Educational Leadership: Observation

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Teacher A is a first-year teacher at Huguenot High School. He graduated from college in May of 2020 without the benefit of student teaching due to school closures due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Teacher A teaches US History I and African American History. As detailed before, Teacher A has been struggling with Standard 2: Instructional Planning and 3: Instructional Delivery since September with little guidance from his department members and no mentorship from the district. I have observed his classes weekly up to this point. We have met numerous times to discuss solutions and resources to assist Teacher A in his goals and diagnose if any previous alterations have helped in the classroom.

Pre-Observation Conference

Teacher A and I met to discuss recent and upcoming walkthroughs and observations. Teacher A shared his weekly lesson plans for the two courses he is teaching. He stated that he has been working more closely with his department chair and peers to write lessons and discuss his plan's implementation. The lessons indicated a forward motion that his previous lessons lacked. The lessons are now well structured, include specific activities and materials presented, and a place for him to record his observations, challenges, and room to reflect on what worked and what did not. He pointed out the changes in how he is presenting information to students.

Previously, Teacher A spent a large portion of the lesson lecturing with a slide deck and then discussing a video. His new lesson demonstrates an understanding that the lecture format is not appropriate for the classroom and now allows for more student participation and feedback. Teacher A has asked that I observe the new structure and provide feedback. He is concerned with the lack of student participation during class. We arranged for me to observe his classes over the

next couple of weeks. He asked that I specifically observe his African American History class in particular and look for ways to implement changes to his Instructional Delivery since working more closely with the department.

Observation Part 1

Following the pre-conference meeting, I conducted 15-minute walkthrough observations on all three of Teacher A's classes. Because of the virtual environment, I felt that the teacher and students needed extra time for transitions and to allow for technical difficulties. On March 4th, I entered Teacher A's US History I, block one via Google Meet at the beginning of the class at 9:30 AM. Teacher A greeted each of the nine students by name and asked a well-being status question. Students were forthcoming and congenial with Teacher A. Teacher A began class five minutes after the official tardy period. He started by providing a Jamboard with a short-answer question and asking students to take a moment to think about what had been covered in the previous class and provide a written response in a complete sentence. Teacher A gave students five minutes to complete the task before he brought them back to review their answers. He spent five minutes in discussion and eliciting responses from students.

I then entered Teacher A's second block class, US History 1, via Google Meet twenty minutes into the class at 10:40 AM. There were twelve students in the class at that time, and Teacher A discussed the video he had just presented to students. He finished speaking and asked students to respond via the chat function or to unmute and answer. Two students wrote a response in the chat, and three students responded to the question. Teacher A provided feedback and discussed the responses with each student, which took ten minutes. Teacher A then provided time for the class to work on three questions he supplied in the slide deck and submit them via

Google Classroom. He directed them to work on the questions for ten minutes, and he would be available for assistance while they worked. I stayed in the Google Meet class to determine whether students reached out for assistance and no student sought help. Teacher A stopped the work and moved to the next part of the class as I left. I spent twenty-two minutes in the class due to the quiet work time given to the students.

I entered Teacher A's third block class, African American History, via Google Classroom at the end of the class at 1:35 PM. In a previous lesson plan, Teacher A indicated the use of exit tickets, but teacher A did not use an exit ticket in the following observation. In the current lesson plan, exit tickets were not referenced by the lesson or teacher. I looked for his means of closing out the lesson in a meaningful manner and the class mentioned above participation. I entered the class at the end of the period with fifteen minutes left. The class was populated with eight students, and Teacher A was presenting a Google slide; however, the class was silent, including Teacher A. I observed ten minutes of silence without Teacher A providing direction, feedback, or check-ins on the students. Teacher A spoke up with five minutes left in the class period to bring the students back and remind them of their assignments for the next day, ask for questions, and send them on their way. When Teacher A returned, he told them that the class was over, and the students began leaving the class. Only one student remained, and Mr. A removed them by the last two minutes because they did not respond when he called their name. He did not use an exit ticket or other exit strategy.

