

INSTRUCTIONAL FOUNDATIONS: OVERVIEW

“Visible teaching and learning occurs when learning is the explicit goal, when it is appropriately challenging, when the teacher and student both (in their various ways) seek to ascertain whether and to what degree the challenging goal is attained, when there is deliberate practice aimed at attaining mastery of the goal, when there is feedback given and sought, when there are active, passionate, and engaging people (teachers, peers, students, and so on) participating in the act of learning” (Hattie, 2009, “The Argument,” p. 22).

I. **Explicit Learning Goal:** *“learning is the explicit goal”*

- Lesson Level: Every lesson includes a learning target that is: Aligned with trajectory of learning, learning centered, important and right sized, at the right level of challenge, specific and contextualized. Measurable, achievable within one period, used to give feedback to students. Posted, processed with students, ensures that collaboration and reflection occur in lesson.
- Every lesson includes a Language Target that defines the requirement for mastery of that lesson’s specific linguistic challenge.
- Unit Level: All units aim toward transfer goals. Written units include specific standards, understandings, essential questions, knowledge and skills that the unit explicitly teaches.

II. **Assessment:** *“the teacher and student seek to ascertain whether and to what degree the challenging goal is attained”*

- *Mantra:* KNOW THY IMPACT. This is the single most important goal the teacher can focus on.
- Lesson Level: Assess the learning target daily at the level of the intended learning. Daily learning targets create an arc of learning that when cumulative provide evidence of understanding.
- Unit Level: Assess the transfer goal with performances of understanding, as well as lesser assessments of acquisition and meaning making.

III. **Deliberate Practice:** *“aimed at attaining mastery of the goal”*

- Students need autonomy, competence, and relatedness.
- Learning requires acquisition, meaning-making, and transfer.
- Lessons and units are explicitly planned to address understanding. Lessons activate prior knowledge and ensure students are engaged in the thinking; the lesson is logically sequenced to produce learning at the correct level of challenge; the sequence of instruction includes both planned questions and scaffolds; MAC protocols are used where appropriate; students talk to construct understanding;
Students are provided feedback on their progress toward the LT during the lesson; reflection on learning (metacognition) is built in so that students think about their thinking; closure (summary) consolidates knowledge at end of lesson and provides more evidence of learning.
- The lesson content and/or processes are culturally relevant and responsive.

IV. **Level of challenge:** *“appropriately challenging”*

- For learning to be optimal and understanding to be achieved, level of challenge needs to be at the top of but not over the student’s zone of proximal development. Challenging goals versus “do your best” goals result in greatly increased learning.
- The right level of challenge requires differentiation and scaffolding.
- Useful tools include Bloom’s taxonomy and UbD’s definition of acquisition, meaning-making, and transfer.

- Level of challenge has high leverage and is an often under-discussed variable.

V. **Feedback:** *“given and sought”*

- Directs attention to the intended learning.
- Occurs during learning, while there is still time to act on it, and provides information to both teacher and student.
- Does not do the thinking for the student; limits corrective information to the amount of advice the student can act on; points out strengths and offers specific information to guide improvement; is enhanced by use of models and rubrics.

VI. **Reflection and Collaboration:** *“active, passionate, and engaging people participating in the act of learning”*

- Reflection engaging metacognition for students and staff should be built into every lesson for students and every observation or coaching cycle for teachers.
- Adult collaboration must be about instruction to see positive effects on learning. Focus on teacher conversations about teaching and learning.
- Learning is social.

Hattie, J. (2009). *Visible learning: A synthesis of over 800 meta-analyses relating to achievement*. (New York: Routledge).

Last modified 7-1-2020 by Susan Meier for East EPO.