# THE
# Ethical
# Supervisor

## NAVIGATING TEACHER EVALUATION WITH INTEGRITY

A GUIDE FOR PRINCIPALS AND SUPERVISORS

# The Ethical Supervisor

Navigating Teacher Evaluation

With Integrity

A Guide for Principals and Supervisors



Norman Powell

John Chen

Vy Cao

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**The Ethical Supervisor: Navigating Teacher Evaluation with Integrity**

**Author Contact (permissions/inquiries):**

Dr. Norman Powell — normandroxie1956@gmail.com

Dr. John Chen — jchen1@lasierra.edu

Dr. Vy Cao — vcao@lasierra.edu

# The Authors

Norman D. Powell, Ed.D, is retired dean of the School of Education at La Sierra University in Riverside, California. Dr. Powell was a classroom teacher and principal in K-12 schools for 25 years. As a professor at La Sierra University, he specialized in teacher supervision and school leadership as well as delivering presentations on teacher supervision to superintendents and principals across North America. He spent a number of years as a trainer-consultant for the California Department of Education leadership program. He served two terms as chair of the City of Riverside Human Resources Board.

John A. Chen, PhD is an Associate Professor and Chair of the Department of Administration and Leadership in the School of Education at La Sierra University, Riverside, CA. He teaches graduate classes to individuals working on masters and doctorate degrees in Administration and Leadership. He has a combined 20+ years as a school administrator in both the public and Adventist school systems in WA, MI, and CA. One of his passions is to develop effective and growth minded school administrators.

Vy Cao, Ph.D., is Assistant Professor of Curriculum & Instruction and Director of CTC Liaison and Assessment in the School of Education at La Sierra University, Riverside, California. Alongside teaching, she leads program assessment and accreditation efforts. Her research examines school leadership, religious education, and youth development, with emphasis on adolescent well-being, identity formation, and the influence of faith and media on student experiences. With more than a decade of experience in education, leadership, and program evaluation, Dr. Cao is committed to supporting schools in fostering both academic excellence and holistic growth.

# Consultants

Sandra J. Balli, Ph.D., Professor of Curriculum, La Sierra University, retired

Steve Comadena, MA, K-12 school principal California, retired. Literacy professor, California State University San Bernardino.

Rachel Romero, Vice Principal, Loma Linda Academy Elementary School, Loma Linda, California, Small School Specialist.

Datha Tickner, MA, Superintendent of Schools, Southeastern California Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, Riverside, California.

Wendel Tucker, PhD, Superintendent of Schools, retired, Alvord Unified School District, Riverside, California. Member of Riverside County Board of Education, 8 years.

# Contents

# Preface

YOU are a school leader. You bear a huge responsibility in shaping the educational experiences of the next generation. You face a complex landscape of ethical dilemmas and diverse constituencies, including students, parents, colleagues, and the broader community. Ethical behavior is paramount as you foster a positive, equitable, and supportive educational environment. Your students face misinformation and dangers with every click on the information highway and social media. Never before has it been more crucial for education leaders to uphold the highest standards of integrity and honesty.

## Multiple Constituencies

You are faced with multiple constituencies. At times it may appear that those constituencies' challenges, desires, and needs may not be in perfect agreement. You must prioritize the welfare and development of students. You must ensure that policies and practices promote their academic and personal growth. You may be faced with issues of equity, providing essential support for marginalized or disadvantaged students. You may face ethical dilemmas when balancing the needs of individual students with those of the student body as a whole.

When engaging with parents, you will need to practice sensitivity and transparency. Parents trust you with the education and well-being of their children. They will expect honest communication and involvement in decision-making processes. Ethical challenges may emerge when parental expectations conflict with school policies or the needs of other stakeholders. You must navigate these conflicts with diplomacy and a commitment to the best interests of the students.

Your school is an integral part of the larger community. You will engage with local organizations, businesses, and government entities. You will build partnerships, secure resources, and advocate for the needs of the school. Ethical considerations include transparency in financial matters, equitable distribution of resources, and ensuring that the school remains accountable to the community it serves.

You are responsible for fostering a positive work environment for teachers and staff. You must ensure fair treatment, professional development opportunities, and a culture of collaboration and respect.

## Multiple Roles and Responsibilities

You wear many hats. As a visionary leader, you are responsible for establishing a clear vision and direction for the school, establishing goals, developing strategic plans, and inspiring others to work towards a shared purpose. Ethical behavior is critical in ensuring that the vision is inclusive and reflective of the diverse needs of the school community.

As a school leader, you manage the school's day-to-day operations, such as budgeting, staffing, and facility management. Ethical behavior requires transparency, accountability, and fairness in decision-making processes.

You are expected to build strong relationships with the community. You must communicate effectively with stakeholders, collaborate with community organizations, and advocate for the school's needs. You must be committed to equity and inclusivity, ensuring all voices are heard and considered in decision-making.

Among these myriad responsibilities, the need to provide quality teachers for all students means that the job of teacher supervision and evaluation is of the highest importance. Take that role seriously and conduct it responsibly with integrity, fairness, kindness, and honesty. We hope this guide will help you provide the best possible education for all the students in your school.



While your job requires your superpowers it also brings great rewards.

# Using this Book

## The Handbook

**Section I.** Examine the core principles of leadership and ethics. Explore ways to deepen understanding of teachers and the teaching craft. Focus on the principal as a lead learner.

**Section II.** Find practical guidelines for implementing teacher supervision and evaluation throughout the school year. Emphasize differentiated evaluation. Explore the different parts and elements of the year-long process.

**Section III.** Reflect on the principles of due process and ethical conduct. Identify the key steps involved in ensuring fairness, equity, and honesty. Understand the proper handling of documents and teachers' files.

## The Teaching Craft

**Section IV.** This section explores best practices of effective teachers. As a principal or supervisor, you were an excellent teacher, so consider this a refresher on identifying and observing effective teaching. Each chapter emphasizes specific strategies of successful teachers, explains how understanding these strategies supports your supervisory role, and concludes with a list of "look fors" to aid in observing teaching.
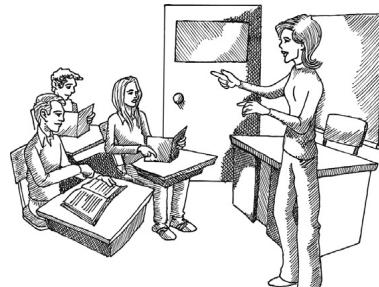
## Support

**Section V.** This section offers additional information on various topics from previous sections. You will find more details about supervisory or teaching practices. This section also includes examples of documents or materials mentioned earlier, where you will see references like this:

*See: page xx for an example of xx*

# Section I

# The Foundation

IF YOU are a principal or vice principal, with the responsibility of teacher evaluation in a K-12 school, this guide will speak to you. As an instructional leader, you have a heavy responsibility to evaluate teachers effectively. If you are a conference or university supervisor, it can also speak to you.

To be an effective supervisor of teachers, careful consideration must be given to certain foundational elements that need to be established. This section presents those elements.
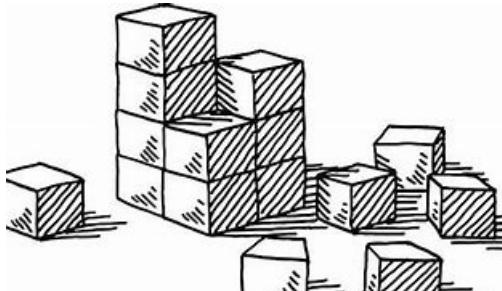
Chapter 1

# Purposes of Evaluation

I S TEACHER evaluation a stressful part of your job description? Do you wonder why the conference creates deadlines and forms to complete? Why do we do this? Consider at least three reasons.

## Competent Teacher in Every Classroom

Students are the first responsibility of any educational system or institution. Equity demands that you provide excellence in teaching in every classroom.

## Teacher Development

To ensure a competent teacher in every classroom, regular evaluations of all teachers must take place, with a strong emphasis on their professional development. Through both policy and practice, teacher evaluations aim to support teachers' professional growth. This process is an essential component in due process.

## Decisions about Teachers

At times, you will be responsible for determining the employment status of certain teachers, such as a new teacher on probationary status or a teacher on emergency status who lacks certification. You will be responsible for making decisions regarding the ongoing employment of some teachers.

Chapter 2

# The Leader

WHEN you take on the role of teacher evaluator, the complexity of your task increases; You need to have a solid understanding of various teaching methodologies. You need to be able to identify specific causes when addressing a teacher whose performance may be unsatisfactory. Being resourceful in supporting these teachers is crucial. Lastly, you should exemplify ethical behavior and set clear, consistent standards for everyone.

## Leadership and Ethics

As a leader, your responsibilities are challenging and complex. You are the leader. A leader leads and empowers. Ethical leaders must first believe in themselves. You hold this position because others value what you contribute. If you maintain a strong prayer life, you will understand that you are valued, which will help you appreciate others and handle criticism. A leader exemplifies the highest standards of ethical and moral behavior. A leader is truthful and compassionate, shows care, and listens. Your responsibility to evaluate teachers places ethics at the forefront. At times, you may deal with a teacher whose performance is inadequate. It is imperative to be open and honest while also being kind and supportive. Whatever you learn from this guide, keep in mind that these principles of leadership and ethical behavior are the top priority.

## Leadership and Learning

The purpose of school is to teach and prepare the next generation. You prioritize teaching and learning by supporting instructional practices that enhance student achievement. You must become aware of the quality of education occurring in all classrooms. Ethical considerations require that all students have access to high-quality education and that all teachers are supported in their efforts to innovate and improve. Teacher evaluation becomes a most important aspect of your responsibilities.

## The Learner

Learning is the core of what school is about. Some people consider the principal to be the "lead learner," while others simply refer to the "learner" (McKibbon, 2015). You will serve as a model for the lifelong learner. You will demonstrate collaborative leadership by emphasizing team building and learning alongside others. Together you will create a culture of continuous improvement where learning is valued at every level. You will provide professional development opportunities and foster an environment of continuous improvement. As you monitor and support the professional development of teachers and collaborate with them to enhance teaching and learning, you learn together. You will lead in creating a forward-thinking environment, which means staying current with educational trends and empowering others.

## Differentiated Evaluation

Every teacher brings their personality and their set of skills. You will respect each teacher because of those differences. As the instructional leader, you expect all teachers to practice differentiated instruction. You will serve as a positive role model by practicing differentiated evaluation. You will take on various roles with these teachers. At times, you will be a coach, at times, a cheerleader, and at times, a mentor. If you practice effective teacher evaluation, you will have the necessary information about teachers to make fair and equitable decisions.

Chapter 3

# Teachers

SINCE teaching is the main purpose of a school, teachers must be seen as the school's greatest asset. You should acknowledge that your role is to support teachers. Early pioneers in educational thought, raised concerns that teachers should be regarded as reflective practitioners instead of mere conduits for the thoughts of supervisors.

## Improvement must be intrinsically motivated.

The professional growth of a teacher doesn't happen merely because they have been told or shown how to change. Change will only take place when the teacher has internally concluded that change is both desirable and achievable, and when a work environment rich in professional resources, mutual respect, and appreciation exists.

## Self-evaluation precedes professional growth.

No matter how much the leader is convinced that a teacher needs to improve, understand that improvement cannot happen unless teachers reach their own conclusions.

## Effective teachers practice reflective thinking.

The ability to reflect on one's teaching practices is a crucial trait of effective teachers. Supervision and evaluation methods should be tailored to promote teachers' reflective practice (Machost & Stains, 2023).

## Teachers differ

Every teacher is unique, and as you work with them, you will come to recognize and appreciate that. Additionally, it's important to understand that evaluation needs will vary according to these distinct categories of teachers. Throughout this guide, you will find references to the following three categories of teachers.

### *The Professional*

The professionals are your accomplished and seasoned teachers. They are fully credentialed and possess some degree of job security. They are no longer considered "at will" employees. Most of your faculty will likely fall into this category.

### *The Novice*

Novice teachers are either new or have only a few years of experience. They may fall into an employment category that lacks job security. Their positions could be temporary or renewed on a year-by-year basis. This grouping may include teachers who are not fully credentialed and are serving under some form of emergency credential

### *The Teacher who is Struggling*

These teachers are considered to be performing poorly after you or previous leaders have determined, through careful consideration, that their performance does not meet acceptable standards. You will read more about these teachers in this handbook.

## Teachers Can Support

Most of the time, teachers practice their craft alone within the four walls of the classroom. When you encounter teachers who need extra support to improve their teaching, your role is to provide them with assistance and resources. Think of a collegial atmosphere. See other teachers as valuable assets (Shernoff et al., 2011). Considered here are some ways that teachers can help teachers.

### *New Teacher Mentors*

Entering the real teaching world can be intimidating for a new teacher just out of college. During student teaching, the master teacher provided support and assistance if things got out of hand. Look for ways to connect your newest teachers with successful, experienced educators who share similar interests. They can become new teacher mentors. Help them identify opportunities to offer essential coaching, support, and encouragement to the new teacher.

Ensure that the relationship between the two teachers is one of mentoring, not of evaluating. Make it clear that the mentor does not report to you. For the teacher-mentor relationship to be effective, it must remain collegial, not evaluative.

### *Peer Coaches*

Teachers will naturally spend time together discussing topics that interest them and may share their difficulties. These interactions happen organically. Encourage this interaction and provide positive support and feedback.

Consider the following model of peer coaching. Some or all of your staff may engage in a planned in-service or skills development training. Before the training, teachers pair up with one another. After the in-service sessions, the two individuals observe each other, teach, and offer feedback and coaching during implementation. This peer-coaching model could also complement a new teacher-mentor relationship.

Chapter 4
# The Craft of Teaching

Y OU might have spent a significant part of your career as a teacher. You were a good teacher. You excelled in the art and craft of teaching. As a leader, you are responsible for helping and supporting the teachers. You are no longer solely practicing the teaching craft; now, you are tasked with providing your teachers with the essential knowledge of the teaching craft. Here are some aspects of teaching practices that you should consider.

## Teaching is the essential function of a school.

Teaching is the "business" of the school. As a school leader, your responsibility, along with other services, is to support the teaching process. It is essential to recognize the complexities involved in defining "good teaching."

## Teaching is complex.

Teaching is part art and part science. All teachers differ and practice effectively in their own ways. Evaluating teachers is a complicated task. It may be tempting, since you are an excellent teacher, to place a higher value on those who "teach in the way you do."
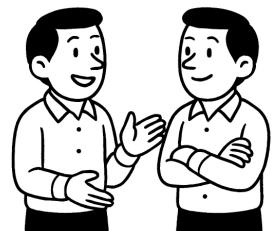
## Teaching practices can be defined, recognized, and observed.

We understand that teaching is complex and all teachers will approach their craft in different ways. However, it is crucial to acknowledge that certain fundamental elements can be identified and observed that influence effective teaching.

### *Defining Effective Teachers*

Despite these issues, understanding what defines a great teacher is crucial. As a supervisor and evaluator, you need a clear grasp of the complexities and fundamentals of "good teaching." Keep the following in mind.

### They Have "The Gift" for Teaching

Some people are born with the gift of teaching. The most effective teachers are those who have developed and practiced that gift. Supervisors often have the opportunity to work with those gifted teachers. Gifted teachers are constantly seeking ways to improve their skills. Traditional teacher evaluation methods may have little impact on these teachers.

### They Have Knowledge of the Subject Matter

No teacher can be effective without adequate knowledge of the subject matter they are teaching. It's generally safe to assume that teachers are knowledgeable about their subjects.

### They Practice the Teaching Craft

An effective teacher is one who understands and practices the teaching crafts. Supporting teachers in enhancing their teaching performance is central to your goals. You want teachers who effectively manage a classroom environment and understand and apply effective instructional techniques.

### They Have a Positive Attitude*

Great teachers also bring attitudes that set them apart. They have a strong sense of self-efficacy and believe they can make a difference. They are enthusiastic, willing, and collaborative, which positively impacts the school.

*\*The same is true for leaders who, by example, may nurture a positive spirit.*

## Performance Standards

Reflect on these qualities of good teachers and your own ideas about the "ideal" teacher. Then consider the importance of having written performance standards for all educators. These standards form the basis for all teacher evaluations. Every school system or conference must have adopted standards. Although this is a conference responsibility, as the site administrator, you need to have a working knowledge of these standards. Here, a brief overview of the key dimensions is provided.

*See Chapter 23 for further information about writing and adopting performance standards.*

### *Performance Standards Dimensions*

#### The Contract

Teachers are expected to perform the duties assigned and abide by the policies of the school and conference

#### Professional Judgement

The ethics of the teaching profession require that teachers always use appropriate personal and professional judgment.

### Teaching Methodologies

Teachers must practice accepted instructional techniques as expected by the profession, the school system, and the school.

### The Learning Environment

The teacher must maintain a classroom environment that can maximize the learning and safety of the students.

### An Emotionally-Safe Environment

The teacher must maintain an environment in the classroom and other areas of responsibility that support psychological safety.

Chapter 5

# Ethics and Due Process

A S AN ethical and moral leader, you will always prioritize ethical and moral practices when working with teachers, staff, parents, or others. You will uphold the ethical principles that guide your decision-making, interactions, and leadership with all the different constituencies they represent. These fundamental ethical principles include integrity, fairness, equity, respect and dignity, accountability, commitment to students' well-being, professionalism, and confidentiality. You will model these principles, promote these ethical behaviors among students, teachers, and staff, and support teachers while ensuring they meet professional and ethical standards.

Consider some kinds of decisions and issues that you will face, especially with your responsibilities for teacher supervision and evaluation.

## Conduct and Communication

You will uphold high standards in conduct, communication, and relationships. You are expected to act honestly and transparently in all your dealings. While communicating with students, teachers, parents, and others, you must always safeguard sensitive information regarding students, staff, and families. Although it can be challenging, it is essential to protect the privacy of students and staff while also maintaining transparency with parents, teachers, and community members.

## Equality and Equity

First, you must demonstrate that you value diversity and foster an inclusive environment. Treat all students, teachers, staff, and parents fairly and without favoritism, ensuring equitable treatment for everyone regardless of race, gender, religion, or sexual orientation. Provide equal access to opportunities and resources for all students, irrespective of their backgrounds. Finally, base all hiring, evaluation, and promotion decisions on merit rather than personal connections.

## The Environment

You must create a safe, supportive, and nurturing learning environment, ensuring that all students have access to quality education regardless of socioeconomic background, learning disabilities, or language barriers. Keep students' needs foremost in your decision-making process and balance policies with individualized student needs.

In a legal context, these practices are often referred to as "due process." When working with a novice or underachieving teacher, it may become a legal issue, particularly if the process leads to some form of discipline or administrative action.

## Due Process Elements

Due process is essential. All relevant supervisory activities and information regarding a teacher that you have received during the year must be handled ethically and with due process.

### Communication

Sometimes, you might have concerns about a teacher's performance. You need to identify and communicate those specific issues to the teacher. Those concerns should relate to performance standards or other evaluation criteria.

### Document

Document areas of concern using objective data, adhering to the documentation guidelines provided in Chapter 10.

### Remediate

Offer resources and assistance to help the teacher improve. These solutions may include opportunities for in-service training or other staff development. Consider appropriate support from you, a supervisor, or a mentor.

### Time

Allow the teacher sufficient time for improvement to occur. The term "sufficient" is subjective, and the duration deemed sufficient will depend on the type of issue and the creation of a suitable strategy to address it.

### Feedback

Give regular and constructive feedback to the teacher about progress made. Provide regular and ongoing feedback and more assistance as needed. Use your ethic of caring, and do whatever you can to assure a satisfactory conclusion to the remediation time and effort.

# Section II

# The Process

TEACHER evaluation is not just a one-time event. It involves more than a couple of visits to a classroom and a completed form. Instead, it is an ongoing series of events and activities throughout the school year. This section will discuss the essential elements for effective evaluation and will define three phases of the evaluation cycle: the "Planning Phase," the "Formative Phase," and the "Summative Phase."

Chapter 6

# Differentiated Evaluation

A S AN effective leader, you understand that while there are certain basic expectations of all teachers, no two teachers teach exactly alike. Your evaluation methods must recognize this diversity. As an equitable leader, however, you provide all teachers opportunities for success.

## Why Differentiated Evaluation?

### It Is Relevant

Differentiated evaluation focuses on individual teacher needs and designs activities that are relevant and challenging. While some teachers need more attention than others, many or most of the teachers on your staff are professionals and excellent teachers. When those teachers face an "evaluation" year, they may have negative feelings and view evaluation as an insult. Let them design their evaluation year activities focusing on something new or something to do differently. Make it affirming and positive. You will learn more about this later in the book.

