

# **C.O.R.E. Program for Teachers**

## **Collaborative Observational Reflective Experience Program for Teachers**

### **Status Report-Fall 2018**

#### **David Betancourt**

#### **Description**

The Collaborative Observational Reflective Experience (C.O.R.E.) Program for Teachers provides a template that has been developed to offer a non-judgmental, professional, valuable, and positive professional development experience in a one-to-one setting. It is collaborative because the interaction, dialogue, and involvement is designed to create an egalitarian relationship where both individuals directly involved in the experience benefit equally. The skill sets and knowledge that each participant brings to the table is recognized and valued. This experience has an observational component in that one colleague will visit another's classroom to watch a lesson being taught while taking objective and subjective notes. The follow up chat allows for sharing of ideas and reflecting on teaching practices by both the observer and the teacher being observed. Colleague mentoring transforms into a dual learning situation where authentic self-assessment is facilitated.

#### **Context**

It is important to recognize that teachers have a significant impact on student learning and engagement (Tucker & Stronge 2005, See Darlen-Hammond 2000, Sanders & Rivers 1996). Students perceive their experience with academic success as being most attributed to teachers (Tucker & Stronge 2005, Sanders & Rivers 1996). How do we ensure the students are receiving the best teachers our institutions provide? One assessment tool that has been in place for a long time is teacher evaluation through classroom visits by colleagues and managers.

Teacher evaluations have long been an anxiety riddled, 'check-the-boxes', watch-your-back process that leaves faculty questioning the integrity of the methods used to assess the value of their worth as an instructor. Is it possible that the "institution" of education has been doing it all wrong? Why are teachers required to endure antiquated or ill-conceived assessment practices and forms that stifle creativity, innovative practices, and transformative learning models? Why does the process of teacher evaluations permeate such a punitive culture? Perhaps a quick summary of the current prevalent process can help to amplify the concerns with teacher evaluation practices.

Any teacher who has gained employment at a school is familiar with the hiring process. Applicants are required to submit any number of forms; resume, curriculum vitae, letters of reference, application, and supporting documents. If an applicant passes the initial paper screening, they are selected to join a pool of applicants for further scrutiny from which a hiring committee will narrow the pool of applicants for an interview. Often, there will be several interviews with all hiring committee members given the opportunity for input. Frequently, an applicant must demonstrate their teaching practice through a mock lesson. There might even be

a final interview with a senior administrator. Of course, there are countless variations on the process. The point is this: The hiring committee, and by default, the institution, put a lot of time and effort into the process to make sure they have the most qualified candidate for the job.

Now comes the interesting part. An applicant is accepted and transitions from a candidate to a colleague. Likewise, the hiring committee changes. Not only do the personnel (often) change, but the purpose shifts. It becomes the “firing committee”. An evaluation process is explained, or not! Expectations are laid out, or not! The evaluation form is reviewed, or not! Visits are scheduled, or not! Colleagues and managers complete forms that require them to check boxes and provide a rating. At the end of the evaluation process, a teacher is deemed worthy to continue as is, someone who needs remediation, or someone in jeopardy of losing their job! To be fair, the “firing committee” is not (usually) set on firing an individual, they just want to make sure they didn’t make a mistake. Ponder that mindset for a second.

Now imagine this scenario: An applicant goes through the hiring process and, if selected for employment, is introduced to a support team of colleagues and administrators who champion life-long learning and plan to introduce the new teacher into a culture of collaborative observational reflective experiences. Instead of giving a message that is perceived as “now that you are hired, let’s make sure you aren’t doing anything wrong, so you can keep your job”, provide a positive initiation that sends the message; “now that you are hired, how can we help you succeed as a teacher?” Imagine the excitement, collegiality, sense of belonging, and community, that could be created around professional development on campuses everywhere!

