



The Perth Amboy Federation

Tips to Prepare for Your Post-Observation

Take evidence of what happened after the observed lesson. Be prepared to discuss factors that the observer may not know. Don't be afraid to discuss the make-up of your class. You may have a student that has a documented history of difficult behavior. It is unfair for an observer to expect you to suddenly remedy the problem on your own. Brag about successes that may not have been observed. Discuss concerns and/or needs not being addressed. Be prepared to advocate for your strengths as a professional. You should have this conversation face-to-face and be ready with test results, samples of completed work, or other evidence of the lesson's success.

If the lesson "bombed" be prepared to discuss how you followed up (re-taught the lesson, offered extra help, etc.) Use the conference to discuss good things happening as well as concerns you have regarding your students. Bring a list of any questions and requests for support you may have for the evaluator. Remember that you have more information about your students than what was observed. Be prepared to bring other evidence of your success other than the lesson.

CRITICAL CONVERSATIONS

Preparation

- Make sure you and your supervisor have sufficient time to see the conversation through to the end.
- Be realistic about what you can and cannot achieve.
- Make sure the conversation is focused on facts and why the facts are important – not just opinions.
- Understand you have a good chance to resolve an issue rather quickly with a conversation.
- Take a deep breath.

CRITICAL CONVERSATIONS

Building Rapport

- Be sincere.
- Be present in the conversation.
- Be confident, but not arrogant.
- Be honest.

NEUTRALIZE

all negative items

- ***Provide evidence to support your disagreement***
- ***Give data to neutralize what has been criticized***
- ***Answer any item labeled as “ineffective”, “partially effective”, “failure to do,” “lack of,” “in need of,” “should/could have,” “suggest,” “noticed,” “appeared,” etc. These terms can be subjective. Make sure there is observable, objective data supporting the “claim”.***
- ***Use language that is not emotionally charged***

It is extremely important to neutralize all negative items in your evaluation. Be sure to have supporting documentation.

ANALYZE –

Ask the right questions

- What is the “tone” of the written report?
- Is the report designed to lead to professional learning?
- Is the report derogatory without being constructive?
- Are there positive facts that have been omitted?
- Is there a pattern?
- What needs correction by rebuttal?

Is the written report prepared in such a way that will lead to professional growth or is it designed to be destructively critical?

When answering the questions, remember the key components of a critical conversation. You must be honest. Are other observers finding similar results? If that is the case, you should ask for assistance and training in the specific areas where you need to improve.

Be prepared to indicate what you disagree with and why, on a factual level, not an emotional level. You should have been trained in the evaluation model. Evidence how you meet the requirements of the rubric.

Remember, a visitor in your classroom does not know what happened before their visit or what happens after their visit.

EQUALIZE
the results

- Stress preparation
- Focus on objectives, procedures, attainment
- Be clear
- Connect performance to job description/model
- Discuss, don't reject, recommendations
- Identify needed support for recommendations

Then you want to **equalize the results**.

- **Stress preparation**, motivation, curriculum, lesson flow.
- **Focus on objectives**, procedures, attainment.
- **Be clear** in directions, assignments, and closing of lesson.
- **Connect all performance** with curriculum and **job description**.
- Connect the performance with the language of the **model** framework.
- **Discuss, don't reject, recommendations. Acknowledge any suggestions offered.**

MAKE YOUR REBUTTAL EFFECTIVE

- Keep it short and simple
- Seek advice
- Utilize facts
- Get specifics
- Identify if assistance had been previously requested; response

If you are going to write a rebuttal, you want it to be effective. A thoughtful and professional response means you are a thoughtful and professional individual. This is an opportunity for you to make a lasting impression. Your best defense is probably a good offense.

- **Keep it short and simple.** Long response tend to portray you as argumentative and may aid in making the administration's case against you. Typically long responses contain too much emotion, are too personal and less objective. This could potentially raise new issues upon which the evaluator may "attack" you.
- **Seek advice** from your union.

- **Utilize facts; create a true picture of you and your abilities** – avoid sarcasm and accusations. Focus response on behavior not personalities. Don't indulge in personal characterizations of the evaluator. Instead write your response skillfully enough that a neutral third party reading the evaluation report and your rebuttal will conclude that the evaluator did not have a true picture of you and your abilities.
- **Get specifics** vs. generalizations from evaluator. Your response should look more thoughtful and professional than the evaluation report. A **neutral third party** examining your rebuttal should conclude that you are knowledgeable, professional, calm and competent.
- **Always indicate when administrative assistance was requested but not provided.**
- **Is the district implementing the evaluation model correctly?**
- **Connect negative comments to circumstances beyond your control.**

Also remember that you should know in advance the criteria that will be used to evaluate your performance, and those standards should be fair, reasonable and consistent throughout the school district. An evaluator should not have expectations for your lesson that are their "personal preferences", or that involve activities or classroom procedures they saw and liked in another classroom. Ask for expectations in writing so that you can document if different evaluators are telling you different things. Keep copies of emails, and write down notes from any verbal conversations. Follow up after verbal conversations with confirming emails. You have the right to advocate for yourself and to be treated like a professional.