

EPISODE 307

Seeking The Insider's View of Teacher Practice: Getting Past Observability Bias



INSTRUCTIONAL
LEADERSHIP SHOW



Essential Question



What is observability bias, and how can we get past it and get the insider's view of teacher practice?

Observability Bias



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.

—*Mapping Professional Practice*, p. 18

Observability Bias



- What we can see is not the entirety of practice
- The façade is not the whole building
- Look-fors can miss the point or be misleading

Example: Strictness



- Teacher was very tenacious with a student
- Student did not seem to be off-task or misbehaving
- Extensive behavior plan was in place

Example: Learning Targets

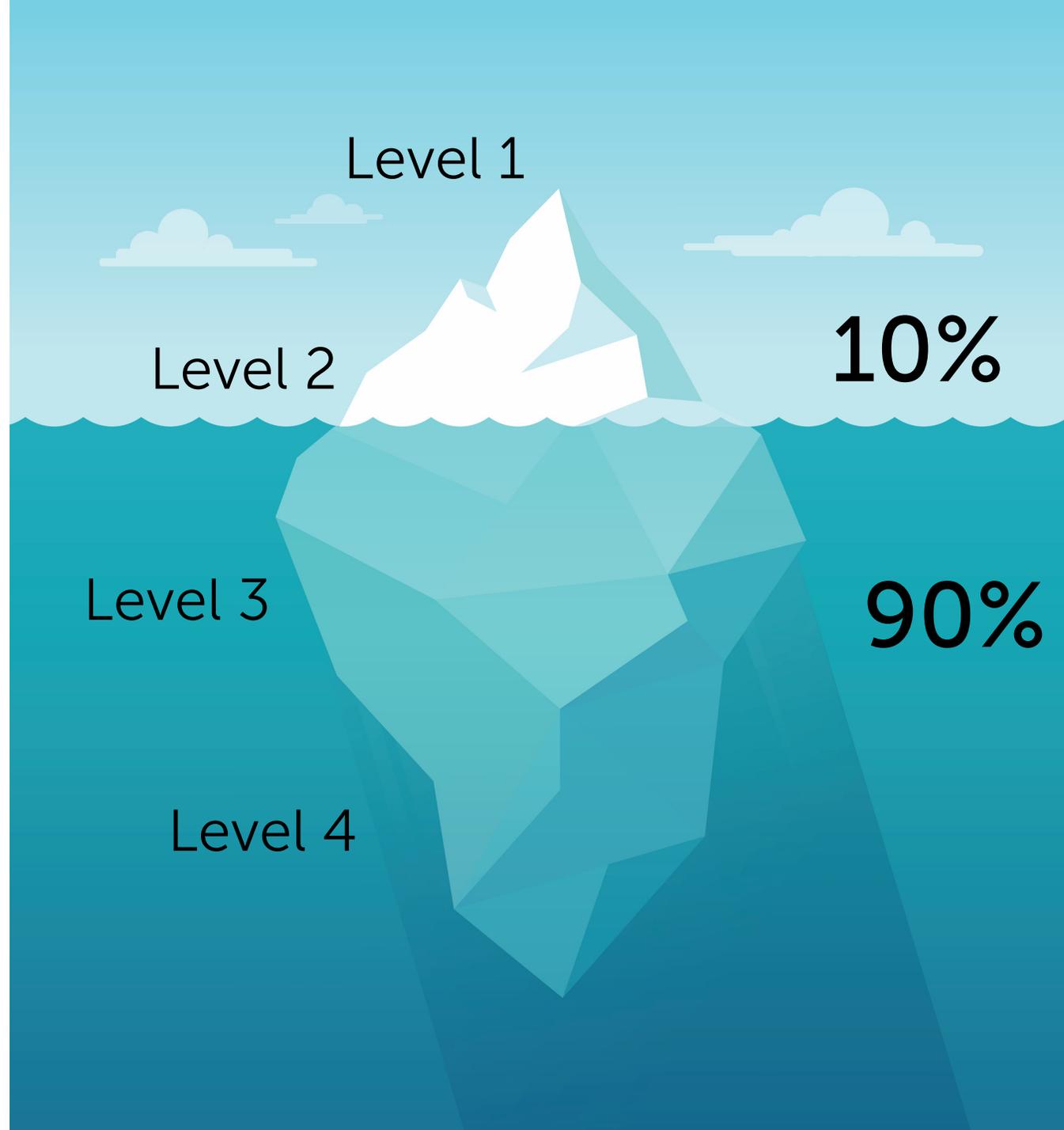


- Observable: Posted on board
- Not Observable:
 - Aligned to the standards
 - Useful in decision-making
 - Internalized by students

The Iceberg



- Teacher practice does have visible elements
- Most is invisible thinking and professional judgment
- Lower levels of fluency are more observable
- Level 3-4 nuances are harder to observe



Ask A Different Question



Not *“What does it look like?”*

But *“What does it feel like?”*

Evidence-Driven Questions



10 Questions for Better Feedback On Teaching

1. **Context:** I noticed that you []...could you talk to me about how that fits within this lesson or unit?
2. **Perception:** Here's what I saw students []...what were you thinking was happening at that time?
3. **Interpretation:** At one point in the lesson, it seemed like [] ...What was your take?
4. **Decision:** Tell me about when you [] ...what went into that choice?
5. **Comparison:** I noticed that students [] ...how did that compare with what you had expected to happen when you planned the lesson?
6. **Antecedent:** I noticed that [] ...could you tell me about what led up to that, perhaps in an earlier lesson?
7. **Adjustment:** I saw that [] ...what did you think of that, and what do you plan to do tomorrow?
8. **Intuition:** I noticed that [] ...how did you feel about how that went?
9. **Alignment:** I noticed that [] ...what links do you see to our instructional framework?
10. **Impact:** What effect did you think it had when you [] ?



“How...” Questions

- “Talk to me about how you...”
- “So how are you thinking you’ll...”
- “How are students...”





KEYS TO SUSTAINABLE IMPACT

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

