



*Unfinished Learning
Community of Practice
Session 1*

**6-12 ELA
January 20, 2021**



Meet Your Facilitator



Ali Wilson, Ed.D.

- Philadelphia, PA
- Assistant Professor
- In my free time, I enjoy “snacky walks” and playing “tea party”

Connecting to our Standards

The Nebraska Teacher and Principal Performance Standards (2020)

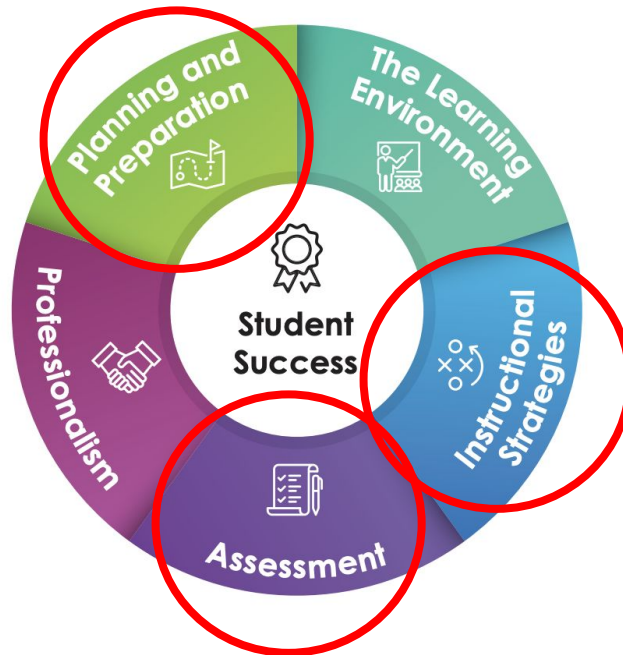
“A framework that provides a common language for what it means to be an effective teacher or effective principal in Nebraska”



Performance Standards for Teachers

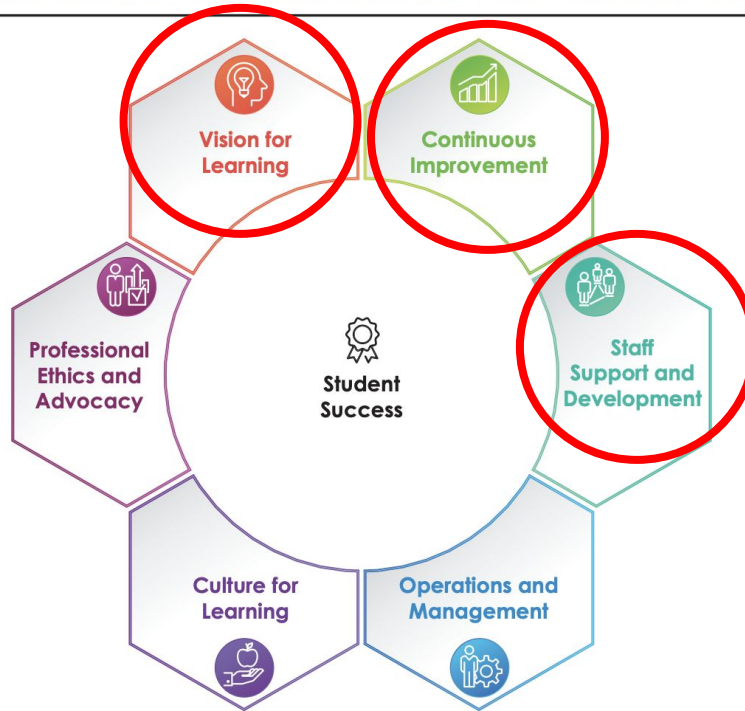


PERFORMANCE STANDARDS FOR TEACHERS



Performance Standards for Principals

PERFORMANCE STANDARDS FOR PRINCIPALS



If you see this image...



Our Norms



We ask that you please:

- 1) Keep your camera on when possible!
- 2) Stay on mute unless you are speaking
- 3) Trust the process
- 4) Take a strengths-based approach

Access Today's Note Catcher!



<https://tinyurl.com/NDEULSession1>



Google Docs

Copy document

Would you like to make a copy of **NDE Day 1_6-12_Notecatcher?**

Make a copy



Today's Goals and Objectives



- **Examine** the research base that informs our approach to equitable Unfinished Learning
- **Learn** Tools to Reframe Deficit-Based Thinking

Essential Question



What does **equitable instruction**
for students with **Unfinished**
Learning look and sound like?

