Element 15: Organizing Students to Practice and Deepen Knowledge

A teacher’s growth in using instructional strategies can be tracked along the developmental scale. Coaching and growth needs vary for each developmental category on this scale. A teacher at the “beginning” level on the development scale has very different needs than a teacher at the “applying” level. Therefore, in order to track a teacher’s growth in using this strategy, it is important to begin by pinpointing his/her current level of use.

Monitoring for the desired effect of a strategy is a critical component addressed in the developmental scale. Monitoring is the teacher act of checking evidence for desired student learning of critical content during instruction, which includes student action and teacher witnessing of that action.

For this element, the teacher organizes and guides grouping in ways that appropriately facilitate practicing and deepening knowledge.

The desired effect of this element states that students practice and deepen knowledge by interacting in small groups.

Developmental Scale

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Beginning</th>
<th>Developing</th>
<th>Applying</th>
<th>Innovating</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Uses strategy</td>
<td>Uses strategy incorrectly or with parts missing.</td>
<td>Organizes students into groups that appropriately facilitate practicing and deepening knowledge, but the majority of students are either not monitored for or not displaying the desired effect of the strategy.</td>
<td>Organizes students into groups that appropriately facilitate practicing and deepening knowledge and monitors for evidence of the extent to which the group work extends the learning of the majority of students.</td>
<td>Adapts and creates new strategies for unique student needs and situations in order for the desired effect to be evident in all students.</td>
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The following scale has been enhanced to demonstrate common mistakes, examples and non-examples, along with ideas for scaffolding and extended learning.

BEGINNING – Uses strategy incorrectly or with parts missing.

Some common mistakes include:
- The teacher organizes groups that are too large or small to effectively interact with content.
- The teacher provides limited guidelines or structure such that students are not sure what to do or how to interact as a group and are not able to effectively process new information.
- The teacher groups students that are unable to work together.
- Student participation in groups is not equitable.
- The groups are not asked to interact with content.

DEVELOPING – Organizes students into groups that appropriately facilitate practicing and deepening knowledge, but the majority of students are either not monitored for or not displaying the desired effect of the strategy.

Some examples of typical, correct use of the strategy include:
- The teacher decides group size and membership based on the processing activity and student needs.
- The teacher incorporates rules and procedures for student interaction for the express purpose of processing new content.
- The teacher defines and assigns student roles within the groups.
- The teacher asks students to complete a processing activity in their assigned group roles.
- The teacher includes guidance and emphasis on one or more conative skill during group work, along with a cognitive focus for the activity.
### APPLYING

Organizes students into groups that appropriately facilitate practicing and deepening knowledge and monitors for evidence of the extent to which the group work extends the learning of the majority of students.

At this point in development, the teacher uses the strategy with increased accuracy and fluency while staying focused on student outcome, or desired effect. At the “applying” level, the teacher must provide opportunity for students to demonstrate that the strategy is having the desired effect — in this case, students practice and deepen knowledge by interacting in small groups. Planning for the implementation of this strategy allows the teacher to identify how he/she will monitor for the desired effect. Some examples of monitoring may include:

- The teacher moves from group to group listening and interacting with students to determine whether the grouping is facilitating learning.
- The teacher scans the room ensuring that groups are interacting with content and individual contribution is equitable.
- The teacher identifies individual contributions on a group product by asking students to use different color writing tools for their processing.
- The teacher listens as groups explain their new understanding of the content.
- The teacher observes students using conative skills during group work (taking various perspectives, interacting responsibly, etc.).

### INNOVATING

Adapts and creates new strategies for unique student needs and situations in order for the desired effect to be evident in all students. In order to do this, the teacher scaffolds, extends, and/or creates a macrostrategy as necessary. As a result of this, **ALL** students practice and deepen knowledge by interacting in small groups.

Examples of providing unique support to meet the individual needs of all students include:

- The teacher assigns groups or roles in groups based on students’ needs.
- The teacher develops individual student tracking charts to assist those students having difficulty complying with group norms.
- The teacher provides visual supports to remind students of important aspects of group discussion.
- The teacher provides sentence starters to assist students as they contribute to their group.

Examples of extension include:

- The teacher assigns groups or roles in groups based on students’ talents.
- The teacher has students create group norms that ensure equal participation from all group members.
- The teacher has students identify additional roles they think would help the group to function more efficiently.
- The teacher asks students to offer his/her own opinion or thoughts, but also to connect the current content and discussion to past learning.
- The teacher asks students to respond both linguistically and nonlinguistically.