This model does exist, but only in isolated pockets. Individual teachers have taken this approach for as long as teaching has been a profession. However, institutionalizing this approach has been difficult as the obstacles that prevent widespread acceptance and implementation are daunting. One obstacle is the shift in mindset that is required at and institutional level. Teachers and administrators must embrace the role of a teacher as a practitioner and life-long learner. This mindset assumes good intentions on everyone’s part. Those evaluating assume the teacher being observed is not only willing to engage in reflective teaching practices but is also actively pursuing improvement. Those being observed assume the primary goal of the individual or team of observers is to facilitate support and help the teacher. Another obstacle is funding. There can be a sincere desire for change or implementation, but without funding, the possibility of success greatly diminishes. Just one example of this would be the ability to shift the mindset of a group of practitioners or administrators, but then not be able to provide the adequate training or resources to support the logistics of implementation due to funding. Anyone who has experienced a lack of support, as described above, is familiar with the sting and disappointment of a failed initiative. A third obstacle, often intertwined with the first two, is the existing institution of education, with all its various constituencies. There are often existing policies at the district, regional, state, and/or national level that prohibit, or make nearly impossible, the institutionalization of a program as presented in this document. This is largely due to the collaboration and cooperation that would be required to affect change. It only takes one constituency to stall or stop the process, while it requires all parties to agree in order to move forward.

## **Three Models**

The C.O.R.E Program for Teachers began in 2016 as a result of communications between Andrew Fisher, Headmaster at Frensham Heights in Farnham, Surrey, UK and David Betancourt, Coordinator of the Center for Teaching Excellence at Cerritos College in Norwalk, California, USA. Subsequently, additional opportunities to develop and expand the program have transpired. The three models included in this report were selected because they have one common denominator: In each instance, there is a deliberate intent to have sustained contact and presence with the institution over time.

### **Model #1 – Frensham Heights School**

Frensham Heights School is an independent school and sixth form college located in Farnham, Surrey, England, run by the registered charity, Frensham Heights Educational Trust Ltd. It is a boarding and day school with approximately 600 students and 60 teachers.

An initial informal greeting was scheduled during a regular “morning announcements” gathering where introductions were made and a summary of intent and invitation was delivered by David Betancourt. Emphasis was placed on the process of non-assessed classroom visits to be complimented by follow-up chats. The terminology was intentionally informal. Volunteers were requested. Teachers were not required to participate. By the completion of the first day’s visit, 30 teachers had volunteered. 14 additional teachers made requests to be added to the observation schedule for a total of 44 teacher observations. The protocol from the C.O.R.E. Classroom Visits Guidelines was followed. The focus of the follow-up chats was on reflective teaching, with care taken to point out effective teaching practices as well as time to address questions about teaching and learning.

There were many visits and follow-up chats to schedule. It was requested to utilize the expertise, assistance, and support from the administrative assistant in creating a schedule. The administrative assistant was able to provide a timetable for the duration of the visit, making daily revisions and additions to the class visits, follow-up chats, meetings, presentations, and professional learning sessions that were scheduled. The schedule did not include the countless informal discussions that took place in hallways, during lunch, or while walking through the school. In total, there were over 110 scheduled appointments during the three-week residency.

Towards the end of the residency a report was drafted, and a meeting was held with the Senior Management team to receive feedback and address any overarching concerns with the report. A final report was drafted and shared with the entire Frensham Heights staff at a final gathering. The report included the purpose and responsibilities of the visiting educational consultant (David Betancourt), statistical data and schedule, procedure outline, a description of positive trends and challenges and how the trends were identified, recommendations (summarily and in more detail with a Recommended Action Plan), and all supporting documents that were collected during the visit. The C.O.R.E. Program for Teachers Form for each individual teacher was not included in the report. It was agreed that the climate of the experience would change

drastically and meeting the purpose and goals of the visit would be jeopardized if the individual forms were made public.

The primary purpose and responsibility of the visit was to inspire, challenge and lead teachers towards reflecting on their own teaching practices and to explore practices that included educational trends, technology, learning spaces, and other innovative practices. These objectives would be met primarily through The C.O.R.E. Program for Teachers. At the time of this visit, the program had no formal name. Secondary responsibilities included meetings with Departments, Department Heads, and Heads of Schools to discuss and review schemes of work. An additional opportunity presented itself in the final days of the visit as the headmaster and consultant discussed possibilities for sustained professional development using The C.O.R.E. Program for Teachers. The headmaster (Andrew Fisher) shadowed the consultant (David Betancourt) through numerous classroom visits and follow-up chats. Consent was given beforehand by the teachers being visited.

Statistical data included the number of classroom visits, follow-up chats, meetings (individual or group requests), group discussions, teach meets (professional development sessions for the teachers), student activities or sessions, a school wide engagement, and a session with the parents. Data also include the number of participants at each type of event.

