Post-Observation Reflection

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Danielson (2007) describes reflection and self-assessment as the most powerful aspects of the framework (p. 168). The process of talking with Mrs. Eding during the pre-observation meeting allowed her and I to self-assess her plans and her thoughts before the lesson was to be delivered. Even thought this process is an individual process, discussion can stimulate the same process to make it more effective (p. 169). In an effort to provide Mrs. Eding some time to reflect on the lesson, I provided the questions in my thank you email to her and asked that she think about them overnight and we would meet on Friday. Following the meeting on Friday, I tape recorded the answers and transcribed them for the reflection.

Mr. Staros- Comment on your classroom procedures, student conduct, and your use of physical space. To what extent did these contribute to student learning (p. 171)?

Mrs. Eding- My students know the procedures for moving to the rug, back to seats, and sharing answers by speaking one at a time. They also know how to work with their table groups. A few students blurted out answers and had to be reminded to take turns talking and listening with their table groups. I think we made good use of our space for the activities that we did. They went from the rug to moving around the room putting cards in groups and then to their tables. I have an active group that cannot maintain focus in any one place for too long (Personal communication, October 8, 2010).

Mr. Staros- Did you depart from your plan? If so, how and why (p.171)?

Mrs. Eding- I departed from the plan by not getting to the leveled science readers about animals. They took much longer deciding if certain animals had particular
mammal traits or not. I didn't want to rush lots of the good discussions using academic vocabulary. We read the books later in the day (Personal communication, October 8, 2010).

Mr. Staros- If you had the chance to teach this lesson again to the same group of students, what would you do differently and why (p. 171).

Mrs. Eding- If I did this lesson over I think I would do the mammal chart for one entire period and not with the PowerPoint and matching activity. Both activities generated a lot of excitement which made it more difficult to talk calmly with their groups and come to conclusions about whether a snake was cold blooded or not. I would also include some time to journal about similarities and differences between two animal groups that we covered. A Venn diagram would be well suited for this activity (Personal communication, October 8, 2010).

As I thought more and more about my own classroom and how I feel about observations I thought it would be interesting to ask Mrs. Eding about her feelings about observations, the process we use, and other important things she felt. In her answer she mentioned that the process with our charter school does not happen enough to get a full picture of her classroom. It is a snapshot in time. I asked her what she would like to see done differently or enhanced and she mentioned having each teacher make a plan for the week, year, or even lesson that will be observed and when the observer comes in they have an idea of what the teacher is looking to improve upon or provide something for the observer to make special note of. In this process for example, if a teacher wants to increase questioning at a higher level, the observer can listen for questions and make
specific suggestions. As the process stands currently they have a set tool and never really have a chance to look for other items. Since the school and teacher have the tool to look at, we can get good at the identified sections, which produces more of a dog and pony show (Personal communication, October 8, 2010). One of the other things that could be changed is the size of the observation tool. Having so many sections has the observer spending more time looking and writing than actually observing. I agreed with this and mentioned that Danielson (2007) suggests focusing on one domain or set of component each time, which provides more time for observation and more focused feedback (p. 177).

References