Overview

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Background and Focus

• Carey Philpott Partner Research Fund via the Carnegie School of Education at Leeds Beckett University, England

• Researcher in Residence
Location

Context

Doncaster

The Rose Learning Trust

Woodfield Primary School

Richmond Hill Primary Academy
The project

The Rose Learning Trust
TRANSFORMING FUTURES COLLABORATIVELY

The Project

- Performative lesson observation is widely used in schools, purportedly, as a tool through which teachers may improve standards of teaching and learning. However, the high-pressure and judgemental nature often associated with such an approach is largely considered to mitigate any potentially positive outcomes of the observation process.
- This action research aimed to explore whether a Multi-Academy Trust (MAT) was able to change a performative lesson observation model to a more effective strategy for teacher growth in confidence and self-efficacy thus positively impacting upon teacher practice and self-efficacy.
- The project developed from an original intention to introduce video observation (to support peer and self-observation practices) onto a wider approach based upon coaching models. However, soon recognising the necessity of a specific cultural context for this level of self-led development to have an impact, the focus of the study turned towards developing such a culture through a range of professional development vehicles.

Methodology

- Insider perspectives were sought into the complex, phenomenological arena of teacher development and growth across the research settings.
- A broad literature review contributed to a deepened knowledge of the relationship between observation and teacher development.
- Baseline questionnaire and final questionnaires gathered both qualitative and quantitative data.
- Structured interviews and focus groups were difficult to negotiate in the busy day-to-day life of a school so “field notes” acted as a crucial source of evidence throughout.

Beyond Performance Management by Observation

An Enquiry into Effective Professional Development for Teachers across a MAT

Goal

- Improve teaching and learning
- Self-efficacy, Collaboration, Confidence

What does the literature say?

- Although promoted as an opportunity for teacher development, lesson observation are more often associated with performative management practices.
- O’Leary (2017)

Conclusions

- A professional development model focused on developing teacher agency and autonomy can have a positive effect on teachers’ self-efficacy in improving teaching and learning.
- Such a system develops teacher confidence and self-efficacy through being developed as opposed to judgemental.
- Such practices can only be successful when their purpose/intention is clear and the school’s vision and values are aligned with those promoted in the model. The foundations for an ethos of self-efficacy, collaboration and self-led development must be in place before attempting to introduce any bold changes in practice. (See below for further details).

Findings

- Baseline findings showed that existing practices for lesson observations were:
  - To check up and monitor a teacher’s performance
  - Often times positively impacting upon teaching and learning
  - Not reflective of practice as a whole, and thus any potential teacher development was considered superficial
  - Only useful when given quality feedback
  - Only and led by the observer as opposed to the observed

- Introduction of video observation received a disappointing response from most teachers and a reluctance to make use of this.
- In hindsight, it was recognised that this tool should have been presented at a later date as Research Leads began to appreciate that there was important groundwork to be done through an initial development of culture and ethos.

School 1

- Personal Professional Development gave teachers the choice of a range of tools to identify their own targets (e.g. coaching/collaborative book reviews/ VEO) and to hold teachers directly responsible for creating an action plan for self-led development.

School 2

- Performance lesson observations were replaced by PDP activities in the school’s OfSTED plan, e.g. half-termly coaching sessions. Collaborative book reviews led without SLT input.

School 3

- Changes in staffing, including a change of research lead during the course of which was not implemented. Only video observation and some coaching training was considered in this setting.

School 1’s comments are positive towards PDP/PD netting particular appreciation for the autonomy afforded by setting and leading on their own professional development.

School 2’s comments are positive towards PD, noting for example, that they are motivated to set their targets as they have complete ownership of them, enjoy the low threat but feel this fuels self-challenge and the impact of collaborative, teacher-led practices (coaching / collaborative book reviews) are beginning to demonstrate positive impact on teaching and learning – evident through case studies.

School 3’s comments highlight an unclear understanding of the PDP policy and its potential impact. Although video observation is not considered a useful tool, coaching is viewed highly in terms of the developmental opportunities it offers teaching in this setting.

How much of an impact does PDP have on developing your quality of teaching and learning? Jan 2018. 10 being VERY GOOD.
Questions
References


Priestley, M., Biesta, G.J.J. & Robinson, S. 2015. *Teacher*