

The Power of Observation:
How Observing Other Teachers Can Increase
the Effectiveness of My Own Teaching

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ABSTRACT:

How can teachers use observation of their colleagues to improve their own teaching? This inquiry looks at how educators can watch and learn from one another through various classroom observations and interviews/surveys with teachers and an administrator.

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Background Information

Personal Context

The inquiry I chose is of a personal nature, corresponding with questions and concerns for my own improvement. Due to the focus of my inquiry, I have not included a classroom context, but rather have contextualized my thoughts, feelings, and actions prior to the start of this inquiry project.

As I began brainstorming possible inquiry topics to pursue, communication between myself and others I had worked closely with (i.e. my mentor, other teachers, other interns, etc.) was a topic that was significant. I had some difficulties with communication in my own classroom, and realized what a vital part of teaching effective communication was. These difficulties within communication manifested themselves in numerous ways, including fear, perceived disinterest, and anxiety, and ultimately took a toll on my ability to talk comfortably with my mentor. As an added support, a second PDA came into my classroom weekly to assist me as I was continually growing and learning as a teacher. I had a hard time beginning conversations with my mentor and felt that what I said needed to be perfectly communicated and therefore since I was unable to do so, would be better off not speaking at all. I am trying to overcome these fears and ideas of perfection as I continually work towards increasing my teaching responsibilities in my classroom. The difficulties I experienced did not lend themselves solely to communication; I also was deeply concerned about presenting material to my students in a developmentally appropriate manner, managing classroom interactions and behavior in a positive way, and increasing positive reinforcement through tonal and vocal changes in my own responses. I therefore decided to continue with a function that was already a part of PDS methods coursework – observation – as the driving force behind my inquiry.

When this internship began, it was necessary for me to observe in other classrooms for various requirements. As I observed in other classrooms, I realized how important observations were for a preservice teacher. Through these observational experiences, I began to see how different teachers approach different concepts, manage their students, and implement lessons, and realized that I was learning a great deal from watching others teach. Throughout these observations, I also had the opportunity to reflect and incorporate what I witnessed into my own teaching. Not only was I able to observe across various content areas, but also in different grade levels, giving me the chance to see elementary education in all realms.

Purpose of Inquiry

The purpose of the inquiry project is to examine best practice and the benefits of teacher observation. In addition to the increasing emphasis on national, state, and local mandates within education today, the topic of “teacher quality” has also come into consideration. For this inquiry project, I wondered how observations could truly improve my teaching and what the essential elements of observation were in order to do so. Not only is effective communication necessary in the educational context, but observing colleagues and others could also impact my beliefs and philosophy. Through discussions with other educators as well as observations of their teaching, it seemed as though my teaching, instruction, and student learning could ultimately be influenced.

Research

I would like to begin my research by developing my own definition of observation as based on personal teaching observations. In my own opinion, observation is a time to specifically focus on the way in which someone else, a veteran or more experienced teacher, teaches as a means of professional growth opportunities. Observation is an integral part of the

preservice teaching experience and has been crucial in providing me many instances where I could improve my own teaching practices.

Based on requirements within my own student-teaching experiences, observation has been a personal tool to view other's practices in an effort to improve my own. Kaplan & Owings note that observation can be used "...to note effective teaching practices" (5), thus the reason it is emphasized in many teacher preparation programs. When teachers enter a teacher preparation program, the desire to teach typically outweighs having the necessary tools to be an effective educator. According to Reynolds, "...teaching is a job that can be learned; one need not 'be born' a teacher in order to teach effectively. Aspects of teaching—not necessarily the entirety of the job of teaching—can be defined in terms of requisite knowledge, skills, and abilities—in other words, teaching tasks and understandings" (200). Through observations as a beginning teacher, one can develop the necessary tools to be an effective teacher. Moreover, a beginning teacher can use areas of struggle to improve one's practices. Reynolds states that "Placing beginning teachers in positions where they have to reflect on problems of practice that are of concern to them, such as developing relationships with students, may help teachers develop deeper understandings of their classroom experiences" (216).

