



Workshop Guide

Demonstration Lessons: Designing, Leading, and Debriefing Grades K-5



Demonstration lessons play a crucial role in professional development in many schools. In demonstration lessons, teachers observe a colleague leading a model lesson with students, take notes, and then discuss their observations together. This DVD features two demonstration lessons at the primary and intermediate levels, and includes sample protocols and observations templates viewers can use in their own schools.

This video can help any school staff get more out of demonstration lessons. When designed well, these lessons are a springboard for continual discussions about cross-grade collaboration, using assessment data to lead instruction, and fostering reflective practice in teaching communities.

Tammy Mulligan and Clare Landrigan are veteran coaches and curriculum coordinators. They are the founders of Teachers for Teachers, a literacy consultation service based in Lexington, Massachusetts.

This viewing guide is designed to support your viewing and help you get the most out of the **Demonstration Lessons** DVD. It includes reflective questions for each chapter, as well as additional readings to support your viewing. You can use these questions to guide your viewing and self-reflection, or to focus conversation during team meetings. The guide is divided by the chapter headings for each section of the DVD.

In Part I, Tammy Mulligan leads a team of grades K-2 teachers as they design a lesson focused on building retelling skills. Tammy presents the lesson to second graders as teachers watch. The teachers then share their observations in a debrief session, and plan next steps for their own classrooms.

Here are discussion questions linked to the each chapter in Part I: Demonstration Lesson on Retelling.

Introduction

Clare and Tammy talk about the benefits of planning demonstration lessons with teachers. By building lessons together, teachers are able to see the thinking behind the lesson. Demonstration lessons are not a "dog and pony show," but rather a shared learning experience in which teachers have the opportunity to be part of the lesson planning process. What do you see as the benefits of including teachers in the planning process for demonstration lessons?

Lesson Planning with Data Analysis

- In this chapter Tammy is working with a team of K-2 lab classroom teachers who come from six different schools. They are working on implementing reader's workshop and teaching comprehension strategies. What are the benefits of working across grades and between buildings in implementing and refining literacy practices? What are the challenges?
- Tammy facilitated the process with teachers in preparing for and participating in the demonstration lesson. How is this process similar to or different from your experience with demonstration lessons?

Demonstration Lesson Process

1. Prebrief
2. Teachers Choose Area of Focus
3. Demonstration Lesson
4. Reflecting on Notes
5. Next Steps

- Prior to the demonstration lesson, the teachers read professional literature, watched classroom videos, and worked together to identify the key concepts for teaching retelling. What other strategies have you found effective in supporting teachers as they build their professional background knowledge?
- Tammy had one of the teachers review her anecdotal notes to think about student needs. How do you use anecdotal notes to inform your instruction? What else do you use to facilitate planning?
- Tammy worked with teachers in using a monthly planning sheet. This template was adapted from Franki Sibberson and Karen Syzmusiak's model in the book [Still Learning to Read](#). The template helps teachers think whole group, small group, and one-on-one instruction, as well as assessments. How is this template similar to or different from your planning template?

If you would like to download a copy of the template, click on this link:

<http://www.choiceliteracy.com/planningform.pdf>

The planning sheet outlines the elements of an effective lesson.

Anchor Lesson Planning Sheet

- Select Materials
- Name the Strategy
- Demonstrate Strategy

- Guided Practice
- Independent Practice
- Conference Points
- Share/Reinforce

How might a planning sheet like this one strengthen the quality of demonstration lessons?

- Think Alouds are often used by teachers to make their thinking visible for students. As the group plans the lesson, Tammy uses this same strategy with teachers to show how her mind works as she plans. How might you incorporate this strategy as coach in the work that you do with teachers? Why is it important that teachers know the thinking behind lessons?
- After watching the planning process, how has your thinking changed about demonstration lessons?

Selecting the Observation Focus

- Tammy asks teachers to think about an area of the demonstration lesson that they will observe. How might having teachers observe different parts of the lesson foster more of a sense of ownership and purpose?

