

Peer Coaching and Observation Techniques

Purpose

Peer coaching is an important means of ongoing professional development that help colleagues strengthen their practice through focused observations and specific feedback. The observations enhance strategies, techniques, and research implemented in the classroom.

The Peer Coaching Format

The Briefing

The participants initially meet to provide an overview of the lesson and determine the observation focus. It is best to select a facilitator for these sessions. The briefing format includes:

1. **The lesson outline.** The participants meet in a quiet room. The presenting teacher will provide an outline of the lesson. All participants need to be part of the briefing.
2. **Focused observations.** The participants organize specific observation goals. The specific observation(s) are determined.
3. **Materials.** Participants can use the included observation forms. While the forms included here provide a template, ultimately the *forms* need to be developed by the observers.

The Lesson

The lesson will provide an opportunity to observe strategies and techniques that interest all the participants. The lesson format includes:

1. **Observing.** The teachers will position themselves to clearly observe.
2. **Notes.** Teachers will use the observation forms to assist with their focus and recording information about the lesson.
3. **Student debriefing.** The presenting teacher will debrief the students on their successes at the end of the lesson.
4. **Video.** Optional support includes still and video images to revisit during the debriefing.

The Debriefing

The teachers will meet immediately after the lesson to share observations. It should involve all participants including the teacher leading the lesson. The debriefing format includes:

1. **Highlights.** Each participant shares a key observation with why it was important to them. Facilitator will lead discussions that further understanding.
2. **Inquiry.** Each participant will share specific questions on an observation to clarify and extend their understanding of the observations.
3. **What you will use.** Each participant will share something they learned that they will implement in their classroom.
4. **Written reflection.** Each participant will write a double column entry (key observations & importance of each) in their reflective journals.

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