Positive trends and challenges were identified through collection of information (objective and subjective) in formal discussions as well as informal discussions with teachers, students, heads of department and schools, the senior management team, and the non-teaching staff. The information was then analyzed for trends. It is important to note that the students perceived their experience with academic success as being most attributed to the teachers at Frensham Heights. As stated earlier, this conforms with research that aligns with the C.O.R.E. Teaching Program (Tucker & Stronge 2005, Sanders & Rivers 1996). Teachers are having a significant impact with students when it comes to, not just academic success, but developing a climate of trust, respect, and independence.

A follow-up anonymous survey produced comments that indicated positive outcomes for the teachers. The following is a sample of questions and answers from the survey:

Did the teaching and learning experience allow you to reflect on your teaching and learning (Yes/No), and if so, in what way?

- 100% of the responses where “Yes”
- Yes. Interesting feedback, positive/uplifting but with some points to think about.
- Yes, made me think more about how I could flip the classroom experience. Made me feel confident about my own practice.
- Yes, his character enabled a sense of safety and unbiased desire to allow positive influence.

Is there anything in particular that you enjoyed/benefited from the experience?

- I really liked the bottom up approach; we were listened to. David was extremely approachable and humble.
- chatting about educational visions for the future.
- Enthusiasm and positivity that David showed plus great to have an inset led by someone that can teach well rather than a theorist.
- Generally, just the positive and energetic attitude that David brought with him.

Andrew Fisher, Head Master at Frensham Heights, provided this quote, "*David's professionalism, openness, love of teaching and absolute commitment to help teachers to improve - rather than feel judged - was superb. He made a real difference to my school. David's visit with us changed the culture of openness to classroom observations, encouraged many staff to think deeply about their daily work and empowered staff to take significant risks in trying new techniques, or to question their practices...He was professional, hugely committed, fun to work with and above all else he brought an unquenchable energy to my school. As soon as he left we wanted him back!*"

A follow-up visit was scheduled for the spring of 2017. The primary purpose of the follow-up visit was to track the progress and activities that took place as a result of the recommendations in the fall 2016 final report. A significant amount of time was spent with teaching staff, reflecting on the impact the fall 2016 visit had on their teaching practices. 30-minute time slots were scheduled with the teachers and each teacher was allowed to continue the discussion past the allotted time if they desired. The majority of the one-to-one discussions last 45-60 minutes. The follow-up visit provided ample evidence that the teachers were engaged and committed to the professional development opportunity that the C.O.R.E. Program for Teachers offered and that the program had significant sustainable impact on teaching practices at Frensham Heights. The program provided a sustainable template towards a positive view and outcome on classroom visits, peer mentorship, and ongoing professional development for teachers. The Deputy Head of Academics tracked the evidence over the course of the academic year by way of department reviews, additional lesson visits, and mentoring of individual colleagues; offering documentation as evidence. The following list is a sample of specific actions taken or observations made by individual teachers that were shared with the consultant:

- Long time teaching staff made note of sustained difference in climate as a result of consultant visit
- Has found a way to teach learning dispositions through his discipline
- Started the year lacking confidence and feeling overwhelmed; shared excitement planning for next year starts; feels more confident
- Moved toward a facilitator role and found success; students were asking questions, working collaboratively, engaged, and completing tasks
- Experiential learning model utilized in an effort to move away from lecture format delivery concepts; conceptual learning taking place through activities; teaching taking place outside the classroom.
- Extensive use (and benefits) of using the polling app; continues to utilize the flipped classroom model

- Ongoing brainstorming strategies amongst teaching staff regarding ethos led learning
- Testimonial given towards “turning the corner” in teaching strategy in the realization that it was “OK” to take risks as a teacher and to practice newly discovered practices
- As a result of new resources given, encouraged additional searching of online resources centered around teaching practices; excitement towards implementing newly discovered teaching methods
- Encouraged by validation of teaching competence (by consultant) to further explore teaching practices
- Team strategizing towards addressing perceived challenge; bringing in consultant
- Collaborative learning through peer exercise where students scaffold answer
- Student led lessons
- Collaborative and experiential teaching and learning models in Year 10
- Open-ended questions in a discipline that traditionally espouses close-ended questions
- Collaborative learning in Year 12 Geography
- Exploratory methods with wide range of activities in Year 9 English
- Use of non-classroom space for Year 7 English
- Individual students in GCSE science – one receiving 1:1 follow-up from lessons to clarify the content of the lesson specific to her learning style, another who ‘doodles’ incessantly – with guidance from teacher, these ‘doodles’ have been turned to become illustrations of notes and subject content – her book is beautiful, she has increased her grades significantly, and smiles more!

