

# What Do You Want From Me? Communicating Expectations of Instructional Practices, Observing Others and Offering Feedback to Improve Teaching

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## **Background That Led to Your Team's Inquiry:**

In the fall, we asked the teaching staff to take a Marzano survey to gauge their understanding and level of satisfaction with various aspects of instruction and feedback. The results of that survey showed that we had some deficits to address. After looking at the data, we identified three key areas of deficit that were connected: Teachers did not know specifically what administrators were looking for in class and did not feel they were getting enough feedback. They also wanted opportunities to see others teach. We decided to focus our attention for the year on improving on these areas. Therefore, the purpose of our action research was to find ways to communicate and showcase expectations to teachers.

## **Statement of Your Team's Wondering:**

With this purpose, we wondered how can clearly defining, practicing and observing classroom expectations improve teachers' perception of the quality and quantity of feedback they receive?

## **Methods/Procedures:**

To gain insights into our wondering, we led the faculty through the process to establish a list of things we "should always or almost always see in the classroom." The list created by the faculty was put into a checklist form and distributed to teachers to use for department rounds to create a common language. We also created a graphic of the things to "always or almost always see," and posted it in every classroom.

The next step was to put the list into practice. The team created a schedule for teachers to observe someone in their department each quarter. We also developed a positive feedback checklist for the visiting teacher to fill out and leave behind for the hosting teacher. Administrators also filled out the checklist and left it for the teacher after short observations.

This spring, we surveyed the teaching staff again with the same questions they answered in the fall. We were hoping to see an increased score for each category.

## **Stating Your Team's Learning and Supporting it with Data:**

As a result of analyzing our data, two important things we learned include: 1. Teachers felt they benefitted from observing others. 2. It's going to take more than this past five months to develop a school-wide instructional vocabulary.

Teachers felt they benefitted from observing others. Two statements from the survey that increased the most in the short times were related to the peer observations. "I have opportunities to participate in instructional rounds." This response increased 1.4 points on a five point scale. "I am given feedback about instructional practices." increased 0.7 on a five point scale. Both of these increases convinced the team that this strategy was working.

It's going to take more than this past five months to develop a school-wide instructional vocabulary. The rest of the questions, had increases in scores but minimal. (School leaders and teacher leaders have developed a written document articulating our schoolwide model of instruction. +.3, I can describe the major components of our schoolwide model of instruction. +.2 , Our school has a common language for talking about teaching and instruction. +.1, I can describe our school's predominant instructional practices.+1, I get observed and receive feedback frequently. +.3.)

We are confident that with continued use of the vocabulary, the scores on future surveys will continue to increase.

### **Providing Concluding Thoughts:**

This was a great learning experience for our team and our staff. We found that our teachers were eager to observe one another as well as be observed by others. We know that for next year, we want to expand rounds so that teachers can observe others outside of their departments.

We also learned that our staff wanted consistency. They wanted the same vocabulary used by teachers and administrators. They also wanted everyone to participate in observations and offer feedback to their peers. Moving forward, we will continue to survey staff and revisit "Always See or Almost Always See in the Classroom" each year. We will also need to create an accountability portion to ensure everyone participates in the observations.

As we introduce new concepts in our staff professional development, we will ask some of our teacher leaders to be exemplars for others to observe. We can also ask those teacher leaders to observe and offer support to new teachers.

### **References:**

Marzano, M.J., Warrick, P., & Simms, J.A. (2014). A handbook for high reliability schools. Bloomington, IN: Marzano Research Laboratory.