BETTER FEEDBACK AND BETTER TEACHING: IMPROVING OBSERVER TRAINING AND PD

OCTOBER 15, 2015

AASA, THE BILL & MELINDA GATES FOUNDATION, AND DCPS

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AASA and Innovative Professional Development

- Technical Assistance and Intervention Districts
- New Supt. Council for PD Redesign
Agenda

**Why** invest in observation and feedback?

**What** resources can I use?

**How** is a leading district doing this work and to what effect?
SEEING IT CLEARLY

Improving Observer Training For Better Feedback And Better Teaching

- Observation Rubrics
- Observer Training
- Observer Assessment
- Monitoring Observations
the book...coming soon!
MET tested. Field proven.
Measures of Effective Teaching

Figure 1. Actual and Predicted Achievement of Randomized Classrooms (Math)
Agreeing to improve

• The classroom is the heart of learning
• Better learning requires better teaching
• Improving teaching requires clarity
• Rubrics don’t substitute for clarity
• Without clarity, conflicting demands multiply
• Clarity allows for meaningful feedback
• Sound observation training produces clarity
Agenda

**Why** invest in observation and feedback?

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SEEING IT CLEARLY
Improving Observer Training For Better Feedback And Better Teaching
Breaking down observer training

<table>
<thead>
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<th>Foundational Steps</th>
<th>Explaining the Rubric</th>
<th>Minimizing Bias</th>
<th>Supporting Practice</th>
<th>Modeling Feedback</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
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<td>Explain the instrument’s basis, structure, and the importance of using it correctly to rate practice.</td>
<td>Explain what bias is in the context of observation and why it’s important to address.</td>
<td>Review types of evidence relevant to each teaching component, and let trainees practice observation with pre-scored video.</td>
<td>Show how use of a rubric to collect and rate evidence from the classroom supports quality feedback.</td>
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Breaking down observer training

**KEY STEPS TO ADDRESS ESSENTIAL ACTIVITIES IN TRAINING**

**Building Steps**
- **Explaining the Rubric**: Improve how you introduce the instrument based on participant feedback and any changes to the rubric.
- **Minimizing Bias**: Train observers to identify and counter their own biases.
- **Supporting Practice**: Codify, enhance, and build out effective activities for modeling and practicing observation.
- **Modeling Feedback**: Require observers to practice giving feedback, and give them feedback on their feedback.

**Foundational Steps**
- **Explain the instrument’s basis, structure, and the importance of using it correctly to rate practice.**
- **Explain what bias is in the context of observation and why it’s important to address.**
- **Review types of evidence relevant to each teaching component, and let trainees practice observation with pre-scored video.**
- **Show how use of a rubric to collect and rate evidence from the classroom supports quality feedback.**
Breaking down observer training

**FIGURE 12. KEY STEPS TO ADDRESS ESSENTIAL ACTIVITIES IN TRAINING**

**Continual Improvement Steps**
- **Explaining the Rubric**: Establish a yearly process to consider changes to the rubric overview based on participant and teacher input.
- **Minimizing Bias**: Establish a yearly process to consider changes to bias awareness training based on input from participants.
- **Supporting Practice**: Begin annual follow-up training to keep observers sharp and to develop more sophisticated skills.
- **Modeling Feedback**: Begin annual follow-up training on feedback that focuses on how to handle different situations.

**Building Steps**
- **Continual Improvement Steps**: Improve how you introduce the instrument based on participant feedback and any changes to the rubric.
- **Supporting Practice**: Train observers to identify and counter their own biases.
- **Modeling Feedback**: Codify, enhance, and build out effective activities for modeling and practicing observation.
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- **Modeling Feedback**: Review types of evidence relevant to each teaching component, and let trainees practice observation with pre-scored video.
- **Building Steps**: Show how use of a rubric to collect and rate evidence from the classroom supports quality feedback.
Easily find the sections you need

Observer Training Checklist

Use this checklist to identify gaps and weaknesses in your observer training, or in your understanding of what training should include to address the knowledge and skills required for quality observation. Questions and examples are provided to clarify each item; for more detail refer to the pages listed to the right. Specifically:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Knowing the rubric.</th>
<th>Training develops an understanding of the key rubric elements that define each teaching component and performance level.</th>
<th>pp. 31–38</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>It helps observers see that what they value in teaching is reflected in the rubric. Does training connect what they see as good practice with aspects of teaching emphasized in the instrument?</td>
<td>p. 31</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>It clarifies how use of a rubric supports fair evaluation and meaningful feedback. Does training explain how the objective criteria allow different observers to make the same judgments?</td>
<td>p. 31</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>It explains how a rubric’s structure organizes indicators of performance. Does an overview point out the key rubric elements that define practice at each level for each component of teaching?</td>
<td>p. 33</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>It points out text features and annotations that clarify how to make judgments. e.g., Key words that define critical attributes of practice, or notes that list related teaching practices or behaviors.</td>
<td>p. 33</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>It explains how evidence of different indicators is interpreted and weighed in rating. i.e., The general rules, and types of exceptions, for considering all evidence for a component of teaching.</td>
<td>p. 34</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Evidence collection.</th>
<th>Training develops the skills to record objective description—efficiently and without judgment—of what occurs in a lesson.</th>
<th>pp. 39–44</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>It develops an understanding of what is evidence. i.e., Its descriptive nature, as opposed to opinion, summary, or judgment.</td>
<td>p. 39</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Clear steps based on your role

