

Learning Site Debrief with Jara Richards

Eliot Innovation School / 6th grade classroom / November 7, 2023

Growth Mindset

Excavating Questions

How do you address resistance when students are disengaged?

- A couple of students have little checklists (two are push-in for math but subsep for ELA)
- If it's not working for students, like one who wasn't engaged with notes, it's a larger conversation with the team across content
 - Don't want him to just copy the notes, I said "I will do the first one, you do the second one", or have another student explain it to him. I just try to have little

Do you adjust the random grouping? If so?

- I try not to, but every once in a while if there is a situation I choose to split kids a certain way
- The cards are nice because they allow me to be intentional without it being obvious
- I always make it SEEM random

Growth Mindset

Evidence	Impact
- random grouping	- Everyone can learn from Everyone
- not over-scaffolding	- Students understand they are capable
- Uplifted ideas of disagreeing & shift of thinking	- Math isn't binary. Not important if it's right or wrong. It's about the thinking and problem solving process.
- focused on process over completion/ correct answers	- Builds collectivism in the class room. Teacher as facilitator.
- promoting collaboration and pushing collective understanding in groups	Everyone is a Contributor

Excavating Questions: How do you address resistance within a group?
Do you ever adjust random groups? why? If not, also why?

Group Work Norms and Routine

Did you have a conversation with students about how to organize the whiteboards?

- I tell students that I don't care about the exact organizational structure but it has to be organized and clear what they are doing for me and for others during the debrief
- It wasn't always this good, they have been

If they are still stuck do you have another strategy?

- Tons of questioning, without leading too much
- Don't tell students that something is wrong

What was on the clipboard? What is the

- I have a tracker that I don't always use now but it's helpful at the beginning of using these strategies
- Has high- medium- and low-level questions, planning for what I thought I would say
- It's important to anticipate possible misconceptions and to know what I am looking for
- I do the math and then I can think about what students might say
- I take notes about the group conversations so I can come back to things in the debrief or with individuals
- This is the hardest part, tracking student work and figuring out what to attend to.
- Will share a blank tracker with the group

Group Work Norms & Routines

Evidence	Impact
① Clear task launch and expectations <ul style="list-style-type: none">↳ visual reminders @ multiple locations↳ communication AND math organization↳ using whiteboards	① All students were able to get started and write something even if they don't "get" the math yet. Smooth transitions + limits distractions
② Intentional questioning throughout task (group)	② Discover misconceptions; get students to verbalize learning; track group progress
③ Highlight progress over perfection during whole class share out / debrief	③ Allow students to see and value each other's work even though it may be incomplete; positive praise

Excavating Questions:
① We noticed that students organized the problem in 3 parts right away. How have you guided students in organizing math work? How do you support students that are "stuck" or "frozen"? Especially for word problems.
② How did you track student learning during group work and do you pre-script essential questions?

Mobilizing Student Knowledge

What did you do to create a classroom culture where kids are willing to share and to be wrong out loud?

- Start of the year three problem-solving tasks not on the content
- What should it look like? What should it sound like?
- At the end of the lessons, did it look / sound like we said it should? Lots of reflecting
- Student developed rubric; took weeks to develop and get practiced at using it. Now I don't have to
- Practice with math talk and questions
- Me going in to facilitate in the small group
- Being willing to say to the whole class, "we're really off today? What do we need to do

How do you check for individual understanding?

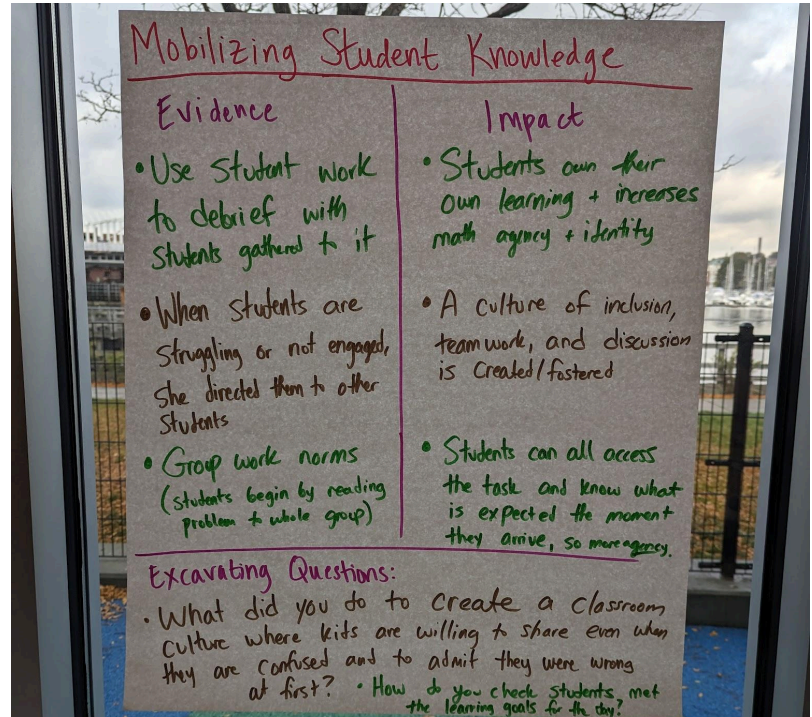
- I do an exit ticket some days but not every day.
- Today I didn't I ran out of time, so my check for today was their notes.
- Sometimes I differentiate between kids who feel ready for independent work or who want to work with me (or sometimes I decide who needs the guided practice)

