Assessment of Progress: STAR Report

Sunnyside High School

Sunnyside School District

May 3, 2011

Assessment of Progress

Prepared by

BAKER ▪ EVALUATION ▪ RESEARCH ▪ CONSULTING

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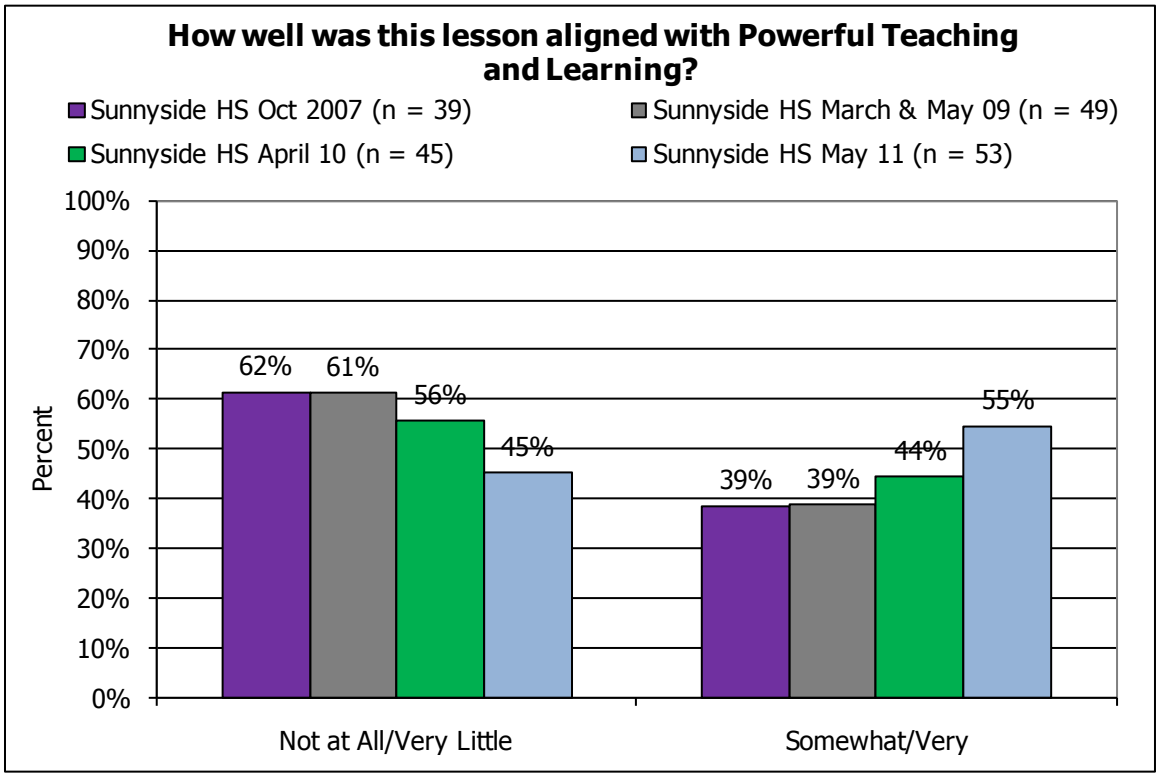
STAR Classroom Observation Study

