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Revising the teacher evaluation system for Estell Manor School

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REVISING THE TEACHER EVALUATION SYSTEM

FOR ESTELL MANOR SCHOOL

by
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ABSTRACT

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REVISING THE TEACHER EVALUATION SYSTEM
FOR ESTELL MANOR SCHOOL
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The purpose of this study was to research and develop a new evaluation instrument for classroom observations using a survey of instruments used by other districts as well as research of various styles of evaluation. The result of the study was a new instrument to be used by administration during classroom observations of teachers in the district. This was shown to be satisfactory for the teachers and the administration. Suggestions for new annual review procedures and peer review techniques were presented and evaluated, with volunteers accepted for a trial period in the upcoming year.

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

Chapter 1

Introduction

Focus of the Study

The focus of this study was on evaluation instruments for teachers, both classroom evaluation instruments and annual review instruments. This study created a new evaluation instrument for use in the Estell Manor School District for classroom observations.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to develop a new evaluation instrument for classroom teachers using a survey of other successful instruments used by other districts as well as research of various styles of evaluation. The result of the study was a new instrument to be used by administration during classroom observations of teachers in the district.

Definitions

Annual performance review – the yearly evaluation of a teacher by administration where the teacher's Professional Improvement Plan is created.

Behaviorism – the educational theory that states, "...programmed instruction was the most efficient means available for learning skills" (Roblyer & Edwards, 2000, p. 54).

Classroom observation instrument - the document used by administration to record observations made during a teacher's classroom observation and evaluation.

Constructivism – the educational theory that states that children learn new knowledge based on previous knowledge and experiences. It focuses on "students'

ability to solve real-life problems, and its methods call for students to construct knowledge for themselves rather than simply receiving it from knowledgeable teachers" (Roblyer & Edwards, 2000, p. 67).

Evaluation system – the combination of classroom observation evaluation and annual performance review that provides feedback to a teacher about teaching skills and professional development.

Formative evaluation – an evaluation with the purpose of providing information to teachers regarding improving instruction, usually descriptive findings that can be used to further goals and professional growth (Glickman, Gordon, & Ross-Gordon, 2001).

Peer assistance – experienced teachers, called consulting teachers, mentor new and veteran teachers to improve their knowledge and teaching skills (National Governor's Association for Best Practices, 2000).

Peer coaching – similar to peer assistance, but not part of an evaluative system; the teachers come together on a voluntary basis to refine their practice (ASCD, 2003).

Peer review – consulting teachers make formal evaluations and recommendations for dismissal or further assistance, without making the final decision regarding employment (National Governor's Association for Best Practices, 2000).

Portfolio – a documented history of a teacher's learning process guided by a specific set of standards (Painter, 2001).

Professional Improvement Plan (PIP) – a plan for professional development decided on jointly by the administration and the teacher at the end of every year.

Reliable – results are able to be replicated consistently each time the instrument is used.

Summative evaluation – an evaluation that has the purpose of determining if the teacher should be rehired or dismissed, usually in the form of checklists, rating scales, or narratives about worth (Glickman, Gordon, & Ross-Gordon, 2001).

Valid – the results are true for what the instrument is measuring.

Limitations of the Study

The results of this study cannot be used for other districts. It was specific to Estell Manor School because it was specifically designed to meet the needs of the district. Portions of it may be adaptable by other districts with similar needs.

Setting of the Study

Estell Manor City is a rural community in Western Atlantic County, New Jersey with a population of 1700. The community is fairly affluent (the District Factor Grouping is DE), and the majority of the families are nuclear families. Traditionally, the community has supported the programs of the district of the school district, passing eight of the last ten budgets, as well as voting to build additions to the school building in 1995 and 2002.

The Estell Manor School District is composed of one school, kindergarten through eighth grade for 234 students. The school has twenty four teaching staff members, ten support staff members, and two administrators. Four percent of the staff hold advanced degrees. It was recognized in 1995 as a STAR School of Excellence by the New Jersey State Department of Education. The curriculum is designed to promote a grasp of the fundamentals, as well as a level of understanding of subject matter that leads to independent thinking and problem solving. This includes a course offered for eighth

grade students in algebra, which allows for accelerated math study in high school. Grade Eight Proficiency Assessment results for 2003 were:

Language Arts: 0% Advanced Proficient

76.3% Proficient

Math: 10.5% Advanced Proficient

55.3% Proficient

Science: 15.8 % Advanced Proficient

57.9 % Proficient

Results for the 2003 Assessment of Skills and Knowledge for fourth grade (ASK4) were:

Language Arts: 0% Advanced Proficient

75% Proficient

Math: 37.5% Advanced Proficient

43.8% Proficient

Results for the 2003 Assessment of Skills and Knowledge for third grade (ASK3) are not available at this time.

