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Purpose:
- To provide information and feedback on the Instruction Rounds Process

WELLSTON CITY SCHOOLS
CURRICULUM & INSTRUCTION FOCUS
March 19, 2012 Submitted by Karen Boch

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INSTRUCTIONAL CORE
What is the Instructional Core? In the book, Instructional Rounds in Education, it is defined as the relationship between the teacher, the student and the content with the instructional task at the center (p.22-23). It is not about what we think we are asking students to do as it connects to the standards, but it is about what they are actually doing. Do students have a clear understanding of how it is related to a previous lesson; the next lesson or course; and even life after high school?

The book outlines seven principles, with one of them identified as “TASK PREDICTS PERFORMANCE”. Relationship building, quality instruction and student engagement are at the heart of learning. While at the same time, as the level of accountability increases, it is important to note that if our expectations are not reflective of the external accountability measures (OAA, OGT, NAEP, SAT, or ACT) then the likelihood of student success is unlikely.

INSTRUCTIONAL ROUNDS: WHERE ARE WE NOW?
As you may recall, during the fall of 2010, the Wellston City Schools DLT (District Leadership Team) began exploring the idea of monitoring tools that would be helpful in identifying if the professional development provided by the district was effective, or if it needed to be re-examined. During this exploration, Dr. Jim Salzman, Executive Director of the Stevens Literacy Center at Ohio University, presented a process called Instructional Rounds to the DLT. Shortly after his presentation, the team decided to move forward with further training on the Instructional Rounds process.

To date, the team has completed three Instructional Rounds Visits to classrooms in all four buildings. It has been quite rewarding to see all the ways we are engaging our students at the different grade levels.

As a District Leadership Team, we wanted to provide you with the information from the previous newsletter so that discussions could take place in grade level and department teams around Schlecty’s (5) Levels of Engagement. These five levels can be found on the second page of the newsletter.

The Problem of Practice, Student Engagement, fits like a glove with our most recent professional development with Dr. Barbara Blackburn. On Barbara’s website, http://www.rigorineducation.blogspot.com, she said the following:

“One of my favorite activities is facilitating workshops with teachers. Last week, I was in Wellston, Ohio, working with all teachers PK-12. I was not surprised at their passion for reaching students—I see that most of the time, but I never take it for granted. It was fun to watch them begin to build a true understanding of rigor (creating an environment in which each student is expected to learn at high levels, each student is supported so he or she can learn at high levels, and each student demonstrates learning at high levels), and realize they were already incorporating rigor in their classrooms. However, it was also great to see them reflect on our activities, and decide how they would use the strategies in their classrooms. It was special for me, because they had copies of my new book, and they were able to refer to it throughout the day. Thanks to teachers in Wellston for making my day!”

By paying attention to the level of rigor and relevance in addition to providing support so that each student will achieve at a higher level, we will ultimately increase student engagement, which in turn, increases student motivation.

INSTRUCTIONAL ROUNDS TIMELINE
October 27, 2010
- District Leadership Team introduced to Instructional Rounds

November 18, 2010
- District Leadership Team begins learning more about Instructional Rounds with Dr. Jim Salzman, Ohio University

December 2010 – March 2011
- Professional Development with Dr. Jim Salzman Continues

May 11, 2011
- Instructional Rounds Practice
  o (8) classrooms in all buildings

September 2011 - October 2011
- District Leadership Team continues professional development on Instructional Rounds

November 17, 2011
- Instructional Rounds Visit #1
  o (10) classrooms across all Buildings

December 2011 – May 2012
- Continue building capacity in the Instructional Rounds process within the district

February 7, 2012
- Instructional Rounds Visit #2

March 27, 2012
- Instructional Rounds Visit #3
Wellston City Schools: Soaring to New Heights

PROBLEM OF PRACTICE:
SCHLECTY'S 5 LEVELS OF STUDENT ENGAGEMENT

At the start of the Instructional Rounds process, the team practiced observing using video clips of classrooms. In order to develop a focus, we started with Student Engagement with the premise that if students are not engaged then learning is less likely to occur. Throughout the year, Student Engagement will continue to be our problem of practice. When we are visiting classrooms, we are looking for evidence of the five levels of engagement.


He further states that a student can move between levels within a class period depending on the tasks. Interestingly, the five levels do not represent a continuum from best to least desirable. Instead, it is representative of categories or types of engagement.

**Authentic Engagement**
Work assigned has a clear meaning and value.

**Ritual Engagement**
Work has no direct value to the student, but there is motivation to complete it because it is tied to a grade.

**Passive Compliance**
Student is willing to complete the work to avoid negative consequences.

**Retreatism**
Student is disengaged, passive but not disruptive.

**Rebellion**
Student simply refuses and exhibits inappropriate behaviors.

WHAT HAVE WE LEARNED ON OUR INSTRUCTIONAL ROUNDS’ VISITS?

- The great majority of examples that we have seen are on the two highest levels of student engagement in Schlechty's framework: authentic and ritual engagement.

- Below is a chart showing the number of examples of each level we have found during our Instructional Rounds Visits. Please note that the data for May 2011 is missing. However, during May’s visit we know that all the examples fell in the first three levels.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Levels of Student Engagement</th>
<th># of Examples</th>
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<tbody>
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<td>Authentic</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ritual</td>
<td>64</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Passive</td>
<td>24</td>
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INSTRUCTIONAL ROUNDS OBSERVATIONS

As part of our professional development, the District Leadership Team is practicing the art of observation and documentation as this is a critical component of the Instructional Rounds process. The key to our observations is to be descriptive and to avoid interpretation. This has been challenging but very powerful.

After we return from our visits, we debrief. Individually, we record our top 6-8 observations that demonstrate our Problem of Practice: Student Engagement before any discussion takes place. In groups, graphic organizers representative of the data are developed and shared. The DLT then discusses the data and determines next steps. All of this is done without identifying the classroom observed. The goal is to look for patterns and trends across the district that will guide our professional development. (Note: In the section below is a summary of our findings thus far. Remember, we are still practicing and we greatly appreciate the opportunities to visit classrooms.)

**Looks Like**
- Write down what the teacher does (where she/he moves, motions made)
- Write down what students do – individual or groups
- AVOID Summarizing

**Sounds Like**
- Write verbatim what teacher says
- Write verbatim what student says
- AVOID Summarizing

Examples:
- Judgemental: High Energy
  - Students are all engaged.
- Descriptive: Students used folded hands to demonstrate similarities.
  - Teacher walks around the room. Stopped and leaned in.
  - Students made up questions about the story they are reading.

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NEXT STEPS

I. Continue learning about and practicing the Instructional Rounds Process

II. The District Leadership Team with input from the Building Leadership Team will develop a rubric to gauge implementation of Instructional Rounds at WCS.

III. TBTs will provide examples of student work that represent the Levels of Student Engagement to share with the Building Leadership Team.