

Team Exercise: Grade the Videotaped Lesson

Excerpted from *Change Leadership: A Practical Guide to Transforming Schools*, Appendix A. Published by Jossey-Bass, 2005.

Step One

Silently observe the video (up to the place where the teacher says to the students, “Now go to it.”). Then, with no conversation in the group, answer the following question:
If you had to grade the lesson (from F to A, with plusses and minuses allowed), what would that grade be?

Write your grade down on an index card. Do not put your name or your reasons for the grade on the card. Pass the card to whoever is facilitating this meeting.

Step Two

Having made your decision, now think about what criteria you used for the grading. Examine what evidence led you to give the lesson the grade you did, whether high or low.

Step Three

The facilitator should now array the results on the flip chart, as follows: list all possible grades vertically from A+ at the top of the page through F at the bottom. Place a check or hash mark after each letter grade horizontally to signify each grade indicated on each index card. This will make visually apparent how frequently each grade was chosen and the spread of grades.

While the facilitator is making this chart, group members are encouraged to discuss what criteria each person used for the grading.

Step Four

Now the facilitator reminds everyone in the room that this is “no fault” work—that there are no right or wrong answers—and asks, first, for two or three volunteers to talk about what evidence led them to give the lesson a high grade—say B+ or above. Next, the facilitator asks the same number of volunteers who gave a significantly lower grade (C or below) to explain their reasoning.

We encourage the facilitator to let this conversation continue as long as it has energy, keeping in mind that the purpose is not, at this time, to solve or settle anything. The first purpose is to try to understand, as well as you can, the differing views that are in the room.

Step Five

Finally, we invite you to step back a bit from the conversation to consider the bigger questions the exercise inevitably raises:

What does this distribution of grades, and our different views about what good teaching looks like, mean for our school or district?