# The Skyrocket Education Teacher Coaching Manual

VERSION 6

by Michael Sonbert

with Kimberly Hamilton and Matthew Glass

SKYROCKET EDUCATION

Thank you for downloading the Skyrocket Coaching Manual. I was inspired to create it and the corresponding framework after observing thousands of lessons in dozens of schools around the country and after visiting with so many passionate and intelligent leaders who knew their schools needed to improve, but who often struggled to land on precisely what they needed to do to make things better.

Many of the techniques in here will be familiar to you. And they should be. They're what so many of the best educators in the country are using/doing to engage students. What will be unique will be the simplicity, both of this manual, the framework, and the step-by- step process we use.

So please use this manual and the corresponding Skyrocket Framework for Teacher Coaching and Evaluation to move your teachers forward while increasing student outcomes as quickly and efficiently as possible.

And, thank you to the hundreds of teachers and leaders who've allowed me to learn from you. This manual exists, in part, because of what you've taught me. Your great work is in here, on every page, for all to see. In particular, Kimberly Hamilton and Matthew Glass, both of whom contributed greatly to the creation of this manual.

Before you dive in, I'd like to give some more rationale for why I wanted to create both the framework and this manual as well as explain what, exactly, you'll find inside.

# THE WHY?

In my observations at schools around the country, three trends emerged.

The first trend exists in schools where school leaders don't have any grounding documents or shared language around instruction and teacher coaching. There isn't anything they can point to that lays out precisely what excellent teaching or excellent coaching looks like. So, often, after an observation, leaders speak to teachers from a place of what they like or think or feel versus using unbiased data and proven best practices to drive their feedback. Meetings often sound like, "I really like the way you did X. Maybe next time you should try Y." In these schools, there's little to no mention of student data, very little modeling or training, and the feedback is either acted upon or not. Because shared language is lacking, even the most well- intentioned and passionate leaders can't talk succinctly with other leaders about teachers, students, or their progress; and, because teachers aren't clearly being told what to do to be more impactful, some teachers are frustrated. However, most simply have an inflated sense of their skill level and effectiveness. Which makes sense as their "coaching" meetings are usually very general. The leaders talk a bunch about what they like and make a few suggestions, but they rarely give any actionable next steps. As a result, teachers think they are excelling, when in fact they would benefit from intense training on basic to advanced skills. But the truth is, in many of these schools, observations and feedback rarely happen anyway. These leaders spend most of their days in their offices responding to emails, organizing field trips, handling operations' issues, and meeting with parents. And often, poor instruction is accepted as the norm.

The second trend exists at schools that do have certain frameworks or rubrics around teaching and coaching. In many cases, leaders attended trainings on those models and in other cases, the trainers came to them. The problem here is that these frameworks and rubrics are very dense. And much of the language is gray ("most students, some students"), so often, the leaders aren't experts at the very thing they're attempting to train their teachers on. They have these impressive frameworks and they're barely being used; and, when they are being used, they aren't being used effectively. I observe leaders from all around the country speaking very generally and hesitantly about instruction while flipping through multiple page documents that not only haven't they fully internalized, but their teachers haven't either. Leaders in these schools try to observe teachers and provide meaningful feedback, but it's so broad and across multiple domains so their meetings aren't as intentional as they can be. Also, teachers can feel totally overwhelmed by the amount of feedback they receive, sometimes being told they need to tighten up their entry routine, write more meaningful objectives, and have students working in groups all in one meeting. I call this feedback shrapnel. It doesn't make teachers better. They just duck to get out of its way. All while potentially feeling like they're failing miserably because they're getting feedback on so much at once. Without leaders and teachers hyper– focused on what good instruction is, without leaders narrowing in on every teacher's most important next step, and without significant training and follow-up on those next steps, these docs (which I do believe contain a lot of the "right" stuff) are as useless as the most decadent cheesecake is to a person who is lactose intolerant.

The final trend is around the cherry-picking of skills by leaders that aren't the most important next step for their schools. A powerful example of this occurred at a school I visited in Detroit. The leaders had just run a training on Cold Call that they were very excited about. They'd read about it in a text and decided that Cold Call was exactly what their school needed. The problem was, they missed the mark. This wasn't the school's most logical next step. Because when I asked teachers in the building if it was an effective training and if they felt like it was what they needed, many responded that they simply wanted to know how to get their students to sit down. I get that no one becomes an educator so they can practice giving directions or designing routines for handing out papers. They get into it so they can ask deep questions and share their passion for their content with young people. So I get why these leaders defaulted to Cold Call before some of the more foundational classroom culture skills. But in doing so, they risked totally disinvesting their teachers and their students. Think about a teacher who's having trouble building a strong culture in his class, asking a question that no one is listening to, and then cold-calling on a student who likely didn't even hear the question, to respond.
I witnessed this. As you can imagine, the more the teacher pushed, the angrier the student got. Until he eventually erupted and stormed out of the room. Interactions like this lead teachers to lose faith in their leaders and students to lose faith in their teachers. And then, in some cases, teachers default to saying toxic things like, "That doesn't work with my kids," when it's time to try it again.

These three trends led me to create The Skyrocket Framework for Teacher Coaching and Evaluation. It's three strands on a two-sided document. Classroom Culture is first, Content Mastery is next, and Rigor is last. The student outcome goals and teacher actions are provided and the language is simple and easy to digest. And, perhaps most importantly, the framework is hierarchical so leaders are only observing, training, and providing feedback on the most important next steps for that teacher. This way, we're not talking about Cold Call with a teacher who can't get his students to sit down.

## WHAT'S INSIDE?

What we've created here is a step-by-step guide to training your teachers using The Skyrocket Framework. Each teacher action inside includes real-world rationale that you can share with teachers that explains why this TA matters. There's a section on what each TA looks like when done with fidelity; and, there is at least one - and sometimes multiple - practice activities for each action. So as a leader, you can observe a teacher and use the framework to land on exactly what they can do more effectively. Then explain to them why that thing is important, share what it looks like when done really well, and then train them on how to do it really well. And each teacher action has a nickname so you and your teachers are always speaking the same language.

I hope you find this to be a useful tool. If you need anything or have any feedback for us, please reach out.
We'd love to hear from you.

- Michael Sonbert

Michael Sonbert is the founder of Skyrocket Educator Training. He's trained leaders from over 80 cities around the world. His Skyrocket Framework for Teacher Coaching is currently being used in over 300 schools nationally, and his first book, "Skyrocket Your Teacher Coaching," was released by Dave Burgess Publishing in 2020. He has a Bachelor's Degree from Queens College and a Master's Degree in Special Education from Arcadia University. He started his career in education at Mastery Charter Schools in Philadelphia, first, as a literature and composition teacher, then as an Instructional Coach, and finally as the Director of Strategic Partnerships. In his spare time, Michael likes to write, play music, and wrestle with his children, Max, Teddy, and Penny.

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# Strand 1

STUDENT OUTCOME GOAL:
STUDENTS ARE ON TASK THROUGHOUT THE LESSON.

**STRAND 1**

Teacher Action 1 - Classroom is neat, clean, and organized. Classroom layout (seating chart/desks, whiteboard, projector, etc.) is most conducive to student learning.

## Nickname – Neat, Clean, and Organized

Rationale – While many people probably think the appearance of a classroom lies squarely in teacher preference, there are actually a number of reasons why a well-kept classroom matters. A neat, clean, and organized classroom allows both teacher and students to operate efficiently and preserve instructional time. A disorganized teacher could easily lose five minutes throughout the day as she looks for the missing copies or tries to straighten student desks to move throughout the room. Over the course of a single week, the 25 minutes the students have lost may not seem particularly consequential, but it adds up to 15 full hours of instructional time over the course of a school year! A neat, clean, and organized room not only supports efficiency, but also communicates respect and professionalism. If you walked into a doctor's office to find newspapers strewn about and trash left from previous patients, or the nurse told you to pick a seat in any room, chances are you'd promptly turn around and find a new doctor. Professionals take care of their space. Students spend more time in their classroom than nearly any other place and deserve a space that reflects the respect they deserve.

What it looks like – There is a place for everything and everything has a place. Bulletin boards are well-maintained, teacher and student desks are free of clutter, and there are clear pathways for student and teacher movement. Instructional areas (classroom library, small group tables, computer areas, etc.) are organized with only the necessary materials. Items used daily are in the most logical location for ease of use. Seating arrangements and charts support a positive culture and are conducive to learning.

**Practice**

1. On a prep time, meet with the teacher in their empty classroom and physically walk through a class period of her day. Take notes of daily use items (handouts, manipulatives, etc.), instructional displays, and instructional areas that are required for that period. Together, make a plan for where materials should be kept for ease of use as well as criteria for what a work area looks like when it is neat, clean, and organized. Ask the teacher to go through this process again with their other class periods. Set a deadline for the teacher to put a plan in place.

2. Share pictures from other classrooms or best practices that demonstrate an organized classroom. Have the teacher choose the system that will best support them and their students. If possible, have the teacher put the system in place in the meeting. If not, set a deadline for its implementation.

3. Model how you would introduce the new seating arrangements, providing the rationale and system for how students will get to their new seats as efficiently as possible (numbered desks, projected seating chart that mirrors the room, etc.). Have the teacher script how they will introduce the seating arrangements and practice delivering it. Provide feedback on the conciseness of their language and rationale.

**STRAND 1**

Teacher Action 2 - Teacher and student materials are prepped in advance, and all lesson components are logical and accessible for students.

## Nickname – Prepped, Ready, and Logical

Rationale – Have you ever shown up to a restaurant on time for your reservation only to be told that your table isn't ready? Or perhaps you've been to a restaurant and the dish you wanted to order is sold out. If you're anything like me, I get frustrated when that happens. It makes me think that the restaurant didn't plan out their reservation times accurately, or didn't account for how many people they had on staff, or simply didn't order sufficient ingredients to make enough of that shrimp special I had my eye on. Just like restaurants need to be prepared for their customers, teachers need to be prepared for their students. The message it sends to students if teachers aren't prepared, if they don't have enough copies, is that the student's time isn't valuable, that the teacher doesn't care.

In addition to the lesson and its materials being prepped, it's integral that what's being asked of students is logical and accessible. This does not mean that coaches should lesson-plan with Strand 1 teachers; it does mean, however, that if a Do Now is 27 minutes long or the teacher is writing in ink so light the students can't read it, or if students are watching a 14 minute video-clip without a task, or if the teacher is writing notes on the board for large portions of the lesson and asking students to copy them down (when a handout would suffice), that the coach can tell the teacher to make these quick corrections.

What it looks like – All handouts, copies, materials, books, supplies, etc. are prepped and ready to be distributed to all students (including extras). Agenda boards and daily displays are current and reflect the day's lesson. All projected materials (slides, PPTs) are up-to-date with minimal errors. Furthermore, those projected materials are easy for all students to see, and the teacher is able to switch slides/docs both quickly and without needing to move too far from the front of the room (example – using a PPT clicker vs. needing to walk back to the computer every time she needs to change slides).

**Practice**

1. Explain to the teacher the significance of being prepared for their students—it sends the message that they value the students, respect their time, and ensure that each minute is productive because the students have what they need to access the lesson. Identify what is causing the preparation to fall short: perhaps not getting to school early enough to print or update the agenda, not using prep periods efficiently or effectively, etc. Create a plan with the teacher on how they should prepare for each lesson, such as having all materials for the next day printed at the end of the current day.

2. Share some best practices for how to be prepared daily by utilizing prep periods efficiently. With the teacher, create a calendarized plan to ensure the teacher is organized with all materials while maximizing time.

3. Record a lesson or lesson portion and review with the teacher. Ask them to make note of anything that's not prepped, ready, and logical. Also, using a timer, ask them to time how much instructional time is lost by searching for papers, getting makeup work for students who were absent, passing back student work, etc. After calculating the total amount of lost instructional time, set a target number for the next lesson (ex – "We lost 7 minutes today. While we don't ever want to lose any instructional time, let's set a goal of cutting that in half by tomorrow."). Then action plan, come up with new strategies, and practice those new strategies for the current biggest time–stealers in the lesson.

**STRAND 1**
Teacher Action 3 - Classroom displays reflect information about students as well as teacher. Displays are relevant and culturally inclusive.

## Nickname – Classroom Displays

Rationale – f you've ever been to a college or professional sporting event, you've likely noticed how the stadium is decorated. Successful players' jerseys and team championship banners hang from the rafters, pictures of famous players, coaches, games, or plays are postered in the hallways. If you're a fan of that team, you feel it as soon as you walk in. Now imagine walking into that same arena except the walls are barren. Or even stranger, the walls have pictures of opposing teams or players. You'd think, "Am I in the right place? Do I belong here?"

Classroom displays should reflect the diversity of the students and teacher. It creates an environment that welcomes all who enter, that shows guests what's important, what's meaningful, and to and for whom.

What it looks like - Motivational posters of content-specific icons reflect the student body so that students see themselves in the work. Language on displays is inclusive in nature, relevant, and up to date. Where appropriate, the teacher includes herself in these displays (i.e. birthday charts, pictures with students, etc.). Displays are prominent so that those who enter the classroom know immediately the content and target audience. Decorations are warm and inviting.

**Practice**

1. The Test of the Unknowing Guest: An unknowing guest will be able to tell you what your room environment communicates to your students. Take 10 minutes of a prep period to stand with the teacher and look at their classroom displays. Make note of how the displays are or are not culturally inclusive of the student body and themself, what's prominent, missing, incomplete, or obsolete, and tell the teacher what is being communicated to the students and their peers by what is posted. Provide feedback to the teacher around how to change the displays so that they are more inclusive of the students population and the teacher themself.

