



School Leadership: Beyond the Walkthrough

A Presentation of the National Reading Technical Assistance Center Based on the NRTAC Leadership Institute in Phoenix, Arizona on Instructional Rounds



Presented by:

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Session Objectives


- Clarify the concept of the Instructional Core
- Understand the central role of Academic Task
- Introduce the practice of Instructional Rounds



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Agenda

- What is the Instructional Core?
- Why is Task important?
- What are Instructional Rounds?
- Why should educational leaders consider doing Instructional Rounds?
- How are Instructional Rounds implemented?




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Change, Hope, & Persistence . . .


Although social change cannot come overnight, we must always work as though it were a possibility in the morning.

Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.



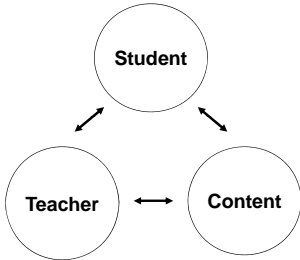


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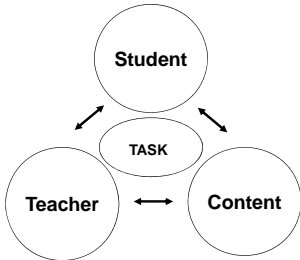
What is the Instructional Core?



The Instructional Core

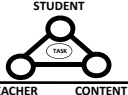


The Instructional Core



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The Instructional Core



Principle #1: Increases in student learning occur only as a consequence of improvements in the level of content, teachers' knowledge and skill, and student engagement.

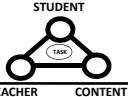
Principle #2: If you change one element of the instructional core, you have to change the other two.

Principle #3: If you can't see it in the core, it's not there.



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The Instructional Core
continued




Principle #4: Task predicts performance.

Principle #5: The real accountability system is in the tasks that students are asked to do.

Principle #6: We learn to do the work by doing the work.

Principle #7: Description before analysis, analysis before prediction, prediction before evaluation.



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PRINCIPLE #4
Why is Task important?



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The TASK Predicts Performance

What determines what students know and are able to do is not what the curriculum says they are supposed to do, or even what the teacher thinks he or she is asking students to do.

City, Elmore, Friarman & Teitel (2009), p. 30





Look Down!

When observing classroom learning . . .



LOOK

at the top of the students' desks rather than at the teacher in the front of the room.



When In a Classroom

- What is the actual product of the task?
- What is the distribution of performance among students in the class on the task?




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ACTIVITY


Task Predicts Performance

With your partner...

- Review the four questions on *Observing and Analyzing the Task*
- Read Tasks A and B, responding to the four questions
- Discuss the strengths and weaknesses of the tasks




▶ Handout 1



Observing & Analyzing the Task


- What is the actual work that students are being asked to do?
- What do you have to know in order to engage the task?
- What would you predict the distribution of performance among students in the class on the task would be? Why?
- What would students understand and know how to do if they successfully completed the task?



