Rebranding Evaluations
How to Promote Risk Taking and Collaboration in Teacher Assessment
Goals for our Revisions

- Promote a growth mindset in teachers
- Provide space for risk-taking within an evaluation framework
- Create clear divisions between faculty assessment and probation
- Give faculty more of a participatory role, so that evaluations are a collaborative event, not something that “happens to them”
- More effectively integrate professional development with evaluation feedback
- Increase frequency and normalize feedback
Trends in our Peer Schools

- Evaluations are done usually every 3-5 years
- Process is not often conditional for employment
- Senior teachers can earn more say in the process
- Observations are the primary source of feedback
- Wide variety in use of student-feedback
- Wide variety in prof. development expectations
- Self-evaluation is normally the starting place
- Trend towards using Personal Learning Networks and/or instructional coaching as a support outside of the evaluation system
The Research & Reflection Year
for teachers in their 5th year and beyond (recurring every 5 years)

- **September:** teachers identify two peer observers
  - one from within and one from outside his/her department

- **October to February:** teachers welcome visitors to their classes
  - New teachers, identified peers, administrators (department head, director of professional development & evaluation, associate head of school, head of school)

- **February:** teachers collect student feedback from all students in all classes (and from their advisees, dorms, and sports teams when applicable)
  - Teachers discuss these results with their department heads (and dorm heads and athletic directors, etc.)

- **April:** teachers draft a professional development plan and discuss it in a meeting with supervising administrators
  - Supervisors weigh in and make suggestions when appropriate

- **May:** teachers officially submit the plan to the school office
Brainstorming Opportunity

Using either yourself or a faculty member who you supervise, imagine how you would complete the following questions.

- What are patterns you see in class visits?
- What are patterns you see in student feedback?
- What strengths are most evident in your teaching practice?
- What are areas in which you could improve?
- What opportunities are there for improving in the following year?
The Professional Development Plan

- 1-2 pages in length
- Includes a written reflection on what the teacher is proud of and identifies areas for growth
- Identifies 2-4 activities in pursuit of the stated goals for growth, to be completed in the following school year
- Presented to a team of administrators in the spring for feedback and suggestions

Plans can include…

- attendance at conferences or workshops
- a reading list
- a class visit schedule
- continuing education
- Work with specialists on campus, like our academic technology integrationist or our IB coordinator, or participation in one of our academic committees
A Sample Plan (from my own experience)

- My student feedback was strong and indicated I was knowledgeable, organized, caring, and fun.
- Students also commented, however, that 1-2 students sometimes dominated discussions.
- Similarly, peer observers noted that the participation in my classroom wasn’t as balanced as it could have been.
- In my own self-reflection, I wanted to develop a stronger Theory of Knowledge framework in my IB class.

My Plan for 2017-2018

- Work with our technology integrationist to use technology that could enhance student engagement
- I organized a workshop with Heidi Kasevich, Director of Susan Cain’s Quiet Education Network, for our faculty
- I will be attending PBL World in June of 2018
- I attended an IB TOK Conference
- I worked with faculty cohorts on IB TOK, IB assessments, and enhancing student engagement
The Professional Development Year

**Expectations**

- The year following a “research & reflection year,” faculty will implement their PD plan
- Mid-Year check-in with the Director of Professional Development & Evaluation
- In May of the year, they submit a 1-2 page reflection
  - Explaining their planned intentions
  - Reflecting on the process
  - Self-assessing where they are in meeting their professional goals

**Encouraging Peer Collaboration**

- Faculty were arranged into cohorts
  - Inspired by [Lauren Porosoff’s article on the NAIS blog](#)
- IB Assessments/Grading (The Council)
- Increasing Student Engagement (The Toolbox Share)
- TOK (The Workshop & The Bringback)
To maintain faculty accountability, and to ensure supervisors had the necessary information to understand patterns in teachers’ practices, we decided to collect student feedback on every teacher, every year.

Faculty were anxious about the change to collecting student feedback every year.

- We formed a committee made up of faculty from 5 of our 7 departments and held several open discussion sessions for faculty to weigh in on the criteria we use to assess teachers.
- After 3 months of meetings and discernment, the faculty agreed to the questions posed.

We kept it to a minimum number of questions, to avoid “survey fatigue.”

We based the questions largely on contractual duties.

We included a mixture of likert scale and open-ended questions.

We included faculty-elected questions, so faculty can assess different criteria each year and can also tailor feedback to their personal goals.
Surprises and Challenges Along the Way

- Faculty concerns about student feedback

- Faculty concern about workload
  - Can administrators take this on without requiring additional staff?
  - Can faculty manage taking on a heavier burden of responsibility?

- Business Office concern about documentation
  - No more long letters documenting class visits
  - No more minutes from evaluation meetings
Positive Results

- Some faculty have shown excitement to “take on a project,” replacing the anxiety about “being in an evaluation year”

- We are in the process of normalizing feedback, and already some faculty are starting to seek it out more regularly

- More teachers are voluntarily visiting each other’s classes and inviting visitors to theirs

- Supervisors are playing a larger role in suggesting areas for growth and then ensuring professional development occurs in targeted areas
Continuing Revelation

- Continue to normalize feedback
- Increase trust between administrators and faculty
- Improve on-campus professional development
  - Create an annual calendar of opportunities in response to professional development plans
- Reconsider the structure and process of class visits
  - Move towards shorter visits
  - Move towards unannounced visits
Sources of Inspiration


- Daniel Wilson, *The Ladder of Feedback: A Protocol Developed at Project Zero*
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