



Video

FULL DETAILS AND TRANSCRIPT

## Principal Walk-Throughs

Woodbridge Elementary School, Delaware • October 2010

Topic: Improving K-3 Reading Comprehension  
Practice: Engage Students With Text

### Highlights

- Jason Cameron, principal of Woodbridge Elementary School, explains the key role he plays in supporting motivating and engaging reading comprehension instruction.
- In this interview, Cameron focuses on how he used several types of classroom walk-throughs to maintain an ongoing dialog between school leadership, instructional coaches, and classroom teachers on effective reading comprehension instruction.

### About the Site

Woodbridge Elementary School  
Greenwood, Delaware

### Demographics

52% White

29% Black

18% Hispanic

- 1% Asian
- 1% Native American
- 72% Free or Reduced-Price Lunch
- 16% English Language Learners
- 10% Special Education

Woodbridge Elementary is a pre-K to fourth-grade school with the largest student population in the state of Delaware. Staff focus on reaching struggling students early and often by implementing various instructional strategies and participating in professional development activities.

- Teachers work with the reading coaches to select narrative and expository texts based on purpose, grade, and students' ability levels.
- Each day students engage in 30 minutes of whole-group literacy instruction, while 60 minutes is allocated to small group instruction according to individual student needs.
- School administrators and coaches complete walk-throughs of teachers' classrooms to foster immediate reinforcement and feedback on instructional practice and to motivate teachers to sustain effective practices.
- Comprehension strategies are taught through whole group read-alouds, partner sharing techniques, and independent student center work.
- Beginning in kindergarten, students are encouraged to participate in text discussions with teachers and peers.
- Woodbridge has created a motivating schoolwide environment to engage students with text.

## Full Transcript

I'm Jason Cameron. I'm the principal at Woodbridge Elementary School, in Greenwood, Delaware.

When I go into a classroom, I expect to see engagement and the students involved. It starts with the teacher first knowing the content and knowing the strategy, and it starts with them being excited. The students have to know that we care for them, and we have to find a way to engage them every day. I had a board member last year, whose daughter was in fourth grade, say to me, "You know, I just can't keep my child in books." I said, "Well, you're welcome, sir," because that's what we want to do; we want to have them excited about reading.

My job is the master motivator. I have to find a way to keep my teachers motivated; the same thing I said about keeping a student motivated for 177 days is keeping the staff motivated. A big part of my role is being in the classroom. I do walk-throughs; there's about three different types of walk-throughs that I do.

The first one, I call it the “drop-in.” That’s where I go in, generally by myself; I’m in for, I’d say, about ten minutes. And it could be for any subject, and I am looking for good instructional strategies. We at Woodbridge—the school district has a teacher model that has eight components, and they include like a warm-up and closure, and engagement, and calling on volunteers and nonvolunteers. So I usually keep a little laminated copy of that with me with my walk-throughs, and I’m not necessarily just looking for those things, but I try to comment on those that I see.

The second type consists of myself going through with either our math specialist or one of my reading coaches, where we pick a grade level and we go through. On those days, I am looking to see, is everybody having the same essential question, is there curriculum fidelity, am I seeing the same thing in each classroom? Obviously not looking for the same delivery, but I’m looking to see, are we all on page 46 or are we all on Unit 4, Lesson 5? Because that’s another reason we’ve been very successful is the curriculum fidelity; you can go into eight sections of third grade, and they are all in the same place.

The third one, which is new to us this year, is we have a read-aloud time, interactive read-aloud time. It’s more of a checklist versus a walk-through, and it has about ten things on it that we are looking through in the read-aloud. It was something that, at a professional development day, we taught to them. Just like with the student, we would teach a rubric to a student first; well, I taught the checklist to the teachers first, so they know what we’re looking for.

One thing that I can’t recreate for you is the dedication of this staff. The nice thing is they have seen the results of their labor.