How often do you a whiteboard task

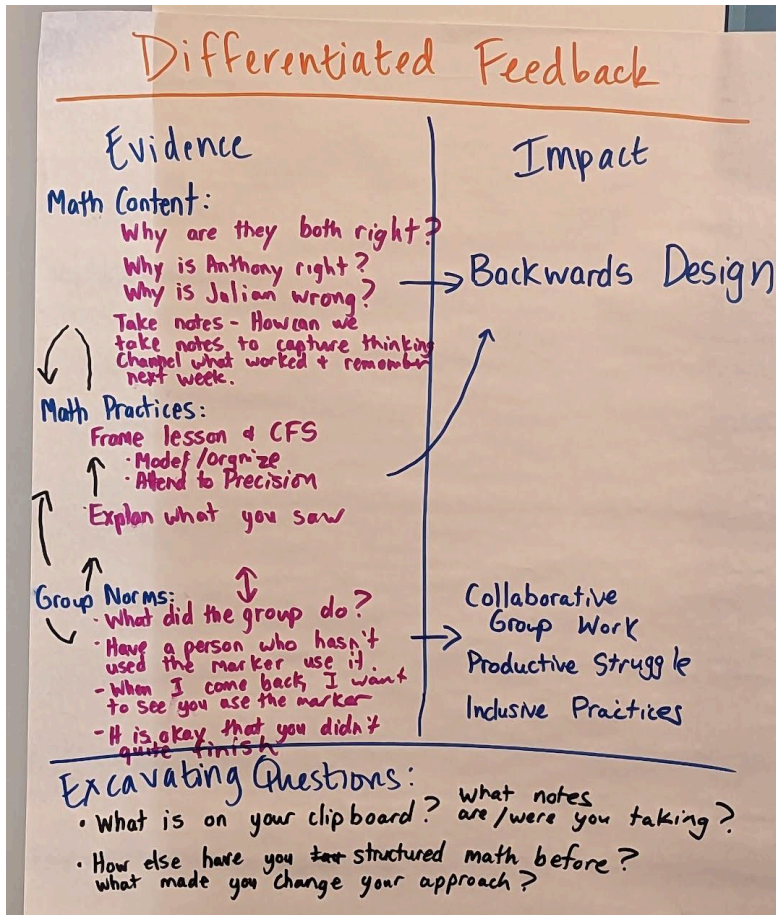
- At least 2-3 times per week
- They aren't always that long, sometimes they have no words (e.g. ratio tables last week)

What are you looking for in a task for the whiteboard routine?

- I use them a lot of different ways so it depends on my purpose
- Pattern recognition, activating prior knowledge, synthesizing a lot of learning (like today we had been doing ratios for a while)
- A lot of times I want the first problem to be an easy entry point.



Differentiated Feedback



How have you taught math before?

- I used a typical mini-lesson practice structure
- 11th year teaching
- Always looking to make math more engaging
- Read thinking classrooms over a summer 3-4 years ago and love it
- All 4 of us math teachers read the book and then decided to do it.
- Every year I have been building

What about BTC book's practices stood out to you?

- Being up working on vertical
- Consolidation and debrief
- Notetaking is something I am working on now
- Not there with homework and assessments recommended

