

Module 6

# Aligning Teacher Practice Organization-Wide



**VIRTUAL**

INSTRUCTIONAL  
**LEADERSHIP**  
CHALLENGE

From Individual Improvement  
To Organizational Learning

# 6 Core Beliefs

1. Instructional leaders belong in classrooms.
2. Visiting classrooms builds relationships.
3. Seeing teaching & learning provides the firsthand evidence leaders need to make decisions.
4. Teachers change their practice as a result of feedback conversation, not mere suggestions.
5. We need a shared vocabulary for feedback conversations—an instructional framework.
6. Improvement can't wait.

From Individual Improvement  
To Organizational Learning



# The Model: High-Performance Instructional Leadership

Make classroom visits that are:

1. Frequent
2. Brief
3. Substantive
4. Open-Ended
5. Evidence-Based
6. Criterion-Referenced
7. Conversation-Oriented



From Individual Improvement  
To Organizational Learning

## “Getting Into Classrooms”

- When you can't visit classrooms in person, make 1:1 phone calls instead
- Develop a consistent habit of 3 visits/calls per day
- This will ensure that you have 500 conversations per year—checking in with each teacher every ~10 days

From Individual Improvement  
To Organizational Learning





# EVIDENCE DRIVEN



From Individual Improvement  
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# The Evidence-Driven Philosophy

- Teaching and leadership are largely about making decisions
- We make better decisions when we have better evidence
- We need to talk about evidence to make sense of it

...so conversation is at the heart of improvement for teachers & leaders.

From Individual Improvement  
To Organizational Learning





# From Individual Improvement To Organizational Learning

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# What Is “Teaching” In A Virtual Context?

Virtual learning casts teachers in dramatically different roles, such as:

- Curator
- Docent
- Coach
- Teammate

From Individual Improvement  
To Organizational Learning

# Feedback on Virtual Teaching



[PrincipalCenter.com/virtual-pdf](https://PrincipalCenter.com/virtual-pdf)

From Individual Improvement  
To Organizational Learning



# 1:1 Feedback Conversations



From Individual Improvement  
To Organizational Learning

# 1:1 Feedback Conversations: Structured Cycles

Name		Room	Lunch		Prep
Period/Subject	Date	Date	Date	Date	Date

[PrincipalCenter.com/notecards-pdf](http://PrincipalCenter.com/notecards-pdf)

From Individual Improvement  
To Organizational Learning

# Instructional Frameworks

At a minimum, instructional frameworks are rubrics that provide shared vocabulary for talking about practice. Ideally, they have:

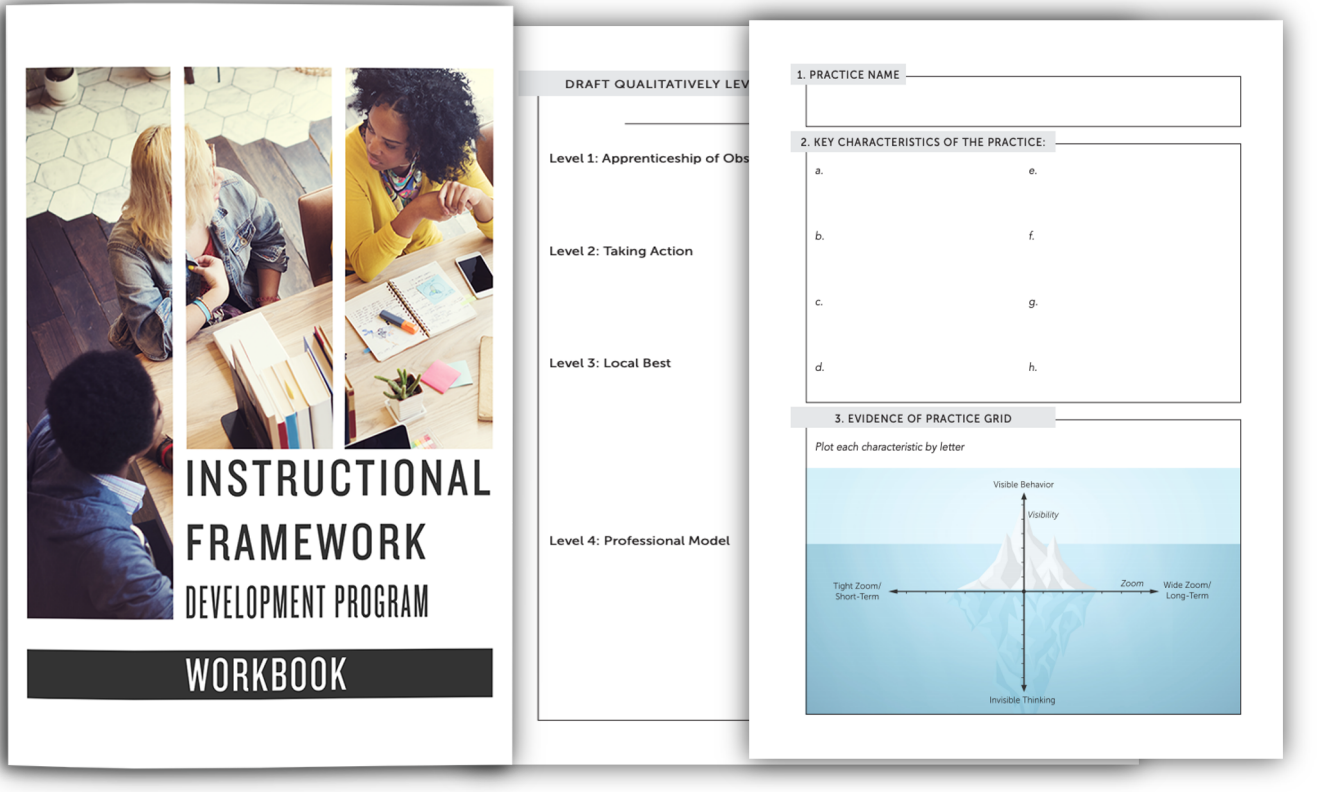
- 4 levels of performance
- Rich, *qualitative* descriptions for each level in specific categories

