

Pre-PEAK

I knew that all kids should learn and that every kid should have the opportunity for success. As a teacher I was always searching for ways to enhance or teach the low performing students. I felt dejected and unsatisfied because these students always seemed to be left behind. I knew that there was a gap in achievement between the low end kids and the high end kids and the gap became larger as the kids got older. Building relationships was easy, the role of building self-esteem, student-teacher (and student-student) relationships was always there from year to year and student to student. The Six Keys were easy to adopt and include in my classroom because I was already “doing” them. I had a built in mechanism that seemed to target these context areas in my classroom over the years, motivating kids to learn.

During PEAK

Starting my PEAK journey has been an unforgettable experience for me. I have used many of the PEAK strategies and strategies since the first discussion of this educational framework back in 2000. All kids need to feel success. All kids need to build strong and positive relationships that will help them later in life. This teaching model dictates or encompasses a well rounded child in education. It breaths success for all kids.

Standards

Before PEAK, I felt I had no backbone in teaching kids—in an academic sense. I was climbing a ladder and “stuck” on the 2nd or 3rd rung, hanging to the side bewildered and not knowing the next steps to help close the gap. There was a missing component, I knew something was missing. I was making relationship connections with students, and I was modifying academics allowing all students to learn. BUT there was still something missing. By knowing the standards, knowing that kids will be coached, teaching with different learning styles and/or different entry points of educational background, and ensuring that all kids learn, was my backbone—performance excellence for all kids. I have become a more efficient, professional and focused educator.

I am teaching to different learning styles and holding kids to standards, using the B or Better grading and some degree of ownership in assignments or projects by stating how to “earn an A+” before the assignment starts. Using parallel assessments has given me that “backbone”. I can say “this is what I want from you because it is what all kids at your age need to know.” Then I hold each child accountable for reaching that standard. They are each different in their ability levels and knowledge of concepts. I’ve learned to build on successes by having kids build on their own success. This has empowered them to become positive, motivated learners.

I, too, am climbing on my own professional developmental ladder. I have begun to climb to a higher level, understanding more and more how to teach kids with different learning styles and feeling successful. I am seeing the results of kids feeling success.

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