Tom Sherrington

SIX DESIGN DECISIONS

PREPARING FOR BETTER LESSON OBSERVATIONS & CPD CYCLES

THE TEACHING & LEARNING FOCUS   THE TRAINING INPUTS   THE REALITY CHECK

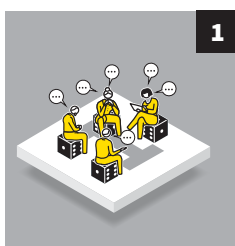THE TEAMS, THE PEOPLE   THE OVERALL TIME STRUCTURE   THE COACHING PROCESS
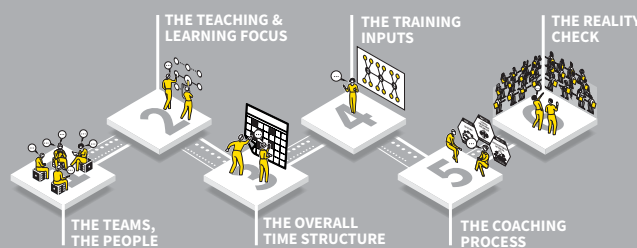
TOM SAYS

Use the structures you have — not those you haven't.

Start with a small, select number of WalkThrus to avoid being overwhelmed.

Don't launch straight into coaching. Start with training to create a baseline of shared understanding.

Ensure everyone has a secure knowledge of the selected WalkThrus. No assumptions — test for accuracy.

The more precise the dialogue by referencing the WalkThrus in question, the more effective will be the resulting next steps.
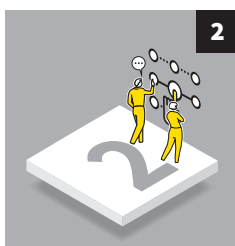
1 THE TEAMS, THE PEOPLE

There are no single correct team solutions. Use whichever team structures are working for you currently. For primaries, this is mostly in age phases, while most secondaries work in subject of faculty teams. Work out who observes whom and who receives the feedback. When working in triads, ensure one member plays the role of driving improvement.

2 THE TEACHING & LEARNING FOCUS

Avoid being overwhelmed by the number of WalkThrus by being judicious and select a small number for all to adopt. This helps create a shared understanding that yields stronger conversations by working on the team's common issues. The Cluster Builder comes into its own here as a tool with which to build a coherent approach to melding the single WalkThru into a meaningful collection.

3 THE OVERALL TIME STRUCTURE

Experience has shown that the sweet spot is when cycles are between 2 and 4 weeks. Such regularity happens with the constant use of the calendar — the best tool to turn good feelings and intentions into committed action. Precise dates help avoid the always present danger of drifting. It keeps the team intentional — the backbone of deliberate practice.
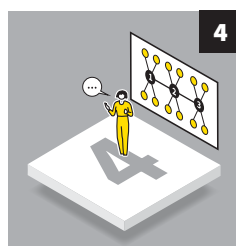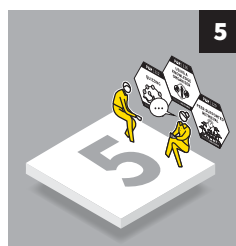
4 THE TRAINING INPUTS

Use the WalkThru techniques to conduct your training: explain how and why, model, and check for understanding. The Theory, See It, Name It, Do It WalkThru (vol.3, p.172) is particularly effective in building a baseline of shared knowledge. Trainers need to be competent, fluent and confident in their own knowledge and application of the WalkThrus.

