



Leveraging

Low Inference Feedback

for School Improvement



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Meet Brad & Laura

We are the administrative team at Kittredge Magnet School for High Achievers in Atlanta, Georgia, the #1 elementary school in the state!

Laura has her Ph.D. in Educational Leadership from Mercer University. Her passions in education include gifted & high achieving students, instructional technology, and equipping teachers with rich data analysis skills that directly impact and improve instruction and assessment.

Brad has his M.A.T. in Science Education from the University of Georgia, and M.Ed. Educational Leadership from Teachers College, Columbia University. He is passionate about curriculum and instruction, specifically through project-based learning and STEM integration that empowers students in the learning process, while also exposing them to an array of topics.

We look forward to networking and problem solving with you while attending the Innovative Schools Conference! Thank you for joining us today!

List of Topics:

- ▶ The Inference Ladder
- ▶ Defining Feedback
- ▶ Low Inference Observation Notes & Feedback
- ▶ Low Inference Feedback & Positive Parent Conferencing
- ▶ Practical Applications in Your Setting
- ▶ Reflections

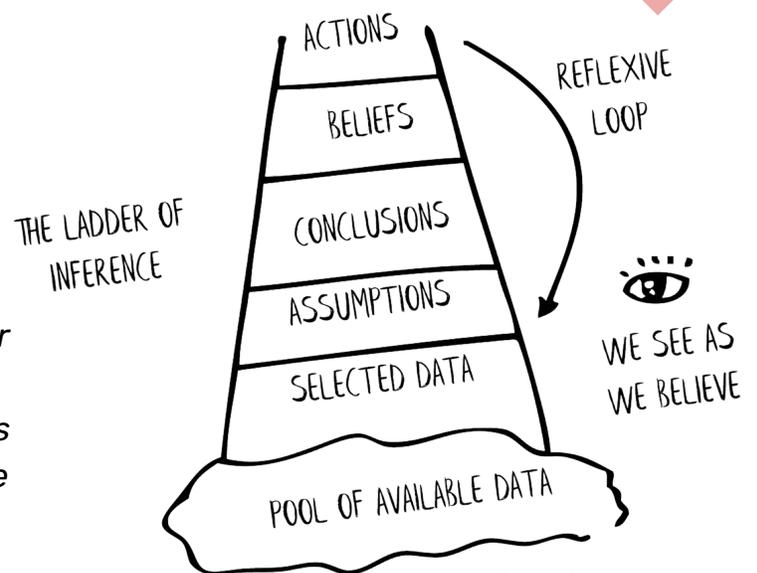
Learning Goals

- ▶ Identify the difference between low inference and high inference feedback
- ▶ Write low inference notes and questions from observations and a variety of data sets
- ▶ Provide low inference feedback in a variety of settings
- ▶ Leverage low inference feedback to drive a culture of change and improve outcomes for students and staff

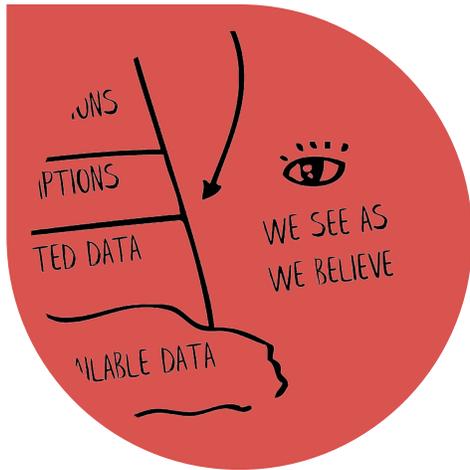
The Inference Ladder

"How we act depends on how we understand the situation we are in. Our understandings often seem obvious to us, as if they were given by the situation itself. But people can come to very different understandings, depending on what aspects of the situation they notice and how they interpret what is going on. The Ladder of Inference is a model of the steps we use to make sense of situations in order to act. It helps us to think about our thinking and to coordinate our thinking with others."

