

## **TLC Teacher Listening Tour – Questions & Feedback Report 11-2-12 (rev 11-28-12 to add Elko)**

**Hosted by the regional education associations - invitations went to members and non-members**

North: through Washoe Education Association – 24 educators & 4 board members present

10-3-12            Barbara Barker & Theresa Crowley – TLC teacher representatives

10-17-12          Barbara Barker, Theresa Crowley & Leslie James, NDE

South: through Clark County Education Association – 45 educators present

10-30-12          Kathleen Collins, Theo Small – TLC teacher reps, Leslie James, NDE

East: through Elko County Education Association – 8 educators present including ECSD Supt

11-8-12            Keith Walz, TLC Models Task Force member/Elko HS Principal,  
Leslie James, NDE

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### Guiding Questions Asked:

1. What questions do you have about these instructional principles, indicators and evidence sources?
2. Are you comfortable with these high leverage instructional principles to measure efficacy in your classroom (the capacity to effect student learning)?
3. Overall questions about educator frameworks etc.

### Major Concerns:

1. Training of evaluators and trust of administrator evaluators
2. Misunderstanding of “Principle 5- Assessment is integrated Into Instruction” thinking this is “testing” vs. “assessment FOR learning”
3. Validity/inter-rater reliability – fail safes for “proving effectiveness to another’s satisfaction”
4. “All students” and “fully” vs. other language – in the indicators of the 5 instructional principles
5. “Fair” vs. “stacked” class building
6. District accountability in this evaluation system
7. Issues around growth: Individual student growth such as with absenteeism; “Equity” re: assessing growth – between tested/non-tested grades and subjects; between groups of students who are more challenging than others; and between schools that have more challenging students/parents than others etc.

8. Angst right now about how all the pieces of the evaluation system will fit together for the differentiated ratings
9. That there will indeed be high quality professional development as a results of evaluation feedback.

### **1. Instructional Principles, Indicators and Evidence Sources**

The evidence looks as though I could offer student work and lesson plans and check every box. Is this the intent? (Washoe)

Good teachers could do the minimum and get by. I don't want administrators to escape the conversation because I want the conversation. (Washoe teacher)

#### **All principles re: optional evidence:**

- Who develops the surveys? Is it the same survey for all kids? (Clark, Middle School Sped)
- My teachers are going to want to know about the student classroom interviews that I see on a lot of these pieces of evidence. (Washoe Administrator)
- My kids don't always know how to answer questions. (Washoe Teacher)
- Will there be examples of evidence given for multiple subjects? (Washoe Educator)

#### **Principle 1 – New Learning is Connected to Prior Learning and Experience**

No questions or comments

#### **Principle 2 - Learning Tasks have High Cognitive Demand for Diverse Learners**

- If the administrator is not knowledgeable in that subject, how can he/she effectively evaluate Principle 2? (Elko, Secondary Foreign Language)

#### **Indicator 2 – Tasks place appropriate demands on each student**

- If scripted instruction is not aligned, is this going to be taken into consideration? (Clark, Middle School Music)
- What about appropriateness for content as well as appropriateness for students? (Clark, H.S. Math)

#### **Indicator 3 – Tasks progressively develop all students' cognitive abilities and skills**

- Who determines "progressively develops"? (Clark, Autism)

### **Principle 3 – Students Engage in Meaning-Making through Discourse and Other Strategies**

#### **Indicator 4 – Teacher structures the classroom environment to enable collaboration, participation, and a positive affective experience for all students**

- I have no control over resource provision and organization of physical space (Clark, Speech/Language)
- Caseloads are out of our control (Clark, Middle School Music)

### **Principle 4 – Students Engage in Metacognitive Activity to Increase Understanding of and Responsibility for Their Own Learning**

- I know we're trying to get kids to self-monitor. I think elementary kids will need some strategies to help with this. (Washoe, Elementary Teacher)
- I am concerned about the metacognition indicators and levels. It does not seem to take into account developmentally appropriate expectations for various age levels. While I certainly get my kindergartners to know that there is a target and purpose for our lessons, I am not confident that it would be appropriate to base my evaluation on their ability to express how they are self-monitoring their own learning. That would be a concern for all the primary grades I would think. Then you add the complication of English language learners being the majority of our students. This profession is complex, and one size fits all does not work for teachers any better than for students. (Elko, Kindergarten Teacher)

#### **Indicator 1 – Teacher and all students understand what students are learning, why they are learning it, and how they will know if they have learned it**

- **Re: Mandatory Evidence Sources of Instructional Practice – Direct evaluator observation** - That's a lot of observation.
- This will cause a lot of angst when we may see students 15 minutes once/week and it could be a 6-7 day rotation. Concerned that instruction is hit or miss w/ students. How are we supposed to give evidence? How will an evaluator know? (Clark, middle school music)
- A lot has to change for these specialists. It's not going to happen with 120 students. (Clark, K-5 P.E.)
- [Looking at "student classroom interviews" as mandatory evidence] "So, an administrator will walk into a classroom and ask what you're learning and why?" (Washoe Administrator)