2. The Test of the Unknowing Guest part 2: Explain to teachers that their classroom environment should be useful to the students. The walls should tell the story of what is most important and relevant at any given time. With the teacher, view the room from the perspective of an unknowing guest and note what the room communicates in terms of relevancy. Compare your notes with the teacher and then ask the teacher to revise the posted expectations and norms based on the discussion (note: this can be done at any point during the year, since norms, expectations, and anchor charts may shift).

**STRAND 1**
Teacher Action 4 - Teacher creates, models, and habituates equitable expectations for all class routines. These routines and academic expectations/anchor charts are posted, visible, and relevant to all students.

## Nickname – Show and Tell

Rationale – Have you ever been to yoga? The instructor is positioned at the front of the room and models every pose while explaining exactly how your fingers should be rooted and your hips should be angled. She doesn't do this because she thinks you don't understand her words. She does it because she knows that showing and telling is far more effective than simply telling. What happens after the class is in the pose? She walks around to individuals to make adjustments and give feedback. When it comes to teaching routines in our classroom, we should all aim to be yoga teachers. Show students what is expected while explaining the routine, then make adjustments and give feedback while students practice.

Of course, you can't model something clearly if you haven't thought through all the possible blips and blunders. Classroom routines don't just occur, they are composed. With thought on the front end, the adjustments and feedback that come in practice will be for the students and not of the routine itself. When composing a routine, the teacher should consistently ask herself, "Will this still work if?" "What if students are absent?" "What if the teacher is absent?" "If it's just a generally frantic day?" "Does this routine make the classroom move more smoothly?" You can tell a routine is strong if it happens with minimal teacher guidance.

What it looks like – When introducing a new routine, the teacher should physically demonstrate that routine while students watch. This demonstration might include students, if necessary. After the model, the teacher watches small groups of students practice the routine, while giving feedback and making adjustments. The show and tell phase of classroom routines should be repeated many times at the introduction of a routine and should be revisited as needed. This added time spent on solidifying routines on the front end can save hours, days, or even full weeks of instructional time over the course of the year.

At the beginning of the year, classroom norms, academic expectations, and routine anchor charts are posted in a prominent place for quick reference. As the year progresses and norms and expectations need to be referenced less frequently, they can be moved to a less prominent position, but should still be visible to all students. Relevant anchor charts and other timely reference materials should hold the most prominent location to ensure students can access them with little reliance on the teacher.

**Practice**

1. Model introducing a routine to students, providing the rationale and the precise, efficient steps students need to take to do it well. Point out how your roll-out includes time, task, materials, sound, and movement. Have the teacher note how this routine would set students up for success. Then have the teacher script out the rationale and steps for success for a routine in their classroom. Provide feedback on the efficiency, student friendly language, and conciseness.

2. Co-compile a list of some potential routines that teachers need to have and then have the teacher add on, thinking through all aspects of a period or day. Pick one and, together, design a routine that's clear and succinct, hitting on every possible thing that could come up (where should students stand, what should it sound like, what should the student who walks in late do, etc?). Then ask them to do one or two on their own and present it to you for feedback. Finally, add to the teacher's list as they'll likely have missed a few (or more) things. Then ask them to design routines for the most important (provide feedback here) things students will need at the beginning of the year (it's hard to prioritize but think, homework submission should be taught week 1. A routine around responding to other students using academic language can happen later).

3. Do you remember being in 3rd grade and being asked to explain how to make a peanut butter and jelly sandwich while your partner was made to do only exactly what you said? That assignment was preparing you to coach classroom routines! To practice the strength of a given routine, ask the teacher to become the "sandwich maker" from all those years ago. Have the teacher teach you the routine and do only what they say. This should highlight anything missing in a typical routine. You might also find it helpful to run through the same practice imagining normal circumstances that occur in a given day, like a student getting makeup work.

4. Clarity of explanation is key to establishing strong routines. Provide the teacher with an example of teaching phrases on an index card. Have the teacher make their own phrases and then provide feedback on succinct phrasing. With the index card in hand, the teacher should practice delivering the instructions until they no longer need the index cards and can remember the precise phrasing. Provide feedback on clarity and presence.

5. With the teacher, identify which routines and academic expectations are posted, visible, and relevant, and which are missing, incomplete, or obsolete. Model the creation of an anchor chart for one routine and be sure to highlight how your example is concise while including all the necessary steps. Have the teacher create/update anchor charts and provide feedback.

**STRAND 1**
Teacher Action 5 - A signal (call and response, countdown, claps, etc.) is used to achieve and maintain one voice when appropriate.

## Nickname – The Signal

Rationale – Attention signals aren't limited to classrooms. Have you ever been to the theater? Just before the show is about to begin, the auditorium lights are dimmed for a moment, signaling to audience members that it's time to get back to your seat and settle in for what is to come. Signals are part of our world because they alert us to things we shouldn't miss. It's important to also note that when that initial signal is given, you're still being given a reasonable amount of time to wrap up what you're doing so that you and others can focus on the reason you're there.

The same thing is true in a classroom. A teacher gives a signal to get the attention of students so they can focus that attention on what is necessary at that time. When a teacher gives a signal like a clap or a raised-hand, it's likely that only a handful of students will respond immediately. After all, the reason the teacher is giving it is because attention is not currently on the teacher. As one or two students see the signal, word should begin to spread—just like in the theater. As more and more students realize that the proverbial show is about to begin, the teacher attains the attention of the class.

What it looks like – The teacher delivers the chosen signal (hand raised, countdown, claps, etc.) from a place in the room where they are visible to as many students as possible (likely, not the back left-hand corner of the room). As students see/hear the signal and become quiet, the teacher acknowledges this in some way (eye contact, head nod, silently mouthing "thank you," table points, etc.) The teacher should continue the signal as she gains the attention of the remaining students, consistently acknowledging their appropriate response (note – we'll talk more about praise and acknowledgment in S1.TA9).

**Practice**

1. Often use of the signal goes awry because a teacher feels out of control and hopes or expects the situation to resolve itself immediately. While this is ideal, it's more likely that a teacher will gain attention of the classroom in small groups of students at a time. Practice in the empty classroom to build comfort and muscle memory first. Model for the teacher. Name what makes your model effective: body language, posture, voice volume, confidence, pace, etc. Then ask the teacher to stand in the place they are most likely to signal for attention (more on this in S1.TA6) and have them practice the signal. When giving feedback on the delivery of the signal, focus your feedback on whether the signal will be visible/audible to the students far from them. Ask them to pretend the students are in the room and acknowledge them as they imagines them responding.

2. Model how you would introduce a signal to students, providing rationale, movement, expectations, practice (similar to introducing a routine in S1.TA4). Have the teacher script and practice out their roll-out language, providing feedback on its clarity and efficiency.

3. Model how the teacher should respond if some students in the class are not responding quickly to the signal - assume the best, repeat the signal, make eye contact, use gestures, or proximity. When the teacher practices, indicate different areas of the room where students are not immediately following the signal. Provide feedback. Repeat this cycle as many times as possible. The goal is to build comfort and muscle memory. When practicing feels redundant, keep going! The best way to build a good habit is repeated, strong practice!

**STRAND 1**

Teacher Action 6 - Directions are delivered warmly and in the formal register from the front of the room and/or with the attention of the overwhelming majority of students.

## Nickname – Focus from the Front

Rationale – I was on an early morning flight recently. I was exhausted, so I covered myself in the thin, scratchy blanket that was on my seat and closed my eyes before takeoff. But before I dozed off, a flight attendant made an announcement I'd never heard before. The woman, stood at the front of the cabin, and, with shoulders back and making eye contact throughout, said, "As this is an early morning flight, some of you may want to sleep. If you do, please make sure your fastened seat belt is visible at all times. That means, your blanket needs to be under your seat belt. If I cannot see your seat belt, I will wake you up to confirm it's fastened. Thank you very much." I then watched as everybody around me put their blankets on and secured their seatbelts over them. Myself included.

Here's the thing: she wasn't cruel. She wasn't angry. She wasn't chummy. She wasn't goofy. She was, in presence, voice, and tone, someone who commanded our respect. And in fact, she was very respectful of us. She stood centered in the aisle where all passengers could see and hear her, delivered the directions, and we all happily listened to because of the way she presented herself. Teachers don't have time to waste trying to convince students to listen to them. Through mutual respect, strong presence, and a formal tone, they need to ensure students listen so they can focus on that day's learning.

Giving clear directions is arguably one of the most important teacher skills and since classrooms are oriented such that the front of the room is the most visually accessible space for students, delivering directions from the front of the room just makes sense. After all, the teacher is going to hold students accountable to those directions so he needs to give all students the best chance to see and hear them the first time they are given.

Note – For some self-contained teachers, the "front" of the room may change throughout the day if the room has separate math/ literacy instructional spaces. This is fine. The "front" of the room can simply refer to the place where all students can most easily see the teacher.

What it looks like – Each time a direction is delivered to the entire class, the teacher should be standing in the same spot at the front of the classroom – the place that is most visually accessible for students. The teacher will have just used a signal to get student attention, so ideally, students will be attentive and waiting for directions. Directions are delivered while the teacher is making eye contact with students, with their head up and shoulders back, and projecting their voice through the room without yelling. They refrain from using slang or an overly conversational tone, particularly during instruction. Teacher also refrains from using a panicked or angry tone in non-urgent situations.

**Practice**

1. Practice in the empty classroom to build comfort and muscle memory first. With the teacher, find the place where all students can see them. Mark the spot on the floor with tape or some kind of visual (not unlike what late night talk show hosts use to orient them as they begin their monologues). This practice can be combined with The Signal (S1.TA5) and/or TTMS directions (S1.TA7). However, you can practice this in isolation by having the teacher "circulate" in the empty room, pretending to check-in with individual students (S2.TA9) while you provide them with directions they need to deliver to the room. Each time you give a direction, you should coach them to step to their "mark" at the front of the room. Actually delivering the directions will come when practicing S1TA7.

2. For a teacher who struggles with presence, come to a meeting prepared with video of them in which their presence needs refining. Name the qualities you're looking for, including posture, volume, tone, eye contact, gestures, etc. Model giving a direction. Have the teacher practice using the same direction until they hit your criteria, providing feedback throughout. Videotape the teacher's practice and show them when their presence matches the criteria and then have the teacher practice some more.

3. Have the teacher practice in an empty room again, just like the original practice, but this time agree on a signal that you'll give to alert the teacher to step to the front of the room and use their formal, warm register. Practice giving the signal and having the teacher respond. Repeat this as many times as possible. The goal is to build comfort and muscle memory.

**STRAND 1**

Teacher Action 7 - Major directions include information on time, task, materials, and sound. Directions are chunked and age appropriate.

## Nickname – TTMS Directions

Rationale – Think about a time, likely after a big storm, when you drove up to a four-way traffic light that was malfunctioning. How did you feel as you tried to figure out what you were supposed to do? As you inched out, wondering if it was your turn? Wondering if the person across from you or perpendicular was about to go? I bet you were anxious. I bet you were frustrated. You may have even avoided that street until you knew the light was fixed. And, when it was fixed, I bet it felt great that things “made sense” again. That the directions were clear. Red means stop. Green means go. When the light was broken, you didn’t forget how to drive. You didn’t care any less about making it to your destination. Still, you felt less confident, more nervous, and less likely to return. When we don’t provide clear directions for students, we make them feel this same way. Overwhelmingly, when students are off task, it’s because they don’t know what to do. In some cases, the teacher has relayed what to do, but students aren’t listening. Possibly because students aren’t invested in the class because the teacher doesn’t authentically praise them. Or because they aren’t redirected when they act out so they think what’s being said isn’t important if the teacher won’t insist they listen. Sometimes, the teacher has made clear what to do, but there are too many tasks, they aren’t chunked appropriately, and students are overwhelmed or just forget what’s next. There are many different reasons, which is why this strand has thirteen teacher actions and not just one; however, despite all the different reasons students might be off task, it’s often because the teacher hasn’t made explicitly clear for students exactly what they should do and how they should do it. The teacher hasn’t provided clear directions. Directions that include TIME, TASK, MATERIALS, and SOUND (TTMS).

What it looks like – “When I say go” (PREPS CUE), delivers directions, “please take 30 seconds (TIME) to copy today’s objective (TASK) on a clean sheet in your notebook (MATERIALS). Let’s do this silently (SOUND). Go” (DROPS CUE). Note here that there is one task. Ideally, these directions are also on the teacher’s slide deck or PPT.

You can play with the order as well as long as all 4 components are included.

“When I say go (PREP CUE) in a level 1 voice (SOUND), please take 1 minute (TIME) to share what you wrote to number 3 with your partner (MATERIALS, TASK). Go” (DROP CUE).

**Practice**

1. Come with a scripted direction and model the same directions multiple times, pausing at different points to pull-out the criteria (also, make sure you’re standing on the teacher’s X). Then, ask the teacher to practice the same set of directions. The teacher should be focused on practicing the same directions to practice relaying them with all 4 criteria. Ask the teacher to practice multiple times, giving feedback until the delivery is solid ((depending on the teacher, you may need to give feedback around their presence as well - see S1.TA6).