### **Model #2 – Cerritos College**

Cerritos College is located in Norwalk, California and is one of the 114 colleges in the California community college state system. It has approximately 24,000 students, 200 full-time teachers, and 500 part-time teachers.

Though the C.O.R.E. Program for Teachers was extremely successful at Frensham Heights, there was concern regarding sustainability and outreach of the program. One individual consultant could not possibly sustain such a rigorous schedule, and even if it were possible, outreach would be limited to what one person could do. The next logical step was to explore the possibility of developing teams for the C.O.R.E. Program for Teachers. Since the consultant already had sustained contact, collaboration, networking, and professional relationships established at Cerritos College, the school was a logical choice for exploring the development of the program.

The first step in this process was to gain advocacy from three groups on the Cerritos College campus. The Faculty Professional Development Committee (a Faculty Senate Committee that guides professional learning for faculty), the Faculty Senate (a shared-governance committee that studies and makes recommendations regarding matters of academic and professional standards), and the Deans of Academic Affairs (the direct supervisors for all full and part time faculty). Emphasis was placed on the process of non-assessed classroom visits to be complimented by

follow-up chats. The Faculty Professional Development Committee assisted in revisions to the C.O.R.E. Classroom Visit Guidelines and the C.O.R.E Form. An invitation was sent to all faculty of the college to participate in a three-day summer institute sponsored by the Cerritos College Center for Teaching Excellence. This institute focused on a process of peer-to-peer classroom visits while discovering and developing best teaching practices through faculty coaching. Topics included: Introduction to expansive education, coaching as a practice, objective and subjective observation notes, formulating questions, chronology, reflective notes, possible action plans, feedback techniques, using the iPad as a tool for observation, using digital forms, and more. The participants were able to shadow the consultant in two classroom visits and then have discussions and share notes. In addition, the participants shadowed the consultant during the follow-up chats, then discussed guideline implementation, challenges presented, and the benefits of the process.

It was during the final day of the institute, when discussions were focused on next steps and final thoughts for the institute, that the participants, facilitated by the consultant, brainstormed to create a name for the program that would adequately convey the intent of the program. The result was Collaborative Observational Reflective Experience (C.O.R.E.). The C.O.R.E. Program for Teachers is an outgrowth of the original naming.

The primary purpose and responsibility of the summer institute, led by David Betancourt, was to inspire, challenge and lead teachers towards reflecting on their own teaching practices and exploring practices that included educational trends, technology, learning spaces, and other innovative practices while also becoming familiar with The C.O.R.E. Program for Teachers through theory and practice. All participants were encouraged to continue their training, towards lending their services as an observational practitioner. All participants agreed to continue. There was concern among the participants that they may not yet be prepared to observe their peers. A solution was presented, and agreed upon, where all participants would spend one academic term practicing the observations and follow-up chats with each other before offering to observe other colleagues.

A follow-up anonymous survey produced comments that indicated positive outcomes for the participants involved in the summer institute. The following is a sample of questions and answers from the survey:

What did you learn?

- In the CTX SI iPad mentoring program, I learned about nonjudgmental peer to peer evaluation. I also learned how to share observations with fellow instructors in an open and non-punitive way. I also enjoyed sharing ideas in an open, casual way with fellow instructors. I also learned to use iPad programs with ease that I feel will genuinely enhance my teaching practices.
- That there is real value and interest in working together to support good teaching, reinforce and support good teachers, and to provide an alternative approach to faculty observation in the classroom.

- It is possible to provide reflective information (feedback) to peers in a manner that promotes candid discussion in a warm collaborative atmosphere aimed at enhancing yourself and others.
- In this cohort for this module of Summer Institute 2018, participants like myself shared different challenges in the classroom and collaborated on various techniques to address these challenges. We also learned and reflected on new protocols for observing faculty and sharing observations that are driven by a peer-to-peer ethos of mutual support and enrichment.

What benefits did you experience from participating in the summer institute?