Observation Part 2

I used the RPS Instructional Vision Walkthrough form on March 9th when I entered Mr. A's class for the formal observation for the last twenty minutes of the class. The form provides a

basic structure for observations. When I entered the Google Meet, there were ten students and Teacher A in the class. There was a video running for the first eight minutes of class after I entered the Google Meet. When the video ended, Teacher A immediately engaged with the students asking them for feedback on what they observed in the video. Two students participated in the conversation, and one student participated in the chat. Teacher A continued for another two minutes on the conversation and then shared a Google slide deck for his lecture introducing new information. Teacher A continued his lecture and stopped after each slide to ask if any students needed clarity or had something they wished to ask or add. No students participated during the seven-minute lecture. At the end of the lecture, Teacher A asked for questions. One student asked for clarity on the homework assignment and the subsequent assignment posted in the Google Classroom assignments section. Teacher A took two minutes to clarify the assignments and asked if there were any other questions. Two students left the Google Meet class at this time. Teacher A directed students to check their assignments and contact him during the asynchronous time if they needed assistance. All but one student removed themselves from the class. Teacher A reached out to the student three times before removing the student from the Meet.

Post-Observation Conference

For the post-observation conference, I used the RPS Mentoring Log to start the meeting. The log is divided into four sections: Teacher A describes what he believes is working, where he thinks he is struggling, what he plans to do next, and how I can assist him. I asked Teacher A what he felt was working in his class. He stated that he thought his lessons were much more aligned with what he was doing in the class and with the pacing guide. We discussed his progress on Standards 2 by focusing on the six elements. He receives more assistance from the department

chair and peers on writing cohesive lesson plans that keep him on track, meet goals, and implement technology to incorporate more student interaction during the class. Teacher A believes the professional learning community he has with his peers is helping him meet the instructional needs of his students. We also discussed his progress on Standard 3, focusing on the first two elements, differentiation and the implementation, evaluation, and adaptation of multiple delivery methods in his teaching. Teacher A felt that with his team's guidance, he modified his delivery of the lesson by limiting his lecture and adding more opportunities for student feedback and participation with technology. He believes that he is getting more involvement from students by utilizing Jamboard, breakout groups, and polling in Google Meet. His next step is to talk to his PLC and see if there are other methods to increase participation during class as students are completing assignments and turning them in with regularity.

I asked how he is keeping track of in-class participation, and he stated that he was not keeping track on paper or digitally. I asked how he knows which students are never responding to his queries, and he said he did not know but thinks he should keep a better record from now on. We discussed using such tools to compile data on which students may be struggling. If they are not participating in class, are they completing assignments? Are their assignments done well and with comprehension. I asked what his next steps will be to make sure students participate more in class and demonstrate comprehension. He plans to ask students to post more in the chat and keep track of which students are participating. He also plans to ask students by name to answer questions, either in the chat or verbally, and keep track of their comprehension levels of the lesson material. He can modify the lesson or meet with students during the asynchronous time to assist them. He will also review their homework assignments and class participation to

see if there is a correlation. The last portion of the mentor log allows me to ask what he needs

from me or what help I can provide. At this time, he states that he does not need help from me

because he has his PLC, and they have been helping him much more this semester than last.

I describe what I saw during his teaching of African American History on the 9th of

March. Teacher A was teaching the appropriate content for the course as dictated in his lesson

plan. The video he used demonstrated cultural relativity to his students and provided real-world

evidence. The video is also a primary source that aligns with the history SOLs. Teacher A also

provided time for student questioning, feedback, and response to his lesson. Students were

engaged in grade-level work and meaningful learning during the assigned times. Teacher A

utilizes his time more effectively by dividing the class period into 10-15 minutes learning

chunks. Teacher A took time to check for learning, comprehension, and student participation.

The lesson plan is more organized to reflect his teaching. The lesson also provides

multiple means of learning the material through video, reading, writing, and discussion. The

content-specific vocabulary Teacher A uses and supplies to his students is at or above their grade

level. He posed multiple open-ended questions for students to respond to and asked two

critical-thinking questions. Students responded to the material he shared and answered one of the

critical-thinking questions during the observation time. I observed the need for better

record-keeping during class for student response as the same students responded to the majority

of questions and provided the most feedback. By keeping track of which students are responding,

he will gauge participation and comprehension during class time.

Summary of Teacher Performance

Teacher A has come a long way from the first time I observed his classes. In the first observations, he spent the entire class period lecturing and showing slide decks and videos. The original lesson plans were lengthy and in disarray as he copied the template and filled in areas, and left others unchanged from week to week. With the combined help of his PLC team, his lessons are now organized and are easy to follow. Teacher A has begun to follow the lesson plan more closely, and his classes reflect the standards and pacing guides. He has met the requirements of Standard 2: Instructional Planning by working with the PLC and partially met Standard 3: Instructional Delivery by dividing up his class time into different presentations and allowing time for students to participate during and after each section. He will continue to provide students with various means of demonstrating their comprehension during the class period.

