

2011 Middle School Conference

General Sessions

Keynote: The Magical Madness of Middle School

David Shepard, presenter

This presentation looks at the laughable, lovable, ludicrous situations and stories that make middle schools the hormonal melting pot that they are. Drawn from over 25 years of personal experiences, the antidotes shared will focus on knowing the children we serve and meeting their developmental needs; no matter how bizarre they may be. You may end up laughing and crying at the same time.

As educators, we continually look for ways to “control” our students. This session does not deal “with” them, but with “us”. What can teachers do to make their classrooms more user friendly? By taking a look at ourselves through the use of a “teacher behavior” survey, all participants will review their own strategies in a humorous non-threatening manner.

Afternoon Feature Session

Rules of Engagement, Winning the War against Student Apathy

David Shepard, presenter

What do you do when faced with the blank stares, the loud groans, the daydreaming minds, and the sleepy nods. Exceptional educators realized years ago that today’s youth must be actively engaged in learning. This program will outline and demonstrate 10 – 15 strategies to differentiate classroom instruction order to change passive sponges into active learners. Participant will leave with many “I’ll try this on Monday” ideas. Teams of Teachers and Administrators will benefit from attendance at this session.

Breakout Session

Honoring the Voices of All Students: Achievement through Literacy and Character Development

Deb Saunders, Literacy Specialist

This is a highly interactive session where participants will explore multicultural literature and participate in character development/literacy techniques that are supported by graphic organizers they may use in their classrooms and team meetings. Participants will experience an identity awareness technique that supports students in applying the comprehension strategy, making connections, and a perspective taking technique that supports them in learning point of view in their reading.

Differentiated Instruction

Vickie Wagner, University of Notre Dame

Differentiated Instruction (DI) is a pro-active strategy: recognizing students vary in background knowledge, readiness, and preferences in learning and interests. This presentation will provide different avenues for students to acquire content. Proven strategies that can be used immediately will be shared.

Response to Instruction: Improving academic achievement one student at a time

Dr. Andrew Melin, Valparaiso Community Schools’ Superintendent

The most effective way for schools to improve academic achievement is by utilizing the Response to Instruction process to differentiate instruction and meet individual student needs. Rtl can be a time-consuming process for educators, but the process is essential in holding students and parents accountable for academic improvement. A specific and proven Rtl process will be shared with session participants to make implementation as user-friendly as possible.

Working with Generation Z

Vickie Wagner, University of Notre Dame

This session is about preparing students for their future, not our past. How are we going to attract, engage and retain the upcoming generation of students? How can we better address the educational needs and expectations of these new, tech-connected, parallel-processing students?

Rtl Framework, One District's Journey of Implementation

Ann Hofmeier, Aptakisic-Tripp CCSD #102, Buffalo Grove

This session will describe how Rtl is organized and implemented in an Illinois K-8 school district. The team will focus on defining philosophy, stakeholders, resources, funding and offer their District's experiences as a guide for other districts to follow. Participants will learn from the challenges and success one district has made as they have journeyed through the process. Attendees will leave the session with a clear idea of the first steps to take in defining their district's plan for implementing Rtl.

The Road to Inclusion: Freeway or No Way

David Shepard, NMSA presenter

Collaboration, consultation or inclusion, no matter what you call it, our attempt to include as many special needs children as possible into the mainstream of school life has become a necessary topic of discussion. This session is designed to offer some basic strategies for schools and districts moving in this direction. Planning, piloting, and identification of pitfalls will be covered during this session. Practical ideas for implementation will be the focal point. Come prepared to share how your school/district deals with this issue.

Motivating Math Students with Projects Using Different Assessment Methods

Angela Buck, Kankakee Valley Middle School

Participants will leave with hands-on activities, alternative assessment ideas and projects that motivate students. Assessments may vary in length of time required, number of standards covered and levels of difficulty. This is a fun way for students to take an active approach in their learning. There is a need to differentiate instruction to meet the needs of all students.

Strategies to Boost Motivation in the Language Arts Classroom

Jodi Tobias, Kankakee Valley Middle School

This presentation will discuss the unique characteristics of middle school students and explore a variety of activities that help meet these needs and motivate these students in the language arts classroom. Participants will examine the educational and social needs of middle level students and explore hands-on examples of activities that are conducive to student motivation.

It's an I-Learn Year

Jamie Doane, Thomas Jefferson Middle School

This presentation will demonstrate how digital tools and educators can work collaboratively and successfully to create differentiated educational experiences and opportunities that encourage lifelong learning. Multiple websites and social networking sites that have been successful in the classroom, and in addition, the presenter's own EDLINE website, will be shared. Current students will speak about their experiences of combining education with technology practices.