

COMPARISON OF COMMON PRACTICES AND PRACTICES FOUND IN POSITIVE DEVIANT SCHOOLS

Area that strategy impacts upon	Common Practices	PD Practices/ Strategies
Family- School relationship	Many Parents do not feel comfortable going to the school or talking to their child’s teacher.	Teachers warmly greet parents whenever they visit the school. Parents feel comfortable approaching their child’s teacher.
	There is little interaction between parents and teachers.	Teachers visit the homes of every student. During this visit they sign a contract (agreement) with the parents. ¹
	Two annual school meetings <i>with a fixed agenda</i> are held; but many parents do not attend.	In order to increase interest in general meetings, teachers inform parents of the proposed topics and <i>request suggestions for other topics</i> .
	Parents receive notes to inform them of upcoming meetings. Parents are not asked to RSVP and there is no follow-up to encourage parents to attend.	Parents are asked to respond to invitations for meetings. When parents do not RSVP, the teacher remind parents of the upcoming meeting.
	Parents who are illiterate or have little formal education are not given opportunities to contribute to the educational process.	All parents contribute to the school. Parents hold workshops to teach students specific skills (i.e. sewing, woodworking). They also help maintain the school building (i.e. mend fences) and arrange student games/ parades.
	The curriculum does not integrate families into classroom activities.	Projects are undertaken to strengthen the school-family relationship. Children are asked to bring a picture of their family to school. Students interview their parents for reports on specific topics (i.e. a value that is important to their family).
	It is unusual for teachers to meet with the parents of a child who is doing poorly.	Teachers visit the homes of students who are doing poorly.
Teacher-Director	No specific times are set aside for	There is a specific time set aside

¹ These agreements outline the responsibilities of parents and the teacher. These responsibilities include that the parents will contact the school if their child will be absent, and the teacher will contact the parent if their child is having difficulty in school.

relationship	staff meetings.	for staff. A one- hour staff meeting is held every fifteen days.
	There is a clear hierarchy within the school system: teachers fulfill certain duties and directors others. Specific protocols dictate interactions between teachers and school directors.	Formal protocols do not dictate most of the interactions between teachers and school directors. Relationships are more informal and collaborative.
Teacher-Teacher relationship	There is little communication or collaboration between teachers; especially those who teach different subjects.	Teachers work as a team. Teachers from different subjects share materials on the topics that are being explored by students. They discuss the needs and strengths of students with each other and school directors.
Community Mobilization	There is little communication between the school and community leaders.	Schools identify community leaders (i.e. priest) and discuss problems with them. Community leaders help to develop programs to decrease school dropout.
School Attendance	There is little communication between the school and families: families may be unaware that their child is not attending school.	Teachers meet with their students' family and older siblings to discuss problems with school attendance or performance.
Repetition	Whether students are promoted to the next grade or held back is determined by the school calendar rather than the ability of the student.	The needs of students are respected: those who are having difficulty are kept in their grade for an extra 2-3 months rather than promoting them to the next grade or having them repeat the whole year.
	There is no testing done to determine the needs or skills of students.	Schools administer tests to determine the academic strengths of students as well as areas that need development.
	Students who repeat a grade are exposed to the same curriculum.	Teachers modify the curriculum and assignments to meet the needs of students.
Individualized Attention	The whole class is given the same assignment to work on: regardless of ability. Older students are assigned the same work as their younger classmates.	The class is broken up into groups. Assignments are modified to reflect the abilities of the students in the group.
		Efforts are undertaken to prevent students from missing school (See Above).

Classroom environment	Teachers display indifference towards the students and their emotional and social needs.	Classrooms are child-centered. Teachers display affection for their students in many ways; i.e. personalized greetings and celebrate student birthdays.
Teaching Methodology/	The class schedule is highly regimented.	Recess is not held at a set time: it is held when the children begin to have difficulty concentrating.
	A rigid curriculum is adhered to.	Activities are designed to reflect the individual needs and interests of students. The class is broken in to groups. Assignments are given that address the needs of those in the group. Special workshops are held on topics that students express an interested in (i.e. carpentry).
	Emphasis is placed on the final product (i.e. correct answer); rather than the process. There is an intense focus on avoiding errors. Students are immediately corrected when they make mistakes.	Teachers use student errors as 'fodder' for learning; they realize that errors can be used in a way that contributes to learning.
	Class work consists primarily of written assignments.	Class work includes oral and written assignments.
Evaluation	Parents are not aware of how their children are evaluated.	Parents are informed of the areas that their child will be evaluated on prior to evaluations.
	Teachers receive little feedback on teaching methods from school administrators.	Regular evaluations of teaching methods are done and findings are followed up on.
Other	Children are provided with one meal at school (lunch).	Schools recognize that hungry children have difficulty learning. The school provides breakfast instead of lunch.
	Libraries are not used. Books are locked up.	Classes use the library often.