

EDU 7701 – Research & Development in Instructional Strategies
Professor Frank Smith

This course focused on the practice of observation and how it impacts on classroom instruction. In the beginning of this class we were asked to write a paper about the observation practice in our particular district and the stated purpose of performing observations. The following examples existed:

- Improve the quality of instruction
- Improve teaching skills
- Improve student learning and growth
- Identify deficiencies
- Extend assistance for correction of deficiencies
- Promote and recognize professional excellence
- Provide a basis for the review of performance
- Improve professional competency
- Provide a basis for recommendations regarding employment

From the beginning, however, it was made clear that this did little to actually improve instruction. Since the purpose of observation is to improve instruction and learning, then other methods were needed.

Instructional practices were also explored. One promising practice that exist in Japan is lesson study. The emphasis here is the delivery of the lesson and not on the practitioner. The lesson had to be polished to perfection. Teachers helped teachers to produce the perfect lesson that enable all to learn. The lesson was then delivered by one of them with the others sitting in and later critiquing. The lesson was what was observed,

not the teacher and in turn the student acquired more knowledge. Under this model, observation improved instruction and in return learning.

In the end, the important question is what does it mean to know? When this is answered strategies can be employed to help all achieve the standard that is expected.