Teaching Coaching and Development Process

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The central aspect of the pre-conference video that was different from what I experienced is the level of thought-provoking questions the observer asked the teacher I have taught at many schools. My first teaching assignment did not require formal observations. So, I was utterly unprepared for the level of preparation required for a formal observation. When I was first observed, my principal did not ask me any questions about my lesson plan. This observer asked prewritten questions from his guidance list to ensure the teacher understood her requirements for the observation. She was able to request feedback on specific areas because his questions were thorough and thought-provoking.

In this video, the observer asks about the articles the teacher will be using during the Guided Reading portion of the lesson. This question reminds the teacher to show him the three articles and explain her differentiation process. By asking a leading question about one area of her teaching, the observer cues the teacher to explain what preparation she has made for this observation. Her responses tell me that she has taken the time to consider the performance levels of her students and made adjustments accordingly. I believe this teacher is well prepared for her lesson.

This teacher did an excellent job of engaging all students throughout the lesson. For example, during the review, the teacher cold-called several students to activate the prior knowledge of all students in the class. When students were unable to answer the questions, she requested volunteers to assist the struggling student. She also limited her calling on the same student more than once. I interpret this to mean that she was comfortable and familiar enough with her students to know who could best demonstrate their knowledge. In summary, the teacher was well versed with her students and worked hard to include all students in demonstrating their knowledge.

The teacher needs to work on her pacing and lesson progression. For instance, in the video, the teacher asked the students to put their thumbs up when they finished. While a few of the students had their hands up, many students were not finished. Instead of waiting for the class to move on, because this was whole group work, the teacher moved on, leaving the other students behind. In other words, she did not wait for the entire group, which caused slight confusion with the students who were behind. From this, I can infer that she wanted to keep the lesson moving at a moderate pace. I also can assume she feared she was going to run out of time and not complete the entire lesson. This inference suggests that if she had paced the lesson appropriately by not including as many activities or story parts for the students to identify in writing, she could have included enough working time for the lower performing students.

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The opening comments were clear, concise, and appropriate. They allowed the teacher the chance to identify the focus of the discussion entirely. The specific evidence used by the coach had a positive effect on the discussion. Because the coach came prepared with notes on the observation, the teacher was able to defend the choices he made during the observance effectively.

In my opinion, I believe the coach was effective in validating the strength of the teacher. The coach allowed the teacher to identify a specific portion of the activity. Throughout the discussion, the coach offered wisdom. She made sure to comment as to why the activity was good for the class. She also offered encouragement to the teacher. I believe this happened because the coach wanted to ensure the teacher did not “through the activity away” for future use. This strategy is useful because it forces the teacher to be reflective of what happened during the observation. It is not telling them what went wrong during the lesson. Asking reflective questions allows the teacher to consider what happened. The teacher can then identify what issue needs correcting for the future.

References

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