

Atkinson Academy
SLT Instructional Rounds
January 10, 2018

TRIPOD 7C: Challenge - Hold students to rigorous academic standards, encourage persistence, and monitor and support student effort. Lessons are consistently challenging and differentiated, teachers ask high-level questions of all students, and students are required to think deeply and explain their responses.

THEORY OF ACTION:

IF teachers are explicit in providing opportunities for individual students to demonstrate rigorous thinking, quality work, and persistence, *THEN* teachers are helping students learn how to challenge themselves.

IF Teachers know where each student's Zone of Proximal Development is in relation to learning specific tasks, *THEN* they are able to scaffold instruction and encourage students to persevere and make progress, at his/her individual level.

IF Teachers can scaffold instruction and model ways that students can encourage each other and persevere in difficult situations, *THEN* students have the opportunity to do it on their own and challenge themselves and each other in independent learning situations.

IF students have the opportunity to challenge themselves in different learning environments and are supported by teachers each day, *THEN* students learn to take risks, gain self-efficacy, and advance in their learning.

OBSERVATION NOTES:

Students:

- Students were involved mostly in small groups; very few whole group settings were observed.
- Students were observed attending to "teacher talk" - teachers were explaining their thinking, asking questions, and provided prompts.
- Some students were involved with solving problems collaboratively with a peer or in a small group setting.
- Student struggled to complete multi-step word problem and didn't use a guide or resource to assist.
- Student responded to verbal questions asked by the teacher. The questions seemed to be differentiated for the individual.
- Some students used assistive technology to be able to participate with classmates.
- Students participated in copying activities that they indicated were easy (ie: copying and stamping words from word wall).
- Small groups of students engaged in the same activity that they commented they had just done with their teacher.

Atkinson Academy
SLT Instructional Rounds
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- Student responded to low-level questioning. Students answered correctly most often.
- Students were observed rotating from teacher-directed small group, independent work, and small group with peers with about 15 minutes per session.
- Students responded to teacher's prompt ("show me proof", "why do you suppose...?", "what else could we do?", "what's another way to do it? "
- Students played a math fluency game..."zap it". (Pulling popsicle sticks out with fluency facts on it).
- Students were asked if they were being challenged, and some answered "No."
- Students were cutting, pasting, copying and sorting words for word walls.
- All students had the same words on the worksheet; one classroom had individual student names on the worksheets and different words on each sheet depending on the student.
- Students were compliant in rotating to groups and showed independence in starting their work.
- Students were in various phases of completing their art projects, and the teacher rotated throughout the groups.
- Students were observed working on their own using technology with headphones, looking at books, reading to themselves, cutting and pasting, and copying words on a worksheet.

Teachers/ Classroom:

- Teacher checked in on small groups to offer feedback back, ask questions to check for understanding, or redirect the group that was off task.
- Guided math lesson in small group did not allow time for the students to try the work.
- Norms or expectations for small group work was evidenced in the teacher group, but was not seen in other student centers.
- Bulletin boards referenced reading challenges, star work, etc.
- Tablets or chromebooks were used by individual students to practice skills.
- One "enrichment" group worked together to solve a task, separate from what the class was doing.
- The websites provided to students could not be used, and students sat for many minutes as a result.
- Teacher directed all students during the lesson, not much individualization observed.

RECOMMENDATIONS for the Next Level of Work with Challenge:

- Provide training to educators and students to ensure a consistent understanding of about what CHALLENGE means, what it looks like in the classroom, and reflect on progress. (Ex. Tripod Toolkit, page 8)
- Practice scaffolding lessons and plan for increasing levels of challenge as time moves on.
- Set challenges that are at the right level for individual optimal growth.

Atkinson Academy
SLT Instructional Rounds
January 10, 2018

- Raise the level of challenge each time you ask students to practice a concept or skill.
- Engage students in thinking deeply and explaining key ideas often.
- Reduce “teacher talk”. Engage students in the talking, explaining, and questioning.
- Recognize students who go beyond expectations, especially those who might struggle with a concept or task.
- Small group and center-based activities must be specific, targeted and allow for students to go beyond the first few levels of Bloom’s.
- Provide students with guidance on how to solve word problems. (ie: Underline the question, highlight important information, etc.). Ensure students access the guides and other helpful resources as needed to ensure successful participation in the work.
- Allow tasks to be done in several different ways. Encourage students to take risks, try something new, explore, solve problems and work together.
- As a staff, choose a particular CHALLENGE strategy to try school-wide, monitor its effectiveness, identify its impact on student learning, and engage in discussion before incorporating another strategy.
- Encourage staff to brainstorm their own recommendations based off the observations listed above.
- Like KINDNESS, roll-out the topic of CHALLENGE school-wide.

THANK YOU!

The Superintendent Leadership Team found Instructional Rounds at Atkinson Academy to be a great experience. Thank you for opening your classrooms. We enjoyed our visit tremendously!