

Section C: Instructional Evaluation

Now that we have identified instructional strategies, the new teacher will want a method of evaluating instruction. Before we consider this topic, think about what it is we wish to evaluate.

For some, there is no evaluation of instruction – only evaluation of students. Here is how it works:

- I teach
- They test
- They pass or fail
- We move on



In such a scenario, the teacher is a performer. He or she performs the act of teaching



If the students achieve, they win - and we move on.



If the students fail, they go up in a puff of smoke - and we move on.

Perhaps the above example is a little extreme, but the intention is to make a point. This chapter is not about winning or losing the game of teaching. It's about the improvement of instruction in order to reach the goal of student learning.

How good is my teaching,
and what can I do to improve?

Before we look at the obvious, and the not-so-obvious, ways a teacher can evaluate his or her instruction, there is a collection of research that new teachers should become familiar with - the "effective schools research."

Effective Schools Research

"Educators disagree on what constitutes effective teaching." (Oliva 126)

For the past fifteen years, quite a bit of research has been done, the results of which are collectively known as the "effective schools research." By learning what the research says about student achievement, the new teacher can more easily understand the importance of effective instruction, and self evaluation. (In other words, to help the new teacher understand **why** they should do **what** they should do.)

Effective schools research (Oliva 127) says that student achievement will be higher when the teacher:

- ◆ Sets clear goals for the class
- ◆ Holds high expectations of students
- ◆ Focuses on the academics (an implication for curriculum integration)
- ◆ Maintains an orderly classroom
- ◆ Uses suitable materials of instruction
- ◆ Monitors student performance
- ◆ Provides feedback to students about their performance
- ◆ Uses positive reinforcement

The new teacher who is aware of the things a "good teacher" does is more likely to head in that direction.



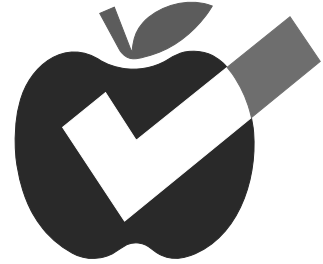
Evaluation of Teaching

To this point, we have described various aspects of classroom instruction. Now it's time to look at tools that new teachers can use to evaluate their instruction. These tools include:

- Self evaluation
- Mentor/peer evaluation
- Student performance
- Student evaluation

Competencies to Be Evaluated

Most schools in North Carolina currently use a "Formative Observation Data Instrument" that outlines the teaching competencies to be evaluated.



The appendix to this guide contains a five page document entitled "Indicators of Effective Teaching" that was developed by Darlene Carrigan, Director of Elementary Education and Student Services for Alexander County Schools in North Carolina, and former teacher-evaluator for the county. Ms. Carrigan has shared this material at past Health Occupations Education New Teacher Workshops to help describe what administrators are looking for when they evaluate instruction.

Also in the appendix is a "Formative Observation Data Instrument" (known in the field as a FODA) that outlines the teaching competencies to be evaluated, and that will be referred to later in this paper.

Self Evaluation of Instructional Skills

To help the new teacher develop instructional competence, the following steps are recommended (adapted from Oliva 438):

1. Analyze the teaching act*. Study literature such as this guide or professional literature on teaching. Study the "Indicators of Effective Teaching."
2. Examine the performance of other teachers**. Use the FODA. Draw implications for your own teaching.
3. Examine your own performance***. Use videotaping and the FODA to evaluate your instruction.

☆Analysis of the Teaching Act

Professional journals are filled with articles to help teachers improve their teaching. When teachers read professional literature, they have an opportunity to analyze an author's point of view, and draw implications for their own teaching. They begin to understand more about the teaching process, and identify ways to improve their teaching skills. (Oliva 438)

★Examination of the Performance of Others

Protocol materials are taped incidents of actual classroom situations. (Oliva 440) They give the new teacher an opportunity to see teaching skills in brief, and to analyze those skills. Try watching the American Teacher Awards on the Disney Channel. This weekly program describes teachers who have been judged to be outstanding. The program interviews the teachers, their students and administrators, and shows examples of the teacher when they are teaching.

Other examples of protocol materials may be available as staff development videotapes in your school system. Ask an instructional leader at your school or central office if any taped materials or teacher-training modules are available.

You may also choose to visit other teachers and evaluate their performance for the purpose of improving your own performance. You may ask to observe colleagues at your school, or request that your vocational director pay your sub so that you may visit another Health Occupations Education teacher. Before using the FODA (in the appendix of this paper) during your observation of another teacher, it is best to receive Inservice training on the use of the FODA. Also, always be sure to be very clear with the other teacher what you wish to observe, and ask permission to use the FODA if you plan to use it.