Introduction

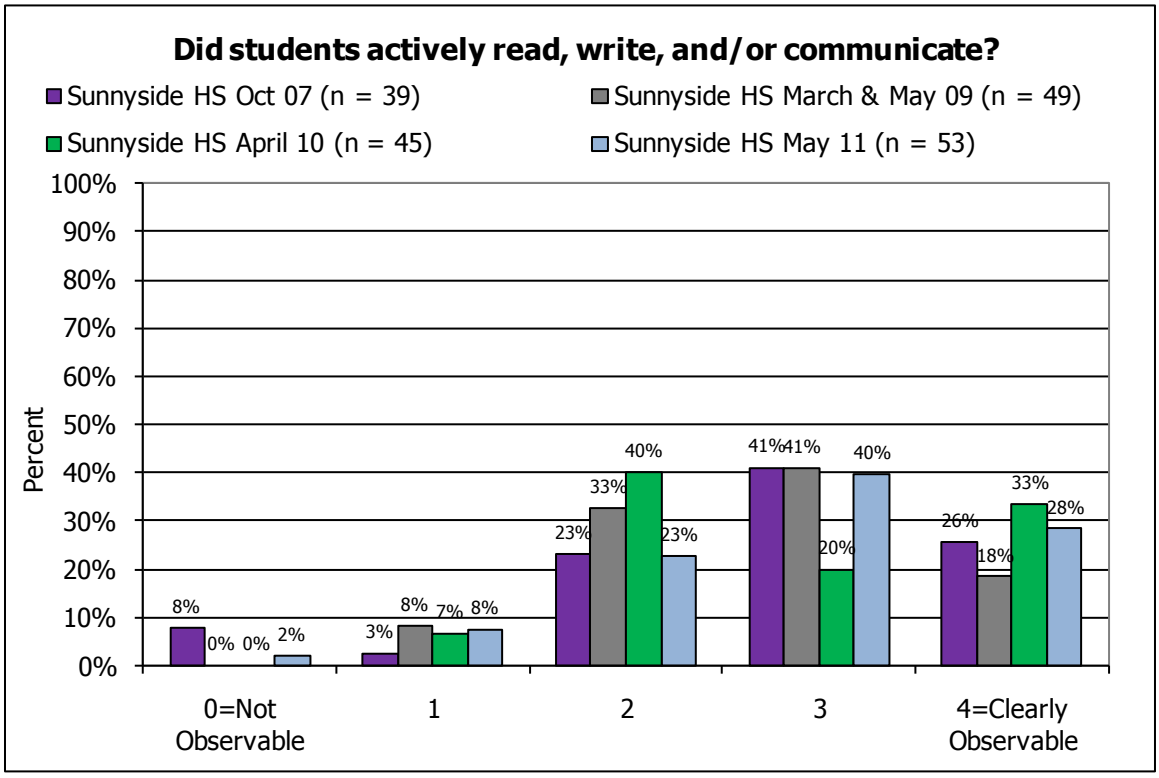
The STAR Classroom Observation Protocol™ is a research-based instrument designed to measure the degree to which Powerful Teaching and Learning™ is present during a classroom observation. As part of the design of the STAR Protocol, only the most significant and basic indicators are used to determine the presence of Powerful Teaching and Learning. Thus, the STAR protocol allows for ease of use with any classroom observation and aligns with the educational improvement goals and standards for effective instruction. The STAR protocol helps participants view Powerful Teaching and Learning through the lens of 5 Essential Components and 15 Indicators.

The goal of this data collection is to determine the extent to which general instructional practices throughout the school align with Powerful Teaching and Learning. Findings within this report highlight Sunnyside High School's STAR classroom observation in comparison to previous results. The results for the Essential Components are shown on pages 2 through 4, and the results for the Indicators are on page 5. A summary and recommendations are included at the end of the report.