- I had an opportunity to gain insight into the evaluation process and more importantly how it can be improved and be made a much more collaborative and nourishing experience.
- I have gained a deeper sense of changing the "evaluation punitive process" to a overall better experience through "questioning" exploratory dialog techniques.
- It was nice to be able to connect with instructors from across disciplines and learn about content delivery and teaching practices in other courses. There was also a feeling of campus community created that I have not yet experienced, and it re-energized my experience as an instructor at Cerritos College. I had a good experience familiarizing myself with new apps and technology. Previously I was a bit behind in these techniques, and now they feel easy and natural to me.
- The open discussions were great. We have limited opportunity to connect with faculty outside our disciplines so hearing what happens in their classrooms as oppose to what I experience in my classroom was extremely helpful.

The C.O.R.E. Program for Teachers at Cerritos College is currently in process and additional information will be shared once the newly formed team begins to complete observations of their peers. There continues to be wide-spread support for the continuation of the program. The feedback and experience of the C.O.R.E. team has propelled progress to the point where the component of team development has become one of the offerings when visiting other institutions who are interested in The C.O.R.E. Program for Teachers. Such was the case in the third model, City of London Freeman's School.

### **Model #3 – City of London Freeman's School**

City of London Freeman's School is a coeducational private school for day and boarding pupils, located at Ashted Park in Surrey, England. It is the sister school of the City of London School and the City of London School for Girls, which are both independent single-sex schools located within the City of London itself. All three schools receive funding from the City's Cash. The school is a member of the Headmasters' and Headmistresses' Conference. It has approximately 800 students and 80 teachers.

The primary purpose and responsibility of the visit by David Betancourt was to inspire, challenge and lead teachers towards reflecting on their own teaching practices and exploring practices that included educational trends, technology, learning spaces, and other innovative practices. These objectives would be met primarily through the C.O.R.E. Program for Teachers. Secondary responsibilities included meetings with Departments, Department Heads, and Heads of Schools to discuss and review schemes of work. There were two important components to this model that differed from the Frensham Heights residency. The first was the addition of an introductory week and the second was the inclusion of additional training to develop a C.O.R.E. Team. An additional activity that developed was the collaboration with the Senior Leadership Team (SLT) towards increased productivity in SLT meetings.

Roland Martin, Headmaster at Freeman's School, suggested a visit by the consultant prior to the residency to give the teachers an opportunity to get to know the consultant as well as give the consultant an opportunity to become familiar with the climate and ethos of the school. The week of activities included meetings with Heads of Department, Heads of School, Deputy Heads, and Head of Boarding and Co-Curriculum. Music performances and art exhibits were attended. Many informal conversations took place with teachers, managers, and students. An Inset (professional development session for teachers) was scheduled towards the end of the week where the consultant had the opportunity to give a summary of intent. Emphasis was placed on the process of non-assessed classroom visits to be complimented by follow-up chats. The terminology was intentionally informal. Volunteers were requested. Teachers were not required to participate. At the completion of the Inset 35 teachers volunteered to participate. The final activity in the initial visit was a keynote address. It was a final opportunity to have teaching staff and students become familiar with the consultant. The keynote was given at Prize Day, Freeman's annual celebration of its students and their accomplishments.

One of the meetings in the initial visit was with James Felgate (Director of Learning, Teaching and Innovation). It was in this meeting that forming a C.O.R.E. Team was discussed. The sustainability of The C.O.R.E. Program for Teachers was of utmost interest to Mr. Felgate. It was agreed that the residency to follow should include a training component to develop a team. Team members could be heads of department, deputy heads, heads of school, and select faculty. The Teaching and Learning Committee was selected to receive a presentation on the C.O.R.E. Program for Teachers. The presentation included an overview of the C.O.R.E. Form that would be used in each classroom visit and the C.O.R.E. Guidelines (both attached to the end of this report). The C.O.R.E. training was given by David Betancourt to James Felgate and Paul Bridges (Deputy Head Academic) with four members of the Senior Leadership Team stepping forward as volunteers to be observed and participate in a follow-up chat. These additional meetings and sessions were scheduled by James Felgate as he took ownership of hosting and all logistics once the residency was in process.

It was requested to utilize the expertise, assistance, and support from the administrative assistant in creating the initial schedule. The administrative assistant was able to draft a timetable for the initial visit and residency. James Felgate then made daily revisions and additions to the class visits, follow-up chats, meetings, presentations, and professional learning sessions as needed.

The schedule did not include the countless informal discussions that took place in hallways, during lunch, or while walking through the school. In total, there were over 140 scheduled appointments during the initial visit and residency.