Meet Sarah

- **Read “Sarah’s Story”**
- **Highlight** each teacher action

Sarah’s Story

Sarah and her family moved to Omaha, Nebraska, from Arkansas in 2007 when Sarah was five and a half. Sarah started kindergarten at her new school halfway through the year, and she loved coming to school and arrived every day excited to learn. Her favorite part of the day was the teacher read-aloud and she often raised her hands to answer questions about what was happening in the book. During the end of the year benchmarks, her teacher was concerned because Sarah was behind her peers in mastering the foundational skills, and she did not yet know all her letters. When her teacher spoke with her colleagues, the reading specialist told her it was likely because Sarah moved halfway through the year, and she’d likely develop that skill over time. However, Sarah continued to show a need with phonemic awareness and decoding, as the years progressed. Noticing Sarah’s reading challenges and wanting her to feel more successful, her 3rd and 4th grade teachers at Brightwood Elementary School made sure to give Sarah lower-Lexile versions of the texts being assigned in class and also provided her with additional time on the school’s computer-based reading program during her literacy block.

When assessed in 5th grade, Sarah was determined to be at a level L, reading approximately three grade-levels below her peers. When she read aloud, she did not articulate many simple words correctly, and her reading was very choppy. When the teacher asked her questions about the text, Sarah often got the answers incorrect, or didn’t answer the question at all. Her teachers wanted to ensure Sarah could read by the time she got to middle school, so for the next two years, Sarah was pulled out of the second half of core ELA to receive the school’s reading intervention. During this time, she worked on a computer-based reading program with a reading specialist teacher.

Sarah is now in eighth grade at Brightwood Middle School. She is trending towards earning Ds and Fs on her end of year report card and feels a sense of dread about the academic demands she will face as a high school freshman, and . She is reading at a 3rd grade level according to the school’s leveled reading program. Sarah received intensive support from well-intentioned teachers over the last five years of her education, so why isn’t she ready?

Let's Discuss!



In breakout groups, consider:

- What **actions** did the teachers take to support Sarah?
- What about “Sarah’s Story” feels **familiar** to you? How/when have you seen this play out in your school?





Why isn't Sarah ready?

Why isn't Sarah ready?



- Sarah was a striving reader
- Adults wanted to help Sarah
 - They **wanted** her to feel successful
 - They **believed** that Sarah needed to work below grade-level (or at her “instructional level”) to experience success

Why isn't Sarah ready?



- Sarah was **pulled out** of grade-level content for reading intervention
- Sarah received push-in support **instead of** engaging with core instruction
- Sarah was given **lower level texts** and often lacked access to grade-level content

Why is this approach problematic?



“Giving those students lower-level work to help them catch up — or, in the more extreme version, asking them to repeat an entire grade — has **good intentions** and a certain logic.

It’s also largely ineffective.”

-When Students Go Back to School, Too Many Will Start the Year Behind.
Here’s How to Catch Them Up — in Real Time
Steiner & Weisberg, April 2020

What happened to Sarah?



Good intentions



A Focus on Remediation



Inequitable Instruction

So then...



How do we **change** Sarah's story?

How do we change the story for **all of our students** with **unfinished learning**?

Inequitable Instruction



A lack of ***equal access*** to a quality education for certain groups of students.

Specifically, a lack of access to at-grade-level content.

The impact of this?



Inequitable instruction in K-12 leads to inequitable access to **post-secondary** opportunities.

Research tells us...



- **40%** of college students take at least one remedial course
- A disproportionate percentage of those students are students of color:
 - **66%** of Black college students
 - **53%** of Latinx college students

(TNTP, 2018)

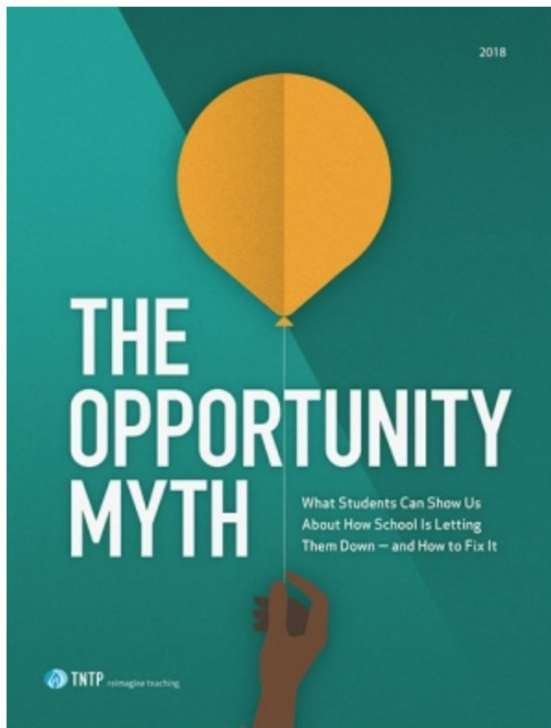
The problem with this?