★Examination of Your Own Performance

According to Oliva, the most promise for continuous improvement in teaching performance occurs when a teacher arranges for himself or herself to be videotaped, and then uses the evaluation instrument to critique the performance. "No matter how helpful an observer may be to a teacher there is nothing that can replace a teacher's viewing his or her own performance." (447)

★Mentor/Peer Evaluation

Once the new teacher is comfortable with self-evaluation, a next step can be mentor or peer evaluation. In this step, the new teacher may invite someone to the classroom to evaluate instruction using the TPAI, or another instructional tool. The mentor/peer could be asked to observe the entire instructional process, or specific areas of concern the new teacher has been working on.

It is important for the new teacher to understand that ongoing assessment of teacher performance is a duty of the school administration. As part of the formative observation process, administrators and supervisors visit teachers periodically to evaluate their performance and help them improve their instruction. New teachers benefit from peer/mentor evaluation when they become comfortable with the process and improve their skills as a result.

☆Student Performance

There are extremes in interpreting the relationship between student performance and instructional skill. If students perform badly on a test, are they bad learners, or am I a bad teacher? The correct answer is neither, but serves to point out that student performance is the responsibility of both the student and the teacher.

The new Health Occupations teacher should use student performance to gauge instructional effectiveness. If the effective schools practices are being employed, and all students are mastering objectives, then the teacher should continue in the direction that he or she is headed. It's working!

If student performance does NOT match the expectations of the teacher, then analysis of student performance and "plan B" should be considered.

Analysis of student performance suggests that the teacher ask the question "why didn't it work?"

Sometimes students will tell you that they didn't pay attention and they didn't study. OK - now you know what happened. Sometimes students will tell you that they tried, they studied, and they understand the material, but....? Then, it's time to evaluate the evaluation method (test).

Finally, sometimes students will tell you that they never understood what they were supposed to know or be able to do. In that case, you may wish to evaluate the instruction.

The key to evaluating student performance is to assure that things are going well (students are mastering the learning outcomes) or to identify when adjustments are needed, and make those adjustments to maximize the learning potential of all students.

Student Evaluation

Learners can provide unique and valuable insights into instruction. Student evaluations can provide data about instructional effectiveness and about the course and teacher.

New teachers are strongly encouraged to consider using student evaluations on a regular basis. When using student evaluations, keep the following points in mind:

- 1) Keep them anonymous, and don't retaliate for negative comments if you can read the handwriting. (Someone else could type the written comments to avoid this potential problem.)

- 2) The results should be available only to the teacher for his or her own use.
- 3) Make note of criticisms. Decide if a change in teacher behavior is needed, or if a misunderstanding by the students needs to be clarified. Focus on the dominate or most frequent points, not the extremes.
- 4) Be prepared for criticism. Students are generally honest when evaluating teachers, and on occasion can be a little harsh. Use good judgment in deciding how to use the student evaluation process to improve instruction.

The last page of the appendix contains a sample student evaluation form. It is only a sample, and can be adapted or changed to meet the needs of the classroom teacher.

Performance Assessment



*No, I said I was going to
evaluate you on 18 scrolls.*

What is Performance Assessment?

Performance Assessment is defined as the:

Direct, systematic observation of an actual student performance or examples of student performances and rating of that performance according to pre-established criteria. Students are asked to perform a complex task for create a product. They are assessed on both the process and end result of their work. Many performance assessments are real-life tasks that call for higher-order thinking. These assessments may be used for individuals or groups.

- - *Pathways to School Improvement*, North Central Regional Education Laboratory

Performance assessment in education is also called authentic assessment, portfolio assessment, and alternative assessment. Basically, the concepts are the same.

Health Occupations Education involves many different ways of measuring performance:

- ✓ Skills
- ✓ Essays
- ✓ Portfolios
- ✓ Reports
- ✓ Projects

Specific examples include:

- Allied Health Sciences II - Clinical Skill Checklists
- HOSA - Evaluation forms for Competitive Events
- Nurse Aide Level I Competency Evaluation
- Medical Sciences II - Evaluation of Performance by Mentors



Is Performance Assessment something new?

No, not exactly. Teachers in Health Occupations Education have evaluated performance for years. Do you give a grade for how well students carry out their responsibilities during clinical internships? That is an example of performance assessment.

Does the blueprint tell me where there will be performance items?

All Health Occupations Education blueprints developed since 1995 have columns for performance weight in addition to cognitive weight. In any column with performance weight, there will be performance items in the bank.

Performance assessment doesn't just happen when it is indicated on the blueprint. Any time a teacher grades a project, speech, essay, or report; that's performance assessment.

How important is performance assessment?

Look at any specific objective. Assessment should fit whatever the objective indicates the student should be able to do. If the objective requires a type of performance, then performance assessment should be a part of the evaluation process.

*Life is the first gift, love is the second,
understanding the third. - Marge Piercy*