What’s REALLY Going On?

An Observational Skills Workshop

Julie Wyman & Mark Grove

Please try to fill a table, before starting a new one!
What’s REALLY Going On?

An Observational Skills Workshop

Julie Wyman & Mark Grove
Imagine...

You’ve recently joined a team as coach, consultant, or Scrum Master. You decide the best way to start is to “simply” observe the team working.

• What do you notice?

• What do you look for?
More than simply what you see on the surface.
Getting below the surface

Some examples
Body Language

• Crossed arms?
• Leaning closer? Leaning away?
• Pointing?
Tone of Voice

• Whose voice is louder? Softer?

• When does it get louder?

• When does it get softer?
Pronouns

• “He” or “she” instead of peoples’ names?

• “Me” and “you” instead of “we”?
Physical Space

• How are people positioned?

• Are people facing each other?

• What in the space is being used? Not used?
Collaboration

• Is there a director? Doers?
• Solo work vs. group work?
• Who tends to offer ideas? Who tends to respond?
• Is disagreement shared?
Decision Making

• Do people think out loud?

• How are decisions made? Consensus? Consultation? Direction?
Information Sharing

• Verbal?
• Visual?
• Written?
Sharing your observations

Some tips
When sharing observations...

- **Do** factually state what you observed in neutral language

- **Avoid** interpretation and assigning meaning to actions
Time to practice!

Modified from a Coaching Beyond the Team activity
General instructions

• Two rounds:
  • Practicing in small groups
  • Half of each table will “build” while the other half observes
  • After the first round, roles will switch
Round 1: Instructions

• **Set up:** Decide at your table who will build first & who will observe

• **Observers:** Each pick one area to observe & use Post-Its to take notes (1 observation per Post-It)

• **Builders:** Build a 5-foot tall structure out of index cards in 5 minutes
5 minute timer

Google timer
Round 1: Small group debrief

- **Share**
  - **Observers:** Share notes from your observation
  - **Builders:** Share what it felt like being observed

- **Discuss**
  - How did it feel to observe just one area?
  - Was it hard to write down only facts?
  - Did you notice any jumps to interpretation?
Round 2: Instructions

• **Set up:** Builders & observers switch roles

• **Observers:** Each pick one area to observe & use Post-Its to take notes (1 observation per Post-It)

• **Builders:** Determine in 5 minutes the 3 most important characteristics of a high-performing team
5 minute timer

Google timer
Round 2: Small group debrief

• **Share**
  • **Observers:** Share notes from your observation

• **Discuss**
  • Did you do anything differently as observers this round having previously been observed yourselves?
  • How did it feel to observe just one area?
  • Did you notice any jumps to interpretation?
Wrapping it up

And keeping it going
Time to reflect...

• What did you learn about being an observer?

• What did you learn about how it feels to be observed?

• What will you do differently next time?