

Professional Development to Implement the KOI with Integrity: A Coordinator's Perspective

by Susan Brady

The intent of the Kingore Observation Inventory (KOI) is two-fold, not only as a screening tool for the identification of gifted potential but also to improve classroom practice. Quality professional development (PD) is the cornerstone of effective implementation of an initiative. This article provides a sample format for PD for the KOI.

IDENTIFY THE AUDIENCE

The intended audience is both teachers and administrators. The KOI empowers teachers with a common language and format for identifying gifted potential. Teachers learn to enrich the learning environment for all children and to differentiate instruction for students with gifted potential. However, without a basic foundation of knowledge and understanding, it is difficult for administrators to monitor the implementation of the initiative. To ensure implementation and administration of the KOI with integrity, it is important that administrators be a part of the PD sessions.

FOCUS ON OBJECTIVES

<i>KOI Professional Development</i>		
<i>Knowledge</i>	<i>Attitude</i>	<i>Skill</i>
Define the categories and characteristics of gifted potential as defined by the KOI.	Embrace the power of the inventory as an identification tool and a means for changing teaching practice toward understanding student potential.	Provide activities to discern gifted potential.
Know the KOI categories.	Appreciate that high ability can manifest itself in both positive and negative ways. Believe the KOI will flush out potential in underserved populations.	Develop differentiated activities that nurture and encourage gifted behaviors.
Explain the procedures and protocols for the KOI.	Understand that the reliability and validity of the instrument is dependent upon implementation with integrity.	Observe student behaviors and note evidence of characteristics.
Know the resources and learning experiences available for support of the implementation of the KOI.	Believe that enriching classroom learning environments for all students is a necessity if we truly seek to reach high potentials, particularly among underrepresented populations.	Use resources and learning experiences to develop differentiated lessons for curriculum integration.

It is imperative to identify the desired outcomes and learning objectives for the intended audiences. One format is the Knowledge/Attitudes/Skills chart above, adapted from Killion's (2008) model. The chart focuses specifically on the concepts of the KOI and how they impact identification, teaching, and learning. Just as educators identify the concepts and understanding that we expect students to possess as a result of instruction, the same concept applies to professional development. "What do I want the participants to walk out of the door knowing?"

- Knowledge: The conceptual understanding of information, theories, principles, and research
- Attitude: Beliefs about the value of particular information or strategies
- Skill: Strategies and processes to apply knowledge

DELIVER PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT WITH INTEGRITY

This article is based on one or more group face-to-face PD sessions and includes a cycle of learning, processing, applying, and reflecting. The presenter is responsible for accommodating adult learner characteristics and presenting content that addresses their needs. When planning PD, design a variety of activities for integrating multicultural education, accommodating various learning styles, setting appropriate instructional pace, expanding levels of learning experience, and enriching content in relation to goals. (Dettmer & Landram, 1997).

Highlight the ease with which KOI techniques and activities can be integrated. Many examples from Chapter 6 can be easily adapted or modified to engage participants during the session. Modeling the activities reinforces the benefits of high-level, open-ended tasks and provides the presenter with the opportunity to strengthen participants' knowledge of the seven KOI categories: Advanced Language, Analytical Thinking, Meaning Motivation, Perspective, Sense of Humor, Sensitivity, and Accelerated Learning. Participants make connections by generating ideas for integration of the sample activities into their curriculum and setting. Participants provide examples of a behavior that might be evidence of gifted potential.

Alphabet Time (Advanced Language and Accelerated Learning)

Provide handouts or the KOI book for reference. Divide participants into seven groups. Each group is assigned one of the seven categories to explore in depth. Each group then becomes the expert on that category to present to the other attendees. Next, to simulate the Anecdotal Folder process, participants view a short video of an interview or conversation with a gifted child. Each group uses sticky notes to record specific behaviors and/or statements made by the child as evidence of gifted potential or Accelerated Learning. Groups place the sticky notes on the Alphabet Time posters that correspond to specific behaviors.

