

TIPS: Gathering, Reviewing, and Analyzing Data/Information

How do we know students are learning? What is the actual program for students?

OBSERVATION: IN INSTRUCTIONAL SETTINGS AND SCHOOLWIDE...

- What the students are doing? Receiving information? Applying skills? Practicing newly acquired skills? Synthesizing and evaluating information? Are the students task-oriented? Are they engaged in their work?
- Range of activities taking place from acquisition of factual knowledge to the use of higher level thinking skills.
- How students are applying the skills of reading, writing, speaking, computing and thinking.
- How the students are challenged to think and to communicate their thoughts orally and in writing.
- How students with special needs are participating in the classroom activities.
- How the instructional settings are varied according to the needs of the students and/or what is to be learned.
- How students are supported, recognized and rewarded.
- The interactions among and between staff, students and parents.

INTERVIEWS (INDIVIDUAL AND GROUP): KEEP IN MIND...

- There is no one "right way" to interview; there is no one correct format.
- LISTEN to responses; be an active listener.
- Explain purposes of questions and double check understanding.
- Use clear and concise language appropriate to the interviewee.
- Keep initial questions simple/non-threatening.
- Use open-ended questions that are unbiased.
- Ask questions to verify, add missing pieces of information, and stimulate thinking about next steps.
- Ask questions which do not imply the answer or reflect bias.
- Allow adequate time for responses and give appropriate feedback to responses.
- Do not push for answers at the expense of the interviewee.
- Be mindful of nonverbal feedback to committee members.
- Be alert to "clues" of interviewees and follow-up what is not being said.
- Do not make comments that reflect personal opinions/biases.
- Begin/end on time. Arrange so everyone can see and be seen, i.e., circle.
- Elicit responses from everyone in the group. Do not allow a few people to dominate the interview.
- Divide larger groups into smaller groups (10-15).
- Use a "fishbowl" structure to stimulate a "rich" conversational atmosphere.
- Have stakeholders share analyzed samples of representative student work showing degree of quality accomplishment of the schoolwide learning results.
- Thank people for attending and contributing to the interview.

SAMPLE QUESTIONS FOR INDIVIDUAL AND GROUP DIALOGUE

Starter Questions:

- We understood from the self-study that...
 - What factors contributed to these results?
 - Is this characteristic of...
 - How did the school/group learn from...
 - Where can evidence be found that...
 - What evidence is there that the students are able to...
 - What process did the school/group use to...
 - What elements of the student/community profile are related to...
 - What impact has _____ had on attainment of the learning results?
 - Has the school/group considered...
 - Students have certainly benefited from...
 - How does the school/group know if this work meets the needs of...
 - What reasons guided...
 - What questions did the school/group ask about...
 - What led to the school/group's conclusion about...
 - Help me to understand...
-
- To what extent is the observable evidence representative of what all students are doing and producing?
 - How does the evidence analyzed accurately reflect the current school's program and its effectiveness?
 - To what extent does the evidence analyzed provide information about the degree of quality accomplishment of the expected schoolwide learning results by all students?
 - To what extent is the school institutionalizing the strategies to assess the school program and student learning? (e.g., conversations about the quality of student work and growth over time.)
 - How did the evidence support the school's identified growth areas? How were these areas prioritized and the schoolwide Action Plan developed?
 - How will the sections of the schoolwide Action Plan impact student learning?
 - Explain the school's next steps in defining and assessing the accomplishment of its expected schoolwide learning results by all students.
 - How are the teachers, support staff, administration, students, and the school community working together to ensure that the shared vision of desirable learning results for **all** students is the basis for all school improvements?

SAMPLE ASSESSMENT TOOLS

- Portfolios of student work
- Open-ended problem-solving situations
- Short/long-term projects/research
- Student/teacher/parent conferences
- Criterion-referenced/teacher-made tests
- Oral/group projects
- Self/peer assessments
- Hands-on activities
- Performance activities
- Standardized test results

GENERAL INFORMATION TO KEEP IN MIND

- Avoid jargon; use full names of courses/programs, few abbreviations. Be consistent in terms (e.g., faculty, administration).
- Verify the facts before writing either a commendation or recommendation.
- Document each commendation and recommendation with at least two of the following references and others as appropriate. Suggested order:
 - *School Report, pp.*
 - *Conference with "whom" (not individuals but groups, i.e., administration, faculty, staff, English department, math department, classified staff, students, parents)*
 - *Observation of "what"*
 - *CAIS/WASC criteria, other criteria used by the school in the self-study, school publications, courses of study, etc.*
 - *For major commendations and recommendations the reference must also include CAIS/WASC criteria.*
- When writing recommendations: Avoid the use of "continue to" and verbs such as "consider, study, explore," etc.
- Seek quality not quantity of recommendations. A question Visiting Committee members should ask themselves:

Would the implementation of an effective solution to this recommendation enhance student learning and improve the quality of the educational programs of the school?
- Reference (using an asterisk or other notation) the commendations and recommendations that support the major commendations and recommendations.
- Do not use 'the school' when writing recommendations and commendations.

TIPS: Gathering, Reviewing, Analyzing Data/Information (cont.)

How do we know students are learning? What is the actual program for students?

SUGGESTED TERMS FOR COMMENDATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

| | | |
|------------------------------|---------------------|-----------------------------|
| accelerate | form | record |
| accept | formulate | redesign |
| achieve | foster | reexamine |
| acquire | fulfill | relocate |
| add | give | report |
| adhere | implement | restate |
| adjust | incorporate | retain |
| administer | increase | replace or repair |
| adapt | inform | require |
| adopt | initiate | restructure |
| agree | inquire | revise |
| align | install | revise the sequence |
| alleviate | institute | reveal |
| allocate | insure | review |
| allows | integrate | review procedures |
| analyze | investigate | review the number & quality |
| analyze the potential impact | involve | |
| apply | mainstream | schedule |
| appraise | maintain | secure |
| arrange | manage | seek means |
| articulate | measure | seek new resources |
| assess | meet | seek ways |
| assign | minimize | set direction |
| allocation | | share |
| assume responsibility | participate | stress |
| assume leadership role | plan | support |
| | place emphasis | synthesize |
| begin | prepare | |
| | present | take |
| employ | practice | test |
| encourage | probe | translate |
| ensure | progress | try |
| equip | promote | |
| establish | promote and support | use |
| estimate | propose | update |
| evaluate | provide | upgrade |
| examine | provide resources | |
| exercise | provide leadership | work |
| expand | questions | work toward |
| express | | work toward developing |
| | rate | |
| focus | recognize | |

When writing recommendations: Avoid the use of "continue to" and verbs such as "consider, study, explore," etc