the implementation of MI in the classroom. Students are empowered to create, analyze, apply, understand, remember, and/or evaluate (Bloom's Revised Taxonomy) in learning situations. When designing their lessons, our professors integrate the Multiple Intelligences while focusing their students' strengths. If a student is having difficulty understanding new material, the Theory of Multiple Intelligences offers several options that can help the professor differentiate their re-teaching techniques to achieve student learning.

Implementation and Monitoring

Multiple Intelligence as an assessment strategy provides measurable student outcomes while allowing Champions to access their strengths and professors to educate the whole child. Just as students have Multiple Intelligences, they also respond differently to numerous forms of assessment. Oxford Prep ensures that a variety of assessments (i.e. content-specific tests, observations, standardized tests, classroom discussions, MI presentations/projects) are used to determine student achievement. This multiple-measures approach improves the reliability of assessment data and more directly targets student achievement.

The physical environment of each classroom also reflects the eight intelligences in useful and tangible ways. A tenet of the Theory of Multiple Intelligences, displayed on a poster in each classroom, challenges our Champions to ask themselves, "How are you smart?" The results from the screenings taken by each student at the beginning of the year are prominently displayed on classroom walls, reminding our Champions that they possess the ability to be academically successful in a myriad of ways.

Upon entering our colorful, dynamic, and vibrant MI classrooms, your eye is drawn to the many elements that transform the space into an enriching educational environment. You might observe reading nooks (Linguistic) with couches or bean bag chairs (Intrapersonal), instruments (Musical), microscopes and binoculars (Logical-Mathematical), classroom pets, plants, garden areas (Naturalist), lamps, art stations (Spatial), even indoor basketball hoops (Bodily-Kinesthetic), and board games (Interpersonal). These elements (grouped into MI centers) encourage students to engage in a variety of meaningful MI activities designed to support the standards being taught. In first grade, Champions may be sitting on a rug categorizing seashells by shape and size. In fourth grade, Champions might be using sidewalk chalk on the blacktop to create and solve area and perimeter problems. A group of eighth graders might use their Bodily-Kinesthetic intelligence to represent the forms of matter through movement and proximity to one another. Throughout the day, Champions may select

from any number of engaging activities that provide meaningful learning experiences through MI.

Oxford Prep's MI curriculum is uniquely effective because it broadens the range of available strategies to support student learning beyond the conventional Linguistic and Logical-Mathematical methods that have formed the cornerstone of education for so long. It provides diverse strategies to support the entire spectrum of our Champions. Perhaps most important, it invigorates all learners to achieve their maximum potential.

Results and Outcomes

The monitoring and assessment process used to evaluate our Multiple Intelligences (MI) focus is multi-tiered. Students' MI attributes are assessed each trimester. Professors analyze each student's strengths and weaknesses to determine if growth has occurred. Each student's dominant intelligences are indicated on report cards so that parents may work together with their child's teacher to build the student's less prevalent MI gift.

The ability of our professors to teach effective lessons utilizing MI is determined through the evaluation process. Oxford Prep's administrative team employs a collaborative coaching model to guide our teachers through the process of ensuring student academic success while developing creative and engaging lessons through MI. This "coaching" occurs throughout the year incorporating formal and informal observations of student learning.

On a school-wide basis, our staff reviews programs and practices during an end-of-the-year evaluation meeting. Included in the discussion is whether the school has been successful at implementing our philosophy for the benefit of all students. M.A.J.O.R.S. classes, Parent Collegiate Nights, and the physical environment are just some of the topics that may be discussed regarding multiple intelligences at Oxford Prep. Parent surveys provide another perspective on the success of our programs. An example of parent comments from last year's survey demonstrate their support for the Multiple Intelligence strategy: "...the use of Multiple Intelligences to learn, definitely increases a love of learning."

For the 2016–2017 school year our Champions posted academic proficiency growth on the ELA CAASPP and Math CAASPP. School-wide 89% of 3rd–8th grade students scored meets or exceeded on ELA and 81% meets or exceeded on Math. Our students' daily attendance rate of nearly 99% further validates the positive impact that the Theory of Multiple Intelligences has on our Champions. It is clear that students love to come to school because they feel valued and nurtured within their learning strengths. As we continue to analyze student assessment data and our school-wide programs, our incredible team of educators will work tirelessly to provide the maximum opportunity to achieve success for all students...our Champions!