Graduates from the Estell Manor School District attend Buena Regional High School on a tuition basis.

Significance of the Study

This study made a contribution to the district by creating an evaluation instrument that was valid and reliable for all teachers. The new instrument better evaluates classroom practices and helps staff members become better teachers through reflection and direct feedback.

Chapter 2

Review of Literature

The Need for Change

There are two main reasons for conducting evaluations: to make sure that teachers are teaching the students effectively, and to help teachers develop professionally (Danielson, 2001). The problem with many existing evaluation methods is that they are done to the teacher, instead of in collaboration with the teacher (Sawyer, 2001); the teacher's role has been a passive one (Howard & McColsky, 2001). This is beginning to change, however. According to Danielson (2001), "Recently...schools and districts have discovered that they can shape an evaluation system so that it contributes substantially to the quality of teaching" (p. 12). Newer evaluation systems put teachers in a more active role – evaluation is not done *to* them (Danielson, 2001). These same evaluation systems are also helpful for administrators in determining teachers whose skills need improvement ("Standards and Teacher Evaluation", 2002).

When creating a new evaluation system, the first step is to determine and state clearly exactly what the performance expectations are (Tucker, 2001). These expectations reflect sound teaching practices and encourage learning (Howard & McColsky, 2001). Current evaluation criteria are often based on direct instruction strategies, while leaving out the techniques of more constructivist teachers (Weiss & Weiss, 1998). They also often look for minimal competency in teaching performance, causing the evaluation to become meaningless for teachers who are already at that level or better (Weiss & Weiss, 1998). Since we have learned more recently about the brain

and how it functions, processes and learns, new evaluation systems should include these strategies (Danielson & McGreal, 2000). As stated by Danielson (2001), evaluation systems should offer assurance that the teacher is competent, as well as information on enhancing teaching skills.

In this chapter, different evaluation systems, peer assistance and peer review, and annual evaluation systems such as portfolios will be examined.

Formative and Summative Evaluations

Formative and summative evaluations are both based on teacher performance, but their purposes are different. Formative evaluations are intended to provide information to help a teacher improve; while summative evaluations make a decision about whether the teacher will continue working in the district, need help, or be dismissed (Glickman, Gordon, & Ross-Gordon, 2001).

Current evaluation systems are often summative in nature. They rely heavily on classroom observations to determine the competency of a teacher. However, these summative systems do not help teachers to grow professionally (Howard & McColsky, 2001).

An example of a summative evaluation would be a rating scale or rubric that is completed by the administrator during or after a classroom observation. One problem with these scales, according to Danielson and McGreal (2000), is that the teachers *expect* to get a rating of outstanding. A single observation or principal's report alone provides an incomplete picture of what teachers do (Weiss & Weiss, 1998). Low levels of trust between teachers and administrators along with a lack of understanding regarding what

good teaching practices actually are leads to an evaluation system that simply judges the teacher, instead of helping the teacher grow (Danielson & McGreal, 2000).

Formative evaluation systems help teachers reflect on their teaching by providing information about areas that could need improving or changing. Based on learning, the concept of good teaching has changed from a behaviorist view to a more constructivist view (Danielson & McGreal, 2000). In a constructivist classroom, the learning is based on students finding answers to problems and building knowledge on what they already know. A simple classroom observation such as a rating scale does not adequately show the competency of the teacher. To be more formative in nature, and to find out what the students are doing and where they are headed, a pre-observation conference is scheduled with the administrator. In this conference, strategies, skills, and techniques that the teacher would be using are discussed. In a post-observation conference, the discussion focuses on whether or not the objectives were reached, student reaction and learning, and how the class could have been improved. The evaluation process becomes reflective, where teaching is studied on a regular basis for the purpose of professional growth (Weiss & Weiss, 1998). According to Danielson and McGreal (2000), "Research indicates evaluation systems designed to support teacher growth and development through an emphasis on formative evaluation techniques produced higher levels of satisfaction and more thoughtful and reflective practice while still being able to satisfy accountability demands" (p.2).