They may or may not apply to all teachers, grade levels, & subjects.

From Individual Improvement  
To Organizational Learning



# Instructional Framework Development Program



The image displays the cover of the 'Instructional Framework Development Program Workbook' and two pages from the workbook. The cover features three photographs of people in a meeting and the text 'INSTRUCTIONAL FRAMEWORK DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM WORKBOOK'. The first page is a 'DRAFT QUALITATIVELY LEVEL' page with four levels: Level 1: Apprenticeship of Observation, Level 2: Taking Action, Level 3: Local Best, and Level 4: Professional Model. The second page is a 'PRACTICE NAME' form with sections for 'KEY CHARACTERISTICS OF THE PRACTICE' (a grid of 8 items labeled a-h) and 'EVIDENCE OF PRACTICE GRID' (a graph with axes for Visibility and Zoom).

**INSTRUCTIONAL FRAMEWORK DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM WORKBOOK**

**DRAFT QUALITATIVELY LEVEL**

Level 1: Apprenticeship of Observation

Level 2: Taking Action

Level 3: Local Best

Level 4: Professional Model

1. PRACTICE NAME \_\_\_\_\_

2. KEY CHARACTERISTICS OF THE PRACTICE:

a. \_\_\_\_\_ e. \_\_\_\_\_

b. \_\_\_\_\_ f. \_\_\_\_\_

c. \_\_\_\_\_ g. \_\_\_\_\_

d. \_\_\_\_\_ h. \_\_\_\_\_

3. EVIDENCE OF PRACTICE GRID

Plot each characteristic by letter

Visible Behavior

Visibility

Tight Zoom/ Short-Term

Zoom

Wide Zoom/ Long-Term

Invisible Thinking

From Individual Improvement  
To Organizational Learning

# Creating Bandwidth for Instructional Leadership

- What Does Bandwidth For Instructional Leadership Mean?
- Budgeting Mental Energy With The Daily Scorecard
- Parkinson's Law: Getting More Done In Less Time
- Making Time For Informal Classroom Visits
- Making Time For 1:1 Phone Conversations With Staff

From Individual Improvement  
To Organizational Learning



# Putting It All Together

- How do we turn our individual improvement work with teachers into collective learning at the organizational level?
- How can we help teachers learn from one another, even if they can't observe one another directly?

From Individual Improvement  
To Organizational Learning





# Journal

An open notebook with a light blue cover and a silver pen lies on a light blue wooden surface. A white cup of coffee is partially visible on the right side of the notebook.

- What's one insight from an individual conversation that could benefit teachers in other departments/grade levels?
- What existing shared vocabulary, expectations, or frameworks are in place?

