EPISODE 333

When To Trust A.I. As A School Leader, Part 3: Reflection

INSTRUCTIONAL LEADERSHIP SHOW

Essential Question

How can we keep A.I. from undermining written teacher reflection?

Member Question

- Observation with low-inference notes
- 3 reflection questions for the teacher to answer before post-conference
- Teacher clearly used A.I. to generate responses
- Teacher was unable to explain/discuss the responses in the post-conference

My Longstanding Advice

Why share written notes, but ask questions face-to-face?

1. Some people will dismiss/answer without thinking

2. Some people will overthink/overreact

My Updated Advice

Why share written notes, but ask questions face-to-face?

1. Some people will dismiss/answer without thinking

2. Some people will overthink/overreact

3. Some people will use AI to bypass thinking

Ask A.I. For Help

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My principal is asking me "How might you gradually release more of the thinking to scholars during evidence-finding or inference questions?" and I'm not sure what to say. This is in a lesson where I was scaffolding to help my scholars answer questions that they were unable to answer independently from the novel we're reading, The Watsons Go To Birmingham. I want scholars to be successful but I do need to gradually release more of the thinking to them.

That's a great reflective question from your principal — and you're already thinking in the right direction by focusing on **gradual release of responsibility (GRR)**. The idea is to move from *teacher modeling* toward *student independence* in analyzing text evidence and making inferences.

Here's a way you might respond and plan for this in your next lesson:

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1. Acknowledge the Goal

You might start by affirming that your goal is to help students become independent thinkers who can find and interpret evidence on their own.

"I want to gradually shift responsibility from me to my scholars so they can independently locate evidence and make inferences with confidence and accuracy."

2. Outline the Gradual Release Steps

You can frame your approach using the GRR model: **I do → We do → You do together → You do alone.**

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3. Add Scaffolds That Fade Over Time

To help scholars gradually internalize the process:

- **Start with sentence stems** and then remove them:
  "The text shows ___ when ___." → Eventually, they write freely.

- **Provide evidence charts** early on, then have them annotate directly on the text later.
- **Model annotations** early, then have them create their own annotation codes.

Our Main Leverage Point

For most aspects of teaching, our primary leverage point is teacher thinking and professional judgment

Enhancement vs. Replacement

- The goal is not to complete the steps in the process, but to improve as a professonal
- It's OK if ideas come from A.I., just as it's OK if ideas come from an article, podcast, video, or book
- It's not OK not to think about your own practice

Deference Threshold

The point at which we trust a technology without verifying its output.

Deference Threshold

Reached:
- Transcripts
- Summaries
- Ideas

Not reached:
- Top priority
- Course of action
- Specific strategy

Setting Expectations

- If you use A.I., it should not be obvious
- If writing has your name on it, you should know exactly what it says and be able to talk intelligently about it
- Tools for *enhancing* thinking should not be used to *bypass* thinking

Next Steps After Reflection

- Try again—use a strategy you identified
- Share video of the strategy in use
- Discuss/reflect again