### It Is Efficient

The evaluation process, when done correctly, is time-consuming. Differentiated evaluation allows you to focus time and energy on the teachers who need it most. You will need to coach and monitor your newer teachers and those who may be struggling. To help them be more productive and successful, provide the required support and time. Meanwhile, empower your experienced and successful teachers to implement their own evaluation activities. Be their cheerleader and supporter.

## Teacher Categories

Every teacher has unique experiences, teaching styles, and talents. In addition to recognizing the uniqueness of each teacher, you need to also recognize that there are categories of teachers that necessitate different approaches. You will need to think about different issues for each of the teachers in the following three categories.

### The Professional

They are the heart and soul of your school, each possessing unique strengths. Support and encourage their ongoing growth. You became an educational leader partly because you are an effective teacher. Learn to understand and support the distinct strengths of these teachers. Your role is to assist them, learn from them, and provide positive support.

### The Novice

New teachers may be enthusiastic and full of energy. However, you will need to closely monitor their growth as they develop into true professionals. These teachers are typically employed on a yearly basis, lacking the same job security as regular-status teachers. You will have to make recommendations regarding their continued employment, meaning that you must conduct teacher evaluations thoroughly, fairly, and openly. Additionally, you will need to provide sufficient support and coaching.

### The Teacher who is Struggling

These teachers may be discouraged and frustrated. They may be experiencing some burnout. Regardless of the reason, they need attention and support. The ethic of caring will drive you to salvage a teacher's career. The ethic of responsibility and concern for the well-being of all students requires you to provide a competent teacher in every classroom. Addressing this challenge will require your focused attention. You will need to dedicate considerable time to observe and monitor the teaching. You may have to make decisions about the future employment of these teachers.

## The Core Element

Yes, you recognize the important differences among your teachers. Yet, certain elements of the teacher evaluation process are essential and relevant to all participating teachers. That core element consists of four parts: goals, evidence, monitor and share (GEMS).

### Goals

Schedule a meeting with each teacher to establish a professional goal which focuses on improving professional performance. The goal must reflect one or more of the teacher performance standards. Consider the impact of this goal on student learning. Depending on the situation, this meeting will be collaborative so that teachers will feel ownership over the goal.

### *Evidence*

Once the goal has been established, the type of evidence needed to demonstrate goal attainment must be determined. You will collaborate with the teacher to decide which evidence will showcase that progress toward the goal has been achieved. This evidence may include a recording of the teacher in action, a recording of students engaging in a learning activity, or a demonstration. A display of student work may also be appropriate.

### *Monitor*

During the school year, you must meet regularly with the teacher to monitor their progress toward achieving the goal. Support should be provided, and necessary resources such as materials or supplies should be accessible. You, another supervisor, or a fellow teacher can offer coaching.

## Share and Celebrate

At or near the end of the school term, provide opportunities for teachers to celebrate their achievements. The evidence established in the goal-setting step will be showcased. Provide a special event with all teachers invited. Each participating teacher will present their recordings, demonstrations, or displays. Create a memorable event featuring teachers as the main focus of the program.

*See: Chapter 11, The Summative Phase speaks more about the celebration event*

Chapter 7

# Preparation Phase

YES, the teacher evaluation process spans the entire year and consists of defined phases. This chapter concentrates on the first phase, the planning phase. Before the school year begins or early in the term, you will establish the elements and practices that make up the evaluation process for the year. Meet with teachers to ensure everyone has a clear understanding of the evaluation plans for the year.

Consider two useful terms when discussing evaluation: formative and summative. Formative means that observations and information about teachers occur throughout the year, while summative refers to the summary of activities, decisions about teachers, and relevant documents.

## Faculty Orientation

Engage faculty in reviewing the evaluation policies and practices. All faculty need to be aware of the basic elements involved in faculty evaluation including:

- ▸▸ Purposes of the evaluation
- ▸▸ Performance Standards
- ▸▸ How evaluation results are used
- ▸▸ Which faculty are to be evaluated
- ▸▸ The evaluation year events

A faculty orientation can take place at a regularly scheduled faculty meeting before school begins or early in the school year. It may be a meeting including only new teachers or only those teachers scheduled for evaluation that year.

## Individual Meetings

Meet with each teacher individually who is scheduled for evaluation. Teachers may feel anxious about the evaluation process. They need to understand the steps involved. Discuss the following:

- ⏩ Provision for support and resources
- ⏩ Encouragement and recognition of teacher achievements
- ⏩ Activities to help teachers reflect on their teaching
- ⏩ Choices the teacher may have regarding evaluation activities
- ⏩ Understanding the teacher's general goals and aspirations
- ⏩ Establishing improvement goals for the current year

## Professional Goals

Before discussing goals with each teacher, consider your current understanding of them. Throughout the early part of the school year and in previous years, you've gained insight into their teaching skills from various sources of information, such as:

- ⏩ Informal or unplanned observations of teaching
- ⏩ Other informal contacts with the teachers
- ⏩ Comments (or complaints) from peers, parents, or students
- ⏩ Written documents
- ⏩ Out of class observations

This information can be valuable as you help teachers set an improvement goal.

## Self Assessment

You will already have certain opinions about the teacher developed through the informal awareness building that has taken place to this date. To help make the planning conference a meaningful, collaborative experience, a self evaluation instrument can be used by the teacher. Often, teachers are not completely aware of their strengths and weaknesses. Consider carefully before you make such a suggestion. Know your teacher well enough to feel safe to suggest this option. Assure that the assessment is totally private.

> ℹ️
>
> *See: Chapter 24 for examples of teacher self-assessment forms.*

## Setting the goals

Help each teacher develop a specific goal for professional improvement. You should be ready to suggest and provide tools to help the teachers achieve their goals. Because you are committed to support and fairness, the goals and process will depend on the needs of the teacher.

Think about the end of the year. Ask the teacher to consider what the attainment of their goals would "look like" at that time. Will there be a new kind of lesson design? A new use of technology? What evidence will be available to show how you or the teacher will know if the goal has been achieved? Talk about the end-of-the-year evidence and how the teacher's progress can be celebrated. Help the teacher think of something that could be demonstrated to other teachers.

The concept of a time to celebrate and share and the end of the evaluation year has already been mentioned. Read more about it in the Chapter 11 the summative phase.

## The Goals and Differentiated Evaluation

### The Professional

Most of your teachers likely fall into this category. For them, goal setting can be primarily non-directive or collaborative if the teacher prefers. Encourage these teachers to think creatively about their goals. They could become mentors to other teachers. They could try some innovative methods or explore new applications of technology. Consider having them prepare a presentation for the other teachers at the end of the year. Later in this guide, read about an event to celebrate teacher achievements as the year concludes.

### The Novice

The goal-setting process can be somewhat collaborative. It's important for the teacher to feel a sense of ownership. If the teacher has one or two years of experience, you may be aware of their specific professional needs. In that case, you may need to be more directive and ensure that some of these issues are included in the professional goals.

### The Teacher who is Struggling

You may have identified these teachers due to valid complaints or classroom observations. They may have several years of unsatisfactory performance that have been overlooked over time. You should take a more directive approach to developing their improvement goals. Collaborate to determine the support and assessment necessary to achieve these goals. You will also need to act as a coach and mentor, and a cheerleader when they demonstrate improvement.

Chapter 8

# Formative Phase

THROUGHOUT the year, your attention is required in many ways. Issues and crises arise unexpectedly, but you manage them and gain a deeper understanding of your teachers. The ethic of fairness requires that teacher evaluation be based on a broad range of information sources. While you learn much about teachers through unplanned events, you must be intentional in teacher evaluation actions and activities.

## Learning about the Teacher

This section will consider ways you will learn about teacher performance during the year; some are intentional, and some are not. This is the "formative" phase. You are always open to learning more about each teacher.

### Classroom Observations

The classroom is where learning, the school's business, happens. Therefore, classroom observations serve as a vital source of information relative to the teacher's professional competencies. While important, it is only one of several ways to learn about a teacher.

Classroom observation may be informal or formal. An informal visit is unannounced. It will be brief instead, not lasting an entire lesson. A formal classroom observation is planned to observe a complete lesson. These formal observations are sometimes misunderstood as merely "the evaluation."

*For more information about classroom observations, see Chapter 9*

## Recordings

In addition to the documents you created during classroom observations, you may have video recordings of classroom activities. These may not take the place of observational records, but there are some potential benefits to having classroom recordings.

## Instructional Documents

Certain documents may provide information about a teacher's plans and skills. The documents may include.

### *Student Work*

It is useful to observe samples of student assignments, practice, projects, and homework.

### *Test Scores*

While norm-referenced standardized test scores should not be used to evaluate teachers, you need to be aware of patterns indicated by the scores that may warrant further examination.

### *Lesson Plans*

You may not practice regular reviewing of teacher lesson plans. However, examining a teacher's long-term or short-term lesson plans can provide valuable data about the teacher's professional abilities.

### *Course Outlines or Syllabi*

Course outlines can help assess how well the teacher aligns with the established curriculum. They may also illustrate the teacher's ability for long-range planning.

### *Teacher-made Tests*

At times, it might be helpful for you to examine teacher-made tests. Such tests provide valuable data about how teachers hold students accountable to the established curriculum.

### *Pupil Progress Records*

Performance standards will probably specify school or conference expectations regarding how teachers maintain academic records and assign grades. It is generally considered the teacher's responsibility to assign grades. However, the school or conference must specify the means and standards for issuing grades. Examining teachers' records will indicate the degree of compliance with those expectations.

# Complaints

Whether you like it or not, you will likely receive complaints about teachers occasionally. Dealing with these complaints can be sensitive and challenging. Complaints may come from various sources.

### Students

Handling student complaints can be particularly sensitive, and teachers rely on your support. However, it's essential to provide appropriate follow-up on student complaints. Also, keep in mind the importance of maintaining ongoing informal discussions with students daily. Such can offer valuable insights into trends or patterns related to teacher performance.

### Parents

Good parents want the best for their children and may sometimes come across as critical. Be an attentive listener. Some conferences or schools require that any complaint be submitted in writing. Whether or not that is a policy you must follow or choose to adhere to, a written complaint immediately becomes part of the teacher's file.

### Colleagues

You may often hear complaints from other teachers. When you listen to teachers express frustrations about their colleagues, you should practice good listening skills while keeping a neutral demeanor.

### Others

Community members, along with other school staff and school board members, may approach you with information about teachers. All observations or complaints must be investigated properly.

# Complaint Ethics

Ethical considerations are vital. Maintain transparency while ensuring confidentiality. Fairness to all parties must be taken into account.

### Confidentiality

Individuals filing a complaint may ask that you keep the source confidential. However, you also need to be honest and fair with the teacher.

### Follow-up

You should follow up on any reasonable complaint. Be aware that maintaining confidentiality may be difficult during the investigation of a complaint. Always uphold the dignity of both the teacher and the person making the complaint. The follow-up will require a written report indicating whether the complaint was validated. Document the nature of the complaint and the outcome of the investigation. The report serves as an evaluation document.

## Student Evaluations

Is it appropriate to use student evaluations in the evaluation process for teachers? Are they reliable indicators of teacher performance? Most of the studies about student evaluation of teachers comes from higher education examples. Much of the literature indicates the high likelihood of gender, cultural, ethnic and possibly other biases that show up in student evaluations (Michela, 2022). Be intentional about their use. Some teacher performance standards may address student-teacher interaction skills. A student evaluation could be helpful. If student evaluations are used at all, they should serve solely as one indicator of teacher performance. When deciding on the use of student evaluations, consider the age of the student. Secondary schools may wish to use student evaluation regularly while elementary schools are less likely.

*See Chapter 25 for two examples of student evaluation forms.*

Chapter 9

# Classroom Observations

SINCE the school's business occurs in the classroom, you need to understand what takes place there. Spending time observing in classrooms will provide insights into each teacher's abilities and the quality of the classroom environment.

There are various times, places, and reasons for being in a teacher's classroom. This chapter will explore two types of classroom visits for teacher evaluation activities: informal and formal observations.

Regardless of the purpose or nature of your classroom observation, always respect the teacher's space. Avoid interruptions unless absolutely necessary. Be as unobtrusive as possible.

First, let's consider informal classroom visits.

## Informal Classroom Observations

Informal observation visits are typically unannounced. They will last for shorter periods and are not designed to cover an entire lesson. These visits may be either planned or unplanned.

The informal observation allows you to see the teacher at different times and during various activities. Informal visits will provide a "cross-section" view of the teacher's classroom performance.

### Planned

Planned informal observations are sometimes called "walk-through" visits. In a planned walk-through, you will set aside time to spend a few minutes making unannounced visits in various classrooms. These visits give you a "feel" for the school as well as a "feel" for individual teachers' performance.

## Unplanned

Some informal observations occur as a result of routine campus activities. Your job keeps you consistently visible on the campus and in classrooms. For example, you may choose to deliver messages personally to students or teachers rather than delegating. You may take the opportunity to linger a few minutes in various classrooms to make observations of teaching and classroom interactions. Determine to be as active and involved as possible in being visible on the campus and in classrooms and make frequent informal visits to classrooms.

## Feedback to the Teacher

If you notice something positive, consider providing a simple non-verbal affirmation before leaving the classroom.

If you notice something that concerns you or observe something more significant, you should speak with the teacher later. You can create an incidental memo detailing what was observed and its implications. You may wish to commend, criticize, or seek clarification. Once written, such a memo becomes part of the teacher's file, and you must follow up with the teacher.

*See Chapter 13 for information about written documents.*

## Differentiated Evaluation

### The Professional

The difference between a successful teacher and an poorly performing teacher may be fluid. Informal observations are useful as they clarify your understanding of all teachers.

### The Novice

Informal visits are crucial for teachers who are new to your school or the profession. These visits will help you assess their instructional skills and classroom management. You will certainly make formal visits or recordings as well.

### The Teacher who is Struggling

Your understanding of the teachers and their individual needs will dictate how often you need to make informal visits.

# Formal Classroom Observations

A formal observation involves observing an entire lesson, usually lasting a full period. This helps evaluate the teacher's ability to plan and deliver an effective lesson. Schedule the visit ahead of time so both parties can prepare.

What do studies in the field of teacher evaluation suggest? The classroom observation is a common tool used in teacher evaluation, yet often misused. It becomes a misuse if the formal classroom observation is the primary or sole part of the evaluation process. It is a misuse to require the formal observation as a mandatory component of the process. It is a misuse to mandate this observation for every teacher.

But consider the benefits. Teachers appreciate feedback about the quality of their teaching. Effective formal classroom observations are a vital part of your teacher evaluation process and can form the basis for meaningful feedback. Observing an entire lesson offers a chance to evaluate the teacher's lesson planning skills. If a teacher is new or facing difficulties, the formal observation provides a more complete view of their craft. If you are new to the school, you will learn a great deal about the teachers (Education Advanced, 2023). Be sure the observation is meaningful, conduct the formal observation carefully and with a clear goal. Plan to observe a full lesson, as this will help you understand the teacher's lesson design skills. Be aware that there are challenges involved in conducting formal classroom visits. And don't forget this: you, as the main learner, might learn something.

*Warning*

*The classroom observation is only beneficial if planned carefully and conducted thoughtfully.*

## The Challenge

You have been a successful classroom teacher before taking on the responsibility of teacher evaluation. Conducting formal classroom observations will require you to analyze and critique many teachers and their techniques. You may not have expertise in every teaching model. As the lead learner, you may soon discover that you have "a lot to learn." Put on your "lead learner" hat and consider the following two suggestions.

### *Learn from Section IV: Best Practices*

Refer to Section IV of this guide, which offers an overview of best practices in teaching. Each chapter in that section explores various effective teaching methods or techniques. Additionally, each chapter provides suggested "look-fors" for your classroom observations. Careful reading in Section IV will enhance your understanding of your teacher's methods and enable you to use appropriate professional terminology as you analyze and engage with your teachers/

### *Learn from Teachers*

You might often notice exceptional teachers using a teaching and learning model of which you may not be aware. During your post-observation meeting, ask the teacher to explain the rationale behind the selected activity and its intended benefits.

## Essential Elements

### Advance Arrangements

Schedule a visit with the teacher to observe the class. You want to see the teacher showcase their capabilities. During an unannounced classroom visit, you might find students engaged in self-directed study, managing routine tasks, or participating in other less informative activities.

### New Material

When scheduling the appointment for the visit, inform the teacher that you expect to see a full lesson featuring new material being presented. This requirement allows you to observe the teacher's lesson planning and presentation skills.

### Complete Lesson

Dedicate sufficient time to observe the entire lesson. To evaluate an instructional episode effectively, you need to determine whether the teacher completes the essential components of effective lesson design.

### Unobtrusive Observation

You are in the classroom to observe actions. Remain as quiet as possible and avoid interacting with students. Ensure that the teacher has set aside a seat for you away from the center of classroom activities. You were an excellent teacher, you enjoyed interacting with the students. You are tempted to interact here. Don't. You are an observer, not a participant.

### Follow-up Conference

Arrange a formal meeting with the teacher following the observation. The main goal of all aspects of teacher evaluation is to create opportunities for teachers to enhance their skills. This feedback meeting should be held either on the same day as the visit or, at the latest, the following day. Any meeting held after that will offer limited value.

## Frequency of Observations

When conducted properly, formal classroom observations provide a comprehensive and equitable assessment of a teacher's abilities, as well as more opportunities for professional growth. The number of times you conduct a formal evaluation will depend on the level of success achieved during the first visit. A school or conference's evaluation policies may specify how many classroom observations are required.

Practical considerations will limit the number of formal classroom observations conducted. Some policies may use the term "number of evaluations." Don't be confused. A classroom observation is one data point used in evaluations; it is not "an evaluation."

### *Frequency and Differentiated Evaluation*

#### The Professional

You know these teachers well and understand how effectively they teach. During the preparation phase interview, you may have concluded that while formal observations are not necessary, they are appreciated by the teacher. The teacher might wish to invite your observations and coaching as an innovation or new teaching technique is implemented. Therefore, whether to include formal observations should be a collaborative decision based on that teacher's specific goals. So, be a supporter and a cheerleader.

#### The Novice

Plan on multiple formal observations during the year. Observe different times of the day and other subjects if that applies. You will want to obtain a broad range of information. The use of recording may also be helpful.

#### The Teacher who is Struggling

Schedule formal observations during a time or on a subject that best represents the concerns regarding this teacher's performance.

## Preparation for the Observation

Make arrangements in advance. You and the teacher should agree on the date and time together.

### *Pre-Conference*

Meeting with the teacher in advance of the observation may be helpful, but is optional. You have already included basic information about formal observations in the individual planning conference for each teacher. This would be a refresher meeting. It might help focus on specific professional growth issues.

### *Teacher Preparation*

Make sure the teacher understands the purpose of the visit and any specifics you're looking for. Remind the teacher that you want to observe a complete lesson, that you'll stay for the entire class, and that the observation will be followed by a meeting.

### *Materials*

Request the teacher to provide written lesson objectives in advance. This will help you concentrate on your analysis. Additionally, ask for advance copies of any student handouts or text. You should understand what the students are doing without needing to walk around.

## How to Record the Observations

Keeping a record of formal observations is crucial for several reasons. It is important for the teacher to understand that your observations are based on objective data. Documenting your observations shows the teacher your professional approach. Relying on memory alone is far less likely to be objective and comprehensive. Consider next what the record of a classroom observation might look like.

### *Check sheets or rating scales.*

Check sheets or rating scales are rarely used to record classroom observations. This type of instrument is typically employed when the supervisor has specific elements of effective teaching in mind. The supervisor aims to compare the observed events with certain predetermined elements or practices listed on the form or checklist.

However, remember that the goal of an observation is to assess this teacher's instructional quality and interactions with all students. You want to learn about and appreciate the unique strengths of this teacher. Simply filling out a form or "checking off some boxes" is unlikely to provide a fair and objective evaluation of this teacher's capabilities. Acknowledging the complexities of the educational profession and recognizing the differences among teachers and situations render a check sheet insufficient in most cases.

### *A Blank Sheet of Paper*

You are committed to understanding the diverse skills and styles of your teachers. It is recommended that you document your observations on a blank sheet of paper. A plain sheet of lined paper is perfect for noting your observations.

### Verbatim

What should you do with a blank sheet of paper? A verbatim note-taking method suggests that the observer write a word-for-word record of everything the teacher or student says during the instructional episode. It can be argued that this verbatim record is the most honest and complete way to document events. However, not every significant element of the teaching or learning episode may be verbal.

**Narrative**

An alternative to a verbatim record is the narrative record. This method does not provide a word-for-word account of the instructional episode. Instead, it narrates the events and highlights the teacher-student interactions.

The record may start with a narrative description of the classroom dynamics during the transition to a new lesson or class period. What did the teacher do or say to engage the students? What actions did the teacher take to address a disruption? What strategies did the teacher use to demonstrate a particular teaching technique? What indications were there that the students clearly understood the material and the expectations set for them?