A strategic planning session, with David Betancourt as facilitator, was scheduled for the Senior Leadership Team (SLT). The agenda items focused on the alignment of internal and external communication with the Mission and Aims of City of London Freeman's School. The intent was to provide a template and protocol towards assisting the SLT in increasing productivity and efficiency.

Positive trends and challenges were identified through collection of information (objective and subjective) in formal discussions as well as informal discussions with teachers, students, heads of department and schools, the Senior Leadership Team. The information was then analyzed for trends. Observations during class visits and feedback/"takeaways" collected on the C.O.R.E. Forms provided evidence of trends and challenges. Conversations and discussions with individuals were also considered. Conversations took place before classes began, during the staff breaks, at lunch, and after school. Discussions were one-to-one appointments with staff, heads, and members of the SLT. Recommendations were given based on the positive trends and challenges. The intent of the recommendations was to provide key talking points for all vested parties to make decisions regarding the culture, procedures, practices, policies, and sustainability of professional learning for teaching staff, specifically, classroom visits and feedback towards improved teaching practices.

Towards the end of the residency a report was drafted, and a meeting was held with the Senior Leadership Team to receive feedback and address any overarching concerns with the report. A final report was drafted and a summary of the report was shared with the Freeman's teaching staff at a final INSET. The report included the purpose and responsibilities of the visiting educational consultant (David Betancourt), statistical data and schedule, procedure outline, a description of positive trends and challenges and how the trends were identified, recommendations, and all supporting documents that were collected during the visit. The C.O.R.E. Program for Teachers Form for each individual teacher was not included in the report. It was agreed that the climate of the experience would change drastically and meeting the purpose and goals of the visit would be jeopardized if the individual forms were made public.

A follow-up anonymous survey produced comments that indicated positive outcomes for the teachers. The following is a sample of questions and answers from the survey:

Did the teaching and learning experience allow you to reflect on your teaching and learning (Yes/No), and if so, in what way?

- Yes. Small ideas that could have a considerable impact. Also the whole experience really helped to change the feeling that observation is punitive to something, which can be very supportive and beneficial to all.
- Yes - consider how to develop the love of learning in pupils.  
Yes. That I can use different methods for control and not always rely on what is successful. Take myself out of my comfort zone.

- Yes, I have always found that observations that are a two way process the most valuable. It was insightful to see from others what think of my practice and it was a very positive and encouraging experience
- Yes. The observation was non-judgemental. This enabled me to think that it a child did wander around the room for a minute , it actually wasn't a major crisis. Perspective was allowed.
- Yes, it helped remove some of the hesitation regarding lesson observations.
- Yes - in particular the way in which I interact with colleagues as an observer, rather than just the teaching and learning in my classroom. The process made me reflect in a positive way on my lesson - rather than just think about what was not good enough.
- Yes, it made me question how my lesson keeps students alert and involved and how to draw in those less vocal and confident.
- yes - got some tips on how to reconfigure lessons for a lower ability group.
- Yes it did, and I am making changes to my practice as a result.

As a result of the professional learning experience, do you have an idea or teaching practice that you plan to implement? If so, please briefly describe.

- patience, time, generosity , care.
- I aim to add activities to videos enabling pupils to independently develop their understanding to topics and reduce my input. This should lead to greater variety of activity.
- upload smartboard material from the lesson onto freelearning.
- To continue to reinforce Habits of Mind even more in all of my lessons.
- To observe colleagues more and be observed more
- Questioning techniques and student led learning to be trialed more and adopted.
- yes, discussion with maths department about working marks and merits.
- Finding time to talk to pupils individually
- Yes, several ideas - a way to engage with a challenging pupil which we developed in conversation.
- When a student can't answer a question, I tend to stay with them and help them to find the right answer. Sometimes, others are very keen to offer their knowledge, and in the future I will acknowledge this more, for example by thanking them for their enthusiasm but explaining that I would like student X to get there as well. David called it being more explicit with the students rather than assume that they understand why I am doing certain things.
- Yes - improving the quality and methods of feedback when observing staff members. Also, to be more prepared to risk something in lessons, rather than just stick to the safe ground with exam classes. The pupils might not see the purpose - but as the teacher I actually see the bigger learning purpose, rather than just passing an exam.

- Yes, I plan to make the students do more, rather than me explaining everything
- Try to incorporate 'micro-tasks' by breaking down longer tasks; more achievable for students.
- To create behaviour agreements/plans with certain students to help them make progress.

