Precision Teaching in the Primary Classroom
On this DVD you will find a Print and Video Resources folder which contains WMV files for PowerPoint presentations and this Viewer’s Guide in PDF.

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Contact ServiceOntario
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The webcast segments and related resources are also accessible online at http://www.curriculum.org/secretariat/precision/index.shtml.

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Overview

Providing precise and personalized instruction that meets the diverse needs of students within a classroom is complex. It is informed by many factors including ongoing assessment, feedback, teacher knowledge of how her/his students learn best and the pedagogical and content competencies of the teacher.

In this Grade 3 classroom, the learning environment is structured to allow students to self-assess, reflect and set personal learning goals. Time for interaction and talk helps students develop their understanding of themselves as learners. They become more independent and metacognitively aware.

Students begin to understand the value and relevance of what they are learning. They clearly understand and can articulate the learning intentions. They monitor their progress and know how to access help as needed. By participating in the assessment process they learn how to receive, give and act on feedback.

In this classroom, you will see a teacher who believes that all students can learn. The student-teacher relationship is strong and the culture of the classroom is respectful, positive and inclusive. Ongoing assessment is woven throughout the day and students are actively included in the assessment process. Together with the teacher, they reflect on their learning and determine next steps. This learning community is one that welcomes risk-taking and errors as a way of learning. Every student has a voice and they all feel that they are valued members of the classroom.

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John Hattie in *Visible Learning* states that successful learning is the result of:

- the worthwhileness and clarity of the learning intentions
- the success criteria
- the power of using multiple and appropriate teaching strategies
- ongoing assessment with an emphasis on feedback
- seeing learning and teaching from the students’ perspective

(Hattie, 2009, p. 199)
Students and teacher collaboratively create success criteria and exemplars to guide the achievement of their learning goals. During the gradual release of responsibility, students work in a variety of groupings that support differentiated instruction. Students learn from each other, each bringing their strengths to the task. Working in teams helps students develop their collaborative skills. They learn to value others’ ideas, question respectfully and build new knowledge together. These are skills students will find useful throughout their lives in school and beyond.

The literacy block flows seamlessly, with each strand of the language curriculum integrated. Language and word study are woven throughout the block in the context of what students are studying. Through the gradual release model, students are explicitly taught what they need to know and be able to do in order to achieve their learning goals. They have many opportunities to practise newly taught skills and concepts with varying degrees of support until they are ready to work independently.

Students gain confidence in themselves as learners. They know how to use the co-constructed tools posted around the classroom. Routines are established that allow students easy access to materials and ways of organizing, monitoring and sharing their work. The classroom is their work environment and students are very familiar with its organization, management and resources.

Throughout the day, teachers and students are engaged in conversations about learning. They give, receive and act on descriptive feedback that moves their learning forward. In this dynamic learning environment, all members are actively learning from, with and on behalf of each other.
WEBCAST SEGMENTS

Introduction

In this Grade 3 classroom, students are actively involved in their learning. Every element of the literacy block is seamlessly connected. Students participate fully in self-assessment and in setting learning goals and success criteria. They are not afraid to take a risk and are very reflective about their learning and next steps.

Based on ongoing assessment, the teacher’s instruction is precise and intentional in order to meet the needs of all students. Through the gradual release of responsibility, time is provided to practise skills and strategies with varying degrees of support until students are able to work independently. Time for talk, interaction and reflection are woven throughout the literacy block to support students’ learning, metacognition and independence. The teacher is fully present during the teaching-learning process, observing the impact of her teaching on student learning and ready to adjust as needed to meet the needs of all students.

- **How are you able to engage in intentional, precision teaching and still remain flexible enough to be able to take advantage of “just right” teachable moments?**
- **Ongoing assessment for learning is essential. How do you gather, monitor, act upon and share assessment information with your students in a way that improves their learning and achievement?**

Lorna Earl describes assessment for learning as follows:

“In the classroom, we foster student growth by clearly defining learning goals, scaffolding learning experiences, providing varied opportunities for practice, and giving meaningful feedback.”