The narrative record must objectively describe the events; it is not an analysis or evaluative record. Selected verbatim notes may also be included. The teacher might have used a particular word or phrase that led to an intended (or unintended) outcome. You could include that in your notes.

You might create shortcuts. For instance, placing a question mark in the margins if you need the teacher to explain something. Alternatively, you could use an "x" to mark something particularly significant for later discussion.

## Characteristics of the Observation Record

### *Authentic and Accurate*

With practice, a skilled observer will have an accurate record of what occurred during the lesson by the end of the period. This doesn't mean you need to have written down everything, but it should be authentic, providing a realistic account of the events. Most likely, it will consist of a mix of verbatim and narrative statements.

### *Objective*

An objective record comprises factual statements devoid of judgment or evaluative terms. Observe the following examples of objective versus non-objective statements.

**Objective Examples**

⬥ Three students threw paper from their seats to the wastebasket. Other students worked at their seats without interrupting while the teacher worked with the group.

⬥ The teacher failed to state the objective to the students.

⬥ The teacher did not provide a written objective or lesson plan.

⬥ During the lesson, five students participated in the class discussion by asking questions or responding to questions. The other students studied quietly or read other books or materials.

### Non Objective Examples

- ⏩ The teacher had good classroom management.
  *The word "good" is an evaluative term.*
- ⏩ There was no indication of a lesson plan.
  *What did you see that gave the impression there was no lesson plan?*
- ⏩ The teacher did not have good class control.
  *"Good" is not objective.*
- ⏩ The room was a zoo.
  *To you, it may have looked like a "zoo," but what exactly did you see?*
- ⏩ The teacher permitted too many interruptions.
  *How many interruptions were there? How many are too many?*
- ⏩ The teacher lectured too much.
  *How long was the lecture? What were the students doing during the lecture? Was the lecture related to the stated objective?*
- ⏩ The teacher does not pay enough attention to the slower students.
  *What did you see the slower students doing? What was the teacher doing?*

You have finished your visit to the classroom. You have an authentic, accurate, and objective written record. So now what?

## Analysis

Your written record serves as your primary tool for analyzing the lesson. Teaching is a complex art. Effective teachers make decisions moment by moment during a single lesson. Careful thought is necessary and may require some judgment on your part. It is essential to follow appropriate procedures and use acceptable criteria as a basis for analysis.

*See Section IV Best Practices. Those chapters will help you focus and analyze your observations.*

### *Timing*

An initial analysis of the lesson should take place right after the lesson and once the observation notes are completed. The observer requires a conceptual framework to interpret what has been observed and to evaluate the effectiveness of the instruction. Section IV "best practices" includes chapters which define some of the best practices of effective teachers. Read those chapters. They contain tools that can be used to analyze and make sense of the lessons you observe.

### Flexibility

Maintain objectivity. Not all teachers use the same methods or teaching styles. A single lesson observation may leave questions unanswered. Therefore, it's important to maintain an open mind during analysis and feedback sessions with a teacher in order to understand their perceptions. Did you see something that made you wonder but seemed to work? Prepare to ask the teacher for some more information.

### Knowledge Base

You must have a broad knowledge of effective teaching competencies. You need be able to recognize and identify the various elements of effective teaching outlined in the teaching and learning lenses and clearly explain to the teacher how employing those principles and practices can enhance teaching.

### Reflective Practice

You analysis of this observation should aim to foster teachers' professional growth. The most effective way to achieve this is by helping teachers understand and analyze their teaching. Therefore, when giving feedback consider how to involve them in the analysis process. Your analysis should include questions. Encourage the teacher to critique the lesson and to clarify any concerns you may have about certain aspects of it.

### Teacher Needs

The teacher's needs are more important than your own. You should recognize that different teachers encounter various challenges to their professional growth. Instead of focusing on your beliefs about what constitutes effective teaching, utilize the resources in Section IV that are most applicable to the teacher's needs during the observation.

### Prioritization

You may conclude that certain performance standards are not being met and require remediation. Avoid discouraging the teacher by expecting them to "fix" everything at once. Be selective in identifying areas for improvement. The lenses offer a framework for prioritizing and making recommendations based on areas that would impact learning and what would be easiest for the teacher to implement.

### Impact on Learning

In areas where the teacher requires improvement, think about which factors would have the greatest impact on student learning.

### Likelihood of Remediation

Consider the areas where the teacher needs improvement and identify which ones would be easiest for them to change. Center your analysis on the most essential strategies that can assist the teacher in their growth. It is unrealistic to expect a teacher who requires help today to achieve perfection tomorrow. You can prioritize by using these two criteria to select the focus for efforts aimed at helping that teacher develop.

## Post-Observation Conference

You have completed your analysis. The next step is to meet with the teacher. Be prepared. Utilize your written record of the observation and your analysis. Think about the teacher. Is this a successful and experienced teacher? Is it a novice teacher? Is this teacher's performance less than satisfactory? Prepare your comments carefully. Work with the teacher to set up the time for the meeting.

### *Teacher readiness*

Before starting the conversation, consider the teacher's readiness. You might be a cheerleader, affirming the success of this event. You might be a coach, discussing how certain teacher actions could have been enhanced. You might be a learner who noticed an effective strategy and wants to learn more.

### *Set the tone*

The location should be accommodating for the teacher. In most cases, meet in the teacher's classroom. If the classroom is going to be busy with other things happening, let the teacher suggest an alternative. Just be sure to ensure privacy during the meeting. Establish a positive tone, as the teacher may feel anxious. Start the conversation with general statements unrelated to the observation analysis.

### *Clarify*

It's possible that certain events during the observation were unclear, which made completing your analysis challenging. Was there something you missed hearing? Was there an action you didn't grasp? Had something relevant occurred earlier? Ask the teacher for clarification to enhance your understanding.

### *Report and critique*

You might ask the teacher, "How did the lesson go?" Hopefully, the teacher's self-analysis will be on point. You are encouraging reflective thinking whether the analysis is positive or critical. You may commend the teacher or follow up with suggestions or recommendations.

Use professional terminology to describe the actions you observed. If you comment on an unproductive action, you may request feedback from the teacher. Did it go well? Why or why not? You promote reflective practice, which can lead to a better understanding of what requires improvement.

You might need to describe the action, report the results you observed, and explain how the action could have been enhanced. You might also incorporate some clarifying questions into this portion of the meeting.

When referring to something specific from your notes, your statements to the teacher should include at least three elements: "data," "label," and "reason" or D-L-R. "Data" refers to what you saw, heard, or observed from your notes. "Label" denotes the professional terminology related to the incident. "Reason" is where you explain to the teacher why the incident enhanced or detracted from learning.

For example: "I noticed that when Susan was humming and not paying attention, you continued your presentation, walked over, and stood by her desk. The humming stopped. You were using extinction by not calling attention to the misbehavior. By employing that technique, the teaching/learning activity remained uninterrupted."

Whatever you do, avoid statements like "I liked that . . ." It's not the teacher's responsibility to "please" you. Instead, use words like "effective" and explain your reasoning.

### *Close*

Always remember that the purpose of evaluation is to enhance teaching and learning. If this teacher demonstrated a high level of competence, then allow that teacher to set the agenda for future observations. Are there aspects of the teacher's professional goals that were not achieved? Are some interventions necessary? Specify the actions the teacher needs to take to improve. Be clear and explicit about expectations for the next visit. Provide resources if needed.

## Using and Filing the Observation Notes

Classroom observation and follow-up meetings mainly focus on helping teachers enhance their instructional skills. Taking notes during observations will allow you to recall what was seen in previous visits while preparing for future ones. The written record of the classroom observation is not meant to be a summary evaluation document.

It's advisable to retain the notes for a reasonable duration, perhaps for the entire school year or until the teacher's next evaluation cycle. Provide a copy to the teacher if requested. These notes are part of the teacher's evaluation file.

Chapter 10

# Recording

WHEN conducted appropriately, a formal classroom observation can be a most informative evaluative event. However, as previously noted, it is merely one event. This chapter explores recording as another valuable tool in teacher evaluation.

## Benefits of Recording

Consider some specific benefits of recording. Recording teacher episodes has significant value in promoting teacher reflective practice. It may serve as a more objective record of the lesson compared to handwritten observer notes. Additionally, it provides a compelling opportunity for review, recall, and self-analysis (Gibbons & Farley, 2019).

### *Recording by Teacher*

A recording enables a teacher to review, and analyze a lesson independently. The only limitations on the use of recordings are time, enthusiasm, and the desire for professional growth. Teachers who record on their own may feel less intimidated by supervisors, especially in areas where they feel somewhat insecure. It can serve as a powerful tool for self-reflection and improvement.

Even if you or another supervisor requests recordings, allow the teacher to record another if not satisfied with the first. Professional growth happens when the teacher reviews a recording, reflects on their performance, makes improvements, and makes another recording. Anxiety will no doubt decrease if teachers know they can submit more than one lesson recording.

### Recording by Supervisor

If you were to make the recording, the teacher could proceed with the lesson without worrying about its creation. After the recording, the teacher and supervisor may watch the lesson either separately or together. The teacher might be more inclined to analyze and self-assess without the supervisor present to highlight significant lesson events. Nevertheless, there could be benefits for both the supervisor and the teacher to watch the recording together and collaboratively discuss their analyses.

## Recording and Differentiated Evaluation

### The Professional

For your veteran teachers, recording might be optional. However, it's important to encourage all teachers to be reflective practitioners, and recording serves as a strong and valuable tool for that purpose. Keep in mind the teacher's original evaluation goal and work together to determine where the use of recordings would be most relevant.

### The Novice

Recording can be especially valuable for newer teachers. They can record their own lessons and watch the footage without any critique from you or a supervisor. This allows teachers to self-reflect and learn. When the next formal observation is scheduled, the teacher may look forward to it as an opportunity to showcase their improvements.

### The Teacher who is Struggling

Encourage, but perhaps do not require, this teacher to use recordings. A recording may be less effective if it is mandatory. You should rely on your observations and support to help all teachers improve.

## Possible Disadvantages

### Incomplete

A recording may be less comprehensive than handwritten notes. It may not provide as complete and holistic a view of the classroom and the learning atmosphere as an observer present in the room would. Significant lesson events may occur outside the focus of the recording.

### Intrusion

Incorporating recording into a classroom will alter the dynamics of the environment. Assessing how significantly this intrusion impacts the lesson and its interactions can be difficult. A human observer also constitutes an external intrusion. In either case, the relative degree of intrusions should be recognized and minimized as much as possible.

## Planning

### Step #1. Establish Goals

The recording serves best as an analysis tool when specific improvement goals have been set. These goals will likely be formed collaboratively between the teacher and you.

### Step #2. View the Recording

The teacher should view the recording first, taking greater responsibility for the process. This gives the teacher an opportunity to reflect and develop strategies for improvement. The teacher may realize that they are not satisfied with the level of growth and might choose to record a different lesson before being observed by the principal or supervisor for review. In any case, the teacher prepares analysis notes and self-critically evaluates the lesson presentation

### Step #3. Review and Analysis

Once the teacher has viewed the recording and completed the analysis, the recording and analysis notes are sent to the principal. If a conference or university supervisor is involved in the process, the supervisor will watch the recording and assess the extent to which their analysis aligns with that submitted by the teacher.

### Step #4. Follow-up Conference

Meet with the teacher to evaluate how well your analysis aligns with the teacher's. An agreement suggests that the process of self-reflection supports the teacher's growth effectively. Any follow-up activities should be developed collaboratively. If there is not full agreement, additional evaluation activities and support may be necessary.

## Conference Supervisors

If you are a conference or university supervisor, the recording can provide distinct advantages. You often have heavy workloads and may be geographically distant from teachers in smaller schools. Travel time and the limited number of visits to these schools can diminish the effectiveness of supervisory responsibilities. Your schedule may not allow for as many observations as you would prefer.

By effectively using recordings, the impact of your visits can be greatly enhanced. Teachers can create their own recordings and send them to you. They may also critique their lessons independently. You will then be able to compare your critiques with theirs. You will observe and critique more lessons, gaining more opportunities for classroom observations without needing to travel as much.

Chapter 11

# Summative Phase

SUMMATIVE evaluation marks the culmination of the evaluation year. This is where it all comes together. As an ethical leader, you have supported your professional staff and seen them grow. You have worked closely with your novice teachers, observing them, supporting them, and cheering for them. Your struggling teachers have also received your support. You have observed their teaching and provided assistance where needed. In each of these cases, you have documented evidence of their accomplishments and the help you have provided.

Now is the time to summarize all of this in your final summative evaluation report. You are prepared to make recommendations regarding the continued employment of your novice teachers. You are prepared to make recommendations regarding the teachers who struggled.

You will prepare a document that meets conference requirements and will become part of the teacher's evaluation file. This evaluation should be comprehensive, drawing from the various information sources utilized throughout the year.

Any concerns or criticisms regarding the teacher's performance that are part of the final summative evaluation should have already been communicated to the teacher throughout the year. Teachers will have the chance to improve if any issues are noted. A record of previously communicated concerns should also be included in the teacher's evaluation file.

- ⇉ Teacher's performance goals for the year
- ⇉ Classroom observation notes
- ⇉ Incidental or other memos you have written
- ⇉ Notes written by others

Reread the notes and documents. Assess the extent to which the teacher's goals have been achieved. Review the assistance provided to the teacher. Examine how criticisms or comments from others have been addressed and what follow-up actions were taken. Summarize and determine what should be included in the summative evaluation document.

## Prepare an Evaluation Document

You need to complete and submit a summative evaluation document. It may be a rating scale of some kind required by the conference. The ideal document, from both a legal and professional perspective, would be a record of all the year's supervision and evaluation activities written as an objective narrative or letter. It should align with the evaluative criteria set by the school or conference. It must contain no new information and should be written objectively.

Give serious consideration to this document. It will be permanently filed at the school and the conference. It may have long-term implications.

Certain forms or methods of reporting summative evaluations are much more effective than others. Review the following information regarding rating scales or narrative documents.

### Rating scales or checklists

Rating scales may be valued for their ability to provide standardized, comparable data that can be used to track progress of a school or program or maybe to support certain policies (Tuytens & Devos, 2010). But do they support the primary purpose of teacher evaluation, to improve teaching?

#### Subjectivity

Completing such a form objectively is not easy. It may reference a performance standard that was never discussed throughout the year. Is it acceptable to say, "I don't know?" Additionally, if there is a rating scale, how do you determine just "how effective" the teacher is concerning a specific aspect? You may find it challenging to distinguish a measurable difference between, for example, "satisfactory" and "excellent." Moreover, any rating or grading of a teacher on a scale lacks legal significance without a written history of that teacher's evaluation events or documents throughout the year. If you have all the relevant documents prepared and filed properly, you possess an objective record. To translate those records to a scale, it becomes subjective. If you are completing a rating scale without the documents, the evaluation will hold no value.

#### Inequality

It has been found that rating scales have significant disadvantages and biases that require careful consideration. These biases include the "halo effect." With this effect, when someone completing the form has an overall positive view of the person being evaluated, that person will also receive higher ratings for specific traits. This can easily lead to inflated ratings for teachers who are more likable, pleasant, or have other favorable qualities (O'Grady, 2023).

### Narrative Document

An open-ended form or a simple letter serves as the most professional and legally binding document. To prepare such a letter, access the teacher's file and summarize all actions related to the teacher's performance, noting what assistance has been provided and any improvements made by the teacher. This objective narrative encapsulates the actions, documents, and observations recorded throughout the year. To assist in preparing a summary evaluation letter, a suggested outline and three sample completed summary letters are provided in Chapter 28.

### Other

You may encounter a challenge. Your conference may insist on completing a scale that involves a rating system. Are you confident in the quality of your supervision activities and documentation? If so, you might consider using the information from this handbook to request a variance, specifically the use of a narrative document. If not, strive to be as objective as possible and support everything on the form with narrative evidence. If you are compelled to provide a rating without documentation, you need to indicate this within the document or as an addition.

## Review the Teacher's Status

For some teachers, the evaluation may impact their certification or employment. They may be new teachers with less than regular employment status. They may be teachers on temporary employment or credential status. They may be teachers on a probationary contract due to previous unsatisfactory evaluations.

You may be asked to make decisions or recommendations regarding a teacher's further employment. Those decisions may relate to

- ▸▸ Promotion of the teacher from a lower to higher employment status
- ▸▸ Change in the teacher's employment status
- ▸▸ Transfer of the teacher
- ▸▸ Termination.

## Consider Future Growth Goals

Did the teacher meet the improvement goals set earlier in the year? Has the teacher's performance indicated that additional goal-setting is necessary? If any new goals for next year need to be written, those goals must (a) be achievable, (b) be realistic, and (c) be prioritized based on their effectiveness in promoting learning. Do the teacher goals suggest the need for providing support options for the teacher? Are there summer workshops available?

## Schedule an Evaluation Conference

You have prepared your analysis and completed the summative evaluation document. You will now meet with the teacher to provide the summative document. You can give the document to the teacher either before or during the meeting.

### *Planning the conference.*

For the meeting, consider each teacher's status. What is the teacher's credential or employment status? Is this a new teacher or a veteran? Reflect on the teacher's readiness for change or innovation. Do you need to make any recommendations for next year? If so, how receptive will the teacher be? Of course, each teacher has unique needs, but it is essential to consider implications for teachers in specific categories.

### *Summative Conference and Differentiated Evaluation*

#### The Professional

When meeting with an already successful teacher, plan for a collaborative discussion. You'll likely have mostly positive feedback. Encourage innovative thinking for this educator. You may also have thought-provoking questions to draw out the teacher's ideas for future development. Consider this: How receptive is this teacher to suggestions for continued growth? Naturally, you want every teacher to improve each year. So, be a cheerleader. Organize a meeting where you encourage the teacher to explore new and innovative ways to enhance their practice. You may or may not have some suggestions for this teacher.

#### The Novice

When meeting with a new teacher, you will hold a directive conference. Evaluate whether the performance justifies continued employment for another year. If it is the final year of their provisional status, prepare your recommendation regarding continued employment and create a list of goals, support activities, and follow-up tasks for the teacher.

#### The Teacher who is Struggling

Is this a veteran who is performing poorly as a teacher? Your file should include various documents demonstrating the number of classroom visits and your observations from those visits. There may be written memos that illustrate how the teacher has responded, improved, or failed to improve. Determine whether the performance justifies a change in employment status or, based on previous decisions, continued employment for another year. If the teacher is to remain employed, prepare a list of expected goals, resources, and follow-up activities.

## Sharing or Celebrating Activity

### What is it?

This section considers an alternative summative evaluation activity. You might name the activity something like "Teacher Celebration Day." The event will take place at or near the end of the school year. Set a time after school for teachers to gather. Provide an opportunity for every teacher who has completed their evaluation cycle to report their success in achieving the development goal set at the beginning of the year.

### Why?

Some of these teachers may have utilized new or innovative practices. Encourage them to share their experiences with their colleagues. Allow the teachers to share their accomplishments with one another. Educators will learn from each other, and they might even start viewing the evaluation year as something to anticipate.

### Who attends?

The principal and faculty need to collaboratively consider who will attend. Most teachers may feel most comfortable with a presentation to their peers and their principal or supervisor. However, it might also be appropriate to include others, such as school board members, pastors, or other supporters of the school and teachers.

Teachers in small schools often feel more isolated than those in larger schools. Bringing together the faculty from small schools at a conference or regional meeting would be a very special event for these teachers. Using Zoom or similar applications could connect more than one school for the celebration.

# Section III

# Documentation

THIS section examines various forms of written communication. Since this book serves as a guide for teacher evaluation, the primary emphasis will be on documents related to a teacher's performance. As an educational leader, you engage daily in discussions with teachers, students, and others. So, why dedicate a section to written communication? Consider this: "if it isn't written, it didn't happen." Is that an exaggeration? Perhaps, but continue reading.
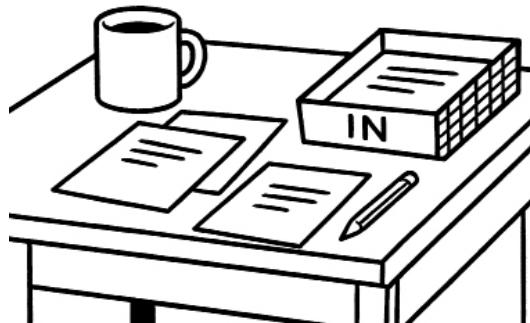
Chapter 12
# The Teacher File

THIS guide focuses on documents related to a teacher's performance. Any document written about a teacher that you possess becomes part of the teacher's file. This is true regardless of where it is or what it is written on.

For example, if you write something about a teacher on a scrap of paper and put it in your pocket, or jot down a note on your office calendar, or make a note in a phone app, any of those immediately become part of the teacher's file. Such documents might include but are not necessarily limited to the following.