During the post-observation conference, we planned to add another standard to his growth plan. He has trouble during the first semester with Standard Four: Assessment of and for Student Learning. Since he has begun working with the PLC, he has been able to add more diverse homework and classwork for students but is struggling with making the work meaningful. We will begin to look more closely at the student assignments and ascertain why the students are not always completing assignments. Last semester he made homework low stakes with minimal effort, and students did not complete most of it. We discussed why he thought that was the case. He felt that the students might think it was too easy and not worth enough points to matter, and he said it might be misconstrued as busy work. He has attempted to correct the requirements for homework to reflect more critical thinking and place more emphasis on the value of the home study.

Reflection on Clinical Supervision Model

The Clinical Supervision model allows the supervisor and the teacher to work collaboratively to improve supervising and teaching. The model provides both people to work as a team to enhance the art of teaching. I liked having the ability to plan for each step of the pre-conference, observation, and post-conference with the teacher. I believe it reduced the amount of stress we both feel regarding observations. Allowing the teacher to be more reflective in his teaching and providing him support to address his perceived shortcomings empowered him to seek help from his peers. That, in turn, helped him meet the goals of better instructional planning and provided him with direction for instructional delivery.

I will use this model going forward with other teachers I may be responsible for in the future. When I met with Teacher A for his pre-conference, I believe he felt empowered by my asking where he wanted me to focus. Teachers know when things are not working in the classroom and with their plans. Teacher A knew his lesson plans were not meeting the minimum requirement because he felt overwhelmed by the form RPS used and had no guidance on how to fill it out. Like many new teachers in social studies, he lectured and provided an agenda or template to students so they could follow along. He knew that it was not working because he had less feedback from students during the first semester than he had hoped. During the post-conference, he reflected that the new lesson plan helped him feel more in control of the material he was teaching and stress less about staying on the necessary timeframe to present everything by the semester's end. He also noted that the new plan made teaching the material more accessible and provided more time to allow for student interaction.

The model also allowed me to stay more organized in creating a plan with the teacher to support his growth. By using the model to pre-plan and work with the teacher as a member of his PLC, he could reach out and obtain more support from his peers. I was able to be less controlling in his growth and allow it to happen more holistically. Most of Teacher A's peers are seasoned educators with ten-plus years of experience, and by observing them, he has learned where he needs to focus on building on his foundation as an educator.

As an administrator-to-be, the model helped me understand the role of a supervisor and provided me with a template with which to work. When I began the cohort, I asked my supervising administrator how he conducted observations, and he did not give me a great answer, and at the same time, he gave me great advice. He said, "there is no cookie-cutter form that you can use to observe a teacher. Each teacher is different, each class unique, and you will never see every aspect in every class, every time" (Personal communication Olds, K). Although I used the district's form to see if he was hitting some of the critical points, I felt that the Clinical Model provided me with a different lens through which to judge the educator and the education. Although I like having a checklist to use as a guide, I understand that I cannot determine whether or not a teacher is a good teacher. It is only there to help me determine if he or she is doing the bare minimum required to be an effective teacher.

APPENDIX A

Instructional Vision Walkthrough Form 2.0

This Google Form is designed for school leaders, coaches, and central office leaders to use for any walkthrough of Tier 1 instruction. This form is directly aligned to our RPS Instructional Vision. Leaders should make a copy of this form and utilize the section(s) that apply to the walkthrough.

Meaningful Learning

Are all students engaged in content aligned to the appropriate standards for their subject and grade? *

- ☑ Can explain the learning target and its relevance to the broader subject matter
- ☑ Make connections to relevant, real-world learning experiences and other content areas
- ☑ Use instructional objectives and materials that are aligned and appropriately demanding for grade level
- ☐ N/A

Is the teacher ensuring that students are engaged in content aligned to the appropriate standards for their subject and grade? *

- ☑ Establish grade-appropriate instructional learning targets aligned with standards and allocates instructional time to address the most important content for the grade or course
- ☑ Plan daily instructional activities that are well-sequenced and move all students towards mastery of grade-level standard(s) and/or IEP goals
- ☑ Develop the necessary scaffolds and supports as needed to ensure all students are able to attain learning targets
- ☐ Use strategies, materials, questions appropriate to meet grade level standards
- ☐ N/A

Culture of Learning

Are all students engaged in the work of the lesson from start to finish? *

- ☑ Demonstrate a sense of ownership of behavioral expectations by holding each other accountable to impact on the learning environment
- ☑ Complete instructional tasks when directed, volunteer responses and/or ask appropriate questions.
- ☑ Engage in grade-level work of the lesson from start to finish.
- ☑ Execute transitions, routines, and procedures in an orderly and efficient manner with minimal directions from the teacher
- ☑ Engage in meaningful learning without interrupting other students' learning upon the completion of the assigned work.
- ☐ N/A

