

*Demonstration Classroom*



*Guidance Document*

*2014-15*

## Demonstration Classroom Teacher

**Description:** Under the direction of the Office of Instruction and in collaboration with Expeditionary Learning and Instructional Coaches, the Demonstration Classroom teacher will provide authentic opportunities for colleagues to see best practices in ELA (Year 1) and in Math (Year 2) in action. This in-house professional development model will take place in a host teacher's room during the normal school day, framed by a pre observation meeting and a debriefing session.

### The Demonstration Classroom Teacher Will:

- Support a level of instructional consistency in our district
- Demonstrate a strong understanding of curriculum and instructional best practices
- Align work with the Curriculum Framework Design Model released from the Office of Instruction utilizing workshop model for delivery of content
- Receive intensive training from instructional coaches through embedded coaching cycles
- Operate a lab classroom as an in-house professional development model
- Welcome classroom visits from other teachers as they model instructional practices in ELA and Math, data conversations and classroom set up
- Facilitate small groups to answer questions and support peers
- Support and coach grade level or department colleagues, sharing what has worked in the classrooms and what hasn't worked
- Support new teachers just beginning to learn the model and welcome students from the College at Brockport participating in pre service work
- Institute collaborative planning sessions with building coach that are focused and include the use of consistent protocols for examining teacher work and student work to make instructional improvements
- Understand adult learning needs and can execute targeted plans that align with outcomes linked to the CCLS
- Illustrates how a deeper understanding of subject matter can actually enhance problem solving and critical thinking
- Highlight ways teachers can seize opportunities for integrating 21<sup>st</sup> century tools and teaching strategies into their classroom practice — and help them identify what activities they can replace/de-emphasize



## **Rationale**

Adapted from: *Demonstrating Teaching in a Lab Classroom*

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Like our students, teachers need brain-based learning experiences that are relevant and challenging and that provide opportunities for active participation (Sousa, 2006). To be most effective, professional development must be job-embedded—specific to teacher concerns—and presented in nonthreatening ways. Teachers need learning structures that empower them professionally and enable them to collaborate with colleagues.

So how can schools integrate professional learning in ways that will truly improve professional practice? This is the question that the Brockport Central School District raised when crafting the STLE 3 grant. In addition, how can we ensure that this model of professional learning is effective and sustainable? We determined demonstration classrooms in ELA (Year 1) and Math (Year 2) that are supported by strong coaches, clear and distinct curriculum, instructional frameworks and ongoing training provide the context for teachers to experience in-depth, sustained professional growth within a collaborative learning community.

## **Description**

The demonstration classroom is an in-house professional development model that takes place in a demonstration classroom teacher's room during the normal school day, framed by a preobservation meeting and a debriefing session. Demonstration classroom teachers are not expected to be perfect in their practice. They are taking a risk and are willing to open their classrooms to colleagues so that all have access to participate in deep discussions regarding research based pedagogical practices.

An experienced facilitator (Building Instructional Coach) is crucial to the success of the demonstration classroom. Facilitators have skill in working with adult learners and shaping group dynamics to help guest teachers (observers)

connect their observation and the ensuing dialogue to their own practice. The facilitator organizes the group, plans the schedule, prepares guest teachers, and manages discussions. Instructional coaches have been working closely with the demonstration classroom teachers and Expeditionary Learning to support the following key areas during the demonstration lessons: Learning targets, higher order questioning and the workshop model.

To avoid distracting the demonstration classroom teacher or the students, research indicates that no more than four guest teachers should visit the classroom at one time. Brockport will be working with student teacher candidates and in some cases more than four observers may participate in observation. Observers should be open-minded and willing to learn, and they should take a non-evaluative stance in the classroom they are observing.

Instructional leadership is essential for demonstration classrooms to succeed. Administrators understand the value of the demonstration classroom model and are willing to provide the time, location, and staff resources for implementation where they can. The Office of Instruction will also support regularly.

