

Teaching In Action: Frequently Asked Questions

What will a Visiting Teacher get out of participating in Teaching In Action?

The Teaching In Action Program offers informal, teacher-led professional development to teachers who are interested in learning from the classrooms of their peers. Through observations and debrief conversations, visiting teachers receive a series of best practice strategies that they can begin to implement immediately in their classrooms, and continue to develop over the long-term.

What will a Consulting Teacher get out of participating in Teaching In Action?

The Teaching In Action program is a leadership and mentorship opportunity for experienced, high-performing DCPS teachers to help their colleagues across the district improve their craft in a tangible way. Consulting Teachers have an opportunity to both showcase their strengths and share their expertise. The program requires minimal additional work outside of teachers' normal responsibilities.

Who can be a Consulting Teacher?

Consulting Teachers are recruited across all schools, grade levels, and subject areas in DCPS. Effective or Highly Effective teachers who are Established, Advanced, Distinguished, or Expert on the LIFT ladder are encouraged to apply. Application information will be provided on Educator Portal+ and via email. Throughout the year, Teaching in Action may do additional recruiting based on program needs, and will accept recommendations and nominations from principals, master educators, and instructional coaches year-round.

How long does an observation typically last?

Observations typically last one hour, and may be longer depending on scheduling and teacher availability. The Consulting Teacher and Visiting Teacher will also conduct a 30-minute debrief conversation immediately following the observation, though it can be rescheduled to a more convenient time or happen over phone, Skype, email, if necessary.

Teachers should also consider travel time to and from their observation site. Observations should NOT cause Visiting Teachers to miss more than half a school day – Consulting Teachers are encouraged to offer observation times early in the morning or late in the day, so that visiting teachers can more easily find coverage for their class during the time they will be out of the building.

How does a teacher make an appointment to visit a Consulting Teacher's classroom?

Appointments are made through the "Teaching In Action" QuickBase application, which all DCPS teachers can access. Visiting Teachers can sort the available Consulting Teachers by subject or TLF strengths. Clicking on a selected teacher will bring up additional profile information and a list of that teacher's available observation times. Select a time that is convenient and fill out the short pre-observation form, which will help the Consulting Teacher prepare based on the visiting teacher's stated objectives. Both teachers will receive a reminder email 48 hours in advance of the appointment.

How far in advance should teachers schedule an appointment?

Appointments should be made AT LEAST one week in advance.

How does a Visiting Teacher find coverage for their classroom during the observation/debrief?

Coverage for your classes should be determined by you and your principal. Teachers should consult with their principals *before* making an appointment, to determine how to arrange coverage. You may request a substitute through SmartFindExpress as you would for any absence, but be sure to list “Professional Development” as the reason for your absence. Remember that this program should not require a full-day absence.

What happens if either the Visiting Teacher or the Consulting Teacher has to cancel an appointment?

If for any reason either teacher must cancel an appointment, it is expected that they will alert the other at least 48 hours in advance, and alert the program manager (ben.theodore@dc.gov). It is the professional responsibility of the two teachers to communicate with each other about any schedule changes to their planned observation/debrief. If another appointment must be made, please do so by repeating the process of signing up through QuickBase.

Is the Teaching In Action program effective?

In surveys administered during the 2012-2013 school year, 100% of Visiting Teachers reported that they achieved their stated goals and found the program to be a beneficial professional development opportunity. Many credited the program with elevating their professional growth throughout the year. More work will be done to evaluate the program this year, and we welcome feedback from all participants.

Can Visiting Teachers continue to seek support from Consulting Teachers throughout the year?

Visiting Teachers are welcome (and encouraged!) to make numerous appointments through Teaching In Action. Visiting Teachers may observe multiple teachers throughout the year or a single teacher on multiple visits.