Module 3a: Facilitation Guide

Overview

The goal of the presentation is to help teachers understand the Framework for Teaching, specifically 3a: Communicating with Students. As an observer, you will become intimately familiar with Charlotte Danielson’s Framework for Teaching and the nuances of each of the components; however, your teaching staff will have little to no understanding of how evidence is observed, collected, and leveled. This module presentation serves to bridge this knowledge gap in your school. Use this Facilitation Guide to lead an engaging and effective presentation for teachers.

Training Materials

- Module 3a: Facilitation Guide
- Module 3a: Presentation (PowerPoint)
- A Printed Copy of the EXIT CARD slide for each Teacher to complete
- Framework at a Glance: Domains 2 and 3 (for each staff member) from previous session
- Framework for Teaching from previous session
- Back Up of Video Clips
Domain 3: Instruction

a. Communicating with Students

The Framework for Teaching by Charlotte Danielson
SLIDE 2: Why is this an important component of effective teaching?

Opening Talking Points:
- Because teachers communicate with students largely through language, that language must be audible and legible.
- When teachers offer and explanation, it should aid in learning. In addition, a teacher’s use of vivid and expressive language can enhance a learning experience.

Why is this an important component of effective teaching?

Teachers communicate with students for several independent, but related, purposes. First, they convey that teaching and learning are purposeful activities; they make that purpose clear to students. They also provide clear directions for classroom activities, so students know what it is that they are to do. When teachers present concepts and information, those presentations are made with accuracy, clarity, and imagination; where appropriate to the lesson, skilled teachers embellish their explanations with analogies or metaphors, linking them to student interests and prior knowledge. The teacher’s use of language is vivid, rich, and error free, affording the opportunity for students to hear language well used and to extend their own vocabularies. The teacher presents complex concepts in ways that provide scaffolding and access to students.
SLIDE 3 & 4: The Elements

Opening Talking Points:

- This component may be broken down into four distinct and important elements.
  1. Expectations for learning.
  2. Directions and procedures.
  3. Explanations of content.
  4. Use of oral and written language.

The Elements

This component may be broken down into four distinct and important elements. As you review these elements, think about what they might look like in practice in the classroom.

- **Expectations for learning**
  Classrooms are business-like places, with important work taking place. This is not to suggest that they are somber; indeed, they may be joyful, but still business-like. The goals for learning are communicated clearly to students. Even if these goals are not conveyed at the outset of a lesson (for example, during an inquiry lesson in science), by the end of the lesson students are clear about what they have been learning.

- **Directions and procedures**
  Students must be clear about what they are expected to do during a lesson, particularly if they are working independently or with classmates without direct teacher supervision. Directions and procedures for the lesson activities may be provided orally, in writing, or some combination of the two. Some teachers use a board or projection device to good effect; students can refer to it without requiring the teacher's attention.

The Elements cont.

- **Explanations of content**
  Skilled teachers, when explaining concepts to students, use vivid language and imaginative analogies and metaphors, connecting explanations to student interests and lives beyond school. The explanations are clear, with appropriate scaffolding, and, where appropriate, anticipate possible student misconceptions.

- **Use of oral and written language**
  For many students, their teachers' use of language represents their best model of both accurate syntax and a rich vocabulary; these models enable students to emulate such language, making their own more precise and expressive.
SLIDE 5: Indicators

Opening Talking Points:

- Determining a level of performance must be grounded in evidence found during an observation.
- Clear and accurate communication has several elements. The first is expectations for learning.
- A fundamental assumption of the framework for teaching is that teaching is purposeful; that purpose should be clear to students.
- A teacher should convey what the students will be learning, why it is important, what the students will be doing to achieve the goals.
- Students should be able to explain to a visitor, if asked, what the topic for a lesson is and where it fits in the larger context of what they are learning.

(Discuss bullet points on slide)

Determining a level of performance for a component must be grounded in evidence found during an observation of a lesson. The indicators below may be used as a guide for looking for evidence of this component in a classroom.

- Clarity of lesson purpose
- Absence of content errors and clear explanations of concepts
- Clear directions and procedures
- Correct and imaginative use of language
SLIDE 6 & 7: Activity: Relevant because...

Activity Directions:

1. Having reviewed the indicators for **Communicating with Students** on the previous slide, select whether each piece of evidence is “relevant” or “not relevant” for the component.

   *(click to show evidence)*

2. Have the teachers read the evidence, and assess using a showing of hands if they think that the evidence is relevant or not.

3. Then click on the slide to get the explanation as to why this is relevant (note that all of these examples are relevant for this exercise)

   *(read explanation and repeat)*

4. Allow for brief discussion.

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**Relevant because...**

- “By the end of today’s lesson, you’re all going to be able to factor different types of polynomials.”
  
  The teacher announces what the students can expect to learn during the day’s lesson—evidence for one of the elements for the component.

- The teacher mispronounces the word *phonemes*.
  
  By mispronouncing a term, the teacher is not modeling proper use of language—evidence for one of the elements for this component, suggesting a lower level of performance.