The Systems Thinker



Daniel Stillman



▶ Addressing Bias

- Bias, context, assumptions and values all impact us as we move up the inference ladder to action.
- Increased awareness can have an immediate impact on our response as we work with high needs populations, at-risk students, dealing with discipline and identifying instructional programs & interventions.
- Increased bias awareness + low-inference training can work together to improve instruction, student outcomes and school culture.

▶ Defining Feedback

"The term *feedback* is often used to describe all kinds of comments made after the fact, including advice, praise, and evaluation. But strictly speaking, none of these are feedback.

Basically, feedback is information about how we are doing in our efforts to **reach a goal**. Even further, helpful feedback is goal-referenced; tangible and transparent; actionable user-friendly (specific and personalized); timely; ongoing; and consistent."

Low Inference Feedback: Dos & Don'ts

Low inference feedback is the product of low inference data analysis & observation.



Low inference feedback does not...

- Provide "expert" advice.
- Rate or rank performance or behavior.
- Contain subjective feedback.
- Provide praise and/or reprimands.



Low inference feedback does...

- Use a description of observable facts, events or data **without** interpretation.
- Use a low degree of subjectivity.
- Contain facts, not opinions, and it's not evaluative.
- Relate to the issue at hand and address specific behaviors and observations.

Georgia Department of Education

Examples of Feedback

High Inference

- I think you should group the students during reading.
- Your teaching is a model for others to follow.
- Why are the students so noisy during group work?
- Great job today!
- The teacher seems flustered and unprepared.

Low Inference

- 14 out of 17 students were reading silently at their desks.
- Julia was out of her seat six times during science class on Monday.
- I wonder why Kevin fell asleep during first period every day this week.
- During your discussion about weather systems, students used academic vocabulary in their verbal responses.

Gallery Walk: High or Low?

Why is your child late to school all the time?

She is the smartest student in class.

I'm wondering why he doesn't wear a coat to school when the weather is cold.

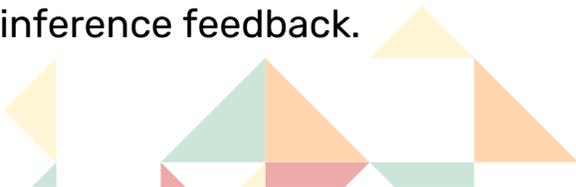
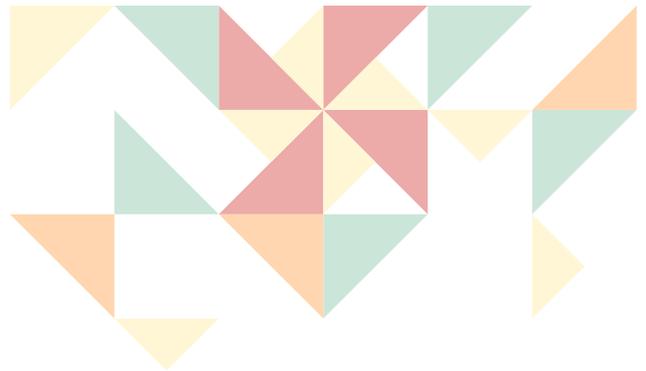
Table 3 has students who are quiet and ready to begin the activity.

His tone was positive and respectful.

She turned in all math homework on time.

Observation Feedback

- 3-min lesson video of a lesson
- Take low inference notes using objective observations about the classroom and the actions of the teacher and students.
- Small groups develop three low inference statements.
- Each group shares one statement allowing the whole group to evaluate it as high or low inference feedback.



Parent Conferencing Dos & Don'ts

Dos

- Collaborate and plan with your colleagues to **prepare** for the conference.
- Provide low inference feedback about what is going well.
- State the learning or behavior goal that is not being met.
- Provide evidence-based data that relates to the goal.
- Present solutions or interventions.
- Seek parent feedback and collaboration.
- Communicate next steps.

Don'ts

- Don't wing it!
- Avoid "fluff" as positive feedback.
- Don't focus on too many goals at one time.
- Don't waste time on unrelated student data or anecdotes.
- Don't absolve yourself of responsibility.
- Don't disregard parent feedback.
- Don't ignore the issues or fail to implement and communicate a plan.
- Avoid high inference statements & questions.

