

Mckinley Elementary School Research Summary San Jose, California

Topic and Description: The questions and results arising from the Action Research done at McKinley last year have led the research team to propose another action research in the following areas:

- How does School Leadership identify and differentiate staff development needs in order to influence teacher and student fluency in Thinking Maps®?
- Analyze the effects of the differentiation of staff development in teacher fluency with Thinking Maps® across content areas
- Did teacher competency in Thinking Maps® reflect in improved student fluency of the eight thought processes?

Name and Qualifications of Principal Investigator:

Joy Wenke has been a bilingual Educator for twenty years. She was a member of the team that completed the Action Research Project on Teacher Effectiveness and Thinking Maps® in 2006-07.

Summary, Method(s) of Research, and Anticipated Results

The team will use both qualitative and quantitative data to analyze the effects of the decision made by the School Leadership at McKinley Elementary School to differentiate staff development in the implementation of Thinking Maps®. In addition, the team will examine the impact of the differentiated teacher training on student fluency in the eight thought processes represented by Thinking Maps®. To support the “collaborative processes that foster ownership in decisions” (DuFour) the team will gather digital samples of the use of Thinking Maps® during staff meetings, grade level collaboration and Leadership Team Meetings. Using this data, the team hopes to prove that differentiation of staff development, continued use of the common visual language of Thinking Maps® during teacher meetings, as well as student-generated work, will support McKinley in becoming a true learning community where all members are contributing to the shared goal of McKinley School: to become a “school of thinkers and scholars”. As Richard DuFour states in Professional Learning Communities at Work, “Teachers increase the effectiveness of their schools when they collectively identify and work toward the results they desire, develop collaborative strategies to achieve their goals, and create systems to assess student learning.”

Quantitative data:

School CST results of students who have been at McKinley consistently, TASS (Teams Assisting Student Success) data, staff surveys, students assessments.

Qualitative Data:

Teacher interviews, administrator interviews, student interviews, student assessments, samples of students’ work, digital pictures of maps generated during meetings and teacher lesson plans.

Anticipated results:

We are anticipating that our research will prove that differentiated staff development is correlated with increased student fluency in the eight thought processes represented by Thinking Maps®. In addition, we will corroborate that the McKinley teachers’ collaboration skills within and across grade level are significantly strengthened.