She goes on to describe assessment for learning in the following terms:

“When they are doing Assessment for Learning, teachers collect a wide range of data so that they can modify the learning work for their students. They craft assessment tasks that open a window on what students know and can do already and use the insights that come from the process to design the next steps in instruction. To do this, teachers use observation, worksheets, questioning in class, student-teacher conferences, or whatever mechanism is likely to give them...
information that will be useful for their planning and teaching. Marking is not
designed to make comparative judgments among the students but to highlight ...
[students’] strengths and weaknesses and provide them with feedback that will
further their learning ... [Teachers] use their personal knowledge of the students
and their understanding of the context of the assessment and the curriculum
targets to identify particular learning needs. Assessment for Learning happens
in the middle of learning, often more than once, rather than at the end. It is
interactive, with teachers providing assistance as part of the assessment. It helps
teachers provide the feedback to scaffold next steps.”

( Ontario Ministry of Education, 2010)

Word Sort

Differentiated Word Sort

In this segment, you will see students involved in a word sort that is open-ended
enough to engage every learner. The goal is to help students develop
vocabulary that describes the characteristics of people and animals they meet
in their reading. The task also develops students’ understanding of how root
words, prefixes and suffixes work. This knowledge will help students read and
write independently. They draw on their schema and prior experiences and
build on the ideas of others as they collaborate to solve the problem at hand.

• During the word sort, students negotiated with group members as
  they built their understanding of the relationship between the words.
The teacher played an essential role during this work and think time.
What did you notice about the strategies she used to push the learning
forward for her students?

• Which of these strategies might you use with your students to support
  their learning?

• What planning needed to happen prior to this lesson to set students up
  for success?

“ The language of the classroom, especially the incidental talk that goes on while chil-
dren are working, gives strong messages to children about their ability.”

( Clarke, 2009, p. 55)
“In vocabulary development ... the teacher’s role is twofold: (1) to teach students (directly and indirectly) how words look and sound, what they mean and how they are used, and (2) to teach and model the process of learning new words so that students may become increasingly independent in their vocabulary development.”

(Ontario Ministry of Education, 2003, p. 8.11)

Teacher Debrief of the Word Sort
This word sort lesson was planned intentionally to meet the needs of students as reflected in their writing and reading. The task is open-ended and differentiated to be inclusive of all students.

• What strategies did you notice this teacher using in order to differentiate the task?

• How might you ensure that word study happens in the context of what students are learning and that it is precise and personal enough to meet the diverse needs of the students in your classroom?

• What strategies might you use to facilitate the word study knowledge being transferred to student’s writing?

Four components of comprehensive vocabulary instruction:
• fostering word consciousness
• teaching individual words
• teaching strategies for learning words independently
• presenting frequent/extensive/varied opportunities for independent reading

(Baumann & Kame’enui, 2004)

Making the Learning Visible
During whole-group sharing, students share new learning and make their thinking visible to each other. Each student clarifies their thinking and builds on the ideas of others. As they reconstruct how they solved the problem, students learn to articulate their thinking.

Knowing how words work is a transferable skill that will serve students throughout their school life and beyond.

• Listening to information, making meaning and then remembering significant information is not an easy task for children. How might you help students benefit from oral sharing sessions?
During this sharing session, students are encouraged to reflect on their learning and explain their thinking. The teacher values students’ thinking and encourages them to think deeply about their work. Students are developing their metacognitive awareness.

What strategies might you use to help students become more aware of themselves as learners?

Inference Game

In this clip, students are actively engaged in a game that reinforces their understanding of the term “inference.” The teacher pulls unfamiliar objects from a mystery bag and the students are challenged to infer the function of each based on the “tool’s clues.” As inferences are made, students provide a rationale for their thinking. Infusing active games into the teaching-learning process is an effective way to engage students in practising a newly taught skill or strategy.

