

Three Levels of Text Protocol

Adapted by the Southern Maine Partnership from Camilla Greene's Rule of 3 Protocol, 11/20/03.

Purpose

To deepen understanding of a text and explore implications for participants' work.

Facilitation

Stick to the time limits. Each round takes up to 5 minutes per person in a group. Emphasize the need to watch air time during the brief "group response" segment. Do 1 – 3 rounds. Can be used as a prelude to a Text-based Discussion or by itself.

Roles

Facilitator/timekeeper (who also participates); participants

Process

1. Sit in a circle and identify a facilitator/timekeeper
2. If participants have not done so ahead of time, have them read the text and identify passages (and a couple of back-ups) that they feel may have important implications for their work.
3. A Round consists of:
 - One person using up to 3 minutes to:
 - LEVEL 1: Read aloud the passage she/he has selected
 - LEVEL 2: Say what she/he thinks about the passage (interpretation, connection to past experiences, etc.)
 - LEVEL 3: Say what she/he sees as the implications for his/her work.
 - The group responding (for a **TOTAL** of up to 2 minutes) to what has been said.
4. After all rounds have been completed, debrief the process.

with them until you find the most appropriate fit for your students. In doing this, you may find the following strategies useful:

Strategy 1: Teach all groups together

You can decide which lessons or units are suitable to be taught to all students together. In this kind of instruction, you provide the same content, use the same teaching and learning methodology in transmitting the content, and expect the same learning outcomes from all students, irrespective of their formally assigned grade - but because of your multigrade classroom, you can have older students work with younger ones both for better learning and to build a sense of classroom solidarity.

Example Whole-Class Activity

Imagine you have planned to teach counting from 1-10 to a lower grade. You can explain the numbers by telling a story to all the groups in the classroom in the following way:

- There was a king who had a single daughter, the Princess -----1
- For the past two days, she was sick-----2
- Three doctors visited her -----3
- They gave her four medicines -----4
- Every five hours, she was made to eat a nutritious meal -----5
- She felt better in six days -----6
- On the seventh day, she got up from bed -----7
- On the eighth day, she told her mother -----8
- That she wanted one chocolate each day for the next nine days-----9
- On the tenth day, she was fit and fine, up and about-----10

Involve higher grades by using a number chart and asking each student to point to the correct number as it is read out. After you have read the story, ask students to sit in groups. At the centre of each group, place a pile of flash-cards with the numbers 1-10. Call out the numbers randomly, and students try to pick up the announced number first. The group that recognizes the most numbers fastest wins.

Strategy 2: Teach one grade while others work independently

It may be useful to decide on a time during the day to devote to each separate grade group. After a short period of teacher-led instruction, one group can be left with their peer tutor, or students can practice independently in their workbooks while you move on to work with another grade group. Your teacher-led activities can be rotated across your grades and groups as needed. To promote continuity in learning, it is helpful to remind your students at the beginning and end of each teaching session what they are doing and why.

Example: Using the above lesson on numbers as the whole-classroom introduction, you can work with Grade 1 first on the cardinal numbers 1-10, then move to Grade 2 and focus on the ordinal version of these numbers (first, second, third). If you have a Grade 3, you can later move to that group and work on related concepts such as single, double, and triple.

Strategy 3: Teach one subject to all grades and at varying levels of difficulty

This strategy allows you to group children of different grades, ages, and abilities together and teach them the same curriculum theme at the same time. You can first focus on common elements and then follow this with differentiated tasks and activities.

A few minutes of explanation and practice around the theme at the start of the lesson can get students of all levels thinking about and using the concepts and skills they will need. You can then direct more demanding questions at older or more able students and ask younger or less able students more supportive questions. In this way all students can participate at their own level and make some contribution to the lesson.

Strategy 4: Develop activities for non-taught groups

Higher grades or older students can sometimes be left on their own to investigate and gather information by themselves. This leaves you with

more time to work with students who need more support. You may have different expectations of the learning outcomes for non-taught groups. Some examples of activities for non-taught groups for different subject areas are presented below.