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- ☑ Demonstrate a sense of ownership of behavioral expectations by holding each other accountable to impact on the learning environment
- ☑ Complete instructional tasks when directed, volunteer responses and/or ask appropriate questions.
- ☑ Engage in grade-level work of the lesson from start to finish.
- ☑ Execute transitions, routines, and procedures in an orderly and efficient manner with minimal directions from the teacher
- ☑ Engage in meaningful learning without interrupting other students' learning upon the completion of the assigned work.
- ☐ N/A

Has the teacher ensured that all students engaged in the work of the lesson from start to finish? *

- ☑ Display learning targets that are clearly visible and invests students in their relevance
- ☑ Implements strategies that are appropriate to grade-level instruction and engage students that elicit student responses
- ☑ Facilitate intellectual risk-taking through positive interaction between student and teacher
- ☑ Utilize time management, routines and pacing that maximizes instructional time
- ☑ Provide specific, concrete, sequential, and observable directions for behavior and academics
- ☑ Using voice and presence to maintain engagement and convey caring for students
- ☐ N/A

Evidence of Learning

Do all students demonstrate that they are learning? *

- [✓] Self-assess in relation to the objective; involved in monitoring their own progress.
- [✓] Provides feedback to other students to guide into deeper thought (peer assessment)
- [✓] Cite evidence to support their thinking through written or oral language, using academic language
- [✓] Demonstrate that they make connections between what they are learning and how it advances their personal and professional goals
- [✓] Express learning through academic writing and/or explanations using academic language through multiple opportunities
- [ ] N/A

Has the teacher ensured that all students demonstrate that they are learning? *

- [✓] Lead instruction that provides accurate and necessary content for students to achieve the learning goal(s).
- [✓] Provide all students the opportunity to demonstrate their learning and the extent to which all students make progress towards learning goals, using multiple forms of assessment and collects data towards student mastery
- [✓] Frequently and accurately check for whether students understand the key content needed to master the lesson at key moments in the lesson (e.g., during direct instruction, before independent practice, at a transition and with an exit ticket at the end of a lesson).
- [✓] Scaffold instruction as needed in response to student needs based on data; identify root cause for errors and reteach or reframe to address causes
- [✓] Option 5
- [ ] N/A

Ownership of Learning

Are all students responsible for doing the thinking in the classroom?

- [✓] Persist to get correct answers and defend responses using evidence and academic language
- [✓] Attempt with consistency to complete academic work and answer questions, even if the work is challenging
- [✓] Synthesize diverse perspectives or points of view during the lesson
- [✓] Independently show enthusiasm and interest in taking on advanced or more challenging content
- [✓] Completes an appropriately challenging amount of the cognitive work during the lesson, such as reading, writing, discussion, analysis, computation, or problem solving, given the focus of the lesson.

Does the teacher ensure that all students responsible for doing the thinking in the classroom? *

- [✓] Maintain high academic expectations, promoting the persistence of students to grapple cognitively
- [✓] Deliver lesson activities so that students do an appropriate amount of the thinking required by the lesson
- [✓] Pose open-ended questions to encourage students' to cite evidence to support their thinking
- [✓] Provides support necessary for all students to complete instructional tasks requiring higher-order thinking skills
- [ ] N/A

History/Social Science

What actions of students are evident in the history/social science classroom?

- [✓] Use content specific vocabulary during lesson
- [✓] Engage content-specific geographical maps
- [✓] Interact with primary/secondary source materials during the lesson
- [✓] Respond to or pose at least one critical thinking or analysis question relating to the topic

What actions of the teacher are evident in the history/social science classroom?

- [✓] Use content specific vocabulary during lesson
- [✓] Instruct by use of content-specific geographical maps
- [✓] Model the use of primary/secondary source materials within the lesson
- [✓] Pose and respond to at least one critical thinking or analysis question from students relating to the topic
- [✓] Provide students an opportunity to engage differing perspectives/cultures/ideas in a safe and thoughtful way.

Academic Pledge:

"I have neither given nor received help on this work, nor am I aware of any infraction of the Honor Code."

Honor Pledge:

"I, Shawn Weisser, having a clear understanding of the basis and spirit of the Honor Code created and accepted by the student body of Longwood University, shall at all times govern my university life according to its standards and actively work to support its principles, thereby thoughtfully accepting my responsibility for preserving the honor and integrity of all past, present and future members of the Longwood University community of scholars. I will not lie, cheat, or steal, nor tolerate those who do."