The traditional approach of evaluating teachers is no longer appropriate for the educational system of today. Standards for students are rising, and districts have a responsibility to ensure that their teachers are capable of helping the students reach those

standards (Danielson & McGreal, 2000). According to Doolittle (1994), teacher portfolios can be used along with more traditional evaluation methods to achieve more authentic assessment of teacher performance. As a summative evaluation, it is an authentic assessment of the effectiveness of the teacher. As a formative evaluation, it provides feedback so that the teacher can improve.

Portfolios

According to Doolittle (1994), a teacher portfolio is a collection of work put together by the teacher to highlight and demonstrate skills and knowledge in teaching; it is a product that describes the teacher's duties, expertise, and growth. Painter (2001) calls it a tool for teacher learning.

Teacher portfolios usually contain two basic parts: artifacts and reflections. Artifacts are evidence that teachers use to document that they are meeting the teaching standards. They can be student-generated or teacher-generated. They can demonstrate best work, or a comparison of beginning work compared with more advanced work (Painter, 2001).

Reflections separate a portfolio from a scrapbook. As each artifact is selected for the portfolio, Painter (2001) states that the teacher should ask questions such as:

- How does this artifact provide evidence of my growth as a teacher?
- How does it represent who I am as a teacher?
- Why is this one better to include than the others?
- Can I explain the importance of this artifact to someone else?

Simply, the teacher needs to justify the inclusion of the artifact in the portfolio, describe the artifact, and explain what he or she has learned about the practice of teaching.

Danielson (2001) supports portfolios by stating that teachers who create portfolios based on teaching standards are forced to reflect on their practice. Painter (2001) continues this thought by saying, "By asking teachers to stop and think about their beliefs and practices in the classroom, the process often identifies any gaps that exist between the two. [T]hey are better prepared to search for meaningful ways to enhance their instruction and further support their learners" (p. 3). Danielson and McGreal (2000) state that portfolios help to promote deep understanding by directing attention to the connections between the content, teacher, learner, and context.

Portfolios are not created easily, however. They can be time consuming, awkward and unwieldy to store, and overwhelming to teachers who may just be beginning (Peterson, Wahlquist, Bone, Thompson, & Chatterton, 2001). Painter (2001) agrees that creating a portfolio is time consuming, but if teachers want to be involved in their own professional development, they need to take some ownership of the evaluation process, and the best way to do that is a portfolio.

Implementing a portfolio program requires communication and planning. Since the portfolio is an evaluation tool, it needs to have clear criteria and purpose (Painter, 2001). Doolittle (1994) gives these suggestions when implementing a portfolio program:

- Introduce it slowly, allowing several years to go from implementation to final stages.
- Gain acceptance through ownership. The staff needs to be involves from the beginning, and administrators need to convey the usefulness and importance of portfolios.
- Communicate clearly the purpose of the portfolio and the evaluation criteria.

- Have a model to show the desired product.
- Caution teachers to be selective – not everything they do should go in.
- Use portfolios as one piece of overall assessment.

Peer Assistance and Peer Review

Another style of formative assessment is peer evaluation. This is a process where the faculty works together to evaluate each other's teaching and helps each other improve (Keig & Waggoner, 1995). Peer evaluation can be broken down into two categories – peer assistance and peer review.

Peer assistance helps new and veteran teachers improve their knowledge and skills through mentors. Mentors, which are sometimes called consulting teachers, are experienced teachers who work with either new teachers or veteran teachers who may be having difficulties in the classroom (Hertling, 1999). The goal is to improve teacher quality through confidentiality, trust, sharing ideas, and support.

Peer review is a more formal program. The consulting teacher still observes and shares ideas, but then will also conduct formal evaluations and make recommendations regarding retaining or dismissing the teacher. Consulting teachers, however, do not have the final authority to make the employment decisions (Hertling, 1999).

Peer assistance and peer coaching have similar benefits as portfolios. When working with another colleague, reflection of the teaching craft is encouraged, prompting teachers to strive to improve themselves (ASCD, 2003). Another benefit is that more incompetent teachers have been dismissed under peer review programs versus traditional administrative evaluation methods (Hertling, 1999). It also encourages collaboration, eliminating any feeling of isolation among teachers (ASCD, 2003).

There can be potential legal problems with peer review, however. By formally evaluating a colleague, it may put the consulting teacher into the category of supervisor, affecting their union status (Hertling, 1999). A successful peer review – assistance program requires a high level of trust and cooperation between the union and administration.

