

Peer-To-Peer

Observation Program





Cross CLB Understanding

"Discovering inter-benchmark connectors and simultaneous pedagogical approaches is key to developing universal standards for an effective system of education."

Developing cross-benchmark connectivity is key to bridging the Gap that must be conquered by all students; the Gap being the level of knowledge and skill a student holds upon his entry to the LINC Program, and where he or she is expected to be in terms of those levels upon completion.

During the Calgary Immigrant Educational Society's twenty-six year life span, teacher observation has been an integral part of professional development. Coordinators have used these observations as a common feature to further enhance teacher development, and as a part of in-service teacher support. With regard to supervisors, observations are about assessment and identifying areas upon which a teacher can improve, with the goal always being making our teachers the best they can be.

While assessment observations are critical to reaching this goal, the CIES LINC department is now proposing to take regular observations into a new and equally important area. It is proposed that beginning the 2015 Year, peer-to-peer observation will become a regular part of professional development for the CIES LINC Teaching Staff. The ultimate goal is to support the CIES LINC program's call for cross level awareness and support.

+ Teamwork
+ Determination
(Drive) × Passion =
Success



“The goal here is an exchange of ideas, fruitful discussions about different ways of working, a comparison of viewpoints, and a search for how to interconnect, assist and support across benchmarks.”

Peer observation is where a colleague watches a fellow teacher’s lesson (or part of the lesson). The aim is for both participants to learn from one another. Teachers should not expect their colleagues to give them supervisor style feedback. The goal here is an exchange of ideas, fruitful discussions about different ways of working, a comparison of viewpoints, and a search for how to interconnect, assist and support across benchmark levels. Developing such cross-benchmark connectivity is key to bridging the *Gap* that must be conquered by all students; the *Gap* being the level of knowledge and skill a student holds upon his or her entry to the CIES LINC system, and where they are expected to be in terms of those benchmarks upon completion of the program.



To approach this challenge only vertically, i.e. within individual benchmark levels and the theoretical framework applied to breakdown objectives and learning outcomes unique to a singular benchmark, is lacking the scope necessary to effectively bridge the aforementioned *Gap*. A strengthened horizontal mechanism that enhances standards across all benchmarks areas, linking the goals and responsibilities of all into one schemata of expectation, is vital. Cross benchmark understanding and cooperation is key to such enhancement and a foundation point that can lay the blueprints of operation is peer-to-peer observations.

The observation can also be considered an objective view of classroom life - regarding attitude, participation levels, or types of questions asked. Such observation can result in mini-quantitative analyses that can help improve both parties.

Peer-to-peer observation is a professionally supportive exchange, minus the intent to judge. The growth in trust and respect that comes from sharing ideas and skills in such a manner can truly help all involved, as well as fostering an overall positive effect on the atmosphere of the school. It's very beneficial to talk through an experience with a person who can both empathize and understand in a way only a fellow teacher can.



Experienced teachers are often surprised when their peers identify their strengths; many even think that what they do well is little more than routine and not worthy of commendation. This is why peer-to-peer observation, at its most fundamental level, is about encouragement and support.

On the language acquisition level, this kind of sharing may at first appear to be simple. Notwithstanding, it has the potential to affect a great amount of pedagogical stimulation, revealing to teachers linguistic habits and structures, both similar and dissimilar to their own classrooms and benchmark levels.

During the observation, the observing teacher should take a few notes about what they see in the classroom. Possible notes can include:

- List a number of interesting things about the lesson
- List a number of things the students did during the lesson
- Note down any feedback from students
- Summarize the main stages of the lesson
- What part of the lesson seemed to most capture the student's attention?
- What were the main challenges for the students? For the teacher?
- What was the high-point of the lesson?
- Was there anything you wouldn't have thought to do yourself?
- Were there any examples of inter-curricular connection and areas of the lesson you could support in your own classroom?

Once concluded, teachers involved will arrange time to meet to discuss what was shared. The observing teacher should be prepared to ask questions and make comments, in the spirit of what was earlier highlighted. The two teachers will later share highlights at the following teacher's meetings.





Calgary Immigrant Educational Society

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