

slides are [here](#).

Act 1

Scene 1

3rd-year teacher Russ Goerend is in his classroom the day before school starts. He has given himself eight hours to get his room and his head straight to start the school year.

Matt: Mr. Goerend can't believe this will be his third year teaching. He is really looking forward to another great year teaching middle school students. He thinks to himself...

Russ: If I put these two students next to each other, will they talk too much? I wonder if these sixth grade girls will be talkative during the first day of class? I'll never forget Beth Swanson...did she ever stop talking last year? Oh yeah...I called her mom and told her I was taking off 5 participation points every day I had to send her daughter out in the hall. That fixed her real quick!

Matt: Russ thinks many of his class management issues are best handled by holding students accountable through the grade book. Punishment, rewards and points are the motivators. That's what he learned in student teaching AND from his mentor down the hall. Let's check in after the first few weeks of class:

Russ: Class, I hope you prepared yourselves for today's test. Yes, Frankie. This is the first test of the year and it is a MAJOR part of your grade. It will be worth 200 points. Yes, Amy. If you do not do well on this test, you will likely be failing the course. Yes, Johnny, if you do well on this test, your grade will improve from the fifty percent it currently is. Say, Johnny...don't you still owe me some homework from last week AND the week before? If you'll recall, I assigned you the evens in the grammar workbook so that you wouldn't be able to use the odd answers in the back of the book. I remember seeing several zeros by your name. You'll be a seventh grader before you know it and those seventh grade teachers are even less likely to track you down when you have missing assignments!

Matt: Later....Russ wishes he wouldn't have used that test from the book. It's taking FOREVER TO GRADE!

Russ: I guess the kiddos won't get their test back until next week. Now where's my calculator to figure out these percentages?

Matt: Russ goes home with his quizzes, gradebook and calculator in hand, wondering if marking up the papers will motivate students to learn at a higher level.

Scene 2

Russ is planning his first unit of instruction

Russ: Hmm. What am I supposed to teach next week? I remember reading *The Giver* when I was in sixth grade. That sounds like a great book for my kids to read, too.

Matt: That sounds like a fun book. But, how is Russ going to know if his kids are doing their reading?

Russ: I think I'll have them complete a worksheet and take a quiz after each chapter to make sure they're reading every night.

Matt: Two weeks later, Russ is wondering why his students aren't doing well in his class. Many of the students are copying their worksheets or not doing them at all.

Russ: Jamal, you didn't turn in your chapter 10 worksheet and failed your reading quiz again. Will you ever learn?

Matt: We've seen how Russ's rationale for his room arrangement. We've seen how he uses points in his class and how he sets up his instruction. *What aspects of this scene can you relate to in your building/district? Please take three minutes and share with a person sitting next to you. We will be circling the room to look for several people to share out.*

Scene 3

Russ is on his computer between class periods, quickly catching up on email.

Matt: Russ is reading his email...He's beginning to feel the grade pinch as he reads the third parent email that day inquiring about their kids' grades. He can't believe parents could be so naive to think their students could get good grades without turning in their homework.

Russ: Why is Mrs. Jones emailing me about Jamal's grade? He hasn't turned in ANYTHING this week. She should know by now that Jamal can turn in his homework late for half credit. “

Matt: Standing in front of the class, Russ begins to compromise even though deep down he knows this was a summative assessment. The tests obviously did not go well. The students must not have studied hard enough, he reasons. He explains the situation to them and lets them know they will be able to make up the points. A project-based assignment requiring kids to interview their parents about the book and create a video response for extra credit should do the trick.

Russ: Yes, Jane...of course it's graded. You're doing it to raise your grade. No, I don't know how many points it is worth, but based on our latest test scores, it'll need to be a lot, and I encourage

all of you to do it. Sammy, please get back in your chair. I know you're happy with your B, but you should really be aiming for an A in this class. Now, who brought in their extra credit kleenex that was assigned last week?

Matt: *What role does extra credit play in your classroom/building? How does this change (or not) in a 1:1 environment? Please take three minutes and share with a person sitting next to you. We will be circling the room to look for several people to share out.*

Scene 4

Russ is teaching. Are the students learning?

Matt: Mr. Goerend does not look forward to parent/teacher conferences. Some students just need to put in more time. Others haven't learned the material. Conferences would be a piece of cake if it weren't for...parents!

