

VIDEO CASE 2—Guide to Analysis

A 5th-Grade Team Meets to Follow Up on a Professional Development Workshop

This case uses an excerpt of a video of a 5th-grade team meeting to explore the issue: how to go beyond professional development workshops and use the team meetings to implement new reading strategies as well as raise questions and challenges in implementing a guided reading strategy. The teachers viewed here work in an inner-city school where all students are mainstreamed and there is a high proportion of special education students.

Your Facilitator

Wait! It would be very, very difficult to gain any appreciable benefit from your expenditure of time and energy by attempting to conduct this analysis and its series of exercises without a facilitator. You *need* to appoint someone (it can be a team member) as a designated facilitator. This is not necessarily your team leader. This person will not be your “boss.” But this person *will* be responsible for:

- Copying and distributing to all participants copies of the Case and Case Analysis and all handouts
- Organizing role-plays (appointing time keepers and observers, where indicated)
- Moving the process along and staying on track

Psst! Facilitators: Read all the activity directions as if they applied to you.

Psst! Team members: You, too.

Materials Needed

Video Clip

Enough printed copies of the following to distribute to all team members:

- The Video Case Guide to Analysis
- Worksheets—Video Observation Templates for Groups 1, 2, and 3
- Handout—Protocol for Viewing Video Clips
- Chart paper and markers

A. Analyzing the Case

Step 1: Before Watching the Video Clip, Read and Review the Following (10–15 minutes)

The people in the video are 5th-grade teachers. The day before the team meeting shown, they were at a workshop on guided reading. In the video, the teachers discuss what they learned from that workshop and how it might change their practice. Callie, the team leader/facilitator is also a teacher, not their supervisor. She is there to help make meetings productive and focused. In an interview after the team meeting, Callie reflected on her challenge:

To facilitate the group and, at the same time, bring in my expertise as a teacher. My other conundrum is toeing the line between putting teachers’ anxieties at ease while at the same time challenging them and keeping their feet to the fire. . . . I don’t want to overstep my authority with the group.

Prior to watching the video, divide your group in three. Give yourself and participants a few minutes to digest the details of the Video Observation Templates (Figures VC2.1, VC2.2, and VC2.3) before starting the video. Each participant should read the specific directions (below) for his or her group and make sure they are understandable and clear.

*Directions for Group 1
(Using Figure VC2.1 Worksheet)*

As you watch the video, pay particular attention to what Callie says to push the teachers’ thinking about implementing the guided reading program (first column) and what she does to help reduce their anxieties (second column). Record both kinds of interventions, and try to decide which she does more of. Callie demonstrates a number of positive facilitation skills (e.g., opens the meeting with a clear goal, ends the meeting with wrap-up and homework). Record those in the third column.

Figure VC2.1 Video Case 2—Worksheet—Video Observation Template Group 1

Facilitator interventions that push the teachers’ thinking	Facilitator interventions that reduce anxieties	Leadership skills that Callie demonstrates

Figure VC2.2 Video Case 2—
Worksheet—Video
Observation Template
Group 2

Teachers' assertions	Others' response to assertions	Will response help? If not, what response would help?

Figure VC2.3 Video Case 2—
Worksheet—Video
Observation Template
Group 3

Teachers' expressed concerns	Others' responses to concerns	Did the responses provide a specific suggestion for the teacher to try? If so, how?

*Directions for Group 2
(Using Figure VC2.2
Worksheet)*

As you watch the video, you will notice teachers making assertions (actions they are going to try). For example, one teacher says, “Spend more time with each student during guided reading, make the mini-lesson shorter.” What other assertions do you hear? Record each assertion you hear (first column) as well as other teachers’ responses to those assertions (second column). After the video, fill in the third column.

*Directions for Group 3
(Using Figure VC2.3
Worksheet)*

As you watch the video, look for all the concerns that were raised, and list them in the first column. Also pay attention to other teachers’

responses to those concerns (second column). After the video, record specific suggestions that were made in the third column.

Step 2: Watch the Video (15–20 minutes)

As you watch the video, complete the specific video observation template you’ve been given, capturing as much detail as possible in the first and second columns. After viewing the video, all groups complete the third column on their sheets. Then, share information from your completed worksheets and record on chart paper the insights and questions raised.

Step 3: Case Analysis Questions (15 minutes)

Using the information from the Observation Templates as a basis for discussion, address the following questions:

- What is the substance of the conversation among team members?
- Do you think that any of the team members will change their practice as a result of this meeting? Why or why not?
- What suggestions might you give Callie to help her toe the line between putting teachers' anxieties at ease while at the same time challenging them and keeping their feet to the fire?
- What suggestions might you give to the team members to make the ideas they have during the meeting extend (*short and long term*) into their practice?
- What were the "take-aways" from this meeting?