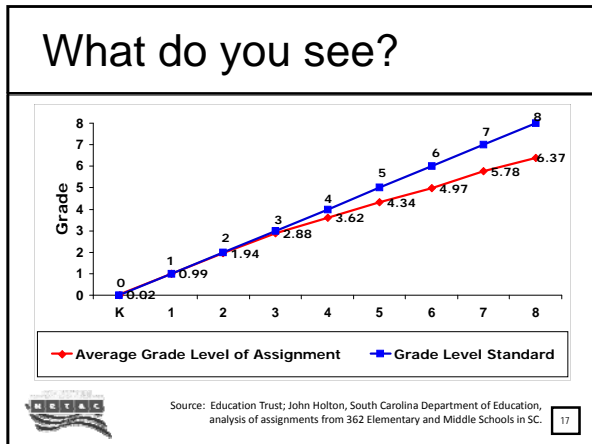
Accountability

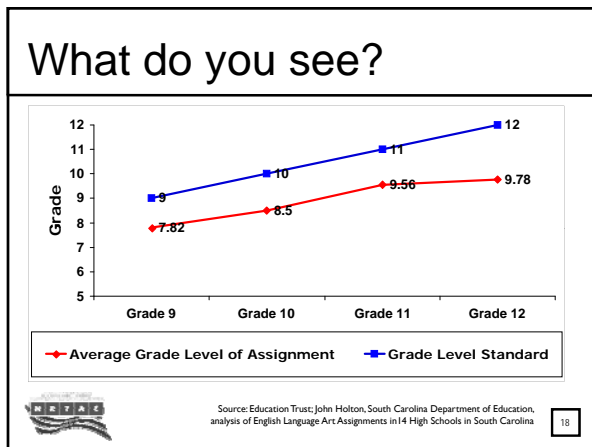
Principle #5:

The real accountability system is in the tasks that students are asked to do.



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What are Instructional Rounds?

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Medical Rounds – Instructional Rounds

Instructional Rounds is an adaptation and extension of the medical rounds model.


- ♦ Rounds are used routinely in medical schools and teaching hospitals to develop the diagnostic and treatment practice of physicians.
- ♦ Rounds in education are used to develop the diagnostic (e.g., analysis of an identified problem of practice) and treatment (e.g., school improvement) practice of educational leaders.

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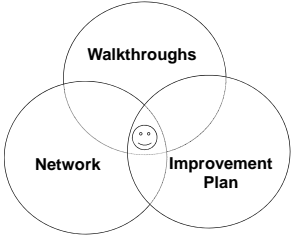
Why do Instructional Rounds?

Consider . . . EKG

- **Equity** - To ensure that ALL children have access to powerful learning no matter which classroom they're in
- **Knowledge** - To understand what kind of learning is happening in your system
- **Group Capacity** - To build a shared language and understanding of powerful learning and teaching

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More than Walkthroughs

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What Rounds Is and Isn't . . .

IT IS NOT	IT IS
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• "Walkthroughs" or "drive-bys"• A teacher evaluation tool• An implementation check• Training for supervision• A "program" or a "project," an add-on, or simply another initiative	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Rounds is descriptive, analytic, inferential• NOT assessment of individual teachers, it separate the person from the practice; focus on the practice• Rounds focuses on patterns of practice and predicted results, not compliance with directives• Rounds focuses on collective learning rather than individual supervisory practice—mirror, not window• Rounds is a practice, designed to support an existing improvement strategy at the school or system level...The way we do the work!




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Why should Educational Leaders consider doing Instructional Rounds?


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What Impacts Student Learning?

Variance in Student Gain Scores




ROWAN, ET AL., "...PROSPECTS..."
TEACHERS COLLEGE RECORD (2005)




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Assessing Learning



Share three ways you could describe the level and type of learning in your school system without using test scores




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Six Ways of Demonstrating Learning

Level 1:
Find a fact in a text in response to a question

Level 2:
Remember something someone else has told you and repeat it

Level 3:
Remember a procedure that someone else has taught you and apply it accurately and fluently



Program for International Student Assessment,
<http://nces.ed.gov/surveys/pisa/index.asp>


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Six Ways of Demonstrating Learning, continued

Level 4:
Choose a procedure from among a number you have learned, apply it accurately and fluently, explain why you chose it, and why it might be better than another

Level 5:
Using a body of evidence, make an argument about what you think it means, anticipate and respond to counter arguments

Level 6:
Teach something you think you know to someone else




Program for International Student Assessment,
<http://nces.ed.gov/surveys/pisa/index.asp>

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Five Levels of Performance
Reading Literacy


1. Locate a single piece of information, identify the main theme of a text or make a simple connection with everyday knowledge
2. Locate straightforward information, make low-level inferences of various types, work out what a well-defined part of a text means, and use some outside knowledge to understand it
3. Locate multiple pieces of information, make links between different parts of a text, and relate it to familiar everyday knowledge