What do you think are the benefits to students and to teachers of this approach to guided practice?

How might you modify this game to support your students in the content area they are currently studying?

Writing

Success Criteria and Exemplars

Students are learning how to write about the inferences they draw in relation to the characters in the texts they are reading. They have collaboratively created learning goals, success criteria and exemplars to guide their writing. These learning tools are posted in the classroom for students to refer to during their writing. Before they work on their individual writing, they will have many opportunities to write with support from their peers and teacher.

Exemplars are helpful in clarifying for students exactly what is expected of them in their work. How would you encourage students to use the exemplars during their writing as part of their self-assessment?

How might you use exemplars in science or social studies?

What caution might you need to consider when using exemplars with students?
**Shared Writing**

Students are applying their newly learned skill of drawing inferences. They are writing a character trait description of the animals in a fable they have recently read. As students decide on the characteristic to describe, they are required to give evidence from the text or their schema to support their ideas. The teacher models the thinking involved in selecting the appropriate adjectives and asks probing questions to push students’ thinking deeper. Students are referred back to the success criteria for guidance. The teacher models how success criteria must be flexible in order to adapt to new thinking as the writing evolves. Students reflect, self-assess and decide on next steps.

- What strategies does the teacher use to lead students to become more reflective writers?
- What evidence of assessment do you notice in this clip?
- What important behaviours is this teacher modelling? Which of these behaviours might you focus on with your students and why?
- How do you involve your students in self-assessment and make them aware of the benefits of ongoing self-assessment?

**Writing Conference: Peers**

Students have co-created success criteria and exemplars of effective pieces of writing that included the reader’s thinking behind their inferences. With these tools to guide their conferences, students meet in pairs to give descriptive feedback to each other about their writing. Their thoughtful and respectful responses reflect a clear understanding of the success criteria and the purpose of the conference.

- What are the benefits to students and to the teacher of a peer writing conference?
- How might you guide these students in preparing for their next writing conference?
- How might you use a clip such as this one with students to debrief how to give effective feedback?
Writing Conferences: Student-Teacher

During the writing block, the teacher meets with students to check for understanding and to provide differentiated support to move their learning forward. Part of the dialogue is devoted to developing the student’s understanding of himself/herself as a writer. The teacher offers a choice of strategies the writer might consider trying and debriefs with students what he/she perceives to be their needs. Students monitor their progress since the last conference and help to determine next steps. Conversations are respectful and are focused on improving the student’s writing.

• What did you notice about the teacher’s strategies that you might try with your students?
• What did you notice about the students’ behaviour during the conference that reflected essential prior learning or experiences? How might this knowledge of important prior learning impact on your instructional decisions?

“Learners need information and guidance in order to plan next steps in their learning. Teachers should: pinpoint the learner’s strengths and advise on how to develop them; be clear and constructive about any weaknesses and how they might be addressed; provide opportunities for learners to improve upon their work.”

(Assessment Reform Group, 2002, p. 2)

Learning Centres

The class gathers around the organizational chart to review their commitments during learning centres time. During this block, students independently apply and practise previously taught skills and strategies. Some of the tasks are mandatory and others are free choice. While students are engaged in a variety of open-ended tasks, the teacher is free to assess their progress, offer support to small groups or individuals and plan for next steps to push the learning forward for all students.

• What do you see as the greatest benefit of learning centres?
• In your opinion, what might be the greatest challenge to implementing learning centres?
• How might you address the challenge and build on the benefits of this approach to independent practice?
• How will you know if all students are benefiting from this approach?
• How might you support students who are having difficulty managing this type of learning?
• What twenty-first century skills are being addressed through a learning centres approach?