B. Exploring Two Dilemmas (10 minutes)

The Dilemma of Teacher Leadership

Many well-intended teacher leadership initiatives are thwarted by the stranglehold of egalitarian norms in schools.¹ Egalitarian norms exert invisible pressure on teachers to retain equal status and not strive to be above their teaching colleagues.² When teachers assume formal positions of leadership, the cultural norm that all teachers are equal is especially threatened. The "crab in the bucket" metaphor is often used to describe the teacher culture in schools. There is no need to put a cover on a bucket of crabs because if one crab tries to climb out of the bucket the other crabs drag it back down.

The Dilemma of Implementing New Teaching Strategies

Many of the problems a teacher must address to get students to learn must be dealt with all at once, not one after another; yet they must be addressed by a single action. And a teacher's actions are not taken independently—they are interactions with students, individually and as a group.

If you don't have a strategy conducive to teacher understanding, you can't get to student understanding. Part of the problem is that the culture of schools is amenable to superficial rather than deep solutions. As David Cohen,³ Richard Elmore,⁴ and others have argued, teachers need daily in-depth opportunities to build up the knowledge and capacity to carry out the deeper reforms envisaged in the best curriculum frameworks. This requires a radical change in the norms and working conditions of teachers and administrators and, in fact, the teaching profession as a whole.

Lack of clarity—diffuse goals and unspecified means of implementation—represents a major problem in the implementation stage; teachers find that the change is not very clear as to what it means in practice.

C. Reflect and Connect (15 minutes)

After reading about these two dilemmas, comment on the following four excerpts from interviews with team members after the meeting shown in the video. For each excerpt, ask a team member to read it out loud, and spend two to three minutes discussing.

1. "We're not here about good conversations, and I think we had many during this meeting, but coming to new understandings about doing things differently. That's where we missed the boat."
2. "During our meeting, Callie says, 'I don't know about you guys, but I think any more than 15 minutes is too long for a mini-lesson.' I know we teachers use this kind of language because we want people to know we assume they're doing the right thing. I think teachers make those moves to be respectful of each other, and I think that makes it harder for another teacher to say she's not doing the intervention. In the meeting, Callie implied, 'Here's what we should be doing, and I'm assuming you're doing it,' but after that kind of comment it takes more courage for a teacher to say, 'I don't really know how to do it that way.'"
3. "The conversations have to be getting smaller, more evidence based; we have to be able to talk about patterns, trends, with safety—what's working for each student and how do we know."

4. “We have to reach consensus. How often are we getting to the struggling reader? If I’m teaching a workshop versus I’m teaching a book and pulling out workshop pieces, it’s not the same instructional diet for kids. That’s not OK.”

When teacher leaders focus on improving their own instructional knowledge and practice as well as that of their colleagues, they are more likely to be valued by colleagues in their schools.

This video case raises interesting challenges for this team:

- How can the team ensure that teachers will change their practice and implement some of the learnings from the workshop?
- In what ways can team members hold themselves accountable for implementing new strategies?
- How can the team leader effectively exert leadership in a culture that resists such efforts?

D. What Do We Do Now?

It is impossible to go far enough in a single team meeting to implement any new strategy. If you are involved in a concerted effort within your team to implement a new teaching strategy, we suggest using video to enable teachers to observe one another’s practice.

Step 1: Develop Norms

If you have never used video as part of your team meetings, it would be a good idea to develop some norms before your first observation. (For more information on developing team norms, see “Establish Team Norms” in Chapter 5.) The norms will serve as guidelines for the ways in which you will interact. Have team members suggest norms and record them on chart paper. After all suggestions are collected, ask if there are any norms participants can’t live with. If so, rephrase the norms so that they are comfortable to everyone. Bring the chart paper to future meetings, and refer to the norms as you continue this work.

Step 2: Create a Video

Select a teacher to record a video of a class, and ask her or him to choose a 10- to 15-minute clip that shows a goal the teacher is trying to work on.

Step 3: View the Video at the Team Meeting

Try using a protocol (Figure VC2.4) to guide your observation.

References

1. Lieberman, A., & Miller, L. (2004). *Teacher Leadership*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.
2. Troen, V., & Boles, K. C. (2003). *Who's Teaching Your Children? Why the Teacher Crisis Is Worse Than You Think and What Can Be Done About It*. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press.
3. Cohen, D. K., & Ball, D. L. (2001). Making Change: Instruction and Its Improvement. *Phi Delta Kappan*, 83(1), 73–77.
4. Elmore, R. (2006). Three Thousand Missing Hours. *Harvard Education Letter*, 22(6).