Is there anything in particular that you enjoyed/benefited from the experience?

- Meeting with David was a great opportunity to talk to someone who looks at the bigger picture regarding education rather than box ticking.
- The conversations. The chance to discuss teaching and learning with someone who is very interested and experienced. Also, the non-judgemental nature of the experience. It was a really positive way to start the school year, feeling supported and listened to.
- Good to talk to another professional where I felt the feedback was for my development
- I thought David's approach to running a strategy meeting in SLT was well worth trying again.
- The non judgmental aspect made it low stress with good benefit.
- Detailed lesson feedback
- affirmation of teaching habits
- The ability to discuss pedagogy seriously
- The feedback session was the best experience and a chance to ask follow up questions.
- It is very good to have non-judgmental observation and to discuss pedagogy with another colleague.
- opportunity to focus on what I do in an unpressurised manner

## **Conclusion**

The Collaborative Observational Reflective Experience (C.O.R.E.) Program for Teachers provides a template that has been developed to offer a non-judgmental, professional, valuable, and positive professional development experience in a one-to-one setting. The three C.O.R.E. models described in this report support an alternative approach to how teachers are assessed. This approach provides an egalitarian culture of self-reflective teaching practices where teaching and learning is championed, and teachers are supported as practitioners who have embraced a life-long learning process. For this type of program to succeed at an institutional level (institution defined as either the place where learning takes place or the institution of education) it will be paramount for administrators and lead decision makers to recognize that teachers have a significant impact on student learning and engagement (Tucker & Stronge 2005, See Darlen-Hammond 2000, Sanders & Rivers 1996). This recognition will require more than a nod of the head and lip service. It will require advocacy and support for funding. It will require leaders to advocate with passion and by embracing the research that indicates students perceive their experience with academic success as being most attributed to teachers (Tucker & Stronge 2005,

Sanders & Rivers 1996). After all, isn't all this passion and effort that is being directed towards helping teachers, ultimately, so they can help the students succeed in life and be contributing, autonomous, creative, productive citizens of society, and more? This isn't just about the teachers, or the students, or the parents, or the citizens. It is about elevating the human condition and touching the future and in way that makes us all better.

## **David Betancourt**

David Betancourt was recognized as Outstanding Faculty in 2015 and Most Outstanding Faculty in 2016. Dr. Betancourt travels internationally as a creative and dynamic educational consultant to promote pedagogical excellence within multiple teaching and learning environments. His core mission is to engage, equip, and connect educators to create and integrate transformative learning experiences using evidence-based practices. He actively accomplishes this mission by fostering learning environments informed by research on teaching and learning, promoting the tools of teaching, advancing strategic learning initiatives, and facilitating practices that support an integrated educational experience. He is committed to excellence in teaching, learning and technology and to continually improve the quality of education by supporting teachers and encouraging reflective teaching practices. Dr. Betancourt supports innovative and interdisciplinary approaches when thinking about learning, teaching and technology and promotes initiatives that involve faculty from multiple disciplines and levels. He is committed to promoting life-long learning for students AND teachers.

Professor Betancourt is a strong advocate for the expansive education movement, experiential learning models, service learning, the habits of minds initiative, the growth mindset, and an overarching teaching philosophy that incorporates learning dispositions as central to the educational experience.

At Cerritos College, California, Professor Betancourt's primary responsibility as the Center for Teaching Excellence (CTX) Coordinator is to oversee and promote a comprehensive faculty center that provides scholarship, administration, teaching and learning, professional development, and technology resources and support through the organization of the multiple faculty resources currently on campus. Since 2012, he has developed an extensively vibrant program of professional learning opportunities for the entire college faculty. As a result, the CTX has become a resource for professional learning centers on university and community college campuses throughout the state. His activities in the CTX have gained notoriety with requests to present on professional learning topics at California Community Colleges Success Network events, the Professional and Organizational Development Network Conference (international), the California Community College Council for Staff and Organizational Development Conference, the Basic Skills Initiative Leadership Institute, the Lilly Conference, and numerous colleges. Under his leadership, the CTX was recently awarded the Outstanding Program Award from the California Community College Council for Staff Development.