Lesson on Retelling (Grade 2)

- Tammy teaches the demonstration lesson that the team planned together. The focus of the lesson is retelling. Tammy models the key elements of retelling using the mentor text, [Guji Guji](#) by Chih-Yuan Chen. How is Tammy's teaching style similar to yours? How is it different?
- As you watch the demonstration lesson try one of the observation forms the teachers use. You can access at the links below. Here are forms Tammy and Clare use with teachers in focusing in on specific aspects of planning and observing the lesson or teaching activity:

<http://www.choiceliteracy.com/SampleDebriefForms1.pdf>

These forms are less structured, allowing for more open-ended response and can be used during the observation of a demonstration lesson:

<http://www.choiceliteracy.com/SampleDebriefForms2.pdf>

- How do the forms help focus your viewing? Do you prefer a more structured observation form or one that is more open-ended? What are the benefits of

guiding and focusing the viewing of teachers who participate in demonstration lessons?

Partner Groups and Conferring (Grade 2)

- Tammy's demonstration lesson during reading workshop includes whole-group, small-group, and one-on-one instruction, incorporating all of the elements of reading workshop. Why is it important that the demonstration lesson is not limited to a whole-group lesson?
- During the lesson, Tammy only works with materials already available in the classroom. What are the drawbacks and benefits of this approach?

Partner Conferring

- Tammy works with two boys as they practice the retelling strategy. This is an opportunity for guided practice. This group was requested by the teacher. How much say should the classroom teacher have in defining who and what is taught during demonstration lessons?

Conferring: Reading with Expression

- Tammy confers with a student, modeling strategies to support reading with expression. What do you notice about how Tammy works with the student? What else do you notice about the classroom?

Whole-Class Discussion

- Tammy pulls the students together for a whole-class discussion as the culmination of the demonstration lesson. Students also have the opportunity to turn and talk as they share their thinking with one another. What do you see as the advantages of bringing the class together to close the demonstration?

Lesson Debrief

- An essential component of the demonstration lesson is the group debrief. Tammy shares the protocol that they use in debriefing group demonstration lessons.

Protocol for Debriefing Demonstration Lessons

- Review Goal of the Lesson
- Summarize the Lesson
- Review Observations
- Next Steps

What is your protocol for debriefs? How might you revise your protocol after viewing this debrief?

Additional Reading:

- Tammy and Clare often lead demonstration lessons. They find lesson debriefs are the most difficult aspect of the demonstration lesson. For more advice on debriefs, you may want to read their article *Tips for More Effective Debriefing Sessions* and share it with colleagues:

<http://www.choiceliteracy.com/public/694.cfm>

Next Steps and Action Plans

- Tammy leads the discussion of next steps for putting ideas into practice. Teachers are encouraged to try one thing in their classroom and return next month ready to share student work as well as what they learned. How do you follow up on demonstration lessons? What is required from teachers, and what is optional?
- Teachers meet on a monthly basis to share, review, and set new goals. How might you organize meetings so that teachers have regular opportunities to set goals, review student work, and reflect on learning with their colleagues?
- The teachers seem genuinely invested in learning together. Think about a team of teachers that you work with that collaborates well. What makes the collaboration possible? Why does it work? Think about a meeting that you've been involved in that went well. What made it go so well?

Part II: Demonstration Lesson on Inferring with Clare Landrigan (Grades 3-5)

In Part II of the DVD, Clare works with a team of grades 3-5 teachers to design a lesson on inferring. The teachers discuss text selection in the intermediate grades and create a graphic organizer. The cycle of design, instruction, and debrief is completed in a fifth-grade classroom.

Lesson Planning

- Clare reviews the protocol/process that they use for demonstration lessons. How might a protocol like this support your work and demonstration lessons with teachers?
- Clare facilitates the planning of a demonstration lesson on inferring. How is this planning process similar to or different from your experience with demonstration lessons?

Demonstration Lesson Process

- a. Prebrief
- b. Teachers Choose Area of Focus
- c. Demonstration Lesson
- d. Reflecting on Notes
- e. Next Steps

- Clare emphasizes to the group that the purpose of the demonstration lesson is about creating a "shared practice" - is not about teaching the students. Do you agree or disagree with this premise for demonstration lessons?
- Prior to the demonstration lesson, the teachers in the video had read professional literature, watched classroom videos, and worked together to identify the key concepts for teaching inferring. How do you help teachers build professional knowledge about teaching best practices?
- Clare talks about the importance of anchor lessons, as well as the dangers of creating scripted lessons. She advises teachers to implement the lesson on inferring but make it their own by choosing a different mentor text. What do you see as the pros and cons of scripted lessons?
- Clare has the teachers review their notes from the previous demonstration lesson together, and then asks them to turn and talk with one another. What is the value of the turn and talk strategy in professional settings?