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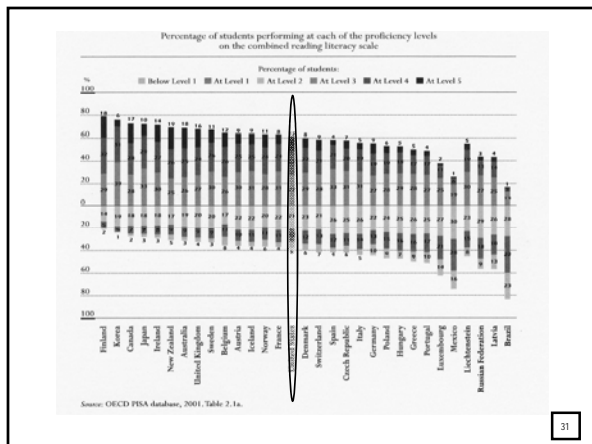
Five Levels of Performance
Reading Literacy, continued

4. Locate embedded information, construe meaning from nuances of language, and critically evaluate a text
5. Manage information that is difficult to find in unfamiliar text, show detailed understanding of such texts and infer which information in the text is relevant to the task, and be able to evaluate critically and build hypotheses, draw on specialized knowledge, and accommodate concepts that may be contrary to expectations.



Organization of Economic Co-operation and Development: Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA, 2001)

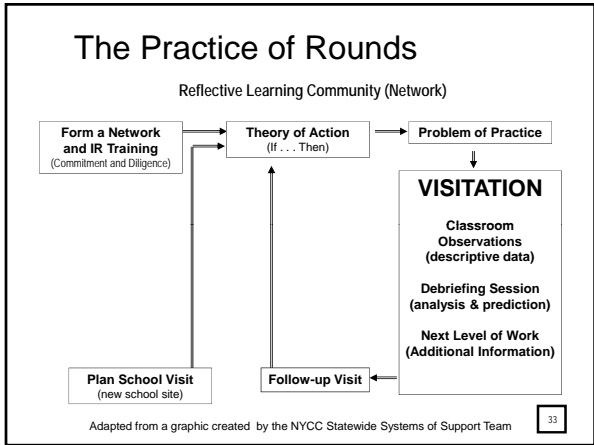
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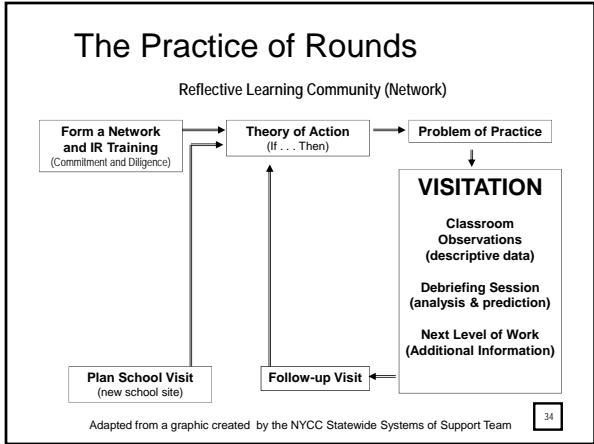


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How are Instructional Rounds implemented?

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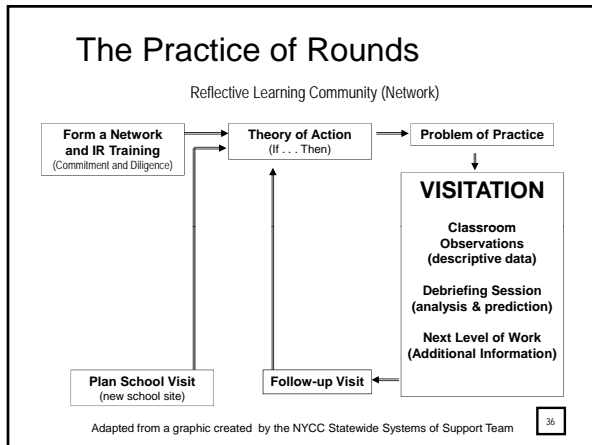
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Forming a Network

- Superintendents
- District Leaders
- Site Principals
- School Teams




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Theory of Action . . .

