

## FOLLOWING UP ON PROFESSIONAL LEARNING (PL) SESSIONS

### 1. Select a focus for improving instruction at a staff meeting.

- **Leader suggests an instructional issue or topic for staff to examine.** Either the program leader and/or the group can initiate a topic for the staff to focus on in this round of reflection. This can stem from questions about a specific student activity, or an important skill or strategy from a PL session.
  - For example: After presenting the Questioning Strategies BEETLES PL session, instructors can focus on when to use broad questions versus narrow questions, and/or think about the instructor roles that they typically take on: guide on the side, sage on stage, entertainer.
- **Staff writes about their own instructional goals related to the selected topic.** Instructors can refer to BEETLES resources for Leading meaning-making discussions or Guiding explorations for ideas about which aspect of instruction they want to examine and improve. Allow adequate quiet time for reflection and journal writing, in order to allow staff to think about where they'd like to further develop their teaching skills.
  - For example: After the Making Observations BEETLES PL session, a possible individual goal might be: "I plan on holding back on identifying organisms until after students have made observations about them." Or after Questioning Strategies session an instructor might write: "I want to see if I can use fewer narrow questions and more broad questions with students, and I will try to keep a tally of each to systematically keep track."
- **Pairs discuss their goals.** Pairs of instructors can meet to share and discuss their individual instructional goals. They discuss possible resources they might use, and any data they could collect while teaching (i.e., tally of broad vs. narrow questions, writing notes after teaching, video/audio recording etc.) This can also be an opportunity to decide how they might support each other in achieving their instructional goals (i.e., co-planning lessons, observing teaching, debriefing together)
- **Conduct a whole group discussion about instructional goals.** Instructors can share some of what they discussed in pairs with the whole group. This sharing of ideas can help initiate a conversation about how to collectively improve on teaching and make adjustments to student activities. This is where you might identify a common instructional theme for your staff to be examining together.
- **Plan for instruction.** Instructors now plan how they will adjust teaching in order to meet their goals. Depending on their goals, they can spend this time writing broad questions, anticipating student responses, planning for data collection or incorporating the phases of the learning cycle.
- **Optional: Set a staff goal for instructional improvement.** Setting goals collectively as a staff can provide a common ground for reflecting on instruction. The group topic can be posted in staff area for easy reference when they return from teaching. By working together on a particular aspect of instructing students, staff can actively become a community of adult learners.
  - For example: A group goal might be that every instructor on the team presents the BEETLES I notice, I wonder, It reminds me of activity this week, and writes about the experience (successes, challenges, thoughts) and the students' response to the activity in their journal.

### 2. Instruction & Reflection.

- **Instructors teach students based on their goals for improvement.** Instructors implement their plans for teaching students and collect data as appropriate.
- **Instructors reflect on achieving their goals.** Immediately following instruction, instructors record their thoughts about successes and challenges in meeting their goals.

### 3. Staff Follow-up Meeting Debrief.

- **Individual journal reflection.** Once all instructors have a chance to instruct and reflect—to engage in a reflective teaching experience—the next staff meeting begins with some silent time for writing in their journals about their experience.
- **Pairs discuss experiences.** Instructors then pair up and talk about successes and challenges, as well as their thoughts about achieving instructional goals.
- **Leader facilitates a whole group discussion about the reflective teaching experience.** Explain that the goal of a reflective teaching practice is to provide opportunities for all teachers to grow and build capacity to make effective instructional decisions. As they bring up challenges and struggles with their teaching, this can be a good time to assure staff that they will continue working and learning together to make improvements to their teaching and the educational program.
- **Plan for next steps in reflective practice.** As the group discusses successes and challenges and offers ideas for things they could try out, record anything that might be worth following up upon. You may want to make a chart of various challenges and ways they could be addressed. At this point you can make a plan for the next set of reflective teaching experiences and select a new topic (or different goals to focus on) that will lead the group to begin the reflective process once more.