Example Activities for Non-taught Groups

Step	Subject	Activities	Expectations
Step 1	Language (i) Vocabulary	Ask your students to go to the school garden. Before they begin to explore, explain what is expected of them when they come back; for example, to catalogue as many words and sentences they can think of while looking around the garden.	Students must find as many new words as possible and put them into sentences.
	(ii) Reading	Have your students settle in the reading corner to read through one or more books. Give them questions beforehand and ask them to find answers in the books. With the sentences your students prepared in the vocabulary lesson, they can make a text which can be used later as a reading text. Students can write down any new vocabulary they learn. You can also dictate the learned words or sentences back to your students.	Students learn to spell and gain new vocabulary. Students practice writing, reading and listening.
Step 2	Mathematics (i) Measurement	Ask the group to measure the distance from the classroom to another building in the village. Talk about metres, half metres, and centimetres. A demonstration lesson on multiplication tables can fit into this topic.	Students can learn both about the principles of measurement and the metric system as well as practice multiplication skills.
	(ii) Sets	Ask students to go outside and measure different parts of their bodies - legs, arms, feet, heads, etc. - and then create a chart of all their measurements to compare differences. Have the group identify colours of buses and cars and the number of people (men and women) in a certain part of the village.	Students learn more about measurement but also gain skills in making comparisons - "bigger than", "smaller than", etc. Students learn that different objects/people form part of separate sets.

Step 3	Social Studies (i) Science (ii) Geography (iii) History	Ask the group to describe the usual weather in your village by season and different ways to measure the weather.	Students will understand local seasons, the principle of climates and the use of instruments to measure temperature.
Step 4	Creative activities	If you have access to paints, ask your students to mix different colours to see which new ones they can create. Ask students to draw a picture based on a particular theme they are studying; you can then display these in the classroom.	In such "free play" activities students will learn to be more creative and gain pride through the display of their work.

Strategy 5: Develop peer, cross-age and cross-grade teaching strategies

Cross-age tutoring is based on the pairing of students and is used extensively in most multigrade classrooms so that older children can help younger students with their lessons. The peer tutor begins by asking general questions to assess the younger student's understanding of the topic; then gradually moves on to more difficult questions. Peer tutoring has been found to be an effective strategy in multigrade situations as it trains students to use a sequenced series of questions and helps scaffold their learning to higher levels. This strategy works well for children with learning disabilities and other special education needs, children from ethnic or linguistic minorities, and children who have not gone through some kind of pre-school programme. Peer tutoring is used on a regular basis to reinforce concepts which you have already presented at the beginning of class or in a previous lesson.

Example: This strategy can be adapted by using a game format in which the class is divided into two teams. Each tutor-tutee pair is assigned to a team. The tutor asks a series of pre-determined questions and awards points for the tutee's correct answers. Each pair's points are totalled to determine the team score. This method allows for competition between teams, but not directly between pairs. Tutoring pairs and teams are changed on a weekly basis to ensure all students have the chance to be on a winning team.

***Chapter 4: Differentiation in the Multilevel
Classroom***

It is understood, however, that planning for learners with exceptional learning needs will require careful attention to meet the specific learning outcomes identified in their *Individual Education Plan* (IEP). Students with exceptional learning needs may require instructional time in a different learning context from that of their classmates. This should occur when the specific learning outcomes identified in the IEP cannot be best met during strategic instruction and some project work within the classroom. The multilevel classroom is an ideal learning environment for inclusion, as all partners in the multilevel learning community can have their individual learning needs met when assessment and instruction are guided by a continuum of learning.

The most important steps in planning for differentiation are determining what the learner can do and setting achievable learning goals to inform instruction and guide new learning. Some students will require more instruction and guidance than others to meet their learning goals. Regardless of whether students move quickly to independence or require more support, they all can experience success through differentiation.