2. With the teacher, identify a few common directions they give on a routine basis (entry, note-taking, exit ticket, etc.). Have the teacher script out their directions for each and provide feedback on their clarity. Have the teacher practice each of those directions until they are automatic (at least 10x each), providing feedback throughout.

3. Review a provided curriculum or the teacher’s lesson plan and stop each time a direction is needed. Script out the first direction with them. Then ask them to repeat the process for the entire lesson. Review when they’re complete, checking for quality. Provide feedback and then ask them to repeat for multiple upcoming lessons and submit to you.

4. After relaying the criteria (TTMS), present your teacher with poorly written directions that are missing one or more criteria. Have them revise them to include all 4 criteria. **Example**: Coach says, “It’s time to pack up and leave.” Teacher thinks for 10 seconds and then says, “When I say go, please take 30 seconds to silently place your materials in your binders and then place those binders on your desk. Go.” Repeat with multiple different scenarios and shorten the teacher’s “think time” each time.

5. After practice delivering directions, have the teacher pull up their slide deck or PPT. Have them the insert directions on the slides where applicable and appropriate. Give the teacher feedback on how well each task is chunked, timed, and age appropriate.

**STRAND 1**

Teacher Action 8 - Teacher scans the room after every direction to determine whether expectations are being met.

## Nickname – Scan

Rationale – You hear it over the loudspeaker, "Ladies and gentlemen, as we prepare for takeoff, please make sure your seat backs and tray tables are in their full upright position. Make sure your seatbelt is securely fastened and all carry-on luggage is stowed underneath the seat in front of you or in the overhead bins. Thank you." The direction has been given and we all know what happens next. The flight attendant walks the plane, scanning every single passenger to ensure expectations are met. Giving the direction is the first step, but the next and equally important step is scanning to make sure the directions were understood and carried out. Maybe you didn't hear the direction, maybe you're having a hard time getting your seatbelt fastened, or maybe you're just the passenger who waits until the flight attendant tells you directly; there are plenty of reasons why a direction may not be followed immediately, but scanning the room will allow the person in charge to determine who needs reminders and/or support to meet the expectation.
This same technique works in a classroom. Not only does the teacher's scan hold students accountable, but it also allows the teacher to clarify any misunderstanding and support students in following directions. This will likely mitigate unnecessary redirections and create a more positive learning environment.

What it looks like – Each time a direction is delivered to the entire class, the teacher scans all students looking for evidence of compliance. The scan should be deliberate and communicate to students that the teacher is seeing them, and the teacher can use their body to emphasize this (standing on tiptoes, craning their neck, using gestures, etc.). If the directions were, "Please take 10 seconds to silently take out your homework and place it on the top left corner of your desk," the teacher's eyes should scan each student's actions and desks while listening for sound.

Note – I've seen a lot of teachers start to circulate (or lap) immediately after giving a direction. While teachers should certainly circulate, doing so too quickly means they will see a portion of the students, and might not see a group of students for minutes. Scanning (and Positive Praise, S1.TA9) should be done from the front of the room before circulating.

**Practice**

1. It is not uncommon for inexperienced teachers to hold their gaze on only one part of the classroom—often the front. Together with the teacher, designate 4-6 places in the room the teacher will scan after giving directions or throughout instruction to ensure compliance (these can be in order to more quickly build the routine). Mark these spots with a visual cue that the teacher will recognize, but will not disrupt the students (for example: a brightly colored sticker on the front of a desk). As with other skills, practice in the empty classroom to build comfort and muscle memory first. Ask the teacher to practice giving directions, immediately followed by scanning each of the designated places in the room. At each designated point, the teacher should pause long enough to make eye contact, nod, or deliver some acknowledgment to students who are complying.

2. Identify areas in the room that the teacher typically doesn't see. Identify a signal you will use to remind the teacher to scan those areas. Have the teacher give a direction and then give the signal to remind them to scan. Repeat multiple times.

3. After a few rounds of the first practice, videotape the teacher scanning with students in the room. That same day, or as soon as possible, review that video together and give feedback. Have the teacher practice in an empty room again, just like the original practice, but this time video this practice as well. Review the video together and give feedback. Repeat this cycle as many times as possible.

4. Once the teacher is pretty skilled at scanning, have the teacher calculate the number/percentage of students not meeting expectations. Stand next to the teacher, and after each direction given, ask, "How many students aren't meeting expectations right now?" Ask the teacher to do this when you're not in the room and submit that data to you. Ideally, this hyper–focus on who is and who isn't doing the "stuff" will become habit whether the teacher officially calculates the number each time or not.

**STRAND 1**
Teacher Action 9 - Teacher genuinely, publicly, and briefly acknowledges students meeting expectations immediately after every direction given. During work time, teacher praises specific student actions relevant to learning.

## Nickname – Positive Praise

Rationale – Maybe you've had one of these experiences: you're walking into a building, whether it be work, a doctor's office, the bank, and as you open the door, you see someone walking up behind you. You politely hold the door for the person and they walk right through without saying a word. Or, while you're fighting traffic on your way home, you let someone who's pulled up next to you, in front of you. And they don't give the friendly driver wave acknowledging that you just did something for them. However small it was. Or, your boss asks you to work on a major project. After weeks of sweat and blood and sleepless nights and not seeing your family, you submit it, only to get a response that's solely focused on the things you missed or that need improvement.

People crave praise and acknowledgment. Whether it's for small or big things. Praise lets the recipient know that they've done the right thing, that the person in charge has noticed and is thankful, and it establishes a positive relationship. Even if it's for something the person was "supposed" to do like the waiter who places your food on the table or the Uber driver who picks you up. Saying "thanks'' goes a long way.

What it looks like – After directions that sound like…"When I say go, please take 30 seconds to copy today's objective on a clean sheet in your notebook. Please do that silently. Go." Teacher scans the room, warmly acknowledging 3-5 students who are following directions by stating the students' names and the observed, tangible behavior ("eyes on the speaker" vs. "paying attention"). Student names should vary to avoid favoritism, as should the types of praise. The teacher should avoid saying "I like" or "I love" too often (especially for praise around compliance), as this can devalue the meaning of the words. Ex:

1. **Narration:** "I see Johnny has gotten started right away. Lamarcus is writing silently" (note: the teacher isn't thanking students)
2. **Thanking:** "Thank you Johnny for starting right away. Larmarcus is writing silently, thank you."

When students are working and the teacher is able to circulate, acknowledgment or praise should focus on the academic portion of the task, not compliance. For example, "Manny is using sentence starters,""Thank you, Corinne for referencing the text," "Peter is checking his work," or "Bianca is reviewing her notes before answering, that's a great strategy," etc.

**Practice**

1. Script out multiple go–to lines of praise and model these for the teacher. Share what makes them effective: they're succinct, they use student names, they name the task the students are supposed to be completing, the specific behavior/action, etc. Have the teacher practice, giving feedback on the criteria throughout. Use the visual cues that were placed in S1.TA8 so that the teacher is practicing praising students in all areas of the room.

2. Review a lesson plan and ask the teacher to identify at key points during the lesson, what precisely students should be doing (what it looks like, sounds like, etc.). Have the teacher script out go-to lines of praise for these and then practice aloud.

3. Incorporate different scenarios, such as when students are working in groups, or individually, while the teacher is circulating, etc. Model a go-to phrase the teacher could use while circulating, then have them script out some go-to phrases based on the academic tasks the teacher would routinely look for. Have them circulate, use the go-to phrases, and provide feedback.

4. Videotape a classroom from the teacher's perspective, facing the students. View the video with the teacher and ask them to place themself in the teacher's shoes while viewing. As you view the video with the teacher, pause as students respond to teacher direction and ask your teacher to step in to acknowledge the students. The goal is to build comfort and automaticity in both seeing and acknowledging behaviors that should be reinforced.

**STRAND 1**

Teacher Action 10 - A continuum of redirection is used, and a ladder of logical consequences is followed for misbehaviors.

## Nickname – Redirect Logically

Rationale – You're walking through the grocery store one day and you unknowingly bump your cart into the corner display of sparkling water. Fortunately only one bottle falls, but the associate has seen this mishap and asks you to stay where you are while she calls the store manager who proceeds to sternly tell you that, "This is a nice store and if you can't be responsible while in the store you are not welcome back!" Whoa! Chances are you're never shopping here again, you're posting on social media, and you're starting a word-of-mouth campaign to boycott the store. The consequence of your action wasn't at all appropriate or logical and it has made you feel unsafe, unwelcome, misunderstood, attacked, angry and so on.
When students are redirected in a way that isn't appropriate or logical, they likely feel the same way, which means they are unlikely to want to comply with your consequence or follow another direction from you in the future. If it happens enough, they might not even want to pass the threshold of your room. So instead of being chastised for breaking the bottle of sparkling water, maybe you're just asked to pay for it. Or maybe, the manager simply asks you to be more careful going forward. Both of which would be logical consequences.

What it looks like – After the teacher has given a clear direction, scanned, and praised, the teacher redirects students by using an appropriate tone, naming the desired behavior (as opposed to "stop___"), directing it at specific students, and disengaging. The teacher should use the least invasive strategy that will get the desired result as efficiently as possible while maintaining the student-teacher relationship. For example, "When I say go, you have 30 seconds to silently copy today's objective in your notebook. I see Malachi, Essence, Heaven, and Brielle got started right away. I need 3 students to pick up their pencils and copy the objective." Some redirection strategies (from less to more invasive):

- Whole class/group: "I need everyone to grab their seats and start working on their Do Nows silently. Thank you."
- Anonymous: "I need 3 students to grab their seats and start working on their Do Nows silently. Thank you."
- Signaling/gesturing: after making eye contact, teacher points to seats and mimes writing. Gives a thumbs up.
- Public correction: "Johnny, I need you to take your seat and start working on the Do Now silently. Thank you."
- Consequence: "Johnny, we're going to move your seat today. I need you working silently on the Do Now."

**Practice**

1. Model for the teacher what it looks like to redirect students, using scenarios you've already created. Ensure that you're modeling holding a high bar for kids, but also ensure that you're not sending a student out of the room for laughing during a silent practice. Or, asking a student who just cursed at a peer to, "Cut it out." Within this, you can create a ladder that matches behaviors with their recommended consequences. And while there will certainly be gray areas here (think of a student who laughingly curses at a classmate he's friendly with vs a student who angrily curses at a student he's had conflict with), you will likely be able to bucket most behaviors in a way that allows the teacher to see something happen in the room and almost immediately know how to react. After you model and after you've bucketed behaviors, have the teacher practice by giving them different scenarios and asking them to choose what the redirection should be and then implement. Give feedback throughout.
2. Ask the teacher to identify the 3-5 most common misbehaviors in class. For 1 of these misbehaviors, model a standardized redirection that could be used with all students, all the time to ensure equity. For example, if a student calls out and doesn't raise their hand, the standardized redirection might be, "Reminder _____ (student name), raised hands to share." Have the teacher script out their go-to redirection phrases for the other misbehaviors and have them practice until they build muscle memory and comfort.
3. Bring a new set of scenarios to the teacher for the next meeting. This time, have the teacher read the scenario and immediately make a decision on the redirection/consequence. You might even set a timer so the teacher must make a decision without deliberation. The goal is to increase the speed of logical decision-making and allow the teacher to begin to feel confident in their developing instinct. Provide feedback to the teacher for each scenario.
4. Videotape a section of the teacher's class where they are likely to give consequences. Review this video with the teacher, providing feedback on the appropriateness of the consequence within the full context of the class. Likely, the authentic context will allow you to see what, if anything, distracts the teacher from maintaining logical decision-making. Provide feedback on each consequence delivered. Then ask the teacher to implement that feedback in front of you. This process may need to be repeated a number of times over the course of days or weeks to develop a new instinct.

Note – if the school has a culture handbook or schoolwide protocols for issuing consequences, please make sure all practice exercises and coaching reinforce these. It can be problematic if one teacher is doing X for a behavior while the teacher next door is doing Y.

**STRAND 1**

Teacher Action 11 - Teacher actions and materials authentically and intentionally build positive relationships with students.

## Nickname – Authentic Positive Relationships

Rationale – For the past fifteen years, my wife and I have been regular customers at a Chinese restaurant (for my money, they have the best orange chicken anywhere). During those fifteen years, there has been a lot of turnover in the staff, but one server has been a constant. She knows our names, knows the food we like, talks to us genuinely, and even recognizes my voice over the phone when we place an order for pickup. While we would still eat at this restaurant even if she weren't there, her presence and the relationship we've built with her routinely improves our experience. We know we're going to be treated well every time, and that's because she knows us. For your teachers, building authentic positive relationships with students is a must. While students may be engaged and learn from teachers with whom they have negative relationships, they're much more likely to succeed with teachers who they trust, who spend the time to get to know them, treat them as people, and are authentic in doing so.

What it looks like – The teacher warmly greets students by name as they enter the classroom and calls on students by name when they participate (names, and their correct pronunciation, must be learned as quickly as possible). At the beginning of the year, the teacher uses surveys, questionnaires or other activities to learn about their students and incorporates student interests into work and class activities. Check-ins (both academic and emotional) are incorporated routinely in class. The teacher makes regular positive phone calls home time.

**Practice**

1. Model how a teacher might get to know their students via routine check-ins. For example, a DN or Exit Ticket could include student names and interests such as "Samantha scored 6 more points than Kenya in their basketball game. If their total points scored was 12, how many points did Samantha and Kenya score?" or "describe a family member using one of our vocabulary words." Have the teacher create activities or questions in class that will include student names and interests and provide feedback.

