

**How are we explicitly teaching students the skills to draw meaning from texts?**

- *How is gradual release of responsibility and questioning being used to meet students' needs and check for student understanding?*
- *How is feedback supporting students to move their learning forward?*





Figure 4 Explicit teaching in NSW public schools graphic.

# Framing the Problem of Practice

## What it isn't

And so our inquiry today is not:

- “Are we using GRR?”
- “Are we asking higher-order questions?”
- “Are we giving feedback?”

## What it is

Are these elements working together to explicitly apprentice students into meaning-making?

# INTENTIONAL DESIGN

- Students aren't learning to develop their comprehension skills because we ask good questions or because we provide feedback in isolation.
- It happens when modelling, questioning, feedback and task design are intentionally aligned across the gradual release of responsibility.

# Learning Intention

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We will reflect on and grapple with the complexities of what lies at the heart of explicit teaching of comprehension

and how modelling, questioning, feedback and gradual release interact within the instructional core to strengthen students' ability to construct meaning from texts.



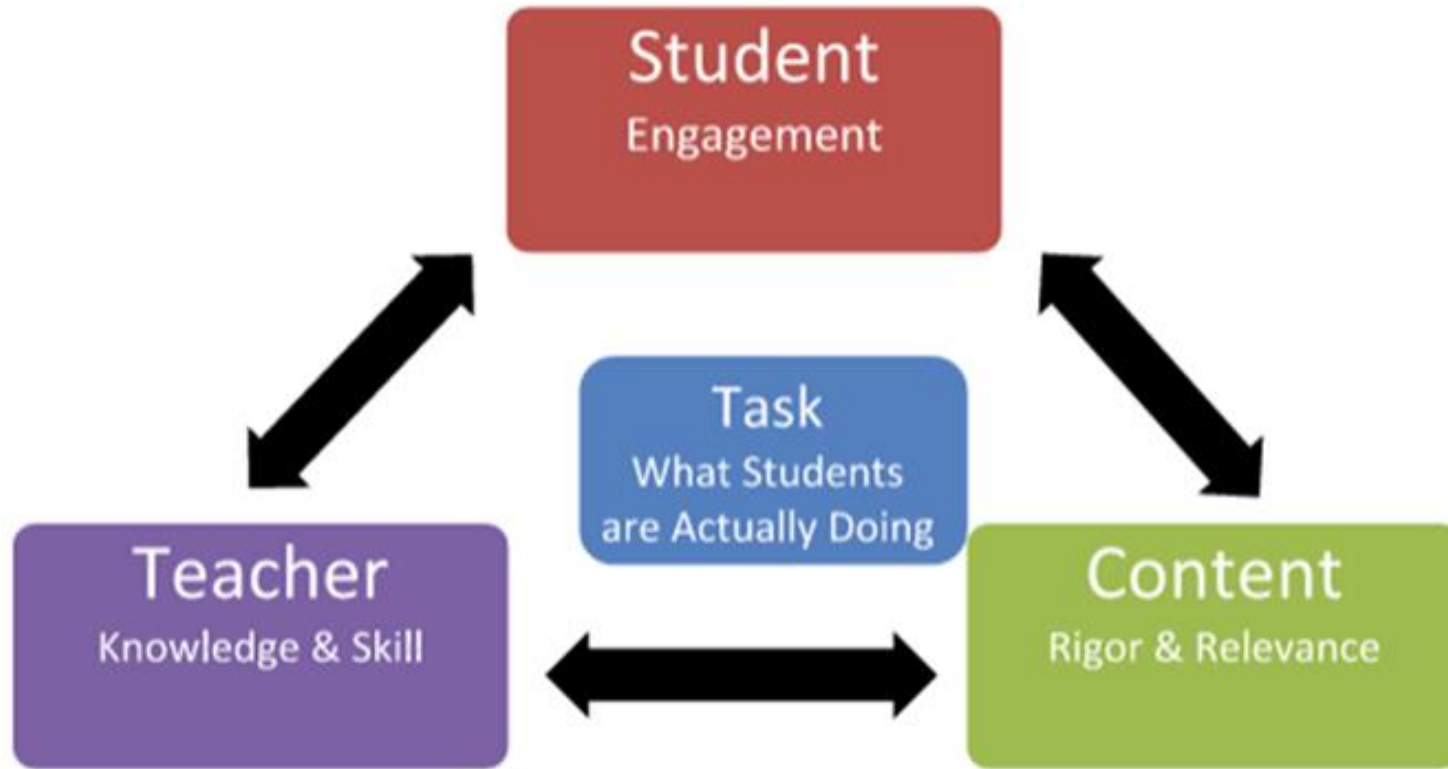
# Success Criteria

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We will be successful when we can:

- Recognise alignment across teacher moves, student thinking and task design.
- Use classroom evidence to inform next steps for teaching and leadership at Berowra Public School.
- Commit to one actionable refinement in our own practice.