Success for All Learners (Manitoba Education and Training) provides a comprehensive discussion of strategies for differentiation appropriate for the multilevel classroom. For more information about inclusion, see the Department's Special Education website at <http://www.edu.gov.mb.ca/ks4/specedu/index.html>.

**Considerations
for
Differentiating
Instruction**

Teachers and students in the multilevel classroom will benefit from differentiating learning tasks and expectations, differentiating materials and resources, and organizing and managing the classroom for differentiation.

Differentiating Learning Tasks and Expectations

Due to the wide range of learners in the multilevel classroom, learning tasks are generally open-ended and have a continuum of expectations. Multilevel classroom teachers

- observe what each learner can do in order to plan for learning and teaching
- provide a variety of learning tasks representing the multiple intelligences and allowing for student choice
- plan open-ended tasks that can offer different developmentally and culturally appropriate challenges for a range of students
- allow for flexibility with timelines
- teach goal-setting skills for establishing achievable expectations

Provide *text sets* of several different stories, books, genres, magazines, images, and multimedia resources on the same topic or theme. This

- allows a broad range of students to participate at their own levels
- enriches class discussion by bringing varied perspectives to the topic
- stimulates interest in further reading and inquiry, as students are often motivated to read and view texts their friends have read and discussed

- **Resources for mathematics and science investigations:** Collections of authentic materials (e.g., buttons, keys, bread-bag tags, seashells, beans, rocks, nests, grains, containers, small boxes) and artifacts play an important role in observing and communicating concepts. Combining authentic materials and commercial manipulatives can enable a broad range of learners to work side-by-side to formulate a mathematical hypothesis or discover a scientific theory.
- **Art materials:** Readily available art materials are also necessary for a variety of learning styles, as well as supporting workshops for independent learners.
- **Text sets:** In the multilevel classroom, text sets are essential because they support a wide range of reading abilities and serve as instructional resources for reading, writing, and inquiry. Select a wide range of visual, print, and multimedia texts on a topic or theme from a content area that accommodates read-alouds, as well as shared, guided, and independent reading. Text sets need to include developmentally and culturally appropriate expository and literary texts. (Building text sets based on content topics or genre studies may be a whole-school project over several years.)

If students need support in reading a challenging text, they may join their cooperative group to listen while the “reader” reads the text aloud. For the purpose of inquiry, students commonly choose challenging texts to read and view, and they often gain valuable information from these texts to share with the class or to answer their questions. Learning to read in the content areas is an essential reading skill; thus, text sets also need to include appropriate texts for strategic instruction in content reading.

Resources and supplies need to be ready and accessible for several students who are engaged in a variety of learning tasks at one time.

Organizing and Managing for Differentiation

The ways in which teachers organize and manage the multilevel classroom can accommodate differentiation for a wide range of learners. Establishing learning centres and a variety of groupings supports a range of learners and ensures classroom management:

- **Learning centres:** Learning centres are essential to the multilevel classroom, as they are to the single-grade classroom. They need to have a variety of hands-on materials and open-ended tasks or investigations to accommodate the wide developmental and cultural range of the students. It is important that learning

