

# The Science of Leadership

Providing Instructional Feedback



So...the Science of Leadership. How many of you knew that there was a fairly large body of research on what effective principals do?

Type in the chat box.



RESEARCH REPORT

# How Principals Affect Students and Schools

*A Systematic Synthesis of Two Decades of Research*

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**Wallace**

# Agenda

- A look at the research
- What's the problem?
- Teacher Evaluation and Observation
  - Tips to help with evaluation
- Instructional Feedback and Coaching
  - Who needs instructional feedback?
  - Key components to providing feedback
- Establish a data-driven instructional program
  - Aligning the PLC questions to the right data
- Questions and answers

Here's my own personal finding from working in hundreds of schools and dialoging with thousands of principals....some (many) are a bit intimidated over providing feedback to teachers when it comes to literacy.



**Why might principals hesitate to provide instructional feedback to teachers in the area of reading?**

**What might be the consequences if they don't?**

**Share with us.**



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## Could it be...

- Fear of a phoneme?
- Daunting digraph?
- Nonsensical syntax?



*"You must  
do the things  
you think you  
cannot do."*



*Being a leader takes  
courage.*



# Fear Not!

- Teacher Subject Matter Knowledge=0.11
- Scaffolding-0.82
- Deliberate practice=0.79
- Direct instruction=.60
- Explicit instruction=.57

[Hattie effect size list - 256 Influences Related To Achievement \(visible-learning.org\)](http://visible-learning.org)

You've got this!



Let's take that intimidation  
away....because teachers  
need feedback!

“Leadership is second only to classroom instruction among all school-related factors that contribute to what students learn at school.”  
--Kenneth Leithwood (2004)

# What's Changed?

- When Kenneth Leithwood did his original research on the principalship—able to analyze one school at one time
- Researchers observed one principal per school—were unable to separate the performance of the principal from the performance of the school's typical performance
- We now have more data sets available that can shed light on how schools change under a particular principal and their effect

# What Has Changed?



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- Data bases now include—
  - School outcomes on state summative assessments
  - Ethnic disproportionality in school discipline practices
  - Focus on leaders' engagement with instruction through teacher evaluation
  - School choice options

# The big difference...

Advanced research methodologies where we can compare the same school's performance under a different principal

Synthesized 20 years of research by the Wallace Foundation

Now able to measure the size of principal effects on student outcomes

Know what good principals do to effectuate change

# What makes a good principal?



**We have all known good principals and bad principals...just like teachers. In your mind, what makes a quality principal?**

**Share with us.**



# What does the research say?

Replacing a principal at the 25<sup>th</sup> percentile in effectiveness with one at the 75<sup>th</sup> percentile in effectiveness can increase annual student learning in reading and math by almost 3 months annually.

# In other words,...

The impact of having an effective principal on student achievement is nearly as large as the effect of having a similarly effective teacher.

# What does the research have to do with the Science of Reading?

- In the United States, state departments of education are doing a bit better job about training school leaders in the Science of Reading
- But let's be clear—understanding how children learn to read is akin to understanding how a rocket flies—you still must learn to build the rocket
- If we continue to **simply** ensure school leaders understand how children learn to read—the outcomes for increasing literacy achievement will remain minimal

# The overabundance of why

- Teachers are receiving a preponderance of PD in the 'why' for shifting gears in literacy instruction
  - (only 5 states require this for school leaders)
- Still lack the knowledge of how to implement
- Often not the materials to implement--what

[Why Putting the 'Science of Reading' Into Practice Is So Challenging \(edweek.org\)](#)

[Teachers Need The Why, The What, And The How For Change To Happen \(forbes.com\)](#)

# How Does the Research on Principals Help?

# Research Indicates Four Big Buckets

1. Engage in instructionally focused interactions with teachers
2. Build a productive school climate
3. Facilitate productive collaboration and professional learning communities
4. Manage personnel and resources strategically



# Engage in Instructionally Focused Interactions with Teachers

Teacher Observation  
and Evaluation

Feedback and Coaching

Establish a data-driven  
instructional program



# Teacher Observation and Evaluation

The key is legitimacy!

