

# OBSERVING STUDENT LEARNING

**"Classroom Observation...is a discipline-a practice, in the sense that it is a pattern of ways of observing and talking and is designed to create a common understanding among a group of practitioners about the nature of their work. A central part of that practice is deciding in advance what to observe, how to observe, and, most importantly, how to talk about what is seen." (Instructional Rounds, p.85)**

## **What?**

- The action or process of observing someone or something carefully in order to gain information related to student learning based on goals predetermined during planning.
- Focusing on observable learning behaviors students are exhibiting.
  - o What are the students doing?
  - o What are the students saying?
  - o What's on top of the students' desks?

## **Who?**

- Coaches watch students to see if learning is occurring.
- Teachers watch students to see if learning is occurring.
- Teachers watch their own teaching to see if learning is occurring.
- Coaches watch their own teaching to see if learning is occurring.

## **How?**

- Watch attentively.
- Structure coaching around a goal for student learning.
- Focus on student learning...what evidence produced by students will guide our next steps during debriefing?
- Honor the teacher's goals and collect evidence of student learning based on the "look-fors" established during planning.
- Ask questions like:
  - o Have students met the desired outcome?
  - o How do you know that they have mastered the desired outcome?
  - o Have teachers met the desired outcomes from professional learning?
- Focus on what is observable. Think of the observation as producing evidence that suggest whether or not learning has occurred.
- Focus on what matters most for reaching previously set goal(s) for student learning.
- Collect evidence like a detective. As you observe, record what you see, not what you think about what you see. Focus on what the students are doing and saying.

**Why?**

- "Observing student learning and collecting evidence while teaching gives us more evidence to draw on. This allows us to let the students teach us what we need to do next." (Sweeney, p. 11)
- Teachers may observe in order to learn and refine instructional practices and incorporate new practices into their teaching routines.
- Coaches/Teachers observe to determine whether or not the desired results are happening.
  - o Determination of whether or not students are on track to meet desired outcomes.
  - o Coaches and teachers observe student learning to guide their future actions.

**When?**

- When student learning has not met teacher expectations.
- When teacher requests support.
- When additional data on student learning is needed to determine goals and next steps.