Differentiated Systems

A differentiated system of evaluation for teachers is one way to accommodate the different levels of teaching ability within a district or building. A differentiated system uses different activities for different groups of teachers – different levels of experience and competence (Danielson, 2001). The idea behind a differentiated system is, "Once a teacher has reached tenure status, they are assumed to be professionally competent and can use the valuation activities to extend and enhance their practice" (Danielson, 2001, p. 14). A simple example of a differentiated system is a non-tenured teacher would be evaluated three times a year, while a tenured teacher would only be evaluated once.

The article "Standards and Teacher Evaluation" (2002) gives an example for a three-track differentiated system for evaluation. The first track is new teachers, either just out of college or new to the district. These are formally evaluated with class observations and portfolios to ensure a grasp of good teaching practices. The second track includes experienced teachers. This group creates long term professional development plans that are aligned with school or district plans. The third group is the struggling teachers. These have a specific plan for improvement and targeted professional development to address any problem areas.

By differentiating evaluations, teachers are evaluated specifically for their needs. New teachers would get the extra attention to assure that they are competent, experienced teachers would get the time and benefit of creating their own professional development, and struggling teachers would get the added assistance they need to be successful.

Conclusion

In creating a new evaluation system for Estell Manor School, a three-fold system was developed. First, a formative classroom evaluation instrument was created. It includes descriptors and information so that the teacher can easily identify shortcomings and strengths. Pre-observation and post-observation conferences are held so that the administrator can give valuable feedback to the teacher based on what was expected during the lesson, what was observed, and how the lesson could be improved.

Second, there should be a differentiated system of evaluation, which would include peer assistance and peer coaching. The first level for evaluation, the novice level, would include all non-tenured teachers, but also differentiating again between first year teachers and second and third year teachers. First year teachers would have mandatory participation in the peer assistance program, with a consulting teacher assigned to them for the year. Second and third year teachers would have the opportunity to participate in the peer assistance program on a voluntary basis. Tenured teachers who have proven themselves to be competent would make up the second level of teachers. These would have the opportunity to become consulting teachers. The third level would be any teacher who is having difficulty in the classroom. These teachers would be part of the peer review program, and could have any level of experience, from novice to tenured.

The last element of the new system would be the addition of portfolios. These would also be differentiated, and phased in on a gradual basis. Level One teachers, the novices, would be required to create portfolios on a yearly basis, but the required artifacts would be for specific teacher practices. Level Two teachers would develop a portfolio over two years, demonstrating the progress of their individual professional development project. Level Three teachers would be required to show artifacts that document the targeted areas where growth was needed.

In conclusion, by differentiating the evaluations and the portfolios, the evaluation system becomes much more individualized and personal, making it more meaningful. Feedback, reflection, and personal design of professional development create a sense of ownership. The purpose was to provide information and the tools for teachers to become the best teachers they can be.

Chapter 3

Design of the Study

General Description of Research Design

The research design involved two methods, survey and experimental, because there were two purposes in this project. The first purpose was to create new evaluation techniques to assist teachers in improving instruction, and the other purpose was to evaluate those new techniques for validity and reliability. The experimental design tested the new classroom observation instrument, while the survey design allowed the teachers involved in the experiment to evaluate their experience and the new instrument.

Description of Development and Design of Research

During this research, the focus was on the trial and evaluation of a new classroom observation instrument. After analyzing the existing classroom observation instrument and examining instruments from other districts, a new classroom instrument was developed. Volunteers were solicited for observation of a class period using the new instrument. After the observation was complete, the volunteer was asked to complete a survey evaluating the criteria used on the evaluation instrument, the applicability to the class, and the usefulness of the feedback it provided. The survey included an open-ended evaluation as well as questions using a Likert scale to determine qualitative and quantitative analysis.

Description of the Sample and Sampling Technique

For this study, the sample represented a cross-section of the teachers in Estell Manor School. Since the school is Kindergarten through Eighth Grade and the

instrument is applicable for all subject areas, teachers were selected that represented early elementary, middle elementary, late elementary, and middle school as well as self-contained, departmentalized, and special areas (i.e. music and art). This was achieved through solicitation of volunteers (see Appendix A), then the representative sample was chosen from these volunteers.

