

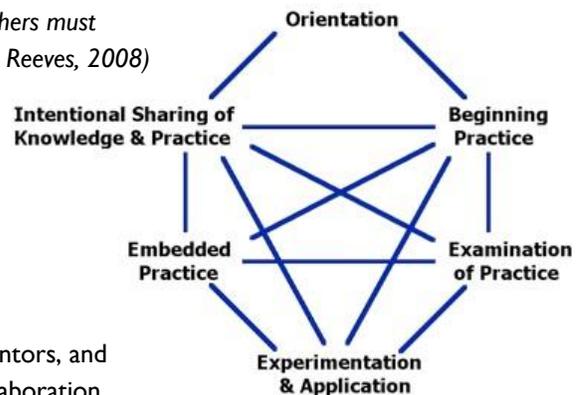
MENTORING MOMENTS: MAKING CLASSROOM OBSERVATION MEANINGFUL

Learning From and With Each Other

Direct observation of the professional practices of teachers by teachers must become the new foundation of professional development. (Douglas Reeves, 2008)

Classroom Observation and Debriefing, whether it be informal observation of a Mentor's classroom by a Beginning Teacher or a more formal demonstration classroom process, represents a powerful tool for personalized and authentic professional learning.

By learning from and with each other Beginning Teachers, Mentors, and their colleagues begin to build meaningful communities of collaboration focused on the "real world" of teaching and learning in practice.



Elements of Meaningful Classroom Observation Experiences

Meaningful professional learning is coherent, sustainable, goal – oriented, evidence – informed and attentive to adult learning styles. For the participating teacher, each classroom observation or demonstration classroom experience includes the following core elements:



ORIENTATION

- An opportunity for participating teachers to share specific learning goals for the observation with the demonstration teacher and/or visit guide (e.g., Mentor, Instructional Coach, NTIP Lead)



OBSERVATION

- Focused observation of teaching and learning in the actual classroom over a sustained period of time



DEBRIEFING

- An opportunity to reflect on the classroom experience, ask questions, and share ideas with colleagues, the demonstration teacher, and/or the visit guide



ACTION PLANNING

- A structured so what / now what action planning process for applying the learning to participants' specific teaching contexts



FOLLOW UP

- Direct assistance from mentors and/or the visit guide to support the implementation of new ideas and strategies back in their classrooms



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Personalization of Learning



Classroom observation is an approach to professional learning that is personal. One person may be focused on classroom management, another be interested in how the demonstration teacher structures their guided reading program, and still another may want to learn more about how the teacher fosters inclusion with the students. Demonstration classroom learning provides a venue for each participant to observe authentic teacher practice and student learning that aligns with his or her unique learning goals.

The Importance of Collaborative Debriefing and Action Planning

Classroom observation without collaborative debriefing can have the “orange wallpaper” effect. Participants may like the day, enjoy being in someone else’s classroom, but leave with their next step being to use the same lovely orange wallpaper the demonstration teacher has on their bulletin board.

Immediately following up the classroom observation with a collaborative debriefing and action planning process involving the Classroom Teacher, Mentors, Visit Guide and other visiting teachers allows the focus of the participating teachers to shift away from what they saw to how they can apply their learning to their own teaching context. Focusing on the “so what / now what” provides visiting teachers opportunities to construct the practical next steps they will implement with their own students while simultaneously expanding their web of networking supports.

Ideas and Resources to Support Implementation



Connect

Register for Upcoming Adobe Connect Professional Learning for Board NTIP Teams

- Dec 8 – Making Classroom Observation Meaningful
<https://www.surveymonkey.com/s/NTIPClassroomObservation>
- Jan 18 – Building Effective Mentoring Relationships
<https://www.surveymonkey.com/s/NTIPMentoringRelationships>



Listen

- Online to the Making Classroom Observation Meaningful SlideCast
<http://conn-o.osapac.org/mentoringmomentsdecember>



Join

- NTIP e-Community and collaborate with your colleagues from across Ontario
<https://community.elearningontario.ca>



Share

- Do you have a topic that you’d like to see addressed in future *Mentoring Moments* or an idea or resource you’d like to share? Please email us at: Jim.Strachan@ontario.ca