- Is a "story line" or narrative that clarifies the vision
- Provides the map that carries the vision through the organization
- Tests the assumptions of the vision against the realities of the work
- Provides a "through line" to the instructional core



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Theory of Action
Requirements

A Theory of Action must be . . .

- A statement of a causal relationship (If . . . then . . .)
- Empirically falsifiable
- Open-ended

Adapted from City, Elmore, Fiarman, & Teitel (2009),
Instructional Rounds in Education, page 41




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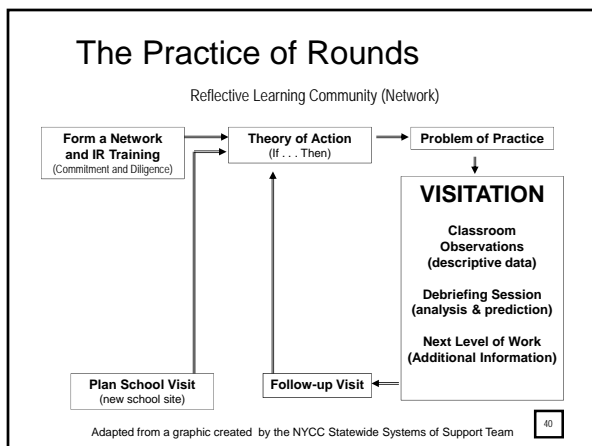
Example: Theory of Action

If our district plans to use lesson study for advancing higher levels of reading tasks (e.g., locating, interpreting, and evaluating informational and literary text),

then students should be practicing these tasks daily during reading and other content areas and should be demonstrating progressively improved levels of competency in these advanced tasks.



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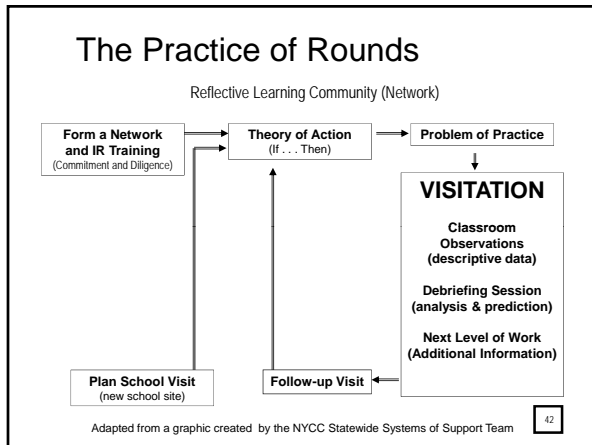
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Problem of Practice

The Plateau Unified School District is concerned that students are not getting adequate opportunities to advanced thinking when using literary or content area text (i.e. given opportunities to examine, interpret, evaluate, and critically reflect on text).


What kind of advanced thinking task are students being asked to do based on classroom text?

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Visitation

- Classroom Observation
- Debriefing Session (Analysis & Prediction)
- Next Level of Work

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Observation of Practice

Collect data that are:

- Descriptive not evaluative- just the facts!
- Specific
- About instructional core
- Related to problem of practice



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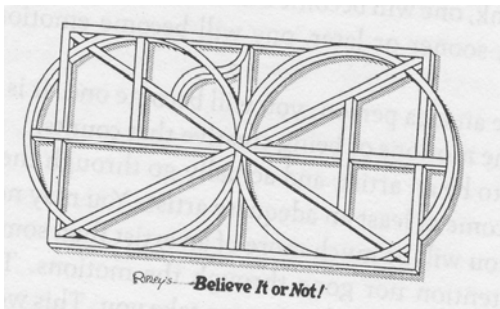
Developing the Discipline of Seeing

- Seeing is a discipline
- It's like a muscle—it gets stronger with repetition
- Foundation of our practice



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Focus: What do you see?




