

The Bridge

Spotlight on Success

MAY 2015

Germanshire Elementary has really embraced new teacher support by offering monthly meetings that include a variety of topics, such as the gradual release model, literacy strategies, writing, interventions, and cooperative learning strategies.

During the new teacher sessions, teachers are given a safe space to share successes and failures experienced in the classroom. New teacher, Ms. Rubin-Carr shared, "What I like about the meetings is that we are able to express our failures and receive feedback that we are able to execute right then. The master teacher and learning coaches model exactly what the strategy looks like."

Master Teacher Emily Vuoso and Learning Coaches Terri Miller, Rochelle Miller, and Tonique Gray meet with new teachers the 4th Monday of every month and consistently link and follow up from previous meetings. Ms. Meehan expressed, "For me coming from TFA they have been really helpful, and I learn the expectations for teachers here at Germanshire."



Checking for Understanding

What is Checking For Understanding?

Checking for Understanding (CFU) is the backbone of effective instruction. Checking for Understanding is the teacher continually verifying that students are learning what is being taught while it is being taught. CFU provides the teacher the opportunity to improve learning based on student responses throughout the teaching and learning process. Using CFU in "real-time" allows teachers to make crucial instructional decisions as necessary (like re-teaching) during lesson delivery.



Benefits of CFU

- It allows the teacher to make instructional decisions during the lesson. It informs the teacher when to speed up, slow down, or re-teach. CFU helps pace the lesson.
- When teachers look at independent work, homework, quizzes, or state test results to see if students learned...it's too late to modify instruction.
- CFU is the backbone of effective instruction and Explicit Direct Instruction... because you measure and monitor student learning in real time.
- CFU guarantees high student success (80-100%)... because you revise teaching in direct response to student learning.

CFU ensures that your students will not be practicing and reinforcing their mistakes.

Practice makes permanent, not perfect!

Strategies To Check for Understanding

- **Go Around:** When a one-or-two word answer can show understanding, self- or group assessment, or readiness for a task, teachers ask students to respond to a standard prompt one at a time in rapid succession.
- **Cold Call:** Call on students regardless of whether they have hands raised, using a variety of techniques such as random calls or tracking charts to make sure that all students contribute.
- **3-2-1:** Students are required to write 3 things you learned, 2 interesting things, and 1 question you still have.
- **Quick Writes:** A timed writing in response to a question or prompt (can be used before, during, or after instruction).

Spotlight on Success

Debra Woods, a teacher at Fox Meadows Elementary had an awesome experience this year serving as a learning coach. She stated, "As a veteran teacher, I've experienced many changes throughout the decades, but the one constant has been the need for good teachers. Serving as a mentor, I have been blessed to work with incredible, emerging teachers who desire to experience the joy of making a difference. I'd like to think that I had a positive impact on our new teachers' professional lives by challenging them to grow in new ways, collaborating with them in a manner in which everyone walks away with refined ideas, and celebrating their many successes. I am highly committed to assisting new teachers find gratification in their job. I served as a confidant, not as an evaluator and my primary concern was helping new teachers excel!"

