

Benchmark: Beginning Teacher Observation and Feedback

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*Summary*

For my observations, I chose to use the videos from evaluator training this summer, where we watched and studied several entire coaching cycles (pre-conference, observation, post-conference) and learned more about the process and how to be an evaluator. For this assignment, I will discuss the observations of Mr. Campbell, a seventh/eighth grade teacher in his third year. In the videos, he is being evaluated by his school's instructional coach.

In the pre-conference, the administrator sat down with the teacher and discussed the lesson she would be observing. Just as the administrator did prior to meeting with him, we were given a copy of the lesson plan before viewing the video, and were asked to generate a list of any questions we had. A few of the questions were: "*What does  $TC+BK=I$  mean?*" "*How will you make this lesson relevant to students?*" "*How can we take this seemingly complex standard and put it in student-friendly language?*" We then watched a video of the lesson and took scripted notes, which proved to be much more difficult than it initially seemed.

During the observation, I was already thinking of the feedback I would give to the teacher, and made sure to note positive actions (such as great classroom management, great question, objectives clearly and constantly stated, etc.). During the post-conference, the administrator gave very similar feedback to what my group members and I discussed. We all thought Mr. Campbell did a fantastic job using his own personal thinking as a model for the students to connect their background knowledge to the poem. He used explicit direct instruction about inferencing and how one must have text clues and background knowledge to make an inference (hence  $TC + BK = I$ ). Some of the constructive feedback was to always make sure he

has a clear assessment method that will show whether or not students understand the objective. Also, he should work on making sure he allots time and opportunity for differentiating, even in a whole-group activity.

Based on the SCTS 4.0 rubric, which is used in South Carolina to evaluate teachers, we collectively decided that his performance would score Proficient (3) based on the data collected in our observation. Even with the constructive feedback considered, he taught a solid lesson that addressed all areas of the standards and their respective indicators.

### *Technology Recommendations*

In the pre-conference, the administrator referred to a previous goal set by the teacher- spend less time whole-group teaching and more time in small-groups, allowing students to work more versus being lectured. During the lesson, he still at times would tell the students “Okay, you have five more minutes” and that time would not be adhered to. I would suggest him using the smartboard as a timer to help stay on track and not have any dead time or have to rush to finish a lesson. Also depending upon available resources, I would suggest giving them a framework or graphic organizer electronically, and allow them to use that method to show their thinking, as an alternative to pencil-paper or verbal. Lastly, if they are a one-to-one school, I would suggest maybe allowing students to create their own poems electronically, or set up a technology station with a website or online exercises for further independent practice.

### *Promoting School Culture*

Our training suggests that when administering feedback, evaluators choose areas of reinforcement and refinement from the rubric. If I were the instructional coach, my goal should

be for our dialogue to be a reflective experience. How did you know your students achieved the desired outcomes? What would you tweak to make this lesson even better? After the lesson is over, it is critical as a coach that I follow up and continue to support the teacher. As the coach stated in the video, “Always begin with student work. Was there mastery in this lesson? Because if not, that was the ultimate goal so we would need to refine some things from there.” Prior to the post-conference, the teacher had already set high expectations for student work as well, so they were able to get some good data and conversation based on those results. Ultimately my actions should show that we are all in the same business- the business of growing teachers and students.

### *Reflection*

Being aware and acknowledging my own strengths and weaknesses helps me understand that I too will grow as an evaluator and one day, a coach. I am not here to tell teachers what they do right or wrong, but provide them with evidence that will help them grow and be reflective. True coaching means affirming teachers. It is a matter of helping my teachers see what I see in them- the best they can be. It is understanding that my teachers and I may not always agree on feedback during reflection, and that it is okay; but foremost we must continue diligence in our support and remain focused on the main goal- successful student outcomes.