Dr. Betancourt holds degrees from the University of Southern California, Northern Arizona University, and Berklee College of Music. He is a member of the Phi Kappa Phi Honor Society, Pi Kappa Lambda Honor Society, NAFME, CBDNA, CMEA, CBDA, ITG, CMS, SCSBOA, the Professional Organizational Development Network, and 4CSD. He is Past President of the Music Association of California Community Colleges (MACCC), and the Chair of the Board for the California Community College Council on Staff Development. At Cerritos College, he chairs the Faculty Professional Development Committee and the Academic Excellence Committee while also serving on the Student Life Committee and the Employee Development Committee.

## Classroom Visit Guidelines

These guidelines are for the observer of a classroom visit to help provide an egalitarian, non-judgmental, professional, valuable, and positive experience for both parties.

### Before the classroom visit

1. Make initial communication with your colleague via email or phone.
2. Remind your colleague that your visit is not part of an assessment or evaluation and that you are most interested, and looking forward to, having time to share best teaching practices together.
3. Set a time and date for a 30-minute classroom visit and a 30-minute follow-up chat.
4. Remind your colleague that you will be taking clinical notes and jotting down questions to aid in your discussion. Consequently, you will not be able to participate in classroom dialogue or activities. Inform your colleague that you are not intentionally being antisocial, but rather, you are attempting to be “invisible” during your visit.
5. Inform your colleague that making introductions is favorable at the beginning of your visit to reduce anxiety or questions from students.
6. Provide the classroom visit form (blank) and answer any questions they may have about the form.
7. Send a formal email (or other documented correspondence) outlining the protocol listed above

### During your classroom visit

1. Have the classroom visit form ready to be completed (initial information already noted).
2. Arrive a few minutes early.
3. Remind your colleague that you will not be engaging in classroom activities.
4. Ask your colleague where you may sit (that will cause the least distraction when you exit).
5. Use the middle column to list chronology (as each activity unfolds)
  - a. Begin timeline before class starts (when appropriate)
6. Use the left column to clinically list activities, observations, quotes
  - a. Clinical documentation
  - b. Include teaching practices that had positive impact
7. Use the right column to list questions; align questions with left column.
  - a. Questions should be non-judgmental
  - b. Questions can address a practice, observation, activity, or quote
  - c. Practice crafting questions that encourage dialogue on reflective teaching, specific methodology, educational technology, learning dispositions, etc.
8. After 30-minutes, leave quietly, providing eye contact and a friendly smile as you depart.

### After your classroom visit

1. Contact your colleague and thank them for allowing you to watch them teach.
2. Forward the classroom visit form to them and remind them that you will be using the form to refresh your memory during the follow-up chat.
3. Confirm the date and time for your 30-minute follow-up chat.

### During your follow-up chat

1. Provide a copy of the classroom visit form for your colleague and yourself.
2. Remind your colleague that your visit to their classroom and the follow-up chat are not part of an assessment or evaluation and that you are most interested, and looking forward to, having time to share best teaching practices together.
3. Inform your colleague how you completed the form
  - a. Center column: chronological
  - b. Left column: clinical observation
  - c. Right column: question that came to you as a result of observation
4. Inform your colleague that the box at the bottom is space for them to document anything of their choosing
5. Discuss classroom visit: There are many different approaches, from a strict sequence, to a more organic free-flowing conversation. Start with something positive. There should be no negatives: In place of negatives, ask questions that you have regarding a teaching practice, activity, quote, etc. Questions can be geared toward beginning a discussion or for your own information or knowledge.
6. Encourage your colleague to note at least one possible actionable item.
7. Continue the conversation past the 30-minute mark if it is appropriate and possible.

### Mentorship Climate

1. Recognize and draw on the expertise and strengths of your colleague by accessing prior knowledge to avoid assumptions.
2. Maintain an informal, professional, relaxed, and conversational style of communication. Be aware of the communication style/preference of your colleague (face-to-face, email, Skype, texting). Social media, as a mode of communication for this program, is not recommended.
3. Share the lifelong learning mindset with your colleague. You do not need to have all the answers, just be willing to share and have a discussion with them.

**C.O.R.E. Form**

Collaborative Observational Reflective Experience Program for Teachers

This form is not part of the formal faculty evaluation process and will not be shared.

Teacher Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Observer: \_\_\_\_\_  
Discipline/Course: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

<b>Objective and/or Subjective Observations</b>	<b>Time</b>	<b>Questions</b>
<b>Teacher's Reflective Thoughts and Possible Actionable Items</b>		