

# Principal Matters

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EXCELLENCE THROUGH EXCHANGE

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Shared decision-making  
The case for captioned video content  
Leadership skills  
Mentoring beginning teachers  
Taking student wellbeing seriously  
Looking beyond their own backyard  
Professional growth plan for lifelong learners

PHOTO: Students from Beaconhills College, in Victoria, paddle up the Mekong Delta, in Vietnam, as part of the school's Global Beacons program.





# Principal Matters

Journal for Secondary School Leaders in Australia

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# The 10-minute meeting: driving reflective practice



The strategic use of powerful 10-minute meetings can improve professional practice, says STEVEN W. EDWARDS.

*'Time is what we want most, but what, alas! We use worst.'* - William Penn

AS educators, we have all felt that we do not have enough time between meetings, classroom observation, addressing student, staff and parent needs, and the pressure of high-stakes testing to accomplish everything we want to, at the level of quality that we want to? My goal is to help you discover the power of the 10-minute meeting.

Due to the multiple demands on them, school leaders and teachers often fall prey to only examining assessment data at the macro level. This is not a criticism of them but rather a reality of the demands of their position. As important as the school-wide and classroom summative assessment data are, information that can be gleaned from teacher-generated assessments is just as critical. These assessments for learning can provide immediate

feedback to teachers allowing for real-time modifications to teacher practice.

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One way to accomplish this is by examining teacher-generated assessments and talking with teachers about the intent, design, and intended outcomes of the assessments (for the purpose of this article, teacher generated assessments is defined as any test, quiz, project, homework assignment, or learning activity that the teacher uses to evaluate student progress).

Time is always a realistic concern for both school leaders and teachers, so how can you efficiently create a productive dialogue around these assessments and still have a great impact on practice?

One viable solution is the 10-minute meeting. With the 10-minute meeting, the principal and a teacher meet one-on-one to examine assessments for the sole purpose of improving practice. Assessments can be ones that teachers have generated or those that have been secured from other sources). If done well, this can be accomplished in 10 minutes.



## Once a day

A 10-minute meeting ideally happens once a day between a principal and individual teachers. Here, decisions become data-driven and, at a personal, micro-level. As noted earlier, data at this micro-level provides real-time information relevant to each and every class and therefore provides the opportunity for re-teaching and differentiation in instruction.

These meetings also provide the school leader with an opportunity to evaluate teacher-created assessments. Through the inquiry process, the principal encourages the teacher to reflect on how the assessment is linked to specific standards and skills, and address higher-order thinking by determining the DOK (Depth of Knowledge) levels or level of complexity of the assessment.

During the meeting, the teacher provides a sample of an assessment that he or she has created. The teacher will also bring three samples of student work (a sample from a student who performed very well on the assessment, a sample from a student who had some gaps and a sample from a student who struggled with the activity). The principal might make the following inquiries:

**1. Explain to me the purpose of this assessment, activity, project, or homework assignment?**

How does it link to our overall curriculum, and standards?

What was the intended learning outcome for the student, what are you actually assessing, and did this assessment accomplish that?

**2. Looking at the student product, first examine the sample from the student who was a high performer. What made them a high performer?**

What were they able to demonstrate to you (be specific)?

**3. Looking at the medium performer, what would have made them a high performer?**

Did they understand the concepts but made simple mistakes?

**4. Looking at the low performer, what skills are missing?**

What are your plans for intervention, re-teaching for this student?

The 10-minute meeting should not be an inquisition of the teacher. Rather, it centres on using the inquiry process to drive reflective practice. Both the principal and the teacher collaboratively focus on developing high quality assessments for learning that are linked to specific standards and skills along with ensuring that assessments engage students in higher-order thinking tasks. *'Conducting 10-minute meetings with my teachers allows me the opportunity to be very aware of what instructional skills /curriculum my teachers are working on in their classrooms'*, reports Lori Howington, Principal at Fall River Elementary School in Big Sandy, West Virginia. *'Together, we can analyse student work and identify areas of need for students who are struggling.'*

Once the 10-minute meeting has been mastered between the principal and individual teachers, the next step is to use the same process from teacher to teacher, as well as at grade level or content meetings and vertical team meetings. When this happens, teachers have an opportunity to learn from their peers and can collectively improve both individual and collective practice. The quality of the assessment has a direct impact on the quality of instruction, re-teaching, and student learning (Drago-Severson, 2012) (Glanz, 2005).

The micro-data obtained from these meetings is immediately reflected in practice as it allows teachers to make direct modifications to their teaching methods to benefit their students. In turn, the instruction can be differentiated to meet individual student needs.

In addition, it keeps the principal in tune with the expectations that teachers have for their students and the quality of the product that students are producing. This helps to ensure that both the teacher and students do not leave class without having the opportunity for maximum learning and achievement.

Incorporating the 10-minute meeting can be an effective way to inform school leaders, teachers, and students and provide valuable information in order to achieve specific learning outcomes. This process has been implemented in many schools and found to be a valuable and efficient means of increasing student achievement - and that's something we should certainly all make time for.

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