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Focusing on the Instructional Core

- What are the students doing and saying?
- What is the task?
- What is the teacher doing and saying?

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Judgment or Evidence?

- “The teacher read from a book that was not at the appropriate level for the class.”
- “There was too much time on discussion, not enough time on individual work.”
- “The students conducted a sophisticated lab experiment.”


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Description without Judgment

Evidence

- “Student 1 asked student 2: ‘what are we supposed to write down?’ Student 2 said, ‘I don’t know.’”
- “Students followed directions in the text to make circuit boards.”
- “Teacher introduced the concept of fractions and students applied it in a hands-on activity.”

City, Elmore, Fiarman, & Teitel (2009), *Instructional Rounds in Education*, page 85

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Specificity of Evidence

“Teacher introduced the concept of fractions and students applied it in a hands-on activity.”

vs.


“Prompt for student essays: “What role did symbolism play in foreshadowing the main character’s dilemma?””

City, Elmore, Fiarman, & Teitel (2009). *Instructional Rounds in Education*, page 93




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ACTIVITY Being Specific



- Choose a card. Without showing it to your partner, describe what you see on the card
- Partners, create an image in your head based on your partner's description
- Share the card
- Partners, is that what you were picturing? When you look at the card, what do you see? How would you describe it?



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Types of Evidence

Specificity →	III. <i>Specific & Judgmental</i>	IV. <i>Specific & Objective</i>
	I. <i>General & Judgmental</i>	II. <i>General & Objective</i>
	Objectivity →	



From Learning Walkthrough Guide, Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education

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What Do You See?

- What is the teacher doing and saying?
- What are the students doing and saying?
- What is the task?







ACTIVITY
Plateau Elementary School

- **Problem of Practice**
After some initial growth in literacy and math performance, recently student performance on both benchmark and state tests is flattening. Most students are passing, but only half of the students are in the "proficient" category, with few in "advanced" on the state test.
What are the tasks that students are being asked to do?
What questions do you hear?



ACTIVITY
Plateau Elementary School


- **Observation (Video)**
 - Take notes
 - What's the evidence?



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Debrief Observations

What's the evidence?



With your partner

- ♦ Describe what you saw
- ♦ Analyze the descriptive evidence
- ♦ Note quadrant of evidence
- ♦ What patterns do you see?
- ♦ How might you group the data?



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Where Does Your Evidence Fit?

Specificity →	III. <i>Specific & Judgmental</i>	IV. <i>Specific & Objective</i>
	I. <i>General & Judgmental</i>	II. <i>General & Objective</i>
	Objectivity →	



From Learning Walkthrough Guide, Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education

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Predictions

Predict what students are learning.

If you were a student in this class and you did everything the teacher told you to do, what would you know and be able to do?




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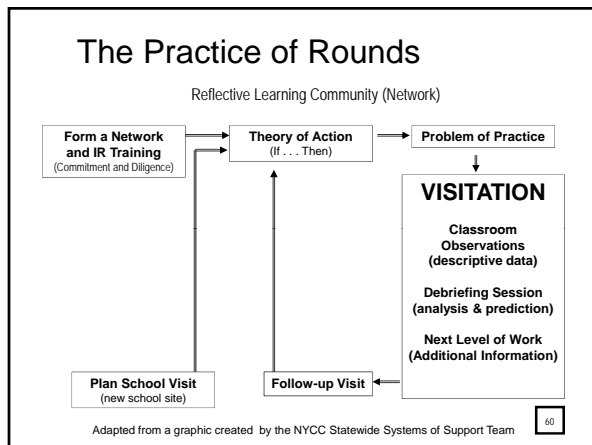
Next Level of Work

After identifying the practice, conducting observations, and debriefing

- Consider...
 - What resources exist to support improvement?
 - What initiatives are already in motion?
- Next Steps...
 - What detailed suggestions will help the school move instruction to the next level?
 - Next week?
 - By winter break?
 - By the end of the year?