2. Share some unity building activities (class circles/meetings, personal artifacts, etc.) that the teacher can use in class. Model their implementation and have the teacher script their language and introduction, noting that the teacher should also share about themself so that the relationships are equitable. Provide feedback. Record one of these unity building activities and note how effectively the teacher deploys it and share this feedback. Set a goal of having the teacher do at least one unity building activity each week.

3. If the teacher struggles with student names, use a seating chart and quiz the teacher by having them say the student's name correctly when they are called on. Challenge the teacher by removing the seating chart to see if they can remember who sits where.

4. Model how to make positive phone calls home and role-play making those calls. Have the teacher make a few phone calls home in the meeting with you. Set a goal for the number of positive phone calls home made each week and use a tracker to keep note of who's been called and who hasn't.

STRAND 1

Teacher Action 12 - Teacher uses growth mindset language to both celebrate and motivate students after individual and class achievements and growth opportunities. Student work is posted, updated regularly, and highlights successes, growth, and opportunities.

Nickname – Growth Mindset

Rationale – Growing up, there was a story about me. The story was that I was "naturally smart." The people in my life messaged this to me (I'm not sure how it started), and eventually, I began to own it. And while it doesn't seem like being called smart would be negative, for me, it did have some pretty negative effects on my development. First, I stopped trying in school. I stopped doing my homework, I stopped raising my hand, and I even stopped bringing books and paper to my classes. I realized years later it was because I didn't want to do anything to disprove what people already thought of me. They thought I was naturally smart. So what if I said or did something that wasn't smart? Around this time, another story emerged. I was a "natural athlete" (see a pattern here?). So, when all my friends from the soccer team went to soccer camp over the summer, I didn't. Remember, I was the natural athlete. They all had to try. They all had to get taught how to play better. Me, I was naturally good. Until the other players passed me by and I quit because it got too hard.

While there can be a tendency to emphasize the verbal in growth mindset, it is just as important for it to be prevalent in student work. Student work is not simply a classroom decoration. It's an opportunity to acknowledge the effort, improvement, and success of every single student in the room. We have to shake ourselves out of the mindset that we post the top scoring work and begin to understand that stapling a paper to a bulletin board provides us a platform to celebrate, teach, and unify our students. In fact, one could argue that a score never needs to be posted. A score isn't useful. A note to a student acknowledging the time and effort they put into learning something increases the chances that they'll put the effort in again. Noticing the improvement a student has made tells the student and his classmates that you see the most important thing a student needs to succeed—effort! When you post only top scoring work, the biggest message you are sending is to the students whose work is not posted-- that no matter how much they try and improve, that doesn't matter to you and it isn't success.

The inspirational educator Rita Pierson said, "I gave a quiz; 20 questions. A student missed 18. I put a plus two on his paper and a big smiley face… You see, minus 18 sucks all the life out of you. Plus two says, 'I ain't all bad.'"

What it looks like – The teacher repeatedly sends messages that reinforce a growth mindset. They send messages about students' effort and about the process they took to get to an answer. "Nice job persevering on that problem. That kind of effort is going to serve you well all year." Teachers use language to help shape students' visions of themselves. "We have some serious mathematicians in this room." Over the course of a report period, notable work from all students in the class is posted. This does not mean every student needs to have something posted at all times, but that the work of all students is displayed at some point. Posted work includes meaningful feedback, not limited to absolute scores and generalized statements of success. Feedback speaks to effort, improvement, and/or student success on a given assignment. Posted student work should be recent - within the last month - to increase student buy-in and excitement.

**Practice**

1. Provide a model for the teacher of five to seven go-to growth mindset phrases they can use. Things like, "Keep working at this" and "The more we try, the more we'll be successful." Along with standard responses to students like, "Thanks for your effort" and "Good job working through that" and "That's a great mistake." After practice of these phrases in isolation, provide the teacher with multiple scenarios, asking them to use one of the provided phrases. Eventually, have the teacher script out their own and/or ask them to make up their her own for additional scenarios you provide.

2. With the teacher, create any exercise-specific or class-specific branding or messaging they can use that will continue to reinforce students' belief that with effort, anything is possible. Things like "It's time for Minute-Math. Where your only competition is you from yesterday." Or, "Let's see some hands from as many Alton Eagles as possible. Remember, being correct is not what matters as we're all learning together."

3. The Test of the Unknowing Guest: Take 10 minutes of a prep period to stand with the teacher and look at their student work. Read through the feedback posted and tell the teacher what is being communicated to the student and their peers by what is posted. Provide feedback to the teacher around how to make feedback stronger to improve academic performance as well as mindset.

4. Review student work in advance and provide sample feedback for the teacher that includes information on effort and success (you likely won't be able to provide feedback around improvement unless you know the students/their data very well). Ask the teacher to review and then provide their own feedback on additional pieces of student work. Ask the teacher to complete this for all of his classes as a deliverable for your next coaching meeting.

5. Videotape the teacher and review together for places where growth mindset language could have been used or where fixed mindset was used. Have them script out new statements to replace some of the less effective statements from the video.

**STRAND 1**

Teacher Action 13 - Teacher is knowledgeable of student IEPs, 504s, and/or behavioral support plans, and makes according accommodations. Collaboration with student services team is regular and intentional.

## Nickname – Student Accommodations

Rationale – I just ran my first 5K ever. It was on a Long Island boardwalk in freezing rain. I ran with a lifelong friend who is also a lifelong runner. He was decked out in extra-grippy running sneakers, Under Armor leggings and an undershirt for warmth, running gloves (yes, this is a real thing), and a running hat. Me on the other hand, I was wearing tennis sneakers, heavy sweatpants, and a bulky sweatshirt. I had no hat or gloves. While we both finished the race, I struggled much more than he did. I could barely breathe and at one point, I even started dry-heaving. All while he sang and laughed and cheered our fellow runners on. Yes, he's an experienced runner and I'm not, so that certainly gave him an advantage. But he also made accommodations - for the cold, for the freezing rain, for the slippery terrain - that I didn't.

Sometimes when we're in schools, teachers will tell us that they'd have a much stronger school culture if it wasn't for a handful (or more) of very disruptive students who are affecting the learning of everyone else in the building. This is, of course, a very real concern. Both that this is happening but maybe more importantly, that when we ask what accommodations teachers (and leaders) have made for these students, they're sometimes lacking (or even non-existent).

This teacher action exists for two reasons. The first is to support school leaders in providing coaching for teachers around supporting all students in their schools. The second is to hopefully blow up the idea that it's the students' fault when the adults haven't provided enough support for them. Yes, some students are very challenging to teach. I know this as a former special education teacher and the father of a child with Autism. But we need to make accommodations, both for the sake of those students who are struggling and for the sake of the other students in their classes. While this may mean more work on the front end, if done well, it'll save a lot of time in the way of parent phone calls and disciplinary hearings on the back end; and, ideally, it will lead to more student success and cause less teacher frustration and burnout.

What it looks like – the teacher is aware of the accommodations each student who requires them needs and throughout the day he makes intentional decisions to ensure these accommodations are being executed. This teacher would do things like having an easily distracted student sit up front so she can focus more easily on the board. They'd potentially give intermittent breaks to a student with self-control issues. They may redirect a student who has oppositional defiance privately vs. publicly as not to get into a conflict. The teacher has routine meetings with the student services team so all parties are aware of how the accommodations are being implemented, their impact on the student, and what needs to be changed.

Note – accommodations referred to here are behavioral in nature. For differentiation around instruction, refer to S2.TA7.

### Practice

1. The first practice involves looking through IEPS and/or 504 plans to ensure the teacher is aware of all the accommodations that are needed. Teachers should be asked to make a list of these on an easily accessible doc. Once the teacher is aware, the coach should model what it looks like to make these accommodations. Some of these will be made in advance, like changing a seating chart. But others, like checking in with a student who is emotionally disturbed, to ensure he's focused and feeling supported, will take explicit modeling with corresponding criteria. Because there are so many different behaviors and different ways to address them, we have not provided criteria here. However, using the IEPS and/or 504s and what the coaches and the teachers know about the students, they should develop a plan for in-the-moment student support. Coaches, make sure you're being explicit here. There's a huge difference between saying, 'Check in on Jonathan" and "Every 10 minutes, you'll walk to Jonathan's desk, kneel down, and ask him if he needs anything. You'll then check on his work offering one piece of praise and one next step."
2. After the accommodations are created, simulate a real classroom and call out student names and the behaviors they're engaging in while the teacher circulates and provides those accommodations. One note here is that we usually coach leaders away from using real student names in practices around redirection as it could reinforce that teacher's belief that student X or Y is a "bad kid." This is different. We need to use the student names here as each of these students needs tailored support. Just stay away from conversations, both on your end or the teacher's end, that paint the students in a negative light. If the teacher says, "Yeah, this won't ever work with him," you should address that right away with something like, "It's true that his behaviors can be challenging, but we haven't provided him with enough support so far. I'm requesting you give this a chance. For him, for the other students in the class, and for you."
3. Quiz the teacher on what accommodations each student needs.
4. If an IEP or 504 doesn't exist, co-design a support plan with the teacher. You don't need an IEP to tell you that a student can't sit still for five minutes. Name the behavior, determine what accommodation/s will address it, then create criteria for what it'll look like when done well. Then have the teacher do this, with your support, for another student. Then have the teacher do it on their own for any other students who need accommodations.
5. Share an agenda template and model a meeting between the teacher and a member of the student services team. Explain that the meeting should use data culled from observations of the student before, during, and after accommodations have been implemented, be solutions oriented, and have clear next steps. Have the teacher practice with a variety of scenarios for student accommodations and relative effectiveness. For the next meeting, have the teacher take data regarding some specific students and be prepared to practice the conversation they will have with the student services team member.

# Strand 2

STUDENT OUTCOME GOAL:
STUDENTS MAKE SIGNIFICANT PROGRESS TOWARD MASTERING A RIGOROUS DAILY OBJECTIVE.

STRAND 2

Teacher Action 1 - Lesson objective is the most important next step for students, is measurable, and can be accomplished in one period. All materials selected are purposeful, rigorous, and aligned to that objective.

## Nickname – Next Step Objectives

Rationale – There are three types of people in the gym I go to. The first type are the folks who hop on the treadmill and jog leisurely for twenty minutes. Who then hop off and do some pushups and some bodyweight squats. Maybe they do a few curls as well. And then they leave. They're likely trying to maintain their physiques or health, but they're probably not getting better at anything. Or at least not significantly better because what they're doing is too easy for them. Then there are the folks upstairs who are lifting monster weight, screaming and groaning and testing the mettle of every vein in their necks and heads. I don't doubt that these people are building muscle, but I often wonder if they're doing more damage than good to themselves because what they're doing is too hard. The last group are the people sweating bullets in bootcamp classes, testing themselves by cranking out burpee after burpee and box jump after box jump. They're pushing themselves every time they're there. Their workouts aren't too easy and not so hard they could get injured.

Just like at the gym, my observations of classrooms usually reveal the following trends specific to instruction. Either students breeze through the day's lesson, mastering the content with ease and often working on (and sometimes completing) their homework in class. Leaving me with the question of why this lesson was chosen in the first place. Or, the students clearly don't understand what is happening and have no chance of mastering the content but the teacher plows forward anyway in order to "finish" the lesson. Sometimes the teacher models (S2.TA6) the daily skill. But often they don't. Sometimes all the materials are perfectly aligned to the objective, but often they're not (example – the lesson is about adding integers and the model only dealt with positive integers. But on the worksheet students are asked to add negative integers and they're not set up to do it). And in many cases, the teacher is simply teaching the "next lesson" of their scripted program and when asked, "Why this lesson today?" They readily admit that.

What I see far less often are rigorous, aligned lessons where the teacher knows exactly what all students know (S2.TA9) and they are using that data to responsively create (or modify if using scripted curriculum) lessons that are the most important next step for students.

What it looks like – Lessons are rigorous but manageable. Yes, they should be hard. But not hard in the way it would be hard for me to climb Mt Everest. It needs to be something that students can be taught to master in one period (or partially master). 3 or 4 part objectives are likely way too much for one class period. The lessons are informed by data and not a script so teachers are hyper– focused on what students need next. This might mean breaking from what the scripted program says they need. Or what the unit plan lays out. This is okay as long as it's intentionally done. It's not an out for instruction that's ineffective. All materials are aligned to the objective. And they all push student learning forward.

**Practice**

1. Co-plan writing objectives that meet the bar for rigor and can be accomplished in one lesson. Then plan each lesson component with the teacher. Do not plan entire lessons at once, but rather, plan multiple model portions to build their expertise there. Then plan multiple Guided Practice portions. And so on. Use student data to inform the creation of these objectives and the subsequent materials.

2. If the teacher is using a scripted curriculum, often these have multi-part objectives and are not in student friendly language (or are just copied from a set of standards). Model analyzing the lesson and identifying the most important objective. Have the teacher repeat for other lessons. Model changing the standards into student friendly language. Have the teacher script for other lessons and provide feedback.

3. Ask the teacher to submit lesson plans that include data-driven rationale for why each lesson was chosen. And get into the habit of asking teachers the following question: "Why this lesson today?"

4. With the teacher, review the different components and materials of a teacher's lesson for objective alignment (if there is a Do Now or opening activity, that can be ignored for the moment). If there are materials or content not aligned to the objective, model how to change one component so that it is aligned, and then have the teacher modify the rest. Repeat for subsequent lessons.