Description of Data Collection Approach

Data was collected for this project through several different techniques. Material culture in the district was reviewed for what has been used in the past and its successes and shortcomings. Other instruments were researched to find exemplary methods for evaluation. Once an instrument was developed, a pilot instrument was instituted to determine whether or not the instrument was usable, valid, and reliable before it was turn-keyed to the rest of the population.

The number of subjects was determined by how many teachers volunteered for the pilot program and by what grades/subjects those teachers taught. Each teacher agreed to allow an observation to be completed using the new instrument during a class period. The purpose of these observations was to determine the effectiveness, reliability, and validity of the new evaluation instrument. They then completed an open-ended evaluation and a survey (see Appendix A).

Description of Analysis Plan

The data was analyzed on an on-going basis as each teacher completed each survey. The analysis was both structured to provide a quantitative result by using a Likert scale, and open-ended to draw conclusions from data the teachers write. The data

was then organized so that weaknesses could be identified in the evaluation instrument and improved.

Chapter 4

Presentation of the Research Findings

The current evaluation instrument for classroom observations in the Estell Manor School District is in need of improvement. In analyzing the evaluation form, it was discovered there are several reasons why a new instrument is needed:

1. The ratings of "Unsatisfactory", "Needs Improvement" and "Satisfactory" have no descriptors. This leaves the decision of a rating to the evaluator, compromising reliability and validity. Different evaluators may have different opinions of what may be unsatisfactory, needing improvement, or satisfactory in a classroom.
2. There are items on the observation evaluation that are not observable during a class period, such as "Works Well with Other Staff Members" and "Cooperative; Tactful with Parents". While these are both traits of a good teacher, they do not belong on a classroom observation evaluation. The only items that should be present are observable qualities in the classroom during that time period.
3. The current instrument was mainly summative. Other than suggestions the administration may have made in the narrative part of the evaluation form, there was no indication how a teacher could improve or what to strive for.
4. There was no opportunity for collaboration between the administrator and the teacher. The administrator watched a class, made some notes, then filled out a form. The evaluation was being done to the teacher, not with the teacher. Ideally,

the teacher and the administrator should work together to set goals to improve instruction.

Benefits of a New Evaluation System

In creating a new Evaluation system for the Estell Manor School District there will be benefits to both teachers and students. The staff will benefit because a new system will help them refine their craft. Most teachers want to do a better job; they are constantly looking for ways to improve. Administration also wants them to improve, so there is a common goal that a new evaluation system can help accomplish. The students will benefit the most, however. As teachers improve, learning improves. The students will reap the benefits of a teaching staff that has the tools to continually elevate their level of teaching, reaching more students more effectively.

The New Evaluation System

The new evaluation system involved two parts, a pre-observation conference, and a new Classroom Observation Evaluation (see Appendix B). The pre-observation conference encouraged a collaborative effort between the teacher and the administrator. It allowed both of them to focus on specific goals for the observation. It was also more efficient since time was not wasted in answering questions or concerns that could have been addressed beforehand.

The new Classroom Observation Instrument included two sections. The first section was a matrix detailing areas of evaluation. It consisted of three main topics: Planning and Preparation, Classroom Environment, and Instruction. Each of these topics was further broken down into subtopics describing areas that exemplify good teaching. There were five possible ratings for each subtopic: Unsatisfactory, Basic, Proficient,

Distinguished, and N/A (Not Applicable). Each rating had a descriptor that specifies the qualities that the observer should see during the evaluation.

The second section of the evaluation instrument was narrative. The administrator can include any observations, comments, or suggestions in this area.

Reliability and Validity

The issues of reliability and validity were serious with the old evaluation system. The lack of descriptors for the ratings left them very subjective to the observer. As the observers changed, the ratings could also change. The rating could also change from day to day or teacher to teacher. By adding descriptors to the matrix that explain an observable behavior for each rating, it caused the system to be more uniform, reliable, and valid no matter whom performs the evaluation.

To ensure that the evaluation system was appropriate for all grade levels and subjects, the following classes were observed: Kindergarten, second grade Social Studies, third grade Music, fourth grade Language Arts, fifth grade Social Studies, seventh grade Language Arts, and eighth grade Math. After each teacher was evaluated using the new Classroom Observation Evaluation, an open-ended response and a survey were completed to rate its reliability, validity, and formative nature. In the open-ended responses prepared by the staff that volunteered to be observed (see Appendix A), each of them commented that the new evaluation was an improvement over the previous evaluation. These included comments about the direction it gave them to improve instruction, appreciation for the descriptors to indicate what was being evaluated in each category, and the various areas it covered. In the survey, the teachers were asked to rate

each item on a scale of one to ten; ten being the highest or best rating that could be given (see Appendix A).