## **Indicator 2 – Teacher structures opportunities for self-monitored learning for all students**

- [Looking at “Description/Notes” – “Student artifacts include self-reflection tools provided by the teacher and students’ notes]  
Re: “self-reflection tools provided by teacher” – is this 1 more think I need to develop?  
Our classes are too large. This is a big concern for me because teachers are great but they are consumed by all they have to do outside of class for preparation.  
(Clark, 2<sup>nd</sup> Grade)

## **Principle 5 – Assessment Is Integrated Into Instruction**

- Re: scripted math – I’m supposed to keep going even if kids don’t get it because “they will get it down the line” [as per the program] (Clark, Kindergarten)

Note: Clark educators did not understand this is “assessment FOR learning” – thought it was testing. When explained, a teacher said, “We don’t have time to figure that out.”

### **2. Are you comfortable with these high leverage instructional principles to measure efficacy in your classroom (the capacity to effect student learning)?**

- It’s clear the TLC has put a lot of work into this. The concern is oversight for observers.  
(Clark, Middle School Music)  
[Seemed to be concern expressed throughout about training administrators to observe.]
- This is looking like a portfolio system. It stretches our thinking so I applaud you.  
Teachers need to start collecting that portfolio information now.  
(Clark, Speech/Language, Middle and HS)
- It seems like data and FOSL walks already in place – asking students “What are you learning?” (Clark, Elementary Teacher)
- I’m concerned about growth. There are so many variables. How do we help kids move along if they are absent a lot. Also – the variances with various kids.  
(Clark, Middle School Social Studies)
- Who is in charge of collecting data?  
[Expressed concerns about trust, relationships and collaboration w/ administrators.]  
(Clark - CCEA)

### **3. Overall questions about educator frameworks etc.**

#### **District evaluation already in place**

- Will this statewide evaluation come in on top of district evaluation?
- Does “effective classroom observation” fit into this? (Washoe)

**Piloting** - Is piloting in 2012-2013 and will we be notified?

**Funding** - Full implementation will happen in 2 years – is there enough money to do this the right way? (Elko, Secondary Ag Science)

**District Accountability** - What is the accountability of the district for a Cadillac caliber needed?

#### **Evaluation; Evaluation Personnel; Evaluation Training**

- Will this be peer evaluation? It’s one of the ways the district is trying to break the union. (Clark)
- We should be part of evaluating each other. (Clark)
- My administrator who evaluates me has the authority but not the credentials. (Clark)
- There’s going to be a need for a lot of professional development for teachers and evaluators, so how will that be addressed? (Elko, Secondary Ag Science)
- I have attended conferences on teacher evaluation in which they have demonstrated plans to have teams of evaluators. All observations and evaluations may not be completed by the site administrator. They may be completed by individuals with areas of expertise (Elko, Superintendent)
- Currently a site administrator observes twice a year. Can he/she fairly evaluate all of the instructional practices and indicators in that amount of time? (Elko, Secondary Ag Science)
- It does appear that you must have a competent administrator to do this evaluation. I’ve gotten glowing evaluations and the guy never came into my room once. (Washoe)

#### **Student Achievement/Growth**

- My wife is a 1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> grade CLS teacher. She has growth but where her students have to go is so far.
- What data would show you about “contribution to reducing the gap”?
- I live in Storey County. How will growth and gap look for schools that don’t have growth and gaps?
- We’re asking the administrator to be superman. You’re asking them to talk to me about how to make my growth. We can’t just train them to be superman.

- Is it the case that student growth will be a school-wide measure for non-tested grades and subjects?
- Will the state be creating assessments for Home Ec, Agriculture etc? The ECSD Vocational Education Director explained that statewide the Vocational Programs are developing exit criteria for their completer series (i.e., students will have to perform to a certain level or demonstrate proficiency before being granted the completer certificate). (Elko, Middle School Science)
- Will the ELPA be a primary evaluation tool to measure effectiveness of ESL teachers? (Elko, ESL Teacher)
- The foreign language standards in NV haven't been addressed for a number of years. Who is going to write the tests for foreign language? (Elko, Secondary Foreign Language)
- I'm concerned about 20% of student achievement being based on CRT growth. How are students with special needs going to be measured? Will growth be based on year to year CRT scores or will student growth be measured from beginning of the year to end of the year? (Elko, Special Education)

**Attribution** - I teach a coop science class – who is responsible for those special education kids?

#### **Fairness**

- Equity issues are a concern. ELA feels more responsibility.
- Fairness questions re: variability between elementary teachers who have the same 30 kids all day and middle/secondary teachers who have 170 different students; wanting reassurance about what will happen with different compositions of classes like AP, special education and inclusion. (Elko, middle and secondary school science)

#### **Student Surveys**

- I would like to see all student surveys – then we would know who the best teachers are. (Clark teacher)
- We were a Washoe pilot school for Tripod. Many of our teachers were unhappy with their results. They say that the students don't understand the questions.
- Who comes up with the questions on the Tripod? Was it one of the Bush brothers?

