OBSERVATION AND FEEDBACK: THE LIFT TOOL
So what’s good feedback?

Feedback is an evidence-based conversation about practice quality that leads to a plan for improvement.

Think: When did you receive great performance feedback?

- Who gave it to you?
- What did they do or say?
- What did you do?

Using whiteboard, add words that describe good feedback.
INSTRUCTIONAL LEADERSHIP IS ESSENTIAL TO SUPPORTING TEACHERS

The shift to online instruction has occurred shockingly fast, and teachers need support to improve their practice. With everything principals are doing, instructional leadership time has decreased at the end of the school year.
Providing teacher feedback and supporting instructional change

Based on small group work, we know that some observation and feedback is feasible for teachers in 2020-21 and research also tells us that feedback is essential for teachers in navigating change.

Research indicates that:

• Teachers that receive regular instructional feedback tend to improve instructional quality.
• Students of teachers that receive regular instructional feedback improve academically, in comparison to other teachers.
• Done well, feedback builds trust and connection between teachers and administrators.

“The post-conference cannot be treated as a bureaucratic formality; it is one of the most critical features of an effective teacher evaluation system if the goal is not just to measure the quality of teaching, but also to improve it.”

~ More than Measurement: Lessons Learned for Designing Better Teacher Evaluation Systems
We all bring strengths and different perspectives to feedback.

• How can you create a situation in your school for teachers to listen and use feedback in all the areas that they need?

- Content matter
- Standards alignment
- Classroom management
- Lesson design
- Differentiation
- Time management
- Cultural responsiveness
- Social and emotional support
We developed the LIFT tool (rubric) in response to principal and assistant principal requests for coaching support on feedback delivery. After conducting a research review, we identified the following feedback characteristics that characterize strong practice.

What strong feedback involves:

• **Planning ahead:** Feedback follows from planful, focused observation
• **Feedback one-on-one:** Engages teachers with observers that’s characterized by:
  • Evidence use
  • Authentic questions
  • Two-way conversation
  • Connects individual practice with schoolwide initiatives
• **Action-oriented:** Results in next steps and commitments

What feedback is NOT:

• Comments about teachers’ non-instructional performance
• Taking care of school business
• Principal talking at the teacher
• A “gotcha” moment
What stands in the way of delivering high quality feedback?

Research tells us:

• Feedback can be uncomfortable
• Feedback is often avoided
• Feedback can be superficial
Leading Instructional Feedback Tool (LIFT) distills research on teacher observation and feedback into a rubric and set of tools.

- LIFT rubric covers observation planning, conversation, and post-observation planning.
- LIFT includes questions for you to ask teachers and yourself about instructional quality and equity.
- LIFT checklists help you plan.
- LIFT videos of your conversations with teachers can be analyzed with your TRPN coach.
- The LIFT 360 survey provides you feedback from teachers about the quality and utility of feedback.
Let’s take a look at part of the LIFT rubric for the next few minutes, in breakouts.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Plan Ahead</th>
<th>Organizing</th>
<th>Developing</th>
<th>Performing</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>- Develop a weekly schedule to ensure that observation and feedback will occur, without the need for you to reschedule, for all teachers to whom you are assigned. Provide observational ratings to teachers within 5 days of the observation. Schedule post observation conversation within 10 days of the observation. Ask teachers to identify a problem of practice or area of focus for the observation.</td>
<td>- Set an observation purpose that aligns with the school improvement plan, with particular attention to student equitable access and performance, teachers’ previous performance and content-specific pedagogy. Observe lesson, with attention to student-teacher interactions around content, discipline, and cultural appropriateness. Determine teaching quality based on observational evidence, using the district framework.</td>
<td>- Provide teachers notes for the feedback session that include identifying teachers’ strengths and opportunities for growth. Encourage teachers to bring additional evidence to the post-observation meeting. Consider each teachers’ prior evaluations, growth trajectory and listening style prior to the meeting. Consider financial or other resources that limit content and pedagogy. Share the purpose of the observation with teachers prior to observing.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Focus Feedback</td>
<td>- Demonstrate active listening by making eye contact. Provide focused attention to teachers during feedback, with no interruptions. Create a physical space conducive to conversation. Use district framework vocabulary when providing feedback. Accurately align feedback and evidence with the district observation framework, standards, and/or indicators.</td>
<td>- Center the conversation on observational evidence collected during the classroom observation, making references to his/her running record, video and/or notes. Check that feedback can be applied to teachers’ classrooms, given students, content, and resources. Create a balanced conversation, where teacher has multiple opportunities for both the teacher and leader to discuss the lesson design and goals. Use appropriate, culturally-responsive communication approaches with the teacher. Address content-specific pedagogy during feedback conversations.</td>
<td>- Prompt teacher reflection about the types of students that are more and less engaged or successful during class. Encourage and respond professionally if the teacher pushes back on the leader’s suggestions or interpretations, OR Encourage teacher to try new ways of teaching that have potential for better supporting student learning.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
We are now going to watch a video that contains a post-observation conversation.

