Using focused observations and purposeful feedback to improve teaching and learning

Dr. Laura-Lee Morin
Senior Education Manager – North America

June 2023
Welcome and Introductions
Quick Poll: Who do we have with us today?
Our Learning Objectives

- Explore current observation processes and conduct a gap analysis
- Identify ways to change the narrative around observations and how we conduct them
- Explore how we can incorporate more collaborative dialogue and purposeful feedback into the process to improve teaching and student learning
- Identify ways to incorporate this practice beyond one observation at a time
What do some experts say about the observation process?

“Reframing teacher evaluation from a process that is done 'to' teachers to a process that is done 'with' teachers begins with a commitment to collaboration.”

Arell Schermerhorn
Education Week

“A great observation results in a conversation that creates a positive change in teacher performance.”

P.J. Caposey
Education Week

“Feedback is the fertilizer of professional learning.”

Ann Mauts bach
Education Week
# Reflection: The Observation Process

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>What are you currently doing well?</th>
<th>What areas would you like to approach differently?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Cambridge Assessments
International Education
The Observation Process

- Prior to observation
- Observation
- Post observation
Prior to Observation

- Teacher choice in observation time
- Pre-Observation Conference
  - Trust building
  - Familiar with the lesson
  - Context of the larger unit
  - Teacher goals
  - Collaborative dialogue
- Work on Changing Culture
- Training on Rubrics
  - Administration
  - Teachers
- Observation Calibrations
- School wide focus
Observation

- Open-mindedness
- In-Class Data Collection
  - Observer dedicates time without interruption to the process
  - Records details that can support their later feedback
  - Acts as in a participatory role, not as a student
  - Making sure to actively look for evidence in the domains selected
  - Time spent in classroom observation
  - Regardless of what happens, thank the teacher

Considerations: How will you record the evidence?
Observation

In-Class Data Collection

- Observer dedicates time without interruption to the process
- Records details that can support their feedback
- Act in a participatory role, not as a student
- Making sure to actively look for evidence in the domains selected
- Time spent in classroom observation
- Regardless of what happens, thank the teacher

Considerations:
How will you record the evidence?
Post Observation Conference

- Collaborative dialogue
- Intentional structure
- Teacher reflections
- Teacher self-scoring
- Observer notes/form mostly completed
- Observer has pre-planned questions
- Observer has identified strengths and areas of growth to discuss
- Feedback is purposeful
  - All comments are stated as a teacher behaviour with focus on impact on student learning
Post Observation

- **The Growth Plan**
  - Collaborative plan setting forth 1-2 target areas for growth
  - Clear success criteria
  - Agreed upon specific strategies
  - Resources provided
  - Achievable timeframes
  - Goals focused on impact on student learning

- **Follow up / Check In**
- Use observation data to identify areas for district/school PD.
What do you think a collaborative dialogue....

- looks like?
- sounds like?
- feels like?
Attributes commonly associated with collaborative conversations:

- Active listening
- Willingness to be wrong
- Ask open-ended questions
- Being respectful of other’s points of view
- Look for pieces you can agree with/on (common ground)
- Intentional structure
- Safe environment
- Being prepared

- Having a shared common goal
- Open-mindedness
- Clear outcome or next steps
- Equal participation
- Engaged in critical thinking together
Creating a positive environment for academic success

#camschoolsconf
Other general tips for post-observation collaborative dialogue

Directly involve the teacher in creating the solution so that we maximise building on individual strengths

- “What part of the activity could be altered to promote [x]?”
- “What strategies could you use to incorporate more [x] into your lesson?”
- “In the past, I’ve found X useful; how could you adapt this/try it out in your own way?”

- Prior to the post conference know the area you want to develop further
  - Idea of Purposeful Feedback
  - Aligned with improvement area
  - Collaborative goal setting
  - Actionable and achievable
Other general tips for post-observation collaborative dialogue

- Open to risk taking and okay with failures
- Don’t focus on the score but on the development
- Focus on the impact on student learning
- Practice self-reflection
- Be self-aware
- Build on ideas of others
- Anticipate unintended consequences
- Practice humility
- Take the perspective of others
- Norms
What do the experts say about a collaborative learning culture?

The goal of a collaborative learning culture is to build communities of teachers who continuously engage in the study of their craft; develop the shared language and common understandings necessary to pursue collegial study of new knowledge and skills; and provide structure for follow-up and follow-through.

Moss, C and Brookhart, S., 2015
How do you think coaching relates to the collaborative dialogue process we just discussed?
Think like a coach!

- Coaches look at players’ performance with the intent of making them better at something they love to do.
- Coaches focus on skills and give feedback that is timely and specific.
- Great coaches communicate about what a player is doing right, as much as what needs to be improved.
- Coaches don’t try and address everything a player needs to do; they focus on one or two at a time.
- Most importantly, coaches take time to talk about what a player’s strengths are.
What is the best way to find a resource to support their goals?

- Ask other teachers to model
  - Conduct Learning Walks, Use Peer Coaching, Critical Friends Groups, Demonstration Teachers
- Ask other leaders if they have an idea
- Professional Development events, journals, online resources
- Build a toolkit – remember that sometimes a single resource can address more than one domain in the rubric
  - ex. Questioning can help with engagement and formative assessment and reflection
Reflection: Review Hexagon
Thank you
Any questions?
Your feedback

- Please let us know your views on this session
- Scan the QR code and share your feedback with us
Learn more!
Getting in touch with Cambridge is easy

Email info@cambridgeinternational.org
or telephone +44 1223 553554