- Notes from conversations with teachers, students, colleagues, parents, or others
- Written complaints
- Examples of student work, if applicable
- Teacher's course outlines, syllabi, or lesson plans
- Pupil progress records, as appropriate
- Observation notes
- Letters

## File Location

### Temporary Locations

You may have written one of those quick notes. If it's about a teacher's performance, it immediately becomes part of the teacher's file. Even when stored in a temporary location, it must follow the same accessibility principles as a document in a locked and labeled file. Ultimately, it has to be discarded or placed in a secure location.

### Secure Location

The permanent teacher's file should be locked and in a secure location.

**Transparency**

The ethic of honesty demands that the teacher must be aware of all documents in this file. If requested, the teacher must be allowed to see all of the contents of the file in your presence. However, the teacher's right to remove items from the file is limited.

# Chapter 13
# Documents

PREVIOUS chapters in this guide have mentioned written documents that arise in various contexts and at different times. This chapter will consider how to use and organize these documents. In this chapter, concentrate on the documents you create that pertain to a teacher's professional performance. These documents are included in the teacher's evaluation file.

## Complimentary

As a kind and thoughtful leader, you might consider writing a commendatory letter. That's great! However, such a document must reflect some aspect of a teacher's performance according to the performance standards. A generalized commendatory letter, lacking specific references to performance, could create issues in the future. At some point, the competency of this teacher may be questioned, and disciplinary action might be considered. Your kind but non-specific document could be used to counter any claims regarding poor performance.

## Critical

Writing documents to teachers who fail to meet expectations is difficult and the preparation of such documents demands careful and thorough thought. The following do's and don'ts should be useful.

### Do's and Don'ts

Do: Find out the facts, have conversations with the teacher or others

Do: Have a conversation with the teacher to determine his or her point of view.

Do: Follow up the conversation with a note or memo

Do: Indicate clearly the nature of the concerns.

Do Not: Ignore inadequate performance

Do Not: Write notes or memos without speaking to the teacher.

## Documentation Steps

In your entire career, you may never have the experience of dealing with an underperforming teacher. But if or when it does happen, you cannot overlook your responsibility to provide a competent teacher in every classroom. So, if that time comes, be prepared. Throughout the process maintain the ethics of honesty, care and empathy.

When you begin to have concerns about a teacher's performance, whether from observation or other means, you must immediately think about how you will communicate or document your efforts to address the situation. What should be the first step? What should follow? The steps listed here will help assure consideration and honesty toward the teacher while establishing a sound basis for any necessary administrative decisions.

These steps include verbal or written communication that should occur in dealing with those concerns, from a simple concern that can be easily addressed to more serious issues. It will address how to deal with a situation where the concerns remain unresolved, leading to possible discipline or termination.

### *Preliminary*

Determining whether a verbal conversation or a written document comes first can often be challenging. Whatever comes first, the ethics of kindness and honesty call for open communication. In most cases, verbal conversations will come before written documentation. If it's a minor issue and you trust the teacher will make the necessary adjustments, that may suffice. Nevertheless, it is often useful to have something in writing. Even if it is just a temporary note for yourself. It may even be a thank you note, simply thanking the teacher for listening. If so it is a part of the teacher's file. That would be "step 1" in the documentation process.

Through this, always keep in mind the principles of due process.

### *Step 1: Working Notes*

Your concerns about a teacher may turn out to be unfounded. You need more information and will need to investigate further. You should keep notes of phone calls made, activities observed, and interviews conducted. These notes can be written in a calendar, note pad, computer, or phone. Keep the notes secure but treat them as temporary. They are still part of the teacher's file. These informal reminder notes or observations may be referred to as "working notes." Ultimately, these working notes should be discarded or placed in a legal folder.

### *Interim: (verbal)*

Always maintain open and honest communication with teachers. If you determine that the teacher's behavior or performance is inappropriate or inadequate, a verbal request to change a behavior or practice will be the next step. Hopefully, you will find that a verbal request or reprimand is sufficient without any further written documentation.

### Step 2: Incidental Memo

You may determine that an incident is serious enough to require a written memo. You may decide that your verbal requests have gone unheeded so a written memo is needed. Since your concern came from an incident or event, consider it an "incidental memo."

An incidental memo is a straightforward communication that describes the nature of the inappropriate behavior or practice and explains the request for a change.

*See: Chapter 27 for some examples of memos*

A personal visit or meeting with the teacher should always come before the memo. It is crucial to specify what changes in the teacher's performance are necessary. Incidental memos should be included in the teacher's evaluation file, and the teacher has the right to respond in writing. This response will also be added to the teacher's evaluation file.

### Step 3: Review

In most cases following the preceding step, the issue or issues have been resolved. But what if not? Any further documents or actions could lead to some form of disciplinary action. Because of your care and concern, let the teacher know that they may connect with a colleague. That colleague may be present at conversations involving the issues and possible next steps. However, make it clear that the colleague may be present, but not an active participant in any conversations, decisions or next steps.

### Step 4: Summary Memo

There may come a time when concerns about a teacher lead you to conclude that certain inadequate performances or behaviors have become a pattern. When this happens, or whenever the latest incident or complaint arises, the teacher must be informed that a pattern of inadequate performance is apparent. Such a pattern should be documented. If it is indeed a pattern, you will have incidental memos on file. Have a conversation with the teacher and share the documents in the file that illustrate the pattern. Follow up that conversation with a written memo documenting the pattern. Include the events, dates, previous conversations, and memos. Repeat the nature of the changes the teacher needs to implement. This memo will also become part of the teacher's file. This memo may sometimes take the form of an improvement contract.

*For a review of due process, see: Chapter 11*

**Improvement Contract.** You need to do everything possible to help a struggling teacher improve and you need to be completely fair, open, and honest with the teacher. Be sure the teacher understands that failure to improve could lead to serious consequences. If an improvement contract results in improved performance, taking it to that level might be avoided.

It is essential that the contract follow all due process elements. The elements noted in the previous paragraph as well the following would be included in an improvement contract:

- ❯❯ The specific improvements needed
- ❯❯ The way the improvements will be measured.
- ❯❯ The support that will be provided, such as mentors, workshops, and released time.
- ❯❯ The time line of feedback to the teacher,
- ❯❯ The time line for the specified improvements.

### Step 5: Letter of Reprimand

When verbal requests, incidental memos, or summary memos do not lead to appropriate changes in the teacher's behavior or practice, a letter of reprimand may be necessary. Of course, this is a situation you hope will never arise in your career. Nevertheless, be prepared. For a letter of reprimand to be legally sound as well as professionally appropriate, the following elements should be included.

**Facts**

Write the specific details regarding the teacher's performance. Clarify what has transpired or been stated. Ensure the information is accurate and objective, including pertinent dates and times. Describe the events or statements, emphasizing dates. Incorporate relevant statements from the teacher. Include observations and remarks from others affected by the incident or incidents.

**Reasons**

Explain the concerns regarding the teacher's performance or conduct. Was there a violation of school policy, and if so, which policy? Did the teacher fail to meet performance standards? Please specify the standard. Did the teacher neglect to follow reasonable instructions, and if so, what were those instructions?

*See: Chapter 27 for an example of a letter of reprimand*

**Impact**

Was this a single incident or a pattern which would demonstrate likelihood of recurrence.  Explain. Who was affected because of what has happened? How many? Students? How widely known was this conduct? Explain. Be sure to describe the context of the behavior and if it involved any special circumstances.

### Time

Prepare the document in a reasonable time from the date of the incident or conduct, or from the last instance if this has been an ongoing issue.

### Ethics and professionalism

Describe the teacher's training and professional status. This will clarify the ethics and conduct expected of the teacher.

### Teacher Statements

Include all relevant statements made by the teacher. Did the teacher explain the reason or motive for the conduct?

### Prior Help

List the resources or suggestions provided in previous related incidents, and include the teacher's response to those resources or suggestions.

### Colleague

Indicate when the teacher was informed that a colleague could be present for conferences. If a colleague was present, indicate the events and dates.

## *Follow-up*

State the specific areas for the teacher to improve and how will improved performance be defined or measured. What development activities in which the teacher must participate. Include a schedule of follow-up activities including teacher activities, observations, and a timetable for demonstrating improvement

## *Right to Respond Statement*

The employee must be given the right to make a written statement of response, which must become part of the document, and the document must show that the employee was made aware of this right.

## *Teacher Signature*

A line for the teacher's signature indicates receipt of the document, not agreement with the contents of the document. If a teacher refuses to sign the document, it should be delivered to the teacher in the presence of a witness, with a notation on the letter that the teacher declined to sign.

Chapter 14

# Scenarios

YOU have finished reading the first three sections of the "how to" book on the ethics and practice of teacher supervision and evaluation. It might be helpful to reflect on these chapters and consider how they apply to a few hypothetical scenarios that follow.

## The Forgotten Teacher Evaluations

It's late May, the final month of the school year. Mrs. Alvarez, the principal, received a notice reminding her to submit all completed teacher evaluation reports by June 1. As she reviews her files, she realizes that six teachers are due for review this year, and she has not written summary evaluation reports for any of them. Mrs. Alvarez is a first-year principal, and this has been a particularly stressful year. This notice certainly adds to that stress.

She opens the empty files for these six teachers and wonders what she needs to do next.

- ⏵ *Does she understand that evaluation is a year-long process?*
- ⏵ *Is it too late to conduct any meaningful classroom observations?*
- ⏵ *Will one classroom observation, formal or informal, be meaningful at this time of the year?*
- ⏵ *Are there any documents that relate to teacher performance in the files?*
- ⏵ *Does it appear that the superintendent has done his or her job in preparing and supervising new principals?*

**Author's notes**

Mrs. Alvarez might hold an outdated view that the "evaluation" is just a formal classroom observation instead of a comprehensive process that spans the entire year. She may have found it easier to postpone her evaluation activities, such as classroom visits, amidst other urgent issues. It is unlikely that this year's evaluation will be meaningful to the teachers or the district. Ethical responsibilities continue to be unmet.

# The Novice

Coco Clancy is a third-year teacher nearing the end of her probationary period. Mrs. Wilson has been her principal for three years and has regularly conducted informal classroom walkthroughs and given verbal feed-back, but none of these interactions were documented. Mrs. Wilson believes that she should recommend Coco for tenure status.

> *Can the principal recommend tenure without documentation?*

> *What would be the risk of recommending tenure without documentation?*

**Author's notes**

Mrs. Wilson has been careless. From a policy or legal perspective, it's as if an undocumented event never happened. She most likely has the right to recommend tenure, but basing that decision on one principal's undocumented opinions is definitely risky. On the other hand, denying tenure would probably be successfully challenged. Once again, certain ethical responsibilities have not been fulfilled.

# The Teacher in Difficulty

On October 18, Principal Sarah Kim conducted an informal classroom visit to Jonathan Reed's class. She observed behaviors that disrupted instruction, such as side conversations, students moving around without a clear purpose, and the use of personal devices during work time. Mr. Reed's responses were often reactive rather than proactive. This led to lost instructional time and decreased focus among some students. In a follow-up with Mr. Reed, Principal Kim emphasized that his behavior management skills needed improvement.

In June, Principal Kim reviewed her files to prepare her summative teacher evaluation report for Mr. Reed. She found no notes about the October 18 meeting, nor any evidence of follow-up visits or activities related to Mr. Reed's classroom.

 Some issues to consider:

> *Did Principal Kim give any specific suggestions? Or any kind of support?*

> *Do we even know if Jonathan's behavior management has improved?*

> *Can Principal Kim include her recollection of the Oct. 18 informal classroom visit in the summative evaluation report?*

**Author's notes**

In the absence of documents, it is as if the event never happened. Furthermore, it is not known whether Mr. Reed's behavior management improved or not. The ethics of open communication and support are not evident. It is very unlikely that Principal Kim will be able to prepare a summative evaluation report that accurately reflects reality and whether there is a need to help teachers improve. Certainly, the elements of due process are missing, and the evaluation process does not seem comprehensive or purposeful.

# The Teacher File

Principal Evans has conducted at least four informal and two formal classroom visits to history teacher Sue's class. During initial visits to teacher Sue's history class, he observed only lectures. He encouraged Sue to diversify her lesson designs beyond just lectures. Subsequent visits did not show significant improvement. He carefully documented each observation and conversation and placed those records in her teacher file.

Near the end of the year, Principal Evans met with Sue to discuss her progress in reducing lectures. He referred to the various visits throughout the year and showed her the written reports. Her response was, "I've never seen those."

    ▸▸ *As long as the documents are present and accurate, does it matter if Sue has not seen them?*

    ▸▸ *Did Principal Evans provide specific suggestions or support to help her improve?*

**Author's notes**

> Even if the documents fairly report the actual conversations, they have limited value. The ethic of open communication was not evident. Important elements of due process are not in evidence. Principal Evans had an obligation to provide specific suggestions and necessary support such as workshops or mentors. There is no evidence that Principal Evans provided any feedback regarding Sue's improvement or failure to improve.

# The Complaint

An unhappy parent approached Principal Sue Jackson, a three-year veteran at the school, to complain that an English teacher named Evelyn was boring. When asked, the parent was unable to define or explain what she meant by "boring." She asked to "keep this confidential" because she didn't want the teacher to know she had complained. Principal Jackson assured the parent that she would follow up, but to be fair to the teacher and to better understand the parent's concerns, she could not keep it a secret from Evelyn. Jackson then met with Evelyn to discuss the parent's complaint to gain a clearer understanding. Evelyn was not defensive and agreed to make a video of her history class and conduct a self-critique.

    ▸▸ *Should Principal Jackson have defended Evelyn at the time of the complaint?*

    ▸▸ *Did Principal Jackson show lack of support by expecting Evelyn to provide refuting evidence?*

**Author's notes**

> A defensive stance by Principal Jackson risks upsetting the parent further. The ethic of open communication was upheld by promising to investigate and by informing the parent that confidentiality could not be guaranteed. The decision to let Evelyn lead the response highlights the importance of collaborative decision-making. It also promotes reflective practice on Evelyn's part.

# Summative Evaluation Dilemma

First-year Principal Carter reviewed his evaluation activities with science teacher Roland, who has been with the school for seven years. During the year, he conducted several informal observations and at least one formal classroom observation. These observations showed that Roland's classroom behavior skills created an environment that was not conducive to effective learning. His communication with students included the use of disrespectful language. Suggestions for improvement were given, but nothing changed.

When Principal Carter prepared his summative evaluation report for this year, he included concerns about Roland's classroom management. During his evaluation conference with Roland, he loudly complained and pointed out that he had received only satisfactory reports on his summative evaluations for several years.

⇥ *Does the teacher's file include reports of each of the classroom observations?*

⇥ *Has the teacher received copies of each of those documents?*

⇥ *Do those documents indicate specific changes that Roland needs to address?*

⇥ *Has Roland received support such as workshops, readings, or mentoring?*

⇥ *Has Roland responded positively to those support opportunities?*

⇥ *Has Principal Carter provided regular feedback regarding Roland's improvement or lack of improvement and does the file document the nature and content of that feedback?*

**Author's notes**

If there are clear "yes's," Principal Carter has followed due process and is positioned to take action. If Roland is a tenured teacher, Principal Carter can consider available district discipline options, which could include placing Roland on probation or revoking his tenure status.

If there are "no's," then Principal Carter's ability to take further action is limited. His ethical responsibility toward Roland, the school, and the community has been diminished.
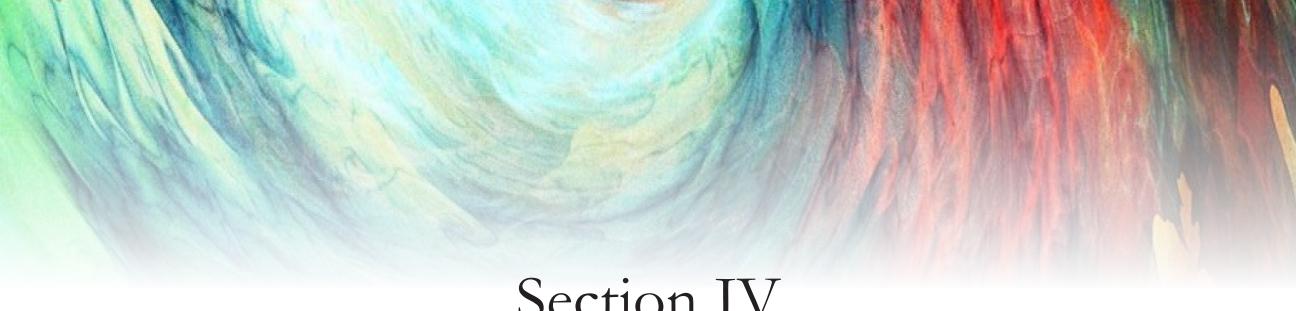
# Section IV

# Best Practices

THE chapters here are designed to define and understand what effective teaching practices look like. The primary purpose of all evaluation activities is to foster the professional growth of everyone—both leaders and teachers—and to encourage best practices that enhance learning.

Chapter 15

# Using this Section

WHAT do you look for during a classroom observation? Teaching is a complex profession, so during any classroom observation, focus on elements that will help you understand and analyze classroom activities. This section examines best practices across various areas. Each of eight chapters focuses on a particular dimension of effective teaching. When you consider each teacher and their strengths and needs, think of each chapter as a lens to help direct your observations. Familiarize yourself with these lenses and keep them in mind for appropriate application. (No one ever claimed that instructional supervision was easy!)

## Chapter Format

Each chapter begins by defining and describing a key best practice and concludes with teacher performance descriptors in terms of "look for."

Improvement

These chapters aim to enhance everyone's professional practice. As the lead learner on campus, these tools help you understand and focus on instruction, and through your collaboration, they also promote teachers' professional growth.

If you are a new principal or supervisor, reviewing the chapters in this section before your initial classroom observations will be beneficial. This will help refresh your understanding of what effective teaching entails.

Chapter 16

# Behavior Management

TEACHERS often experience stress and frustration when maintaining a classroom environment conducive to learning. You face a dilemma when you see that a classroom environment is unsatisfactory, yet struggle to diagnose and offer useful recommendations.

This chapter will address the best practices of teachers who are effective classroom managers. The most effective teachers demonstrate skillful attention to at least six dimensions.

1. Classroom Organization
2. Physical Environment
3. Rules and Procedures
4. Use of Time
5. Communication
6. Responding to Misbehavior

## Classroom Organization

### *Materials*

Classroom materials are organized so that essential instructional resources are easily accessible to the teacher or students whenever needed for instruction.

### *Room Arrangement*

High-traffic areas are free of congestion, allowing students and the teacher to see each other easily.

## Physical Environment

### Appearance

The classroom is clean and visually appealing and demonstrates a focus on learning and ethical and moral principles.

### Comfort

The classroom environment is physically comfortable. The teacher oversees the air temperature, freshness, odors, and more.

## Rules and Procedures

Rules and procedures represent a coherent and appropriate classroom management philosophy.

### Rules

Students understand and the teacher consistently and fairly enforces a few (4-8) general rules that cover classroom behavior.

### Procedures

Established routines for classroom functioning and needs are evident, allowing students to transition between activities with minimal loss of learning time.

## Use of Time

Instruction is organized, focused, and well-paced. Students are on task and actively engaged in learning activities.

## Communication

### Positive Reinforcement

The teacher effectively uses positive reinforcement to promote appropriate behavior. Positive communication is more common than negative.

### Age-appropriate

Expected classroom behaviors have been taught and implemented in a manner appropriate for the grade level.

### Clear Expectations

Classroom expectations are clearly communicated to students, parents and others involved.

### Non-Verbal Skills

Non-verbal skills are used to maintain desired student behaviors and respond to inappropriate behaviors.

### Demeanor

All classroom communications are appropriately calm and even tempered.

## Responding to Misbehavior

### Problem Behaviors

Behaviors that are minor irritants, brief in duration, and behaviors that indicate an escalating or spreading problem are treated with appropriate responses.

### Intervention Strategies

Intervention is most effective when effectively stop inappropriate behavior in the shortest time with the least negative impact to the student or the class.

### Consequences

Appropriate consequences for misbehavior are applied when necessary. Consequences are fairly and consistently applied.

### Tangible Recognition

Desired behaviors are recognized by clear words and actions.

# Look For

## Materials

➢ Are the furnishings and materials in the room orderly and in place?

➢ Does everyone know where things belong?

## Physical Environment

➢ Can students and the teacher easily see each other at all times?

➢ Is the room organized, tidy, and visually appealing?

➢ Is there adequate light and fresh air?

➢ Does the environment reflect learning activities and objectives?

## Rules and Procedures

➢ Are the classroom rules brief and clear?

➢ Do the rules encourage mutual respect, self-control, and effective use of time?

➢ Is it clear that students understand the expected behaviors?

➢ Are there clear procedures for classroom functioning, such as using the restroom, group interactions, transitions, obtaining materials, and collecting homework?

