



ACTIVITY 3.3

Verifying Teachers' Content Knowledge and Assessment Competence

PURPOSE

This activity asks participants to answer three questions:

1. What questions could be asked in an interview with prospective teachers that would help school leaders evaluate their academic preparation to teach and assess the assigned subject(s)?
2. What questions can school leaders ask, or what evidence they should seek, to verify current teachers' mastery of the standards they are expected to teach and their level of assessment literacy in measuring those standards?
3. How can leaders assist teachers who are not currently masters of the standards or competent assessors?

TIME

1 hour

MATERIALS NEEDED

- Interview forms and teacher evaluation models/forms currently in use in your district
- Your district's comprehensive assessment plan, if available

SUGGESTED ROOM SETUP

- Tables and chairs set up for ease of discussion among participants
- Interactive whiteboards or flip charts and easels for capturing discussion points

DIRECTIONS

Think about and discuss the following questions:

- What should you reasonably expect the interview component of the overall hiring process to produce regarding useful information about the candidate's subject-matter knowledge?
- Given that, what questions could you design that would help inform you about the applicant's subject-matter knowledge? What is the range of acceptable answers to those questions?
- What should you reasonably expect the interview component to produce regarding useful information about the candidate's assessment competence?
- What questions could you design that would inform you about the applicant's assessment competence? What answers would you consider acceptable for that set of questions?
- Do you currently have a process for determining the subject knowledge and assessment competence of the teachers who already teach in your school or district?

- Is this process adequate?
- Does it need improving? If so, what questions do you need to ask? What evidence do you need to seek?
- What staff development and support do you provide for teachers who are not yet masters of the content standards or experienced assessors of the standards? Is it adequate? What improvements need to be made? Can you assign them to a position where they do have the content knowledge their students must master? Can you provide teachers with collaborative learning environments to become assessment literate?

CLOSURE

Whatever questions you might ask about subject-matter knowledge and assessment competence, consider the following points:

- Is there a link between what questions are asked in an employment interview and subsequent teacher evaluation? If not, should there be? Why or why not?
- Is there a link between those same questions, which in part act as expectations of teacher skills and knowledge, and the staff development program of your school or district? If not, should there be? Why or why not?

Look at the questions on some of the interview forms currently in use in your school or district to see if they include questions related to assessment. If they do, are the questions related to assessment *of* learning, assessment *for* learning, or both? If your district has a comprehensive assessment plan, check it to see if it spells out classroom assessment competencies. Also, consider asking teachers whom you believe already understand the principles of quality assessment to tell you what questions they think should be included in the interview.