How to Make Teacher Evaluation Actually Improve Teaching

AASA
New Orleans
3/2/17

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Map of Pedagogical Knowledge

Key Concepts
- Areas of Performance
- Repertoire
- Matching

Overarching Objectives
Curriculum Design
Planning
Objectives
Assessment
Learning Experiences
Personal Relationship Building
Class Climate
Expectations
Clarity
Principles of Learning
Models of Teaching
Space
Time
Routines
Attention
Momentum
Discipline
Foundation of Essential Beliefs

Skillful Teaching

THE BIG ROCKS OF HIGH EXPERTISE TEACHING (H.E.T. Project)

1. Identification of the most worthwhile objective, making sure the students understand it, and using it as the focus of the lesson
2. Error analysis of student work to deliver re-teaching to those who need it [Data]
3. Feedback: frequent, timely, non-judgmental, and useful.
4. Making Students’ Thinking Visible
5. Using a variety of cognitive strategies matched to content and students
6. Communicating 3 critical messages re: effort-based ability: this is important; you can do it; and I’m not going to give up on you. 50 Ways to make kids believer in themselves.
7. Cultural Proficiency and Personal Relationship Building: the routes to making students feel known and valued
8. Building a classroom climate of community, risk-taking, and ownership
9. High volume of student reading/writing and explicit embedded literacy instruction
10. Direct vocabulary instruction and practice

Skills pertaining to Planning

1. High Expertise Teachers dig deeply into their content as they are planning lessons. Thus they identify the most worthwhile learning targets in the materials and make sure the students know what they are. They also make sure the learning experiences the students do are logically aligned with the learning targets (objectives) and that the assessment will give good data about student mastery. The hierarchy of concepts within the content are outlined. Student misconceptions and points of difficulty are anticipated and provided for in the lesson because the teacher did the student tasks him/herself. The criteria for success are carefully thought out and understood and used by the students. The objective is communicated to the students in student-friendly language that also makes the learning seem relevant, and then it is unpacked with them to make sure the students understand the objective. Finally, the teacher makes the objective the focus of the lesson and returns frequently to it.

2. High expertise teachers know how to study student work, all the way from standardized tests to work samples from yesterday’s class. They can analyze student errors and identify gaps in student learning. Thus skillful error analysis leads directly to re-teaching for those students who didn’t get it the first time around.

3. High Expertise Teachers arrange for a constant flow of feedback to students on their performance. The feedback is non-judgmental and keyed to specific criteria the students are clear about. Thus the students can self-evaluate and use techniques they have been taught to set effective goals and plans of action to improve.

Skills Pertaining to Instruction

4. High Expertise Teachers make students’ thinking visible during class interaction by using a constellation of 24 interactive skills. Thus there is a high degree of student talk both with the teacher and with one another about the content at a high level of thinking. The students are active thinkers with the content and the teacher gets a constant reading on who understands
and who doesn’t. In turn, the students are required to become good listeners to one another and be active processors of information.

5. High Expertise Teachers have a repertoire of research-based cognitive strategies like visual imagery and modeling thinking aloud. These strategies, chosen to match the students, the curriculum and the content, make concepts and ideas clear and accessible to students. Thus when content needs re-teaching for students who didn’t get it the first time around, the teacher has alternative approaches to use. They check thoroughly for understanding and get students engaged in activating and summarizing strategies.

Skills Pertaining to Motivation

6. High Expertise Teachers convince students to believe in “effort based ability” (The Growth Mindset.) Thus they consistently send the messages: “What we’re doing is important; You can do it; and I won’t give up on you” (tenacity and perseverance.) These messages are sent through daily interactive teacher behavior, through class structures and routines, and through policies and procedures. These teachers take it upon themselves to teach the students explicitly how to exert effective effort.

7. High Expertise Teachers make students feel known and valued. Thus they know about the students’ life and culture and show an interest in their activities and success. The unrelenting tenacity and high-expectations of teachers with low-performing students also becomes evidence to the student that the teacher thinks they are worthwhile. Cultural Proficiency becomes an important skill set, because understanding and valuing students’ family values, cultural heritage, and norms of behavior become important to making instruction appropriate as well as making individuals be authentically known and respected.

8. High Expertise Teachers create a climate of community, risk-taking, and ownership among all their students. Thus the students know each other as people and have been taught the skills to cooperate. The students feel safe to make mistakes and view errors as feedback, not judgments; thus they take academic risks and challenge themselves to do hard work. And the students have voice and ownership in constructing the “rules of the classroom game.”

Skills Pertaining to Literacy

9. High Expertise Teachers make literacy an embedded priority. Thus regardless of their subject or academic discipline, they ensure a high volume of quality reading and writing about their content, and they scaffold the students’ entry into text. Of particular importance, they are assiduous at facilitating “literate conversations” (Allington 2011) about the text.

10. High Expertise Teachers become committed and proficient in vocabulary instruction. Regardless of their academic discipline, they understand that the words and the concepts they represent are intimately related and indispensible to student learning.
The Collaboration Teacher Model

RBT offers schools and districts a new professional development program designed to leverage and reinforce professional development for teachers.

I. How Does it Work?

• A cohort of about 30 to 40 teachers take our online course “Making Student Thinking Visible”.
• Administrators select 10 people who took the course, show proficiency with the skills, have credibility with their peers, and are willing to open their classrooms up to colleagues who want to see what these skills look like in practice.
• These 10 teachers are called “Collaboration Teachers”. They are willing to share their ongoing process of learning.
• We give collaboration teachers an extra full day of professional development face-to-face to increase their expertise. They practice in small groups.

Administrators spread the word and ask if other teachers who took the course would like to visit the Collaboration Teachers. Administrators facilitate the scheduling and coverage.

II. Who’s Already Doing it?

Two districts have already successfully piloted this new RBT program:
• Eugene, Oregon (16,500 students; xx teachers) www.4j.lane.edu/
• Revere, Massachusetts (7,000 students; xx teachers) www.revereps.mec.edu

III. To Learn More

Please contact: DeNelle West, RBT Director of Professional Development at (978) 263-9449 or west@rbteach.com.
How Leaders Influence Teaching Practices
Or
Where to Show Up and What to Do

Clear chartering of leadership team meetings and operating agreements

Facilitating the work of coaches/instructional specialists

Planning and leading faculty meetings

Ensuring high-functioning meetings of teams that share content (PLCs) (common planning time)

Student by student accountability talks

Building-based Study Groups and Professional Development Planning

How Leaders Improve Teaching and Learning

Doing frequent short visits and having conversations about CEIQ

Doing Planning and Goal-Setting Conferences

Arranging Public Teaching and Peer Observation

Doing Formal Observations and Reports

Doing walkthroughs and learning walks

Frequent Classroom Presence and Hall-Wall Availability

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Making Students Thinking Visible: Play Book and Principles

1. Engage student thinking with planned questions

Teacher-Student interaction
2. Call on all
3. Pause...use wait-time
4. Avoid judgment
5. Validate confusion

Have students:
6. Explain
7. Restate
8. Turn and talk

Teacher be sure to:
9. Establish norms, Teach prompts
10. Active listen
11. Re-voice
12. Scaffold
13. Persevere and Return

During lessons:
14. Slow down
15. Allow struggle
16. Don’t answer yourself
17. Leave with clues to puzzle over

In class discussions don’t give answers or confirm answers; ask students to:
18. Agree/Disagree
19. Add-on
20. Compare thinking
21. Surface discrepancies
22. Revisit previous thinking

Look for opportunities to:
23. Infuse academic vocabulary
24. Record academic vocabulary