Russ: Yes, Mr. Smith. I know your son is failing this class. I've taught your son about literary elements. He **just** needs to start listening during class. I realize he has an F right now. He **just** needs to start turning in his homework, too. If he would start turning in his homework, he **just** might start doing better on the tests, too. My fault? Somebody has to be here at 7:30 to make copies and that somebody is still here at 4:30 grading papers. Which one of us is that?

Matt: Mr. Goerend needs to be careful...

Russ: What is your son doing to get his grade up? No, Mr. Smith. I taught these literary elements to your son. James, you were here two weeks ago when we went through these ideas, right? Tell your father you were here on those days. Why don't you just go to your locker and grab those notes.

Russ turns to dad and winks.

Matt: HE TAUGHT IT. THEY JUST DIDN'T LEARN IT. After all, kids should understand they don't get it when they receive 1/10 on their DOL. It's not rocket science. Students like James should realize they're failing and STEP UP! Numbers and percentages are set in stone. Russ believes these indicators tell the entire story. <pause> When James returns from his locker, Mr. Goerend is in for a shock.

James: Here are your notes, G. <James throws his notes on the conference table.> I was here. I was listening to you "teach." Didn't work, did it? 'I taught it. I did this. I did that.' Well, guess what: I didn't learn it. It's not about your lectures and your tests. It's about my learning. When are we going to start focusing on my learning?

</SUMMATIVE>

Matt: *Where is the focus in your district...on teaching or on learning? How did it get there? Does a 1:1 initiative change the focus? Why or why not? Please take three minutes and share with a person sitting next to you. We will be circling the room to look for several people to share out.*

<FORMATIVE>

Act 2 - 2 years later

Scene 1

Matt: Mr. Goerend is back for his fifth year of teaching. Since year three, he's been to two formative assessment institutes, listened to Matt Townsley speak at his school and read Kelly Gallagher's book *Readicide*. He's really fired up for another group of energetic middle school students.

Russ: Okay, this desk thing. I wonder how I can best setup my room so that students will be able to work together. We need to make use of the reflection time I'm building into our lessons. I know that writers workshop and book clubs are going to be a big part of this year. Yeah, groups of four. That will do it. Four boys in the same pod? You bet.

Matt: Russ thinks to himself "Bring on the sixth graders!" He is starting to see how his class can be better structured so that students can provide each other with feedback. Three weeks have gone by and Russ is now at the front of the room talking with his students. He's really stoked to talk with his students about their upcoming projects.

Russ: "Tomorrow your first reading assessment is due. Remember the purpose of this assignment is for you to demonstrate how you understand the three literary elements we've been working on so far this year. Tomorrow we'll start peer and teacher conferencing. Some of you wrote papers, some of you made videos, some of you did a combination. I'm looking forward to hearing you defend your self-assessment based on the rubric you've had since we started learning these skills. We will discuss how well you're doing with literary elements. We'll be setting goals for next week before you present what you've learned.

Matt: It is now the next day. Mr. Goerend notices that Alex did not turn in his writing project.

Russ: Yes, bring it in tomorrow, but don't worry about the point. I'm not going to take off 50% if you turn it in late. I'm more interested in helping you learn about the literary elements than I am

when you learn them. Zero? No, I'm not willing to give you a zero. That's the easy way out for both you and me. If I give you a zero, I'm letting you off the hook and telling you these skills don't matter. They do matter and the quicker we move forward, the quicker I can give you feedback on the three big ideas. I know you can do it, Alex. You might even have some fun along the way. I know that you're really into skateboarding. I love your Tony Hawk sweatshirt! How might he fit into this project?

Matt: *We've presented a changed Mr. Goerend. What changes do you notice? Do you agree or disagree with these changes? Please take three minutes and share with a person sitting next to you. We will be circling the room to look for several people to share out.*

Scene 2

Russ and his PLC are planning their next unit of instruction

Matt: Russ meets twice a week with the other 6th grade language arts teachers in his building. During this common planning time, they discuss upcoming units, students' common misconceptions as well as instructional strategies they've used previously that motivate students to learn at high levels. Russ is leading the discussion this week, focusing on the upcoming unit on poetry.

