Lesson Demonstration Protocol

Lesson demonstration is a curriculum-based professional learning (CBPL) protocol that can be used to provide educators with an experience of what key lessons within the local curriculum and high-quality instructional resource (HQIR) are like when taught as intended. This experience can allow educators, teachers and leaders to engage in learning from the stance of a student and then pause at strategic points to resume an educator's perspective and discuss a lesson's components. Beyond watching a video model or observing a model classroom, both of which have benefits, lesson demonstration allows educators to experience what learning is like for their students while also discussing the "teacher moves" in order to improve instructional practice.

Preparation

Determine which lesson would be important to demonstrate.

Key lessons often center on a recurring routine or instructional strategy that supports all students in accessing grade-level learning. These lessons may be identified using data, such as classroom observations, professional learning community (PLC) observations or student performance data. Alternatively, the focus may be on the overall lesson structure and design, including how the lesson (1) opens and frames the learning for students; (2) engages students during the core learning experiences; and/or (3) closes to reinforce learning and assess understanding.

Determine who will facilitate the lesson demonstration.

- The person providing the demonstration should have strong understanding of the HQIR as well as of the lesson and its components, which includes being skilled in the focal routine or instructional strategy. This can be an external CBPL provider or vendor partner, a district leader or principal, an instructional coach or a lead teacher as long as the needed capacity is present.
- The facilitator should use and be ready to refer to "educative" supports provided by the HQIR to help educators understand the lesson elements to be demonstrated. This can include support such as lesson notes, protocols and videos.

Internalize the lesson.

- Educators engaging in lesson demonstration should have internalized the lesson in their PLC prior to attending.
    - Decide which components of the lesson would be most beneficial to have demonstrated. If the primary focus is an instructional strategy or routine, it could be helpful to also include the lesson structure before and/or after the focal routine or strategy to establish context.
    - Determine whether the lesson demonstration will occur as a shared learning workshop where multiple PLCs, potentially from across grade levels and perhaps schools within the district, are participants, or if it will happen within a single PLC.
    - Questions and concerns about the lesson surfaced during internalization can be carried over to lesson demonstration and addressed during pauses to discuss.

Lesson Demonstration

Prepare for the demonstration. (Approximately 5 minutes)

- Establish the focus and goals for the demonstration. This can include briefly setting context and reviewing the intended purpose of this portion of the lesson and how it contributes to students obtaining the intended learning outcomes.
- Decide where potential “pause points” for discussion will be.
- Set norms. These can be a resetting of a PLC’s standing norms, when appropriate.
- Determine how educators participating in the demonstration will hold their thinking. An organizer can be created, if helpful.

Facilitate the demonstration (Approximately 30 minutes)

- The demonstrator engages in the lesson as “teacher” while participants engage as “learners” and capture key learning from the targeted portion of the lesson. The demonstrator can step out of lesson facilitation, when appropriate, to add instructive commentary.
- Pauses for brief discussion can occur during natural transition points.

Lesson Debrief

Participants share observations and ask questions. (Approximately 15 minutes)

- Reflective discussion is used to increase clarity and deepen understanding of targeted lesson components. Important observations are shared and lingering questions addressed.

Determine next steps.

- Participants determine how work with targeted lesson components will continue in PLCs and classroom practice. This can include:
    - Informing lesson internalization discussion in an upcoming PLC meeting where the targeted component next occurs;
    - Practicing targeted components during lesson rehearsal; and
    - Inviting an observer (e.g., a principal, instructional coach, lead teacher) into the classroom to provide feedback on the targeted component when a part of upcoming instruction.

This resource includes approaches and language from Carnegie’s Transforming Classrooms with Curriculum-Based Professional Learning and EL Education’s Demonstration Lessons and Debrief Protocol.