**STRAND 2**

Teacher Action 2 - Lesson plan includes an accurate and appropriately rigorous lesson exemplar, steps for success, differentiated pathways, and criteria for evaluation as well as potential student misconceptions. Teacher has a clear understanding of lesson flow.

## Nickname – Exemplar, Steps, and Criteria

Rationale – Whenever you have a goal, whether that is shedding some weight, making an addition to your home, or nailing an interview, you need to know what the end product looks like. If I go for a haircut and don't tell my barber exactly what I want, if I don't have a vision for what my hair should look like afterward, I won't be able to explain to him what I want and I might (or might not) get a good haircut. But if I know I want my hair to look like Ryan Gosling's hair and I describe it exactly and maybe even show him a picture of Gosling's hair, we'll both know exactly what success looks like and we'll know, afterward, if we got there. That picture is the exemplar. The steps the barber needs to take to make my hair look like that are the steps for success. My hair looking like Ryan's afterward - the same shape, same length, same color, same part, etc. are the criteria for evaluation. The same rationale applies to the teacher and students. If a teacher doesn't know exactly what success is, if he doesn't have that exemplar, the steps, and the criteria, it'll be much harder to teach the children the new skill because he might not be able to describe exactly what they should be doing at every point. And if the teacher doesn't know these things, then he cannot provide the most precise feedback or evaluate the success of the students. By having an exemplar, steps, and criteria, the teacher knows what excellence is and how to get there. They can take partial student answers and push them towards that excellence.

But having an exemplar, steps, and criteria isn't enough. Along the way, the teacher should also anticipate what issues may arise that will prevent the students from attaining excellence. Think about the television show Property Brothers. When Jonathan Scott makes his blueprint for reconstruction, he also considers what issues could interfere with the final product. Could there be mold in the bathroom? How about faulty wiring? Just like Jonathan, the teacher needs to think about what things will prevent students from achieving excellence. These are misconceptions. Where might students run into "faulty wiring?" The teacher must plan for the misconceptions students may have so that when they arise, the teacher can identify and correct them. And knowing what misconceptions may arise is a direct result of knowing exactly what success looks like and how it should be achieved.

The final part of this teacher action is the teacher has internalized the lesson - how students will go from A to B to C to exemplar. Some curricula or scripted programs have the exemplar already done in the teacher edition. This might encourage teachers to show up to class, open the textbook, and read the lesson verbatim to the students but the intellectual preparation is not there, so when students are struggling, the teachers don't know why and haven't anticipated those misconceptions.

What it looks like – In lesson planning, the teacher designs and writes out an exemplar end product and backward maps from there to determine what steps they followed to get to the exemplar response. The teacher also thinks through their metacognitive processes to identify where a mistake or misconception might arise. These misconceptions are addressed prior to students engaging in independent practice (note – during modeling, the teacher can show an exemplar to the students—but not, obviously, the final product exemplar as that will give away what the response is. But certainly, the teacher can create another exemplar or two and use those to model). Finally, the teacher lands on the criteria for evaluation. In other words, what will they look at to determine whether or not the students were successful? With the criteria for success and misconceptions in hand, the teacher includes those differentiated pathways to the exemplar.

**Practice**

1. Design an exemplar using one of the teacher's upcoming lessons. Review with them, pulling out the components. Ask the teacher to create one with you there. Identify the steps the teacher took to get to that exemplar. If you can't tell how the teacher got there, then the students probably can't either. Provide feedback and then ask the teacher to do another one (and even assign some for the teacher to do for homework).

2. For teachers using a scripted curriculum, often the exemplar is provided. Have the teacher complete the exit ticket or final assessment students are expected to do, and then identify the steps of getting there.

3. Choose a group of students who did not meet the exemplar set in a lesson. Model analyzing one student's work against the exemplar criteria, steps for success, and misconceptions. Have the teacher repeat this process for the other students, naming precisely why those students did not meet the bar. What were the common mistakes the students made? Why? By having a teacher go through the process of thinking about the misconceptions beforehand, they can begin to internalize the metacognitive processes the students will be going through on a daily basis. Use this feedback to inform the creation of more exemplars and misconceptions.

**STRAND 2**
Teacher Action 3 - Lesson requires students to consistently engage in a variety of ways throughout class.

## Nickname – Engagement Opportunities

Rationale – Seeing a hockey game in person is an awesome experience. The puck is whipped from player to player, from one side of the ice to the other. In the blink of an eye, a puck saved at one end of the rink is shot up the other side of ice to a streaking player who scores. This happens in a matter of seconds. As soon as you look away, you've missed something. Live hockey requires an attendee's total concentration and engagement. A classroom must operate like a live hockey game. Students must be required to engage at all times. But unlike a hockey game, that's very exciting on its own, class sometimes feels the opposite of this. So students must be asked to engage so they don't miss anything. Engagement means they are thinking, participating, and learning. Think of any ineffective class you had in high school or college. Chances are, the teacher or professor spoke ad nauseam and you just went along for the ride. Chances are, you didn't learn much. In the classroom, students must be active and engaged because engagement is paramount to learning. This does not mean that every second of every class is high leverage or intense, but it does mean that for every teacher action, there is a requisite, observable and tangible student action. To be clear, what I'm talking about in this strand is what I call, "Low–Level Engagement." Annotating, tracking the speaker, snapping when they agree with a response, etc. We get into much deeper levels of engagement in Strand 3.

What it looks like – For every activity in class, the teacher must have a tangible task/expectation for all students. Asking students to "listen" as a classmate reads is much harder to observe, monitor, and provide feedback on than "annotate for one thing you find interesting." If the teacher is lecturing, the students should be doing something as well (taking notes or responding to a thinking question). If the students are reading, they are annotating as well. If students are talking with their peer, they are writing down their peer's response as well (note – talking to peers is Strand 3, but they should still have a tangible task when they are). For every action in class, there is requisite student action. This ties very clearly to S1.T7 TTMS Directions. "While I am reading out loud, highlight diction that demonstrates_________."

Note – these engagement opportunities should vary throughout class: students should not be taking notes all period, or holding up whiteboards, or just reading and answering questions.

**Practice**

1. Review a lesson with a teacher. For every teacher action ask or action, "What are the students doing here?" If nothing exists, or if it's not easily observable, co–design the engagement opportunity with them (turn and talks, stop and jots, whiteboards, holdups, etc.). Then ask them to do the same for another lesson or two and provide feedback.

2. Model how to incorporate a variety of engagement strategies into daily lessons. Have the teacher apply to further lessons and provide feedback. Have the teacher script these and note them in their daily lesson plans.

3. Record a portion of class and watch the video together. Note where student engagement drops and compare with the teacher. Have the teacher make suggestions for different ways they could have included more and varied engagement opportunities. Apply these takeaways to an upcoming lesson.

**STRAND 2**

Teacher Action 4 - Lesson objective is clearly displayed and visible to all students throughout the lesson. Teacher states daily objective/learning outcome using student-friendly language, what they will accomplish by the end of the lesson, and how/why they're meaningful.

## Nickname – Objective Importance

Rationale – If I asked you to go for a run, you'd inevitably ask me one question in response: how far are we going? I know this because I ask this question at trainings around the country and this is how people respond. If I asked you to play a game of one-on-one basketball, you'd ask, "What are we playing to?" And if I said, "11," I'd bet that as we got closer to that number, the intensity would ratchet up. Just like if our run was 8 miles, we'd push ourselves at mile 7, even if we were both exhausted. Without those goals, without that end point to strive for, we'd just be jogging or shooting around. The goal is what turns the scrimmage into a game. It's what makes it matter more.

Students need to know the objective in every lesson, how it connects to what they've been learning, why they are doing it, and how they are going to accomplish it. This deeper connection to what's happening in the lesson will allow the teacher to push students further as well as motivate students to push themselves as they know exactly what they're striving toward. And while you know that we'd go for a run because it's good for our health, explaining to students why today's lesson matters is a great way to get them to see the value in it.

Note – a really big trend I see in classrooms around the country are lessons that start with almost no explanation of what's about to happen. Intros that sound like, "Okay, open to page 39 and let's get started." And when I ask those students what they're working on or why it matters or what they'll have done by the end, they rarely know. S2.TA4 is a pretty easy way to get kids really connected to why they should be wholly focused on this lesson and everything included therein.

What it looks like – The agenda board is updated each day with the appropriate lesson objective and is also included, where applicable, in slide decks/PPTs. At the beginning of the lesson, before modeling, the teacher states what students will do in that class period. They will explain, in student friendly terms, what the objective is, how it relates to the unit of study/why it matters, and how the students will accomplish it. The teacher may also have students repeat the objective, why it matters, and how they'll accomplish it is a good way to build internalization within students. An example: "Today we are going to explore the themes of love and revenge in Romeo & Juliet through Shakespeare's use of literary devices. Specifically, by the end of class, you are going to choose 1 literary device and explain how it contributed to the themes of love and revenge. By analyzing what authors are doing and why, not only do you have a better understanding of the text, but you'll be able to infuse that in your own writing."

**Practice**

1. With the teacher, model then practice scripting out objective importance in student-friendly language. Have the teacher do this multiple times, providing feedback throughout. This is particularly effective with teachers who use scripted programs with predetermined objectives. It'll be very helpful to get them connected to why today's lesson matters beyond just that it came next in the progression. The teacher can then add a visual cue/reminder in their slide deck so that she mentions it at the appropriate part in the lesson. The objective should be posted in a highly visible place: as the footer or header on each slide in the PPTs, included on all worksheets, and posted on the agenda board.

2. Model how you would explain an objective, particularly the why and the how. Have the teacher script their own language for a particular lesson and practice delivering it. Provide feedback on if their explanation is concise, precise, and relatable for students.

3. Share some direct quotes from students regarding a previous lesson and compare it to the teacher's own words. Model how the teacher could revise how she explains the objective to students, and then have the teacher practice with upcoming lessons.

**STRAND 2**

Teacher Action 5 - A lesson hook is used to engage students, connect to the objective, and highlight the relevance of what will be learned.

## Nickname – Lesson Hook

Rationale – About once an hour, I get some kind of update on my phone, whether it's from Facebook, the news, or Twitter. Not to mention emails and text messages. Every time my phone vibrates or pings, it's another call for attention. The most recent one I received was regarding a friend's birthday. I immediately got on my phone and texted him. In that instance, I was hooked into taking immediate action. This is the life of students in the technological age we live in, where attention spans are shorter than they have ever been before. Students will be pulled in countless directions, from social media to home life issues to what's going on after school.

Teachers are competing with all of this. In order to keep students' attention, teachers must devise a hook: something that will make the lesson interesting and relatable and allow students access very early on. The hook can be combined with the piece of why this matters from S2.TA4. Or it can be something totally different.

What it looks like – Hooks should occur at the beginning of a lesson (after the Do Now or entry exercise, or it could be the Do Now or entry exercise). It should last no more than 3 minutes and require all students to engage (see S2.TA3). The teacher should give students a question to ponder, a scenario which piques the interest, relayed in a way that the students can connect to it. This time should be served with a lot of student voice—students should be writing, talking to each other, responding to questions, raising their hands because they can't wait to share their opinions. The teacher here is a facilitator of student engagement. Think about what makes the content interesting and relevant, and connect it to students' lives.

I saw a great example of this in a Government class where the day's lesson was about choosing a side in an argument. The teacher began with a story about his youth and connected it to a candy bar his dad always ate and about his dad's rationale for always eating that candy bar. As you can imagine, students (they were 8th graders) were excited to share about their own favorite candy bars, which the teacher had them do next. They were asked to come up with as many reasons as possible why their candy bar was the best. Then a few shared out and the students were asked to either stay with their candy bar or switch to the other person's (only if the argument to do so was strong enough). After a few minutes of the candy bar share, students were thrilled to dive into the lesson and excited about choosing sides in an argument.

**Practice**

1. Model this for your teacher in isolation by showing how a normal lesson usually starts and then have them compare that to a lesson that begins with a hook. Provide some examples of hooks (questions, activities, stories, hypotheticals, real-life examples, etc.) The teacher should then practice on multiple lessons by designing a hook that will resonate with students. The more relatable for kids, the better. For example, I recently saw a literature class in which they were discussing significant moments. The teacher opened the lesson by showing a short clip of Steph Curry hitting a variety of shots throughout a game. Students were asked to raise their hands when he made the most significant shot. All students' hands shot up on the buzzer beater. The teacher stamped this as the most significant moment of the game and students were hooked for the remainder of the lesson.

2. In lesson plans, add a column for lesson hooks so the teachers are in the habit of creating hooks and receiving feedback (this column should include both the activity and how students will engage, see S2.TA3) and the time frame.

**STRAND 2**

Teacher Action 6 - Teacher succinctly and efficiently models the precise steps and cognitive processes students are expected to take to master content.

## Nickname – Create a Model

Rationale – I remember when I first learned how to swim. The instructor showed us how to doggy paddle and then put us in the water and asked us to stay up for at least sixty seconds. What the instructor didn't do was show us how to doggy paddle and then have us swim freestyle across the length of the pool. If he had, I probably would've drowned. And if I didn't drown, I certainly wouldn't have trusted that swim instructor again. If teachers don't explain and model succinctly and efficiently the precise steps needed to master the objective for the day, it sets the students up for failure. If students find themselves in this situation too frequently, it can cause them to mentally checkout. Whatever the end assessment is, the steps when the teacher models should be perfectly aligned to that end goal.