Observation should not stop once the teacher enters his/her own classroom following a teacher preparation program. Allowing ongoing observation of one's own teaching as well as taking the opportunity to observe other's practices is vital. Some school districts have emphasized observation as "...opportunities for continued professional development" in addition to more focused areas like content-specific pedagogy (Reynolds 217).

Two programs in particular strive to support teachers as they improve the quality of their own practices. First of all, some have suggested the process of *Peer Observation and Assistance*

(POA) in order to help teachers improve the quality of their own teaching. In using POA, the teachers can increase awareness “of the classroom techniques they are using and by teaching them to set goals for constructive changes and to assess the results of the changes they make” (Willermann xv). POA encourages teachers to be responsible for their own teaching practices, but it is also in observing others (administrators, other teachers, etc.) that teachers can find best practices and truly grow professionally. Willermann recognizes the many dimensions of teaching, thus supporting POA as effective in improving one’s teaching:

“In addition to knowing subject matter, a teacher is required to be an expert in instructional, classroom management, and interpersonal techniques. There is a great need for a method that will help the teacher improve these skills in a manner that does not threaten her self-esteem. Peer observation and assistance is a method that can significantly help the classroom teacher who wants to improve her teaching. It is a method that places the teacher in control of improving her existing skills or of developing new skills. A teacher who engages in POA assumes responsibility for her own development and works in collaboration with other teachers to become a more effective professional.” (Willermann 1)

POA is a program that has been used for experienced teachers to have the opportunity for peers to observe and reflect on their teaching, analyzing the ways that one can find best practices in many content areas. POA targets three specific areas: 1) feedback in terms of instructional objectives, lesson plans, and teaching methods; 2) affirmation of the positive aspects of one’s teaching behavior; and 3) diminishing one’s anxiety about changing teaching behaviors and providing motivation towards professional growth (Willermann 2). POA requires collaboration

among teachers, requiring them to work with one another to promote their own development, and ultimately, the growth among their students (Willermann 5).

Similar to POA, *instructional coaching* is another method supporting observation as a means for professional development. Rather than teaching teachers how to find best practices, instructional coaching encourages teacher to work with one another, integrating their learning with their teaching through ongoing feedback (Kaplan & Owings 6). This program is structured to use teaching experts as coaches—frequently former, experienced teachers—to consult with teachers in order to customize their specific learning needs with an emphasis on growth and development (Kaplan & Owings 6).

“Instructional coaching is a highly focused program of in-house professional development for educating teachers about the most recent research and classroom practices in teaching, curriculum, and assessment...Coaches model classroom teaching practices, team-teach with colleagues to demonstrate new approaches, observe and provide specific feedback to teachers implementing the new practices, and organize teacher collaboration in evaluating student work. Working collaboratively with the teachers in their classrooms helps teachers enhance their skills.” (Kaplan & Owings 6)

As professionals work together with a common purpose, a sense of support and encouragement is established along with a professional learning community. These areas are truly “...an essential part of improving teacher and student achievement” (Kaplan & Owings 6).

Observation is not merely a tool that teachers can use to improve their own teaching, but it can be used to challenge one’s thinking regarding teaching and learning. Suzy Ort, a teacher in the New York City public schools, used a 40-hour observation assignment as a tool to reflect and learn while watching another educator at work. Not only did she realize that some of her long-

held views of teachers and students were redefined, but the observation experience was extremely powerful for her, even as a veteran teacher:

“I underestimated the potential for discovery that this assignment (visit a teacher’s classroom weekly) could provide. I have had time to talk to another teacher at length, to carefully observe, and to reflect deeply on such pivotal issues as multicultural education, engagement and motivation, classroom management...Another thought encourages me to think concretely: How can we incorporate this kind of extended observation into the professional development and/or preparation of teachers?” (Suzy Ort, Duckworth 83)

Observation is an educational instrument that should not merely be emphasized for novice teachers, and the process of ongoing, well-supported observations can prove beneficial for educators, beginning or experienced. Many school districts are encouraging these opportunities for their teachers to find best practices while also growing and developing professionally.

