

**Danville Elementary School**  
**SLT Instructional Rounds**  
**January 24, 2018**

**TRIPOD 7C: Clarify** - Explain ideas and concepts in a variety of ways, check frequently for understanding, address misconceptions, and provide students with useful feedback.

**THEORY OF ACTION: Clarify**

- IF teachers anticipate common areas of instructional difficulty for students and use a variety of ways to explain concepts clearly, *THEN* there is less opportunity for confusion, and students are able to better explain their thinking.
- IF students are able to explain their thinking and teachers regularly check for understanding using a variety of ways, *THEN* the results can be used to address misconceptions, pinpoint and adjust instruction; thereby, personalizing instruction.
- IF instruction is clear, personalized, and students are given constructive feedback that is specific, descriptive, and linked to standards and criteria for success, *THEN* individual students can avoid confusion, and use feedback to self-direct next steps and advance their learning.

**OBSERVATION NOTES:**

- A variety of teaching and learning tools were utilized including magnetic tiles, sticky notes, Chromebooks and projectors, books, computer apps, document camera, graphic organizers, whiteboards, etc.
- Several “checks for understanding” were observed including strategies like Thumbs Up, Thumbs Down, use of questioning techniques, requests for students to repeat directions, requests for students to explain their thinking aloud and in writing, and monitoring of student work.
- Some questions were asked that required students to verbalize their thinking/understanding, including questions like, “why do you think...,” “how did you solve that,” “could that be done another way,” “what changed,” “how do you know.”
- Students were requested to explain their thinking, show their answers, demonstrate their understanding, and make connections between new learning and previous learning,
- Small groups of students who received frequent check-ins from an adult were more on task.
- Students were reminded to use strategies and tools like “Tap It Out”, refer to your interactive notebook, check the Word Wall,
- Several examples of the gradual release model were observed - I DO, WE DO, YOU DO.
- Some students continued to struggle even after a teacher’s check for understanding...for example, after doing “Thumbs Up or Thumbs Down,”, there was not noticeable action for those that didn’t understand or needed more instruction such as

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bringing those student a small group, re-explaining, placing the student with a partner, or giving the student a resource or support.

- A student said they didn't know what to do when they didn't understand something.
- Students were reminded of the day's learning goal.
- Rally Coach technique provided students with an opportunity to work with a peer. One student solved the problem while the other student's job was to monitor, give clues if needed, and check the problem for accuracy.
- Students sang songs to reinforce a concept.
- Teacher activated prior knowledge by asking students what they knew about the animal on the cover of the book.
- Students used addition to solve for subtraction; a strategy for students to check their own work.
- Classroom environment had posters for students to reference, to know what to do when they have finished an assignment, or what to do when they get "stuck".

**RECOMMENDATIONS for Next Level of Work on Clarify**

- Provide training to educators and students to ensure a consistent understanding of about what clarify means, what it looks like in the classroom, and reflect on progress. (Ex. Tripod Toolkit, page 6)
- Monitor your amount of wait-time to allow student to think and then answer.
- Use "Turn and Talk" strategy for questioning and discussions to provide all students with an opportunity to answer before calling on one or two to share. This prevents passive learning when students rely on someone else to answer the question.
- Be purposeful when checking for understanding - have a plan for what you will do with the information that you collect such as group students, reteach, follow-up with students, provide a partner or a resource for support, etc.
- Try a blind "thumbs up, thumbs down" to allow students to answer honestly and to feel safe about their response.
- Utilize Write n' Wipe boards to engage all students in demonstrating their understanding and for Quick Checks.
- Avoid excessive "teacher talk". Engage students in more opportunities for talking, explaining, and questioning.
- Pair verbal with visual examples to provide students with clear explanations of new ideas and concepts.
- Provide multiple explanations and allow students to explain their reasoning to reveal confusion or misconceptions.
- Investigate various types of feedback to give students...choose one, give it a try school-wide, and discuss together. Be sure that your feedback is specific, descriptive, concise, and it matches your expectations for student learning.
- Ask students to check their own work against exemplars and rubrics.
- Encourage staff to brainstorm their own recommendations and next steps.

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**THANK YOU!**

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