Guided Reading

Students practise previously taught reading strategies as they read in small guided reading groups led by the teacher. After establishing the learning goal and task, students read on their own. During this time, the teacher meets with individual students to conduct a quick assessment for learning. The students talk with the teacher about their strengths, needs, progress and possible next steps.

• Students are fully engaged in this assessment for learning process. The Star and a Wish form helps them remember their learning goal. How might you use this strategy to help your students become more independent?

“Since both reading and writing focus on meaning, development in one reinforces progress in the other: students learn to read and write better when the two processes are linked.”

(Ontario Ministry of Education, 2003, p. 1.3)

After students have had an opportunity to read the text on their own, the teacher draws the group together to debrief the strategies students used to make meaning as well as to check for understanding. Students listen and learn from each other as they develop an understanding of unfamiliar vocabulary, use picture clues and clarify their own thinking.

• What strategies did you notice the teacher using to make this session inclusive of all students?
• How did the structure of this session support teacher and student learning?
• How do you know if your strategies are improving student learning?
• What do you think you might find most challenging about implementing guided reading?
• How will you address this challenge and build on the benefits of this approach?
Guided Reading Debrief
The teacher discusses the structure of the guided reading session, and the benefits to students of looking at unfamiliar vocabulary before the reading begins. She explains how an ongoing check for understanding during the session can be as simple as a thumbs-up response. During the session, as students are reading on their own, the teacher is free to do one-on-one mini-assessment conferences.

- In order for students to become independent learners, they need to self-assess, set goals and monitor their progress. What aspects of a guided reading session help students develop their independence?
- What strategies highlighted in the guided reading segments might you try with your students?
- What aspect of guided reading would you like to investigate further?

“Inferring, according to Anderson and Pearson (1984) is the heart of meaning construction for learners of all ages.”

(Miller, 2002, p. 107)

Student Self-Assessment
Students are consistently involved in self-assessment and reflection during the teaching–learning process. They develop an understanding of themselves as learners and are able to articulate their strengths and needs. They track their own progress and clearly understand their personal learning goals.

- What are the benefits for students and teachers of tracking student progress on this visual display board?
- What cautions need to be considered with this approach to tracking progress?
- What elements of this approach would you be interested in trying with your students? How will you know if these strategies are working?
Classroom Tour

This classroom environment is designed to celebrate student learning and to support their growth as independent, action-oriented thinkers. Routines are established to assist students in their work, and artifacts are posted around the classroom to provide visual reminders of student learning and goals for next steps. Students are involved in reflective self-assessment and in monitoring their own progress as well as in learning about themselves as learners. Learning stations provide opportunities for students to practise new skills and to reflect on their learning. They work collaboratively at these stations, developing the skills and habits of mind necessary for success in school and beyond.

• How is independence promoted in this classroom?
• What self-assessment strategy might you explore further with your students?
• How will you involve your students in implementing this new strategy?
• How will you know if it is working? What will you do to support students who experience difficulties?
General Viewing

“Thus the professional teacher is a continual learner – managing the instruction and learning in their classrooms self-monitoring their own and students' behaviours, and then self-modifying to improve themselves and their students' achievement constantly.”

(Costa, 2000, p. 13)

You may wish to consider the following questions relating to your own practice, either with your study group or for personal reflection:

1. Self-esteem is the most significant factor in being a successful learner. What did you notice about the body language of the teacher featured in this resource? What did you notice about the teacher’s word choice when she spoke to students about their learning?

2. Research shows that achievements are more effectively celebrated privately than publicly. How does this teacher celebrate achievement with each student? How do you celebrate learning privately with your students?

3. How does this teacher involve her students in the assessment process? What strategies might you use to involve students in self-assessment?

4. Reading, writing, oral communication and word study are interconnected in this classroom. How is this interconnectivity beneficial to students?