What it looks like – The teacher lists out the precise steps students need to take in order to master the content (exactly aligned to the exit ticket or final assessment), does a think-aloud, provides something written/visible to anchor the steps, and completes the entire process from start to finish. This model should last no more than 10 minutes and does not include student participation in terms of naming or stamping the steps. Students can write, annotate, use signals, copy, but they should not be a part of the model ("Bianca, what's my next step?" does not occur here). Think about cooking dinner. If you ask me to cook chicken cordon bleu but all I know how to cook is roasted chicken, then the end product will not be chicken cordon bleu. Modeling is the recipe…the step-by-step process the students need to master in order to produce chicken cordon bleu.

Note – some curricula specifically direct the teacher not to model the precise steps for success before the students dive into work. This is okay, as long as the teacher at some point during the lesson does model to address any misconceptions or struggles students have encountered along the way.

**Practice**

1. Script out your own exemplar and model. Do your model for the teacher in isolation. Ask them to follow your steps. Have them reflect on the experience, then have them script out and deliver their model for a lesson. Provide feedback on the clarity, precision, and efficiency of the model. Repeat for multiple lessons.

2. Have your teacher do their model as if they were in front of students (think-aloud, written out steps, under 10 minutes, etc.). Follow your teacher's model exactly. Compare your end product with the teacher's exemplar. If they match up, then the steps in the model are aligned to the final product. If your end product doesn't match the exemplar, identify the area(s) where you fell short. There could be two issues here. One: the exemplar is not at all aligned to the steps. Two: the steps are missing something to produce the exemplar. Identify which of these options your teacher falls under. If it is the former, have the teacher modify the exemplar to be more aligned to the steps (see S2.TA2). If it is the latter, identify the missing pieces of the model and ask your teacher to modify them. Then ask the teacher to repeat with multiple lessons. This can also be done with student work.

3. Record the teacher's model and ask the teacher to reflect on places where the model is clear and places where it isn't. Ask the teacher to revise the model to make it clearer. Do this with multiple lessons.

**STRAND 2**

Teacher Action 7 - Teacher differentiates instruction, content, materials, and presentation to meet the needs of all learners. Teacher creates opportunities to challenge students exhibiting early evidence of content mastery.

## Nickname – Differentiation

Rationale – Everyone learns just a little bit differently from the next individual. Because different people learn differently, teachers must differentiate instruction. Some students might need small group instruction. Others might produce a different final project to demonstrate understanding. This does not mean that teachers should lower the bar. We never lower the bar. What it does mean is that one size does not fit all. By differentiating instruction, teachers are working their hardest to make their classroom as inclusive as possible.

What it looks like –Differentiation can happen in 4 ways. One is the content—students will be at different areas of content knowledge on a given day, so the information/lesson may differ. Two is input—how the teacher presents/delivers the lesson to the students (the instruction itself, the materials shared with students). Think of having videos, guided notes, vs. reading a text. Three is output— how will students demonstrate mastery of the material? This could be in a written paper, speaking through their understanding, drawing something, etc. Four is environment—some students need small groups, others need individualized attention, some work best with a partner. The key here is to understand where each student is and meet them there. The bar never changes. How the students reach the bar does. For students who exhibit early evidence of content mastery, the teacher needs to have created opportunities to challenge them (perhaps the content itself is more challenging, or the output requires greater detail in the answers, or there is a harder set of questions, etc.).

**Practice**

1. Come prepared with a model of how to differentiate one of the teacher's lessons for students who are on grade level, below grade level, and above grade level on that particular content. Ensure your model targets different modes of learning, both in terms of input and output (for example, a PPT supplemented with guided notes, a graphic organizer, a video, and a reading assignment). Next, have the teacher create their her own differentiated content. While this can be done generally at first, you should eventually move toward tailoring lesson design for particular students. You can go back to the modifications you made for S1.TA13 to inform this part of the practice. Just ensure the conversations here are around what the students can do and about how this will support that vs. conversations that are grounded in frustration about this extra work for what may be just a handful of kids.

2. Provide a sample lesson that lacks differentiation (perhaps students are only solving problems). Have the teacher identify how they could differentiate it in terms of content, input, output, and environment. Provide feedback on how effective the differentiation strategies will meet the needs of all learners. Repeat for an upcoming lesson in the teacher's curriculum.

Note – It's likely not feasible for a teacher to create three or four different approaches for every lesson. And they shouldn't. The practice here is about getting the teacher to think generally about this and then honing in on a more specific approach. Once student accommodations are determined and through the strategic collection of data (S2.TA9), teachers can create alternative approaches for the handful of students who need them.

**STRAND 2**

Teacher Action 8 - Teacher allocates an appropriate amount of time for each lesson portion to ensure students have enough reps, both guided and independent, to master the content.

## Nickname – Time to Practice

Rationale – When my friend was growing up, he took piano lessons. He's not, by his own admission, a naturally good musician; but, over time, he became a good pianist. When I asked him what was the thing or things that most contributed to him becoming a good player, he shared, "The amount of time I got to practice in front of the piano instructor. She would show me a new scale or chord progression or entire song and then would give me time to practice in front of her. Getting feedback in the moment from her was incredibly valuable, and it allowed me to practice independently at home."

In the classroom, it is just as important to give students ample time to practice, both guided and independent. What I often see is teachers spending so much time on their model that the lesson runs long and students are deprived of practice time in front of the teacher. When this happens, students do not know in the moment if they are mastering the material or making mistakes. If content mastery gets pushed to homework (which it often does), students might not get any feedback on their work and progress. Not only is this bad for student knowledge and mastery, it's bad for the teacher because there isn't the data available right away to inform the next lesson. If students are practicing the wrong way, they're reinforcing the wrong thing. If they're not practicing at all, they can't possibly get better. In order for lesson content to truly stick, the teacher needs to allocate enough time in each lesson for the students to practice.

What it looks like – After the hook and model, students get multiple reps at an aligned guided practice and then they get at least one rep at independent practice. During guided practice, the teacher should be circulating amongst students to identify trends—where are the students succeeding and where are they struggling—so that these trends can be addressed prior to independent practice (think of misconceptions addressed in S2.TA2 and S2.TA9 coming next). Independent practice should comprise the majority of practice time.

**Practice**

1. Come prepared with analysis of the teacher's lesson, sharing how long students had to practice, both guided and independent, including timestamps, when the teacher interjected, etc. Model how the lesson could have been adjusted to provide more practice time. Have the teacher review an upcoming lesson and backwards plan. First identify what the objective is, then how long students will need to practice and where that practice will occur. The teacher should then put time stamps in their lesson to account for each lesson component.

2. Have the teacher practice delivering a part of their lesson that typically eats into student practice time (Do Now, modeling, discussion, etc.) and time them. Provide feedback on the conciseness of that lesson component. Set a timeframe for that component of the lesson and put a time allocation and timestamp in their lesson plans. Repeat for other parts of lessons that interfere with student practice and provide feedback on how the content can be delivered in a more succinct or efficient way. Have them include these time stamps on lesson plans moving forward.

**STRAND 2**

Teacher Action 9 - Teacher frequently and strategically checks for understanding. This data is used to make appropriate and timely adjustments to instruction and inform students of their progress towards the objective.

## Nickname – CFU and Adjusting Instruction

Rationale – Think of a coach teaching someone to shoot a basketball. After teaching the skill, the coach asks the players to shoot 10 times and report back on how many shots they made. One player misses all 10 shots and tells the coach. The obvious result is no basket—the player hasn't learned how to shoot a basketball. So shooting needs to be retaught. The flaw in this approach is that the end result is informing what comes next without considering what happened throughout those 10 shot attempts. There are multiple facets to shooting a basketball. There is the position of the feet, of the body over the feet, of the shooting elbow, of the guiding hand, etc. Checking for understanding needs to address each component of the lesson, and it needs to happen multiple times. The coach needs to know why the player student missed: it could be from poor foot position or bad posture. Maybe one player has bad guiding hand placement but the others keep the ball too low. The coach will only know if they were checking at each stage of the shooting process.

Regardless of the lesson, it is incumbent upon the teacher to know what the students understand, and maybe more importantly, what they don't. Once the teacher knows that, they can modify the lesson appropriately. Maybe it needs to be taught again tomorrow in a new way. Or maybe the teacher can increase the difficulty or move faster because students already get it. This is the heart of teaching. And it's very different from simply teaching the content once, in one way, and assuming it's been learned.

What it looks like – Checking for understanding needs to happen multiple times within each lesson (3x or more and during purposefully selected times) and in a variety of ways (circulating questioning, strategic sampling, etc.). It requires all students to engage and produce a response (see S2.TA3), that way, the teacher can collect data from students of all skill levels and knowledge bases. Checking for understanding allows the teacher to make in the moment adjustments, including speeding up, to meet the needs of the students. When students are struggling with the content, the teacher pauses to reteach the content in a new way or pulls a select group of students to support further.

**Practice**

1. Review a lesson plan with a teacher and ask the teacher to identify what students should know, be able to explain, etc. at different parts of the lesson (possibly after the model, during guided practice, and before/after independent practice). Provide an example of a question and aligned task that requires students to show their understanding during one part of the lesson (quick write, think-pair- share, white-boards, etc.), then have the teacher practice with subsequent lesson components, designing both the question and how students will demonstrate their understanding. Have your teacher script these checks for understanding in their lesson plans.

2. Review an upcoming lesson and compare it with a class roster/seating chart. Identify a sample set of students (5-10) with a variety of skills for this particular lesson (think below grade level, at grade level, above grade level). Support the teacher in planning how they will check for understanding with this subset of students. The teacher should plan the questions they will ask and how they she will collect the data from this sample set of students. Repeat for more lessons as warranted.

3. Provide some fake data points based on checks for understanding. Identify with the teacher how they would adjust instruction based on these data points. If you have actual student work from a previous lesson, use this to identify how instruction could have been adjusted based on that work.

**STRAND 2**

Teacher Action 10 - Teacher models and holds students accountable for using the content-specific vocabulary needed to master the objective in both verbal interactions and written work.

## Nickname – Content Vocabulary

Rationale – One of my favorite movies is My Cousin Vinny. For those of you who haven't seen it, it's about two friends from New York who are wrongfully arrested for murder while traveling in Alabama. One of the friends asks his uncle, an inexperienced lawyer played by Joe Pesci, to defend them. In one of the early courtroom scenes, the judge asks Pesci, "How do your clients plead?" Pesci answers by stating that his clients "Thought they were being arrested for shoplifting a can of tuna." The judge responds, "What are you telling me? Do they plead not guilty?" Pesci tries to explain more, saying "My clients didn't do anything," but the judge interrupts him repeatedly (and Pesci is eventually held in contempt) to get him to say, "Not Guilty." Courtrooms have specific language that the lawyers and judges must abide by.

Every grade, content, and lesson has specific vocabulary that teachers and students must use. Whether it's the science lesson focused on student crafting hypotheses, an English lesson dedicated to tone, or a math lesson on functions, the teacher needs to hold themself and their students accountable for using the academic language that demonstrates content mastery.

What it looks like - Throughout the lesson, the teacher uses the appropriate content-specific vocabulary and requires students to use the same vocabulary in their answers. While teachers generally use the appropriate, content-specific vocabulary, holding students to using that same language is often where things fall short. For example, if the lesson is about fractions, the content-specific vocabulary includes numerator and denominator, the teacher should use these terms consistently throughout class. When a student gives a response and says, "the bottom number is bigger," the teacher asks the student to rephrase their answer using their math term. Content-specific vocabulary should also appear on academic anchor charts, and the teacher can refer students back to the anchor chart in their responses (while anchor charts and classroom displays are Strand 1, their use can be applied here for the purposes of content-specific vocabulary).

**Practice**

1. Share a go-to phrase the teacher can use when redirecting students for the appropriate vocabulary ("remember our academic language," "include our words of the day," "what's our term for____? check your notes," etc.). Model an interaction in class which would require the teacher to correct the student's language. Have the teacher create their own go-to phrase(s) and role-play holding students accountable for the content-specific vocabulary. Provide feedback on the conciseness and effectiveness of the phrase.

2. Review some student work and note where students did not use the content-specific vocabulary. Ask the teacher to reflect: why these students? Why in this work? Where could students have been held more accountable? Provide feedback and have the teacher identify what they could have done differently.

3. Record a lesson and analyze it with the teacher. Note at what points students do not use the appropriate academic vocabulary and the teacher's response. Share this analysis with the teacher and then have them practice by pausing the video when the language is not used and have the teacher interject with their go-to phrase.

**STRAND 2**

Teacher Action 11 - Teacher closes lesson by assessing student learning and communicates progress to students. Assessment data is analyzed and used to inform next steps.

## Nickname – Final Objective Data

Rationale – I have a vivid memory of trigonometry with Mr. K. He would teach the lesson, we would work independently or with partners and then he would sit at his desk while we finished. At the end of class, he might review a question or two before we left.. I worked hard in class, did my homework, but I didn't ask too many questions. When the first test came, I completely bombed it. In fact, that test had to be curved by 28 points. I went into the test expecting to succeed, and instead failed miserably. Why? Because I didn't know what I understood or didn't, and I don't think Mr. K could have told me either. This pattern played out for the rest of the year—me working really hard and thinking I understood, only for the test to come and prove me wrong. My friend Tim was the same, and I believe we both ended up with Cs in Mr. K's math class. What's the point? If he would have checked to see what the class knew at the end of the lesson, he would have been able to provide help (especially to me), reteach certain skills, or pull small groups. When teachers collect data at the end of each lesson, assess how the students did, and inform them of their progress, they help create intrinsically motivated students who are invested in doing well, and most importantly, adjustments to instruction can be made appropriately.

