

INSTRUCTIONAL EXCELLENCE SUMMARY

This Instructional Excellence Summary includes key features of instruction that experts agree help students achieve standards and growth beyond those standards. It is designed to help teachers, teacher-leaders, and principals grow as instructors and as instructional leaders.

The instructional methods included here span subjects and grades. Our experience with outstanding schools and teachers tells us that great instruction stands on the following three pillars, in addition to the other elements you'll find in this summary:

- **Strong subject matter knowledge and thinking skills**, which are essential for teachers to grasp and impart to students;
- **High-standards curricula that include honed lesson plans and interim assessments**, incorporating strong subject matter content, thinking skills, and opportunities for personalization; and
- **New models of teacher-leadership and collaboration that ensure that teachers execute** excellent instruction for student achievement and growth.

It is based on input from a wide variety of sources, including the following:

- Interviews with **Opportunity Culture** teachers, multi-classroom leaders, and principals who achieved high growth, often with disadvantaged students.
- Input from **Opportunity Culture Fellows**, teachers selected for their excellent instruction and leadership.
- Input from **Public Impact team members** working with Opportunity Culture schools.
- Input from partners in the field who study instructional excellence or work with many programs to promote it.
- A wide range of published materials about excellent instruction. Please see the **list of recommended readings** on page 3.

See OpportunityCulture.org for more.

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This is a working document, and we invite suggestions for improvement. Contact us [here](#).

	DELIVER INSTRUCTION Connect Lead Classroom Execute Rigor & Personalization	IMPROVE INSTRUCTION Monitor Learning Adjust Instruction Share
PLAN Before the School Year	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Raise sights, quality, & consistency by planning ahead <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Articulate the vision for teachers, students, & families ○ Choose high annual standards & growth goals ○ Choose and/or develop high-standards curricula aligned with goals across grades and subjects ○ Develop engaging lesson plans that align with curriculum and include frequent checks for understanding, personalization/differentiation, re-teaching, & acceleration ○ Systematize schoolwide procedures & routines 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Raise sights, quality, & consistency by planning ahead <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Select or develop interim assessments aligned to high standards & growth goals ○ Establish an assessment calendar ○ Determine data systems to share progress w/teachers, students, & families ○ Schedule time to analyze data & adjust teaching ○ Plan for students to set & track goals
IMPLEMENT During the School Year	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Connect with students & families to cultivate a culture of learning <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Impart a collective vision that all students can succeed ○ Build positive, genuine individual relationships <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Respect diversity across all lines of identity ○ Communicate student learning information regularly <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Initiate positive, constructive, & helpful dialogue ○ Motivate everyone to do their best <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Foster trust & joy: be trustworthy & joyful ▪ Celebrate achievements! * Establish superior classroom leadership <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Lead with a firm, yet warm presence, in person & online <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Influence students with strong posture, voice & online communication ▪ Model eagerness for learning ▪ Circulate throughout the classroom (and/or conduct check-ins online) ○ Set norms for a successful learning environment <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Conduct consistent procedures & routines ▪ Script, model, & reteach clear directions ▪ Respond to unique strengths & needs of each student ▪ Maximize all instructional time ○ Follow a continuous behavior management cycle <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Set & reinforce high expectations ▪ Convey the consequence hierarchy ▪ Apply & assign consequences appropriately ▪ Use least invasive intervention--de-escalate behavior ○ Introduce a positive incentive system to highlight exemplary learning behaviors aligned to your vision <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Anticipate proactive steps to prevent misbehaviors ▪ Describe positive behavior as it happens * Execute rigorous, personalized lessons for mastery & growth <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Ensure that all students have ambitious learning goals <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Set challenging, measurable goals, overall & with each student ▪ Encourage students to work hard toward goals ○ Plan & teach lessons aligned with curriculum & student needs <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Assess students before lessons with diagnostics ▪ Set sequential learning targets to & well beyond standards ▪ Continue developing & editing engaging lesson plans that align both with curriculum/standards and what students know ▪ Include in lesson plans: frequent checks for understanding, personalization/differentiation, re-teaching, & acceleration ▪ Differentiate instruction for students at different learning levels ▪ Include assignments that allow any student to advance by choice ▪ Use culturally & personally relevant activities ▪ Script out higher-order questions & correct answers ▪ Incorporate digital instruction wisely ○ Engage students deeply in the learning process <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Incorporate student-centered teaching models, inquiry, & discussion ▪ Deepen understanding via evidence & teamwork 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Monitor student learning data during year <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Use aligned assessments <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Align with lesson, unit, & annual goals ▪ Incorporate standards-based grading ▪ Capture data on both mastery & growth ○ Track with an effective & efficient system <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Follow assessment calendar; adjust if needed ▪ Standardize & automate some components ○ Collect & compare multiple data points <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Conduct pre-tests for baseline data ▪ Assess student grasp daily ▪ Use interim assessments (unit, quarter) ▪ Observe student activity ▪ Confer with students & families informally ▪ Use surveys for formal student feedback ○ Generate reports to summarize mastery & growth and to guide instructional change ○ Analyze data for individuals' needs, trends, and outliers in each class & across school * Adjust instruction to meet each student's needs <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Collaborate with colleagues to improve instruction rapidly for mastery & growth <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Regroup students ▪ Reteach when needed ▪ Offer advanced work ▪ Personalize assignments, pace, etc. ○ Research additional interventions aligned to each student's need, as needed * Share data with students & families about student growth compared with goals students help set <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Involve students in setting their own goals ○ Provide frequent, timely data so students can track growth against goals ○ Guide student choices during the year based on students' own goals <i>and</i> belief that students can raise their bar ○ Share data with families to help them support their children & teens at home
CONTINUOUSLY IMPROVE instructional delivery & improvement process & tools		

RECOMMENDED READING—WRITTEN SOURCES

We encourage users to read these informative sources for help improving instruction.

- * Teaching As Leadership: teachingasleadership.org
- * Teach Like a Champion: teachlikeachampion.com
- * Teaching Channel: teachingchannel.org
- * Match Education: matchminis.org

Visit OpportunityCulture.org/instructional-excellence/ for more resources.