Wonderings/Question

The main question I investigated was, “*What can I learn from watching others teach?*” In the process of this inquiry, a number of sub-wonderings closely developed around my main question, dealing with observation and its purpose for teachers in their professional growth and development. Initially, my sub-wonderings included the following questions:

- What is important to look for when observing others?
- Are there strategies for effective observation?
- When someone observes my teaching, how can I effectively incorporate the feedback into future lessons?
- How can I use observation to better my own practice?

- How do other teachers use observation as a learning tool?
- Will watching other teachers help me in my lesson planning as well as my instruction?

Inquiry Plan

Inquiry Process

I initially felt very positive about my inquiry and about the prospects of observing others. Within my own classroom, observation comes frequently; each time my mentor taught, I observed her and took notes within my lesson observation journal. As well, both of my PDAs used focused observations to identify areas of need within my own teaching and learning. I used those particular areas to identify where I could then focus my own observation in other classrooms as a means for gathering data.

For my inquiry project, it was necessary for me to collect data outside of my own classroom, so I arranged times to observe in various classrooms within Park Forest Elementary and the Park Forest Annex. I consistently observed in a first grade classroom as previously mentioned as a part of my partner classroom experience. I was interested in gaining a better understanding of particular aspects of teaching within each observation (i.e. time management, behavior management, material management and preparation, teacher instructional strategies, and teacher techniques). Since these were all suggested areas for me to work on as indicated by my mentor and PDAs, it was particularly important that I focused on these areas to see how these could allow me to improve within my own teaching.

Data Collection

For the observational aspects of my inquiry, I observed teachers in seven different classrooms—one kindergarten, three first/second grade splits, one first grade, one second grade, and one third grade. I have also included over twenty PDA/mentor observations for self-

reflection and analysis. In addition, I began writing in my lesson observation and dialogue journals as instructional and reflective tools daily in my learning. The lesson observation journal was a journal used solely for times when I observed my mentor teach. In this journal, I recorded thoughts, questions, ideas, and issues that arose during each observation. The dialogue journal was a reflectional journal to help increase communication with my mentor teacher.

As I began to think about how I would collect data for this inquiry, I realized that I needed to communicate with other teachers and the building administrator to better identify the role observation plays in their teaching and evaluation of lesson effectiveness. In order to do so, I developed and distributed surveys to the teachers and interns (to gain both preservice and veteran teacher perspectives) at Park Forest Elementary as well as to the Curriculum Support Teachers in the areas of language arts, social studies, math, and science. Moreover, I scheduled an interview with the principal of Park Forest Elementary to inquire about the administrative perspective of observation and its significance within education.

Surveys were distributed to six interns and fourteen classroom teachers at Park Forest Elementary School. Surveys were also distributed via email to six Curriculum Support Teachers at College Heights. Three out of six interns returned their surveys (50% return rate), seven out of fourteen classroom teachers returned their surveys (50% return rate), and four out of six Curriculum Support Teachers returned their surveys (66% return rate) to be analyzed. Interns and teachers were given the same set of questions while Curriculum Support Teachers were given a slightly modified set (ones that more accurately addressed their expertise). However, all questions correlated with the idea that observation can be used as a beneficial tool for all professionals within education.

In addition to observation of other teachers, I also asked my mentor and PDAs to closely observe my teaching methods while also looking for specific areas of need, how I incorporate their feedback into my instruction, and aspects of improvement within my teaching over time. I specifically asked them to look for these areas so I could gain an understanding of when, how, and if I use observation as a tool for improvement.