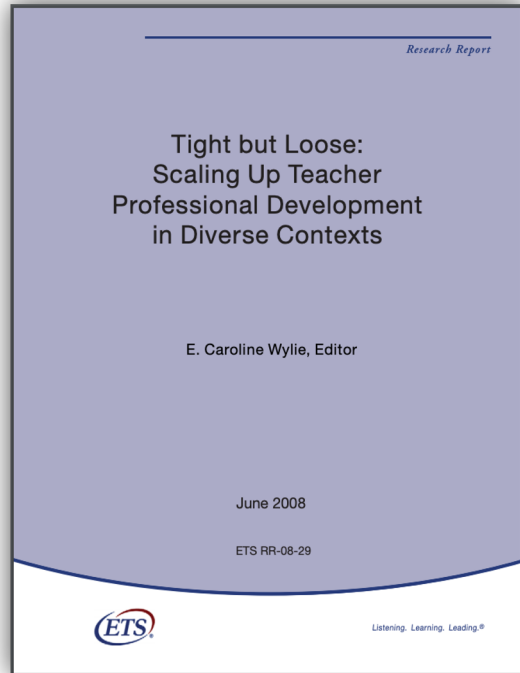
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CHALLENGE

Aligning Practice:  
Tight But Loose

# Tight But Loose



<https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/EJ1111327.pdf>

Aligning Practice:  
Tight But Loose



# What Does Alignment Mean?



Aligning Practice:  
Tight But Loose

# Tight But Loose

- We want everyone to be on the same page, but...
- There's a difference between ***alignment*** and ***micromanaging***
- We want teachers to have a broad repertoire, but we don't want to police the use of specific techniques

