TIPS: GATHERING, REVIEWING, ANALYZING DATA AND INFORMATION

How do we know students are learning?
What is the actual program for students?

OBSERVATION: In instructional settings and schoolwide...

- What the students are doing. Receiving information? Applying skills? Practicing newly acquired skills? Synthesizing and evaluating information? Are the students task-oriented? Are they engaged in their work?
- Range of activities taking place from acquisition of factual knowledge to the use of higher level thinking skills.
- How students are applying the skills of reading, writing, speaking, computing, and thinking.
- How the students are challenged to think and to communicate their thoughts orally and in writing.
- How students with special needs are participating in the classroom activities.
- How the instructional settings are varied according to the needs of the students and/or what is to be learned.
- The extent to which the school values learning.
- How students are supported, recognized, and rewarded.
- The interactions among and between staff, students, and parents.

INTERVIEWS (Individual and Group): Keep in mind...

- There is no one "right way" to interview; there is no one correct format.
- LISTEN to responses; be an active listener.
- Explain purposes of questions and double check understanding.
- Use clear and concise language which is appropriate to the interviewee.
- Keep initial questions simple/nonthreatening.
- Use open-ended questions that are unbiased.
- Ask questions to verify, add missing pieces of information, and stimulate thinking about next steps.
- Ask questions which do not imply the answer or reflect biases.
- Allow adequate time for responses and give appropriate feedback to responses.
- Do not push for answers at the expense of the interviewee.
- Be mindful of nonverbal feedback to committee members.
- Be alert to “clues” of interviewees and follow-up what is not being said.
- Do not make comments that reflect personal opinions/biases.
- Begin/end on time. Arrange so everyone can see and be seen, i.e., circle.
- Elicit responses from everyone in the group. Do not allow a few people to dominate the interview.
- Divide larger groups into smaller groups (10–15).
- Use “fishbowl” structure to stimulate a “rich” conversational atmosphere.
- Have stakeholders share analyzed samples of representative student work: showing degree of quality accomplishment of the schoolwide learning results.
- Thank people for attending and contributing to the interview.

Over

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SAMPLE QUESTIONS for INDIVIDUAL and GROUP DIALOGUE

Starter Questions

- We understood from the self-study that...?
- What factors contributed to these results?
- Is this characteristic of...?
- How did the school/group learn from...?
- Where can evidence be found that...?
- What evidence is there that the students are able to...?
- What process did the school/group use to...?
- What elements of the student/community profile are related to...?
- What impact has _____ had on attainment of the learner outcomes?
- Has the school/group considered...?
- Students have certainly benefited from...?
- How does the school/group know if this work meets the needs of...?
- What reasons guided...?
- What questions did the school/group ask about...?
- What led to the school/group's conclusion about...
- To what extent is the observable evidence representative of what all students are doing and producing?
- How does the evidence analyzed accurately reflect the current school's program and its effectiveness?
- To what extent does the evidence analyzed provide information about the degree of quality accomplishment of the schoolwide learner outcomes by all students?
- To what extent is the school institutionalizing the strategies to assess the school program and student learning (e.g., conversations about the quality of student work and growth over time)?
- How did the evidence support the school's identified growth areas? How were these areas prioritized and the schoolwide action plan developed?
- How will the sections of the schoolwide action plan impact student learning?
- Explain the school's next steps in defining and assessing quality accomplishment of its schoolwide learner outcomes by all students.
- How are the teachers, support staff, administration, students, and the school community working together to ensure that the shared vision of desirable learning results for **all** students is the basis for all school improvements?

SAMPLE ASSESSMENT TOOLS

- Portfolios of student work
- Open-ended problem-solving situations
- Short and long-term projects/ research
- Student, teacher, and parent conferences
- Criterion-referenced/teacher-made tests
- Oral/group projects
- Self/peer assessments
- Hands-on activities
- Performance activities
- Norm-reference tests/SAT 9 results

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