## **Protocols**

If you visit any of our Demonstration Classrooms, the following protocols will be in place to facilitate teacher and leader learning in an aligned consistent manner across each school:

1. **Pre -Observation:** Demonstration classroom learning provides a venue for each participant to observe authentic teacher practice and student learning that aligns with his or her unique learning goals. The primary focus of the demonstration classrooms will be in the following areas: Learning Targets, Workshop Model and Higher Order Questioning. Please note, this is the District's area of focus, however, if a specific need arises, demonstration lessons can be crafted to meet differentiated needs. Prior to observing the demonstration teacher, the observer will need to fill out the beginning of a document entitled, Demonstration Classroom Observation and Reflection

Guide (see appendix). In this guide you will initially identify your purpose for your visit to the classroom and work with the building coach to set a time where you will meet with the demonstration classroom teacher. During your meeting, a lesson plan will be shared with the observer and discussion will revolve around the learning target, items to look for and potential questions to ask students. This pre-observation conference is the time for the teacher to understand what the observer wants to learn to ensure the needed elements are built into the lesson. In addition, this is the time to pose a “problem of practice” and gather any necessary data prior to the observation (demonstration lesson).

Although demonstration teachers are outstanding examples of the kinds of teaching we envision, observers need to understand that the term “demonstration” implies practice and experimentation, not perfection. The demonstration classroom teacher and facilitator will explicitly communicate mutually acceptable norms (see appendix). Observers are expected to come to the classroom with a willingness to learn and a focus on the purpose of the observation.

## **2. Demonstration Lesson:**

Depending on the goals, the length of the observation may vary. Sometimes guests will just observe a brief lesson; at other times, they might stay for more than two hours to see the various transitions within an extended literacy block. In either case, the classroom operates as it normally would.

Observers will sit or stand, quietly observing and taking notes. They are welcome to sit in close during a teacher-student conference, small-group lesson, or student group discussion, simply listening to and observing the interaction. Although guests are discouraged from initiating conversations with students, they can respond if a student approaches them and during the preobservation period, the observer and demonstration classroom teacher will generate questions that are aligned and appropriate for the observer to ask the students.

Students in the demonstration classrooms should rarely be distracted by the presence of other adults; the interactive setting of the workshop model lends itself to movement, discussion, and the comings and goings of other adults besides the teacher.

3. **Debriefing:** The debriefing will immediately follow the classroom observation or a set time facilitated by the building coach. The debriefing will focus on what the demonstration classroom teacher did as it relates to the specific area of focus, what students did regarding participation, engagement, rigor, etc. relevant to focus area, and the observer's thinking (synthesis statements, questions, implications for observer's practice). In addition, the action planning process involving the demonstration classroom teacher, coach and visiting teacher will begin based on the focus of the participating teacher to shift away from what they saw to how they can apply their learning to their own teaching context. Focusing on the "so what / now what" provides visiting teachers opportunities to construct the practical next steps they will implement with their own students while simultaneously expanding their web of supports.

## Resources

Educational Research article: “Demonstration classroom takes skepticism out of professional development”

<http://www.ernweb.com/educational-research-articles/demonstration-classroom-takes-skepticism-out-of-professional-development/>

Demo Lesson Planning Protocol

[http://curriculum.austinisd.org/soc\\_stud/hs/dept\\_chair/documents/Chapter6tools\\_001.pdf](http://curriculum.austinisd.org/soc_stud/hs/dept_chair/documents/Chapter6tools_001.pdf)

ASCD Article on “Lab Classrooms”

<http://www.ascd.org/publications/educational-leadership/summer10/vol67/num09/Demonstrating-Teaching-in-a-Lab-Classroom.aspx>

ASCD Article on Collaborative Coaching and Demo Classrooms

<http://www.ascd.org/publications/educational-leadership/oct11/vol69/num02/The-Year-We-Learned-to-Collaborate.aspx>

ASCD Article “Modeling Lessons”

<http://www.ascd.org/publications/educational-leadership/oct11/vol69/num02/Modeling-Lessons.aspx>

Lesson Study and Demonstration Classrooms: Examining the Effects of Two Models of Teacher Professional Development\* (Toronto study)

<http://www.tmerc.ca/digitalpapers/samples/WholeResearchStory.pdf>

Austin School District example

<http://www.austinisd.org/pd/demonstration-classrooms>

Improving Teaching and Learning through Instructional Rounds

[http://hepg.org/hel-home/issues/25\\_3/helarticle/improving-teaching-and-learning-through-instructio#home](http://hepg.org/hel-home/issues/25_3/helarticle/improving-teaching-and-learning-through-instructio#home)

## **Appendix**

- **Demonstration Classroom Observation and Reflection Guide**
- **Brockport Central School District—Demonstration Classroom Visitor Norms**
- **Classroom Environment Practices (Danielson Domain 2) for Demonstration Classroom Protocols**