

## Classroom Lab Protocol

An observation debrief protocol based on principles of the Descriptive Review Protocol and the Issaquah Protocol (*developed by Nancy Mohr, Deborah Bambino, and Daniel Baron of the National Reform Faculty*)

**Purpose:** This protocol is based on the idea that description without judgment, careful labeling of why individual practices matter, and questions tied to the intention behind our practices, leads to deeper understanding of what matters most to student and teacher learning.

### The Protocol:

1. **Independent preparation.** Observers reread the teacher’s context letter and review the notes they took during the observation, highlighting important noticings and quotes from students and/or the teacher. (5 minutes)
2. **Discussion and active listening by the group.** The group “recreates” the class by sharing what they saw and heard during the observation. They use observational and active listening phrases like “I saw...” ; “I heard...” as related to the role of instructional practices on student engagement and achievement in writing. (Whip around. 8-10 minutes)
3. *Note: The purpose of active listening is to build trust and credibility with the teacher. This round shows that observers were paying careful attention and are able to determine importance about what matters most for student learning.*
4. **Interpretive listening by the group.** “What this means to me is...” (Whip around. 8-10 minutes)
5. *Note: The purpose of interpretive listening is to get at what meaning each observer is making from what he/she is hearing in order to help the group and the teacher consider why their labeling around instructional practice matters to student engagement and achievement in writing.*
6. **Probing questions think/write.** Observers take a few minutes to capture probing questions (either addressed to the teacher on index cards or on chart paper for the group) with the opening “I wonder...”. These should not be suggestions disguised as questions, but true wonderings based on what the group saw, heard, knows, and *is learning* about. (5 minutes)
7. **Probing questions.** Participants go deeper into what they observed based on the probing questions that get to the heart of teaching, learning and writing instruction by using the cards to guide dialogue. The presenting teacher reviews the cards, looking for patterns or compelling questions to bring to the group conversation by first answering the question based on the class and then opening it up to dialog when appropriate. (Popcorn into natural conversation. 10-12 minutes)
8. **Debrief:** What are your insights and/or take-aways from this observation? (Whip around to all participants and end with the presenting teacher). (5-7 minutes)