# The Instructional Core

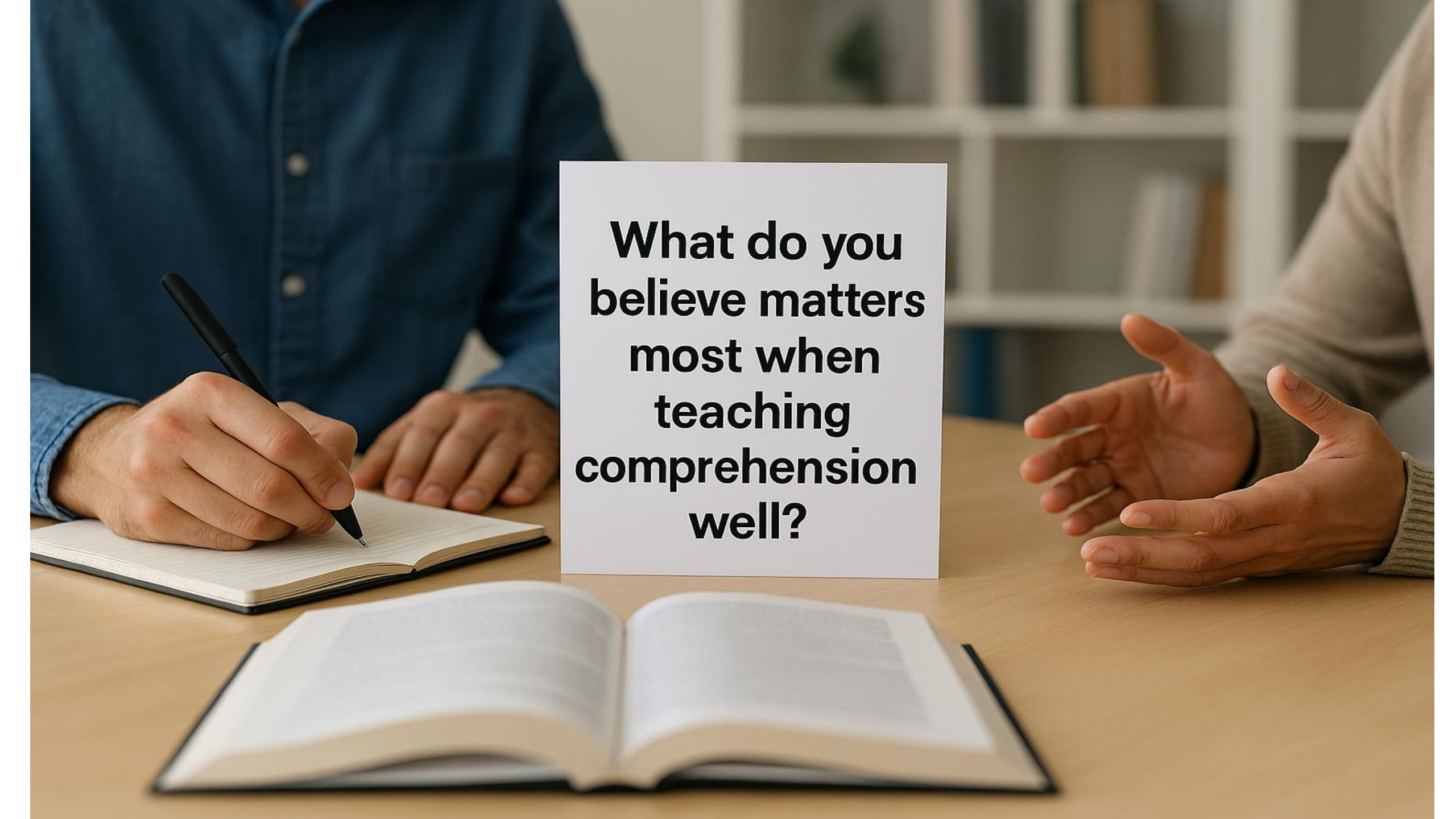


Modified from  
City, Elizabeth, et al. *Instructional Rounds in Education*,  
2014

QUICK

REVISIT



A photograph of two people sitting at a wooden table. On the left, a person in a blue button-down shirt is writing in a small notebook with a black pen. On the right, a person in a light-colored sweater has their hands open in a gesturing motion. In the foreground, an open book lies flat on the table. In the background, a white bookshelf is visible. A white rectangular box with black text is centered over the image.

