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Student Observation Protocol

Interesting Moments

Adapted for observing students in ATLAS Communities from Peer Observation Protocols created by the National School Reform Faculty.

The underlying assumption for this protocol is that the observer and the observed will work together to create some new knowledge — they are in it together. The observation of the students is a shared experience, and so is the debriefing. There is an underlying assumption that both the observer and the observed will focus on respect, and that each believes the relationship is one of co-mentoring.

Pre-Observation Conference

Because this form of observation is more open-ended, it is not strictly necessary to have a pre-conference, although it may help to orient the observer to what will be happening.

Observation

The observer maintains an open field of vision, focusing on the students. S/he notes anything that strikes him/her as particularly interesting — anything that may lead to deep questions.

Debriefing

Either participant begins by raising a point of interest, stating as clearly and fully as possible what occurred for the students. A conversation develops around the point of interest with both observer and observed attempting to sort out, “What was going on here?” As the ideas build, both are responsible for keeping the conversation on track while maintaining the flexibility necessary to create new understandings.

Reflection

How will what I learned today impact my classroom practice? What will I do differently next time? What do I need to remember to do again?

Note: Prerequisite for this protocol is a high level of respect between the two participants. This respect is demonstrated by language that recognizes the debriefing is not about evaluation, that each will be thoughtful, will listen and respond, and that whatever knowledge is created will be shared knowledge.