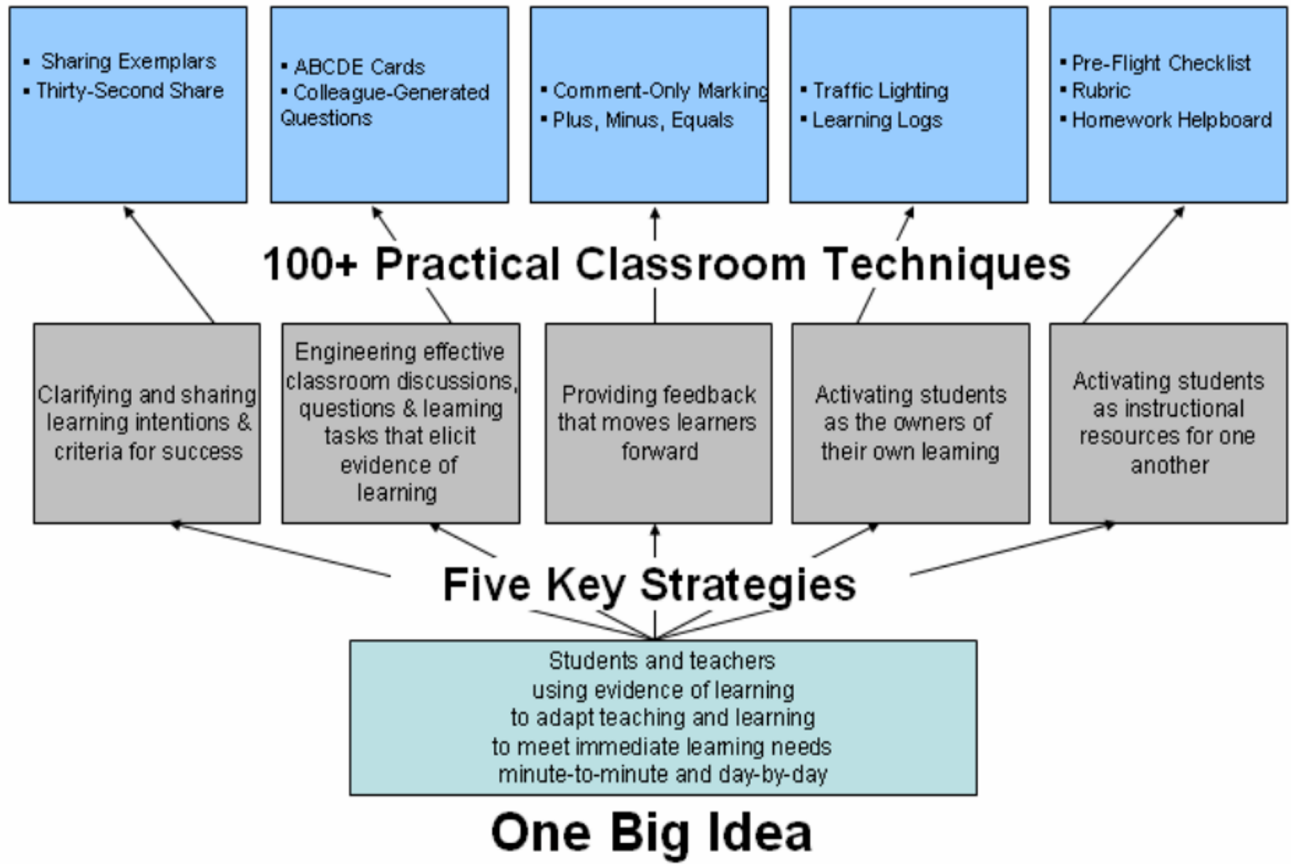
Aligning Practice:  
Tight But Loose

# Example: Assessment for Learning (AfL) Project

## Theory of Action:

- “Superstep A: Teachers Learn Extensively and Deeply About Minute-to-Minute and Day-by-Day AfL Via an Initial Workshop and Sustained Engagement in TLCs”
- “Superstep B: Teachers Make Minute-to-Minute and Day-by-Day AfL a Central Part of Their Everyday Teaching Practice, Implementing the Big Idea and Five Strategies of AfL Through Judiciously Chosen Practical Techniques”

Aligning Practice:  
Tight But Loose



<https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/EJ1111327.pdf>

# Aligning Practice: Tight But Loose



# Aligning Practice: Tight But Loose



# Avoiding Surface-Only Alignment

- Retain teacher autonomy in the choice of specific techniques
- Don't micromanage in feedback, e.g. "You should have done X instead of Y"
- Be skeptical of buzzwords as evidence of alignment

Aligning Practice:  
Tight But Loose

# Avoiding Surface-Only Alignment

Common terminology

≠

shared meaning

Aligning Practice:  
Tight But Loose

# Deep Alignment with Instructional Frameworks

1. Practice Name
2. Key Characteristics
3. Plot on Evidence of Practice Grid (Visibility & Zoom)
4. Draft 4 levels of performance for each characteristic

Aligning Practice:  
Tight But Loose

# Deep Alignment

**1. PRACTICE NAME**

**2. KEY CHARACTERISTICS OF THE PRACTICE:**

a. e.  
b. f.  
c. g.  
d. h.

**3. EVIDENCE OF PRACTICE GRID**

Plot each characteristic by letter

Visible Behavior  
Visibility  
Tight Zoom/ Short-Term Zoom Wide Zoom/ Long-Term  
Invisible Thinking

**DRAFT QUALITATIVELY LEVELED RUBRIC**

CHARACTERISTIC

Level 1: Apprenticeship of Observation

Level 2: Taking Action

Level 3: Local Best

**INSTRUCTIONAL FRAMEWORK DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM**

THE PRINCIPAL CENTER

Aligning Practice:  
Tight But Loose

# A Caution About Instructional Frameworks

An instructional  
framework is  
**not a list of steps**  
for using a practice.

Aligning Practice:  
Tight But Loose

# Get The Insider's View of Practice

***Observability Bias** is the tendency of instructional leaders to focus on what is easiest for them to observe, rather than the key decisions teachers are making.*

Aligning Practice:  
Tight But Loose

# Journal

An open notebook with a light blue cover and a silver pen lies on a light blue wooden surface. To the right, a white cup of coffee is partially visible. The notebook is open to a blank page, and the pen is positioned vertically on the right side of the page.

Ask yourself:

- What are the big ideas to get people on the same page about?
- Does this apply to everyone, or just some grade level teams or departments?
- What core ideas do we need to be “tight” about?
- What’s part of the larger repertoire that we want teachers to develop, but don’t want to micromanage?

Aligning Practice:  
Tight But Loose

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Teacher Autonomy & Alignment



# Self-Determination Theory

SDT posits that intrinsic motivation stems from three innate needs:

- Autonomy
- Competence
- Relatedness

Teacher Autonomy & Alignment

# Autonomy & Alignment

Alignment can be a powerful force for improvement, but only if it doesn't eliminate appropriate professional autonomy.

Teacher Autonomy & Alignment



# Choosing a Focus for Alignment

Develop shared expectations for practices that are:

- High-frequency
- High-impact
- High-variability

...to create a roadmap for growth.

Teacher Autonomy & Alignment



# Give Teachers Autonomy In Choosing

Teachers should have a say in determining which practices are worth aligning around, and what the “insider’s view” of those practices looks like.

Teacher Autonomy & Alignment



# Competence

Alignment can create growth pathways that lead to across-the-board competence, if our instructional frameworks successfully identify the key elements of a practice.