“First-time bachelor’s degree candidates who take a single remedial course are **74 percent** more likely to drop out.”

(TNTP, 2018)

Why is this happening?



How can so many students be graduating from high school **unprepared** to meet their goals for college and careers?

(TNTP, 2018)

They Took a Closer Look at What Students Were Doing

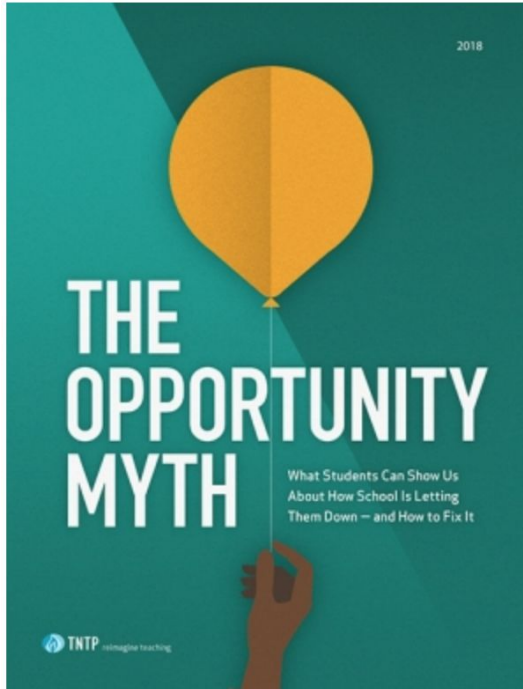


Students
succeeded on
71%
of their classroom
assignments.

They met grade-level
standards on
17%
of those same
assignments.

(TNTP, 2018)

Their Conclusion: 4 Key Recommendations



1. Consistently provide grade-level assignments
2. Provide strong instruction
3. Deeply engage all students
4. Have high expectations

Opportunity Myth Snapshots



- **Count off by 6**
- **3 min:**
 - **Review** your assigned snapshot from the Opportunity Myth and write a one-sentence summary
- **5 min:**
 - Share your summary with your group and discuss what it means for your work

Let's Discuss!



What **impact** does this research tell us about how we should approach **unfinished learning**?



The Opportunity Myth: In One Sentence



“The ‘**achievement gap,**’ isn’t inevitable. It’s baked into the system, resulting from the decisions adults make, **consciously** and **unconsciously**, about **which students get what resources...** It’s a **gap of our own design.**”

- TNTP, Opportunity Myth



What do you think of when you hear the word “**intervention**”?



A Closer Look at “Intervention”



The word **Intervention**...

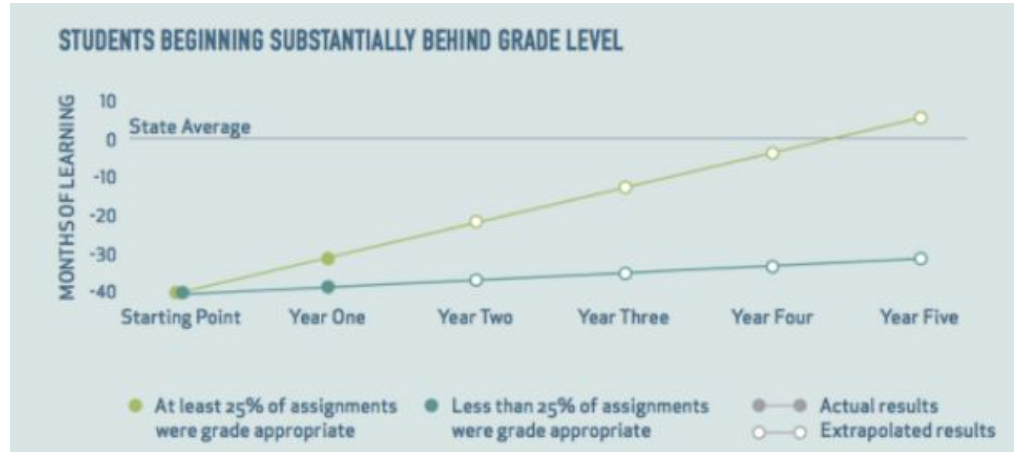
....comes from Latin “**intervenire**” meaning “to come between” and the verb “**intervenire**” means “to jump in the middle of something, to interfere”

Is this the approach we want to take for students who have unfinished learning?

What's the Problem with Intervention As We Know It?



