



PINPOINT



Everywhere I looked, the evidence seemed to point to the same conclusion. There seemed to be no field or profession where checklists might not help.

Atul Gawande

The Checklist Manifesto

Top surgeon, Atul Gawande, wrote the best-selling book *The Checklist Manifesto*. In it he reports how checklists have saved more lives in medicine than any other method.

Gawande then investigates other arenas in which checklists are part-and-parcel of modern professions.

Resistance to checklists

The establishment of checklists had not been easy. Nor rapid. Doctors fiercely resisted, seeing them as undermining their professional integrity.

And yet giving nurses the power to instigate simple checklists for hygiene saved lives. Only when these statistics were presented to medical boards were they accepted — despite

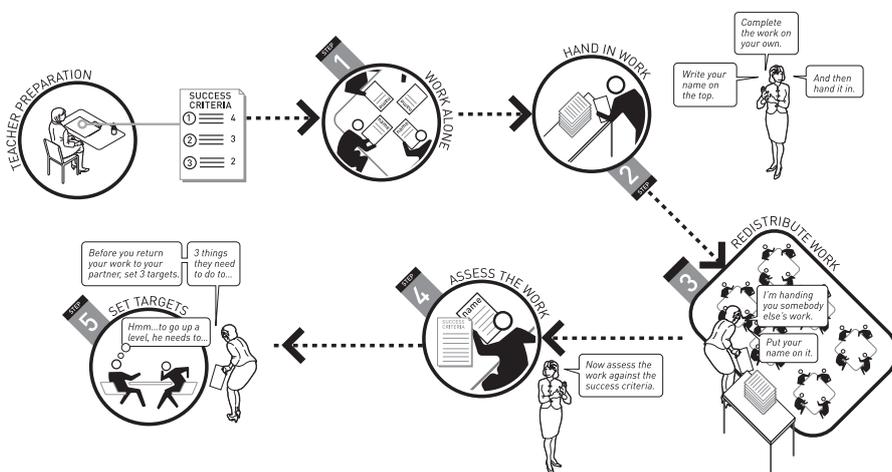


When teams use short, focused checks of vital processes at crucial stages in their work, every team member is clear about what has to be done and high-quality performance is maintained.

Atul Gawande

HOW2s are visual checklists

Cognitive scientist, Ruth Colvin Clark, writes that: “materials with diagrams alone can serve as better performance or learning aids than materials with text alone, especially with more complex content.” Sounds like she’s describing a HOW2 to me. In fact, she likes the HOW2s so much, she’s including them in the next edition of her Evidence-Based Training book.



The Right Stuff

When tasks are complex and checklists are missing you get a search for people with the *right stuff*. This rock star status is awarded to those who know how to execute such difficulties. And these people are the very first to resist checklists as they demystify their hitherto unmatched skills. What they fear is the loss of their elevated status.

Democratising expertise

Checklists send a strong, positive message: this craft can be mastered by all, through diligent practice. By clarifying exactly how to execute the skills that were previously the property only of the *rock stars* — the gifted ones — mastery becomes democratised. Expertise becomes available to

Procedural knowledge

Checklists are quintessentially procedural knowledge. That is to say, they are a *knowing how*. As opposed to the majority of text which is classified as declarative knowledge: a *knowing that*. Checklists unlock the secrets of how actions are sequenced for success.

Instructional Coaching

One of the core responsibilities of coaches in Jim Knight’s model, is the identification of the key elements drawn from hefty teaching manuals. That is to say, the creation of concise checklists for the teachers they are coaching. The traditional, text-heavy book is seen as being an inappropriate format for the dissemination of practical knowledge.

Practice Perfect

Unsurprisingly, Doug Lemov — author of *Practice Perfect* — advocates that coaches use abbreviated directions in their practice sessions. He talks of *skinny parts*: breaking down complex actions into their smaller units. A checklist by any other name.

REFERENCES

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