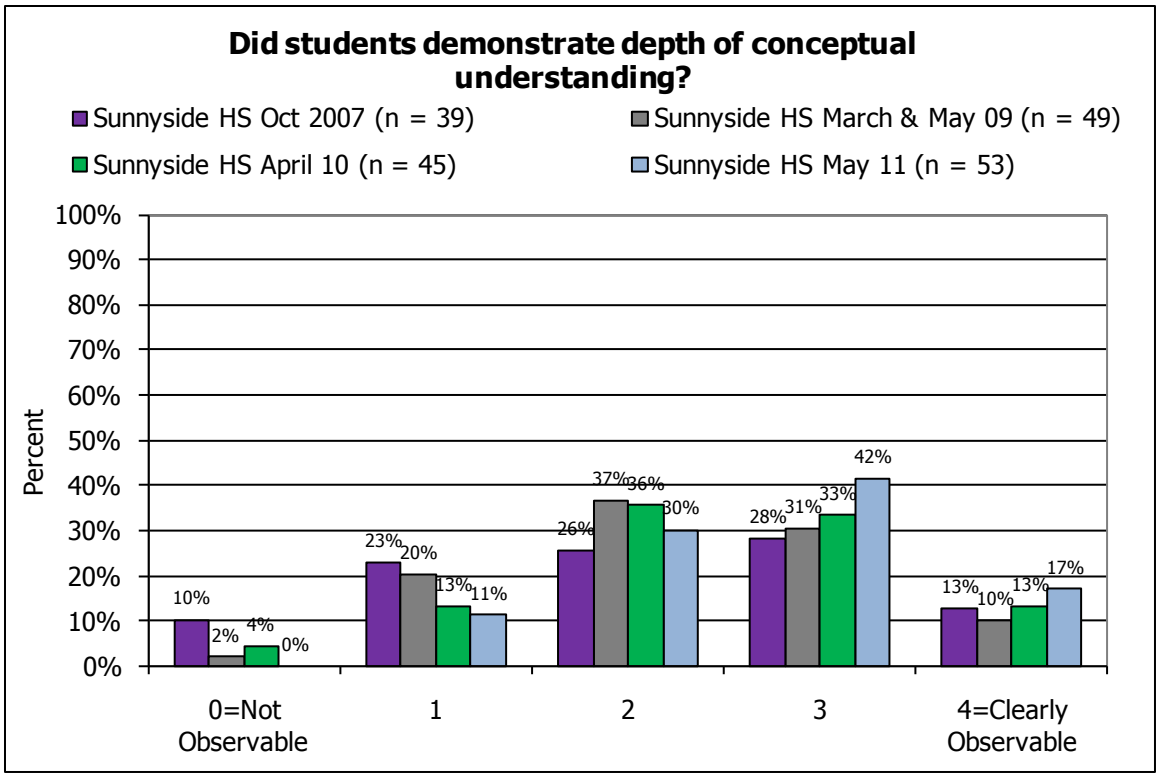
Overall Results



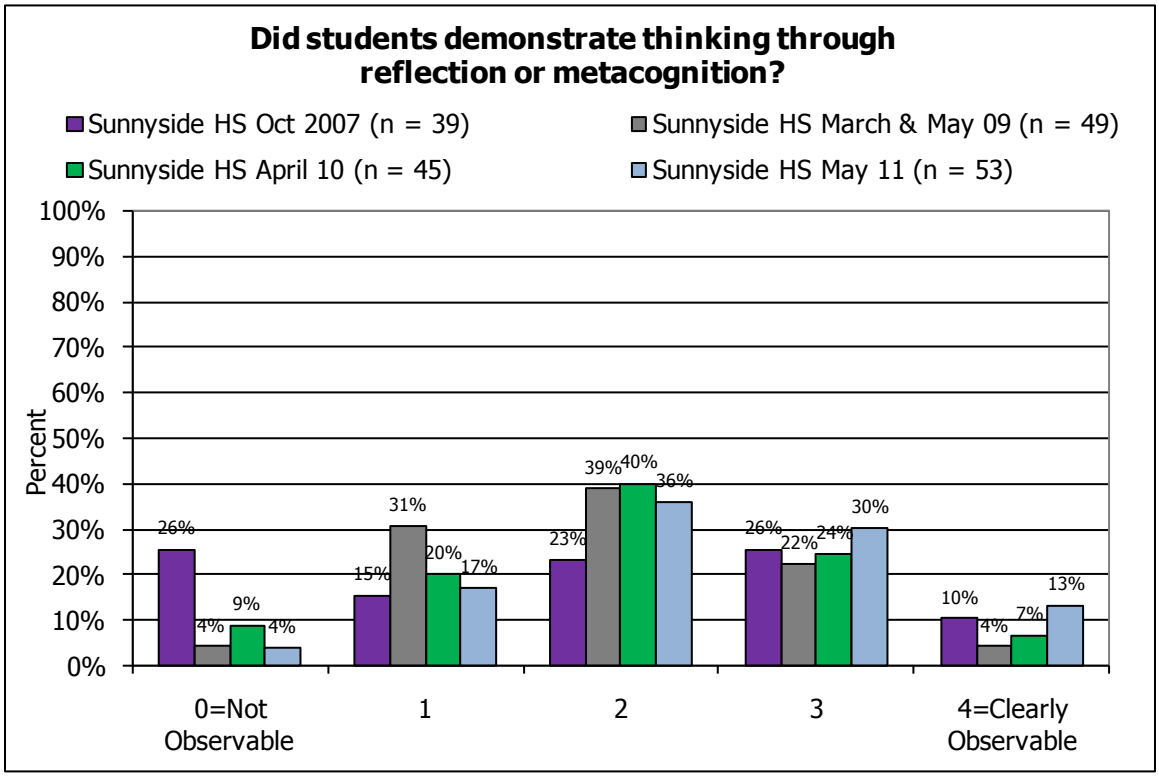
Skills: Essential Component Results



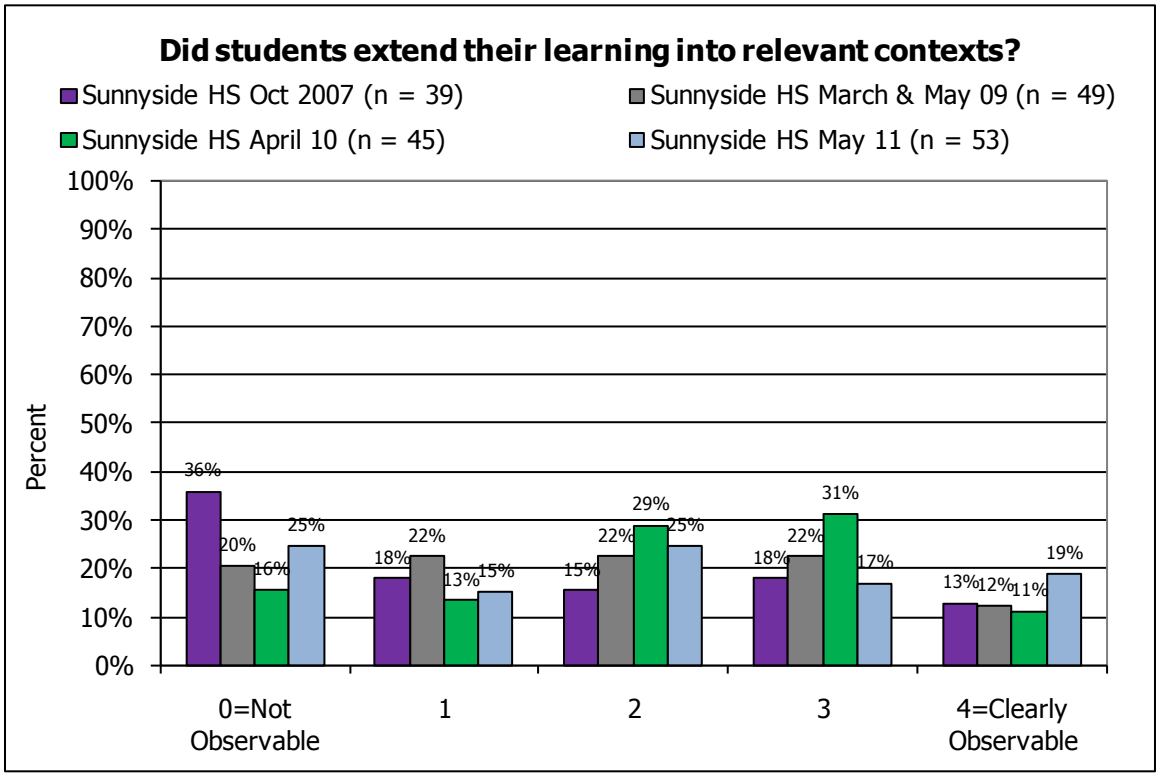
Knowledge: Essential Component Results



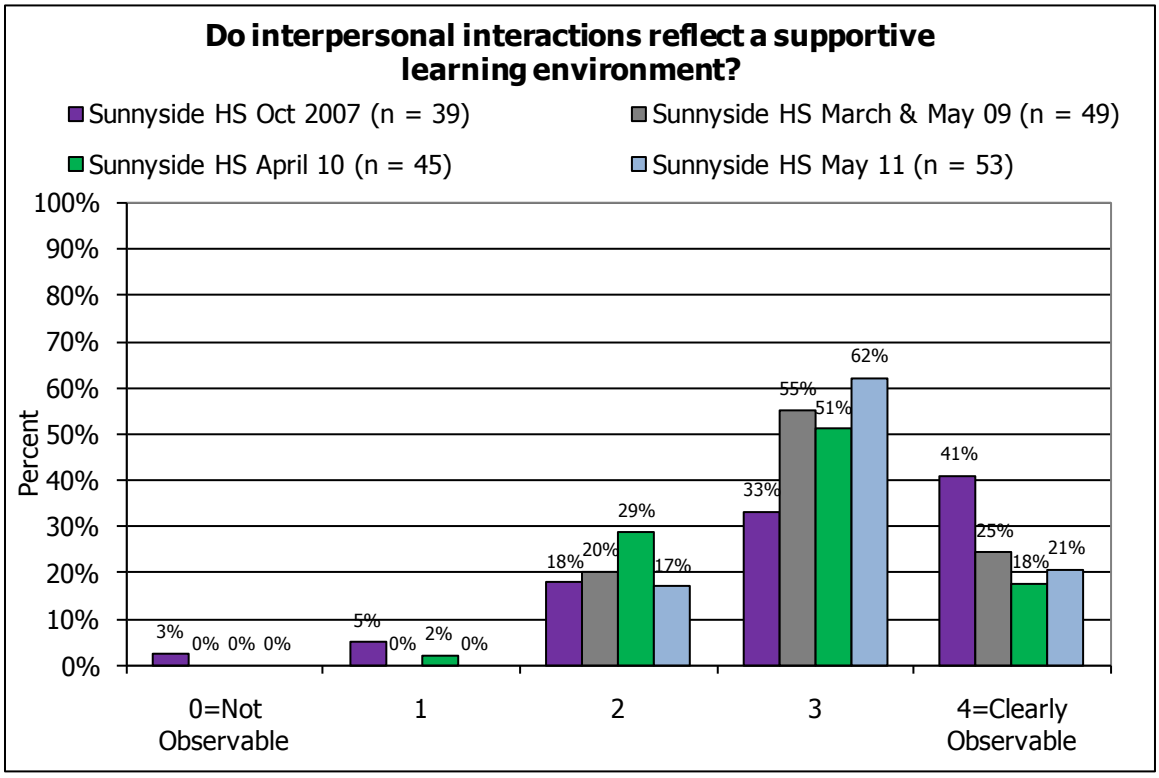
Thinking: Essential Component Results



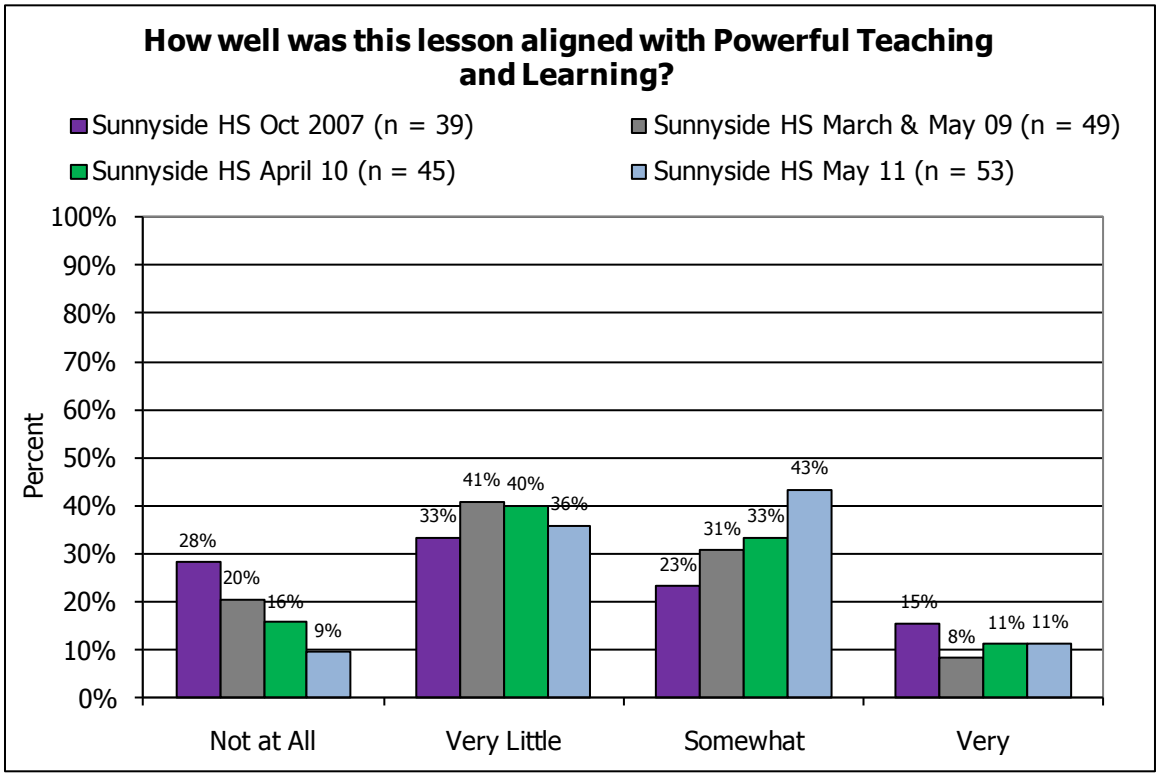
Application: Essential Component Results



Relationships: Essential Component Results



Overall (scales 1-4)



Disaggregated STAR Indicator Results

1. Teacher provides an opportunity for students to develop and/or demonstrate skills through elaborate reading, writing, speaking, modeling, diagramming, displaying, solving and/or demonstrating.	0%	8%	15%	47%	30%
				77%	