Data Analysis

In order to analyze the data from both surveys and the administrative interview, I looked at one question at a time. In doing so, I documented each response that was given using tally marks to represent individual responses. After gathering all responses, I went through and counted how many times each response was stated in order to assess the importance of each as based on the responses. (See Appendix A-C for surveys and interview questions). Upon completion of this step, I starred the most prevalent responses and discounted any response that appeared only one time.

Based on observational data, I utilized my mentor and PDA trip sheets, the lesson observation journal, and dialogue journal for further data sources. As a means of data analysis, I evaluated all of my trip sheets and the pages in each journal, looking for specific times when I could extract information that referred to focused observations, areas of improvement or need, or meaningful reflections. As I read each piece of evidence, I was able to identify individual ideas, thoughts, and pieces of evidence and organize these appropriately. These became the essential elements that eventually led to my claims.

What You Learned or Now Know

My Claims

Claim 1: Teachers who have more opportunities to observe outside their own classroom benefit in terms of professional growth and development by gaining new ideas and insights into instruction, management, and classroom environment.

While it was apparent to me that teacher observations were beneficial in my own teaching experiences, it was crucial that I gain the opinions of this topic from other teachers and interns. In doing so, the surveys I distributed at Park Forest Elementary as well as to the Curriculum Support Teachers focused on these questions. Overall, the responses of the teachers and interns emphasized the idea that teachers who are given opportunities to observe will grow and develop while gaining new ideas across content areas to implement as best practices. In this section, I have analyzed their responses to each question in an appropriate manner, justifying why observation is such a vital tool for educators.

When teachers were asked the question, “Would you like more opportunities to observe other teachers?”, interns and classroom teachers unanimously voiced that they would benefit from more opportunities to observe other teachers. These respondents emphasized that these opportunities would provide insights into new ideas through different teaching styles, potentially allowing them to make changes within their own thinking and practices. When teachers and interns observe, they focus on areas of management strategies (time, behavior, and materials), the classroom environment, lesson ideas, teacher techniques, teacher language, and lesson plan implementation.

As there are many benefits that both teachers and interns express through opportunities to observe, the survey respondents noted that the opportunity to observe is very seldom. Teachers

have limited availability to observe other teachers because of all the demands within the classroom. Because of the flexibility of their schedule as well as requirements in their teacher preparation programs, interns are provided more opportunities to observe. If given more opportunities to observe, experienced teachers would be able to benefit in their own teaching; seeing new ideas and other teacher approaches that could essentially become embedded in their own practices. In her survey response, one classroom teacher explained the benefits she sees in observing other teachers and how she learns from these opportunities:

“I know that I don’t have all the answers. Watching what others do gives me opportunities to question my own practice and perhaps change or modify what I may do in a lesson or how I manage the room based on my observations of another teacher. I have the chance to reflect on what I believe and think. ‘Would that work in my room?’”

Claim 2: Reflection can contribute to a teacher’s growth and development as they search for best practices.

Early in my student teaching experience, reflection was emphasized through weekly journals as well as in dialogue after teaching various lessons. In January, my mentor and I began a dialogue journal. The purpose of this journal was not as much as an observational tool, but to be used as a pre-/post-conferencing tool between my mentor and me as well as to improve interpersonal communication. The journal is shared between my mentor and me nearly everyday, and we each have the opportunity to address concerns and ask questions about my teaching or other happenings within the classroom. Although it does not solely rely on the observations my mentor had during my lessons, it has been a way to talk about my growth and development while using it as a tool to focus on areas of improvement within my teaching. If my mentor brought up a suggestion through feedback in the dialogue journal, I would respond as to how I could

implement these suggestions into future lessons. After implementing these particular suggestions, my mentor then had the opportunity to respond as to how these aspects went in addition to her comments within the journal.

