

Teacher Performance Appraisals

Teacher Performance Appraisal Process: General Tips

The Teacher Performance Appraisal process should be taken very seriously as three successive unsatisfactory ratings will result in dismissal and a report being filed with the Ontario College of Teachers.

Therefore, while adequate preparation for the TPA process can be potentially time consuming, it is highly advisable that teachers invest time in preparation for their own protection.

A Few Tips to Include:

1. Be proactive in every step of the performance appraisal process.
2. Review your Board's Teacher Performance Appraisal Process manual to determine the requirements for each step in the process.
3. Become familiar with the forms that are prescribed for the process. Anticipate questions that the evaluator may have and think carefully about the appropriate responses.
4. Take the time to gather supporting materials that will assist you in demonstrating your skills as a teacher and that will show how you are meeting the 16 competencies.
5. The TPA process is still relatively new and many evaluators are also new to the process. Do not assume that the evaluator knows the process well or interprets and applies the process, terminology and expectations in the same way that you do. Ask questions of clarification when you are unsure of the expectations of the evaluator.
6. Be prepared to have a professional dialogue with your evaluator. Be prepared to articulate your expertise in instructional strategies, curriculum initiatives, assessment and evaluation tools and the developmental characteristics of the students that you teach.
7. As the process unfolds, take note of specific comments and expectations that the evaluator expresses (i.e. IEPs, DI, Growing Success, etc).
8. In each meeting with your evaluator, reiterate the next steps as you understand them to ensure that you both have a common understanding of what is being required.

9. There should be no expectation that you will demonstrate all the 16 competencies during the classroom observation. However, give careful thought to how you can structure the lesson to demonstrate as many of the competencies as possible. Be prepared to point to other lessons or units where you demonstrate other competencies not covered in the lesson observed.
10. Become familiar with the evidence under each domain and competency, so that you can use the language of the “look fors” in your discussion with the evaluator.
11. Important: If you feel that you are encountering significant difficulties during the TPA process, immediately contact your District Office for assistance.

Step 1: Getting Ready for the Pre-Observation Meeting

- Before the pre-observation meeting, prepare a point form overview of the course that will be observed. Make a separate list of your professional activities within the school and community that you can rely on to provide evidence for competencies that will not be observed in the classroom visit.
- In Section A of the Pre-Observation form, provide a written analysis of the class that will be observed to highlight circumstances that can be barriers to learning.
- Be prepared to discuss your professional strengths and activities and to articulate clear and concise points for each of the questions in Section B of the Pre-Observation Form, as they relate to the 16 competencies (8 for NTIP).
- Know the language of the competencies to highlight the learning activities that respond to the “look fors”.
- Review and update your Annual Learning Plan.
- Consult the Board’s TPA manual and policies for other materials that you should bring to the meeting (course outlines, grade books, etc).

Step 2: The Pre-Observation Meeting

- Have all your documents organized so that you can easily refer to them.
- Describe your plan for the class that will be observed – curriculum expectations, what the students will learn or do, assessment and evaluation strategies, resources or technologies that you will use, modifications for certain students.
- Listen carefully to the directions and suggestions of your evaluator and take notes. Use any appropriate opportunity you can to highlight your strengths, your successes with the class and your positive plans for their learning.
- Prepare to discuss your Annual Learning Plan.

Step 3: Classroom Observation

- Ensure that you are well prepared for the class and demonstrate effective class routines.
- Project an air of enthusiasm and confidence. Do not be intimidated by the evaluator's presence.
- Follow your plan for the lesson.
- As soon as possible after the class is completed, make outline notes about specific elements of the lesson that went well. Reflect on any areas that did not go as well as you would have hoped and think of how you will address any critical points that the evaluator may raise.

Step 4: Post Observation Meeting

- This meeting should occur as soon as possible after the classroom observation, but no later than 20 school days after the observation.
- Be sure that you are familiar with the Post-Observation Meeting form and that you are prepared to make suggestions about what should be included in the evaluator's comments.
- Remember that this meeting is your last formal opportunity to dialogue with the evaluator and to present additional materials that provide evidence of how you are meeting the competencies.
- If you become concerned that the evaluator is making a lot of recommendations about competencies that you need to focus on for professional growth or areas in which you need to improve, take careful notes, ask questions of clarification and request that the meeting be recessed and reconvened at a later date. Consult an OSSTF District Officer about your concerns.