- A student asks, “What are we supposed to be doing?” and the teacher clarifies the task.
  
  Because the student had to ask the question, the directions and procedures were not communicated clearly—evidence for one of the elements for this component, suggesting a lower level of performance.
Many questions are of the *recitation* type, such as “How many members of the House of Representatives are there?”

*NOT RELEVANT: While this could be evidence of teacher communication with students, this piece of evidence is more relevant when thinking about the quality of questions, an element for the component Using Questioning/Prompts and Discussion Techniques.*

- The teacher uses technical terms without explaining their meanings.
  
  *By using unfamiliar terms and not explaining them, the teacher’s explanations of content are not clear—evidence for one of the elements for this component, suggesting a lower level of performance.*

- The teacher greets students by name as they enter the class or during the lesson.
  
  *RELEVANT: While this is evidence of how a teacher communicates with students, this particular piece of evidence is not related to one of the elements for Communicating With Students. Instead, it is more relevant for the component Creating an Environment of Respect and Rapport.*

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**SLIDE 8-13: Activity: Level of Performance**

**Opening Talking Points:**

- The Framework for Teaching is a tool that provides clear expectations and standards to both the observer and the teacher.
- The rubrics provide a common set of criteria, a common language of professional practice.

**Activity Directions:**

2. Review the directions on slide 8 for this activity.
3. Display and Read aloud the descriptions on slides 9-12, giving 4-5 minutes on each for teachers to utilize their Framework to determine the performance levels of each.
4. Display the slide 13. Inquire by showing of hands what level the teachers would have placed each description. Click on the presentation after each discussing each of the 4 scenarios to reveal the answers.
You will read four classroom observation descriptions. They are numbered so that we can reference them and in no way reflect their performance level. After each of the four description, jot down what performance level you would assign it and why.

What’s the Level of Performance?

1. The instructional purpose of the lesson is clearly communicated to students, including where it is situated within broader learning; directions and procedures are explained clearly. The teacher's explanation of content is well scaffolded, clear, and accurate and connects with student knowledge and experience. During the explanation of content, the teacher invites student intellectual engagement. The teacher's spoken and written language is clear and correct. Vocabulary is appropriate to students’ ages and interests.
What’s the Level of Performance?

2. The teacher's attempt to explain the instructional purpose has only limited success, and/or directions and procedures must be clarified after initial student confusion. The teacher's explanation of the content may contain minor errors; some portions are clear while other portions are difficult to follow. The teacher's explanation consists of a monologue, with no invitation to the students for intellectual engagement. The teacher's spoken language is correct; however, vocabulary is limited or not fully appropriate to students' ages or backgrounds.

What's the Level of Performance?

3. The teacher links the instructional purpose of the lesson to student interests; the directions and procedures are clear and anticipate possible student misunderstanding. The teacher’s explanation of content is thorough and clear, developing conceptual understanding through artful scaffolding and connecting with student interests. Students contribute to extending the content and explaining concepts to their classmates. The teacher’s spoken and written language is expressive, and the teacher finds opportunities to extend students’ vocabularies.
What’s the Level of Performance?

4. The instructional purpose of the lesson is unclear to students and the directions and procedures are confusing. The teacher’s explanation of the content contains major errors. The teacher’s spoken or written language contains errors of grammar or syntax. Vocabulary is inappropriate, vague, or used incorrectly, leaving students confused.

Level of Performance Answers

1. Effective (Rubric Level 3)
2. Partially Effective (Rubric Level 2)
3. Highly Effective (Rubric Level 4)
4. Ineffective (Rubric Level 1)

Any surprises?

(Discuss Results)
SLIDE 14-15: Level 3 Critical Attributes, Evidence, and Sample Video

Opening Talking Points:

- The levels of performance described in the rubric correspond to developing expertise with respect to Communicating with Students.
- We will first examine level of performance 3 in detail.

Allow for brief discussion.

Level 3: Critical Attributes

- The teacher states clearly, at some point during the lesson, what the students are learning.
- If appropriate, the teacher models the process to be followed in the task.
- Students engage with the learning task, indicating that they understand what they are to do.
- The teacher makes no content errors.
- The teacher’s explanation of content is clear and invites student participation and thinking.
- Vocabulary and usage are correct and completely suited to the lesson.
- Vocabulary is appropriate to students’ ages and levels of development.

Level 3: Evidence

- “By the end of today’s lesson, you’re all going to be able to factor different types of polynomials.”
- During a presentation of content, the teacher asks students, “Can anyone think of an example of that?”
- The teacher uses a board or projection device so students can refer to it without requiring the teacher’s attention.
Opening Talking Points:

- The levels of performance described in the rubric correspond to developing expertise with respect to Communicating with Students.
- We will first examine level of performance 2 in detail.

Allow for brief discussion.

