



Your Virtual PERA Coach

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A publication created by the Performance Evaluation Advisory Council and the Illinois State Board of Education to guide you in implementing the *Performance Evaluation Reform Act*.



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Dear Illinois Educator,
 Fall is officially here and your performance evaluation cycle should be well on its way! You have probably finished your student growth/goal-setting meetings with teachers and are now observing professional practice.

In this issue, we will focus on the observation process and the various roles evaluators play in helping teachers develop or refine their practice. We will share reminders of PERA requirements regarding teacher observations and provide you with suggested templates and questions to use during pre- and post observation conferences.

Please take a few minutes to let us know what you think about the PERA Coach and how we can help you in the future by completing a brief survey. You can click on this [survey link](#) or use the link located near the end of this issue. Thank you in advance for taking the time to give us feedback.

Sincerely,

The Performance Evaluation Advisory Council



Part 50 Rules About Observations

Non-Tenured Teachers	Tenured Teachers who Received a Rating of Proficient or Excellent on Last Evaluation	Tenured Teachers who Received a Rating of Needs Improvement or Unsatisfactory on Last Evaluation

A minimum of three observations is required each school year. Two must be formal observations. Formal observations are a minimum of 45 minutes, a complete lesson, or an entire class period. They include both a pre-and post observation conference.

A minimum of two observations is required during the cycle in which the current evaluation is conducted. One must be a formal observation. Formal observations are a minimum of 45 minutes, a complete lesson, or an entire class period and include both a pre-and post observation conference.

A minimum of three observations is required in the school year immediately following the year in which the "needs improvement" or "unsatisfactory" rating was assigned. Two must be formal observations. Formal observations are a minimum of 45 minutes, a complete lesson, or an entire class period and include both a pre-and post observation conference.

Informal Observations

Following an informal observation, the qualified evaluator shall provide feedback to the teacher either orally or in writing (electronic or paper) and if the feedback is in a written format, also provide the teacher with **an opportunity to have an in-person discussion with the evaluator.**

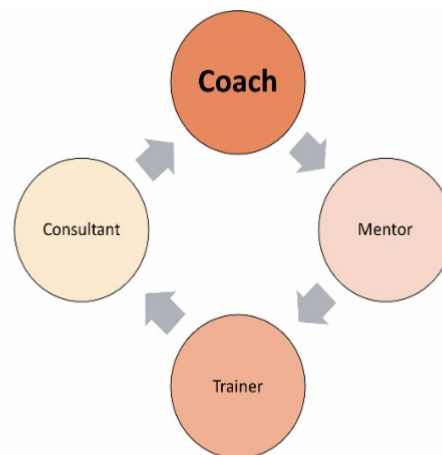
Evidence gathered during the informal observations may be considered in determining the performance evaluation rating, provided it is documented in writing.

***Note that these are the requirements of the Part 50 administrative rules; additional, specific requirements may also be included in your district's locally developed teacher evaluation plan.**

Click [here](#) to see the whole section about observations from Part 50 Administrative Rules.