5. What questions might you ask of yourself when deciding how word study might be integrated into a lesson?

6. This teacher is very intentional in her instruction. What are the key elements of her teaching that allow this intentionality to be effective?
References


Go to http://www.eworkshop.on.ca/edu/core.efm to access the Ontario Ministry of Education’s Guides to Effective Instruction.
Technical Instructions

How to Access the Print and Video Resources

To access the Print and Video Resources folder in Windows, insert the DVD into the DVD drive of your computer and:

1. Click on the Start menu.
2. Select My Computer.
3. Right-click the mouse on the DVD icon titled PRECISION_TEACHING_DVD to open a drop-down options list.
4. From the drop-down list, select and click on the Open option.
5. Double-click on the folder titled Print and Video Resources to access the files. Ignore the folders titled Audio_TS and Video_TS.
6. Select the resources you wish to use directly from this folder, OR Copy onto the Desktop and open files from the Desktop.

Alternatively, when the DVD is inserted and the options box opens:

1. Select the option Open Folder to View Files.
2. Click on the Print and Video Resources folder.
3. Select the files you wish to use directly from this folder, OR Copy the files onto the Desktop and open them from the Desktop.

To access the Print and Video Resources folder in Mac OS X, insert the DVD into the DVD drive of your computer and:

1. Exit from the DVD player (which typically opens automatically when a DVD is inserted in the drive).
2. Double-click on the DVD icon titled PRECISION_TEACHING_DVD.
3. Select the files you wish to use directly from this folder, OR Copy the files onto the Desktop and open them from the Desktop.
How to Save the Video Files to Your Computer

The video files can all be copied and saved to your computer using either of the following methods for copying and pasting files.

Method 1

1. Right-click on the file and choose the Copy option.
2. Right-click within any computer folder into which you would like to save the file, and choose the Paste option.

Method 2

1. Left-click the mouse on the file you want to save, so that the file is highlighted.
2. Simultaneously press the Ctrl and C keys (or, for Macintosh users, the Command and C keys) to copy the file.
3. Left-click within any computer folder in which you would like to save the file, and simultaneously press the Ctrl and V keys (or, for Macintosh users, the Command and V keys) to paste the file there.

• For Macintosh users, the Command key is the one with the 🎵

NOTE:
If you want to insert video files into a PowerPoint presentation, you must save these video files in the same folder that contains your PowerPoint file. If you save a PowerPoint presentation to another location (e.g., a memory stick, CD-ROM, etc.), you must also save the video files in the same location in order for the video to play. So, if you transfer the presentation to another computer, you must also transfer the video files with it, or else the video will not link to the PowerPoint presentation.
How to Insert Video Clips (WMV files) into a PowerPoint Presentation

On this DVD you will find WMV versions of all segments of the webcast. To insert a clip into a PowerPoint presentation, follow the directions below:

1. Open your PowerPoint program.

2. Create a new PowerPoint presentation OR open an existing PowerPoint presentation, and within it, open the slide on which you would like to add the video.

3. Insert the webcast DVD into the DVD drive of your computer.

4. If a new window opens asking how you would like to view the files on the disk, choose the option Open Folder to View Files; OR
   If a new window does not open, open the My Computer window from the Start menu. In the My Computer window, double-click on the icon that is shaped like a disk, which will likely be labelled D: or E:.

5. Save the video segment that you want to insert in a PowerPoint into the same folder that contains your PowerPoint presentation.
   NOTE: Video files that have been saved to your computer can be cropped and edited into smaller segments using Movie Maker (free on PCs) or iMovie (free on Macintosh).

6. Open the PowerPoint slide on which you would like to insert the video, and click on the Insert menu in the PowerPoint menu bar.

7. From the Insert menu, select Movies and Sounds, and click on the Movie from File option.

8. A window opens, prompting you to select the video file that you would like to add. Find and select the video file that you saved in step 5.

9. Once you have chosen the video file you need, another window opens and asks whether you want your movie to play either automatically when you enter the slide, or only when it is clicked. Choose your preference. (You will notice that the starting image of your movie is not displayed on the slide.)