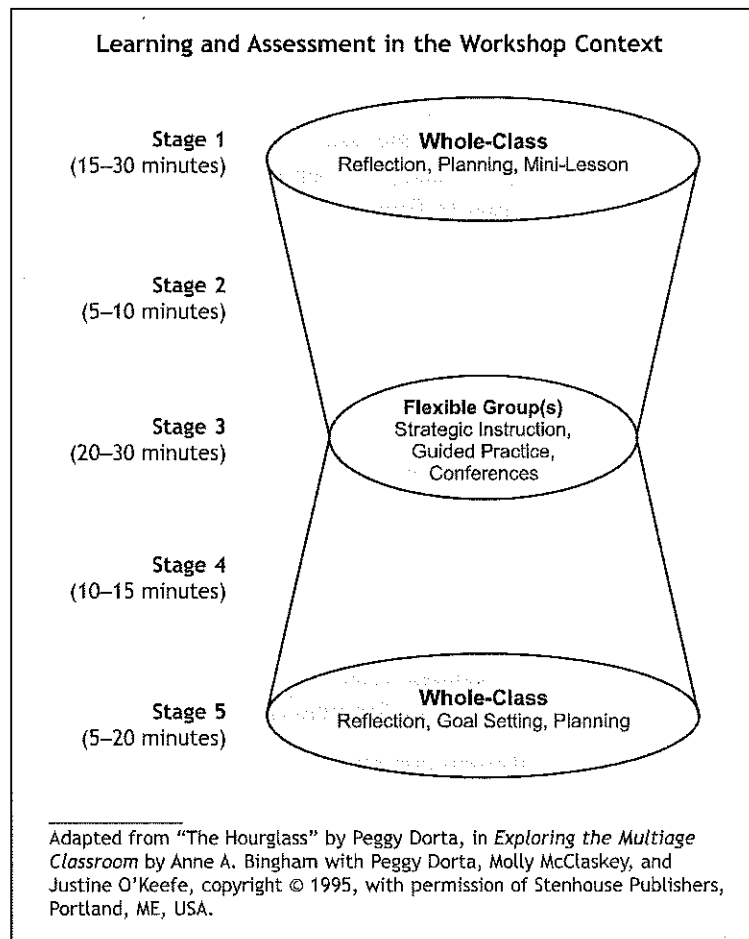
The Workshop Format

A large block of uninterrupted time (60 to 90 minutes) is necessary for successful workshops in multilevel classrooms. (Times will vary from classroom to classroom and from day to day within a classroom.)

Learning in a multilevel classroom is often accomplished through a workshop format that uses a variety of groupings and allows the multilevel teacher to teach “individually all at once” (Dorta, in Bingham *et al.* 123). Dorta suggests that teachers use an “hourglass” model for workshops, following these stages:

- Stage 1: Whole-class setting for reflection, planning, and initial instruction
- Stage 2: Cooperative and flexible groups to prepare for learning
- Stage 3: Flexible group(s) for strategic instruction, guided practice, and/or conferences
- Stage 4: Cooperative and flexible groups to practise and apply learning
- Stage 5: Whole-class setting for sharing, reflection, goal setting, and further planning

These workshop stages are discussed on the following pages.



The groups for Stage 2 of the workshop may be chosen by the teacher as part of instructional planning, or may be spontaneously formed by the teacher or students to take advantage of a strategic teaching opportunity. On occasion, students may work individually.

While students are preparing to work in cooperative groups and individual inquiry, the teacher will choose to work with a flexible group for further instruction or guided practice. As this group prepares for learning, the teacher will also check that the remainder of the students know what is expected of them and are engaged in on-task learning. Teachers will develop a routine for this part of the workshop, which may include the following steps:

- Meet with one flexible group at a designated workstation for further instruction.
 - Move around the room, ensuring that all students understand their task and are engaged in it.
 - Proceed with a mini-lesson or strategic lesson with the group awaiting instruction at the designated workstation.
- **Stage 3: Flexible Group(s):** Most students will be engaged at this stage of the workshop. The teacher may provide further instruction for the flexible group identified in Stage 2, and then assign a practice task that the group will be able to manage independently. The teacher may then work with another flexible group or confer with two or three individual students for focused formative assessment.
 - **Stage 4: Cooperative and Flexible Groups:** This stage of the workshop is a valuable time to watch and listen to students at work. By moving around the room again, touching base with each group and observing and assessing the progress of each student, the teacher is able to offer over-the-shoulder conferences, record observations, and gain more valuable information about students' learning.
 - **Stage 5: Whole-Class:** Students return to the whole-class grouping to bring the workshop to closure and celebration. Closure is generally kept brief, although it may vary from 5 to 20 minutes. Students may report on or synthesize their learning, reflect, or plan their next step(s). Teachers may facilitate student reflection through questions such as the following:
 - What did you learn today?
 - What strategy worked well for you?

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