

ALIGNMENT OF FISH! FOR SCHOOLS™ WITH CALIFORNIA STANDARDS FOR THE TEACHING PROFESSION

FISH! For Schools is a research based curriculum, methodology, and philosophy centered around creating effective, engaging, and satisfying educational environments. The potent combination of dynamic workshops and training (“FISH! For Schools LIVE”), original and invigorating staff development materials (“Guided Journey”), with scalable lesson plans that mesh with existing curriculum, as well as developmentally segmented materials for kindergarten through ninth grade classrooms (“Expedition Packs”), allows FISH! For Schools to make both immediate and long-lasting impact.

The common language of The FISH! Philosophy® - Be There, Play, Make Their Day, and Choose Your Attitude™ – gives FISH! For Schools its simple, but not simplistic, appeal and potential. This language with an emphasis on engagement, shared ownership, learning responsibility, and safety is the foundation of FISH! For Schools. Educators across the country who desire the positive professionalism exemplified by the *California Standards for the Teaching Profession* are finding increased success as they incorporate FISH! For Schools.



CSTP 1: ENGAGING & SUPPORTING ALL STUDENTS IN LEARNING

- Connecting student’s prior knowledge, life experience, and interests with learning goals.
- Promoting self-directed, reflective learning for all students
- Using a variety of instructional strategies and resources to respond to students’ diverse needs.
- Facilitating learning experiences that promote autonomy, interaction, and choice
- Engaging students in problem solving, critical thinking, and other activities that make subject matter meaningful

Educators who embrace The FISH! Philosophy are more effective in engaging and supporting their students in learning. Because FISH! For Schools puts the relationship among teachers and students at the heart of education, educators are better able to connect with their students. These connections give educators more background knowledge, allowing them to help students place the content being taught in the context of their individual lives. These relationships, as well as the variety of strategies encouraged in the Expedition Pack lesson plans, lead to a more comfortable, safer environment where students have opportunities to take educational risks, experience success, and take responsibility for their own learning. Often, this is simply a matter of playing a 3-5 minute game like “Unfortunately/Fortunately” (see example 1 below). At other times, the issues are more critical and require the kind of conversation that would come out of some of the “Situation Cards” – a developmentally differentiated tool included in each Expedition Pack (see example 2 below).

Example 1:

Unfortunately/Fortunately (pg. 27), Choose Your Attitude, 3-5 Expedition Pack

Students take hypothetical or real situations and find ways to see possibilities in how they respond. A student could say, “Unfortunately, we have to get up everyday at 6 a.m. to be at school on time.” The next student suggests, “Fortunately, we get to see our friends.” Through this process, students assimilate the understanding that they are responsible for the choices they make in response to what happens to them.

Example 2:

Situation Card Number 7, Teaching Tools, 6-8 and 9-12 Expedition Packs

The situation card states, “A friend tells you he or she is bored with life. What do you do or say, if anything? What are some possible consequences of your words? By engaging adolescents in conversations that have personal meaning. Educators encourage awareness of choices and personal responsibility. The relationships fostered by this approach create an environment that is more supportive of all learning.

CSTP 2: CREATING & MAINTAINING EFFECTIVE ENVIRONMENTS FOR STUDENT LEARNING

- Creating a physical environment that engages all students.
- Using instructional time effectively.
- Planning and implementing classroom procedures and routines that support student learning.
- Establishing a climate that promotes fairness and respect.
- Promoting social development and responsibility.
- Establishing and maintaining standards for student behavior.

As Marzano & Marzano (2003) suggest, “Teacher-student relationships provide an essential foundation for effective classroom management - and classroom management is key to high student achievement.” Both the research and common sense tell us that when humans feel empowered, they are more likely to act in beneficial ways. FISH! For Schools incorporates structured experiences designed to engage students in establishing and maintaining high standards for behavior (see example 3 below). Classrooms based on these standards results in more efficient use of learning time. When students emotional needs are better supported, both by educators and their classmates, they become more motivated. And, as Alfie Kohn wrote, “Performance is a by-product of motivation.”

The physical structure of the Expedition Packs gives teachers clear direction but does not limit their creativity or ability to give lessons their personal spark. Most FISH! For School lessons can be completed in 25 minutes or less, but can also be expanded or used as a template for whatever content the instructor is responsible for conveying.

Example 3:

Lesson 5 (pg.21), Campaign Plan, 6-8 Expedition Pack

Through watching the video, Student FISH!” and the activities and conversations suggested by the lesson plan, students personalize the experience that they would optimally have in their classroom. Using write on/wipe off posters, they establish positive guidelines for their interactions throughout the year.

CSTP 3: UNDERSTANDING & ORGANIZING SUBJECT MATTER FOR STUDENT LEARNING

- Drawing on and valuing students' backgrounds, interests, and developmental learning needs.
- Modifying instructional plans to adjust for student needs.
- Establishing and articulating goals for student learning.
- Developing and sequencing instructional activities and materials for student learning.
- Designing short-term and long-term plans to foster student learning.