# Teacher Observation and Evaluation

- Numerous studies indicate students benefit from sophisticated teacher evaluation systems that marry structured classroom observations to high-quality teacher feedback. (Steinberg and Sartain, 2015, Taylor and Tyler 2012, Dee and Wyckoff, 2015)
- These studies have indicated increased reading achievement gains from .10 standard deviation to as high as a .27 standard deviation. (Wallace Foundation, 2021)

# Tying Evaluation to the Teaching of Literacy

Those who support teachers—mentors, coaches, supervisors, and so on—must be able to recognize classroom examples of the different components of practice, interpret the evidence against specific levels of performance, and engage teachers in productive conversations about their practice. Evaluators must be able to assess teachers accurately, so teachers accept the judgments as valid, and the public has confidence in the results.

*Charlotte Danielson*

# Consistent Communication of What is What



- Have an intense dialogue with faculty members about what constitutes good teaching of literacy.
- Develop a shared understanding of what is good practice in literacy instruction.
- Create a culture in the school around continued learning and professional inquiry as it relates to good literacy instruction

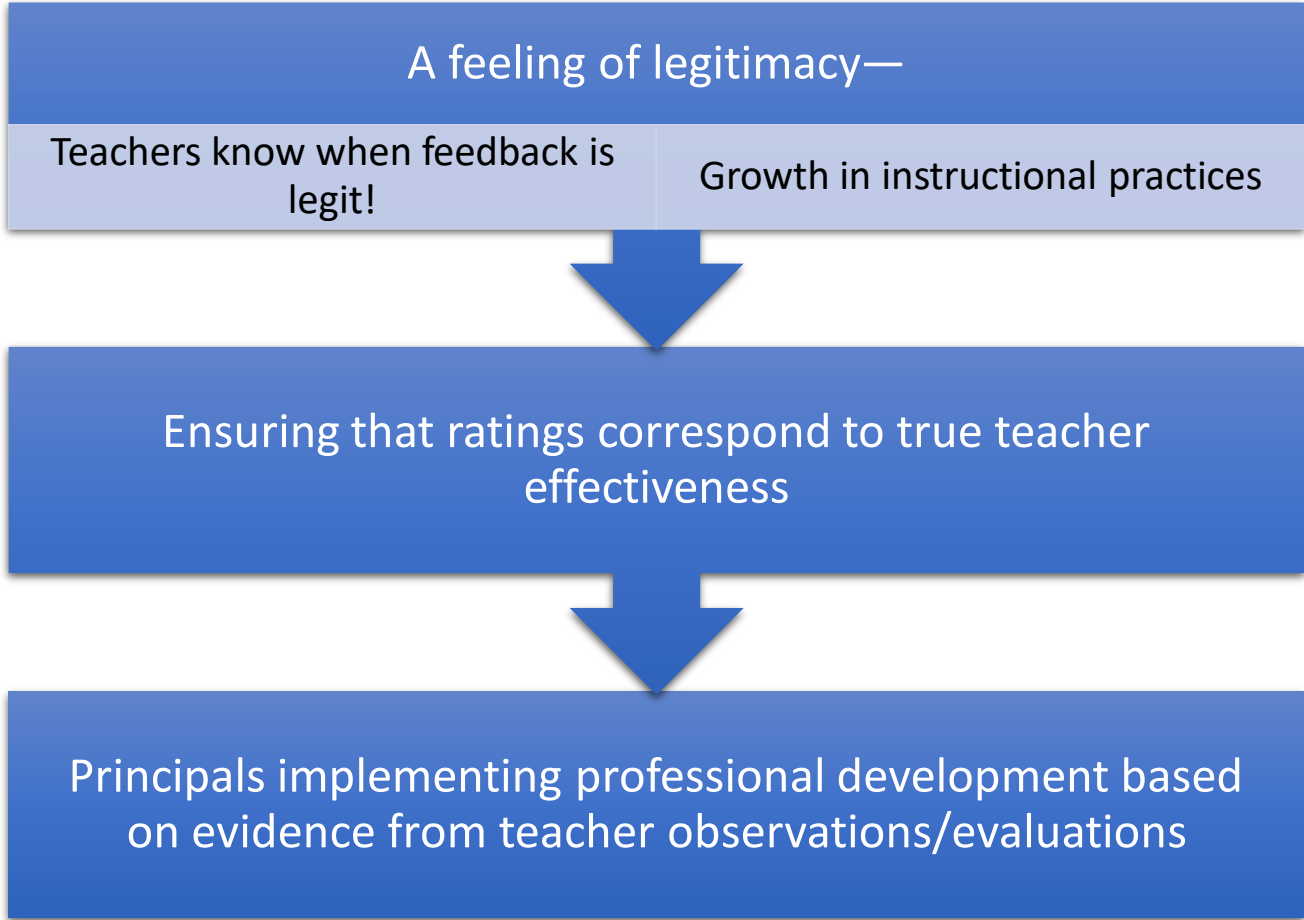
# Caution: Mandated Evaluation Systems Don't Always Align with SOR