➢ Are relevant activities available and in use during "extra time"?

## Instruction and Learning

➢ Is the lesson well-organized and conducted at the right pace?

➢ Is the instruction suitable for all learners?

➢ Is sufficient time allocated for each subject or activity?

➢ Does the teacher use time effectively?

➢ Are students engaged and focused on learning?

## Classroom Communication

➢ Does the teacher effectively use nonverbal communication skills, such as standing or moving about while teaching and maintaining appropriate proximity?

➢ Does the teacher mainly use positive communication?

➢ Does the teacher demonstrate verbal and non-verbal self-control in the classroom?

## Responding to Misbehavior

➢ Does the teacher respond appropriately to minor annoyances as opposed to more challenging and recurring behaviors?

➢ Does the teacher use appropriate intervention strategies to address misbehavior?

➢ Does the teacher apply relevant consequences for misbehaviors fairly and consistently?

➢ Does the teacher recognize and reinforce positive behaviors?

# Chapter 17
# The Learning Environment

EFFECTIVE behavior management significantly contributes to creating a positive learning environment. Yet, there are deeper issues that influence the spirit of a class. When you visit a classroom, you may perceive the quality of that spirit.

This chapter refers to this concept as the "Learning Environment." Effective practices aim to create an environment where learning is engaging and transcendent, allowing students to participate unhesitatingly in classroom life and take academic risks. It should provide freedom from bullying, discrimination, and fear of judgment.

You may find it challenging to pinpoint specific observable teacher strategies that support such an environment. This chapter aims to provide useful tools and focuses on the following characteristics of a stimulating and safe learning environment. Best practices reflect the following:

▸▸ Focus on Learning

▸▸ Emotional Climate

▸▸ Inclusion and Equity

▸▸ Moral Development

▸▸ Digital Awareness

## Focus on Learning

Effective teachers enhance the learning atmosphere by maintaining a continuous focus on learning and seeking knowledge. When observing instruction, how clear is the direction or focus of the learning? If the focus or direction is unclear to an observer, it is likely unclear to the students.

Teachers may integrate any combination of learning theories such as behaviorism, cognitivism, or constructivism to achieve student-centered objectives. Social or collaborative assignments can encourage inclusion in the classroom.

*See: Chapter 18 for more information about learning theories*

## Emotional Climate

Focusing on the following aspects of the classroom climate, where both students and teachers care for each other's well-being, can foster a welcoming and emotionally safe environment. Research shows that classrooms that intentionally cultivate emotionally safe and inclusive environments help mitigate the negative effects of trauma, social bias, and inequality, especially for marginalized groups. (Darling-Hammond et al., 2019; Izadi & Hart, 2024; Kartal & Bilgin, 2009)

### *Rapport*

Building rapport with students improves when teachers demonstrate genuine interest in their emotional, social, and academic needs.

### *Expectations*

Students are more likely to succeed when teachers express high expectations for them.

### *Communications*

All communication should be calm, respectful, and supportive. This encourages students to believe that they are seen and heard by the teacher. Positive comments should dominate over negative ones. It is important to be aware of the potential for emotional harm and to encourage conversations that aid in restoring emotional well-being. Students should be encouraged to reflect on and manage their own emotional responses.

### *Mutual Respect*

Teacher communication should show respect for all students, and students should be expected to demonstrate respect for others. Communication should support an environment of kindness and mutual respect. Peer interactions will be respectful and free from teasing.

## Inclusion and Equity

Diverse cultures, races, genders, religions, and family structures should be positively represented in materials, displays, and classroom discussions. Any biased or exclusionary language should be corrected whenever it occurs. All students should be encouraged to share their own perspectives and experiences.

*See: Chapter 22 for more about special needs students.*

Classroom norms and expectations must be culturally responsive and inclusive. Differentiated support is available to meet the needs of all students. Students from historically marginalized backgrounds must be treated equitably in participation and feedback.

# Moral Development

A key objective of schools is to foster an ethical and moral life for all students. In any school, whether secular or religious, the cultivation of moral character is crucial for shaping responsible citizens who can interact respectfully with others in society. While no supervisor or observer would seek to assess a teacher's own moral character, specific teacher-student interactions and various aspects of classroom life can enhance students' moral development. (Jackson et al., 1993)

### Formal Moral Instruction

In an Adventist school, formal moral instruction is a vital part of the school curriculum. A teacher provides evidence that formal moral instruction receives high priority through attention to lessons that include moral underpinnings. Student learning outcomes can reflect the importance of moral lessons.

### Informal Moral Instruction

In every subject area, there are opportunities for teachers to express moral viewpoints. Recognizing these opportunities and presenting all lessons with a clear moral tone fosters higher-order thinking about morality and encourages systematic growth in moral character. Observers will diligently note the teacher's skill in connecting everyday classroom events to moral insights.

### Traditions

Every classroom has its own traditions and ceremonies, including opening activities, celebrations, guest visits, and service learning. These experiences can significantly influence students' moral development when designed to foster feelings of loyalty, inspiration, reverence, gratitude, and dedication.

### Visual Elements of the Classroom

Visual displays in the classroom should be morally uplifting. This includes classroom posters, bulletin boards, and displays of student work, which are common and expected components of a classroom environment.

### Moral Content of the Teacher's Expressions

Both verbal and non-verbal communication can convey moral messages. Classroom communication can foster a sense of well-being and mutual respect. The importance of classroom communication that uplifts or possibly demoralizes should not be underestimated.

### Trustworthiness

Trustworthiness may be the strongest moral influence a teacher can embody. Biblical religious theology places trustworthiness at the core of moral experience. Just as God can be relied upon for our best interests, students develop in moral character with a trusted teacher.

# Digital Awareness

## Conversations

Discussions about responsible digital behavior, cyberbullying, and media influence should take place. Classroom technology tools must be used to promote community rather than isolation. Students should be educated about issues of privacy, data usage, and online safety.

## Usage

If the school or district has established clear rules for using digital media in the classroom, the application of those rules must be monitored. It is critical that all students are aware of and understand these rules. If no school or district rules have been established, classroom rules need to be created and followed.

# Look For

## Focus on Learning

- Does the teacher provide frequent reinforcement?
- Does the teacher utilize an appropriate variety of lesson materials and opportunities?
- Are lessons focused on tasks that are relevant to students?
- Does the teacher provide time for reflection on learning?
- Are students encouraged to take risks, and willing to ask questions or participate?

## Emotional Climate

- Does the teacher demonstrate personal interest in each student?
- Does the teacher verbalize high expectations for all students?
- Does the teacher take time to listen to all students?
- Does all communication demonstrate kindness and mutual respect?

## Inclusion and Equity

- Does the teacher pay attention to the emotional needs of all students?
- Are students from marginalized backgrounds treated equitably?
- Does the teacher promote mutual respect, empathy and collaboration?
- Do the students appear to have a high level of trust toward the teacher?

## Moral Learning

- Do classroom activities reflect attention to moral issues?
- Do classroom traditions and displays reflect positive moral principles?
- Do classroom rules contribute to positive moral development?

## Digital Media

- Are there conversations about digital behavior, cyberbullying, and media influence?
- Does the use of technology promote community rather than isolation?
- Does the teacher educate students on privacy, data use, and online safety?

# Teaching/Learning Strategies

EFFECTIVE teachers possess a broad repertoire of teaching strategies that they use interchangeably to enhance student learning. It is essential for you to recognize and promote the use of various teaching strategies while evaluating their appropriateness based on student learning outcomes.

The teaching strategies outlined in this chapter are informed by the theoretical frameworks of three learning theories, behaviorism, cognitivism, and constructivism. Given that constructivist learning theory has been frequently referenced in scholarly research and at education conferences over the past decades, most modern teaching strategies are rooted in a constructivist approach. Nevertheless, there is significant overlap among all teaching strategies and various theoretical perspectives on how students learn. The multiple intelligences theory is also considered in this chapter. It may not be a separate learning theory, but it assists educators in considering individual learner differences in their educational practice.

## Behaviorism

The behaviorist learning theory posits that learning is shaped by the environment, resulting in a change in observable behavior. Instruction is typically direct or teacher-centered. Prior student knowledge can be linked to new information when presented in a sequential and organized manner. Information or skills may be broken down into small parts or sub-skills to be taught separately. As students receive information, they first study and practice with the teacher's guidance before working independently. This strategy may enhance the efficiency of delivery.

The learning process generally consists of lectures, drills, demonstrations, and other teacher-controlled instruction.

# Cognitivism

Cognitive learning theory asserts that the brain's memory system actively processes and organizes information for storage in long-term memory to retrieve when needed. Cognitive learning practices might include the following.

### Concept Attainment

A concept refers to a set of concrete objects, symbols, abstract ideas, or events that are grouped and categorized based on shared characteristics. Students learn concepts by identifying examples and non-examples of a specific concept. Teachers can provide a definition of the concept, along with examples and non-examples, allowing students to practice with it. Students can then offer their own examples and non-examples to demonstrate their understanding of how to categorize and retain the concept in long-term memory.

### Memorization and Mnemonics

Mnemonics is a strategy for memorizing information, concepts, or procedures by associating them with the familiar. This method involves organizing, ordering, linking, and visualizing to assist students in storing content in and retrieving it from long-term memory using familiar cues. Cues generally come in the form of acronyms, songs, poems, or raps.

### Other Cognitive Learning Strategies

Some other cognitive teaching strategies might include the following. Teachers will elicit prior knowledge from students' long-term memory by asking them questions about what they already know regarding a topic or by providing a pre-test. They will teach lessons that are developmentally appropriate based on what students already know. They will explicitly connect students' prior knowledge to the new information being taught by demonstrating through examples how the lesson relates to previous lessons or to students' experiences.

Lesson information presentation must systematically include illustrations, visual aids, student activities, stories, and similar resources to assist students as they actively process and store new knowledge. They will emphasize key points in the lesson to help students extract essential information from a larger body of content. They will summarize what students have learned and preview the next lesson to support the cognitive development of schemas for their learning.

# Constructivism

Constructivist learning theory is based on the understanding that students construct knowledge and derive meaning from their own experiences.

Learning is integrated and leads to a comprehensive understanding. Subject matter is not taught in isolation from other disciplines. Primary resources, data, manipulatives, field trips, and experiments are utilized to engage students in a variety of experiences. Students will engage in authentic tasks conducted in the real world, such as writing for a newspaper, giving speeches, acting in plays, balancing a checkbook, cooking, measuring, and building, allowing students to learn through experience.

Tasks that are relevant to student interests are important. Students are encouraged to explore various perspectives on issues and problem-solving. Students are engaged in learning activities that lead to an identifiable end product and empower them to develop a sense of ownership in their endeavors. Students will be encouraged to take risks, expressing their opinions freely without fear of repercussion. They will occasionally participate in dialogue, discussion, and reflection.

### *Inquiry*

The inquiry approach is designed to teach students to examine and explore ideas through questioning. Questions can be generated by students or by the teacher. Activities such as observing, hypothesizing, and experimenting helps students develop theories. Application of the scientific method is an example of inquiry learning. Although inquiry is often used in science, it has broad application in other content areas as well. Using inquiry strategies can help students think and reason inductively.

### *Role playing*

Role play asks students to imagine themselves as concepts, objects, or individuals in a given situation. Students are invited to understand the context and think through the enactment before the exercise. Student observers will be prepared to listen and discuss the issues and concepts depicted in the performance. But student observers are not responsible for evaluating acting skills. A fundamental assumption of role play is that students can grow and engage with concepts and issues in a supportive and open classroom environment.

### *Cooperative Learning*

Cooperative learning is most closely aligned with constructivism, though it can incorporate elements of cognitivism as well. Constructivism emphasizes learning as an active, social process where students build knowledge through interaction and collaboration. Cooperative learning is more than putting students into groups and hoping for the best. When planning cooperative learning activities it is important to include the following elements. (Cooperative Learning Institute, 2025).

### *These five basic elements include*

*Positive interdependence* – students must have a shared goal and each group member must have a specific role.

*Face-to-face interaction* – students are placed in small working groups of two-three persons to ensure optimum verbal exchange.

*Individual accountability* – cooperative groups are only successful when every member has learned the content or helped complete a task and is prepared for individual assessment.

*Interpersonal and small group skills* – teachers teach and monitor the social skills needed for successful small group collaboration.

*Group processing* – student groups are given time to process how well their groups are functioning and determine new goals for improved functioning based on student and teacher feedback.

## Multiple Intelligences

The multiple intelligences theory is not a new or separate family of learning theories. Understanding multiple intelligences helps educators develop a richer understanding of all students, and helps students maximize their preferred way of relating to material to be learned. Multiple Intelligences Theory proposes that each individual has a unique combination of eight (or more) intelligences which have both biological and cultural bases (Gardner, 2011).

Understanding these eight intelligences provides the teacher with two powerful benefits in designing instruction. First, the theory provides a way to understand students' unique ways of thinking, and a way to design activities suited to a broader range of students. Second, the theory provides a basis for more fully appreciating each individual student for his or her unique intelligence.

Multiple intelligences strategies can be effectively integrated with any of the other instructional strategies already mentioned. The following is a list of the eight intelligences identified in multiple intelligences theory:

### *Verbal-linguistic intelligence*

#### Use of words:

This intelligence refers to the student's ability to use words effectively, orally or in writing. Traditional instruction has often emphasized this intelligence over others.

### *Logical-mathematical intelligence*

#### Use of logic, deductive reasoning, and relationships:

This intelligence refers to the ability to detect patterns, reason deductively, think logically, and manipulate numbers.

### Visual-spatial intelligence

**Understanding space and relationships:**

This intelligence enables a student to manipulate and create mental images, and see visual relationships among objects and ideas.

### Bodily-kinesthetic intelligence

**Using movement to express ideas and feelings:**

This refers to the ability to more fully learn through movement and to understand one's own body.

### Musical-rhythmic intelligence

**Capacity to work with musical forms:**

This refers to the student's ability to perceive, discriminate, transform and express musical forms.

### Interpersonal intelligence

**Understanding others:**

This refers to the ability to work in groups and to perceive distinctions among the moods and feelings of others.

### Intrapersonal intelligence

**Self-knowledge:**

This refers to the ability to be introspective about one's emotions and to reflect on those feelings.

### Naturalistic intelligence

**Understanding the natural environment:**

This refers to the ability to perceive and understand patterns in the natural environment.

*See the next page for instructional strategies that reflect multiple intelligences*

# Multiple Intelligences Instructional Strategies

This chart illustrates various instructional strategies that may be effective with learners of different intelligences.

| Intelligence | Sample teaching activities | Sample teaching materials | Instructional strategies |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Linguistic** | lectures, discussions, word games, storytelling, choral reading, journal writing, etc. | books, tape recorders, word processors, stamp sets, books on tape, etc. | read about it, write about it, talk about it, listen to it |
| **Logical-mathematical** | brain teasers, problem solving, science experiments, mental calculation, number games, critical thinking, etc. | calculators, math manipulatives, science equipment, math games, etc. | quantify it, think critically about it, conceptualize it |
| **Spatial** | visual presentations, art activities, imagination games, mind-mapping, metaphor, visualization, etc. | graphs, maps, video, LEGO sets, art materials, optical illusions, cameras, picture library, etc. | see it, draw it, visualize it, color it, mind-map it |
| **Bodily-kinesthetic** | hands-on learning, drama, dance, sports that teach, tactile activities, relaxation exercises, etc. | building tools, clay, sports equipment, manipulatives, tactile learning resources, etc. | build it, act it out, touch it, get a "gut feeling" of it, dance it |
| **Musical** | superlearning, rapping, songs that teach | board games, party supplies, props for role plays, etc. | sing it, rap it, listen to it |
| **Interpersonal** | cooperative learning, peer tutoring, community involvement, social gatherings, simulations, etc. | self-checking materials, journals, materials for projects, etc. | teach it, collaborate on it, interact with respect to it |
| **Intrapersonal** | individualized instruction, independent study, options in course of study, self-esteem | formation of boundary between self and others during early years | connect it to your personal life, make choices with regard to it |
| **Naturalistic** | natural events, environment, processes, phenomenon applied to content | field trips, natural products, outdoors | connect content to nature |

# Look For

- ➢ Does the teacher clearly state the student learning outcomes?

- ➢ Does the teacher use a variety of teaching strategies?

- ➢ Does the teacher use teaching strategies that are appropriate for the learning goals?

- ➢ Are all or most of the students engaged?

- ➢ Does the teacher make adjustments when strategies may not be working?

- ➢ Does the teacher connect prior knowledge to the current lesson?

- ➢ Does the teacher monitor and summarize what students have learned?

- ➢ Does the teacher use a variety of lesson materials and opportunities?

- ➢ Are lessons focused on tasks that are relevant to student interests?

- ➢ Are students free to formulate solutions or express opinions?

- ➢ Is content integrated across disciplines?

- ➢ Does the teacher provide time for reflection on learning?

Chapter 19
# Instructional Planning

ANY successful project requires planning. Effective practices in education call for both long-term and short-term plans. Planning must take into account curriculum standards, subject-matter sequences, school expectations, and the learning needs of all students.

Effective planning involves at least two critical elements.

**Outcomes.** All unit or lesson goals and objectives are stated in terms of student learning outcomes.

**Adaptation**. Instructional plans are designed or adapted to meet the needs of all students. Effective teachers consider the diverse students in their classroom to determine how best to adapt the instructional plan to meet the specific learning needs of all students. Classrooms may include students whose first language is not English or students who have particular behavioral difference, learning differences, or physical needs. Effective teachers plan for ways to make the lesson content more accessible to the needs of all students.

## Lesson Planning

## Long-Term

Long-term goals may be student outcomes that may take a year or more to accomplish. In order to achieve long-term goals, teachers must break goals into smaller measurable objectives to be accomplished in each lesson as student learning outcomes. Each lesson, activity, or assignment leads the learner toward accomplishment of course goals.



Long range goals          Lessons/activities/assignments          Goals/outcomes
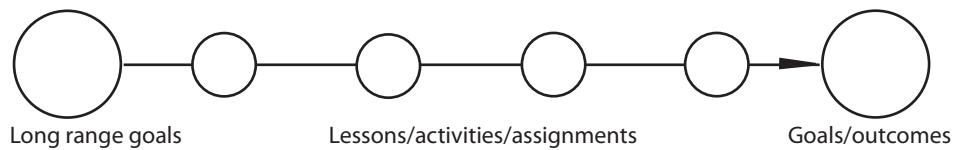
## Short-Term

Every element in the lesson leads to the intended student learning outcomes.

Lesson objective — Lesson elements — Outcomes
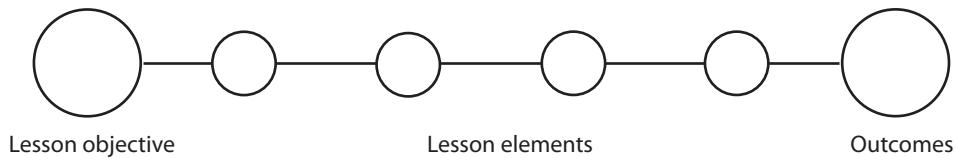
## Lesson Objectives

Effective lesson planning begins by writing objective that can be used to measure whether or not students meet the intended learning outcome. Following the stated objective, are plans for learning activities that facilitates student progress in meeting the lesson objective.

In 1956, Benjamin Bloom and his colleagues established a taxonomy of educational objectives that has guided teachers for nearly 50 years as they planned instruction. Bloom's original taxonomy was updated by one of his colleagues (Anderson & Krathwohl, 2001) to reflect what we currently understand about teaching and learning. Teachers who use the taxonomy of objectives as they plan lessons will be able to effectively design specific learning activities based on the complexity of student thinking required.

The taxonomy of objectives includes the following six levels of complexity along with examples of verbs to describe student activities at each level:

**Remember**: *list, identify, name, recall (this level requires students to retrieve facts)*

**Understand**: *classify, summarize, predict (this level requires students to comprehend meaning)*

**Apply**: *solve, use, demonstrate (this level requires students to carry out a procedure)*

**Analyze**: *organize, select, integrate, determine (this level requires students to break information into parts and explain how the parts relate to each other)*

**Evaluate**: *defend, test, judge (this level requires students to assess based on evidence)*

**Create**: *formulate, design, compose (this level requires students to assemble information to make a new idea or structure)*

# Lesson Planning Models

In understanding lesson design models, remember that the best lesson design is that which fits the content with the needs of the students. This chapter examines two lesson planning models that have been traditionally practiced by effective teachers for many years, a "sequential" model and a "conceptual model." Following that is a discussion of lesson elements in a "standards-based learning" model.

## Sequential Model

This is a traditional lesson design model that has been established and used for many years. It is highly effective for direct instruction lessons. Since it is sequential in nature, consider the following steps.