- On the issue of reliability, when the teachers who were observed and evaluated were asked to rate the evaluation, ("Would the evaluation be appropriate for any of your classes?"), all teachers scored it as a ten.
- On the issue of validity, ("Did the evaluation accurately reflect what happened in the classroom on the day of the observation?") all the teachers also scored the instrument at a ten, the highest score possible.
- The final question was regarding the formative nature of the evaluation ("Will the evaluation aid you in improving instruction?"), and the rating was averaged out to be 9.57 out of ten. One teacher commented that she valued suggestions very highly, and would have liked to see a section devoted more to that.

Conclusion

In conclusion, the current evaluation system needed to be improved for several reasons. First, it needed to be more formative in nature, focusing on improving instruction. Second, the previous Classroom Observation Instrument was neither reliable nor valid, and did not offer any means of showing the teachers ways to improve. A new system needed to be created to rectify these issues. The new instrument that was tested received high scores from the teachers on the issues of reliability, validity, and formative nature.

Chapter 5

Conclusions, Implications, and Further Study

The current evaluation system was improved in several ways. First, by including a pre-observation conference to focus on specific goals and encouraging collaboration between administration and staff. Second, a new evaluation was created to reduce subjectivity and increase reliability and validity of the classroom observation process.

The new evaluation system that was created improved the previous evaluation system being used in the Estell Manor School District. The new system was more reliable and valid, and assisted teachers in improving their instruction. Administration and staff worked together to form goals and to achieve them, with clear-cut ideas of how to improve.

Implications of the Study on Leadership Skills

ISLLC Standard 1: A school administrator is an educational leader who promotes the success of all students by facilitating the development, articulation, implementation, and stewardship of a vision that is shared and supported by the school community.

The development of this evaluation system has shown that there are many different approaches to creating new procedures. Creating a strategic plan, gathering and interpreting data, and finding different information resources all lead to an environment where there is continuous school improvement so that all students have the knowledge, skills, and values that are needed to become successful adults. Continuous school improvement comes from teachers who are willing and able to improve what they do in the classroom.

ISLLC Standard 2: A school administrator is an educational leader who promotes the success of all students by advocating, nurturing, and sustaining a school culture and instructional program conducive to student learning and staff professional growth.

As teachers improve themselves, they are able to reach more students. Evaluations are a major component in pinpointing what areas need improving.

ISLLC Standard 3: A school administrator is an educational leader who promotes the success of all students by ensuring the management of the organization, operations, and resources for a safe, efficient, and effective learning environment.

A classroom that is efficient and effective is one in which learning occurs. To provide the optimum environment, the administrator needs to accurately evaluate the teaching in the room, then provide assistance to teachers who are not accomplishing that goal.

ISLLC Standard 5: A school administrator is an educational leader who promotes the success of all students by acting with integrity, fairness, and in an ethical manner.

The new evaluation instrument allows the administration of Estell Manor School act with fairness and integrity because it prevents subjectivity in the evaluation by only rating observable behaviors and providing descriptors of the desired behaviors.

Further Study

In the Review of the Literature, two further ideas for staff evaluation were discussed: portfolios, and peer coaching and peer review. These concepts will be studied, and volunteers will be solicited to try them. To evaluate the use of portfolios as a formative evaluation technique, the volunteers would be surveyed before the program began regarding their opinion, understanding, and prior use of portfolios. Approximately

halfway through the program, the volunteers would be surveyed regarding their opinions, successes and difficulties of using the portfolio. At the end of the program, the volunteers would again be surveyed to find their opinions, successes and difficulties using the portfolios. Included on the final survey will be an item asking them to rate the value of the portfolio regarding professional growth.

A longitudinal study using surveys would also be completed to find out the benefits and problems associated with peer coaching and peer assistance. The volunteers in this study would be surveyed prior to beginning the study as well as after the study was complete to find their opinions of the value and feasibility of peer assistance and coaching. The surveys will include different items for teachers who were the coaches and those who were the recipients of assistance.

Finally, the new classroom observation system created for classroom observations will be evaluated on a regular basis to find areas needing improvement. Improving instruction does not imply that it begins and ends with the teacher. Working together, teachers and administration can continually strive to improve not only the classroom, but the entire school community.