• What LIFT components do you see?
• How well did the principal deliver feedback?
• What next steps would you take with the principal?
If interested, we’d like for you to try LIFT with your coaches between November and end of December. The LIFT conversations with your coaches will focus on your practice, as feedback deliverers.

What we might do:

• Register via your post-session eval form and join a LIFT orientation by attending a 30 minute Zoom meeting on:
  ▪ April 5 between 3:00 and 3:30 p.m. EST
  ▪ April 6 between 12:00 and 12:30 EST
• Complete a teacher observation, whether it is online learning or in-person learning, and schedule a post-observation meeting as usual.
• Video record a feedback meeting, using your phone or Zoom. (You’ll need to talk with teachers ahead of time to get their okay to record.)
• Send the recording to your coach about 3 days ahead of a meeting.
• Use the LIFT rubric to rate yourself.
• Meet with your coach to talk about feedback, and how you might improve.
• What questions do you have about the process or what do you want to know more about?
• How might this help or hinder trust-building or other key supervisory practice?
• How might this hinder supervision?
INSTRUCTIONAL LEADERSHIP IS ESSENTIAL TO SUPPORTING TEACHERS

• How are you getting organized for instructional leadership in the new academic year?
• What’s your plan for providing teacher feedback on online learning (because they need feedback, even if they are not evaluated)?

1. Interpreting TEAM or other instructional rubrics in the online environment and identifying—with teachers—the “look-fors” available in your learning platform.
2. Making time to deliver high-quality teacher feedback, either personally or through designees (e.g., assistant principals, chairs).
3. Resetting an instructional management system for online learning.
MAKING TIME FOR OBSERVATION AND FEEDBACK: SOME IDEAS

Weeks 2 and 3 (Week 1 is just for getting started!)

Convene your instructional leadership team (assistant principals, chairpersons, teacher-leaders) to talk about observation, feedback, and instructional leadership in the online learning environment.

• When will observation and feedback occur? Will you conduct a performance evaluation or not?
• What are the look-fors and what other data will you bring?
• Who is going to be responsible for observing and providing feedback?
• What are our schoolwide goals for student engagement, learning (and what are our non-negotiables)?

Communicate with individual teachers about observation and feedback expectations...

• Why are we observing? You might state that observations are about providing feedback on individual practice and helps the school improve online instruction for all teachers and students.
• What are the expectations for observation? Clearly state whether or not the observation is evaluative, and outline the process for observation and feedback.

Encourage self-reflection. Consider ways to support teacher self-reflection, to open up focused conversation about instruction (via Google forms or other process). The self-reflection could use TEAM language to do some self-reflection and ask teachers about technology supports. This will help you see trends within your school.

Convene 30-45 minute teacher meetings that provide an open forum for facilitated reflection and some teacher surveys.
MAKING TIME FOR OBSERVATION AND FEEDBACK: SOME IDEAS

Weeks 4 through 8

**Observe for organization and engagement.** At this stage, you can conduct a video-based observation of the class (and monitor chat), review instructional plans and assessments. Observations should—at first—focus on the instructional environment, instructional routines, and student engagement, as these three areas are growing points for most teachers. Consider these questions

- What instructional routines are working well to help class stay focused and organized? How well do routines capitalize on students’ prior experience in classrooms?
- How well are you transitioning between lesson topics and platforms?
- How is student participation and engagement encouraged? Which students seem more/less engaged and why?
- How well are students expressing their ideas and thinking in the class?
- Does that class allow for social and emotional support?
- How well are assessments embedded as checks on student learning?

**Observe lessons for excellence and equity.** When ready, begin to observe classes for instructional excellence, content rigor, differentiation, culturally-responsive practices, and equity. You may use live video or recorded sessions for observation and integrate other data about student participation and performance into the observation.

**Online grade level and content area meetings.** You may re-launch schoolwide and grade-level/content area meetings among teachers to share best practices, learn together, and plan for next semester.