**Professional Development** – There's going to be a need for a lot of professional development for teachers and evaluators, so how will that be addressed? (Elko, Secondary Ag Science)

**Other** - Is there any discussion of changing the minimum entry age to make sure that students are mature enough to enter school? (Elko, Vocational Education)

## Written Comments from 2 Clark County School District Teachers

These 2 sets of questions with comments were emailed to Theo Small with the intention of asking as per reporting out to the TLC

I attended the informational session on October 30 at the CCEA building. I am an elementary classroom teacher. After some reflection and further review of the handouts, I have some comments that I hope you'll consider taking to the state committee.

I applaud the high level of standards that this evaluation format is aiming for, and do believe the High Leverage Instructional Principles are what many teachers strive for in their practice. As a National Board Certified Teacher, I see many similarities between the framework you propose and the Architecture of Accomplished Teaching and National Board Core Propositions. I also see the documentation involved in developing a portfolio similar to that of preparing National Board portfolios. Is it right, however, to expect that all teachers take such time-consuming steps (National Boards assumes approximately 300 hours of work) simply to prove they are effective? We know that only about 2% of teachers nationwide have successfully completed National Board Certification - at what level would you expect teachers to perform in order to be considered "effective?"

I understand that this format is likely to put much more weight of the outcome of an evaluation in a teacher's hands rather than an administrator's, but it does seem potentially like a lot of extra "work" on an already overworked profession, and there are likely to be several who are not able to "prove" their effectiveness to another's satisfaction, just as with National Boards. Obviously, much training for teachers on how they might complete their portfolios should be recommended to all county districts if this proposal is accepted.

I am also largely concerned by the language of the indicators – specifically, the use of the word "all." While it is a worthwhile and necessary goal to do or provide all these things for "all" students, I wonder if it is realistic to expect that on any given day, observation, lesson, etc., that ALL students are ALWAYS engaged, challenged, etc., throughout the lesson. Even the best of us have less than best days or lessons. My fear would be that administrators, even properly trained, could deem a teacher who might miss an opportunity to redirect a student (or purposefully employ ALL cognitive abilities, or whatever it may be) ineffective, simply because it was not demonstrated that ALL students were engaged at a particular time. This would be a similar concern throughout all principles and indicators. What would a rubric look like? Would it be "satisfactory / effective" to observe that ALL students were engaged MOST of the time? (Yes, I realize MOST is a vague word, also open to interpretation.)

Again, my concern is not with what teachers must demonstrate, but the extent to which it must be demonstrated. Using language such as ALL or FULLY may inadvertently allow administrators to be biased, or even unethical if they choose, when completing evaluations. This might be better addressed further down the road when developing actual rubrics, and may be more of

an issue to watch for with specific districts rather than your committee. ... The point is this: whatever language is ultimately chosen is extremely important. Thank you for allowing, and actively seeking, input from your colleagues. Congratulations on what you have accomplished thus far.

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Written questions to a teacher to ask on behalf of a Clark CSD teacher with 18 years of elementary & middle school experience

My primary concerns are if student assessment is half of our evaluation:

- a. How can we be sure of fair class building on the administrators' part? What fail safes will be in place to ensure that administrators and office personnel do not "stack" classes to reward some teachers and doom others? Extreme behavior challenges, kids with IEPs and difficult parents are just a few of the scenarios that immediately come to mind.
- b. How much "growth" is acceptable on the growth model for this to be considered actual, real growth? Is there a minimum for this?
- c. Several of my contemporaries who teach in the non-high stakes testing grades (K-2) have said they would "do whatever is necessary" to show growth with their students. What are the fail safes there?
- d. While I work in a "nice" area with "good" kids and "supportive" parents, many of my contemporaries in the valley aren't so blessed. What will happen to them?
- e. Did the CTU teachers get the CPS district to concede on any of this...is there a precedent for that and are we looking into it?
- f. WHO IS WATCHING THE WATCHERS? I've worked for many poor administrators... While many of them get promoted, why are we made to feel such pressure about this new change?
- g. I see me and teachers like me being targets under the wrong type of administration. I like my job and I am good at what I do, but this type of evaluation seems just as subjective as the others used in the past. ...I do see the definite need for this new evaluation process to be examined so that the teachers themselves are protected.