



Long Beach Unified School District
Office of Research, Planning and Evaluation

**Common Practices of
Highly Successful MAP²D Teachers**

Excerpted from the 2007-08 Evaluation Report

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Students taught by the most successful MAP²D teachers achieved the highest value-added gains in math.¹ We observed that the following practices were shared by these teachers:

- 1) Commitment to a structured and predictable learning process
- 2) Commitment to engaging every student every day
- 3) Maintaining high expectations by holding students accountable
- 4) Clear and precise Input/Modeling of problems and new concepts
- 5) Thorough preparation and organization
- 6) Embracing the MAP²D program design

Best Practice #1: Commitment to a Structured and Predictable Learning Process

The MAP²D lesson structure places a premium on time management and strong routines. In high-performing classrooms, students always knew what needed to be done next. Efficient routines enabled instruction to proceed at a vigorous pace, and successful teachers maintained a commitment to spending a limited amount of time on each activity. These teachers also tended to pay close attention to detail, such as how journal entries should look or what student teams should accomplish during guided practice.

Successful teachers recognized that effective management is the outcome of a *continuous conditioning process* that begins on day one and is sustained throughout the school year. This requires a vigilant commitment to building an environment in which all students actively participate in a rigorous, structured and predictable learning process each day.

¹ Student achievement was measured using **value added modeling** – a sophisticated statistical method that enables direct comparison of classrooms composed of students who differ in initial achievement levels. This is accomplished by comparing *actual performance* in the current year with *expected performance* based on prior test scores in the same subject area. The value-added approach isolates the gains in performance that are attributable to what the student actually learned in a given time period.

Successful teachers sought to create a trusting learning environment by actively promoting mutual assistance and positive reinforcement. One teacher explained, “I encourage and motivate students to take risks in class by providing a safe learning environment where every student's opinion is valued and every question or concern is addressed.” This is critical to success in MAP²D since students must feel confident working together in groups and secure when they demonstrate in front of the class.

Best Practice #2: Commitment to Engaging Every Student Every Day

One important distinction between classrooms was the extent to which teachers were committed to *actively engaging* all students, regardless of ability. In classrooms with lower achievement gains, struggling students were more likely to be overlooked, so long as they were not disruptive to the rest of the class, and teachers were more likely to call on the most confident students during discussion. Successful teachers demonstrated a commitment to engaging and assisting the least confident students. These teachers avoided excessive “teacher talk,” which creates space for students to disengage, and were more likely to act on information generated by whole-class checks for understanding.

Best Practice #3: Maintaining High Expectations by Holding Students Accountable

Highly successful teachers emphasized the importance of high expectations that are maintained by holding students accountable. When asked why he believed he was a good teacher, one high performing teacher said, “I’ll find a way – if the kid is low, I’ll find a way to get them high. I don’t accept things in their life as an excuse. It’s not a ticket to underperform.” These teachers also tended to be firm when it came to expectations for completing classroom work or homework. One said, “I am very strict and stern with the students and I hold them accountable for nearly everything and anything.”

Best Practice #4: Clear and Precise Modeling of Problems and New Concepts

Highly successful teachers exhibited confidence with the lesson material that was particularly evident during modeling. They tended to use clear language when modeling their thought process, demonstrating each step of the algorithm with clarity and precision. They provided precise procedural steps for students to copy or paste in their notebooks.

Best Practice #5: Thorough Preparation and Organization

Highly successful teachers were highly organized and delivered well-prepared lessons. As one said, “If I had to say what makes me a good teacher, my answer would be my organization.” A second explained, “For me, preparation, growth and a genuine desire to make a difference, are the three reasons why I think I am a good teacher.”

Several of these teachers presented lessons utilizing PowerPoint slides or pre-scripted transparencies they had developed. This teacher-generated content included procedural steps and sample problems for modeling and practice. As one explained, “Last year, every night before the lesson, I scripted it all out and had everything prepared, and now this year I just have to take it out look it over and tweak little things that I’ve changed.”

Best Practice #6: Embracing the Curriculum

Teachers whose students achieved the strongest value-added gains in math tended to implement the program with high fidelity. During interviews, it was clear they had embraced the program, or at least had made a conscious decision to make it work. They recognized that success depended on *believing in and selling the program* to students. Some of the most positive comments about the program were made by these teachers. One said, “This program that we’re using, it works for me. I wish I had it for my other subjects.” When asked what was most effective, another successful teacher said, “All of it is good – the pacing plan, the structure, modeling, collaboration, presenting, developing social skills – from top to bottom the program is very good. I really embrace it.”