



First Classroom Visits

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Purpose

The purpose of these first visits to each other's classrooms is to enhance our understanding of our own practice. These visits are never meant to be an evaluative process. Before beginning your classroom visits, think hard about a question that you have about teaching and learning. Is there a question that gnaws at you...that keeps you up at 3 am...that you feel some passion about? It may be that after 1 or 2 visits, you may want to change your question. That's OK, too.

Pre-Observation

You should let the teacher you are visiting know what you are hoping to learn something about. At the same time, be clear that you are not expecting the teacher to craft her/his lesson around your particular interest. That's not the point. Assume that your question is broad and deep enough that any class will give you a window on some new learning.

During and After Observation

So, you are visiting classes to gain insight into a question that you have framed related to your own teaching. You are not visiting to evaluate or give feedback to the teacher whom you visit. Do have at least a brief conversation with every teacher you visit after the class. What did you learn?

Keep a journal or notebook with your notes and reflections from your visits. If others in the school or grade level or content area team are also taking part, these reflections (though private) will serve us in our collective dialogue, and we will use our learning and these visits to shape our meetings and future peer observations together.

My question is:

Possible questions to guide your reflections in your journal:

- What evidence do I see in this classroom that might address my question [or portions of my question]?
- What particular content or strategies in the classroom are striking to me? Why?
- As I leave this class, what have I learned about myself as a teacher, about our students here at this school, or about teaching? What new questions or insights do I have?