### A. Introductory phase

**1. Introductory set:** The lesson begins with a brief introduction that produces a state of anticipation or interest.

**2. Objectives:** Expected learning outcomes are clearly communicated to the students.

**3. Purpose:** In addition to communicating the expected learning, students need to find the relevance of the learning.

### B. Information phase

**4. Input:** The specific concepts or skills are communicated in a clear, well organized format.

**5. Model:** Students are shown a clear and correct model of the intended learning or outcome.

**6. Check for understanding:** Feedback from students is elicited to test the effectiveness of the teaching/learning activities.

### C. Practice phase

**7. Guided practice:** Feedback activities are provided so that both teacher and student have evidence that individual practice is likely to be done correctly.

**8. Independent practice:** Independent practice is appropriate to the expected learning.

## Conceptual Model

This model aims to assure that the essential elements that are effective in learning are present in the lesson regardless of any particular sequence.

### Application (meaning)

Elements and activities are designed for students to see the relevance of this lesson to real aspects of their lives? Students are encouraged to look within themselves for new meanings for their own lives?

The lesson should provide students linkages to previous learnings as well as to other academic areas

### *Individualization*

An effective lesson provides opportunities for students of varying intelligences or learning styles to work in their best mode. And students are also encouraged to work in learning modalities, or intelligences other than their strengths.

Effective lessons may also include non-traditional approaches to problem-solving or application as well as generating higher level thinking skills.

### *Motivation*

Effective lessons, by design, include elements that are designed in increase the students level and to encourage them to put forth their best efforts?

### *Structure*

Effective lessons are well organized in terms of allowing the students to have an acceptable level of comfort (or discomfort) relative to expectations.

In an effective lesson, the planned purpose is apparent in terms of the school curriculum and student learning.

### *Resources*

Effective lessons include a variety of resources and/or a variety of media used to provide information relevant to the lesson.

### *Closure*

At the close of the lesson, it should be apparent that students were led to some identifiable new learnings, skills, or applications that the students could define or describe.

## Standards-based Learning Model

Many schools and districts have adopted what is known as Standards-Based Learning (SBL). While traditional lesson designs follow sound teaching and learning principles, standards-based learning planning requires specific lesson design features to be considered. Lesson planning in an SBL classroom involves aligning instruction, assessments, and activities with specific learning standards. Below is an outline of the basic structure and elements that describe lesson planning using the SBL approach (Heflebower et al., 2021).

### *Long Term Planning*

#### Identify the Standards

Each school must first identify the state or national standards to use, such as the Common Core or other subject-specific frameworks. Those standards must be broken down into key learning objectives that outline what students should know and do.

### Define Learning Outcomes

The learning outcomes will serve as the criteria for success as students advance. Use student-friendly language such as "I can . . ." or "students will be able to . . ." The outcomes must be written to be measurable and observable, describing how outcome measurement may evolve over time.

### Design Assessments

Assessment plans are often referred to as "backward planning" because unit or lesson plans are structured around the specific learning outcomes or skills that are expected and subsequently measured. Plan for both formative and summative assessments. Formative assessments act as checks for understanding, while summative assessments are intended for students to demonstrate proficiency for each standard. Ensure that all assessments align with the standards. Design assessment tool that provides students with means to track their own progress.

### Plan Engaging Instructional Strategies

Differentiated teaching and learning strategies need to be designed to support diverse learning. Examples include breaking down content into small steps, allowing students to choose activities, and implementing small-group instruction. Provide active learning activities that incorporate collaborative work, hands-on tasks, and problem-based learning. Integrate technology by utilizing digital tools or interactive simulations.

### *Short-Term Planning*

**Engage:** Teachers will design an engaging question, scenario, or real-world connection.

**Define:** The learning standard mastery will be defined in student friendly language.

**Model:** Teachers will model or demonstrate the skill or concept.

**Guided Practice:** Teachers will monitor the mastery expectations with students with examples.

**Monitor:** Teachers will use formative assessment to modify instruction.

**Independent Practice:** Teachers will allow students to apply learning on their own.

**Feedback:** Teachers will provide feedback that is specific to the standard and reassess as needed to ensure student proficiency.

**Individualized Assessment:** Students will track their own progress.

# Look For

## Objectives

- ➢ Are the written learning objectives written in user friendly form?
- ➢ Do the learning objectives include learning at various higher levels of thinking?
- ➢ Has the expected learner outcome been clearly communicated to the students?
- ➢ Was the purpose of this learning clear and relevant to the students?

## Lesson Model

- ➢ Is the lesson design model appropriate to the content and learning needs of the students?
- ➢ Is the lesson structured and clear so that students have a sense of purpose and direction?
- ➢ Does the teacher have the attention of all students before beginning?
- ➢ Does the teacher provide appropriate review or transfer to prepare students for the new learning?

## Lesson Input

- ➢ Are the directions provided by the teacher clear to the students?
- ➢ Are the essential concepts explained in ways that are sequential and useful??
- ➢ Are the critical attributes of the learning clearly explained and modeled?
- ➢ Does the teacher elicit feedback concerning the effectiveness of the lesson?
- ➢ Is that feedback obtained from an adequate sample of the learners?

## Practice

- ➢ Have all students been given the opportunity been given for immediate practice.
- ➢ Was there adequate guided practice to ensure likelihood of successful individual practice of all?
- ➢ Was there an appropriate amount of immediate or "massed" practice?

## Closure

- ➢ Has the teacher summarized the lesson content and previewed the next lesson?
- ➢ Have the teacher and students celebrated today's learning?

## Chapter 20
# Higher Level Thinking

THE importance of critical thinking is not new in education. The quote "It is the work of true education . . . to train the youth to be thinkers, and not mere reflectors of other men's thought" was written by Ellen G. White in 1903. Current practices reflect that effective teachers do recognize the need to ensure their students have mastered the curriculum content, whether knowledge, skills, or deeper understanding (Alsaleh, 2020).

According to this vision, you should be attentive to the teacher's ability to design instructional activities and questions that promote deep and higher-level thinking among students. The discussion of levels of thinking can begin with the taxonomy of educational technology by Benjamin Bloom (Anderson & Krathwohl, 2001).

### Bloom's Taxonomy

The previous chapter referred to Bloom's revised taxonomy of educational objectives, listing six levels of required thinking needed as students engage in various learning activities. These thinking levels include: Remember, Understand, Apply, Analyze, Evaluate, and Create. In order for students to use their thinking skills to apply, analyze, evaluate, or create, however, they must first be able to remember information and understand concepts. In other words, learning consists of building blocks from the simple to the more complex. If students are lacking in the prerequisite skills, the chance of success in subsequent learning is reduced.

While it is important for students to learn basic knowledge and skills as building blocks for higher level thinking, research suggests that a great deal of classroom instructional time is centered on the least complex areas of remember and understand, which leaves little time for more of the complex thinking required in application, analysis, and creative activities.

# Higher Level Questioning

In their guide to critical thinking, Paul and Elder (2008) provide teachers with intellectual standards and questions to encourage students to develop higher-level thinking. These intellectual standards and questions that lead to higher level thinking include:

### Clarity

- Can you elaborate further?
- Can you give me an example?

### Accuracy

- How could we verify or test that?
- Where can we seek additional information to help with that?

### Precision

- Can you be more specific?
- Can you give me more details?

### Relevance

- How does that relate to the problem?
- How does that help us with the issue?

### Depth

- What are some of the complexities of this question?

### Breadth

- Do we need to look at this from another perspective?

### Logic

- Does all this make sense together?
- Does what you say follow from the evidence?

### Significance

- Which of these facts are most important?
- Is this the central idea to focus on?

### Fairness

- Do I have a vested interest in this issue?
- Am I accurately representing the viewpoints of others?

## Habits of Mind

The consistent use of higher level questions and activities helps students develop the habits of mind that characterize "thinkers and not mere reflectors." Building on the work of Robert Marzano and other educators, Costa and Kallick (2000) developed a model of 16 habits of mind that can be encouraged as teachers challenge students to pursue ideas and strive for excellence.

1. Persisting

2. Communicating with clarity and precision

3. Managing impulsivity

4. Gathering data through all senses

5. Listening with understanding and empathy

6. Creating, imagining, innovating

7. Thinking flexibly

8. Responding with wonderment and awe

9. Thinking about thinking (metacognition)

10. Taking responsible risks

11. Striving for accuracy

12. Finding humor

13. Questioning and posing problems

14. Thinking interdependently

15. Applying past knowledge to new situations

16. Remaining open to continuous learning

As teachers go about the business of educating children and youth, are they creating opportunities for students to think by questioning them beyond the level of rote memorization? Are teachers or-chestrating a classroom where students feel safe to take academic risks, where they seek accuracy, provide evidence, listen to the perspective of others with respect, remain open to expanding ideas, and work collaboratively and curiously?

# Look For

➢ Do the learning activities include questions or activities at all taxonomy levels?

➢ Does the teacher demonstrate high expectations for student's intellectual thinking?

➢ Does the teacher design questions which encourage higher level thinking?

➢ Does the teacher consistently encourage higher level thinking?

➢ Does the teacher use follow-up comments or questions to stimulate higher level thinking?

# Chapter 21
# Motivation

MOTIVATION impacts student interest, energy, effort, and self-direction. Motivated students strive for academic success. While some may identify particular students as unmotivated, all students have needs and desires that they are motivated to satisfy. Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs suggests [See illustration] that when students' basic physical and safety needs are met, they are open to forming relationships with classmates and the teacher. As students develop classroom friendships and experience mutual respect among their peers and with the teacher, they become more receptive to opportunities for accomplishment. (Maslow, 1943)

**Self-actualization:** achieving one's full potential, including creative activities — Self-fulfillment needs

**Esteem needs:** prestige and feeling of accomplishment

**Belongingness and love needs:** intimate relationships, friends — Psychological needs

**Safety needs:** security, safety

**Physiological needs:** food, water, warmth, rest — Basic needs
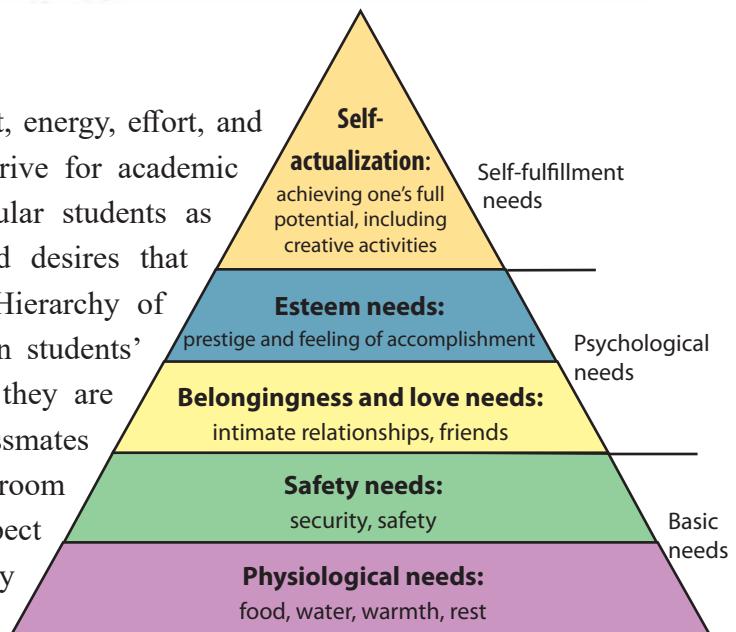
Is motivation something visible when you observe classroom activities? Are there activities designed to boost student motivation? While motivational elements have been discussed in previous chapters, this section will specifically focus on them.

## Motivational Variables

Consider some motivational variables as noted in previous chapters.

### The Classroom Environment

Students are more motivated to lean in a secure learning environment, free from excessive distractions. A learning atmosphere that is intellectually stimulating will encourage the development of motivation. An emotional climate in which students feel safe and respected contributes to a sense of belonging and opens the way for students to engage in learning activities.

### Teaching and Learning Strategies

Diversity in motivation is more typical than uniformity. Although students share basic needs evidenced in the foundation of Maslow's hierarchy, they are likely to have a wide variety of interests, abilities, priorities, goals, and learning styles. Motivation is most likely to be stimulated where teachers provide a variety of teaching strategies and activity choices to meet the variety of learner needs.

### Instructional Planning

Typically, classroom lessons are planned to be teacher-directed. Increasingly, however, educators recognize the motivational value of choice, or self-determination (Deci & Ryan, 2000). This is demonstrated in learner-directed instruction with the teacher as a facilitator and coach. Ultimately, planning decisions should be based on instructional goals and the knowledge and skills that students bring to the lesson. Supervisors will expect to see more motivated students when lessons are presented in a well organized way in which learners clearly understand and can experience the expected outcomes.

### Higher Level Thinking

Teachers who have provided for students' basic and psychological needs can foster motivation by pressing students to think and work at higher and more complex levels once they have mastered basic skills. Self-actualization is increasingly within reach for learners who experience "ah ha" moments where their intellects are being stretched to places they may have never gone before.

### Extrinsic and Intrinsic Motivation

Students who are extrinsically motivated have learning goals that are external to the task, such as good grades, money, or recognition. In contrast, students who are intrinsically motivated have learning goals that are inherent to the task itself and participate because the task is highly interesting or helps them develop a skill they consider significant. Students with intrinsic motivation are more likely to set long-term goals and manage their academic behavior effectively. Many students are motivated by both extrinsic and intrinsic factors simultaneously. Effective teachers are aware of when to motivate or push students with external rewards or threats and when to design learning activities that emphasize relevance, interest, variety, and choice.

### Rewards

Using rewards to foster extrinsic motivation is not uncommon. We are aware of the stickers, prizes, awards, parties, etc. that are often used by teachers. Such rewards can be effective but clearly extrinsic. More effective may be acknowledgement of successes and providing simple words of encouragement.

*I think I earned it.*

### Concern or Tension

The levels of expectation or anxiety in a classroom can be monitored and adjusted. If the level of concern is too low, students may become complacent or develop careless study habits. Conversely, excessive concern can lead to unnecessary stress, resulting in discouraged students. Effective teachers know how to navigate this balance to foster optimal motivation for learning.

*Looks like I better pay attention!*

### Relevance and Interest

Learners are more motivated to engage in a learning activity when they find it relevant to their real lives beyond the classroom. We define relevance in classroom tasks as authentic learning. Authentic learning contrasts with a continuous stream of textbook assignments and lower-level worksheets. Moreover, teachers can utilize factors like humor, enthusiasm, and novelty to keep students interested.

*Cool!*

### Success

Motivation for learning can quickly fade if the learner cannot achieve success. Achieving success requires a challenge along with support from the teacher. For success to be felt, the task should be challenging enough to push the learner, but not so difficult that success becomes unattainable.

*I DID it!*

### Meaningful Feedback

When students put in effort to learn, evidence of success is necessary to maintain motivation. If students experience repeated failures, they may start to believe that they lack the ability. Effective teachers provide feedback to help students see failures as a need for different study strategies or alternative approaches to learning tasks. Feedback should be specific, timely, and must encourage students to look forward with hope for future success.

*Now I know how to fix it!*

### Active Participation

Active participation on the part of the learner is essential for the maintenance of motivation. Teachers should be deliberately conscious of teaching/learning activities which stimulate active participation by all learners. Effective teachers use multiple intelligences strategies to encourage active and motivated task engagement.

# Look For

- ➢ Is the learning environment safe and secure?

- ➢ Does the teacher foster classroom friendships and respect?

- ➢ Is the learning environment intellectually stimulating?

- ➢ Are learning goals and activities relevant to the real lives of students?

- ➢ Are students provided with opportunities to select their learning activities?

- ➢ Does the teacher encourage intrinsic motivation rather than just external rewards?

- ➢ Does the teacher adjust the level of concern based on the learning needs?

- ➢ Does the teacher employ suitable humor?

- ➢ Does the teacher often use innovative or unexpected approaches?

- ➢ Does the teacher ensure that the learning objective is doable for all learners?

- ➢ Are the learning experiences both challenging and supportive of students' efforts?

- ➢ Do the questioning strategies help students of different abilities achieve success?

- ➢ Do students receive prompt and specific feedback?

- ➢ Does feedback contribute to successful experiences after incorrect student responses?

- ➢ Does the teacher ensure that all students are involved in verbal learning exchanges?

- ➢ Does the teacher allow wait time between asking a question and calling on a student

Chapter 22
# Special Needs Students

EVERY school has students with special needs. These students have physical, emotional, behavioral, developmental, or learning disabilities that affect their ability to succeed in a traditional classroom. They might need specialized instruction, support services, or accommodations to succeed academically and socially. These students bring unique perspectives and face challenges that require customized approaches to learning. Meeting their educational needs is not only fair but also helps create an environment that values diversity. It is crucial that every student has the chance to reach their full potential. Whether or not schools have dedicated special education teachers, effective special education methods ensure that students with special needs receive personalized, fair, and accessible learning experiences.

## English Language Learners

Examples of strategies that effective teachers use with English Language Learners include: using extensive visual aids, repeating and clarifying instructions, previewing vocabulary along with visual aids, speaking slowly and clearly, avoiding idioms, adjusting assignments to match students' progress with English, checking frequently for understanding, and providing written lesson summaries.

## Special Needs Students

Effective teachers aim to identify a student's specific needs. For example, has a student been diagnosed with Attention Deficit Disorder, a learning difference, Autism, or a hearing impairment? Whatever the specific need might be, teachers should seek well-researched information to determine how best to adapt instruction and make content accessible for the student with special needs.

Consider the following four critical components.

- ⠆ Lesson Planning & Instruction
- ⠆ Differentiation & Accommodations
- ⠆ Classroom Engagement & Management
- ⠆ Student Assessment & Progress Monitoring

# Lesson Planning and Instruction

Lesson objectives must align with students' needs as well as curriculum standards.

## Learning Objectives

Objectives must be aligned with Individualized Education Programs (IEPs) and curriculum standards. Learning goals are specific, attainable, and student-centered.

*Example:* Developing phonological awareness skills through interactive activities and guided practice.

*Non-Example:* Learning about letters and words – this is vague and lacks measurable outcomes.

## Learning Materials

Materials must be thoughtfully adapted to support diverse learning modalities, including visual, auditory, and hands-on learners.

*Example:* Using an alphabet chart, picture cards, sentence strips, and a short video for multi-sensory learning.

*Non-Example:* Relying solely on printed worksheets without visual or hands-on components.

## Lessons

Instruction should be scaffolded into small, manageable steps to enhance comprehension and support student success. Transitions between activities are smooth, and there is clear progression from simple to complex concepts.

*Example* (a lesson with planned sequence)

1. Introduction – Reviewing letters, watching a short video, and discussing concepts.

2. Phonological Awareness Activities – Using rhyming games, segmentation, blending.

3. Guided Practice – Writing letters and spelling simple words.

4. Assessment – Identifying letters, recognizing initial sounds.

*Non-Example:* Jumping between unrelated tasks without a clear structure or progression.

*See: Chapter 29 for a sample lesson plan for special needs students.*

# Differentiation and Accommodation

Individualized support, including picture cards, sentence strips, or assistive technology, to ensure access to instruction should be available. Students should be provided with modified tasks and specific support based on their individual needs. Accommodation, such as extended time or simplified assignments, should be offered as appropriate to promote student success.

## Individualized Education Program (IEP)

An individualized educational program should be available for each special education student. Lesson activities, accommodations, and modifications should align with IEP goals. Where possible, facilitate collaboration with special education staff and therapists.

*Example:* Providing extended response time for students with processing delays or using speech-to-text software for students with writing difficulties.

*Non-Example:* Expecting all students to complete the same task at the same pace without modifications.

## Accommodation

Instruction must be designed to meet varied learning needs. Multiple entry points for engagement such as group work, individual tasks, and peer-assisted learning must be provided.

*Example:* Using picture cards for students struggling with phonemic awareness and allowing letter cards instead of handwriting for fine motor skill challenges.

*Non-Example:* Expecting all students to write letters at the same speed, without additional scaffolding or alternatives.

# Classroom Engagement and Management

Clear routines should be established and consistently followed to create a structured and predictable learning environment. When disruptive behavior arises, it is calmly redirected using positive behavior supports. Reinforcement tools such as visual charts, stickers, and verbal praise are actively used to encourage appropriate behavior and maintain student engagement.

## Engagement

Students should be encouraged to actively participate in the learning process through actions such as pointing, speaking, or matching, based on their abilities. Specific and consistent praise and encouragement build confidence and motivation. Learning activities should be interactive and engaging, moving beyond passive formats like worksheets or lectures.

*Example:* Ask students to physically point words on sentence strips and repeat sounds aloud.

*Non-Example:* Teacher reads aloud while students passively listen.

## Positive Reinforcement

Positive reinforcement strategies are used to support student engagement. Effective redirection techniques are applied for managing disruptive behaviors.

*Example:* Implementing Behavior Intervention Plans and positive reinforcement systems (e.g., reward charts, verbal praise).