5 THE COACHING PROCESS

When coaches enter someone's classroom, it's not to share the wisdom of their evaluation. Dylan Wiliam has laid bare this delusion. The primary task is to gather information with which to have more productive conversations with the teacher. The primary purpose is to support the teacher in finding solutions to the situations that the teacher them-selves acknowledges are present.
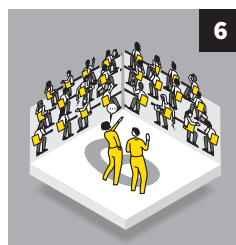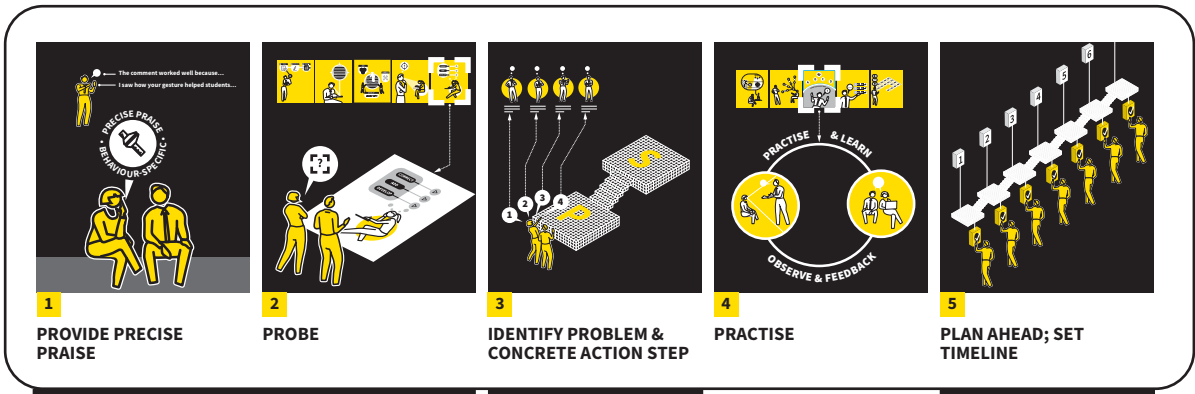
6 THE REALITY CHECK

Always go beyond self-reporting by using a variety of approaches: video, observations (in-person & unseen), drop-ins and analysis of student work. Regarding how best to give feedback, always use the agreed WalkThru as a common, practical and shared focus. It transforms your conversation, making it more precise, which in turn, triggers better next steps.

FEEDBACK IN INSTRUCTIONAL COACHING | V2, P.158

1 PROVIDE PRECISE PRAISE

2 PROBE

3 IDENTIFY PROBLEM & CONCRETE ACTION STEP

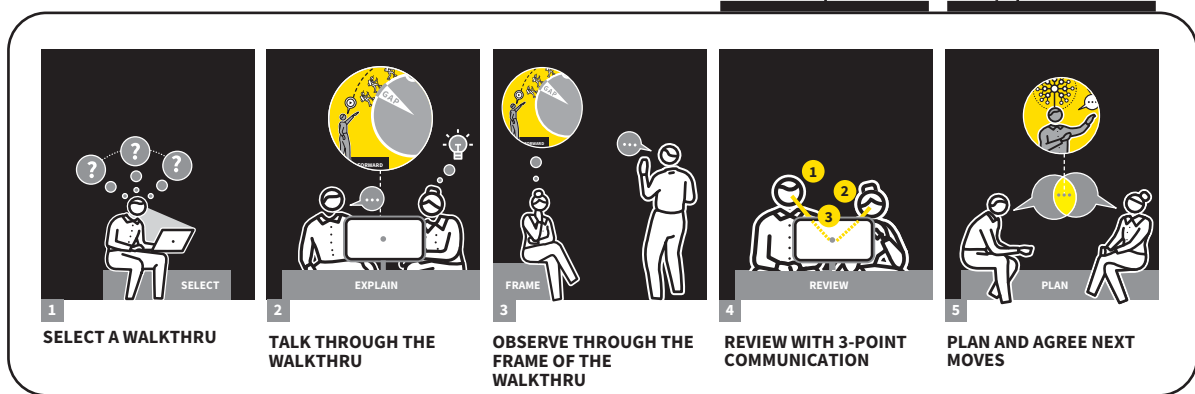**4** PRACTISE

5 PLAN AHEAD; SET TIMELINE

Sitting side by side, both looking at the relevant WalkThru, helps trigger focused conversations that are more precise. The precision of the praise is naturally extended when asking questions that probe key areas of practice.

Linking specific action steps to precisely identified issues is the key to effective improvement.

The future success of plans are dependent on frequent use of the calendar. This is where commitments are agreed and made secure.

OBSERVATIONS | V1, P.156

1 SELECT A WALKTHRU

2 TALK THROUGH THE WALKTHRU

3 OBSERVE THROUGH THE FRAME OF THE WALKTHRU

4 REVIEW WITH 3-POINT COMMUNICATION

5 PLAN AND AGREE NEXT MOVES

Side-by-side learning manifests itself in the way teacher and coach, together, plan the often necessary tweaks to the chosen WalkThru. The adaptions made are theirs.

The teacher feels safe knowing that the coach is looking through the agreed and co-created adapted WalkThru. This ensures there won't be any later *gotcha* moments in the feedback session that follows.

ADAPT | V1, P.152

1 ATTEMPT

2 DEVELOP

3 ADAPT

4 PRACTISE

5 TEST