



Center for Leadership & Educational Equity

Observer as Learner

Developed in the field by educators.

The primary “learner” in this protocol is the observer. The observer’s only purpose is to learn how to improve their own practice. Since the observer has little responsibility to the observed, the duration of the observation and even the level of attention to what’s going on is determined by the observer, as long as this is fine with the person being observed. Peer observation is never meant to be an evaluative process. The time involved may also be reduced if neither party desires a pre-observation conference.

Pre-Observation Conference

It is not necessary to have a pre-conference unless either party would like to have one. A pre-conference would help to orient the observer as to what will be happening.

Observation

The observer focuses on whatever they wish.

Debrief

The observer often asks the observed questions that might help them better understand the choices made by the observed. The observer often shares an insight or other learning that occurred as a result of the observation, and thanks the observed teacher for sharing her practice.

Note: Given the potential feeling of vulnerability on the part of the observed in any situation, and especially in a situation such as this where the observed may have little idea of what the observer is focusing on, it’s important that the observer try to ask questions during the debriefing in a way that does not put the observed on the defensive.