*Non-Example:* Using mainly punitive measures without reinforcement or alternative behavior strategies.

## Student Assessment and Progress Monitoring

It is important to utilize data-driven methods to monitor and support student progress.

## Data-Driven Assessment

Both formative and summative assessments are used to track progress. There is a clear alignment between assessment methods and lesson objectives.

*Examples:* Letter Identification, using flashcards with student responses. Phonemic awareness, segmenting words into individual sounds and blends. Individual Progress, tracking and updating IEP progress reports regularly.

*Non-Example:* Relying solely on written worksheets, which may exclude students with different learning abilities.

## Assistive Technology and Communication

Students should have access to various tools like tablets, voice output devices, and visual communication boards to support their learning and interaction. Non-verbal students are given effective ways to express themselves and participate meaningfully. Assistive technology is incorporated into instruction and activities, not just used during breaks or downtime.

# Look For

## Lesson Planning & Instructional Design

- ➢ Is the student's IEP used to guide lesson planning?
- ➢ Are lesson materials adapted for students' varied needs and learning styles?
- ➢ Is the instructional flow logical and scaffolded into manageable steps

## Differentiation & Accommodations

- ➢ Are accommodations such as visual aids, extended time, speech-to-text tools evident?
- ➢ Do students have different ways to show what they've learned?
- ➢ Are materials presented in various modalities (auditory, visual, tactile)?

## Inclusive Engagement & Classroom Interaction

- ➢ Are students actively participating through movement, visuals, or verbal engagement?
- ➢ Does the teacher use reinforcement strategies to encourage engagement?
- ➢ Are students supported in social interactions and group learning?

## Behavior Management & Support

- ➢ Are behavior strategies based on positive reinforcement
- ➢ Are students supported with rewards and personalized behavior plans when needed?
- ➢ Does the teacher calmly guide students back on track instead of using punishment?
- ➢ Are daily routines consistent, clear, consistent and calming for students?

## Assessment & IEP Progress Monitoring

- ➢ Are students' progress checked both during and after learning?
- ➢ Are assessment tools adapted for students' communication and processing needs?
- ➢ Is student progress regularly tracked and aligned with IEP documentation?

## Assistive Technology & Communication Tools

- ➢ Are tools such as tablets or voice-out devices, alphabet boards, gesture systems used?
- ➢ Are students supported in using devices to read, write, or move more easily?
- ➢ Are tech tools integrated meaningfully into instruction?
- ➢ Are assistive technologies or resources available for students with diverse needs

# Section V

# Resources and Examples

# Teacher Performance Standards

I T IS the responsibility of the school district or system to establish performance standards for their educators. This guide provides some basic guidelines for the preparation of the performance standards and examples.

The starting point for any set of teacher performance standards would include these three basic expectations of teachers.

- ▸▸ They use effective and diverse teaching methods.
- ▸▸ They have adequate knowledge of the curriculum and subject matter content.
- ▸▸ They establish and maintain a safe and suitable learning environment.

## Guidelines for Writing Standards

### Professional Soundness

Each standard must be professionally sound. Members of the educational community should agree that such expectations are based on sound educational theory and practice.

### Appropriate Specificity

Each standard should be specific enough to be unambiguous yet general enough to enable evaluators to make applications to various educational settings and situations.

### Breadth of Scope

The completed list of standards should cover the range of professional expectations.

### Reasonableness

The standards must be both reasonable and enforceable.

### Performance Based

Positive attitudes and other subjective teacher characteristics clearly enhance teacher performance. However, written performance standards must be performance-based.

# Teacher Performance Standards

## *Example #1*

*The National Board for Professional Teaching Standards (NBPTS)*

**Proposition 1**  Teachers are committed to students and their learning

- Teachers Recognize Individual Differences in Their Students and Adjust Their Practice Accordingly.
- Teachers Understand How Students Develop and Learn.
- Teachers Understand How Students Develop and Learn.
- Teachers Understand How Students Develop and Learn.

**Proposition 2**  Teachers know the subjects they teach and how to teach those subjects to students.

- Teachers Appreciate How Knowledge in Their Subjects is Created, Organized, and Linked to Other Disciplines.
- Teachers Command Specialized Knowledge of How to Convey a Subject to Students.
- Teachers Generate Multiple Paths to Knowledge.

**Proposition 3**  Teachers are responsible for managing and monitoring student learning

- Teachers Call on Multiple Methods to Meet Their Instructional Goals.
- Teachers Support Student Learning in Varied Settings and Groups.
- Teachers Value Student Engagement.
- Teachers Regularly Assess Student Progress.
- Teachers Engage Students in the Learning Process.

**Proposition 4**  Teachers think systematically about their practices and learn from experience.

- Teachers Make Difficult Choices That Test Their Professional Judgment.
- Teachers Use Feedback and Research to Improve Their Practice and Positively Impact Student Learning.

**Proposition 5**  Teachers Collaborate with Other Professionals to Improve School Effectiveness

- Teachers Work Collaboratively with Families.
- Teachers Work Collaboratively with the Community.

# Teacher Performance Standards

## *Example #2*

1. **Professional Knowledge**
   The teacher shows an understanding of the curriculum, subject content, pedagogical knowledge, and student needs.

2. **Instructional Planning**
   The teacher plans using school district curricula and standards, effective strategies, resources, and data to address the differentiated needs of all students.

3. **Instructional Strategies**
   The teacher promotes student learning by using research-based instructional strategies relevant to the content, engages students in active learning, and facilitates the students' acquisition of knowledge and skills.

4. **Differentiated Instruction**
   The teacher challenges and supports each student's learning by offering suitable content and fostering skills that cater to individual learning differences.

5. **Assessment Strategies**
   The teacher uses various valid and suitable diagnostic, formative, and summative assessment strategies and tools that match the content and student population.

6. **Assessment Uses**
   The teacher consistently systematically gathers, analyzes, and uses relevant data to measure student performance.

7. **Positive Learning Environment**
   The teacher consistently creates a well-managed, safe, and orderly environment that promotes learning and fosters respect for everyone.

8. **Academically Challenging Environment**
   The teacher consistently fosters a student-centered academic environment where high-level teaching and learning take place, and students become self-directed learners.

9. **Professionalism**
   The teacher consistently demonstrates a commitment to professional ethics and the school's mission, engages in professional development opportunities to enhance student learning, and contributes to the field.

10. **Communication**
    The teacher communicates effectively with students, parents, district and school staff, and other stakeholders in ways that enhance student learning.

# Teacher Performance Standards

## *Sample #2, detail*

Most sets of performance standards will also provide added detail for each standard. For example, from "sample II" standard #2 with further detail would look like the following

2. Instructional Planning: The teacher consistently plans using state and local school district curricula and standards, effective strategies, resources, and data to address the differentiated needs of all students.

  2.1 Analyzes and uses student learning data to inform planning.

  2.2 Develops plans that are clear, logical, sequential, and integrated across the curriculum (e.g., long-term goals, lesson plans, and syllabi).

  2.3 Plans instruction effectively for content mastery, pacing, and transitions.

  2.4 Plans for instruction to meet the needs of all students.

  2.5 Aligns and connects lesson objectives to state and local school district curricula and standards, and student learning needs.

  2.6 Develops appropriate course, unit, and daily plans, and is able to adapt plans when needed.

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# Chapter 24
# Teacher Self-Assessment

**Example #1 Faith-based school**

Directions:    Circle #1 if this is one of your strongest characteristics.
                Circle #2 if this is neither your strongest nor weakest characteristic.
                Circle #3 if this is an item you think needs improvement.

1. Engaging and Supporting All Students in Learning

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| I create a learning environment that engages all students | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| I connect prior knowledge, life experiences, and interests with student learning goals. | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| I create learning experiences that promote autonomy, interaction, decision-making | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| I engage all students in problem solving and critical thinking | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| I promote self-directed, reflective learning for all students | 1 | 2 | 3 |

2. Creating and Maintaining an Effective Learning Environment

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| I create an environment that stimulates intellectual development | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| I create an environment that is conducive to moral development | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| I establish a climate that promotes fairness and respect | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| I promote social development and group responsibility | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| I establish and maintain standards for student behavior | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| I apply classroom procedures and routines that support student learning | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| I use instructional time effectively | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| I maintain a physical environment that is clean, orderly, and safe | 1 | 2 | 3 |

### 3. Organizing Subject Matter and Designing Learning Experiences

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| I demonstrate knowledge of subject matter content and student development | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| I follow adopted curriculum and frameworks | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| I interrelate ideas and information within and across subject matter areas | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| I integrate faith with learning across subject matter areas | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| I use instructional strategies and resources appropriate to the subject matter | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| I develop & sequence instructional activities & materials for student learning | 1 | 2 | 3 |

### 4. Monitoring and Assessing Student Learning

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| I establish and communicate learning goals for all students | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| I collect and use multiple sources of information to assess student learning | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| I involve and guide all students in assessing their own learning | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| I use the results of assessments to guide instruction | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| I communicate student progress timely with students & appropriate others | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| I maintain complete, accurate, and confidential student records | 1 | 2 | 3 |

### 5. Developing as a Christian Professional Educator

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| I model a positive and growing relationship with Christ | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| I demonstrate a lifestyle consistent with accepted Seventh-day Adventist standards | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| I create and maintain an environment that encourages students' spiritual development | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| I promote opportunities for student involvement in outreach activities | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| I establish professional goals and demonstrate initiative in the development of them | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| I work with colleagues and communities to improve professional practice | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| I communicate effectively with parents and families | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| I maintain a professional appearance appropriate to my teaching assignment | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| I fulfill adjunct duties as required | 1 | 2 | 3 |

# Example #2

Directions:  Circle #1 if this is one of your strongest characteristics.

Circle #2 if this is neither your strongest nor weakest characteristic.

Circle #3 if this is an item you think needs improvement.

## 1. Curriculum and Planning

I use evidence-based practices that empower all students to develop and apply knowledge and skills in relevant contexts.  1  2  3

I draw upon and build from knowledge of my students' identities, skills, developmental levels, cultures, languages, and communities.  1  2  3

## 2. Instruction

I engage all students as active learners of meaningful, standards-aligned and grade-appropriate content.  1  2  3

I support all students to meet or exceed high expectations, produce high-quality work, and develop self-awareness and independent learning skills.  1  2  3

I accommodate and support the individual differences in all students' learning needs, abilities, interests, and levels of readiness.  1  2  3

## 3. Learning Environment

I foster positive, caring relationships to ensure all students feel valued, respected, equitably supported, and have a sense of belonging in the classroom community.  1  2  3

I create a safe, supportive, and inclusive learning environment.  1  2  3

I enhance students' relationship and communication skills through collaborative learning.  1  2  3

I help students evaluate themselves, solve problems, seek support, and access resources when needed.  1  2  3

I help students develop their critical thinking skills, ask questions, and analyze sources, perspectives, and biases.  1  2  3

## 4. Family Collaboration

I discuss with families what students are learning in the classroom and the expectations for their success.  1  2  3

I seek feedback from families and collaborate on strategies and resources to support student learning and growth both in and out of school  1  2  3

## 5. Reflection

I constantly reflect to enhance my practice, address learning inequities, and support all students in meeting or exceeding grade-level standards      1      2      3

I actively pursue and participate in continuous professional learning to enhance equitable practices and boost student learning, applying new knowledge and skills in practice while monitoring their impact on student outcomes      1      2      3

## 6. Professional Collaboration

I work together with colleagues on various tasks to support our shared goals for student learning.      1      2      3

I take responsibility for creating a schoolwide culture and learning expectations that foster an equitable and culturally and linguistically sustaining school community.      1      2      3

I provide ideas and expertise for school and district planning and decision-making.      1      2      3

Adapted from

Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education. (2015). Self-assessment: Teacher tool (Educator evaluation implementation brief).

# Chapter 25
# Student Evaluation Forms

**Sample - Elementary students**

Directions: For each statement circle one number. Circle only if you are sure you understand the statement and wish to respond. This information is private, the teacher will know only the total results. Mark as follows:

1 = all of the time
2 = most of the time
3 = some of the time
4 = never

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| 1. My teacher is interested and enthusiastic about the subjects. | 1 2 3 4 |
| 2. My teacher explains and answers questions. | 1 2 3 4 |
| 3. My teacher is friendly and courteous. | 1 2 3 4 |
| 4. My teacher makes classes interesting. | 1 2 3 4 |
| 5. My teacher makes me feel welcome to ask for help. | 1 2 3 4 |
| 6. My teacher makes assignments and directions clear and easy to understand | 1 2 3 4 |
| 7. My teacher's test and quiz questions are the same as was taught | 1 2 3 4 |
| 8. My teacher's test and quiz questions are easy to understand. | 1 2 3 4 |
| 9. My teacher makes learning fun. | 1 2 3 4 |
| 10. My teacher makes learning seem easy. | 1 2 3 4 |
| 11. My teacher explains the grades I get. | 1 2 3 4 |
| 12. My teacher gives grades that are fair. | 1 2 3 4 |
| 13. My teacher treats all students fairly. | 1 2 3 4 |
| 14. My teacher listens to me if I have problems. | 1 2 3 4 |
| 15. My teacher encourages and praises students. | 1 2 3 4 |
| 16. My teacher has a good sense of humor. | 1 2 3 4 |
| 17. My teacher has confidence in me. | 1 2 3 4 |

Comments

# Sample - Secondary students

Directions: Please respond thoughtfully. The information on these forms will not be made available to your instructor until the grades for this course have been recorded.

For each statement below, circle one number. Circle a number only for those statements which you regard as applicable. If the allowed responses to a statement seem insufficient, please feel free to write a response at the bottom of the page or on the back of the page.

Use the following rating system:
      1 = superior
      2 = above average
      3 = average
      4 = below average
      5 = poor

1.  Instructor's ability to stimulate interest in the subject      1 2 3 4 5

2.  Your perception of the instructor's knowledge of the subject matter
      of this course.      1 2 3 4 5

3.  Instructor's ability to make the course material understandable      1 2 3 4 5

4.  Organization of the course      1 2 3 4 5

5.  Clarity of the instructions provided for assigned work      1 2 3 4 5

6.  Instructor's preparation for the class sessions      1 2 3 4 5

7.  The instructor's regularity and promptness in conducting class      1 2 3 4 5

8.  To the extent the graded materials reflected the course objectives      1 2 3 4 5

9.  The extent to which graded materials were returned in a reasonable time 1 2 3 4 5

10. The helpfulness of written or oral comments made by the instructor on
      student work.      1 2 3 4 5

11. Instructor's receptiveness to students' comments and questions      1 2 3 4 5

12. Overall quality of the instruction in this course      1 2 3 4 5

13. Clarity of course requirements presented in writing      1 2 3 4 5

14. Grade expected for this course      A B C other

Comments

# Chapter 26
# Classroom Observation Notes

**T**HE following is an example of notes written during and following a formal classroom observation. Note that the observer has used a narrative approach. Also note the use of "t" as shorthand for teacher.

*Philip Johnson - 3rd grade reading - October 12*

*Students were lining up from recess*
*t mentioned 2 or 3 names that were "standing in line quietly"*

*other students quickly quieted*

*t made other positive comments*

*Students came into room, went to seats, began to work on papers that were already on desks*

*t called for group A*
*t had chart w/ new vocab words*
*t read each word - gave definition*
*t asked various students to read & use words as he pointed*

*Students then read in turn - Jack missed 4 or 5*
*t gave help to Jack*

*about half of others had finished - were wandering around
room*

*t was interrupted five times by questions from those "wander-ing" students*

*t answered those questions without criticizing students*

*Students in group A finished*

*t gave instructions for the worksheet*
*Group A went to seats*

*t called the rest, groups B & C to attention*

*t gave group answers to the 2 questions that had been causing
trouble for some*

*Students in group B & C then worked without interruptions
while t circulated*

*More than half of students in group A had to have extra help
with worksheet*

## NOTES

### Questions to ask

- What advance instructions had group B & C been given re: the worksheets?
- Did those worksheets represent new information or review?
- What was the specific objective for group A

### Commendations

- Use of positive reinforcement as management tool
- Positive feeling tone
- Worksheets available in advance

### Concerns

- Didn't see evidence of a clearly defined planned student outcome.
- Not sure that the lesson plan was appropriate to the apparent planned outcome.

# Post Observation Comments - Examples

THE following are some examples of statements made following a formal observation or video. Notice the use of DLR. Data, what happened in the lesson, Label, labeling the relevant learning strategy and Reason, why the event was productive or unproductive.

### Science Lesson

During your discussion of the chapter on theories of motion, you asked students to raise their hands instead of calling out. Several times, students called out their responses, and you answered. You reinforced the behavior you wanted to discourage and ignored the behavior you wanted to encourage. As a result, you achieved the opposite outcome of what you intended.

### Reading Lesson

During the time you had group B in the reading circle, one of the students suddenly did a backwards somersault and immediately righted herself. You continued your lesson without interruption. By not addressing the inappropriate behavior, it didn't persist, allowing the learning process to remain uninterrupted. This was an example of using "extinction" in reinforcement theory. The result was that the incident did not repeat or detract from the learning activity.

### Literature Lesson

After discussing the works of the Brontë sisters, you divided the class into four groups and informed them that they could collaborate to complete their individual assignments. This exemplifies the use of a collaborative learning strategy, creating opportunities for more students to succeed. Success is a powerful motivator. Consider exploring additional collaborative learning strategies where you organize the groups so that different students have distinct responsibilities, leading to a collective outcome.

### History Lesson

During your discussion of the Civil War, you led a class dialogue about the various causes and issues surrounding the war's onset. Robert provided an incorrect answer to one of your questions. You responded, "Robert, if I had asked the question differently (you gave a revised version), your answer would have been "right on." However, because I asked for the "root" cause, the answer wouldn't be the same." This was an example of using success as motivation. Instead of telling Robert he was wrong, you demonstrated how his answer could have been correct. You transformed a potential negative into a positive, allowing Robert and the entire class to arrive at a much stronger conclusion as a result.

# Chapter 27
# Notes and Memoranda

## Incidental and summary memos - Examples

## An incidental memo to self

During a short visit to Chuck's room, while he was conducting a group lesson at the front table, it was unclear what most of the other students were doing. I need to ask Chuck about this. How does he manage student activities when teaching in small groups?

## Series of Memos

The following series of memos demonstrates the documentation steps that show openness and honesty, serving as a record of attempts to help a teacher improve.

### *Note to self*

When I briefly walked into Walter's class, I noticed three or four upended student desks near the back of the room. Students were milling around, and I had no idea what was happening.

### *Note to Walter*

Walter, when I visited your room earlier, I noticed some tipped-over student desks and several students who didn't appear to be engaged in any studying or learning activities. Please stop by my office before you leave campus today to explain.

### Note to Walter

October 19

Thank you, Walter, for visiting my office. This note serves as a reminder of our conversation regarding classroom management in your classroom. The situation with the overturned desks and students idling was not conducive to a safe environment and suitable for effective learning. You agreed with this. You and I will meet during third period tomorrow to review your lesson plans for October 11, and we will arrange a substitute teacher for you on that day. You will spend the day in Carlyle's classroom observing his classroom management style. He is a trained mentor teacher who employs several effective classroom management techniques. Please observe closely and plan to incorporate more effective management strategies into your class.

### Note to Walter (left in classroom)

November 8

Walter, as we planned, I have made three informal visits to your classroom over the past two weeks. It appears there is some improvement, but I still have concerns. Please stop by after school today.

### Note to Walter

November 8.

This is a reminder of our discussion after school. Today, I noticed at least three students spending half the period chatting around the bookcase in the back of the room. About half were reading various books, while perhaps fewer than half seemed to be working on the class assignment. You mentioned that you were not impressed with how Carlyle managed his classroom. That may be true, but you need to establish an effective management system so that students can learn. I will continue to visit your classroom regularly and expect you to plan on implementing what you learned from Carlyle on October 11. In the meantime, I will explore some in-service opportunities for you regarding classroom management.

# Sample - Letter of Reprimand - Example

Dear Mrs. Timberlate

This letter serves to remind you of the concerns we've expressed about arriving late to class and other related events. I believe you genuinely want to meet the expectations that both the profession and I have for you. I hope this letter will be the final communication regarding this matter.

To recap, on October 7, Mr. Overton reported an incident that occurred in your class at approximately 10:45, ten minutes after the bell. He heard loud noises coming from your classroom, including crashing sounds, yelling, and students laughing.

He left his class under the supervision of a student teacher to check it out. When he arrived in your room, he found some books scattered on the floor and a girl lying on the floor. She introduced herself as Mary and said that two boys, Brian and David, had pulled the chair out from under her when she tried to sit down.

Mr. Overton asked a couple of students to assist Mary and noticed a cut on her elbow. He mentioned that you entered the room at that time and told him you would take care of it. As he was leaving the room, he asked one of the students if you had been in the classroom that morning. The student replied, "No, she never gets here until after the bell rings."

