

EPISODE 273

# Setting Up Peer Observations For Struggling Teachers



INSTRUCTIONAL  
LEADERSHIP SHOW



# Essential Question



How can I set up productive peer observations for struggling teachers to learn from more skilled colleagues?

# Steps To A Successful Peer Observation



- Selection—choosing the right teacher
- Reconnaissance—pre-observing by yourself
- Outlining—describing what you want the observing teacher to notice
- Observing together & taking notes
- Debriefing & highlighting what you saw

# Why Peer Observations Fail

- Distractions, e.g. equipment
- Inappropriate peer
- Not knowing what to look for





# Distractions

- Specific materials or equipment
- Specific activities
- Specific students

*The goal is transferable learning,  
not the acquisition of irrelevant specifics.*





# Selection: Choosing A Peer



Don't aim higher than necessary—avoid using peers who are:

- Especially charismatic or well-liked
- Using a completely different model or method
- Teaching markedly “easier” students (e.g. honors)

# The Ideal Peer To Observe



- Satisfactory, but not an unattainable standard
- Using traditional methods the struggling teacher can use without a major learning curve
- Not especially charismatic
- No other “that wouldn’t work for me” excuses

# Reconnaissance



Observe by yourself to determine:

- Is this an appropriate peer to observe?
- Will the struggling teacher see what they need to see?
- What should I point out so they learn from this?

# Observation Guide



\_\_\_ does a great job of \_\_\_.

When \_\_\_ happens, notice how they \_\_\_.

# Observation Guide



*"Mr. Jones does a really good job of making sure he has students' attention when he's giving directions.*

*When he's calling for everyone's attention, I want you to notice his body language, voice, and facial expression."*

# Observation



- Conduct the peer observation *together*
- Take notes using your observation guide
- Describe the teacher's practice in great detail
- Look for subtleties the struggling teacher may miss

# Debrief & Highlight

- Review the observation guide
- Compare your notes
- Press for detailed observations
- Translate to struggling teacher's classroom
- Press for commitment

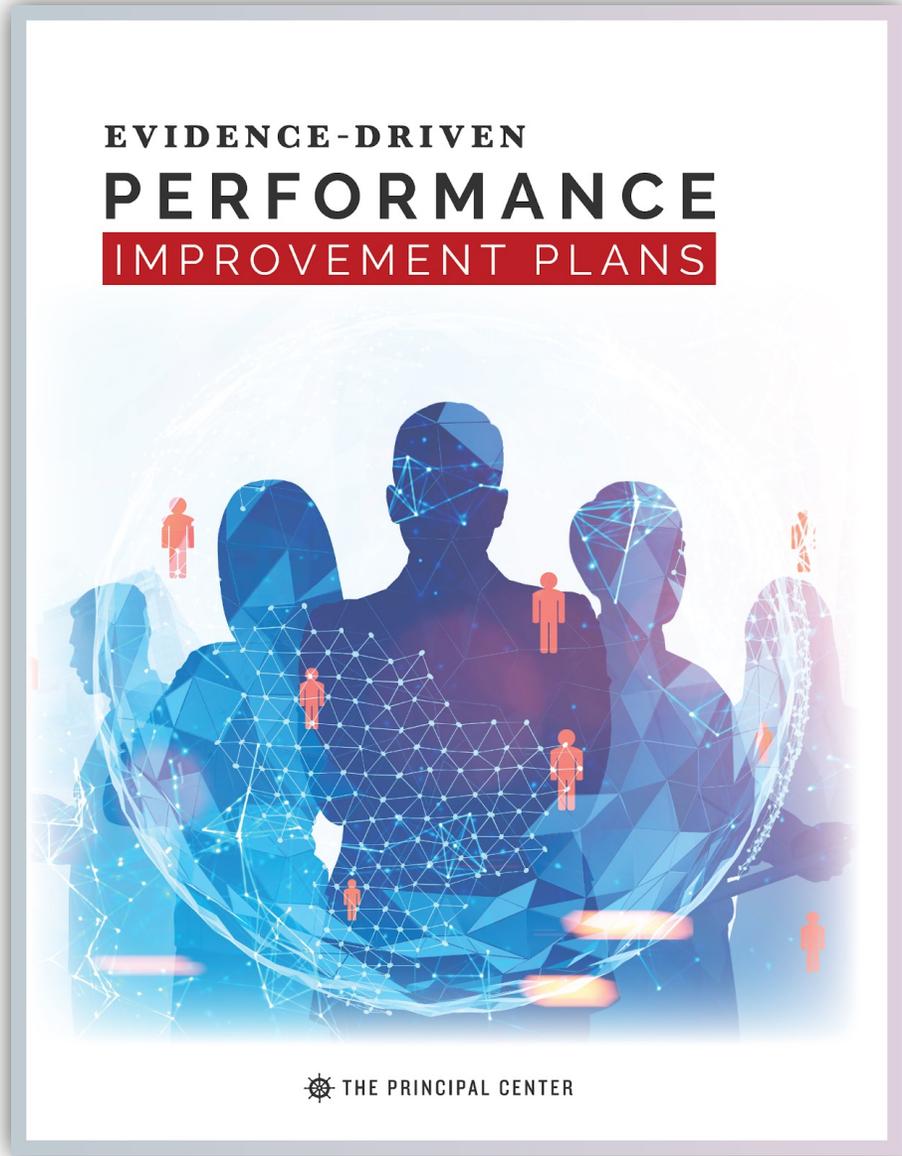


# Example Debrief



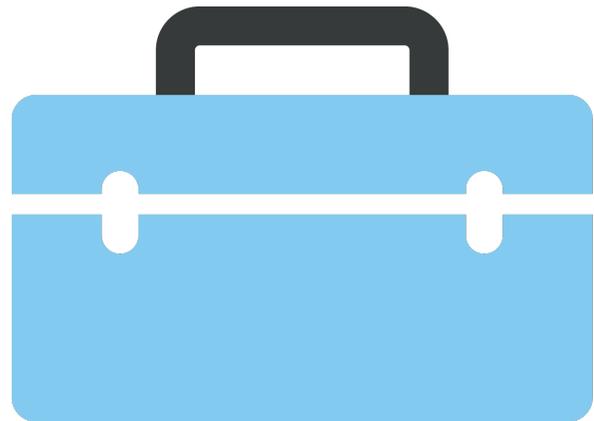
"I noticed that when Mr. Jones is calling for students' attention, he stands at the front of the room and looks at the whole class. He's not multitasking—he's making eye contact with every student to make sure he has their attention.

One thing I've noticed is that when you ask for students' attention, you're often behind your desk getting papers. I want you to practice making this shift, so students know you're serious when you ask for their attention."



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