Russ: Good morning, team! I tell ya what, I've been really looking forward to teaching poetry this year. Which poems are you reading whole group this year? <pause> Yeah, I was thinking of asking my 1st hour class to read "[Dreams](#)" again, too. I really like how this poem not only helps the kids think about smilies, but it also has some personification hidden in there too.

Matt: Russ is really happy to work with a team of dedicated professionals that push him to think about the materials he uses AND the instructional strategies.

Russ: You know, I like projecting a poem from my computer and breaking it down as a whole class. My kids really like to *watch me work*. I like to model my thinking for them. It helps me develop their metacognition, I think.

Matt: A colleague breaks in, "Do you think all the students enjoy watching you work?" she says. "I know when I've done that in the past, I have a good number that tune it out. I've found it works well to do one whole class poem at the start as an overview, but to work in small groups from there out. Any thoughts on that?" Russ leaves the meeting feeling better about the upcoming unit.

Russ: That was a good reminder that it's not the "Mr. G show."

Matt: Russ is reminded that when it comes to materials and pedagogy, he doesn't have all of the answers. These experiences remind him that no single teacher has all the time, skills or resources to meet the needs of every single student. *What role does collaboration play in your building? What if, anything, is the focus of your building's collaboration time? How does this change (or not) in a 1:1 environment? Please take three minutes and share with a person sitting next to you. We will be circling the room to look for several people to share out.*

Scene 3

Small group poem reteaching

Matt: Russ has taught a 10-minute lesson to the whole group overviewing the next genre they'll be studying. Most of the group is now working on a project of their choosing -- writer's workshop, independent reading, vocabulary... -- while Mr. Goerend meets with a small group.

Russ: Hey guys. Did you all bring your books and something to write with? Ok, good. Do you have any questions from the whole group mini-lesson? The difference between a myth and a legend? Interesting. Anyone have any thoughts?

Matt: Russ was scared to take the plunge into workshop-style teaching, but he's realized that if students have meaningful work, he can feel confident to have them work independently while he focuses with small groups.

Russ: This was a great discussion. I felt like each of you have contributed and I've gained some new insight into how you think about myths. So, you're now going to read the first story in the book and storyboard the plot. When we get back together we'll talk through your storyboards.

Scene 4

Matt: Russ is pretty pleased with the flow of his class. He's made some tweaks along the way such as gradually releasing responsibility to students who don't initially exhibit self starting behaviors. He has a group of boys that come in for "9th hour" a few times a week after school and he's heard positive reports from his principal about the risks he's taken so far. In his mind, these are all green lights to continue on with the new approach. *Let's jump ahead to parent/teacher conferences.* Russ is excited to talk with parents about the success he's seen with the workshop-style teaching and the new way he is reporting student learning. He's received a few emails inquiring about the perceived level of independence students have in his class, but many parents seem to be pleased with the positive rapport their students report having with Mr. Goerend this year.

Russ: Good evening, Mrs. Johnson. Have you had a chance to look at your daughter's progress report yet? Yes, I'd like to explain why it looks a little bit different this year. Do you see this list of big ideas? Suzie is doing really well in these areas, but still has room for improvement in this area. Yes, you are correct. I do not have any late work penalties. No, ma'am. There is no extra credit in this course either. Correct. If Suzie demonstrates tomorrow that she is secure in that area, her report will immediately change. No, I'm not crazy, Mrs. Johnson. I'm more concerned about your daughter learning these big ideas than I am penalizing her for learning a few days after some of her peers. Yes, I understand that it is important for you to know if Janie is turning in her work. We report behavior separately on the progress report. You can see that on this side of the progress report.

Matt: *What differences do you see between your classroom (or your building) and Mr. Goerend's philosophy you saw in this last scene? What steps can you take beginning today (with or without a 1:1 initiative) to close this gap? Please take three minutes and share with a person sitting next to you. We will be circling the room to look for several people to share out.*

BRINGING IT HOME...

- Formative assessment is a process
 - Instruction
 - Assessment
 - Feedback trumps grades (Russ)
 - New evidence of learning replaces old evidence of learning (Russ)
 - Report learning rather than activities (Matt)
 - Stop hiding behind points (Matt)
 - (Repeat)
 - Report learning
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How will you change? How will teachers in your building change? What's the impetus?

Q & A

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