Venn Diagram (Analytical Thinking)

Expose participants to complex thinking by adding more circles to the Venn. Begin comparing a nickel and dime. Then add a quarter. Finally add a penny. This simple activity lends itself to

any group size. Vary the complexity by the number and kind of items you choose to compare. Challenge participants to generate curricular topics or concepts to compare and contrast, such as:

- Division, multiplication, addition, subtraction;
- Historical documents (Declaration of Independence, Magna Carta, Bill of Rights); or
- Animal groups (amphibians, birds, fish, invertebrates, mammals, reptiles).

Encourage participants to compare and contrast the KOI behaviors in general as well as underrepresented populations: general, culturally and/or linguistically different, and low-income populations. Participants use a three-way Venn diagram to note the behavioral similarities and differences among the three populations. Finally, each group synthesizes the information to generate a conclusion.

Question That! (Meaning Motivation)

This interactive activity encourages participants to think and question. For example, participants write questions for the answer *blue*. They write their question on a sticky note and place it on a whiteboard or other flat surface. Discuss ways to connect this activity of a topic of study using concept words, locations, people, or numbers related to the topic.

Perspective Map (Perspective)

Use the Perspective Map as an activity to look at the varying perspectives of implementation of the KOI. Place the topic, Kingore Observation Inventory, in the middle of the map surrounded by the perspectives of the child, teacher, administrator, and parent. Discuss questions that each might ask about the KOI. Invite ideas for using a Perspective Map in classrooms.

How Does It End? (Sense of Humor)

Energize participants with the How Does It End? activity. Ask them to complete the sayings with KOI related connections, such as: *When in Rome... translate the KOI into Italian!*

- *The squeaky wheel gets...*
- *Better late than...*

Personal Analogies (Sensitivity)

Prompt participants to create personal analogies to an item they pull from their purse, tote, or wallet. Provide a sentence stem and ask them to write their response on a sticky note. Later, participants develop curriculum connections with analogies.

- *Being an educator is like (the item selected) because....*
- *Being a student or parent is like (the item selected) when...*

HONOR ADULT LEARNING STYLES

Ensure that sessions are personalized, differentiated, practical, and engaging. Set the stage for a growth mindset (Dweck, 2010). Encourage risk-taking as you model the type of

learning environment to promote in classrooms by providing direct, concrete experiences so participants can apply the learned information.

Many attendees believe they lack the background knowledge, expertise, and confidence to present the information to others. An engaging strategy is a gallery walk. Use the Alphabet Time expert groups discussed earlier. One member of each team stays with their chart as the presenter. Small groups rotate to each of the seven presenters to learn about one category. The presenter defines the behavior, mentions four or five key characteristics, and describes a student behavior that would be indicative of gifted potential. Rotate presenters throughout the activity.

Embed informal assessment techniques to discern if participants are grasping the identified knowledge, attitudes, and skills related to the KOI. An idea for application and informal assessment is to have participants list specific student behaviors that are evidence of the various characteristics of the KOI behaviors. “What might a student do or say that would be evidence of being verbally proficient or having an extensive vocabulary (Advanced Language)?” “In what ways might a student exhibit intense concern for human issues (Sensitivity)?” Employ varied structures for interaction among participants, such as discussion, dialogue, and collaboration. It is important to include activities and extensions that encourage them to apply the processes they are expected to use. For example, during the session, provide teachers with time to:

- Explore the various KOI activities and identify those most appropriate for integration within the curriculum.
- Create a repository of teacher ideas to post on the district share drive.

Systematically, devote time for participants to pause, reflect, and note. This process deepens understanding, allows for individual reflection and collaboration, and provides participants their own summary of the training. It also models behaviors to be reinforced in the classroom.

- Provide participants with a graphic organizer for summarizing and reflecting upon each learning segment.
- Encourage participation and engagement through collaborative structures.

SEEK PARTICIPANT FEED-BACK

Acquire comments from the participants regarding the session(s). One method is an Exit Ticket with sentence stems that attendees complete, similar to these sample stems with participants' responses.