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**Level 2: Critical Attributes**

- The teacher refers in passing to what the students will be learning, or it is written on the board with no elaboration or explanation.
- The teacher must clarify the learning task so students can complete it.
- The teacher makes no serious content errors but may make a minor error.
- The teacher’s explanation of the content consists of a monologue or is purely procedural with minimal participation by students.
- Vocabulary and usage are correct but unimaginative.
- Vocabulary is too advanced or juvenile for the students.

**Level 2: Evidence**

- The teacher mispronounces the word *phonemes*.
- The teacher says, “And oh, by the way, today we’re going to factor polynomials.”
- A student asks, “What are we supposed to be doing?” and the teacher clarifies the task.
- Students ask, “What do I write here?” in order to complete a task.
- The teacher says, “Watch me while I show you how to solve the equation” with students asked only to listen.
- A number of students do not seem to be following the explanation. Students are inattentive during the teacher's explanation of content.
SLIDE 18-19: Level 1 Critical Attributes, Evidence, and Sample Video

Opening Talking Points:

- The levels of performance described in the rubric correspond to developing expertise with respect to Communicating with Students.
- We will first examine level of performance 1 in detail.

Allow for brief discussion.

Level 1: Critical Attributes

- At no time during the lesson does the teacher convey to the students what they will be learning.
- Students indicate through their questions that they are confused about the learning task.
- The teacher makes a serious content error that will affect student understanding of the lesson.
- Students indicate through body language or questions that they don’t understand the content being presented.
- The teacher’s communications include errors of vocabulary or usage.
- Vocabulary is inappropriate to the age or culture of the students.

Level 1: Evidence

- A student asks, “What are we supposed to be doing?” but the teacher ignores the question.
- The teacher states that to add fractions, the fractions must have the same numerator.
- Students have a quizzical look on their faces; some may withdraw from the lesson.
- Students become disruptive, or talk among themselves in an effort to follow the lesson.
- The teacher uses technical terms without explaining their meanings.
- The teacher uses the word *ain’t*.
- Most students ask what they are to do or look around for clues from others.
SLIDE 20-21: Level 4 Critical Attributes, Evidence, and Sample Video

Opening Talking Points:

- The levels of performance described in the rubric correspond to developing expertise with respect to Communicating with Students.
- We will first examine level of performance 4 in detail.

Allow for brief discussion.

Level 4: Critical Attributes

In addition to the characteristics of a level of performance 3,
- The teacher points out possible areas for misunderstanding.
- The teacher explains content clearly, using metaphors and analogies to bring content to life.
- All students seem to understand the presentation.
- The teacher invites students to explain the content to the class or to a small group of classmates.
- The teacher uses rich language and offers brief vocabulary lessons where appropriate.

Level 4: Evidence

- The teacher says, “Here’s a spot where some students have difficulty; be sure to read it carefully.”
- The teacher asks a student to explain the task to other students.
- When needed, a student offers clarification about the learning task to classmates.
- The teacher explains passive solar energy by inviting students to think about the temperature in a closed car on a cold but sunny day, or by the temperature of water in a hose that has been sitting in the sun.
- The teacher asks, “Who would like to explain this idea to us?”
- The teacher pauses during an explanation of the civil rights movement to remind students that the prefix in– as in inequality means “not,” and the prefix un– also means the same thing.
SLIDE 22: Discussion

Opening Talking Points:

- Teachers demonstrate the clarity and accuracy of their communication primarily through classroom performance.
- The evidence is not, of course, whether an explanation, for example, is clear to an observer; it must be clear to students.
- Watching the students’ reactions provides the best indication of whether the goal has been achieved.
- Teachescape is a resource in which teachers can log into to see more videos at each level under Module 3a: Levels of Performance, should they desire on their own.

Discussion

- After reviewing the Performance Levels for Domain 3a: Communicating with Students, do you think you could distinguish between them?
- Did the sample videos of each of the performance levels in this component help to provide clarity in what each of the performance levels looks like?
- Reflect on your classroom practices…. What would the performance level of your classroom on a typical day be as it relates to this component?
SLIDE 23: Our performance goal is to LIVE in 3... and vacation in 4.

Opening Talking Points:
- It is important that as we move through the modules that teachers understand that the expectations for our staff is that we are all effective practitioners (Level 3).
- Highly effective practices truly reflect students taking much of the responsibility and initiative.
- Effective practitioners strive to be highly effective in their practices but due to external and necessary factors and duties of the profession, this cannot always be achieved. (ex. test giving, direct instruction mini-lessons, flexibility in meeting student needs lead to a more teacher-centric lesson)

Remember...

Our performance goal is to LIVE in 3... and vacation in 4.
SLIDE 24: Session Reflection & Exit Card

Opening Talking Points:

- A lot of new information was just disseminated and it will take time to digest it all.

Activity Directions:

Have teachers complete the EXIT CARD as a reflection of session and submit to the facilitator to collect impressions and feedback.

Session Reflection & Exit Card

- An insight I had as a result of today’s session is…

- Concepts from this session that are most applicable to my teaching practice are…

- A question I have related to today’s session is…