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Lessons Learned

- It's a practice—it takes practice (lots of repetition!).
- Rounds are countercultural—and it's easy to slip back into the default judgmental culture, especially if you have an emotional reaction to what you're seeing and hearing.
- The interactions are what matter.



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Lessons Learned, continued

- Rounds by itself is not enough—it needs to be part of an improvement strategy.
- Rounds is not likely to yield strong results unless you have a clear theory about how Rounds leads to desired outcomes.
- Rounds is a powerful practice—it changes the way people see classrooms, focus their work, and talk.



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Remember

- Instructional Rounds is NOT an event.
- It is a practice that when used with an improvement strategy can impact the way we observe classrooms, focus our work, and talk about learning and teaching.



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In Closing...

The Importance of Diligence

People underestimate the importance of diligence as a virtue. No doubt this has something to do with how supremely mundane it seems. It is defined as "the constant and earnest effort to accomplish what is undertaken." There is a flavor of simplistic relentlessness to it. And if it were an individual's primary goal in life, that life would indeed seem narrow and unambitious.

Understood, however, as the prerequisite of great accomplishment, diligence stands as one of the most difficult challenges facing any group of people who take on tasks of risk and consequence. It sets a high, seemingly impossible, expectations for performance and human behavior.



Atul Gawande, *Better: A Surgeon's Notes on Performance* (2007)

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NATIONAL READING
TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE CENTER



Handouts
***School Leadership:
Beyond the Walkthrough***

A Presentation of the National Reading Technical Assistance Center
Based on the NRTAC Leadership Institute in Phoenix, Arizona on Instructional Rounds

Presented by:
Dr. Alice R. Furry
RMC Research Corporation
Sacramento, CA

Sharon Ruiz Van Vleck
RMC Research Corporation
Sacramento, CA

Presented at:
U.S. Department of Education Reading Institute
Anaheim, CA
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ACTIVITY: Task Predicts Performance



Analyzing Tasks A and B

With a partner...

- Review the four questions on *Observing and Analyzing the Task*
- Read Tasks A and B, responding to the questions
- Discuss the strengths and weakness of the tasks
- Be prepared to share

Observing and Analyzing the Task

1. What is the actual work that students are being asked to do?
2. What do you have to know in order to engage the task?
3. What would you predict the distribution of performance among students in the class on the task would be? Why?
4. What would students understand and know how to do if they successfully completed the task?

ACTIVITY: Task Predicts Performance

TASK A

Students are sitting at tables in groups facing each other. The teacher begins the lesson by introducing the importance of deepening their understanding of the meaning of words. She introduces a word association activity that uses target words generated from the class's previous discussion of a reading selection. She presents two target words that can be contextually associated with people, experiences, or places and gives some examples: friends, public figures, movies, books, events, locations. Then she draws the attention of the whole class to the two examples she provides on the classroom whiteboard. She emphasizes that this activity has three steps: First, the target word needs to be defined with synonyms. Second, a context for associating the target word needs to be identified. And lastly, a sentence needs to be written that interprets the meaning of the target word within the selected context but does not use the actual target word in the sentence. Then she walks through the activity.

ACTIVITY

Define TARGET WORD	Identify a context ASSOCIATION	Write a sentence to offer INTERPRETATION
Speculation – <i>guess, possibility, assumption, conjecture</i>	Stock Market	Investors in the stock market assume their portfolios will have some financial losses.
Relishing – <i>tasting, savoring,</i>	Dan Brown	He savors his fame in the release of two movies based on his recent novels.