Note – This teacher action is not about the teacher collecting every piece of student work, or even every piece of independent practice or exit ticket. To do so will ensure that the teacher falls behind in grading, in assessing how their students are doing, and paper will pile up. Whatever is collected must be able to be analyzed quickly and accurately. When I first started teaching, I had a habit of collecting exit tickets and then not grading them for days. That was a waste of both my students' and my time, because by the time I actually looked at their exit tickets, we had moved on to something else.

What it looks like – At the end of each lesson, student progress toward the goal is collected via an exit ticket, independent practice, whole group questioning, etc. While the teacher may not be able to in depthly analyze the data right then and there, the teacher should give the class an overall summary of the lesson and how well the class did. For example, the teacher stands in front of the class and shares overall class progress, "Today we identified some turning points in World War II. Most of us were able to name the bombing of Pearl Harbor, but we're still missing some other key events. We'll hit those again tomorrow." Students can also self-assess and report this data out as well. While this is admittedly less accurate than the teacher collecting this data, if steps and criteria for success are crystal clear, students can use a teacher created rubric to determine how they did in the lesson with relative accuracy.

**Practice**

1. Review an upcoming lesson and support the teacher in designing the exit ticket or independent practice questions/task that will inform objective mastery. Design multiple fake data points and have the teacher practice quickly determining student success and then relaying that to the class.
2. Share an objective, criteria for success, and student-facing rubric. Model how you would have students self-assess their work using this rubric. Have the teacher create a student-facing rubric for an upcoming lesson. Provide feedback.
3. Replicate the classroom by putting a sticky note at each student's desk. The sticky note should be marked with a clear, easy to interpret system for identifying student progress (i.e. 1 = not mastered, 2 = close to mastery, 3 = mastered). Using the checks for understanding questions planned in S2.TA9, have the teacher circulate, collect data and mark it on a clipboard, and then use that data to close the lesson aloud.
4. Review a class set of student work with the teacher. Have them assess objective mastery and then practice stating overall class progress aloud.
5. If the teacher is collecting work that has multiple data points (i.e. a worksheet with many questions, paragraphs), support the teacher in identifying the most important question, element of written work, etc., so that content mastery can be assessed efficiently. Repeat with upcoming lessons.

# Strand 3

STUDENT OUTCOME GOAL:
STUDENTS DEEPLY ENGAGE WITH CONTENT AND PARTICIPATE IN ACADEMIC DISCUSSIONS CONSISTENTLY THROUGHOUT THE LESSON.

**STRAND 3**

Teacher Action 1 - Teacher plans for students to carry the cognitive/intellectual load for at least 50% of class (independent work, group work, Socratic seminar, etc.).

## Nickname – Plan for Engagement

Rationale – When we were pregnant with our first child, we took an 8 week birthing class. My wife and I expected a hands-on, crash- course in all things pregnancy and baby. What we got instead was a dry, boring class without any interaction, any engagement, and no work we had to do other than listen to the instructor read from a book and talk about her experiences. This is the opposite of how a classroom should operate. In this strand, teachers are not lecturers. They're facilitators of student learning. Once the teacher presents the content in an effective and efficient way, they step back and let the students carry the cognitive load. Predictions about the objective can be made and students can run lead on determining what steps they'll need to take to be successful based on projected exemplar responses (teachers do ultimately need to share the correct steps with students).

What it looks like – The start of class (hook) through the model should take no more than half the class. Even during the hook and model, the teacher should plan for students to be carrying the cognitive load. Guided notes should be mostly avoided at this stage in Strand 3 as students should be taking notes on loose-leaf or in notebooks. After the hook and model are complete, the teacher should plan for students to be working for most of the remainder of class. This can start with groups, then partners, then independently. During this time, many of the higher-order questions are asked and students are responding to each other.

**Practice**

1. Co–plan lessons that are instructionally dense but that don't rely on the teacher doing too much of the heavy lifting. In this TA, less is more. Make a PPT slide limit/notes limit and make sure the teacher stays within that. Throughout the PPT or lesson plan, the questions and student activities should dominate. Ask the teacher to repeat this process with an upcoming lesson and then to plan this way going forward and submit to you when complete.

2. Model analyzing the time that one component of a lesson will take, including the time students spend working, and how this could be adjusted up or down. Then have the teacher repeat this process, timing each component throughout the lesson and add it up. If it is less than 50% of the lesson, review the other lesson components and identify areas which can be cut or made more succinct/efficient.

3. Have the teacher put time stamps in their lesson plans denoting student work time and submit them to you when complete.

**STRAND 3**

Teacher Action 2 - Teacher scripts out multiple higher-order questions and engagement opportunities in lesson plans. These include opportunities for students to respond to each other in meaningful ways.

## Nickname – Script It!

Rationale – When you interview for a job, there are a standard set of questions that you have to answer. You know them. You've answered them. Where interviews vary is once you get past those initial questions. Depending on the job, the employer, or the hiring manager, you're going to get asked more complex questions related to your duties, your communication skills, and your ability to think on your feet. Your answers to these questions are what will get you hired (or not). These questions are scripted. Hiring managers know what questions they are going to ask as long as the candidate answers the first set of questions sufficiently. In a classroom, after a teacher has mastered the design and presentation of the content, it is their job to plan for students to respond to these higher-order questions. Higher-order questions go beyond simple recall and require students to use what they know to make inferences or assertions about content. These questions must be scripted and teachers should know when they are going to ask them. These questions should push students' thinking beyond the baseline by increasing peer-to-peer responses. By scripting higher-order questions and facilitating student responses to each other, the teacher puts the cognitive load on students. When students carry the cognitive load, they will be more engaged because their brains are doing more work.

What it looks like – At multiple points in the lesson, the teacher has predetermined questions scripted. For example, the students just read an excerpt from a book and the teacher has scripted out, "Make a prediction. Based on the character's behavior here, do you believe he'll be successful in his quest? Please defend your response." Or, "Looking at the way we solved that problem, please jot down another way it can be solved that would lead to the same result."Higher-order questions here should not guide students towards the answer, but rather be open-ended and force students to do their own thinking and respond to each in thoughtful ways.  Students should have multiple opportunities to share and respond to each other for these questions. It's important that the questions are written in a way that allows for all students to engage. When students respond to each other, the teacher has open-ended prompts to require deeper, rigorous thinking. While this teacher action is specific to the design of these questions and not the asking of them, questions that read like, "Who can tell me what you believe our objective is based on a review of my exemplar?" will elicit one student response (or a handful) vs. what you want here: every student engaging.

**Practice**

1. Co–plan with the teacher and script out questions that require all students to engage. Ensure these questions go beyond recall. Have the teacher identify when, where, and how students will respond to each other to these questions.

2. Have your teacher script out higher-order questions and email them to you for all upcoming lessons. Provide feedback.

3. Present the teacher with a list of questions they asked in a previous lesson and your analysis for which met the bar for higher-order questions and which did not. Model how a question could be modified from recall/calculation to higher-order. Have the teacher revise the non-higher-order questions to be higher-order, where appropriate.

4. Co-design a set of go-to questions that the teacher can ask all students in response to the answer of one student. Example: "Everyone write down whether or not you agree with James' assertion and why or why not. James, take this opportunity to add an additional piece of evidence to your assertion."

5. Co-design a set go-to, generalized prompts which push students to defend their thinking or respond to each other more deeply. For example, "Tell me more" or "What in the text makes you think that?"

**STRAND 3**

Teacher Action 3 - Turn and talks, partner work, and group work are intentionally designed. Roles and outputs are clearly defined beforehand, and all activities are intended to engage all students equitably.

## Nickname – Partner Work

Rationale – In high school and college, I hated working in groups. Without fail, I'd be partnered with a person or two who didn't carry their weight, who tagged along for the ride (I was definitely guilty of this at times as well). Sometimes this would play out fine, other times, we'd stand in front of the room to present to the class and some parts of the presentation would look paltry and disconnected compared to others, or sections of our paper would vary vastly in quality. Then, we'd all get the same grade. Nothing created more resentment. I'm sure you've had a similar experience. While not all partner/group work in school is a project, we do want to build teamwork, communication, and responsibility within our students. That means that it is not enough for a teacher to just say, "Work in groups to solve this problem," for that ensures that one or two people will likely do the bulk of the work, or the roles will be so ill-defined that the work won't get done efficiently or well. By explicitly stating precisely what partner/group work looks like and what each person is responsible for, the teacher can avoid many of the issues that plague partner work.

What it looks like - Every time the teacher has students interact with each other, the teacher has thought through each component of that interaction, explained it to students, and modeled it as necessary. Who talks? For how long? What precisely do they talk about? What does the other student do while their partner is talking? In group work, what is each student responsible for? How does each student contribute equally and equitably to the end product? How will the teacher know? The teacher should be able to walk amongst the students and see/hear engagement from everyone, and that only happens when all students know exactly what to do, how to do it, and what they are responsible for.

**Practice**

1. Model the roles and responsibilities for group work, as well as the language the teacher should use as they introduce group work to students (similar to S1.TA4), then have the teacher practice saying this aloud. Then have the teacher repeat this process for their own group work. You can even have the teacher put the roles and responsibilities in their slides or on a handout, depending on the complexity of the interaction. Look at an upcoming lesson where partner work is planned. Support the teacher as they define the roles and responsibilities each student has in this partner work. For example, model a turn and talk and group roles to ensure that when students engage with each other, everyone is accountable for something. A teacher asking students to, "Turn to your neighbor and share your response" is much different than, 'Everyone turn to a neighbor and share your response. Neighbors, it's your responsibility to ask one question and share either something about their response you agree or disagree with. Be prepared to share your neighbor's responses, the question you asked, and what you agree or disagree with."

2. Share with the teacher how a previous group/pair activity functioned. Who said/did what? How was the work distributed amongst students? Was it equitable? Model how that activity could be changed to give all students voice, responsibility, and equitability. Have the teacher revise an upcoming activity and provide feedback.

**STRAND 3**

Teacher Action 4 - After each higher-order question asked, teacher will require all students to, either individually or with partners, generate a response.

## Nickname – All Students Every Time

Rationale – There is a specific dynamic that exists within every group, whether it's a group of friends going out to eat or a group of students in a classroom. You probably have a friend who always speaks what's on his or her mind. Who's always Mr. or Mrs. Personality. You probably have another friend who doesn't say much of anything unless he or she is asked a question. Growing up, that person who didn't talk much unless he was asked a question, was me. In fact, I only participated in school when I was asked a question. As a result, I probably didn't learn as much as I could because I sat back and let other people do the talking, writing, and ultimately, thinking. I was disengaged and even disliked school. There will be students like me in every class, and it's our job to ensure they do not become passengers in their own education. Conversely, there are also students who may be passionate about a certain subject or school altogether. Teachers should leverage that passion by challenging them consistently. We need to engage all students to keep them invested and learning so we know what everyone's thinking.

What it looks like – Throughout class, the teacher is asking those higher-order questions, providing think time, and requiring all students to produce something. So not, "Who thinks they know how to solve this problem?" but rather, "Take 1 minute to try to solve this problem in your notebooks." Or, "With your neighbor, come up with an argument either for or against the use of solar power." For each higher-order question, all students are required to generate a response.

**Practice**

1. Using the teacher's scripted higher-order questions (S3.TA2), model how one question could be turned into a whole group task. Have the teacher practice with other higher-order questions.

2. Co–plan engagement opportunities across multiple lessons to get the teacher into the habit of embedding all–group tasks throughout.

3. Design question stems ("Let's get everyone to generate a response to…" "When I say go, let's all turn to our neighbors and discuss…") and practice in an empty room by naming tasks and having the teacher turn each one, on the spot, into an all group task.

**STRAND 3**

Teacher Action 5 - After giving sufficient time to process, write, talk to partners, etc., teacher will strategically sample students for responses.

## Nickname –Strategic Participation

Rationale – Years ago, I wrote a novel. After it was finished, I spent months rereading, editing, revising, deleting, etc. When I thought it was good enough for other people's eyes, I asked some friends of mine to read it as part of our book club, and they were kind enough to do so. The moment came where my book was going to be reviewed. I sat silently and listened, writing down notes, questions, suggestions, and only after my friends finished their discussion did I talk about the book. Their feedback was overwhelmingly positive. So I thought my book was great, and I felt validated. The issue with this process: my friends wanted to be respectful, didn't want to hurt my feelings, and likely saved some of their critiques because I was sitting amongst them. I decided to repeat the same process, only this time, I gave it to my mom's book club, put a recording device on the table, and left. Their feedback was much different ("He needs an editor," still sticks in my mind). Teachers need to hear from a variety of students, not just students with their hands raised, even though it's validating ("I taught the content. They get it."). By eliciting responses on higher-order questions from all students in a variety of ways, (cold-call, warm-call, etc.), the teacher lets all students know that they're accountable for doing the work. This means that students feel compelled to answer every question, and as such, they engage deeply with the content and are always ready to respond. And the teacher will have a better sense of all students' thinking.

What it looks like – After the teacher asks a higher-order question, they inform the students that they will not be taking volunteers after the students have been given sufficient time to generate a response. They can cold-call using popsicle sticks or a wheel of names, or warm-call by circulating and privately letting a specific student (or students) know they will be called on. This lets the students know that they have to be prepared with an answer. The teacher calls on one student (and asks the others to track the speaker S2.TA3) and that student shares what they wrote. The teacher then calls on another student or two and either asks them to share what they wrote or asks them to respond to the speaker before them. By strategically sampling students, the teacher ensures that a variety of student voices are heard and validated.

