Lit Talk

with Dr. Nell K. Duke

LIT TALK TOOL

Time Analysis

See exactly how instructional time is spent before you change it.

A time analysis gives your team a clear picture of where the minutes actually go, so you can decide together what to keep, what to replace, and what to teach more efficiently.

FIVE STEPS

1. **Get clear on why.**
   Go in with a continuous improvement mindset. Everyone involved should know the goal is learning how time is used, and the analysis isn't an evaluation.
2. **Decide who will observe and when.**
   Pick one block of the day to start.
3. **Pick your approach.**
   Follow the whole class, or follow one or a few focal children to see the day from where a student sits.
4. **Timestamp everything to the minute.**
   Small stretches add up.
5. **Keep your notes low inference.**
   Write what happened. Save judgments for later.

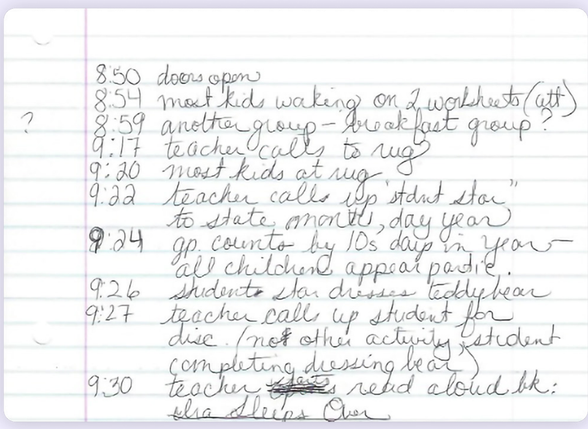
WHAT YOU NEED

An observer, a clock, and the log on the back of this page (or your own version).

LOW INFERENCE LOOKS LIKE

Write: "Teacher calls students to the rug."
Skip: *"The transition dragged."*

Write: "Six students in bathroom line."
Skip: *"Too many breaks."*



8:50 doors open
8:54 most kids working on 2 worksheets (att)
8:59 another group – breakfast group?
9:17 teacher calls to rug
9:20 most kids at rug
9:22 teacher calls up student "start to state month, day year"
9:24 gp. counts by 10s days in year – all children appear participate.
9:26 students start dressing teddy bear
9:27 teacher calls up student for disc. (not other activity student completing dressing bear)
9:30 teacher ~~starts~~ read aloud bk: Sha Sleeps Over

REAL NOTES FROM ONE MORNING

Each line is a timestamp and a plain note of what happened. Here's some of what these notes turned up:

Structural: the breakfast group got about nine fewer minutes of class time a day.

Management: most of the class took three minutes to reach the rug, and a discipline issue took three more.

Content: most worksheet time, and dressing a teddy bear for the weather, aren't supported by research.

After you observe

Sort entries by the research

Protect it: research supports it.
Talk it through: research is neutral, or your team isn't sure.
Find time here: research does not support it.

Name the kind of change

Structural: systems-level changes.
Management: transitions and behavior.
Content: what gets taught and how.

Choose where to start

Look across the three kinds of change on the back of this page and pick one or two first moves.

SCHOOL / GRADE _____ DATE _____ OBSERVER _____

BLOCK OBSERVED _____ START _____ END _____

APPROACH ☐ Whole class ☐ Focal child(ren): _____

TIME	WHAT HAPPENED (LOW INFERENCE)	MIN	RESEARCH SORT (AFTER OBSERVING) SUPPORTS	NEUTRAL NOT SURE	DOES NOT SUPPORT
			○	○	○
			○	○	○
			○	○	○
			○	○	○
			○	○	○
			○	○	○
			○	○	○
			○	○	○
			○	○	○
			○	○	○
			○	○	○
			○	○	○
			○	○	○
			○	○	○

Potential structural changes?

Systems-level issues, like how arrival and breakfast are handled. These may take a conversation with school or district leaders.

Potential management changes?

Transitions and behavior, like how long it takes to get to the rug. These may call for new routines, a different way of storing materials, or more responsive teaching practices.

Potential content changes?

What gets taught and how. These may involve the curriculum, what you prioritize within it, or how you approach teaching it.

EDITABLE VERSION

Need more space? Want to adapt the tool?

Scan the code or go to share.inquired.org/time-analysis-tool for an editable version.