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School Improvement for All: A How-To Guide for Doing the Right Work

By Sharon V. Kramer and Sarah Schuhl

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Study Guide

This study guide is a companion to the book *School Improvement for All: A How-To Guide for Doing the Right Work* by Sharon V. Kramer and Sarah Schuhl. *School Improvement for All* provides a framework for supporting schools that need to improve student achievement.

This guide is arranged by chapter, enabling readers to either work their way through the entire book or to focus on the specific topics addressed in a particular chapter. It can be used by individuals, small groups, or by an entire team to identify key points, raise questions for consideration, assess conditions in a particular school or district, and suggest steps that might be taken to promote a healthy school culture.

We thank you for your interest in this book, and we hope this guide is a useful tool in your efforts to create a healthy culture in your school or district.

Chapter 1

Charting a Course Focused on Learning

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1. What relationship do first-order changes and second-order changes have?

2. On page 9, the authors mention four qualities leadership team members should possess. In your experience, which of these qualities is most valuable, and why?

3. Does your team regularly discuss the *why* and *how* of your school's improvement? If not, what can you do to encourage regular discussions of your school's progress?

4. With your team, describe three schoolwide goals and three classroom goals you have. Why might these goals be crucial for student success?

Chapter 2

Transforming Culture and Structures

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1. Have you ever experienced a time when your school culture was toxic or negative? What did you do to change your mindset that contributed to that culture? How can you prevent toxic or negative cultures in the future?

2. Why is it important for teachers to work in collaborative teams?

3. Why should schools often celebrate students and staff members?

4. What types of rituals does your school or classroom participate in? What types of rituals could your school or classroom create to inspire more students?

Chapter 3

Focusing on 21st Century Learners

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1. On page 41, the authors mention that "students of color, from poverty, and from second-language homes are often over-represented in low-performing classes and are seldom enrolled in honors courses." Do you find this to be true in your school? How can you, as an educator, raise the bar for *all* students?

2. Why must educators *reach* students before they can *teach* them?

3. Have you ever focused more on your students as a whole rather than individually? How did you fix that problem then? How would you approach this differently now?

4. In your own words, what is the difference between *teacher-directed learning* and *student-directed learning*?

Chapter 4

Establishing a Common Guaranteed and Viable Curriculum

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1. On page 55, the authors mention three types of curriculum in modern schools. What are the differences between these types of curriculum? What are the similarities?

2. How can you create a stronger connection between teachers to increase the learning of *all* students?

3. Describe how your team determines which standards are the most essential for students to learn.

4. Describe how teachers might plan for unexpected bumps in learning along the way.

Chapter 5

Creating and Using Common Assessments

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1. In a collaborative team, describe how teachers can avoid measuring students based on common assessments to improve student learning, not just measure it.

2. What must teachers do to ensure continual learning for all students after assessments?

3. Emulating the best education team a school could have, how might teachers work together in a collaborative team to define the rigor necessary for student success with each standard assessment?

4. How does your teacher team currently assess students' proficiency with each learning standard? After reading this chapter, what things might you and your team change about this assessment process for the greater good of each student?

Chapter 6

Planning Meaningful and Effective Instruction

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1. In your own words, name and describe the nine categories of instructional strategies that affect student achievement.

2. Do your students use the five elements of effective cooperative learning within the classroom? How can you, as an educator, make sure they take advantage of *all* elements?

3. How does your team currently determine the best lessons and homework assignments? What can you and your team do to design better quality lessons and homework assignments in the future?

4. Why is student self-assessment an important step during a unit? How can you incorporate more peer reviews and peer-based learning within your classroom?

Chapter 7
Embracing Accountability

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1. In a group, describe the importance of leadership accountability and how it plays a critical part in creating a culture focused on student learning.

2. In this chapter, the authors mention that effective schools have clarified systems that address students' academic and behavioral needs. What clarified systems has your school implemented? What systems, if any, do you think your school should implement that it hasn't?

3. How can leaders within a school eliminate redundant teacher work? With your team, describe what would help you, as educators, improve your classroom success.

4. Why do you think it's important to hold students accountable for their own success?