2. Students' skills are used to demonstrate conceptual understanding, not just recall.	2%	11%	26%	43%	17%
				60%	
3. Students demonstrate appropriate methods and/or use appropriate tools within the subject area to acquire and/or represent information.	8%	4%	32%	28%	28%
				57%	
Knowledge Indicators	***0***	***1***	***2***	***3***	***4***
4. Teacher assures the focus of the lesson is clear to all students.	0%	13%	28%	30%	28%
				58%	
5. Students construct knowledge and/or manipulate information and ideas to build on prior learning, to discover new meaning, and to develop conceptual understanding, not just recall.	4%	19%	23%	34%	21%
				55%	
6. Students engage in significant communication, which could include speaking/writing, that builds and/or demonstrates conceptual knowledge and understanding.	4%	13%	30%	38%	15%
				53%	
Thinking Indicators	***0***	***1***	***2***	***3***	***4***
7. Teacher uses a variety of questioning strategies to encourage students' development of critical thinking, problem solving, and/or communication skills.	9%	30%	23%	19%	19%
				38%	
8. Students develop and/or demonstrate effective thinking processes either verbally or in writing.	4%	13%	34%	34%	15%
				49%	
9. Students demonstrate verbally or in writing that they are intentionally reflecting on their own learning.	15%	25%	26%	23%	11%
				34%	
Application Indicators	***0***	***1***	***2***	***3***	***4***
10. Teacher relates lesson content to other subject areas, personal experiences and contexts.	25%	21%	21%	21%	13%
				34%	
11. Students demonstrate a meaningful personal connection by extending learning activities in the classroom and/or beyond the classroom.	34%	13%	17%	17%	19%
				36%	
12. Students produce a product and/or performance for an audience beyond the class.	85%	2%	2%	2%	9%
				11%	
Relationships Indicators	***0***	***1***	***2***	***3***	***4***
13. Teacher assures the classroom is a positive, inspirational, safe, and challenging academic environment.	0%	0%	13%	57%	30%
				87%	
14. Students work collaboratively to share knowledge, complete projects, and/or critique their work.	23%	28%	19%	23%	8%
				30%	
15. Students experience instructional approaches that are adapted to meet the needs of diverse learners (differentiated learning).	8%	28%	26%	28%	9%
				38%	

