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The Script for the PowerPoint Slide Show.
Towards A Common Language:
Writing A Thesis Statement Across the Curriculum

Unfortunately I was unable to save the notes with the PowerPoint.

Slide One:

What if every teacher in a school shared a common language, vocabulary for teaching writing? How would that improve student achievement? When a student entered the math class, science, social studies, physical education, art, music, each teacher used the same terms to instruct students on how to develop a thesis statement and supporting sentences. What if parents used the same bank of terms when reading their students papers at home? This is a template I developed for teachers in some of the middle and high schools I served as a coach. In some schools, the teachers worked with a computer teacher to make it more user friendly for parents and teachers. Feel free to set up a wiki and revise it to suit your situation.

Slide Two:

You might want to use these objectives to create an agenda

Slide Three:

To improve the schema of teachers and students. I use the metaphor of an umbrella. Explain that like an umbrella, a thesis has to cover its subject/owner. It shouldn't be too large because then it would be unwieldy, not manageable, clumsy for the carrier. If it is too small, the carrier will be drenched. It has to be just right/custom made. I use examples of a wrestler or a basketball player carrying an umbrella that is too small,, one for a child. Use an example of a small child carrying a custom made umbrella for an athlete or some other large person

The only difference between a thesis statement and a topic sentence: topic sentence covers a paragraph; a thesis covers a larger body of work

Slide Four:

The umbrella/thesis statement makes a promise, a vow, a commitment. It must cover every sentence, detail, idea, example, statistics, facts, etc.

Slide Five:

Think of the power of each teacher using a common vocabulary to teach writing. The entire burden does not have to fall on the language arts teachers. Every one can participate. Coaches: think about the help you will need to implement this idea. Do you want to set up an in-house social network

Slide Six:

Read the statements and encourage teachers to select one to develop thesis statement/ topic sentence. This is a great exercise for teachers who assign writing without really understanding the rhetorical nature of what it is they are asking student to do. Give them five or ten minutes.

Slide Seven:

Distribute the packet that accompanies this Powerpoint. Give teachers time to study the first couple of pages. Allow them to work in pairs. After they have completed the exercises, have them revisit the thesis statement that they wrote. Do they want to make changes? Why or why not? Explain that a thesis statement is always a work in progress until the essay is complete

Slide Eight:

Give teachers an opportunity to add additional sentences to their thesis. Objective: identify the topic sentence and the sentence that causes the paragraph to lack unity or oneness. A topic sentence is not always the first sentence.

Slide Nine:

Work in groups to respond to these questions. Review the slides if necessary.

Slide Ten

Today many schools, especially charters, share common principles: dress code, bulletin boards, character education, quotes posted throughout the hallway and classrooms. Every is on the same page. These principles promote a clean, safe, and orderly environment. A common language can promote

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Curriculum, instruction, and Assessment. Try it out and share the results
This is the first in a series.

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