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Appendix A

Instrumentation

September 29, 2003

Dear Colleague:

As part of my internship program, I am attempting to create a new evaluation instrument for use during classroom observations. I need to test the instrument, and so would like to ask if you would consider allowing me to observe one of your classes at some time in the next few months. The observation would not be used in any way as a formal evaluation of your teaching, but afterward I would appreciate your feedback about the instrument itself.

Please initial below if you will be able to help out. Thank you for your time.

Dianna Abraham

_____ I am willing to allow you to observe a class using the new evaluation instrument.

To: The wonderful teachers who allowed me to come and observe your class!

From: Dianna Abraham

RE: Follow-Up Survey

Thank you all so much for allowing me to come and observe your class, and for your thoughtful responses to the observation evaluation. I would like to ask you for one more thing…if you could take about 30 seconds to fill out this simple questionnaire, I would greatly appreciate it. Thank you again for all of your help!

Please rate the following items regarding the classroom observation evaluation on a scale of 1 – 10 (1 being the lowest or worst score, and 10 being the highest or best score) by circling the appropriate number.

Reliability:

(Would the evaluation be appropriate for any of your classes?)

No, not at all 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 Yes, all of them

Comments: _____

_____

_____

Validity:

(Did the evaluation accurately reflect what happened in the classroom on the day of the evaluation?)

No, not at all 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 Yes, definitely

Comments: _____

_____

_____

Formative Nature:

(Will the evaluation aid you in improving instruction?)

No, not at all 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 Yes, definitely

Comments: _____

_____

_____

To:

From: Dianna Abraham

Thank you for letting me observe your class. Attached please find the new classroom observation form and the evaluation of the class I observed. Please take a few moments to look it over, then let me know what you think. Did it accurately portray your class? Is it helpful to you? Do you like it? Why or why not?

Thank you again for your time.

Appendix B

Final Products

Teacher: _____

I have scheduled an observation for your _____ class on
(Subject/period)

_____.
(date)

Please meet with me for a pre-observation conference on

_____ to discuss your goals and objectives for
(date/time)
the class.

Please let me know if this time is inconvenient so that we can reschedule.

Thank you.

Dianna Abraham

Eval. #: _____

Date: _____

CONFIDENTIAL CLASSROOM OBSERVATION

Staff Member: Grade/Subject Area:

Evaluator:

The purpose of classroom observations is the improvement of instruction. This is not limited only to formal periods of instruction, but is an ongoing process. As educators, all our efforts should be directed toward increasing our teaching effectiveness. There are five categories being used to evaluate your teaching performance: unsatisfactory, basic, proficient, distinguished, and not applicable. If at any time you receive a rating of basic or unsatisfactory for any areas of the evaluation form, a written statement regarding the unsatisfactory rating will be attached to the form. Please be assured that I am available to assist you in reaching the goal of improving instruction.

PLANNING AND PREPARATION

	Unsatisfactory	Basic	Proficient	Distinguished	N/A
Demonstrates knowledge of content	Knowledge of content is inaccurate and/or insufficient.	Demonstrates accurate but limited knowledge.	Demonstrates thorough knowledge of content.	Demonstrates knowledge with evidence of pursuit of additional knowledge.	Does not apply or was not observable in this class.
Demonstrates knowledge of students	Displays little knowledge of students' skills and abilities.	Displays general understanding of group's, but not individuals' skills and abilities.	Displays understanding of groups of students.	Instruction is diversified to meet the needs of each student.	Does not apply or was not observable in this class.
Selects instructional goals based on CCCS	Few if no goals are based on CCCS.	Most instructional goals are based on CCCS.	All Instructional goals are based on CCCS.	Instructional goals extend to cross-content CCCS. objectives.	Does not apply or was not observable in this class.
Uses a variety of resources	Teacher is unaware of and/or not using available and appropriate resources.	Teacher has limited awareness and/or implementation of resources.	Teacher is aware of and uses resources properly.	In addition to awareness and use, teacher prepares or seeks other materials to enhance instruction.	Does not apply or was not observable in this class.
Lesson plans	Teacher does not have any lesson plans.	Lesson plans are incomplete.	Lesson plans are complete and include clear objectives.	Lesson plans are complete and specific; include clear objectives and references to CCCS.	Does not apply or was not observable in this class.