Summary and Recommendations

Overall, researchers observed instruction aligned with Powerful Teaching and Learning in 55% of classes, which is an increase from previous results. Additionally, each Essential Component, except *Application*, shows an increase in the alignment of Sunnyside High School with the STAR Protocol. To ensure continuous improvement, we recommend that staff members explore two specific Essential Components of the STAR Classroom Observation Protocol:

Thinking: The *Thinking* Component scored at a moderate level on the Protocol; 43% of classrooms scored a 3 or 4. Teachers asked open-ended, higher-level questions in 38% of classrooms (Indicator 7), and students demonstrated their thinking skills in 49% of classrooms (Indicator 8). However, researchers observed students reflecting on their learning in only 34% of classrooms (Indicator 9). It is essential that students understand their thinking strategies and methods of problem solving. Teachers can encourage this by asking reflective questions. For example, "How did you get that answer" or "What makes you think that" will require students to think deeper about their answers. It will allow students who have a wrong answer to evaluate their thinking and make a change to it. During class discussions or in response to open-ended questions, it is effective to allow multiple students to answer. This allows students to respond to each other. New ideas will inspire students to reflect on their own thoughts and redefine their thinking. We recommend teachers develop a number of reflective and open-ended questions they can pose throughout the lesson.

Application: The *Application* Component scored moderately low on the Protocol, with 36% of classes scoring either a 3 or 4. In approximately one-third of classrooms, researchers observed where teachers and/or students were making connection to lesson content. For example, students were creating hypotheses, testing them in a lab setting, and applying what they learned to real world scenarios. For instance, in one class, students were testing for presence of sugars within certain foods, making connections between the presence or absence of sugars and what types of foods diabetics should try to avoid. Other classes tied in the current assassination of Osama Bin Laden by U.S. Special Forces and discussed current revolutions in the Middle East, war, prejudice and civic responsibility. These, and other activities such as writing pen pal letters to a classroom outside of the school and having students research relevant topics they have selected help to connect learning within and beyond the classroom. To improve scores, we recommend teachers continue to be intentional about helping students to extend their learning into relevant contexts and to make lessons pertinent for students, which may also lead to on-going reflective practice. We recommend staff members work together to generate additional ideas for extending student learning. It is a reasonable strategy to incorporate Indicators 10 and 11 every lesson and Indicator 12 every month.

Relationships: The *Relationships* Component scored moderate to high on the Protocol, with 83% of classes scoring either a 3 or 4. Compared to last year Indicator 13 has improved by 14 percentage-points 87%, indicating teachers are providing positive inspirational learning environments conducive to student learning. Across classrooms, the respect and caring that teachers had for students was palpable. Similarly, students showed a high degree of respect and caring for teachers and for each other. This is an essential foundation for learning and enables teachers to ask students to take risks in their learning. Expectations for student behavior and participation were high and teachers took steps to ensure students understood and could meet those expectations. However, there were fewer instances of structured student collaboration (evidence of Indicator 14 was observed in 30% of lessons). We recommend teachers provide additional structured opportunities for students to collaborate. We also recommend teachers use the positive relationships they have cultivated to leverage additional, deeper learning (e.g. Thinking Component). Students clearly feel safe and respected and may be willing to take on increased learning challenges because of that.

STAR Classroom Observation Reflection Page

Use this page to take notes, synthesize information, draw conclusions, and make plans

General observations, comments, questions regarding the data:

_____

_____

_____

_____

What is/are the highest scoring Essential Component(s)? _____

_____

What is/are the lowest scoring Essential Component(s)? _____

_____

What is/are the highest scoring Indicator(s)? _____

_____

What is/are the lowest scoring Indicator(s)? _____

_____

What are some areas that we could all focus on? _____

_____

What should we do next? _____

_____

Additional Notes