

Promising Practice

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About our Better-seeking Team:



“Twenty-first Century Classroom now boarding. Approach launch pad, and adjust your mindset to boldly go where no Calhoun City Schooler has gone before. Beware: Sudden jolts of high expectations, novel surroundings, technologically advanced learning tools, and complex learning tasks may be injurious to those content with the status quo.”

-Vivian Moss, Calhoun High

- The above quote best describes what Calhoun City School’s District Change Team envisioned in 2004. The Better-Seeker Team wanted to reach new heights with technology. In order to complete the mission, goals were set, teachers were recruited, and the journey began. The initial team chose four teachers at each school level to implement the twenty-first century tools, specifically targeting our EIP population.



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We faced this challenge:

- Background:
 - Training:
 - Teachers were trained using the Learning-focused Schools methods.
 - Technology:
 - We had some technology, but it was not used to it fullest extent.
 - Teachers used technology when they had to (some communication, newsletters, assessments – AR and CRT).
 - Achievement:
 - Subgroups were showing a decline in achievement.
- Goal: To improve the Early Intervention (EIP) and Limited English Proficient (LEP) subgroups' CRCT first-grade reading scores
- Challenge: Find innovative instructional methods that would get the students more involved in their learning
- What we implemented: 21st century model classrooms



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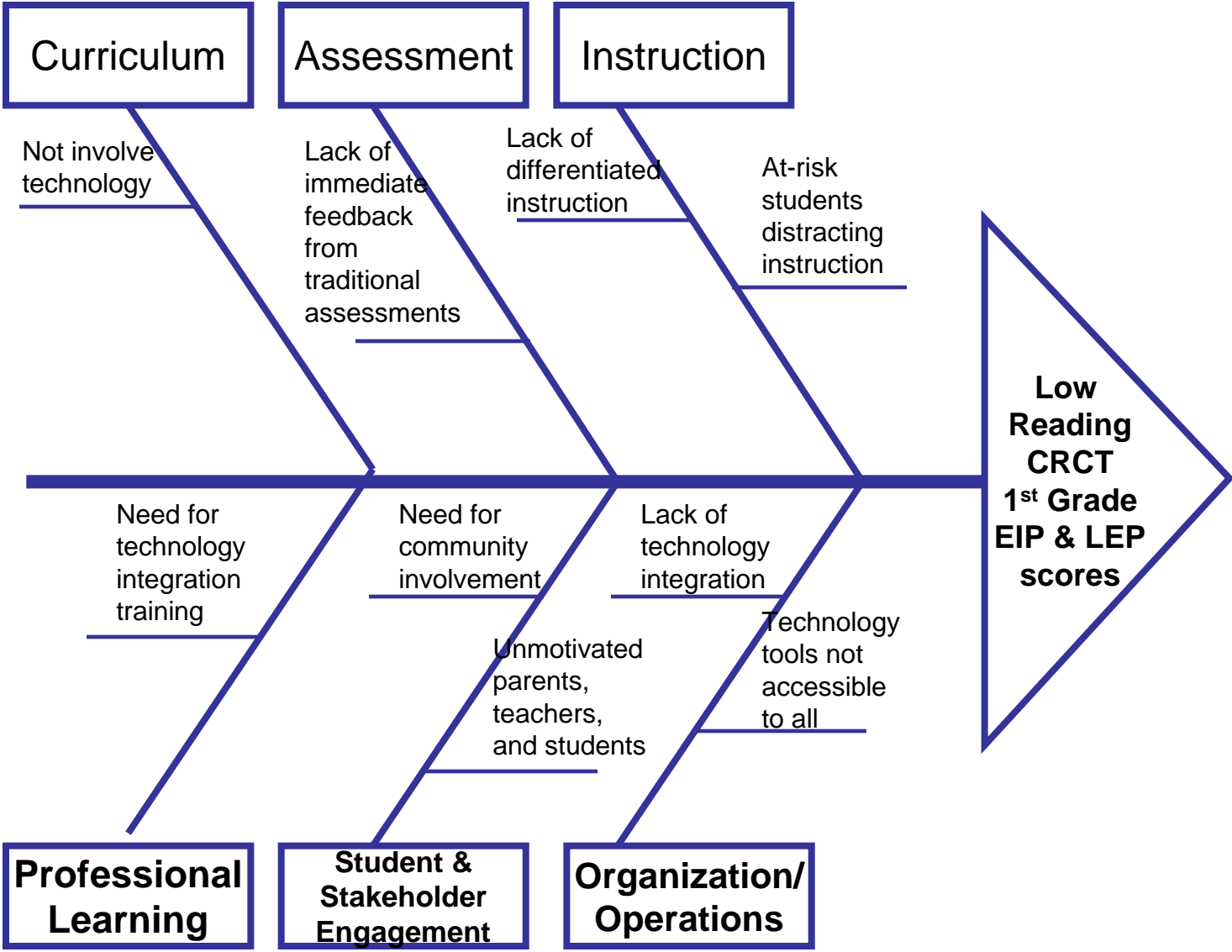
Our data analysis helped us define the causes of the problem:

