

Cypress Fairbanks Independent School District Partnership Report



The Situation

Cypress Fairbanks ISD in Houston, Texas began its partnership with The Bob Pike Group in the late 1990s when 257 Secondary Math Teachers who worked with 27,000 students attended a Creative Teaching Strategies (CTS) program.

The scientific learner-centered strategies based on over 30 years of field-tested brain and learning research dramatically increase attention, retention and recall. The Learner-Centered Approach and Creative Teaching Strategies is the scientifically sound approach to student success.

The objective was to provide teachers with innovative teaching techniques to move them away from using traditional teacher-centered, lecture-based lesson plans toward active involvement and student-centered learning. After the two-day course and practicum, the teachers were anxious to apply their newly acquired learner-centered strategies back in their classrooms.

The Pilot and Tangible Results

Cypress Fairbanks built a control group of a similar number of teachers who were to keep teaching without applying the participant-centered techniques even if they caught wind of the surprising results.

They videotaped the classrooms and also recorded some baseline data that included the student's interest in Math on a scale of 1–5. Needless to say, Math was not a favorite subject for many students. They especially wanted to improve grades so they measured the student's average grade level and also Texas Test Scores. By the Spring of 1997, they were very anxious to once again videotape what was happening in the classroom and gather data to compare with their original baseline. They discovered more learning was happening and learning was more fun. They found themselves with both tangible results with 2,700 students and some surprising intangible results. On the attitudinal survey, the student's interest in Math, for those not originally at a Five, increased an entire point on a scale of 1–5.

Furthermore, the average grade increase for all student's, excluding those already earning an "A" was one letter grade.

Intangible Results

Less tangible results recognized included:

- Attention and retention improved
- Students took on greater responsibility for their learning
- Classrooms were transformed from teaching environments to learning environments
- Students' attitudes toward school improved and self-confidence increased

Most telling is that by the end of that first year, the math teachers not originally in the CTS pilot were so anxious to take it that they offered to pay for it out of their own pocket. Since that successful pilot, thousands of teachers have been trained. With this kind of interest and dramatic results Cypress Fairbanks needed to be able to go to another level.

The Future: Teach the Teacher Creative Teaching Strategies

Over the past year, Cypress Fairbanks has transitioned from having The Bob Pike Group's consultants train their teachers to being able to train teachers themselves. Forty teachers and staff developers in the District have been certified to teach the course in 2004–2006, allowing them to make CTS mandatory curriculum for all Cypress Fairbanks teachers.

This partnership with the Bob Pike Group has created a replicable or scalable Teach-the-Teacher model that would ensure successful district-wide implementation for an economical investment. The tangible results are potentially infinite since we are unlocking the learning for the future community, state and world leaders of tomorrow. It has allowed Cypress Fairbanks and The Bob Pike Group to join the education revolution transforming the face of education one district, one school, one teacher and one student at a time.

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