



Activity 8.4

Verifying Teachers' Content Knowledge and Assessment Competence

Teaching applicants must answer many questions, both in writing and through interviews. When building principals interview potential new hires, they often ask questions related to classroom management, instructional skill, and student discipline. Questions related to the candidate's mastery of content knowledge and the development and use of quality assessments necessary for the specific teaching assignment are sometimes overlooked. By adding in questions related to student assessment, we can identify candidates who are well prepared to carry out the assessment-related aspects of teaching.

Learning Target for the Activity

- Formulate questions for interviewing applicants for teaching positions that produce evidence of their level of assessment literacy.

Purpose

This activity asks participants to consider the teacher applicant interview:

1. What questions could be asked in an interview with prospective teachers that would help school leaders evaluate their academic preparation to teach the assigned subject(s)?
2. What questions can school leaders ask or what evidence they should seek to determine a candidate's level of assessment literacy?

Time

60–90 minutes

Materials Needed

- Interview forms and teacher evaluation 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

White/smart boards or flip charts and easels for capturing discussion points

Directions

Think about and discuss the following questions, keeping track of answers on a white board:

1. What should you reasonably expect the interview component of the overall hiring process to produce in terms of useful information about the candidate's subject matter knowledge?

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2. Given that, what interview 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?
3. What should you reasonably expect the interview component to produce in terms of useful information about the candidate's level of assessment literacy?
4. What interview questions could you design that would inform you about the applicant's assessment knowledge and skill? What answers would you consider acceptable for that set of questions?
5. What staff development and support do you provide for teachers who are not masters of the standards or accomplished assessors of the standards? Are they adequate? What improvements need to be made?

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 teacher evaluation criteria? 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? What might be missing?