- Data analyzed:
 - Teacher/student surveys
 - SACS accreditation review
 - Benchmark testing to identify at-risk students
- Causes identified:
 - Students are not engaged in lessons - they are “bored”
 - Teachers are not able to easily integrate technology into lessons due to lack of training
 - Technology tools are not accessible for teachers
 - At-risk students’ behaviors are distracting classes from learning
 - Differentiated classrooms are not equipped to meet the needs of all learning styles



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As part of our root cause analysis...our Fishbone Diagram looked like this:



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Our analysis compared our practices to best practices. Here is what we determined what needed to change:

- Differentiation – Teach using methods that will meet the needs of all learning styles
- Engagement – Get *ALL* students involved in using prior knowledge and experience learning
- Integration – Use technology to take the students to places they have never been before while making their learning meaningful
- Activation – Encourage those “active” students to channel the energy toward academic activities
- Teaching – Use tools that will enhance their learning experience in order to make it fun!



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We took these actions to implement the set of solutions:

- Development of a Technology Better-Seeker Team
 - Researched different types of interactive boards and instructional technology tools
 - Found possible funding opportunities
 - Created community partnerships
 - Choose a team of teachers to lead the way to “model” classrooms
- Installation of Technology
 - January 2005: Promethean Activclassroom tools were supplied to schools for use in certain model classrooms
 - March 2005: Certified Promethean Training was provided to the participating teachers
 - Data collection began



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We tracked our impact and results...

- Model classrooms collected data. Their data was compared to the data of similar model classrooms without the technology, as well as the regular classroom.
- Georgia OSA benchmarks and grade-level assessments were used to gather data throughout the year.
- Surveys were given to parents, students, and teachers that evaluated their beliefs and perceptions of technology used in the classroom.
- The data was constantly analyzed from all stakeholders in order to provide the best educational solution.



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We experienced these changes as a result:

- Increased student involvement during academics
- Motivated teachers creating interactive lessons
- Decreased discipline problems within the 21st century classrooms
- Enabled the teachers to ensure that all students mastered the standards by receiving immediate feedback
- Increased student expectations of at-risk students by the faculty
- Provided opportunities to boost self-esteem and academic achievement in students
- Overall, excitement for learning!