In less than 5 states we require principals demonstrating knowledge in the Science of Reading

No state or educational institute mandates principals know anything about Explicit Instruction—and very few educational institutes for school leadership teach highly-effective instructional strategies

There are primarily 2 systems for teacher evaluations in this country—one is based on a **constructivist approach** 31 states and over half of the country's 20 largest school districts.

# What makes teacher evaluation effective?



# Teacher Evaluation Implications and the Science of Reading

Must know what your evaluation system includes...

- Is the evaluation rubric/framework you are using based on a constructivist model of teaching?
- If yes, must know where it speaks to explicit teaching
- Does the evaluation system contain any information about the 5 components of reading?
- How is the literacy block described—some are literature based





# Teacher Evaluation Implications and the Science of Reading

Must know how children learn to read and...

- It's important to understand the components of reading—across the grade levels
- It's important to understand explicit and systematic instruction
  - Implications for universal instruction and interventions
- It's important to understand the layout of a quality literacy block
- It's important to be able to dissect and analyze teacher literacy data and possible next steps



# Understand a Quality Literacy Block

- Instructional hierarchy of skills
- Alignment of skills
- Length of time for each skill based on grade levels
- The layout and components of the curriculum being used
  - Following the scope and sequence
  - Teaching the critical components
  - Logins to teacher resources
  - Lesson plan templates

# Understand a Quality Literacy Block

- If teachers have a lesson plan template—they know what to teach, principals know what to observe
- Should include a logical instructional hierarchy
- Principal log-ins to the curriculum to ensure the correct scope and sequence is being used

## Observing Tier 3 Instruction— Understanding Intervention



Explicit instruction

Adequate amount of  
time for practice

Appropriate scope and  
sequence

Are teachers teaching to  
fidelity?

Opportunity for aligned  
time in text—  
decodables

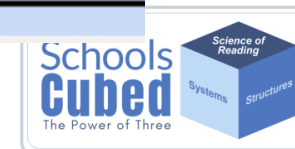
- See list of vetted decodables



## Schools Cubed Approved List of Decodable Readers (2023)

Grades K-2 Recommended Decodable Books:	Grades 3-8 Recommended Decodable Books:
<a href="#"><u>BOB Books</u></a>	<a href="#"><u>Phonic Books: Dragon Egg Series</u></a>
<a href="#"><u>EPS Phonics Plus Readers</u></a>	<a href="#"><u>Phonic Books Moon Dog Series Set 1 and Set 2</u></a>
<a href="#"><u>Phonic Books Dandelion Launchers Series 1-7</u></a>	<a href="#"><u>Phonic Books: Magic Belt Series</u></a>
<a href="#"><u>Phonics Books: Dandelion Launchers Stages 8-15</u></a>	<a href="#"><u>Phonic Books: That Dog! Series</u></a>
<a href="#"><u>High Noon Little Sprouts</u></a>	<a href="#"><u>Phonic Books: Alba Series</u></a>
<a href="#"><u>Primary Phonics Storybook Sets</u></a>	<a href="#"><u>Phonic Books: Totem Series</u></a>
<a href="#"><u>The Superkids Library</u></a>	<a href="#"><u>Phonic Books: Rescue Series</u></a>
<a href="#"><u>Voyager Sopris Power Readers</u></a>	<a href="#"><u>Phonic Books: Talisman Series</u></a>
<a href="#"><u>Charge Into Reading Decodable Readers</u></a>	<a href="#"><u>Phonic Books: Island Adventure Series</u></a>
<a href="#"><u>Express Readers</u></a>	<a href="#"><u>Phonic Books: Titan's Gauntlets Series 1 and 2</u></a>
<a href="#"><u>Flyleaf Emergent Readers</u></a>	<a href="#"><u>Phonic Books: Amber Guardians Series</u></a>
<a href="#"><u>PAF Readers</u></a>	<a href="#"><u>High Noon Sound Out Chapter Books</u></a>
<a href="#"><u>King Elephant Phonics Books</u></a>	<a href="#"><u>High Noon Sound Out Nonfiction Series</u></a>

