

COE Assessment Task Force: Focus Group
April 19, 2007
9:00 – 10:30 am

Present: see sign-in sheet

Clarifying Questions from group:

- Do we read from the beginning of sentence? Top of list
- Who does the framework include?
- What is the purpose of the framework and what will it be used for? Is this for evaluation or self-assessment?

Warm Feedback

- ❖ Opens up the environments where learning is occurring like “programmatic decision” opening up out of classrooms to where all learning is occurring.
- ❖ 1.4 speaks to everybody looking at what each other is doing and helping each other out.
- ❖ Professional knowledge instead of just subject knowledge
- ❖ Professionalism: easy to overlay with framework for teaching
- ❖ Change from students to learners to include teachers as learners as well also change from child to student is a good choice.
- ❖ Teachers should be able to see themselves in their classrooms and schools should be able to see them do good work.
- ❖ Seems to be asking everyone to examine and enlarge his or her roles. Seems to push teachers to be leaders.
- ❖ Includes preservice teachers who want to work outside of the classroom, as coaches for example, there are things they can think about.
- ❖ Is there a way that ties them all together? Is it analogous across columns? (Darker gray row seems to tie them together)
- ❖ Use for Live text, students highlight key words so they don't try to look for a thread across rows.
- ❖ Document captures all when you read it holistically, but reviewing under individual cells then certain parts of the grid would be more useful than others. For example, 3.2 Is it the word finances that makes it look more for administrators than teachers? What about personnel? Teachers may work with aides.
- ❖ There is a tighter fit than before.

Cool Feedback

General Comments

- ❖ Why does it have to be open to include all?
- ❖ Troubled by the phrase “accomplished educators.” It seems to suggest that you have “arrived” and not that you are a life-long learners. Is this the vision of where we want them to be? Not for pre-service teachers as they first come out. There is some work that is being done by Sally Hudson-Ross to look at what it looks like at different careers phases. Accomplish sounds final. May come from the issue of National

Board. Can it be changed to “professional educators”? Perhaps the word “vision” could be used and/or the word “accomplished” should be removed. Can anyone ever get there? Goes back to what is the purpose of the framework. If a vision, then people can see their roles as changing. There needs to be a real good reason to justify using the word.

- ❖ Tons of words but it doesn't resonate what it means. This is with all these kinds of policy documents. As teacher educators we would have to parse it for our students.
- ❖ We need the framework to be broad to include all, but it is important to have conversations about specific areas that fit people's needs.

Notions of High Expectations (e.g., 2.1)

- ❖ “High expectations” is lovely but everybody says it. People don't act and do things that reflect that. We should not only hold high expectations but support students to meet them.
- ❖ What evidence do I have to meet that?
- ❖ Under Knowledge but is limiting because it doesn't link up across to planning and instruction.
- ❖ Our pre-service teachers pick up on this when they work in schools and see teachers not having the same expectations for all.
- ❖ Standard has the danger of being something that is checked off and not followed.

Issues of “follow” School and District Policies (6.3)

- ❖ What about school policies that a teacher does not believe in? Should they just follow it? Need a resistance statement that suggest, “I'm enough of a professional that I will resist policies I don't agree with and will not follow”
- ❖ How do we prepare our preservice to do this?
- ❖ Maybe replace the verb “follow” with “address” Another option could be to end the sentence after “professional conduct” and omit “school and district policies”.

Organization of Grid

- ❖ What was the reason for the order of the columns and left to right order? (i.e., putting planning in the 5th column) For example, knowledge of students should go first, professionalism so far right.
- ❖ Content should be close to left. Content and curriculum should have the notion of a broad understanding of the curriculum.
- ❖ Needs some visual way to search or represent like the bridges website. Some ideas include: (1) an instructional hexagon where all points (column titles) have the same value; sort of like the instructional triangle, or (2) a Venn diagram with intersecting circles.

What's Missing?

- ❖ Knowledge of students: nowhere does it acknowledge the experiences and knowledge that students/learners bring to schools. Reads more like we will stuff them with knowledge

- ❖ Why is the move from learners back to students in some places? Sometimes it's not clear that our ultimate goal is to serve students. There is a danger in generalizing to all.
- ❖ 3.3 and 3.4: Change in language loses intent (3.3 the word "behavior" should be taken out, and maybe "classroom" too) but if you take out too much do we acknowledge the need to have control of a classroom?
- ❖ There is a negative tone, is there a way? If we look at 3.4 then why do we need 3.3? What do we do as a school to make a safe environment for schools? When we talk about classroom management we are really talking about trust and safe spaces so can 3.3 address that instead.
- ❖ 4.6-4.8 Say something about communicating and monitoring learning progress. Do all teachers need technology-based records?
- ❖ 1.3 why use of the word "performers", can we stop at learners?
- ❖ 5.1 can we use instructional decisions. Why use the word "defend", perhaps the word "justify" is better?
- ❖ At the end, will the document turn me off or energize me?

The Process of Running the Focus Group

- ❖ Liked the CFG format with the warm and cool feedback
- ❖ Interactions within the focus group helped the discussion because people added more than they would have if they just read the document alone and provided feedback.
- ❖ The facilitators allowed all discussions/ideas without cutting people off but also brought the focus back to warm or cool feedback
- ❖ The size of group was a nice size and not too big.
- ❖ Summary of notes was shared and that was a good idea so people could hear how they will be represented and can respond.

- ❖ It's complex and hard to separate out warm and cool feedback when the topic and discussion needs both. Is there a third type of feedback, like luke-warm, if you are ambivalent about something?
- ❖ Make sure that everyone has a chance to say what he or she wants. Perhaps an initial round robin could accomplish this.