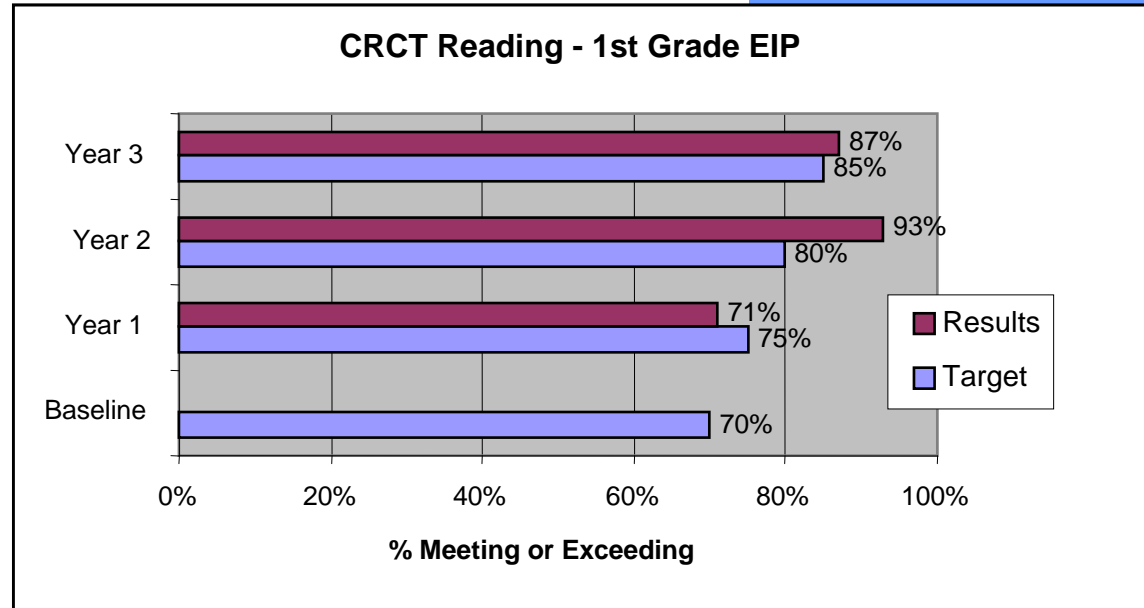


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We gained these targeted measurable results:



How long have you been with GLISI?	3 Years Member of Cohorts 9 & 18
Indicator	CRCT Reading EIP Subgroup
Baseline (2004)	70% Meet or Exceed
Year 1 Target (2005)	75% Meet or Exceed State Target 66.7%
Year 1 Results (2005)	71% Met or Exceeded
Year 2 Target (2006)	80% Meet or Exceed State Target 66.7%
Year 2 Results (2006)	93% Met or Exceeded
Year 3 Target (2007)	85% Meet or Exceed State Target 66.7%
Year 3 Results (2007)	87% Met or Exceeded



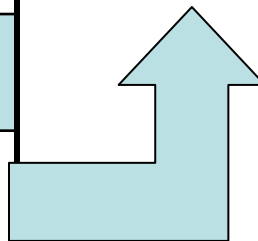
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We also gained these unanticipated measurable results...



How long have you been with GLISI?	3 Years Member of Cohorts 9 & 18
Indicator	CRCT Math EIP Subgroup
Baseline (2004)	68% Meet or Exceed
Year 1 Target (2005)	70% Meet or Exceed State Target 58.3%
Year 1 Results (2005)	86% Met or Exceeded
Year 2 Target (2006)	75% Meet or Exceed State Target 58.3%
Year 2 Results (2006)	93% Met or Exceeded
Year 3 Target (2007)	75% Meet or Exceed State Target 58.3%
Year 3 Results (2007)	59% Met or Exceeded

During year 3 the EIP model was changed from a self-contained classroom of 14 to small group pull-out. There was also a bigger emphasis on reading than math. The Activclassroom tools proved to be more beneficial when used in the regular classroom setting consistently.



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These other factors influenced our results:

- More teachers wanted the 21st Century Tools, which encouraged technology integration
- Parental outreach
- Community outreach



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As a result of this study, we can now say the following:

- Lessons We Have Learned:
 - Students are very technologically literate and electronically entertained.
 - Engagement and activation is the key to student success.
 - Teacher buy-in is important to the change process.
 - Instructional support is needed to ensure that the process continues to be beneficial.
- Meaning to Us as Professionals:
 - The 21st Century model classrooms were instrumental in giving teachers a way to make continuous assessment a reality. This classroom setting allows students to go “back to the future” rather than experiencing a “blast from the past.” They are actively involved in their learning through interaction with the 21st century tools. The future is bright for Calhoun City Schools!



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Our Solution Implementation Summary:

- **Challenge Identified:** Low first-grade CRCT Reading scores for EIP and LEP subgroups
- **Set of solutions:** Developed a Technology Better-Seeker Team to investigate new technology products to promote better technology integration and more motivated teachers and students.
- **Changes Experienced:** Motivated teachers, students, and parents as well as technology integration in classrooms with proven results.
- **Result Realized:** Increased scores in first-grade CRCT Reading scores as well as more teachers and students asking for technology integration in their classrooms.
- **Next Steps:**
 - Seek grant opportunities to increase technology funding
 - Continue to evaluate effectiveness of technology
 - Revise system technology plan in order to update and meet current needs based on new technology
 - Continually PLAN...DO...CHECK...ACT



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