The teacher then passes out a worksheet with a blank chart labeled like the chart on the whiteboard. She instructs students to select 5 target words from the worksheet's list of 10 words from a previous reading assignment and then complete the chart as demonstrated. The teacher circulates and answers students' questions. Some students ask the teacher to explain what it means to identify a context, or how to write an interpretive sentence. She responds by repeating her earlier examples. Some students finish long before others do. The teacher collects each student's worksheet before she moves on to another part of the day's lesson.

At the end of class, the teacher assigns a homework worksheet that uses 15 other target words. Students are to match the statements to each of the target word (example: target word *tedious* to be matched with "I just can't face another minute of this boring activity!"). The teacher sets the expectation that students' homework answers will be shared and discussed at the beginning of the next day's class.

ACTIVITY: Task Predicts Performance

TASK B

Students are sitting at tables in groups, facing each other. The teacher gives students a 5-minute exercise to complete a set of 4 stem sentences with target words (Teacher’s example: There was great speculation that: - - -). Each group is given a different set of words. After 5 minutes, the teacher reads a few of the completed sentences aloud and asks students what words could be substituted for the target word to convey the same meaning. She gives an example before calling on students: target word speculation – guess, possibility, assumption, conjecture -- as synonyms. Students then share synonyms and the teacher responds to the “fit” of these suggestions in the students’ stem sentences. After this brief exchange, the teacher explains the importance of interpreting the context in which words are used in order to access word meanings. The teacher then introduces a word association activity that she has prepared on the whiteboard for two target words. She emphasizes that this activity has three steps: First, the target word needs to be defined with synonyms. Second, a context for associating the target word needs to be identified (e.g., people, places, things). And lastly, a sentence needs to be written that interprets the meaning of the target word within the selected context but does not use the actual target word in the sentence. She walks through the first target word activity with two examples. After demonstrating the activity, the teacher asks two students to identify a context and use a defined word in a sentence.

ACTIVITY

Define TARGET WORD	Identify a context - ASSOCIATION	Write sentence to offer INTERPRETATION
Speculation – guess, possibility, assumption, conjecture	Stock Market	Investors in the stock market assume their portfolios will have some financial losses.
	Response to Friend	My conjecture is that there is no space aliens on earth, so stop being so paranoid!*
Relishing – tasting, savoring,	Dan Brown	He savors his fame in the release of two movies based on his recent novels
	Dog	My dog, Simon, enjoys tasting his toys.*

**Note: After the teacher finishes her two examples for each target word, she calls on two students to orally complete the activity.*

After the demonstration and student examples, the teacher hands out a worksheet to each student, with a blank chart labeled like the chart on the whiteboard. Each group is given a different set of 4 target words (total of 20 words). She instructs that each student in the group needs to complete one of the target words in the activity within 5 minutes. At the end of the 5-minute period, the teacher directs the students in each group to share and collaborate to determine if the writer’s interpretation sentence sufficiently and correctly uses the synonym of the target word. She also states that one person from each group needs to be prepared to read 2 group-selected sentences to the class. The teacher circulates around the classroom and answers questions throughout the activity. After the final 5-minute period, the teacher calls on each group’s person to read the 2 sentences. The teacher provides comments following each group’s set of responses, and again emphasizes the importance of developing rich word knowledge. She encourages students to use new words in meaningful contexts to reinforce their ability to access these new words easily and quickly. She gives each group time to “play” with the words, suggesting that they think of additional synonyms, antonyms, or do a word web.

ACTIVITY: Task Predicts Performance

At the end of class, the teacher assigns homework that requires each student to use the same words to generate an original narrative, either topically or thematically tied to the previous reading or a personal connection that demonstrates a deep understanding of at least 5 out of the 20 target words. The teacher sets the expectation that students' homework sentences will be shared, discussed, and handed in at the beginning of the next day's class.

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