- **Categorical data** (standardized assessments or disability status), not diagnostic data, are typically used to determine placement into intervention
- **Adolescent reading profiles** are complex and varied
- **“One-size-fits-all” model** does not meet the needs of students with unfinished learning



Let's Shift Our Thinking



FROM:

“Johnny **can't** read multisyllabic words, so let's **pull him** from his 7th grade ELA class to receive intervention on foundational reading skills.”

TO:

“Johnny is **still learning** to read and put multisyllabic words together, so let's **build in** supports so he can still access today's 7th grade-level complex text.”

Re-defining Intervention



If our ultimate goal of “intervention” is to ensure each student can successfully engage with **grade-level content** and work towards mastery of **grade-level standards**, let’s redefine what we mean by this term.

Intervention = a *continuum of supports*.

This Support is “Just Right!”



Sometimes, a student...

- won't need **any** support
- will need **some** support
- will need **a lot** of support

Intervention is a continuum of supports → our job is to figure out the “just right” amount at the “just right” times!

What might “intervention” look like for Sarah?



- **Read** the updated case study, which describes Sarah’s experience in her 8th grade ELA class
- **In groups**, work through the questions in your note catcher, which include:
 - What scaffolds does the teacher provide for all students? For Sarah specifically?
 - What does this tell us about what intervention as a “continuum of supports” might look like, particularly for students with **unfinished learning**?

Let's Debrief



- What **scaffolds** does the teacher provide for all students? For Sarah specifically?
- What does this tell us about what intervention as a “**continuum of supports**” might look like in the classroom, particularly for students with unfinished learning?

Key Points: Redefining Intervention



Do:

- Ensure all students with unfinished learning have access to daily **grade-level instruction**
- Provide **core-aligned supports** to increase access to and success with grade-level instruction
- Use **formative assessment** data to identify specific student needs

Don't:

- Swap out the grade-level text for a **lower level text**
- Use core instruction time for **supplemental or intensive** instruction
- Use **categorical data** to identify specific needs of students and/or to place into intervention

Our Sequence for Addressing Unfinished Learning



- **Mindset:** Identify how to think and talk about students with unfinished learning
- **Formative Assessment:** Identify tools to better understand students' strength and needs in the classroom
- **Support Knowledge/Vocabulary:** Identify strategies to support access to grade-level instruction
- **Support Fluency/Decoding:** Identify foundational skill barriers that influence access to core instruction & learn strategies to support access

Tapping into the “Unconscious”



“If we want to offer more equal and dynamic learning experiences to all children, we will need to address both **pedagogical skill** and **deficit thinking** at the same time.”

Adair Colegrove McManus (2017)

What are some actions we can take
right now?

**Let's develop an understanding of what
equitable instruction for unfinished
learning **sounds like.****

What is Deficit-Based Language?



Language that frames students or families in a **lacking or “less than”** state that is seen as **permanent** and **their fault** can impact expectations about what those students and families value and are capable of.

Why is this so dangerous?



Language shapes:

- The way we *think*
- The way we *behave*

Identifying Deficit-Based Language

- **Read** the Common Examples of Deficit-Based Language

- **Chat:**

- Which have you heard the most in your schools?
- How might this be problematic?

| Common Examples of Deficit-Based Language | |
|---|---|
| "You don't know my kids." | "I have all struggling students." |
| "They can't do that." | "Our IEP students can't..." |
| "She is never going to get it." | "That is my low group." |
| "He needs an easier task." | "He can't focus for that long." |
| "They don't have help at home." | "These students are below grade level." |
| "My kids aren't motivated." | "Those kids have IEPs—the Special Ed teacher deals with them" |
| "She is an English Language Learner, so of course she can't_____" | |



How does this connect to Equitable Instruction?

“Deficit views of historically marginalized children, their families, and communities because of race, class, language, and culture **persist in education conversations and research** (Valencia, 2010)...

Deficit thinking implies that students **‘lack’ knowledge and experiences** expected by the dominant group.”

-National Council of Supervisors of Mathematics and TODOS: Mathematics for ALL, 2016

What can we do about it?