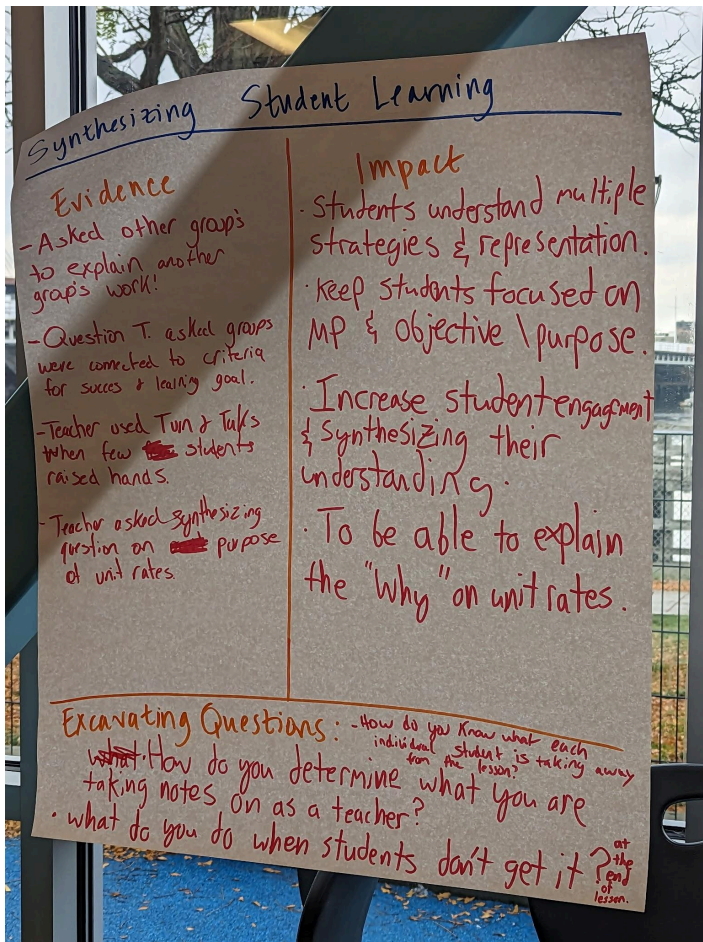
Can you talk about how this routine looks different in different grades?

- Using it in grades 5-8 now
- Grade 5 sets them up for the routine, but the teacher provides more support
- Basics of the routine are the same

What does the team aspect look like?

- First year we focused on the routines and LASW, norming, reflection, looking at tasks
- This year we are focusing on notetaking and consolidation
- This year we will be able to observe each other a little more

Synthesizing Learning



What do you do when students don't get it?

- A lot of pulling small groups, giving more scaffolding
- Tomorrow we will practice this more
- Entrance ticket to start
- I try to give choice
- Start with "what do you remember about yesterday?"
- Provide more direct instruction for kids

Student Impact:

How do you think this routine has impacted students?

- students are more willing to attack problems they aren't sure of
- Reflection every unit, students love the whiteboard tasks and ask for more
- Students like math more, especially kids who don't
- Test score improvement – sometimes yes sometimes no, this might help but they still need more.

Theory Generating Question:

What are the key ingredients that make your practice effective?

- I want to change my practice, I want to grow, knowing that I can always grow
- Starting small, then keep building, start with setting expectations, do the reflections, that has to come first
- Reflecting myself on what is working and what is not working
- Knowing the students individually and knowing how to support them

Logistical Qs:

- Grades 10 and 11 - what advice you have for teachers that are wanting to implement this practice and didn't get this off and running from the beginning of the year and set those norms? How would you support buy-in from older students that prefer traditional teaching?
 - Starting with something fun and engaging - look at the Facebook group
 - Give a day or two to non-curricular problem solving and provide time for students to enjoy working together

- Incentives: Looking for a mystery group - get a jolly rancher or a homework pass to get the buy in and make it a challenge
- Are you freestyling your turn and talks or planning those?
 - Mostly on the fly, if it's getting quiet we tend to do a turn and talk
 - How long has it taken you to feel comfortable to adjust on the fly?
 - When I planned this lesson I wanted to plan the first two parts
 - What do we need to get to? I always plan for more, but knowing what the essentials are.
 - I'm still working on the planning with the pacing, there are always little mini-reflections
 - Planning for how long something is going to take and giving myself extra time.
- Curious your thought about calculators:
 - I haven't thought about it to be honest. I haven't used them for whiteboard tasks.
 - Math content-wise if you need to find a problem, I don't mind them using a calculator since I know they know how to do the steps, but might have to come in after to help with fluency.
- Where do you go from this to this?
 - 7th grade sets up proportions (proportional reasoning)
 - I set up equations and algebraic expressions, they don't know variables yet, but we will be.
 - 6th grade is a shift in standards to get them ready for HS standards.

Closing the Loop:

- I need to think about the structure of my lessons, b/c I'm a first year teacher and I'm following the curriculum and it's very structured. I was afraid to stray away from that and in my class they can get excited if I structure my classes differently.
 - JR: I took the same conversation from the curriculum, but put it up on a vertical space - shifted it just a bit.
- Thinking about building this culture with a group of colleagues as you did with everyone reading the same book.
- I'm thinking about taking notes while the small groups are happening and thinking about the questions to help the students with the task.
- I was thinking of how do we make students more independent learners and now I'm thinking about helping students be team independent learners. How do I create these routines that will help students with their reading?
- I need to think about the launch of the lessons and engaging ways to wake up the classroom bc that can help the students with excitement about math and mathematical thinking.
- If educators are really intentional with the questions they ask students and leverage their work at the board, it allows students to see themselves as mathematicians.
- Student generated knowledge to stick, I want to think about using the vertical white-board space
- How can I use the students more in thinking about the debrief? How do I make it more student-led? I'm doing task-based and how do I make it more engaging? This could be an easy lift to try something new.