

# NEWSLETTER

## The Value in Doing a Learning Walk Together

Maggie Kiley, the Director at Nerstrand Elementary was looking forward to more learning walks after participating at Lafayette Charter School. She shared her observations (noticings) and her questions (wonderings) about the agreed upon areas of focus that Lafayette’s school leader, Peter Roufs, and his leadership team identified. Learning walks are not evaluative. Rather, they provide an opportunity for the school leadership to get collective feedback on key strategies that they are implementing schoolwide.

The first step is to identify up to three strategies that the school is using schoolwide to improve student learning. The next step is for the school leader(s) to identify the success indicators. What should the observers see and hear from students and teachers using the strategies? Then head out together on the learning walk and notice and wonder. “Having another pair of eyes looking for the use of expected practices that were shared in PLC for example, is helpful. I think it is also valuable visiting other schools and recommend joining learning walks at other NEO schools,” says Maggie.



*Ms. Cho’s class uses vocabulary from their word wall they created, together and then independently.*

## Upcoming Events!

NEO will continue to facilitate sharing of effective practices through learning walks. Be sure to stay tuned for upcoming opportunities to join a learning walk at another school. We will be sending out the link to the sign up sheet again soon!

## Cool Things Happening at Sejong Academy of Minnesota, Korean Immersion School

Guiding students to make gains in learning the state standards takes planning and continuous reflection on each student’s level of understanding. Teacher Yun Cho would like to share her effective practice in planning and lesson delivery of differentiated instruction. Ms. Cho graduated from University of Fairfield in Connecticut, where the teaching focus was on the Gradual Release Model for delivering student instruction. The end goal of the Gradual Release Model of instruction is that all students will use the new knowledge and demonstrate the skill successfully at the end of the lesson. In other words, the lesson and resources set all students up for success! In order to do so, the knowledge and skill is gradually released to the students, first through modeling and then through guided opportunities for practice, all while keeping the end goal in mind. The Gradual Release Model helped the school exceed state growth targets in math and reading their 1<sup>st</sup> year!

## GRADUAL RELEASE MODEL AS USED AT ACHIEVE LANGUAGE ACADEMY

If you take a learning walk with lead teacher Jennifer Minea or Mary Apuli, the director, you gain an appreciation for the school's attention to indicators of success.

Using a list of success indicators that the teachers and school leadership created based on the Gradual Release Model, the learning walk team visits classrooms to look for 1) clear modeling of the use of the knowledge and/or skill, 2) opportunities such as pair/share and turn and talk for students to begin to use and practice the knowledge and/or skill, and most importantly, 3) whether the students independently demonstrate success with the knowledge and/or skill.

The learning walk team then shares observations.

*I noticed that the teacher modeled clear steps that were easy for students to follow.*

*I noticed that the teacher included a student in the modeling.*

*I noticed that all students were engaged in turn and talk and were using the knowledge.*

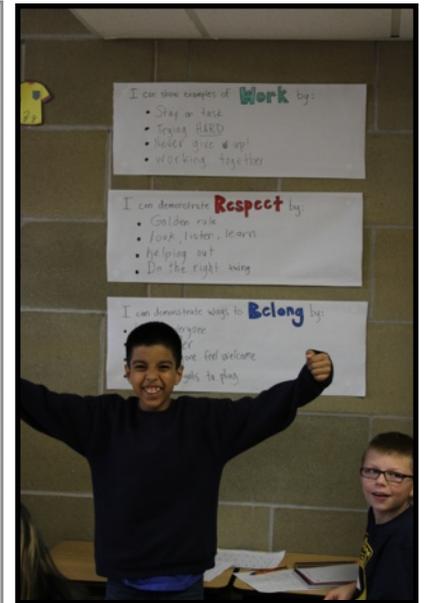
*I noticed that students were able to independently use the information that they learned in their exit slip writing.*

The learning walk team also shares questions such as:

*I wonder how the teachers use the feedback that they get from the exit slips.*

*I wonder how the teachers share feedback that they get from exit slips.*

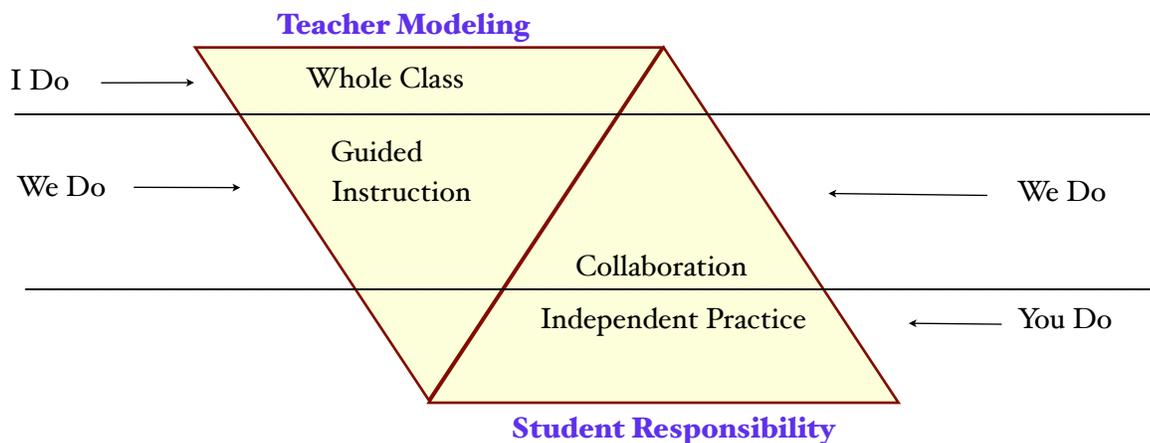
After a brief discussion, it is on to the next classroom to notice and wonder.



### Upcoming Due Dates!

Be sure to look for sign up information for the formal annual site visit!

## COMMON STEPS USED IN GRADUAL RELEASE MODEL



Fisher & Fry, 2007

## NEO'S CORE: CONSISTENT, ONGOING, ROBUST/RELEVANT EVALUATION WITH SCHOOLS

NEO's mission is to provide consistent, ongoing and robust evaluation/feedback. The evaluation and feedback is geared to helping each school achieve significant and measurable

student growth. NEO allocates resources to connect schools to expert feedback in finance, governance and academic performance.

For more information and contact information visit NEO's website: [neoauthorizer.org](http://neoauthorizer.org)