We need to
shift our
thinking
and
language...

| FROM | TO |
|-------------------|--------------------|
| Fixed mindset → | Growth mindset |
| Assumption → | Inquiry |
| Blame → | Ownership |
| Generalizations → | Specificity |
| Cultural bias → | Cultural relevance |

Embodying an Asset-Based Mindset

- **Review** the “Reframing Deficit Language Toolkit”

- **Discuss:**

- What do you notice about how the deficit language is **reframed** in each example?
- What **impact** does this reframing have?

| Reframing Deficit Language & Mindsets | |
|---|---|
| Deficit Language | Reframed Language & Mindsets |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• our students can't... | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• some of our students can't yet... |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• EL students can't...• EFLs can't... | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• name specific students and the data showing exactly what they have not yet mastered or are challenged by• we need to create more opportunities for our ELs to...• how might we better help our SWD with...? |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• my students are different... | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• some students have unique and profound challenges, but all students can learn and be successful with grade-level work with the right supports |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• poor readers / low readers• slow group• low group | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• students working toward reading proficiency• students with unfinished learning in math• students not yet reading and writing on grade level |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• he can't stay focused | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• I haven't yet successfully engaged the student• I haven't yet supported the student to build stamina for... |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• these students don't have the knowledge necessary to... | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• all students have some relevant knowledge and experience• how can we find the relevant experience and connect to it? |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• students aren't motivated | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• we have not yet successfully motivated students to...• how might we change our instruction to engage all? |

—from the work of Tonya Ward Singer

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What does Equitable Instruction **sound** like?



Imagine that you just spoke with a colleague who has been using lower-level texts in the class. When you asked why, your colleague said, “**He’s an SPED student,**” and offered no other response.

How might you answer?

Sharing Your Knowledge

Key moves for reframing deficit language:

1. **Listen** and **notice** when it happens
2. Ask a **probing question**
3. **Share** your journey as a learner
4. Provide an **example** of how to reframe the language

Key Moves for Reframing Deficit Language

We can practice addressing deficit-based mindsets by:

1. **Listening and noticing** when it happens
2. **Asking questions** to understand what the person means and encouraging them to see the situation differently:
 - What do you mean by...? Can you be more specific?
 - What else could be going on here?
 - What's another way of thinking about this situation?
 - What could we be doing differently? What opportunities and supports do we need to create for students to be more successful?
 - What does the student/family bring that we can use and build on?
3. **Responding** with "I used to think/feel... Then I found out... Now I know/think/feel..." statements that push back with empathy.
4. **Providing an example** of how to reframe the language with a growth mindset, specificity, ownership, inquiry, and/or cultural relevance

Supporting an Asset-Based Mindset



An example conversation:

1. Ask a probing question

“I noticed you said the student was a SPED student, which is why he received lower level texts. Can you tell me more about that? What are you noticing he needs support with?”

2. Share your journey as a learner and advocate for assets-based thinking

“I wanted to share something I just learned called “The Opportunity Myth” about granting all students access to grade-level text, and I learned that the way we talk about our students impacts the instruction we provide... It turns out that...”

3. Provide an example of how to reframe the language

“What might happen if we thought about this student as one who is approaching proficiency...how might this change the supports we offer him?”

Wrapping Up

Reflect

- What **idea or key takeaway** is most resonating with you from today's learning?

OR

- What is **one specific action** you plan to take as a result of today's learning?



Next Steps

Before our next session...

Complete the self
assessment and be ready
to share your findings!

[https://tinyurl.com/
ELASelfAssessment](https://tinyurl.com/ELASelfAssessment)



NDE 6-12 ELA Community of Practice Self-Assessment

Part I: Mindsets & Beliefs

1. My teachers and staff demonstrate a growth mindset in terms of our all of our students' abilities, including students who struggle. *In this context, growth mindset means that a student's academic ability can be improved through effort and is not a fixed quality.*
 - a. 4 = to a great extent (more than 75% of your teachers and staff)
 - b. 3 = to a partial extent (50-75% of your teachers and staff)
 - c. 2 = to a limited extent (25-49% of your teachers and staff)
 - d. 1 = little to no extent (less than 25% of your teachers and staff)

Provide evidence for your response.

2. My teachers ensure that all of our students, including students who struggle, are taught with at-grade level, rigorous content.
 - a. 4 = to a great extent (more than 75% of your teachers and staff)
 - b. 3 = to a partial extent (50-75% of your teachers and staff)
 - c. 2 = to a limited extent (25-49% of your teachers and staff)
 - d. 1 = little to no extent (less than 25% of your teachers and staff)

Provide evidence for your response.

Looking Ahead



| Session 1 | Session 2 | Session 3 | Session 4 |
|--|---|--|--|
| Defining our Equity-Based Approach to Addressing Unfinished Teaching and Learning in ELA | Using Data to Assess Comprehension and Determine Next Steps for Unfinished Learning | Supports for Reading and Understanding Complex Texts Part I: Vocabulary + Knowledge + Engagement | Supporting for Reading and Understanding, Complex Texts, Part III: Foundational Skills and Fluency |

Thank You!



Please give us your feedback:

<https://tinyurl.com/CoPSession1Survey>