According to William Glasser, M.D., “Students will do things for a teacher they care for that they wouldn’t do for one they don’t care for.” This is also true in the reverse – teachers who are connected to and genuinely care for their students will do things for them that they might not do if they are less connected. FISH! For Schools’ staff development component, The Guided Journey - a combination of self-reflective experiences and text with provocative and engaging video of students, teachers, and administrators – is designed to re-ignite a passion for education. It also prompts re-examination of instructional methods, teaching behaviors in and out of the classroom, and ultimately asks each educator to make intentional choices about how they teach.

Each Expedition Pack at each level (K-2, 3-5, 6-8, 9-12) gives educators organized lessons and tools which assist them in creating an atmosphere that encourages both short and long-term social development in a learning setting. One of the many outcomes of this approach is recognition and utilization of more engaging and impactful teaching strategies. As students and teachers become more connected to each other and their learning, they enjoy it more, which fosters greater engagement – a virtuous cycle.

CSTP 4: PLANNING INSTRUCTION & DESIGNING LEARNING EXPERIENCES FOR ALL STUDENTS

- Demonstrating knowledge of subject matter content and student development.
- Using materials, resources, and technologies to make subject matter accessible to students.
- Organizing curriculum to support student understanding of subject matter.
- Interrelating ideas and information within and across subject matter areas.
- Developing student understanding through instructional strategies that are appropriate to the subject matter.

The Guided Journey staff development materials re-orient educators, putting the focus on the student. With the student as the primary interest, teachers must consider their organization, use of technology, and strategies in order to best suit the needs of both individuals and the group. Hopefully, every educator carries with them an educator from their past who was so passionate about teaching that they inspired students to learn more than they had anticipated. The Guided Journey works with educators to ignite that passion. When teachers are passionate, both they and their students become more fully engaged. Educational Leadership (No. 61, 2003) reported, “Being fully engaged in what we’re doing fosters the joy of learning.”

Because many of the lessons can be integrated into existing curriculum, not only do they not require additional instructional time, they enhance the quality of instruction. In the 3-5 Expedition Pack, inquiry based learning is used as a model for helping students become aware of their impact on the world around them. This approach easily dovetails with the science curriculum and makes connections between social development and scientific theory. Additionally, because inquiry method requires hypotheses, experimentation, observation, and conclusion, many cross-curricular opportunities with language arts, math, and social studies present themselves.

CSTP 5: ASSESSING STUDENT LEARNING

- Establishing and communicating learning goals for all students.
- Collecting and using multiple sources of information to assess student learning.
- Involving and guiding all students in assessing their own learning.
- Using the results of assessments to guide instruction.
- Communicating with students, families, and other audiences about student progress.

FISH! For Schools provides unique assessment tools for measuring student and teacher perspectives on the school and classroom. Teacher surveys focus on how educators feel about teaching, students, support, school climate, and job satisfaction. This measurement will help administrators understand faculty needs, teachers and faculty understand student needs, and parents and community members understand the needs of the school. Student surveys focus on how students feel about school, their sense of belonging, emotional and physical safety, and the relationships they have with teachers and classmates.

As educators and students collaboratively develop their classroom culture, opportunities for formal, informal, and personal measures increase. Students in FISH! For Schools classrooms view learning as their responsibility, so self-reflection happens naturally and intentionally. Open lines of communication extend beyond the classroom walls into conferences with families. When communication is more open, everyone has a greater stake in success, therefore the results of assessment have potential for a more positive impact on instruction.

ChartHouse Learning may collaborate with district research and assessment departments to decide on tools to look at and measure student achievement data and student behavior data and the overall impact FISH! For Schools has on the school climate over time.

CSTP 6: DEVELOPING AS A PROFESSIONAL EDUCATOR

- Reflecting on teaching practice and planning professional development.
- Establishing professional goals and pursuing opportunities to grow professionally.
- Working with communities to improve professional practice.
- Working with families to improve professional practice.
- Working with colleagues to improve professional practice.
- Balancing professional responsibilities and maintaining motivation.

FISH! For Schools recognizes that educators are dedicated professionals engaged in the noble cause of teaching children. The Guided Journey impacts every element of this standard. It is a complete, personalized staff-development course, designed especially for educators. By completing this self-guided DVD/Video course and journal, educators deepen skills in classroom cultural management through new techniques for building relationships, developing shared ownership, and creating a safe and effective learning environment with the common language of The FISH! Philosophy. This tool can be completed individually, or preferably, in a variety of group settings.

FISH! For Schools also provides staff development trainings and workshops that rekindle the passion that drives most educators when they first begin teaching. These inspiring workshops allow educators to explore creative solutions and collaborate on current academic and educational issues. These curriculum, training, collaboration and networking opportunities provide communication tools to help educators maintain positive learning environments in classrooms and schools.

One of the most powerful philosophical aspects of FISH! For Schools is the concept of getting educators to work together and collaborate in unique ways regarding issues that impact schools. When people work together and establish supportive work and learning communities, adults and students alike take ownership and feel safe and empowered. This environment naturally fosters improvement and enhancement of professional practice and student success.

