INSIDE THIS ISSUE

How you present yourself is how people first view you. What are you showcasing?

– Mama Zara

Onboarding
Starting with Day Zero

By Emily Beck, HCMS Administrator

You never get a second chance to make a great first impression. While this is a familiar saying, the sentiment becomes particularly notable when considering the beginning of an employee's lifecycle with your school or district. We are all familiar with the challenges associated with recruiting new teachers—according to the 2018 Arizona School Personnel Administrators Association, 25% of teaching positions remained unfilled at the beginning of the 2018 school year—which makes it critical to develop and sustain the educators we do bring in. A deliberate, comprehensive onboarding program can make all the difference in reducing attrition rates, increasing employee engagement, and ultimately, improving student outcomes.

Consider developing a district-wide onboarding plan that reflects the needs of a new employee starting with *Day Zero. Day Zero* covers all of the time that passes between a signed contract and the first day of work. Some ideas for *Day Zero* resources could include a welcome and introduction letter with FAQs and toolkits, resources about the campus and team, and assignment of a mentor or buddy to connect with. This head-start communication can make a great impact on that new team member's feeling welcome and ready to dive into a new environment.

The next sections of the plan should consider the myriad things that await throughout the coming year. This would include scheduling regular check-ins with coaches and supervisors, goal setting, professional development, and a healthy dose of social and celebratory engagements. Finally, include time near the end of the plan for self-evaluation and reflection.

Implementing this kind of plan will not only ensure your new team members are prepared for the year ahead, it will also help each of them feel valued and supported in this exciting new role.

For further information, please contact Emily Beck (emily.beck@maricopa.gov).
Source: AASPA Survey Results as published here.

Retain Talent, Accelerate Equity, Expand Leadership, Extend & Reward Excellence

Back to School Brings Awards

By Richard Eagan, Financial Business System Specialist

Fall brings us all back to temperatures leveling off below 100 degrees, cooler nights and mornings, our children starting back to school, and REIL scores returning for another year. Keep those pumpkins put away for just a little bit longer and let's get the REIL awards sorted out and paid out to all you highly effective and effective educators out there. We love this time of year as we recognize all that you achieve and award retention stipends and performance pay to returning educators meeting district and REIL score target levels. This is like the Oscars for the REIL Extend districts.

Each district has engaged in developing a strategic compensation plan that rewards an educator's effectiveness based on REIL scores. Over the summer, REIL scores were pulled together using scoring information from the 2018-19 school year. This fall over $3 million dollars will be distributed to educators for retention and performance compensation. Each year we hope to retain more and more effective educators while attracting and placing new educators who see this award program as a positive step in identifying effective teaching that boosts student performance. Welcome back to the fall and your recognition of high quality instruction.

For further information, please contact Richard Eagan (richard.eagan@maricopa.gov).

A New Teacher's Perspective on the LOI

By Chris Nutt, Field Specialist

In the fall of 2017, Aly Heusch began her first year as a Kindergarten teacher at Wilson Primary School. Along with her ID badge and 28 excited, little faces, she was handed a copy of the LOI. While she came to recognize the LOI as a rigorous observation instrument that supports excellence and the professional growth of teachers, she shared how hard it was in the beginning to incorporate all the elements of the Learning Observation Instrument (LOI) in everyday instruction.

The training provided by the Wilson Teacher Induction program and the one-on-one supports by her mentor teacher and Peer Evaluator (PE) were a great help in incorporating the elements of the LOI in everyday instruction. Ms. Heusch expressed that the weekly walk throughs in her classroom and feedback sessions not only provided her with small chunks she could apply to her everyday lessons but gave her the practice needed to incorporate each element, so it would come naturally. "They helped shape me and become the teacher I am."

By the end of her first year Ms. Heusch was comfortable with people coming into her classroom. She was so confident that she was using best practices that she would forget the observers were there. "Be confident in yourself. You do this every day, you know your students, and you will do well." After her final observation cycle, she attributed her positive experience to the guidance of her mentor teacher and PEs, and to the training and support she received throughout the school year. "This is what it feels like to be evaluated and not be nervous."

For further information, please contact Chris Nutt (christianne.nutt@maricopa.gov).

REIL-Extend Goals

Goal 1: Attract, place, retain, and sustain effective educators through implementation of a high-quality, LEA-wide human capital management system focused on expanding leadership and cultivating an engaged workforce.

Goal 2: Redesign high-need schools to accelerate access to effective educators by extending the reach of excellent teachers.