Earlier I mentioned *Peer Observation and Assistance* (POA) as a tool that teachers can use to improve the quality of their own teaching. Through the use of a dialogue journal, my mentor and I both had the opportunity to reflect on the techniques I used in order to make effective, constructive changes; these are the values emphasized in the POA program. Although it was many times the reflections and feedback of my mentor and/or PDAs to suggest ways to improve my own teaching, I became responsible for my own practices, forcing myself to begin self-monitoring in an effort to assess the changes I was making within my own teaching. Similar to POA, I used feedback in terms of my lesson plans and instruction as well as self-motivation towards professional growth to apply these suggestions effectively.

As the dialogue journal began on January 24, 2005, my mentor and I were able to expand our communication beyond just verbal feedback and suggestions. It was within the journal entries that I could reflect as I sought best practices in my own teaching. Initially it was my own concerns that drove the entries:

1/25/05—“In terms of the feedback you give me, much of it is very useful for me when thinking about and reflecting on lessons...From my perspective, I read your comments and questions and feel like talking to you further about the lesson will open our communication to talk about aspects that aren’t going to be successful. This is not to say you have never given positive feedback—because you do. I think pinpointing my fears will allow this uneasiness to disappear...I think my sensitivity plays a major role in how I

receive feedback as well as the way I interpret it...The feedback I do receive needs to be a chance for me to think about and use it toward my advantage to bring about change.”

As the entries went on, my mentor began using suggestions for improvement within my own practices through reflection of her teaching:

3/14/05—“...I think it would be helpful for you when you observe me this week to look at management I use (verbal/non-verbal). Verbal will be easy to see. Non-verbal is harder (looks, proximity, pausing, touch, etc.). I will try to remember some of what I do and we can discuss it.”

The dialogue journal was a written conversation between my mentor and I, and I reflected on her lesson while observing on her suggested focus areas:

3/17/05—“I have begun to observe your non-verbal interactions with students. I feel like I am aware of these non-verbal cues but subconsciously use a verbal cue at times. Recently, I have been trying to be more conscious of my interactions and intervention with students.”

As I became more comfortable with the dialogue journal, I began reflecting more consistently and assessing the changes I had been making within my own teaching:

3/23/05—“Recently, I have been thinking about goals for myself and have three small ones in mind. And they are beginning to stick there because I think about them constantly!

1. Working on using more non-verbals—even though I verbalize a lot it helps me. When I do say something out loud when it could have been silent because I know that next time I’ll try to think before I speak. Becoming less of a verbal person is difficult but the effectiveness of non-verbal communication is so important to me right now.

2. *Getting my flustered frustration calm so it does not effect students. I definitely don't want to be mean, I just want to learn and accept that perfect does not happen.*
3. *I want to become a better planner. I realize this has improved over time. But I want to get to a point where planning becomes comfortable. Now for me, it is stressful because I want to do it well. I just want as many ideas to pursue so when I am on my own I am confident that my lessons will be delivered in an effective way. There is so much to think about and letting go of becoming perfect will help in this situation."*

The dialogue journal became a positive reflective tool for both my mentor and me as it was through the application of these suggestions that I began to grow and develop as a teacher. After over two months of written dialogue, my growth became apparent to my mentor as well as in personal reflections:

4/9/05—"I am really pleased with some of your post-teaching reflections. I do think you are thinking of more things and making connections between your planning and implementing."

Claim 3: Observation needs to be ongoing in order to bring about improvement in one's teaching.

In addition to asking other teachers and interns how they benefited from observations, I felt that observing in classrooms outside my own would give me more opportunities for focused observations. In addition to taking notes, recording in my Lesson Observation Journal during these observations allowed me to pose questions and reflect on what the teacher was doing in his/her lesson. As I was receiving feedback within my own classroom, observing in other classrooms provided me the opportunity to observe other teachers and how they addressed the aspects I was to work on myself. For instance, it was brought to my attention that I was often

use verbal interventions when addressing misbehavior during my lessons and it was suggested that incorporating non-verbal communication would be an important step in terms of my growth and development. When observing my mentor or other teachers after receiving this particular feedback, I was specifically looking for how teachers used both verbal and non-verbal cues during their instruction (See Appendix D).