Readers/about-the-program



# Evaluation and Observation Summary

- Know your evaluation system
- Talk to the staff regarding what constitutes good literacy instruction
- Focus on the curriculum → provide feedback on:
  - the layout of the literacy block
  - explicit instruction and/or direct instruction
  - opportunities for practice
  - proper scope and sequence
- Provide actionable items that will make a difference
- Align to professional development for teachers

# Feedback and Coaching

Principals can and should provide instructional feedback and coach!





**Many, many principals do not have instructional coaches. It becomes incumbent on the principal to provide feedback and coach teachers.**

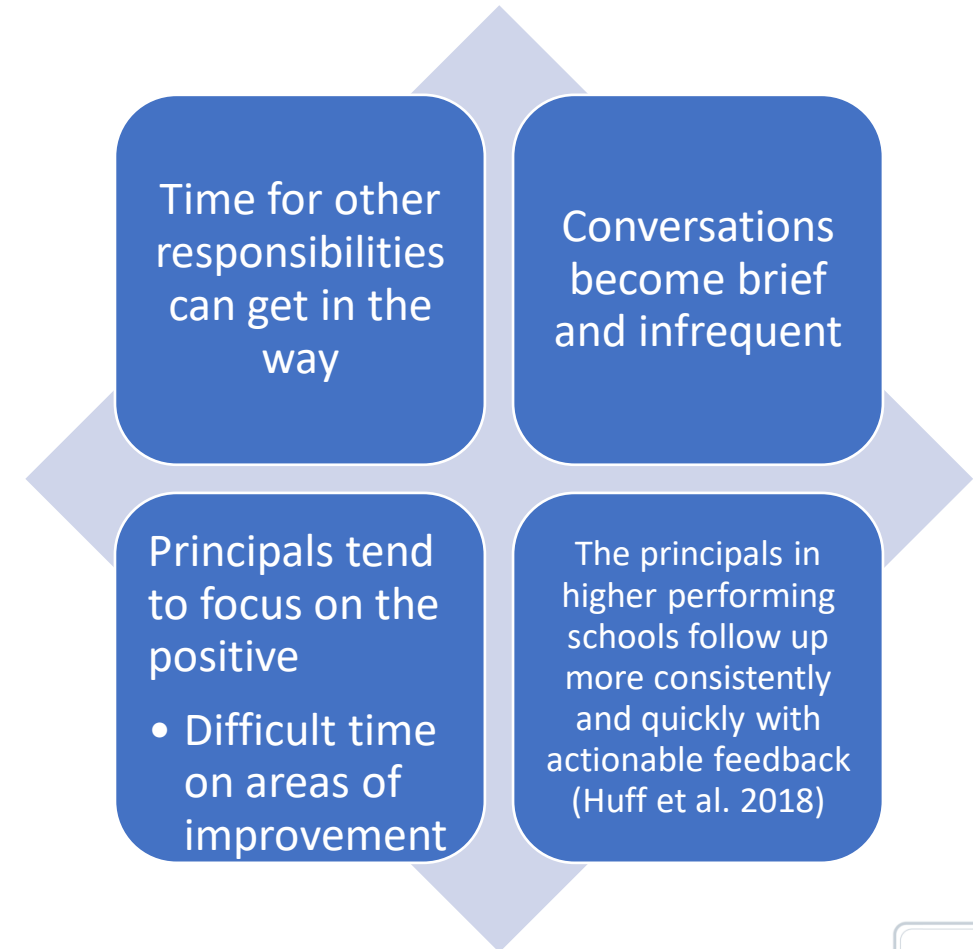
**How many of you have an instructional coach?  
If yes, what has that done to the role of the principal? Are they still instructional leaders?**