Selecting the Text

- Clare and the teachers select a mentor text that will be used in the demonstration lesson on inferring. The group chooses "The Play" from the book, [Childtimes: A Three-Generation Memoir](#) by Eloise Greenfield. What do you notice about the conversation? What is Clare's role within this discussion?

Planning the Lesson

- In preparing for the demonstration lesson, Clare helps everyone think through the "architecture of the lesson" using an anchor lesson planning sheet. The planning sheet outlines the elements of an effective lesson:

Anchor Lesson Planning Sheet

- Select Materials
- Name the Strategy
- Demonstrate Strategy
- Guided Practice
- Independent Practice
- Conference Points
- Share/Reinforce

If you would like to download a copy of the template, click on this link:

<http://www.choiceliteracy.com/planningform.pdf>

How does the planning template strengthen the planning process for the group?
How might you revise the template for use with your colleagues?

Additional Reading:

- Researcher Robert Marzano in [Making Standards Useful In The Classroom](#) concluded that if teachers simply included why students were learning what they were learning and how it would help them as a learner in every lesson, then student understanding would increase by 80%. When Tammy and Clare plan lessons, they identify what they want students to learn and how that can be taught within the context of authentic reading and writing tasks. When they work with teachers to plan lessons, they begin by having teachers identify which specific reading skill/strategy the students need to learn. To

learn more about their planning and teaching process read their article, Why and Watch Me: Making the Abstract Concrete for Readers. **You may also want to make copies of this article for other teachers viewing the DVD:** <http://www.choiceliteracy.com/public/765.cfm>

Selecting the Observation Focus

- At the end of the planning process Clare asks each teacher to choose a different aspect of the lesson to watch. What are the benefits of having teachers choose different areas of the lesson to focus on as they observe and take notes? What are the drawbacks?

Lesson on Inferring

- In this segment Clare teaches the demonstration lesson that the team planned together. The focus of the lesson is on inferring character traits and finding evidence to support thinking. How is this demonstration lesson similar to those that you may do in your district? After watching the planning process, how might you change how you approach demonstration lessons?
- As you watch the demonstration lesson try one of the observation forms the teachers use. You can access at the links below. Here are forms Tammy and Clare use with teachers in focusing in on specific aspects of planning and observing the lesson or teaching activity:

<http://www.choiceliteracy.com/SampleDebriefForms1.pdf>

These forms are less structured, allowing for more open-ended response and can be used during the observation of a demonstration lesson:

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Additional Reading:

- Are you having trouble getting into classrooms for demonstration lessons? Tammy and Clare offer strategies for building the trust needed for demonstration lessons in their article Opening Classroom Doors. **You may want to make copies of this article for teachers viewing the DVD:**

<http://www.choiceliteracy.com/public/708.cfm>

Small Groups and Conferring (Grade 5)

- Clare asks the classroom teacher if there are any students that would benefit from additional support on the topic. The teacher suggests a small group of students who would benefit from additional modeling in inferring meaning of unknown words. Clare works with the small group using the book [Ziba Came on a Boat](#) by Liz Lofthouse. What do you notice about the students? What is Clare's role in the group?

Conferring: Tracking Characters

- Clare confers with a student, modeling strategies to track characters. What do you notice about how Clare works with the student?

Whole Class Discussion (Grade 5)

- In this segment Clare pulls the students together for a whole class share as the culmination to the demonstration lesson on inferring character traits. Students also have the opportunity to share their new thinking with the group. What do you see as the advantages of bringing the class back together? How might this strategy foster a sense of community among students?

Lesson Debrief (Grades 3-5 Teachers)

- Clare has each teacher share something from their notes. This gives everyone a job or role, and provides an opportunity for everyone to contribute. What methods do you find effective for demonstration lesson debriefs?
- During this debrief there was quite a bit of conversation about gradual release. Clare shared that she felt that she should have had students turn and talk sooner - when she did there was an explosion of conversation. What did you notice about how the gradual release model was used in the lesson?

Additional Reading:

- For more advice on debriefs, you may want to read their article *Tips for More Effective Debriefing Sessions* and share it with colleagues:
<http://www.choiceliteracy.com/public/694.cfm>

Next Steps and Action Plans

- Each demonstration lesson ends with teachers identifying next steps and making an action plan. Clare explains how they try to stick to a predictable structure for demonstration lessons. What are the benefits of this shared learning and leadership experience? How does ending with teachers reflecting on next steps foster the transfer and implementation of new ideas into the classroom?