**FIGURE 4. WAYS TO INDIVIDUALIZE YOUR USE OF THIS GUIDE**

**To plan next steps for particular aspects of training**

- **Diagnose**
  Complete the observer training checklist on pages 7–8.

- **Prioritize**
  Identify which of sections 1–12 address your biggest areas of need.

- **Plan**
  Review those sections and respond to the prompts at the end of each.

- **Apply**
  Implement those plans, assess the results, and consider next priorities.

**To plan next steps across an entire training system**

- **Diagnose**
  Complete the observer training checklist on pages 7–8.

- **Prioritize**
  Read all 12 sections in order, responding to the prompts at the end of each.

- **Plan**
  Summarize plans across all sections by completing the worksheet on pages 105–106.

- **Apply**
  Implement those plans, assess the results, and repeat a similar process annually.
Advice that reflects where you are

**TECHNIQUES BUILDING A SHARED VISION OF EFFECTIVE FEEDBACK**

**To Lay the Foundation**

- Convene stakeholders to draft an agreed-upon statement defining effective feedback—a statement that drives consistent messaging to teachers and principals as well as the skills to address in feedback training.
- Provide evaluators with protocols and criteria for post-observation conferences that promote a supportive tone, teacher reflection, and co-planning of action steps.
- Create opportunities for trainees to critique and suggest improvements to examples of feedback using videos or role-playing.
- Enlist experienced instructional coaches with a strong track record of supporting teacher growth in suggesting techniques and tips to share with trainees.

**To Build and Improve**

- Give in-depth guidance on each step in the process of planning a post-observation conference, including prioritizing areas of focus, preparing reflective prompts, and identifying suggestions for teachers to use in their teaching. For each, provide strong and weak examples, plus opportunities to practice preparing.
- Survey principals on the extent to which they feel prepared to execute each step in the process of preparing and delivering feedback. Survey teachers on the extent to which the feedback they receive meets agreed-upon criteria for effectiveness. Use results from both to target training areas for enhancement.
- In follow-up training, discuss with evaluators how to adjust feedback for different situations (e.g., for highly skilled teachers, for reticent ones).
- Compile high-quality reflective prompts and suggested teaching techniques for each part of the observation instrument so that evaluators have a resource to go to for inspiration.
- Consider a pilot of video-based feedback in which post-observation conferences are grounded in review of selected parts of a recording of the teacher’s lesson.
SNAPSHOT
MINNESOTA DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION’S VISION OF EFFECTIVE FEEDBACK

To guide district leaders in planning new teacher evaluation systems, the Minnesota Department of Education asked representatives of stakeholder groups to craft a common vision of effective feedback. The group produced a set of characteristics that define feedback and outlined a set of practices that need to be part of feedback for it to be effective. The brief document is meant to provoke local system leaders to develop their own agreement on what they mean by effective feedback.

MINNESOTA’S VISION DOCUMENT FOR EFFECTIVE FEEDBACK

Feedback is...

- Sharing and communication of evidence (evidence-based conversations)
- Collaborative conversations or dialogue
- Focused on strengths, growth areas, development of next actionable steps, and available resources
- Ongoing conversations (follow-up) vs. event
- Clear and concrete so that teachers understand the feedback
- Timely
- Consistent evidence aligned to a standard (rubric)
- “Judgment” that is honest, fair, evidence-based, and aligned with the tool (rubric)
- Nested within other goals or activities such as student impact, teacher individual growth goal, schoolwide goal, district goal
- Distinguishes between performance levels (growth)

Practices associated with conducting feedback:

- Coaching conversation that moves teacher practice forward
- Time for teacher self-reflection prior to providing feedback
- Data shared prior to providing feedback
- Transparent on criteria and processes used
- Documented and occurs face-to-face
- Discussion based on teacher need and observer role
- Share students’ “voice” as supported by evidence
- Pre- and post-observation conferences, as appropriate for the type of observation being conducted
- Owned by the teacher and facilitated by the observer and includes next steps that both people believe in
- Opportunity to practice
Concrete tools & tips from peers

**RHODE ISLAND’S FEEDBACK QUALITY REVIEW TOOL**

**FIGURE 38. CLARIFYING THE QUALITIES OF EFFECTIVE FEEDBACK WITH EXAMPLES**

- **Reinforcement**
  - Managing Classroom Procedures
    - Students are well aware of the routines and procedures in the classroom. When you signaled you were starting the lesson, the classroom helpers retrieved the materials needed for the class and distributed them seamlessly.