**What do you  
believe matters  
most when  
teaching  
comprehension  
well?**

# GROUP TASK

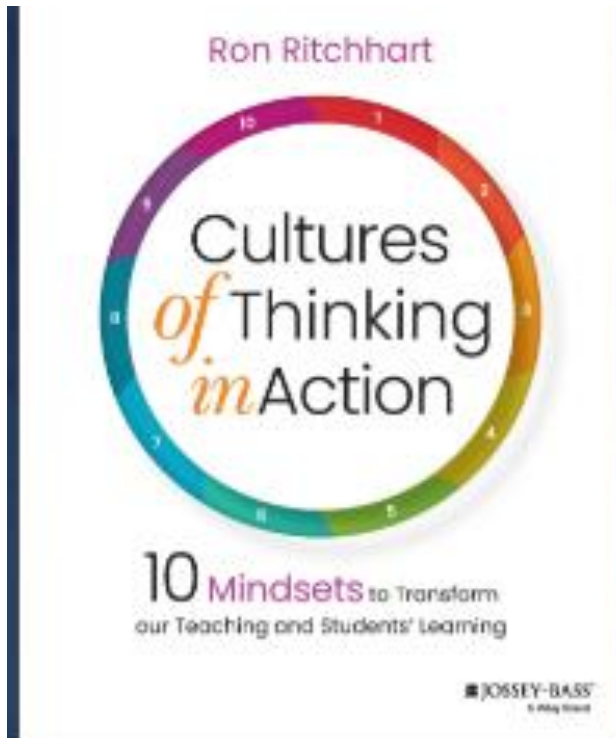
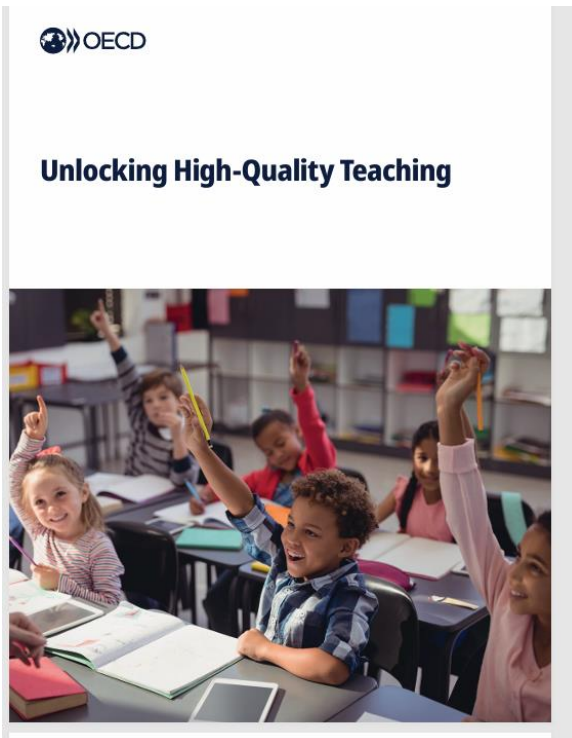
Compare lists:

- Identify commonalities.
- Circle one that feels most critical.

Sort each belief under it heading:

- Teacher Move
- Student Action
- Task Design

# PRE-ROUND READINGS



FEATURE ARTICLE

INTERNATIONAL LITERACY ASSOCIATION

**Thirty-Five Years of the Gradual Release of Responsibility: Scaffolding Toward Complex and Responsive Teaching**

*Sandra Webb, Dixie Massey, Melinda Goggans, Kelly Flajole*

Since Pearson and Gallagher published the landmark framework of the gradual release of responsibility, how has this scaffolding routine changed, and how can it be implemented in adaptive ways?

## SMALL GROUP TASK

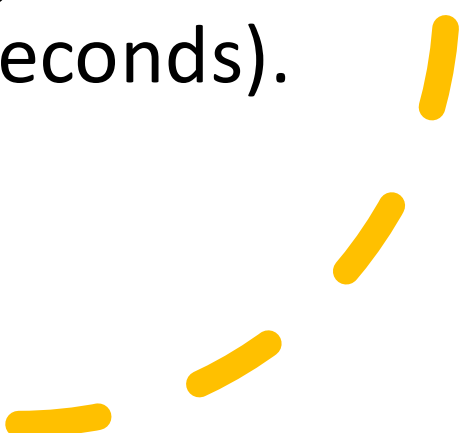
*What are the powerful instructional implications from your reading that would strengthen students' ability in reading lessons with a comprehension focus?*

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Take turns to share one of your “what’s?” and one “why it matters?”