**Share with us.**

# The Problem with Feedback and Coaching



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# The Problem with Feedback and Coaching

Principals must be “taught” how to provide coaching

Leader  
as  
Coach



Center your feedback and coaching around a coherent “instructional program” (instead of multiple initiatives)

- In other words, if we are shifting to a Science of Reading implementation—
- School leaders must know how to provide feedback on that topic
- Focus on the components of teaching and instruction—relieve yourself from the fear of a phoneme

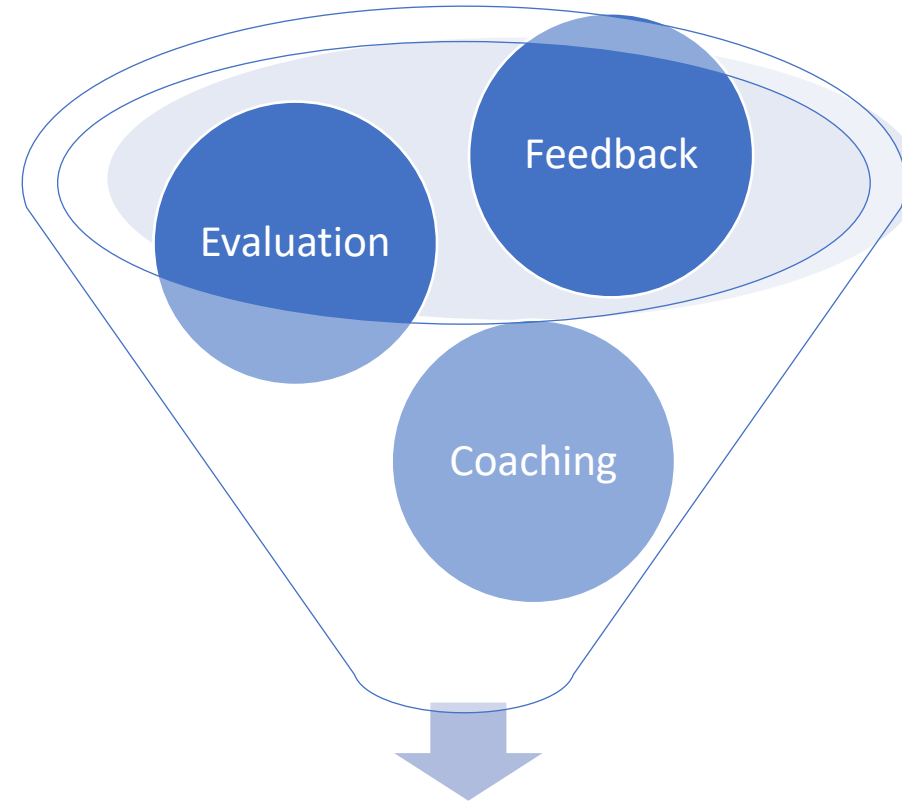
# Coaching, Feedback and Evaluation

The 3 topics have gotten confused

The advent of instructional coaching has led some principals to believe they shouldn't coach

Providing instructional feedback should be a part of a principals' responsibilities

For schools to improve, principals must coach, give feedback and evaluate



Improved instruction

# Coaching, Feedback and Evaluation

- Coaching—a person who trains an athlete (teacher) or team (teachers); a person who prepares a person for an examination; to give instruction or advice
- Feedback—a reaction or response to a particular process or activity; evaluative information derived from such a reaction or response
- Evaluation—an act or instance of evaluating or appraising; to judge or determine the significance, worth or quality of



**I'd like you to think about this...**

**In schools where there is an instructional coach...the belief is that teachers volunteer for coaching, that it is collegial...**