CLASSROOM ENVIRONMENT

	Unsatisfactory	Basic	Proficient	Distinguished	N/A
Creates a positive learning environment	Teacher conveys a negative attitude toward content and low expectations for students.	Teacher conveys minimally positive attitude toward content and inconsistent expectations for student achievement.	Teacher conveys genuine enthusiasm for content and high expectations for student achievement.	Teacher's enthusiasm is shared by students. High expectations are maintained.	Does not apply or was not observable in this class.
Manages classroom procedures	Materials are handled inefficiently, resulting in a loss of instructional time.	Classroom routines functioned moderately well.	Classroom routines are handled smoothly; teacher delegates many tasks to students.	Classroom routines are seamless; students are responsible for tasks.	Does not apply or was not observable in this class.
Manages student behavior	Behavior is not monitored; teacher is not aware of what students are doing.	Teacher used techniques to impact some but not all student behavior.	Teacher consistently monitors student behavior and uses appropriate techniques.	Teacher uses subtle and effective techniques to encourage student self-monitoring behavior.	Does not apply or was not observable in this class.
Maintains a purposeful and orderly classroom	Classroom is unsafe or arrangement of furniture is unsuitable for lesson activities. Teacher makes poor use of physical resources.	Classroom is safe and furniture is adjusted for classroom activities. Teacher makes adequate use of physical resources.	Classroom is safe and arrangement of furniture enhances learning activities. Teacher makes skillful use of physical resources.	Classroom is safe and students arrange furniture to enhance their own learning. Teacher and students make optimal use of physical resources.	Does not apply or was not observable in this class.
Interaction with students	Teacher is negative, demeaning, and disrespectful.	Teacher is generally appropriate, sometimes inequitable.	Teacher is consistently warm, friendly, and respectful to the class.	Teacher shows genuine caring and respect for the class and individual students.	Does not apply or was not observable in this class.

INSTRUCTION

	Unsatisfactory	Basic	Proficient	Distinguished	N/A
Communicates clearly and accurately	Teacher directions and procedures are vague. Teacher's spoken language is inaudible and written language is unclear.	Teacher directions and procedures are clarified after initial confusion. Teacher's written and spoken language are clear and accurate.	Teacher directions are clear. Teacher's written and spoken language are clear and accurate.	Teacher directions and procedures are clear and teacher anticipates possible student mis-understanding. Teacher's spoken and written language is correct, clear, and expressive.	Does not apply or was not observable in this class.
Engages students in learning	Representation of content is unclear. Activities and assignments are developmentally inappropriate. Students are not cognitively engaged.	Representation of content is inconsistent in quality. Some activities and assignments are developmentally appropriate and some students are cognitively engaged.	Representation of content is developmentally appropriate and relates well to students' knowledge and experience. Most activities are appropriate and most students are cognitively engaged.	Representation of content is developmentally appropriate, relates well to students' knowledge and experience, and involves student contribution. All students are cognitively engaged.	Does not apply or was not observable in this class.
Accommodates and modifies instruction based on students' needs and abilities	Teacher does not make any changes in instructional plan. Teacher ignores student questions and blamed students for their lack of success.	Teacher attempts to adjust instructional plan, with mixed results. Teacher accepts responsibility for student success but used few instructional approaches for students in need of help.	Teacher makes smooth adjustments to instructional plan and succeeds in accommodating student questions. Teacher uses some instructional approaches for students in need of help.	Teacher makes successful major adjustments to instructional plan and uses opportunity to enhance student learning. Teacher uses extensive strategies for students in need of help.	Does not apply or was not observable in this class.
Provides feedback to students	No feedback is provided or quality of feedback is uniformly poor. Feedback not provided in a timely manner.	Quality and timeliness of feedback are inconsistent.	Quality and timeliness of feedback are consistently high.	Quality and timeliness of feedback are consistently high. Students are provided opportunity to use feedback in their learning.	Does not apply or was not observable in this class.

ADMINISTRATOR'S OBSERVATIONS, COMMENTS AND/OR SUGGESTIONS:

Evaluation #: _____ Evaluator: _____

Date signed: _____ Teacher: _____

Biographical Data

Name	Dianna Abraham
High School	Arthur P. Schalick High School Pittsgrove, NJ
Undergraduate	Bachelor of Arts Earth Science Education University of Delaware Newark, DE
Graduate	Master of Arts Supervision and Curriculum Development Rowan University Glassboro, NJ
Present Occupation	Science Teacher Estell Manor School Estell Manor, NJ