Building Assessment Items

By Dr. Cory Peacock, Measurement Coordinator

Creating a quality assessment item, whether for a formative or a summative assessment, begins with the standards. It is important to have a thorough understanding of each standard that needs to be assessed. While assessing a standard, determine what types of questions represent the essence of the standard and which types are not directly supportive. Does the standard require that students understand how broad systems interact with one another? Or does it require that students recall key details, dates, or facts? Determining this detail enables question writers to assess more specifically what standards require.

Similarly, evaluate the depth of knowledge that needs to be assessed for every question. Numerous resources exist online for Webb's Depth of Knowledge (DOK) idea. In short, there are four levels of knowledge that can be assessed ranging from level 1's basic recall to level 4's extended strategic thinking. Any given assessment item will be targeted to one of these four levels.

DOK 4

EXTENDED THINKING
· Synthesis of information
· Interpretation of data to solve problem

DOK 3

STRATEGIC THINKING
· Planning
· Complex reasoning

DOK 2

SKILLS & CONCEPTS
· Compare
· Basic reasoning

DOK 1

RECALL & REPRODUCTION
· Recall of facts
· Definition of procedure

Figure 3: Webb's Depth of Knowledge. Digital Image. Synergis Education. 5 January 2018. https://www.synergiseducation.com/blooms-taxonomy-and-webbs-depth-of-knowledge/

Lastly, be sure to look at how students responded to items as a group. Did *everyone* get the question right/wrong? It's too easy/hard. Who got the question right? For those who got it wrong, was there a pattern in the wrong choices that helps to determine where the problem lies? Is it a bad question? Was there a conflict with instruction? It is absolutely important to evaluate how items "perform" during tests. Take the time to determine whether your assessment items are working the way you intend. If they are not, rewrite the question for next time. Because just like other types of writing, the best test question writing is rewriting.
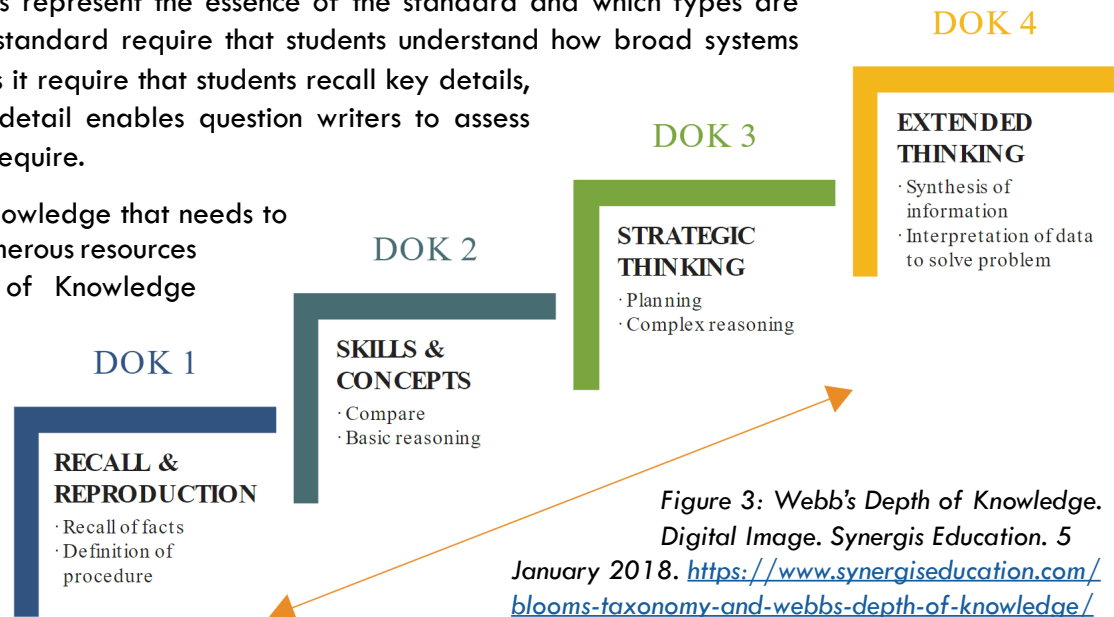
EXAMPLE

STANDARDS:

5th Grade Social Studies

5.SP4.2: Use evidence to make claims about the past.