**So, who is left to coach the teachers that don't volunteer? Who are those teachers?**

**Share with us.**

# The key factors in providing feedback so it is heard

- Be knowledgeable in the content—
  - Science of Reading
- Be WISE in instruction--
  - Curriculum
  - Instructional practices—explicit instruction
- Know the data
- Establish relationships (Trust Matters, 2014 and Collective Trust, 2011)
  - Trust is a key factor
  - The 5 Facets of Trust
- Problem solver
  - Instructionally—Problem Solving Process (Student Centered Coaching, 2021)



# Some Examples to Help

- When observing, log-in to the curriculum being used
- Ensure teacher lessons are coherent
- Observe for engaging strategies
- Become familiar with the intervention being used—ask for the lesson
- Watch videos provided by curriculum/professional development
- Be a part of teacher-led instructional conversations
- Understand the components of explicit instruction



# Explicit Instruction

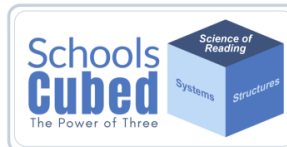
- Teachers think that they are teaching explicitly
- Living in a “workshop” model of instruction—20 years
- When trained in Science of Reading—see lots of “activities” going on in classrooms
- Understand the difference between a literacy block in a Structured Literacy classroom as opposed to a balanced literacy classroom
- May not have the adequate materials to teach—interventions may be scripted

# Explicit and Systematic Instruction



## Explicit Instruction Observation Sheet

Design of Lesson	Evidence
<p><b>Big Idea</b> What do you want students to learn by the end of the lesson? Look-fors:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Today we will learn....</li> <li>○ By the end of literacy we will know how to....</li> <li>○ After a hook, teacher says, “What do you think we are learning today?”</li> <li>○ Why are we learning this?</li> </ul>	
<p><b>Conspicuous Strategies</b> Explicit teaching of helpful strategies available to students that will benefit their learning. Look-fors:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ When I am reading a book or story, I visualize what I am reading about.</li> <li>○ To organize my thoughts, I like to create a web that helps me....</li> <li>○ Today I will teach you a strategy to use when...</li> </ul>	
<p><b>Strategic Integration</b> Is the student applying what has been learned and knows and understands into new information? Look-fors:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ You know 5 consonant sounds and the short</li> </ul>	





# Communication

How we say it makes all the difference...