As I observed on a more frequent basis, there were more questions that arose, and I began to change my own observation techniques. For instance, a particular lesson I observed my mentor teach made me wonder why, when students were supposed to be completing an individual assignment, they were not all working quietly. After documenting my question and sharing my concern with my mentor, it was agreed that I would then do “sweeps” following the next lesson to see if students were truly on task or not. I had then created a seating chart with students when working at their desks as well as generate my own when students are at the carpet. This has been used to improve not only my instruction, but also my mentor’s, and we can observe whether or not students are on task (See Appendix E).

Similar to POA, a technique that has been applied in my own practices; *instructional coaching* is another method that supports observation as a means for professional development. Using my mentor and PDAs as my “teaching experts”, I have been coached in my journey of professional growth and development through their feedback and suggestions.

Through their coaching over the past several months, I have been able to pinpoint areas I could improve as I search for best practices in my own teaching. In many of my lessons, for instance, I was mostly verbalizing what the students were learning as more of a discussion, but I was not using materials like charts, overheads, and other visuals to support them. As I observed in other classrooms, I focused on how teachers would incorporate visuals into their lessons,

seeing what I could bring into my own lessons as well. Time management was another area of improvement I strived for in my own teaching, thus giving me another aspect to particularly focus on when observing others teach. To do so, I was looking at how long each part of the lesson was during my mentor's lessons. In my Observation Journal, I asked "Is there a general time frame that each part of the lesson should follow? For example, guided practice versus independent practice, etc." After observing and talking with my mentor, she informed me that the longest part of the lesson should be where students are participating in meeting the goal of the lesson. From this observation and discussion, I was able to find ways to better plan my own lessons in terms of time, using the goal as a way to frame instruction.

As I am learning best practices as an elementary educator, observation has been an integral part of my growth and development. I have chosen 3-4 trip sheets—detailed observations—of particular lessons throughout my student teaching experiences. As I began this inquiry, I knew that observation of my own teaching by my PDAs and mentor could allow me an insight into my strengths and weaknesses as a teacher and help me find ways to improve my own teaching. After each lesson, I had the opportunity to conference with my observers (mentor and/or PDAs) if they were available at the time.

Mentor: From the trip sheets completed by my mentor, I chose observations that focused on my use of visuals within my lessons. At one particular point, it was suggested that I incorporate more visuals into my lessons because of the various learning styles of the children in my classroom. Realizing that all students learn differently, I could see the importance of using a variety of techniques aside from verbal communication in order to address related concepts. As I began incorporating more visuals into my lessons per her suggestions, later trip sheets reflected

her recognition and more importantly the benefits for my students through their use (See Appendix F—trip sheets on 3/23/05, 4/7/05, and 4/12/05).

PDA 1: Earlier in the year, one of the concerns of my PDA was my tone of voice and lack of positive reinforcement with the children. Upon these concerns through her observations of my teaching, I knew this needed to be a focus of mine in future lessons. After these suggestions, I began to self-monitor how I spoke to the children and the way I interacted with them, being very cautious that my own frustrations did not get in the way of my teaching. I have collected eight trip sheets from October to April which all show how these suggestions became more frequent in my teaching. By having these suggestions brought to my attention through several lesson observations, I was able to use this as a tool to help me be more aware of my tone and positive reinforcement within my lessons. (See Appendix G—trip sheets on 10/18/04, 12/04, 1/20/05, 2/4/05, 2/9/05, 2/16/05, 3/21/05, and 4/6/05)

PDA 2: Beginning in January, another PDA began regularly attending and observing my lessons. With the suggestions brought about by my mentor and PDA 1, PDA 2 began observing more closely with my timing, another area that was important for me to focus on. While I knew the goal of my lesson as I led students in the activity, often times I would struggle with timing, not carefully planning how long each segment of the lesson should be. This was something I needed to more closely watch, and it was through the observations of PDA 2 that I became more aware of my timing. (See Appendix H—trip sheets on 3/28/05, 3/30/05, 4/4/05, 4/5/05, 4/8/05, 4/13/05, 4/15/05, and 4/19/05).