- **Constructive Feedback**
  - Questioning and Discussion Techniques
    - Almost all questions asked of students were low-level knowledge or comprehension ones that did not require them to explain their thinking or cite specific examples.
  - Challenge students to think critically and engage in discussion with their peers. To do this, prepare questions that require higher-order thinking such as analyzing, synthesizing, or evaluating when prepping your lesson.
  - In addition, have students explain their answers and allow them to challenge each other’s responses to promote dialogue.
  - See attached article on Bloom’s Taxonomy for guidance on creating questions. Ask yourself: “How do I create opportunities for students to think critically?”
### FIGURE 39. EXCERPT FROM DPCS’ SUGGESTION CATALOG FOR ONE ASPECT OF TEACHING

#### Emphasis of Key Points in a Lesson

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Level 2 indicator that describes teacher’s current practice</th>
<th>Techniques to move to Levels 3 and 4</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The teacher sometimes emphasizes key points when necessary, such that <strong>students are sometimes unclear</strong> about the main ideas of the content.</td>
<td><strong>“Bite-sized” recommendations</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Script key points. Script the most important ideas prior to the lesson to ensure consistent delivery.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Draw attention to key points.</strong> Clearly signal key points by writing the points on the board, pointing to pre-written words, or asking students to capture important notes.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Display content.</strong> Use an anchor chart or other visual to capture key points. Repeatedly return to the chart throughout the lesson to emphasize how classwork addresses these points.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Level 4 Suggestion:</strong></td>
<td><strong>Sentence stems.</strong> Stage moments in the lesson where students discuss the key points covered up to that point in the lesson. Provide students with sentence stems such as “The most important idea is ...” and “If I taught this to someone else I would ...” to support their conversation.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Agenda

Why invest in observation and feedback?

What resources can I use?

How is a leading district doing this work and to what effect?
Washington D.C. Public Schools (DCPS) at a Glance

- **nearly 50,000** students committed to graduating from high school, prepared for college and work.

- **4,000** teachers determined to live up to our unparalleled role in ensuring the achievement of our students.

- **111** schools and principals who demonstrate the vision to build positive school communities focused on academic achievement.

- **3,500** classroom aides, social workers, counselors, custodians and other support staff who understand that our students must be safe, healthy and supported in order to achieve at the highest possible levels.

- **Countless** parents and family members supporting our children and demanding a high-quality education for them.
Our Goal for Classroom Observations

• All teachers receive high-quality feedback that improves instruction.
• Teachers trust that TLF scores are consistent, regardless of who observes the lesson.

Robust Evaluator Training

Online Learning + Application Opportunities + Calibration
Evaluator Training at DCPS

Welcome to DC Public Schools

An Overview of IMPACT and the TLF

RESOURCES AND PRE-WORK
NEW SCHOOL LEADER ORIENTATION 2015-2016
Online Learning: The align TLF Training Platform (8 hours)
Evaluator Training at DCPS

Evaluators View 30+ Videos as Part of Initial Training

Video Practice

(T at board, grid of Character/Emotion or Choice/Lesson)

How is Sophie feeling in this passage?

Click to Open Sample Evidence Script
Live Orientation Extends Online Learning (12.5 hours)

- IMPACT Best Practices
- Evidence Collection Strategies
- Writing Efficient and Compelling Reports
- Live Classroom Observation Norming
- Maximizing Feedback Conferences

33 content learning walks offered (as of 10/15/15)
Evaluator Trends Inform Future Training

Legend:

- Missing: %
- Low: %
- Discrepant Low: %
- Accurate: %
- High: %
- High Discrepant: %
IMPACT data helped us re-think our hiring timeline.

We know it looks like we cooked the data to make that perfect line. We didn’t.

Source: Internal DCPS Data Analysis
IMPACT data helps us retain our best teachers at very high rates.

Percentage of Teachers Retained from 2013-14 to 2014-15

- Highly Effective: 92%
- Effective: 89%
- Developing: 84%
- Minimally Effective: 50%

Source: Internal DCPS Data Analysis
Recent results from the National Assessment of Educational Progress also provide definitive evidence that our broader reforms are working.
Lessons Learned from Evaluator Training at DC Public Schools

#1. Invest in videos. Film your own if possible.

#2. Stay the course with proven training strategies.

#3. Frame through the lens of quality feedback (inter-rater reliability is only step one).
SEEING IT CLEARLY

Improving Observer Training For Better Feedback And Better Teaching
Get in Touch!

• MET Project: http://metproject.org/
• Seeing It Clearly: http://goo.gl/JcJsYE
• Bryan Joffe, bjoffe@aasa.org
• Steve Cantrell, Steve.Cantrell@gatesfoundation.org
• Jess Wood, jess.wood@educationcounsel.com
• Stephanie Shultz, stephanie.shultz@dc.gov
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