# Basic Principles of Communication



Listen



Pause and think before responding



Ask questions and be earnestly curious

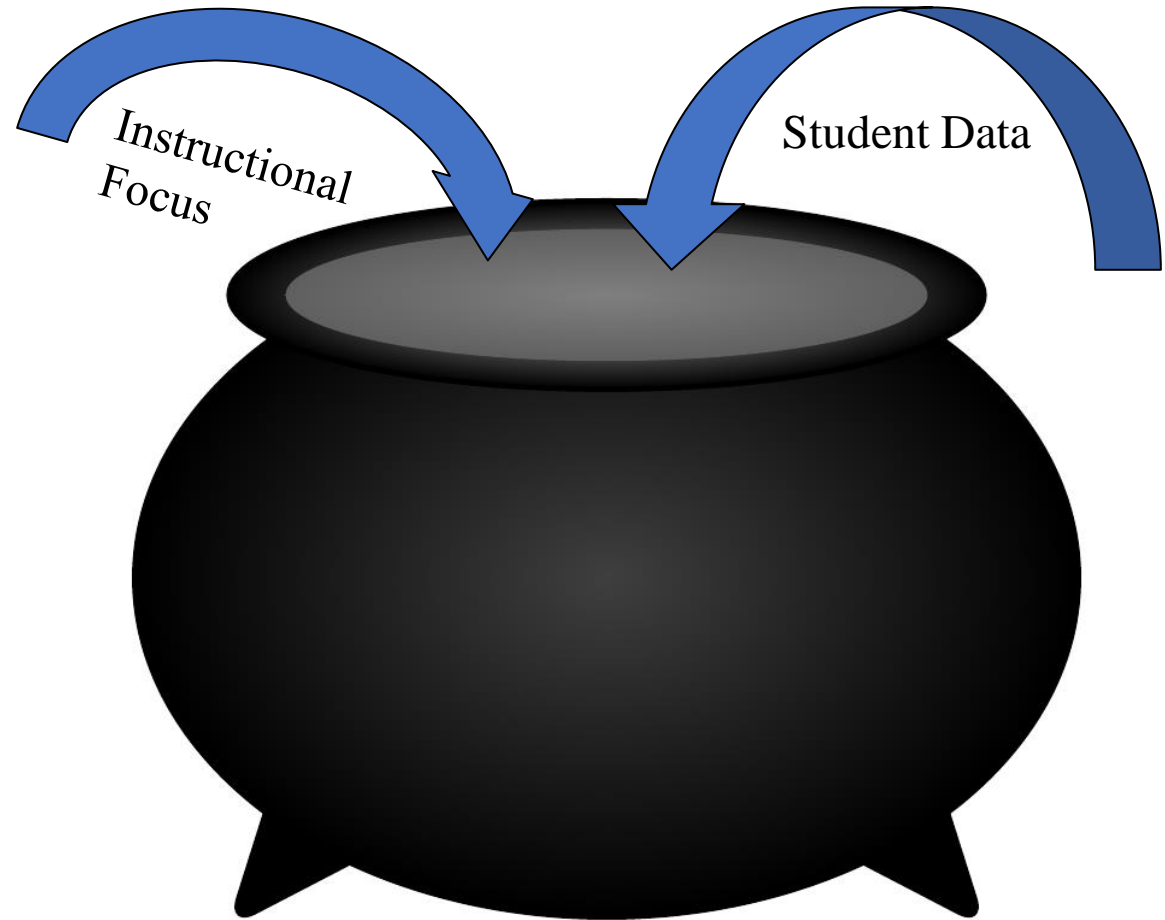


Be non-judgmental

# 2 Drivers to Consider

Aligned with the school's  
Instructional Focus—  
Science of Reading

Aligned with student data  
from the classroom



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# Focus on what's important

- Are students engaged?
- Is small group instruction aligned to students' data?
- Are students reading?
- Are there areas of teachers' data that could be strengthened?
  - Analyze subskill reports of individual teachers
- Do they need enhancement in one particular area of reading?
  - Use Google when you aren't sure (how many phonemes in...what's a blend, what's a digraph?)





**How might the instructional feedback from principals look different than from coaches?  
What sort of a difference might that make?**

**Share with us.**

## Teacher Feedback Protocol



Name: Mary Jones	Date: December 4, 2017
Data used: DIBELS	Data reveals: 53% of students are at benchmark on Nonsense Word Fluency at B-O-Y assessment
Goal: 80% of students will be proficient based on progress monitoring data.	
Standard:	
Action steps: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>✓ Mary will work with Donna, the instructional coach to enhance the students' ability to blend words.</li><li>✓ Donna will model an instructional routine for blending words</li><li>✓ Mary will teach the instructional strategy for blending words</li><li>✓ Donna will video Mary's lesson</li><li>✓ Donna and Mary will reflect by using a video on Mary's blending lesson</li><li>✓ Mary will use the blending instructional routine and Donna will provide feedback</li></ul>	
Targeted Differentiation to be provided:	
Comments, changes, reflection:	
Date to be completed: December 22, 2017	
Outcome:	
Students who will require reteaching:	



# An email....

Good morning, Kim

I spent 10 minutes in all rooms yesterday. I did see one teacher hit this week's phonics skills of introduction to the digraph /sh/. All teachers reviewed the phonics skill of doubling the final consonant "Floss Rule" which is a review of last week. In your room, I did not see the introduction of /sh/. Rather, I saw you and another teacher working on glued sounds that are not in this week's Scope and Sequence.

My question is, if you are not following the Into Reading Scope and Sequence, how is it matching up with the decodable?

Always open for more conversation.



**What do you think?**

**Share with us.**

# Feedback and Coaching

Time spent on coaching teachers by *principals* is associated with higher student achievement growth, whereas time spent on informal classroom walk-throughs is unproductive.

(Grissom, Loeb, and Master, 2013)

# Using Data to Drive Instructional Improvement

# Good principals use data in various ways

Research suggests that effective principals make use of data not only to make good decisions and address school needs but to inspire action.