KMS Parent Conference Framework

- Positive Statement of Student Performance
 - Specific, low inference examples
- Problem & Goal
 - Presented by one person
 - Low inference presentation of the problem
 - Present the problem in relationship to a goal (SMART: specific, measurable, achievable, realistic, time-bound)
- Suggested Solutions
 - Clear presentation of suggested solutions
 - Solutions should be in alignment with the problem and goal
- Summary of Conference
 - Presented by one person
 - Next steps, communication plan, action items



5th Grade Student Performance Data

at the 12th week of school

Attendance

- Excused absences: 10
- Unexcused tardies: 1

Demographics

- Age 10 (July DOB)
- Girl
- White, Not Hispanic
- 504 (ADHD)
- Not F/R Lunch
- No office referrals

MAP August '22

Math Data

- Growth 71st percentile
- Achievement 70th percentile

Reading Data

- Growth 97th percentile
- Achievement 70th percentile

ELA Data

- Growth 39th percentile
- Achievement 77th percentile

Science Data

- Growth 35th percentile
- Achievement 77th percentile

Current Grades

- ELA: B
 - Math: F
 - Science: B
 - Soc. Studies: C
 - German: B
 - PE/Health: B
 - Chorus: B
 - Art: B
- 14 missing assignments across all classes*

She attends a magnet program where a core class GPA of 3.0 is required. Her current GPA is 2.2.
Note that the average GPA in fifth grade is 3.8.

Parent Conference Plan & Reflection

- Applying what you've learned about low-inference feedback and parent conferencing, use the Parent Conference Framework to plan a conference based on the sample student data.
- What other data would you like to have on this student?
- How did student data play a role in your conference planning?



Role Play & Reflection

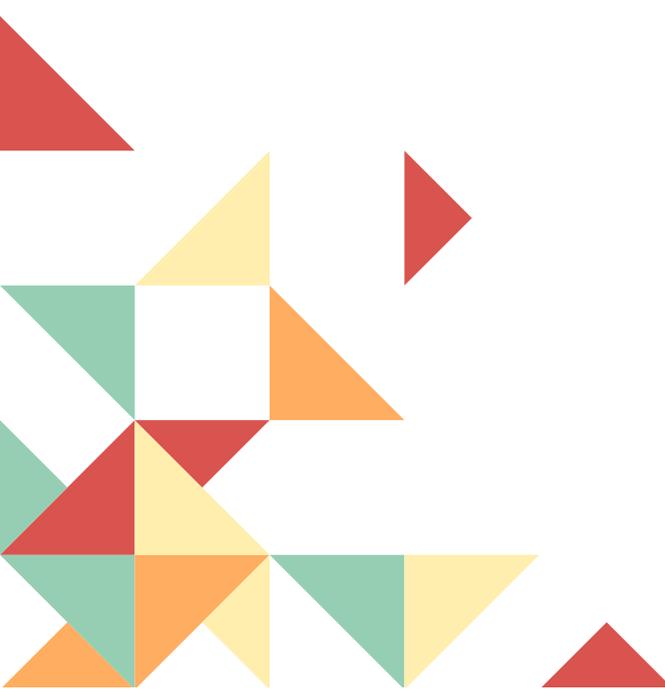
Role Play: Use the scenario cards to practice giving and receiving low inference feedback.

Take turns in each role.

- Scenario 1: Administrator and teacher in a post-observation conference.
 - Scenario 2: Teacher and parent in a conference.
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Reflection Questions

- How did this process help you think about your own practice?
- What is your comfort level with low inference feedback?
- In what ways can you see low inference feedback impacting your classroom, school or organizational culture?
- What can you take from this session today and immediately implement in your work setting?



Thank You

for working & learning
with us today!

References

Slide 4

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Daniel Stillman, <https://www.danielstillman.com/blog/the-ladder-of-inference>

Slide 5

Caeleigh MacNeil, <https://asana.com/resources/ladder-of-inference>

Slide 6

Grant Wiggins, Feedback for Learning: September, 2012: Vol.70, No.1

Slide 7

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