Using an additional standard in support of the assessment item

5.H2.1: Use primary and secondary sources to summarize the causes and effects of conflicts, resolutions, and social movements throughout the historical timeframe (American Revolution to Industrialism)

DEPTH OF KNOWLEDGE (DOK):

The following item is DOK 3 because it requires the student to:

• Analyze separate statements
• Make and explain the conclusion about their impact or content
• Utilize the evidence presented in the statements to justify their explanation.

ASSESSMENT ITEM:

Read the two quotes below. The first quote is a primary source stated by Patrick Henry during the Continental Congress in Philadelphia in 1774.

"The distinctions between Virginians, Pennsylvanians, New Yorkers, and New Englanders are no more. I am not a Virginian, but an American."

The second quote is from the history book The American Colonies: From Settlement to Independence by Richard C. Simmons (1981).

"[There emerged a] kind of unformed nationalism… growing up with more and more men in more and more colonies speaking and writing of an American cause that they largely defined in terms of protecting American liberties against British tyranny."

Explain the change that happened in the time period when Patrick Henry made his statement. Use the quote from Simmons to support your argument.

AN APPROPRIATE ANSWER:

According to Henry, the people all had to see themselves as united in order to take on the action of war. According to Simmons that happened. The people started feeling united and wanted to preserve their land as one new country. They started the American Revolution.

For further information, please contact Dr. Cory Peacock (cory.peacock@maricopa.gov).

Critical Thinking

By Des Hockman, Professional Development Resource Coordinator

Critical thinking is complex. Multiple definitions exist, which generally include the rational, skeptical, unbiased analysis, or evaluation of factual evidence. This last school year I was able to film Becky Rose, a sixth-grade science teacher who uses critical thinking in her classroom. I had the opportunity to interview her to get an idea of how she fosters this skill so effectively.

The first thing she noted was that she uses group structures to "foster student-to-student dialogue on a consistent basis within (her) lessons". This ensures that students are used to building on each other's ideas using questioning and justification. Students use sentence frames like "Some evidence I have to support this is…" or "I think this because…". In the class' last unit students asked questions of each other after presentations. Rose explained:

> [Questioning time] extended the thinking far beyond what I taught. Students asked questions like 'what is the negative impact on ecosystems? And why do you think that is happening? What do you think the ecosystem will look like in 5 years? 10 years? It wasn't something that we were talking about, because we had been focusing on the now. The students took it to that next level, and even thought about how technology might make it better in the future.

For teachers who want to get better at questioning, or get your students better at critical thinking, investigate the question formulation technique provided by the Right Question Institute. Ms. Rose's advice to continue growing in this element was to "plan the questions ahead of time so they are thought provoking. Doing this over time will make it routine and students start using those same questioning strategies." What I learned from my interview was that critical thinking takes planning and a classroom culture that asks questions.

For further information, please contact Des Hockman (desere.hockman@maricopa.gov).

NEWSLETTER FEEDBACK | Did you really enjoy a particular article? Have a suggestion for the next issue? Take our 3-question survey to tell us what you think!

Critical Thinking
Level 5

Students use complex reasoning **with planning over an extended period of time in connection with a long-term project, problem, performance, and/or investigation** (*e.g., process multiple conditions of a problem or task; use multiple sources to gather and synthesize information; examine and explain alternatives*).

Students monitor their thinking to ensure learning; seek knowledge about how they learn new concepts, facts, and procedures; gain control in directing their solution process. (5f)

## Instructional Conference Micro-credentials

By Kim St. Clair, Professional Development Resource Coordinator

We are excited to present the "Know Thy" series! These are the first three micro-credentials in our new Instructional Conference stack. The "Know Thy" series is designed to support evaluators and coaches to transform the instructional conference into a powerful professional learning experience for teachers.

These three micro-credentials build on each other but can stand alone; a leader can choose to complete one, two, or all three in any order. However, we recommend completing all three in sequence for the greatest impact.

To register, visit: schoolsup.org/micro-credentials.

For further information, please contact Kim St. Clair (kimberly.stclair@maricopa.gov).
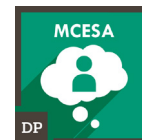
MCESA **DP** — **KNOW THYSELF** *UNCOVERING LEADER WILL DRIVER & BIASES*
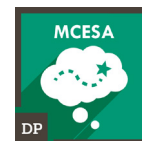
MCESA **DP** — **KNOW THY TEACHER** *USING THE SKILL & WILL MATRIX ASSESSMENT*

MCESA **DP** — **KNOW THY PLAN** *USING THE SKILL & WILL MATRIX TO PLAN AN INSTRUCTIONAL CONFERENCE*