

The Role of Teacher Leaders in Closing the Achievement Gap

The Meadowbrook Series takes a critical look at how teacher leaders can be vital in closing the achievement gap. This upcoming session will be presented by Dr. Robert Martin from Pontiac Public Schools, Ida Turpin and Brian Blackney of Walled Lake Western High School and teams from schools that have had success in tackling this important challenge.

Participants will learn new ideas and perspectives in this interactive session and will leave with new tools to take back to schools and districts.

AUDIENCE: All administrators and teachers. We encourage you to attend in vertical teams.

WHEN: November 10, 2009 from 4:00-7:00 p.m. Hors d'oeuvres and a cash bar

WHERE: Meadowbrook Hall at Oakland University

COST: \$40/person. Registration is through Oakland Schools

We hope you will join us for this valuable opportunity for learning and collegial conversation. Contact Kay Cornell for questions or additional information: kaycornell@comcast.net.

Communication is the KEY

By Pam Shoemaker

Teacher leaders strive to learn and grow professionally on an ongoing basis. Stepping up to share ideas in an effort to create positive change simply comes with the territory. Becoming a more effective communicator will help in your effort to more effectively lead classrooms and colleagues. There are two simple tips for designing and delivering presentations that will help convey your message, whatever it may be. These tips can be applied to PowerPoint, Keynote, Google Presentations, or any other online presentation application.

1. **Use less text on slides;** cut out what is not critical. Too much text is b...o...r...i...n...g and confusing to your audience. A detailed handout (not a print-out of your slides) keeps you from feeling compelled to cram everything into your slides. Never just read what is on your slides.
2. **Creativity and design matters.** Use images and short video clips to help portray your message as much as possible. Yes, this takes more time and effort, but it pays off. Your audience will spend more time thinking about what you are saying instead of being passive listeners. The skills necessary to be an effective communicator have changed. Today, literacy is not only about reading and writing text (though that is just as necessary), but also about understanding visual communication. Today, we need a higher degree of visual literacy and an understanding of the great power that imagery has for conveying important messages.

Below is a "before and after" example. If your goal is to have discussions that move ideas and improvements forward, which would be more effective?

Differentiated instruction

- is a way of thinking about teaching and learning.
- involves providing students with different avenues to acquiring content
- involves developing teaching products so that all students within a classroom can learn effectively, regardless of differences in ability.



For more detailed information about these ideas, consider reading *Presentation Zen: Simple Ideas on Presentation Design and Delivery*, by Garr Reynolds.



Guest Contributor
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KEEPING UP WITH THE NEWEST PODCASTS

The *Podcasts for Leaderful Schools* series has continued with interviews with Dr. Yong Zhao, author of the just released book, *Catching up or Leading the Way: American Education in the Age of Globalization*; and Bill Strickland,

author of *Make the Impossible Possible*. Strickland's remarkable work as social architect, community leader and visionary in reaching urban youth and unemployed adults led to a *MacArthur Genius Award* for this inspirational CEO of the Manchester Bidwell Corporation in Pittsburgh.

Another episode discussed the partnership between the Galileo Institute, Oakland University's Early Childhood Department and Oakland Schools, which made possible the very successful early childhood conference in early August.

Other recent guests included recent Oakland Ph.D. graduates, Don Brosky, discussing his research on micropolitics in schools and Kevin Brockberg reflecting on the challenges of urban education.

LEADING CHANGE

The work of changing and transforming schooling practices is a challenge that needs the right individuals committed to making a real difference for students, staff, and schooling practices. Recently visiting professor, Tom Tattan presented at the national Phi Delta Kappa conference in Indianapolis about how the redesign of Oakland University's M.Ed. in Educational Leadership will better prepare school leaders for 21st century schools.

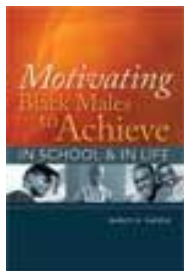
The program plan is to provide two years of multiple learning experiences that are aimed at preparing students to lead in today's schools. They will learn about the professional and personal skills needed, standards of performance expected, dispositions, personal attitudes, the risk-taking, best practices, and ultimately the guts to actually transform schooling practices.

We need individuals willing to become change leaders in our schools. Spread the word about the M.Ed. in Educational Leadership at Oakland University.

For further information, contact Dr. Tattan at tattan@oakland.edu or log onto our interactive website at www.galileoinstitute.ning.com and join in Dr. Tattan's current blog.

OCTOBER BOOK TALK

with Kay Cornell, Education Consultant



MOTIVATING BLACK MALES TO ACHIEVE IN SCHOOL AND IN LIFE

by Baruti Kafele ASCD, 2009

If good things really do come in small packages, then Kafele's new book is truly a treasure. With the continuing focus on eliminating the achievement gap, this book adds a great deal to the discussion with answers, not just angst about the problem. After an overview of the challenges facing the education system, Kafele elaborates on the necessity for teachers to learn about their black male students in order to meet their classroom needs, to understand all of these issues about their black male students: need for inspiration; learning styles; goals and aspirations; experiences and realities; needs and interests; challenges, obstacles and distractions; peers, parents and neighborhoods; and history and culture.

From the cover of the book: "The author shows how simple but powerful measures to instill self-worth in young black males can not only raise these students' achievement, but can also profoundly alter their lives for the better."

This book is a good follow-up to Tony Wagner's book *The Global Achievement Gap*, and I think readers will find valuable information on reaching black males in their schools and classrooms.

QUESTIONS? Contact

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- Barbara Klocko, Research Associate baklocko@oakland.edu

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