Conclusions and Further Wonderings

Implications for Teacher Practice

Throughout my research in this inquiry process, my belief that observation was a vital tool in improving one's teaching was strongly reaffirmed. Since the beginning of the year, I have observed my mentor as well as in other classrooms to gain new ideas, detect new strategies, and find aspects to implement as best practices. Similar to how we as teachers ask our students to watch us as we model something for them, it is important for teachers to watch one another in order to learn new strategies and find the best ways to teach. Observations have been extremely helpful in my own teaching throughout this year, for example. With the suggestions and feedback given to me by my mentor and PDAs, I have been able to utilize these in my planning, self-monitor as I teach, and reflect on the implementation of these suggestions during a post-conference.

After watching others teach in addition to being observed in my own teaching, I now use observation and the feedback provided to me to guide my planning and instruction. Based on this inquiry, I plan to incorporate ongoing observation into my practices in order to grow and development by gaining new ideas and insights to implement as best practices.

New Wonderings

Throughout my own observations as well as the evidence and literature I collected, there were many benefits I took from these experiences. However, there are some wonderings regarding observation that still remain. As I concluded my inquiry, several new wonderings arose:

- How can I use others' teaching styles/techniques in my own teaching?
- How can time/behavioral management differ so greatly from one classroom to the next?

- What does positive reinforcement look like in different classrooms?
- How do different teachers structure a lesson in terms of time?
- Would allowing more opportunities to observe in other classrooms be beneficial?
- Is there is a way that school districts and administrators can support teachers' requests for release time to observe in other classrooms?
- What is the most appropriate technique to giving feedback?
- Why do teachers and interns have different feelings about observation?

Conclusion

“Improvement” is a keyword in education for everyone—students, teachers, and even school districts as a whole. Because of the emphasis on developing high quality teachers, Duckworth (1997) states that:

“...educators, students, parents inhabit cultures questing for ‘better’ practices than the ones we have. This quest will continue as long as there are children to raise, things to learn, and processes to evolve. Our quest is becoming sophisticated. Having largely abandoned our search for one-size-fits-all solutions, we switch from desiring pronouncements to wanting dialogue.” (x-xi)

Taking time to talk about the lessons we teach, the ways we manage our students, and the lessons we observe empowers educators to strive for “best practices”. Through observation as well as personal reflection, we teachers have the power to improve our practice and the practice of others.

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Documents from my classroom:

- *Trip Sheets* - written by mentor teacher and two professional development associates on the following dates: 10/18/04, 12/04, 1/20/05, 2/4/05, 2/9/05, 2/16/05, 3/21/05, 3/23/05, 3/28/05, 3/30/05, 4/4/05, 4/5/05, 4/6/05, 4/7/05, 4/8/05, 4/12/05, 4/13/05, 4/15/05, 4/19/05, 4/6/05 and 4/7/05.
- *Dialogue Journal* – journal entries were written by both myself and my mentor teacher on the following dates: 1/25/05, 3/14/05, 3/14/05/ 3/23/05, 4/9/05
- *Lesson Observation Journal* – journal entries were written by myself on the following dates: 3/14/05, 3/22/05, 3/24/05, and 4/28/05.

Appendix

- A. Teacher and Intern Survey Questions
- B. Curriculum Support Teacher Survey Questions
- C. Administrative Interview Questions
- D. Lesson Observation Journal Entries
- E. Sweep Recording Sheet
- F. Trips sheets from Mentor
- G. Trip sheets from PDA 1
- H. Trip Sheets from PDA 2