During lunch hour that day, October 7, we discussed the incident. You confirmed that you had been late to class on at least three other occasions over the past two weeks: September 30, October 3, and October 4. You also confirmed that you hadn't given Mary a hall pass to have her elbow treated. We talked about Mary's injury and your failure to assist her. I reminded you that school regulations require you to send an injured student to the school nurse. Page 22 of the Teacher's Handbook states, "When a student is injured in school, the student must immediately be examined by the school nurse." You explained that you did not send Mary to the nurse because "it was only a scrape." I told you that you should never make medical judgments and should always send injured students to the school nurse without delay. Your response was, "I am an excellent teacher, I earned my degree with honors, and I should know what I'm doing."

You told me that you hadn't slept well and had fallen asleep during your break, primarily because her students were the worst in the school and caused her too much stress. At that point, I suggested you talk to the school nurse about getting a referral to address your sleeplessness. She reassured me not to worry, saying she would work harder to get more rest at home and that if the students didn't cause her so much stress, she would sleep better. I then encouraged her to speak with the school counselor to explore what she could do about her classroom management and some of the more challenging students. Her response was, "I can handle it."

I then informed you about page 12 of the Teacher Handbook, which states that you are responsible for being in your classroom before the final class bell. Additionally, Teacher Performance Standard #7 requires you to provide a safe learning environment. Due to your actions, a student was injured, and instructional time was significantly limited. At that time, I reminded you that you were in clear violation of the handbook and the performance standards, which require you to be in your classroom before the tardy bell sounds.

Also, on that day, I informed you of the right to speak with a colleague for advice and counsel. That person could attend conversations, but would not be a participant in discussions or decisions.

Two days later, on October 9, I was informed that another teacher, Miss Swifter, noticed you enter your classroom five minutes late at 10:40 a.m. She mentioned that nine of your students were in the hall and ran to your classroom when they saw you approaching.

Mrs. Timberlake, you hold a general elementary teaching credential. The importance of classroom supervision is a fundamental aspect of your training. When you are late and your class is unsupervised, there is a significant risk of injury, such as what happened with Mary.

As the students in your class have a right to an education within a safe and supervised environment, I request that you arrive on campus no later than 8:00 a.m. each morning and ensure supervision at all times in your classroom.

I have scheduled an appointment for you with the district's Psychological and Counseling Department at 4:30 p.m. next Wednesday. I expect you to speak with a counselor to receive assistance in managing your stress and sleep issues. Additionally, I have requested Dr. Doolot from the University to observe your classroom and provide support for your classroom management. You are expected to meet with him and implement strategies to enhance your classroom management skills.

For the next four weeks, you are directed to sign in at my office with my secretary, Mrs. Blue, when you arrive at school. We will meet during your 5th-period prep in my office on November 1 to discuss your progress. A copy of this memorandum will be placed in your personnel file in ten (10) days. You have the right to respond and that response will be attached to this document.

Sincerely,


George Boombox, Principal

Signature _____Date _____

Your signature indicates that you have received this memorandum, but does not mean you are in agreement with its contents.

# Chapter 28
# Summative Evaluation Reports

⁂

THIS chapter contains a suggested outline for writing a narrative summative evaluation report as well as three examples.

## Summative Evaluation Report - Suggested Outline

### *Information:*

Name of School

Teacher's name, grade or subject taught.

Years of teaching experience

The credential held and employment status

### *The Goal*

What was the teacher's professional development goal

### *Classroom observations summary*

#### Formal observations or recordings

If any, list the dates and provide a summary of the observation(s)

#### Informal observation

Approximate dates and number of visits. Summarize

### *Other significant events or observations*

Incidents during the year that demonstrated professional excellence or led to concerns?

Complaints that may have been generated during the year. Describe and explain the follow-up.

Other? Dates and descriptions

### *Summary and recommendations*

### *Signature lines*

# School Letterhead

This is the summary evaluation report for:

Susan Rumble, Grade 6

Susan is in her third year of teaching on provisional status and holds a standard credential.

## *Evaluation Summary*

Goal: Her professional goal for the year was to become more proficient in social learning methods.

Observations: There were two formal observations in her classroom this year. October 13 and February 20 and about 8 informal visits during the year.

On the October 13 visit the classroom atmosphere was conducive to learning and a clear lesson design was apparent. She had the students do their assignments in groups, but there was no effective management of the organization of each group. She is interested in group learning and her goal is to learn more. She is scheduled to attended a one-day workshop in November.

At no time did I have any concern about the quality of the atmosphere in the class and students were occupied during my various informal classroom visits.

The second visit was on February 20. She had attended the social learning workshop and demonstrated much excellent use of group dynamics and group organization during that visit.

Other: During the course of the school year, Susan was always active in supporting school initiatives and outings. There were no complaints of any kind from any source.

## *Recommendations*

Susan has demonstrated a high degree of professionalism during her two years here. I would have no difficulty recommending that she be advanced to regular employment status next year

Dave Oppenheimer, Principal

Signature _____Date_____

Your signature indicates that you have received this memorandum, but does not mean you agree with its contents.

# School Letterhead

This is the summary evaluation report for:

Jon Everhart, Grade 7 Sports and PE

Jon is in his 13th year of teaching, his second in this school. He has regular employment status and holds a standard credential.

## *Evaluation Summary*

Goal: His professional goal for the year was to develop a varsity team in football, hoping to better prepare them for their high school experience.

Observations: There were no traditional "formal" observations. I observed his practice periods and games six or seven times during the year and once in the locker room to observe post-game activities. The specific dates on my calendar were October 4, January 4 and 14 and March 2. There were other observations that were somewhat "accidental."

On October 4, I observed a practice session and clearly noticed that in his interactions with students, he made many more negative than positive comments. We talked, and his response was, "They need that to make them tough." I encouraged him to aim for at least one positive comment for every negative. He replied, "I'll think about it." I followed up the visit with a brief memo reminding him of the goal. Additionally, I sent him an article titled "Culture of Positive Thinking in Sports Training," requesting that he read it.

My January 4 visit was during a post-game locker room conversation. The team had lost, and Jon's tone and words were negative and strong. He used phrases like "that was a stupid move" and "how dumb was that!" I spoke to him in my office and reminded him of the goal of at least half positivity. I asked him if he had read the article. His response was, "I don't believe in that; it's girly stuff." I told him that I expected him to read it and apply it, and that I wanted to see changes.

Follow-up visits on January 14 and March 2 showed no change in Jon's verbal interactions with students. During a brief visit on February 21, I inquired about his goal to form a varsity football team. His response was, "not yet." When I asked why, he said, "there aren't enough good players." Subsequently, I discovered that several players who had signed up for the varsity experience had quit. I spoke with a couple of the boys, and both expressed that they were tired of being yelled at and called names. On March 2, I spent considerable time watching a scrimmage and noted that there was no improvement in his verbal interactions.

I met with him in my office on March 3 and informed him that it was essential to foster a more positive atmosphere in both the locker room and on the field. I instructed him to read the article thoroughly and to develop an action plan for changing the way he communicates. I reminded him that his actions had caused him to lose some of his better athletes. I also reminded him that he was not in compliance with teacher performance standard #8, which requires him to create a positive learning environment.

Subsequent informal visits on the field showed no improvement in his communication with the students. I followed up with a detailed letter of reprimand which is in his file.

Summary: Jon's goal of forming a varsity team was not achieved. One reason was his inability to foster an enthusiastic and positive atmosphere to attract quality players. His interactions with students on the field and in the classroom or locker room were negative and often insulting. He did not respond positively to suggestions for improvement nor did he follow through on the one professional development opportunity that was presented to him. I recommend that his employment status be reduced to probationary, allowing him one school term to demonstrate his ability to create the necessary positive atmosphere.

Maria Segura, Principal

Signature _____Date_____

Your signature indicates that you have received this memorandum, but does not you mean agree with its contents.

# School Letterhead

This is the summary evaluation report for:

Evelyn Rasmussen, Secondary History

Evelyn is in her 23rd year of teaching, her second in this school. She has regular employment status and holds a standard credential.

### *Evaluation Summary*

Goal: Her professional goal for the year was to create a plan that incorporates personal history into her classroom by establishing connections within the community with individuals who could provide first-hand accounts of significant historical eras or events.

Background: Evelyn worked with the office staff to develop communication tools for creating a database of individuals who could serve as resources for her personal history projects. An announcement was included in the school newsletter, and about half a dozen names were collected. These included military veterans, some recent immigrants, and a few grandparents who had immigrated in earlier times. One grandparent of color had stories and even some pictures of slave ancestors.

Observations: I made a few informal visits to one or two of her classes to help her explain the project and develop the list of names. One visit that stood out as a highlight of her year was when the first community speaker, a Vietnam veteran, spoke about his experiences.

Summary: Evelyn spoke of her project to the faculty in our end of the year "teacher celebration" event. She showed a brief video clip of the Vietnam veteran visit.

Joe Trueblue, Principal

Signature _____Date_____

Your signature indicates that you have received this memorandum, but does not mean you agree with its contents.

Chapter 29
# Special Needs Students Resources

THIS chapter serves as an important resource for administrators, providing essential background on the Individualized Education Program (IEP) and the broader Special Education Process. Understanding this framework is crucial for effectively evaluating teachers and guiding them in creating strong strategies to support students with diverse learning needs. To connect theory with practice, a comprehensive sample lesson plan is also included.

## Individualized Education Programs (IEP) and Processes

An Individualized Education Program (IEP) is a written plan created to address the specific educational needs of a student with a disability. It is developed and regularly reviewed by the school's special education team, with input from the child's parents or guardians. The IEP details the student's strengths and challenges, annual goals, necessary accommodations or modifications, and the student's level of participation in the general education setting. Federal law also requires that students with disabilities be educated in the least restrictive environment whenever possible (US Department of Education, 2020).

An IEP team must be formed. As defined by the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), it includes a variety of stakeholders: the child's parents or guardians, at least one general education teacher, one special education teacher, a school district representative with authority over instructional decisions and resources, and someone qualified to interpret evaluation results. If appropriate, the student and other individuals with specific expertise or knowledge of the child may also be invited to participate (Center for Parent Information and Resources [CPIR], 2017).

## Special Education Services

The process of obtaining special education services usually starts with a referral from a parent, teacher, or school staff member who has concerns about academic or behavioral progress. After the referral, the school must get parental consent to conduct a formal evaluation. A multidisciplinary team then reviews the student to decide if they qualify for a disability under IDEA. If the student is eligible, the IEP team meets to develop a personalized plan that outlines the student's educational goals, support services, and teaching methods. This plan must be reviewed at least once a year. If parents disagree with the evaluation results or the proposed services, they can request an Independent Educational Evaluation (IEE) or pursue mediation and other dispute resolution options (U.S. Department of Education, 2020).

## Public Schools and Private School Consultation

Although IDEA establishes consistent federal requirements, special education services can differ among public school districts. These differences may stem from variations in staffing, funding, training, and available resources. For example, while one district might provide in-house occupational therapy or behavior intervention services, another may contract those services or have limited access. Despite these disparities, all public schools are legally required to follow IDEA's procedures for evaluation and service provision. Parents can request an evaluation at any time by submitting a written referral to the school's principal or special education coordinator. In many states, the school must respond within 14 school days and, if agreed upon, complete the evaluation within 60 school days of receiving parental consent (Illinois Legal Aid Online, 2025).

Furthermore, public school districts are required to meet annually with private school representatives, usually in the spring, as part of IDEA Part B's equitable services requirement. These meetings aim to discuss how federal special education funds will support parentally-placed private school students with disabilities. Topics covered include student identification, service delivery methods, and budget allocation for the upcoming school year.

# Lesson Plan Example

The following is an example of a lesson plan created to meet the goals and procedures outlined in a student's IEP.

## Print Concepts and Phonological Awareness Lesson Plan

### *Objective:*

Students will develop print concepts and phonological awareness skills.

### *Materials*

- Alphabet chart
- Picture cards with corresponding initial letter sounds
- Sentence strips with simple sentences
- Whiteboard and markers
- YouTube video

### *Procedure:*

### 1. Introduction (10 minutes):

- Show the alphabet chart and review each letter.
- Play a short video (3 minutes) on the letters being studied.
- Use picture cards to demonstrate initial letter sounds.
- Discuss print concepts by pointing out words, letters, and spaces in sentence strips.

Examples

Alphabet Review: Show the alphabet chart and go through each letter. For example, "This is the letter M. Can you say 'M'?"

Initial Letter Sounds: Use picture cards with objects like "moon," "dream," and "calm." Say the word and ask students to identify the initial sound. For example, "What sound does 'moon' start with? /m/."

Print Concepts: Teacher shows sentence strips with simple sentences like "The moon is on the sky." Point to each word and space as the teacher reads the sentence aloud.

## 2. Phonological Awareness Activities (20 minutes)

- ⪢ Play a rhyming game where students identify words that rhyme.
- ⪢ Practice segmenting words into individual sounds and blending sounds together.
- ⪢ Use letter cards to build simple words and emphasize sound-symbol correspondences.

    Examples:

    Rhyming Game: Say a word like "moon" and have students come up with words that rhyme, such as "mud," "mess," and "monkey."

    Segmenting and Blending: Say a word like "mother" and ask students to break it into sounds (/m/ /o/ /t/ h/ /e/ /r/) and then blend the sounds together to say the word.

    Letter-Sound Correspondence: Student use letter cards to build words like "moon" and "monkey," emphasizing the sound each letter makes.

## 3. Guided Practice (15 minutes)

- ⪢ Have students practice writing letters on individual whiteboards.
- ⪢ Encourage students to spell out simple words using letter-sound correspondences.

    Examples

    Writing Letters: Demonstrate writing letters on the whiteboard while students follow along on their individual whiteboards. For example, write the letter "M" and have students practice writing it too.

    Spelling Practice: Present simple words like "arm" and "worm" to spell using letter-sound correspondences. Provide guidance as needed.

## 4. Assessment (10 minutes)

- ⪢ Conduct a brief assessment where students identify letters, recognize initial sounds, and demonstrate phonemic awareness.

    Examples:

    » Letter Identification: The teacher shows flashcards with letters and asks students to identify each one.

    » Initial Sound Recognition: Show picture cards and ask students to name the object and identify its initial sound.

    » Phonemic Awareness Tasks: Provide words and ask students to segment them into individual sounds or blend sounds together. For example, ask them to say the sounds in the word "mom" (/m/ /o/ /m/).

# Accommodation and Inclusive Tools

## Accommodation

Accommodation in education involves modifications or adjustments made to educational settings and practices to support students in overcoming the challenges of their disabilities. These changes, aimed at improving access to learning, can vary from simple measures to more complex interventions tailored to individual needs.

### *Accommodation Categories:*

Presentation Accommodations: Modify the way instruction, directions, and information are presented (e.g., using audiobooks, large print, or visual aids).

Response Accommodations: Allow students to complete assignments or assessments using alternative formats (e.g., speech-to-text software, verbal responses instead of written work).

Setting Accommodations: Adjustments to the environment, ensuring it is well-lit, quiet, and free from distractions.

Timing and Scheduling Accommodations: Modify the organization of instructional time, such as extended test-taking time, breaking tasks into smaller segments, or adjusting the time of day for assessments.

### *Assistive Technology and Augmentative & Alternative Communication*

Special education teachers play a crucial role in incorporating assistive technology (AT) and augmentation & alternative communication (AAC) tools to support literacy development among students with various needs. These technologies include the following:

- ▸ Speech-generating devices and communication boards for non-verbal students.
- ▸ Behavioral and sensory tools to enhance engagement and comprehension.
- ▸ Adapted keyboards and voice recognition software for students with motor impairments.

By implementing these various forms of accommodation and leveraging assistive technologies, educators can cultivate learning environments that are more equitable. This approach ensures that all students receive the necessary support to thrive academically and socially, fostering their participation and success within the educational setting.

Chapter 30

# Digital Media and School

I N TODAY'S digital age, technology and media literacy are essential parts of classroom instruction and environment. Digital media and technology have transformed how students learn, communicate, and connect with the world (U.S. Department of Education, 2017). Classrooms today are no longer limited by walls or textbooks. Students have instant access to global information, collaborative tools, AI assistants, and social platforms that influence their thinking and behavior (Darling-Hammond et al., 2020). Proper use of digital media can boost creativity, inclusivity, personalized learning, and the development of 21st-century skills. (International Society for Technology in Education [ISTE], 2016).

Educational leaders must ensure proper planning and management to prevent potential risks. These risks—such as data privacy concerns, off-task behaviors, and digital burnout—can outweigh their benefits (Livingstone & Sefton-Green, 2016). Administrators play a crucial role by setting the tone, distributing resources, shaping policies, and demonstrating what it means to be instructional leaders in the digital age (ISTE, 2016). District or school leaders can support digital integration through policies, professional development, and ongoing guidance. Such support will give teachers the clarity and confidence they need. (U.S. Department of Education, 2017).

School leaders must go beyond simply recognizing the importance of digital learning. They need to understand what effective digital integration looks like in the classroom. It's not about counting devices or verifying if a popular app is being used. Instead, it involves meaningful conversations with teachers, active listening to their experiences, and a solid understanding of how digital tools connect with strong pedagogy, equitable access, and student well-being.

## Digital instruction

To support digital learning in classrooms, administrators should first develop a clear understanding of the instructional context. This includes why certain tools are chosen, how digital media influences engagement and equity, and what policies or constraints shape classroom practices. Instead of approaching these visits with a checklist mindset, administrators are encouraged to see them as collaborative opportunities to listen, support, and understand. Adopting a coaching perspective

helps leaders recognize the pedagogical thinking behind digital decisions, identify barriers such as limited access or infrastructure, and build trust with teachers. During and after the observation, feedback should focus on student-centered practices like engagement, critical thinking, and inclusive participation rather than solely on tool usage. Administrators can increase their impact by providing ongoing support, suggesting relevant professional development, and affirming teachers' efforts to innovate. When leaders prioritize understanding over inspection, they foster a culture where digital learning is both effective and sustainable.

In short, digital media use and learning should not be left solely to individual teachers' discretion. Instructional leaders play a crucial role in cultivating a school culture where technology is used intentionally, ethically, and fairly. Effective leadership guarantees that digital integration is not just allowed but actively supported, guided, and aligned with the school's mission.

It is the responsibility of administrators to:

- ⇥ Establish clear, school-wide policies for digital media use.
- ⇥ Invest in ongoing professional development on digital pedagogy.
- ⇥ Monitor equity of access across the student body.
- ⇥ Ensure compliance with all policies, data protection standards, and instructional goals.

Teachers cannot innovate in isolation. Support must come from the top. When leaders provide both the infrastructure and the professional culture, teachers are empowered to create digital learning environments that prepare students for success in a connected world.

The rubric on the next page can be a helpful tool for school leaders to guide and develop strong digital learning environments..

| Dimension | Exceeds Expectations | Meets Expectations | Developing | Not Yet Evident |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Instructional Purpose | Digital media is seamlessly tied to objectives, clearly enhancing content and deepening understanding. | Digital tools support learning objectives and add instructional value. | Tools are used, but the connection to learning goals is unclear or surface-level. | Tools are used, but the connection to learning goals is unclear or surface-level. |
| Teacher Readiness and Fluency | Teacher navigates multiple digital tools smoothly, adapts to challenges, and models confidence. | Teacher uses tools with competence and integrates them meaningfully into instruction. | Teacher demonstrates some difficulty or uncertainty with tool use or pacing. | Teacher avoids tech use or becomes flustered when using it. |
| Data Privacy and Online Safety | Teacher models and teaches best practices, proactively communicates safety guidelines with students/families. | Approved tools are used; students are informed about general rules. | Teacher uses tech with limited attention to policy or family communication. | Unapproved or unsafe tools are used with no privacy instruction. |
| Digital Citizenship | Students engage in deep discussions about online behavior, bias, and ethics as part of class culture. | Teacher addresses key topics like safety and respectful behavior; some critical evaluation is evident. | Teacher touches on digital conduct occasionally, but not consistently or deeply. | No instructions or mention of responsible online behavior observed. |
| Equity and Accessibility | All learners are supported with proactive accommodation, options, and inclusive planning. | Teacher considers access and uses some supports for diverse learners. | Some equity efforts are present, but not consistent across all learners. | No evidence of planning for access, accommodations, or inclusive use. |
| Student Engagement and Application | Students create, collaborate, and apply learning with visible ownership, reflection, and purpose. | Students use tools actively and meaningfully for learning tasks. | Students use tech passively (e.g., watching or typing only) or seem off-task. | Students appear disengaged or unsure of how or why the tech is being used. |

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# The Ethical Supervisor

## NAVIGATING TEACHER EVALUATION WITH INTEGRITY

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