**Practice**

1. The first step for strategic participation is setting up the systems for a variety of students to share their responses. This includes cold-calling, warm-calling, strategic sampling, circulating/lapping, etc. Using a teacher's lesson, model the creation and implementation of a system, such as cold-calling. For example, to ensure cold- calling becomes a habit, the teacher can put students' names in a hat or ask one student to write all the students' names on popsicle sticks and then model pulling names from the hat (or sticks from an empty coffee can). Have the teacher practice setting up systems for strategic participation and give feedback to them. To be clear, the teacher doesn't need a system for this if they can simply remember to be strategic when calling on students. However, this will be a challenge, popsicle sticks, names in a hat, a wheel of names, or an attendance list with check marks next to the names of students who've shared works wonderfully.
2. Using a teacher's lesson, model the different times and methods you would use to ensure a variety of student voices and participation. Have the teacher repeat this process for another lesson and provide feedback on how well those activities and strategies encourage a diversity of voices.
3. Model what will happen if a student doesn't have a response or refuses to respond at all. The teacher needs to keep the student on the hook but must also protect the relationship. You can model saying, "We'd love to hear what you think," or "It's okay to be wrong. What matters most in here is our effort." Co-design go-to responses that will keep students on the hook and have the teacher practice those. Provide feedback on how well their language would reinforce students to respond in a positive and supportive way.

Note – Cold-call is not a punishment and should never be framed as such. Cold-calling to "catch" students who weren't paying attention or in response to a lack of raised hands or a perceived lack of interest in certain content will only damage relationships and hinder the teacher's ability to use this tool for good going forward. If students aren't paying attention, coach the teacher to get their attention. If students are disinvested, coach the teacher to create better lesson hooks or clearer models or more interesting questions. Just make sure that when students are cold-called on, it's to further their engagement.

**STRAND 3**

Teacher Action 6 - Teacher holds students accountable for responding to peers using evidence and academically rigorous, appropriate, and responsive language.

## Nickname – Complete, Academic Responses

Rationale – Have you ever played a sport for an organized team? How about attended a business meeting? Or worked in a restaurant? In each of these cases, people wear a uniform appropriate for the situation. When you put on your jersey, you feel like an athlete. Even if you aren't very good. When you attend the business meeting in a suit, you feel like a professional. Walk into any chain store and you will see all employees, from the cashier to the manager, in a uniform. This uniform is the signal that the people here are present to do their jobs in a professional manner. There is something about that uniformity that screams professionalism. Being professional in the classroom means, in part, students using complete, academic, evidence-based responses that are appropriate and responsive in both verbal interactions and written work. When students present their work this way, it helps build their confidence and sends a message to them and to the world that they are serious and professional about the work they're doing. It also sends the message that ideas are discussed, not individuals. This is the essence of walking the walk and talking the talk.

What it looks like – Every student response should be in a complete sentence that fully answers the question, using content-specific vocabulary (S2.TA10), with evidence (where applicable) and is responsive and appropriate. So not, "Because of Shakespeare's word choice," but rather, "I know the tone of this scene is humorous because of Shakespeare's word choice. For example, on line 12______." Not, "7," but, "4 plus 3 equals 7." This is in response to both teacher questions/assertions and student questions/ assertions. When students are responding to their peers, their language must be appropriate, focusing on the content and ideas of the other student, not the individual. In addition, in all written work, students use academically rigorous, evidence-based language as well. The teacher should model what this sounds like early on and have reminders, both verbal and written, around the room. "Let's begin the share outs. Just a reminder to make sure you're using academic language and citing evidence from the article" and "Please begin your analysis of the text. Make sure you're using academic language and our vocab words of the day in your responses."

Note – There is a reason that this TA comes near the end of Strand 3. At this point, we're dealing with a highly skilled teacher and a really well–functioning classroom. Students in this class should be ready to take this next step. There's a school of thought out there that states that as students are just becoming familiar with content, they shouldn't be pressured to speak in a certain way (example – teacher corrects a student's subject/verb agreement as he's answering a question about velocity) as it can interfere with learning. I actually participated in an exercise where myself and a few colleagues were asked to solve some math problems, but as we were sharing our findings, we had to add a "z" sound after every syllable. "I (z) be (z) lieve (z) that (z) the (z) an (z) swer (z) is (z)…" The exercise was meant to illustrate how difficult it can be to be thinking about content and thinking about speaking in a certain way at the same time.
I subscribe to this theory and I believe we should help get students comfortable with content and bought into our classrooms before correcting slang or grammar. Asking students to use evidence and academically rigorous language in their responses (whether responding to a peer or the teacher) is about holding the high-bar for rigor, which is what this strand is all about, and that's why this TA arrives so late in our progression.

**Practice**

1. Make academic sentence starter posters with the teacher and hang them throughout the room. Sit in a variety of student seats and note how easily you can see/access these sentence starters and give feedback to the teacher.
2. Practice how the teacher will model using the sentence starters and provide feedback on their language and rationale.
3. Provide scenarios in which students do or do not respond to each other or the teacher using academically rigorous, evidence-based language or appropriate and responsive language. Model how you would reinforce those expectations ("Tyra referred back to the text on page 14. Someone respond to her with evidence from a different page" or "remember Tyra, we're responding to Brian's idea, not him. Take 30 seconds to rethink how you want to respond to his thoughts. Support your thinking with evidence."). Have the teacher practice and provide feedback.
4. Review student work that doesn't meet the bar for academically rigorous, evidence-based language. Model how you could provide feedback in the moment to hold students accountable. Have the teacher practice with other examples of student work.

**STRAND 3**

Teacher Action 7 - Teacher responds neutrally (speech and body language) to student contributions, and facilitates/moderates further student participation.

## Nickname – Poker Face!

Rationale – I used to play a game with my oldest son right before I kissed him goodnight. He was three at the time, and I'd ask him, "Max, do you think I love you as big as an ant or as big as an elephant?" It was fun for me to watch him think about which one of the things I named is bigger and to hear his little three-year-old voice excitedly say, "An elephant!" After he'd share his response, I'd always say the same thing. "That's right!" Then he'd ask me a similar question (note– he didn't think anything was bigger than a crocodile so if that was one of his choices, I knew to pick that) and if I guessed correctly, he'd say, "That's right!" The truth is, as much as my wife and I were/are working to instill in all three of our kids that there's nothing that's more important than practice and trying hard and not giving up, I still default to the binary, "Right or wrong" at times.

For a teacher, it feels good when a student provides a "correct" answer. Or, the answer that the teacher was "looking for." But a classroom, unlike a one-on-one interaction with a 3-year-old, is the perfect place to avoid immediately affirming answers. If the teacher signals (either by speech, body language, or facial expression) that the answer given is correct, the other students might mentally check out. And within that, a student who has a really unique perspective to share, might not do so because they feel like their her answer isn't what the teacher wanted. By nodding or saying, "Yep. Yep" or smiling or doing any number of things that can message approval, the teacher is messaging to other students that it is okay to stop thinking.

What it looks like – Once a teacher has asked a higher-order question, the teacher puts on their best poker face. Regardless of the student's response, the teacher will thank the student for sharing and then call on another student to respond (cold-calling is great here) either with their own answer or a response to the first student. Through the process, the teacher can ask all students to reflect on a particular response: "Everyone, please jot down whether or not you agree with Anna's statement. And be prepared to share out." The teacher should stamp the "right" answer (if there is one) at the end of this exercise. Especially if the class decides on a decidedly incorrect response through some misconception. In this case, the teacher needs to stop the lesson, address the misconception, and perhaps re-teach the content.

**Practice**

1. One reason professional poker players are so good is because they do not reveal anything through their facial expressions. They know, and can control, their face, their breathing, their hands, and their body language. This is easier said than done. Model your body language, your facial expressions, and gestures etc. to a correct answer. Practice with your teacher by videotaping their responses to the correct answers you give them. Review the video back with the teacher so they can see their face and body and how they respond. Provide feedback on how they can change their body language, facial expressions, etc.

2. Record a portion of class that has the teacher asking higher-order questions. As students give correct or incorrect answers, provide an example analysis of how the teacher's facial expressions, body language, or speech signaled to other students the quality of the response. Have the teacher perform the same type of analysis for other parts of the lesson. Review an upcoming lesson's higher-order questions and practice giving correct or incorrect responses. Monitor and provide feedback on the teacher's poker face.

**STRAND 3**

Teacher Action 8 - Teacher projects/shares student work for students to analyze in order to further their understanding or address misconceptions.

## Nickname – Project It!

Rationale – Think about a chef creating a new dish. He spends hours in the kitchen, fiddling with the right mixture of ingredients, seasoning, cooking time, temperature, etc. The dish is then added to the menu, possibly as a special or for a trial run so that the chef can get feedback. Do the customers like it? Are they ordering it or passing on it for something else? Depending on how the dish performs, it is added to the menu, modified, or removed. Students are the chefs of their own learning. It is not enough for them to work in isolation, they need to get feedback from and analyze other students' work in order to get the most out of the lesson. And while most people like to be recognized for their accomplishments, when people make mistakes, avoiding recognition is usually the modus operandi. This is why sharing student work on a doc cam or projector can be stressful for everyone. However, projecting student work should not be about stress. It should be about creating leaders in the classroom by getting them excited about what they're doing academically. Every time you put someone's work on display, you build confidence, student voice, and a culture of respect. The purpose of projecting student work is to share what some students are doing so they can all learn from each other and build confidence in each other. At the same time, it prepares students to take risks by forcing them to put their work and voice on display.

What it looks like – The teacher announces at the beginning of practice that student work will be collected and shared. This should be a routine—after students have been working, they can expect that their work will get used at some point during the lesson. Sharing work should always be framed as a tool to improve—it should highlight a common misconception the teacher noticed in student work or it should drive a deeper understanding of the content. When the teacher is collecting data while circulating, they note work that demonstrates a misconception they've planned for versus particularly outstanding work. There are a few ways they can choose to share. Choose the misconception or the outstanding work and let the students analyze. "Take a look at Paul's piece here. Jot down one glow about it and one grow that could improve it." Or two examples can be projected as a side-by-side comparison. When presenting these examples for the class, the questions the teacher asks should be less about which one is "right" and more the higher-order variety about process and areas of success and improvement for both. Also, the teacher should not tip their hand.

**Practice**

1. Review an upcoming lesson and identify areas where student work could be shared and analyzed, including the questions that could be asked. Model how you would share the work and the questions you would ask to probe student thinking. Have the teacher repeat for other lessons and include the moments where student work will be shared in lesson plans. Have the teacher submit to you for feedback.

2. Review student work with the teacher. Practice scripting out questions that would push student understanding, thinking, and analysis (remember, these questions should also require all students to engage in analysis). Have the teacher script out go-to questions/phrases they can use repeatedly when sharing student work for analysis.

3. Video tape the teacher sharing student work and the analysis that follows. Note the difference in teacher talk vs. student talk (you might use a timer to quantify the disparity between the two). Does the teacher build on student responses or do students expand on what their peers said? What kinds of questions are asked? Are students being held accountable for each question? Give feedback initially and have the teacher take over by providing feedback for themself.

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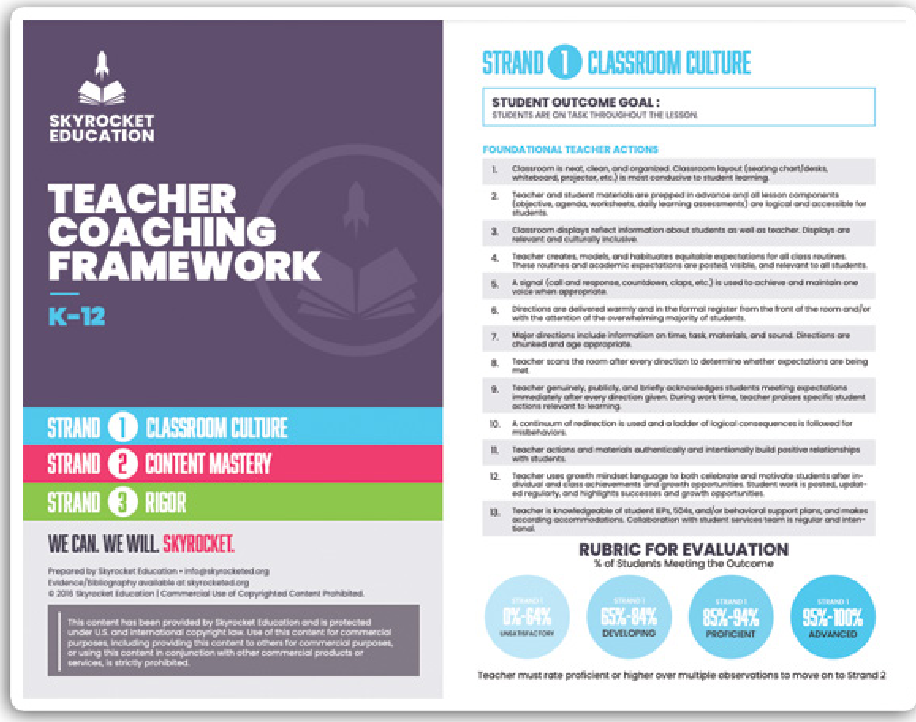


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