- *I really like...*
 - *The flexibility, ease of use, limited preparation of materials, and how the activities fit our curriculum.*
 - *The fact that we include ALL students in activities.*

- *An idea that is new to me...*
 - *Is that Sense of Humor can be an aspect of giftedness.*
 - *Is all the wonderful activities Dr. Kingore has created to identify students.*
- *I wish others understood...*
 - *The discrepancy between potential and opportunity—an important issue.*
 - *The importance of enriching our top tier students.*

Ultimately, teachers realize their value in the identification process. Provide a forum for teachers to share their successes including student work, lesson plans and ideas for the activities and changes in their teaching practices as well as shifts in their philosophy.

- “KOl activities have become a part of our daily schedule and completely changed the way I teach all day. Our guided reading centers have become KOl activities. As a teacher, a great part about implementing KOl activities is that the activities are low-prep.” Becky Butler, First Grade Teacher
- “The need to look within a clustered-filled classroom of students with average, below average, low and special education students seemed to be an unnecessary task. Upon implementation of just a few KOl activities, specific student responses were noticed immediately.” Donna Young, Third Grade Teacher.

PROVIDE FOLLOW-UP

Follow-up is critical if participants are expected to implement their learning with integrity. Technology enhances the opportunity for follow up through email, discussion forums, shared documents, learning management systems, voice and video calling, instant messaging, and more.

The building administrator’s role is to reinforce learning, structure time for collaboration and monitor implementation. Provide administrators with tools such as a document for use during walk-throughs to define what to look for when visiting classrooms. Suggest that administrators ask to see the teacher’s log or lesson plans incorporating the KOl activities. Administrators might collect grade level meeting notes as evidence of discussion and planning. Finally, administrators might use one of the modeled activities as a way to present information during a staff meeting.

Teachers appreciate time to collaborate with others who are implementing the KOl, and technology produces many opportunities for non-traditional collaboration. Some schools use electronic platforms to integrate the KOl activities into their on-line curriculum maps. Make a share-drive available with sample lessons and activities created and implemented by teachers. Produce tutorials to place on discussion forums or learning management systems. Create an implementation rubric to guide self-assessment on the level of implementation. Produce sample calendars as models for a schedule. If time permits, develop these tools with participants during the actual training session.

The coordinator of gifted programming is often responsible for the logistics of administration. Provide sample timelines summarizing the main tasks. Suggest that the coordinator gather reflections from the implementation of the process and make adjustments for future trainings and/or administration of the instrument.

SCHEDULE PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

The amount of time needed for professional development depends upon the amount of content to be presented and the time allowed for application and idea generation. Basic training with minimal time for exploring materials and resources can be provided in a half-day session. Extended time is warranted to incorporate more opportunities for processing and application. For example, the delivery described above would certainly take one full day. Allot an additional two to four hours for teachers to collaborate in grade level teams to evaluate various activities and determine those to include. Designate teacher leaders to develop simple curriculum maps for use during the administration window. These maps might illustrate connections to academic standards, connection to skills being taught, and references to the KOI book. If structured efficiently, mapping the activities might be accomplished in one day. Providing practical, curriculum-related resources for those who are administering the KOI heightens the level of implementation.

SUMMARY/CLOSING

“Increasing the effectiveness of professional learning is the leverage point with the greatest potential for strengthening and refining the day-to-day performance of educators.” Learningforward, Professional Learning Association

Professional development is more than a one-day workshop. Identifying learning targets, knowing the content, honoring adult learners, and providing authentic, engaging activities all lead to effective training. The quality of implementation of an initiative such as the Kingore Observation Inventory is dependent upon many factors, and professional development with integrity is a vital component.

REFERENCES

- Dettmar, P. & Landrum, M. (1997). *Staff development: The key to effective gifted education programs*. Waco, TX: Prufrock Press.
- Dweck, C. (2010). Giving students meaningful work: Even geniuses work hard. *Educational Leadership*, 68(1), 16-20
- Killion, J. (2008). *Assessing impact: Evaluating staff development*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin.
- Standards for Professional Learning (n.d.). Retrieved April 10, 2015 from:
<http://learningforward.org/standards#.VS5tI6b0gWM>