# Small Group Discussion Scaffold

## PART 1

- Initiator: One “WHAT?” from the reading...” “WHY it matters for our Problem of Practice...” (60 seconds)
  - Extender: A different person adds a connection or makes a comment (30 seconds)
  - Clarifier: One person asks a genuine clarifying question only (30 seconds).
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# Small Group Discussion Scaffold

## PART 2

Your job is to agree on the single most powerful instructional implication from your reading that would most strengthen students' ability to draw meaning from text.

Write it clearly.

Make it observable.

Be ready to defend it.





In mixed groups

## GROUP TASK: CO-CONSTRUCTING A SHARED DESCRIPTION

You are co-constructing a shared description of what explicit meaning-making instruction looks like when gradual release of responsibility, questioning, and feedback are aligned in a reading (comprehension) lesson.

You're not summarising the readings again. You are doing something harder.

If we walked into a reading lesson and comprehension (or meaning-making) was being explicitly taught well, what would we see and hear? What might the task require?

You are co-constructing a shared description of what explicit meaning-making instruction looks like when GRR, questioning, and feedback are aligned.

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## Think about – What it is and what it isn't

- Ask questions that can be answered without reasoning
- Model once – release immediately
- Give feedback on accuracy
- What does it look like when these three levers operate coherently to help students draw meaning from text?

# POWERFUL QUESTIONS

- “What will we need to unlearn to teach meaning-making more explicitly?”

or

- “If students are not yet drawing meaning deeply, what might that be telling us about our modelling, questioning or feedback?”

# What are the key things we know and believe matter most when teaching comprehension?

Insights from the Connect –  
Collaborate – Grow  
Instructional Rounds Network



# Purposeful and Rich Texts

- Use high-quality, rich texts across key learning areas.
- Include multimodal and multimedia texts.
- Provide opportunities for students to justify their thinking.



# Importance of Oral Language

- Oral language is essential before, during, and after reading.
- Encourages vocabulary growth and comprehension.
- Includes teacher-to-student and peer-to-peer talk.



# Critical Thinking and Text Engagement

- Students should become critical consumers and producers of text.
- Encourage analysis, interpretation, and response.
- Link comprehension to real-world text engagement.



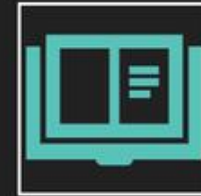
# Explicit Teaching and Gradual Release



Use explicit instruction, including think-aloud strategies.



Implement gradual release of responsibility across K–6.



Teach comprehension strategies at the point of need.

# Vocabulary and Background Knowledge

- Build background knowledge to support understanding.
- Vocabulary development underpins reading comprehension.
- Use deliberate language development activities.



# Reducing Cognitive Load

- Scaffold students learning to decode while comprehending.
- Balance decoding with meaning-making.
- Ensure all students can participate meaningfully.



# Collaborative and Dialogic Learning

- Learning is social and collaborative.
- Encourage student discussion about text meaning.
- Support group inquiry and shared comprehension experiences.



# Embedding Comprehension Strategies

- Plan for strategy instruction within lessons.
- Make strategies visible and repeatable.
- Use formative assessment to guide instruction.

# Student Questions –

You each ask 1 student at the end of the lesson.

1. Can you tell me what you are learning about in this lesson?
2. How do you think you are going with this learning?
3. What does your teacher say or do that makes you think that?  
(not just in this lesson)
4. How do you get feedback about your learning? (Prompt for options other than teacher)
5. How does feedback help you with your learning?



*The initial question  
leaders should  
investigate is,*

***“Should students be  
learning this today?”***



# Network proposes the next level of work for BPS



**Considering all the evidence we have collected and analysed related to RPPS's PoP**



**How can they focus their energy and resources to make progress on the problem of practice?**



**What (new) knowledge and skills might teachers need, and how might the school support that learning?**

# QUESTIONS THAT MIGHT HELP FOCUS DIFFICULT WORK

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What is it we want our **students to know & be able to do?**

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What do we want our **teachers to know & be able to do to sustain effective learning environments** for students?

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What do **leaders need to know and be able to do** to create optimum conditions for teaching and learning?

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In what ways can we ensure **teachers and leaders develop the skills they need to be consistently effective?**

In what ways has your thinking shifted because of this round?

What do you want to know more about?

What are you committed to doing back at school?