Developing Teaching through Video-based Peer Feedback Conversations

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The Terrain

1. Following up on the keynote about professional conversations: comments and questions, Hadar and Bar’s conversation
2. Video-based peer “feedback”: principles and structures
3. Practicing the model: identifying issues
4. Practicing the model: conducting the conversation
5. Bringing this practice to your school
Feedback / evaluation / supervision --

functions

• management
• sorting
• motivation
• system learning
• individual learning

What have been the dominant purposes of observations you’ve experienced?
“Dialogic debrief” – background

• Disclaimer: motivated by a research project, not professional development
• Thanks to Rotem Trachtenberg
• Trapped by language: “feedback”, “debrief” – suggestions?
• Reciprocal: everyone observes everyone (you choose)
• Video-based (rich representations)
• Issue-focused
• Ongoing, part of school culture and routines
“Dialogic debrief” – the model

Prior to conversation
(a) pre-observation expectations,
(b) observing and video-recording lesson,
(c) initial identification of issues and episodes,
(d) editing clips

Dialogic debrief
a) Opening: initial feelings, thoughts, and expectations
b) Setting the agenda: no more than 1-2 key issues
c) Issues: observe clip and discuss issues arising (one at a time)
d) Conclusion: reflection on conversation and next steps
Guiding questions for discussing issues

• What is happening and why?
• What was the teacher doing? How did it shape students’ actions? And vice-versa
• What motivated, shaped and/or constrained their actions?
• What alternatives were available?
• What are the advantages and disadvantages of the different alternatives?
• In what circumstance are which alternatives most appropriate?
Identifying issues

• Issue: not necessarily something that needs fixing

• What makes for a good issue? Some criteria:
  – Can be specifically identified and pointed to in the lesson
  – Multiple ways of coping (preferably, in the lesson)
  – Raises dilemmas of wide relevance
  – Can be addressed, worked upon
(Expertise in teaching)

- **Sensitivity** to notice what’s happening;
- **Interpretation** to accurately make sense of what’s going on;
- **Repertoire** of strategies to act and respond flexibly;
- **Judgement** to choose the best course of action.
Some principles

• Listen, actively
• Converse, don’t preach or judge
• Inquire, ask questions
• Adopt the other’s perspective
• Direct conversation to what can be realistically addressed in the current context
• Anchor the feedback in examples, but generalize from particulars to broad principles.
• Balance and moderation
• Appropriate location and time
• The observed teacher takes the lead
Teacher: But before that I want you to tell me what you know about floods.
Thank you!

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Rules for professional conversations

1. Don’t talk about pedagogical problems
2. Don’t mind the gap between teaching aspirations and classroom realities
3. Dichotomize!
4. Trust your own unique experience
5. No precise professional language
6. Hyper-criticize!
7. Focus on what’s missing rather than what’s present
8. Trust your feelings and intuition
9. Everything is due to the teacher
Rules for Professional Conversations that Make Us Smarter about Our Practice

1. Focus on the core work of teaching: classroom practice;

2. Anchor discourse to rich representations of practice and base claims on evidence from them;

3. Adopt an inquiry stance: describe and understand before attempting to judge or solve;

4. Balance criticism and support, and be honest;

5. Focus on issues and dilemmas, and move between specific instances and general principles.