(Hitt et al. 2018)



**If trying to move to a Science of Reading approach, how might school leaders use data to inspire action?**

**Share with us.**

# Use data to inspire action



Teachers and staff must have a very clear idea of the current state of affairs



Effective principals keep teachers apprised of how literacy proficiency is improving with a new initiative—through benchmark data



School leaders must use data to plan for human resources and communicate the why's to staff

# Effective principals create goals

- School goals should be based on literacy data
  - SMART Goals
  - School-wide and grade-level specific
  - Progress monitor goals along with teachers
  - Discuss with teachers how their students are doing toward the goal





# How to establish a data-driven instructional program?

- Most schools use a Professional Learning Communities to look at data
- The 4 questions are right:
  - What do we want all students to know and be able to do?
  - How will we know if they learn it?
  - How will we respond when some students do not learn?
  - How will we extend the learning for students who are already proficient?
- Particularly in grades K-3 we might be looking for the wrong thing?
- Most Educational Leadership Schools discuss the necessity of PLCs but none discuss ways to implement

# A Reexamination of the PLC Questions

- Schools have been misguided in their understanding of the 4 questions
- Generally, schools look at the questions as they relate to standards
- Standards are good, but standards don't measure whether or not a student is adequately learning to read
- If students can't read, we shouldn't expect them to adequately access grade-level standards

# A Reexamination of the PLC questions...

“What do we want all students to know and be able to do?”

- Read at grade level
- Examination of interim assessments that measure the foundational skills of reading
- On-going progress monitoring, built into our system, for any student who is reading below grade-level

# A Reexamination of the PLC questions...

“How will we know if they learn it?”

- By examining the weekly or biweekly progress monitoring of students who are reading below grade level
  - Monitor the subskills found within a foundational reading assessment
- Principals should be attending ALL PLC’s that analyze progress monitoring data
- Regularly observing in classrooms to ensure strategies are effectuated in classrooms

# A Reexamination of the PLC questions...

“How will we respond when some students do not learn?”

- By establishing a culture of, “all means all.”
- Ensuring our teachers understand quality Tier 2 instruction in the general classroom
- Implementing a rigorous system for Tier 3
- PLCs include conversations regarding Action Steps with instructional strategies

# A Reexamination of the PLC questions...

“How will we extend the learning for students who are already proficient?”

- Ensuring that when interventions occur school-wide—we have extension “interventions” built in
- Regularly monitoring the progress of those already at grade level
- Ensuring that more than the “composite” scores of foundational reading assessments is analyzed

# Wrap up

01

To ensure that literacy is taught based on evidence, principals must have instructional interactions with staff

02

Instructional interactions—evaluations, observation, feedback and data-analysis are critical features

03

Each must be aligned to the instructional focus of the Science of Reading and the foundational skills of literacy

# Some Tips...

- Don't agonize over a phoneme
- Focus on *How* teachers are teaching--Content versus craft
- Understand the data
- Understand how your evaluation system links and aligns to the Science of Reading
- Grow your knowledge in the Science of Reading—  
*Top 10 Tools for Teachers*



# The importance continues...



For a school as a whole—the effectiveness of the principal is more important than the effectiveness of a single teacher.



Principals affect all 483 students  
(typical building population)

Teachers affect 21 students (average class  
size)

The reading gains from replacing a below-average principal with an above-average one, would be larger than approximately 50% of the effects on reading achievement of various educational interventions in 747 studies.

(Kraft, 2020)

*It is difficult to envision an investment with a higher ceiling on its potential return than a successful effort to improve principal leadership.*

The Wallace Foundation, 2021

# Our own research....

We have worked with hundreds of schools and interface with thousands of principals each year

Those who...

- provide highly effective instructional feedback are much more successful.
- observe classrooms in a meaningful way have higher outcomes.
- develop PLCs that focus on the foundational skills achieve results faster.
- demonstrate that they are an instructional leader have a staff that will follow them anywhere!!!!

# District Leaders/Heads of Departments of Education

- Work on policies that promote professional development to school leaders in evidence-based instruction in reading
- Ensure evaluation systems link to the 5 components of reading and explicit instruction
- Work with “principal schools” to update their offerings
- Provide leadership coaching and mentoring to your principals on the systems and structures necessary for increased literacy outcomes



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