Teacher Autonomy & Alignment



# Competence

Level 1: Apprenticeship of  
Observation

Level 2: Taking Action

Level 3: Local Best

Level 4: Professional Model

Teacher Autonomy & Alignment



# (In)competence

- It's possible that the process of alignment will make it clear that some people are less competent in specific areas
- The resulting framework will create a roadmap for improvement that everyone can follow

# Aligning Our Shortcuts

Everyone takes shortcuts when they run out of time. If we align around these expectations, we'll create fewer gaps for students.

Teacher Autonomy & Alignment





# Journal

An open notebook with a light blue cover is placed on a light blue wooden surface. A silver pen lies on the right page of the notebook. To the right of the notebook, a white cup filled with orange liquid, likely coffee, is partially visible. The background is a solid blue color.

What practices that are

- High-frequency
- High-impact
- High-variability

...could I get teachers to align around by developing an instructional framework?

Teacher Autonomy & Alignment

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Your “Stop Doing” List:  
Pareto Satisficing

# Aligning Our Shortcuts

- There is never enough time to do everything as planned
- Every teacher makes decisions about how to keep on pace
- We make the best decisions in collaboration, rather than in secrecy

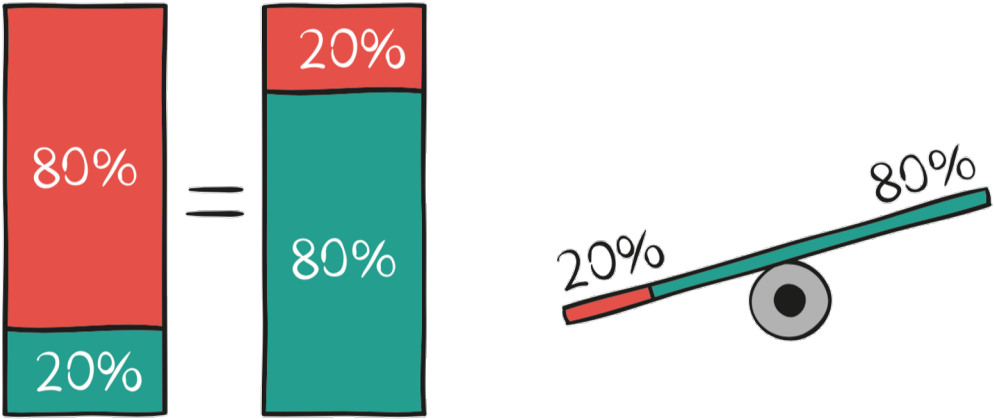
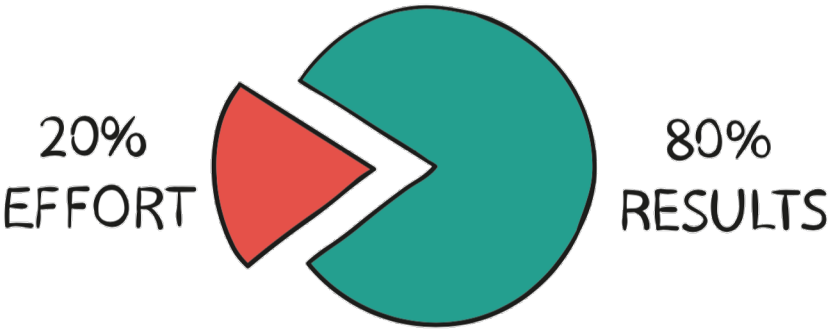
Your “Stop Doing” List:  
Pareto Satisficing

# The Pareto Principle



Your “Stop Doing” List:  
Pareto Satisficing

# The Pareto Principle



Your “Stop Doing” List:  
Pareto Satisficing

Satisfice = Satisfy + Suffice

“Good enough  
is good  
enough.”

*Herbert Simon,  
decision-making &  
administration  
pioneer*



Your “Stop Doing” List:  
Pareto Satisficing

# Giving Teachers Permission to Stop

- Teachers tend to be highly conscientious, and often will often continue to do work they don't find valuable for student learning, if they believe they're supposed to
- Leaders must explicitly empower teachers to speak up when they identify unproductive work

Your “Stop Doing” List:  
Pareto Satisficing

# Search for Efficiencies

- Duplicated effort across team/department
- Paperwork for an audience that doesn't need it
- Turning in lesson plans

Your “Stop Doing” List:  
Pareto Satisficing



# Less → Better

The more teachers can take off their plates, the better they'll be able to do what remains—the essentials

Your “Stop Doing” List:  
Pareto Satisficing

# Journal

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- What are teachers currently spending too much time on?
- How can I raise this question with each team or department?

Your “Stop Doing” List:  
Pareto Satisficing