



EXPEDITIONARY LEARNING

Developing a Focus of Inquiry Protocol

Description: This protocol will help a *Learning Walkthrough* team to develop, organize, and prioritize questions that investigate practices and activities in classrooms and build an understanding of the interactions among teachers, students, and content.

Time: 30 minutes

Scenario: The instructional leaders in ‘your building’ have analyzed data and recognized serious achievement gaps in reading, and believe that a lack of proficiency in the foundational reading standards is a part of the reason for these gaps. The instructional leaders have gathered together to conduct an inquiry based learning walk in order to learn more about this phenomena.

Directions:

1. Briefly review the New York CCSS Instructional Practice Guide for the grade levels you will observe. Keeping in mind that the lessons will be focused on the foundational reading standards, identify a topic or issue that the learning walkthrough team will investigate in ‘your building’. Use the guide to help you begin your thinking, but do not let it box you in. Write the topic down on the top of your Instructional Practice Guide. Make sure the topic relates directly to student learning (10 min).
2. As a group, brainstorm questions that stem from the original topic. Write the questions on the chart paper. Keep in mind guidelines for brainstorming (10 min).
 - a. Let questions flow freely. Generate as many as possible, saying the first thing that comes to your mind. Don’t censor your ideas.
 - b. Share brainstormed questions without discussing them. The point of this exercise is to generate questions, not to evaluate or sort them (yet).
 - c. Bolder, unexpected questions are best. Break out of old patterns.
 - d. Even if your idea is similar to something else that’s been said, say it anyway. It will keep the creative energies going.
 - e. Do not debate, discuss, sort or evaluate ideas at this time; don’t even say “great idea!”
 - f. Make sure everyone contributes.
3. From this group of questions, identify three that deal with issues over which ‘the school’ has control and that, when resolved, could have a significant impact on teaching and learning. From these three, identify a top priority question. Consider the following: (10 min)
 - a. It is important for the participants to be able to articulate a question in a way that is not evaluative. A focus of inquiry should guide the Learning Walkthrough process to identify instructional and student engagement practices that positively impact learning.
 - b. Ensure that the Focus of Inquiry will help the walkthrough team members look for the type of learning they want to see, not the kind of teaching they may see.

The top priority question should serve as the Focus of Inquiry to guide the *Learning Walkthrough*.



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Team Calibration of Scripting Protocol

Description: These guidelines support a learning walk team through the classroom observations and analysis of the evidence collected during those visits. Times have been truncated for professional development purposes. Please adjust according to your own team's needs.

Directions:

1. Identify a facilitator for the group, then individually review each of the 9 steps before beginning the observations (5 min)
2. Before entering classrooms review the **norms** for working together.
 - a. We are here for our collective learning, not to evaluate one another, the teachers, or the students.
 - b. We will uphold norms of confidentiality in relation to the visits we make to students and teachers.
 - c. We will encourage one another to be as explicit as possible about the evidence behind our statements.
3. Before entering classrooms review the **norms** for observations.
 - d. Our goal is to have as minimal an impact as possible on the functioning of the classroom.
 - e. Refrain from conversation with other team members; avoid distractions to the class.
 - f. Review student work samples in folders, portfolios, or displays.
 - g. Ask students (if appropriate): What are you learning? Why are you learning it? How do you know if your work is good? What do you do if you need help?
 - h. Ensure that each class visit is for a consistent duration.
4. Before entering classrooms review the guidelines for gathering evidence.
 - i. Record factual data on scripting sheets using quotes, tallies, or descriptions.
 - j. Focus on stating factual evidence (“I heard... I saw...”) and refrain from subjective statements (“I liked...”).
 - k. Focus on what is actually said or done, as a video camera might record.
 - l. Be as fine-grained and objective as possible, for example:
 - i. Teacher asked: “How would you demonstrate that these fractions are equivalent...?”
 - ii. Students worked in teams of four following the scientific process to...
5. Observe one classroom (15 min)
6. After classroom observations, begin the team collaboration of scripting in the hallway (15 min)
 - m. One team member shares an example of how he or she scripted a piece of evidence.
 - n. Other team members discuss whether or not the evidence is non-judgmental and specific enough, probing with questions such as:
 - i. What is the evidence?

- o. What did people actually do or say?
 - i. How many [students] did/said _____?
 - ii. How long did [the teacher] do/say _____?
- p. The presenting team member shares with the team a refined version of the scripted evidence.
- q. Repeat the process with another member if there is time before the next observation.

7. Observe another classroom (15 min)



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Learning from Data Protocol

1. Debriefing the Classroom Visits: Analyze Evidence (20 min).
 - a. Share highlights (big ideas, trends, areas of strong practice, areas of need) from the aggregated evidence by posting distinct pieces of evidence on sticky notes.
 - b. Place sticky notes on chart paper and move them around when categories or key themes that begin to emerge (more themes emerge when several classrooms are visited).
 - c. Identify patterns, trends, and big ideas, noting areas of strength and areas in need of support.

2. Generate Next Steps (15 min).
 - a. Brainstorm possible “Quick Wins” that will address key themes that emerged.
 - b. Collaborate on the content and wording of summary observations and feedback to be shared with faculty, and chart them on paper.
 - c. Participants reflect on might change their own practice based on key themes that emerged and the possible influence on professional development plans.
 - d. Reflect on the Day: Reflect on the process, results, and relationships developed during the day, noting areas to keep or improve for future Learning Walkthroughs.