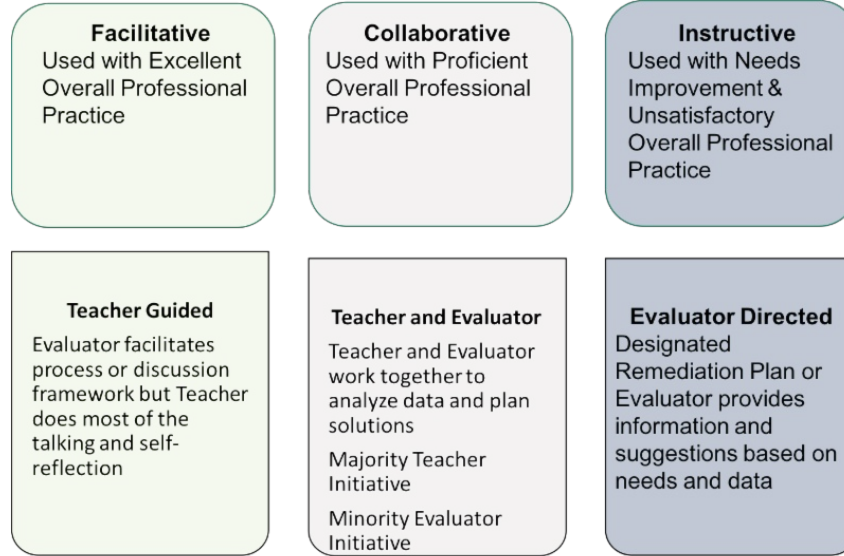
The Roles of the Evaluator

Evaluators can help teachers to improve their professional practice by knowing when it is more effective to be directive and when it is better to be a facilitator/coach, especially during pre/post observation conversations.



- **Coaches** facilitate conversations to help teachers identify what they need to do in order to improve their practice and increase student achievement.
- **Mentors** share past experiences and wisdom and provide guidance.
- **Trainers** teach new skills and knowledge.
- **Consultants** give advice on their area of expertise and help with implementation.

Differentiated Feedback/Conversations



Generally, the higher skilled the teacher is (proficient/excellent), the more evaluators should serve as facilitators/coaches and ask questions that call for the teacher to be reflective about their practice. Teachers at higher levels of performance remain the expert and benefit from focused professional conversations with their evaluator.

Beginning teachers and teachers who have significant areas of deficit need more direct language and can benefit from their evaluators (or other teachers) being a Consultant, Mentor or Trainer.

Pre-Observation Conferences

The pre-conference serves as an opportunity to build rapport with the educator and to begin to collect evidence for the upcoming observation.

Ideally, the pre-conference would occur one to two days prior to the observation.

Click [here](#) to see a full-size copy of the following sample template to use to guide the conversation during a pre-observation conference.

Pre-Observation Conversation Framework

Stage of the Meeting	Examples of Activities/Questions
Preparation before the meeting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Begin by gathering/reviewing evidence, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lesson Plan Lesson materials (e.g., assessment, handouts, etc.) Prior observations and feedback provided to teacher Prepare questions for teacher in advance
Opening/Greeting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Greeting: <i>"Thanks for taking the time to meet with me. I'm really looking forward to coming into your class on _____."</i> Time: <i>"This discussion should take us about 30 minutes."</i> Set Purpose: <i>"The purpose of our conversation is for you to help me to know what I can expect to see happen during the observation and for you to know what things I am specifically looking for."</i>
Focus on the lesson/objectives	<p><u>General Questions</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>"Tell me about the lesson I will observe."</i> <i>"What do you expect students to know and be able to do at the end of the lesson?"</i> <i>"Tell me about any challenges or specific areas of the instructional framework that you are currently working to strengthen."</i> <i>"Is there anything else you would like me to know before the lesson?"</i> <p><u>Standards/Objectives</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>"How will the learning objectives be communicated to students?"</i> <i>"How do you plan to connect the lesson to previous learning?"</i> <i>"How will you know the students have learned what you wanted them to know and be able to do?"</i> <p><u>Lesson Structure and Pacing</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>"Talk about the lesson structure (beginning, middle, and end)."</i> <i>"Talk about classroom procedures."</i> <i>"How will the lesson be differentiated for students at different learning levels?"</i> <i>"Do you anticipate any learning difficulties or common misconceptions that may occur during the lesson?"</i> <p><u>Activities and Materials</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>"How do the activities relate to the objective?"</i> <i>"How will you make the lesson relevant to students?"</i> <i>"Talk about the grouping that will be used in the lesson to maximize student learning."</i>
Closure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Summarize takeaways from the conversation and expectations of the observation <i>"Based on what you shared with me during our conversation, it sounds like you are also looking for feedback on classroom management so I will be sure to make note of this as well."</i> Confirm day/time of observation

Post Observation Conferences

The focus of a post observation conversation should be to help the teacher learn about his/her practice and to support the teacher's thinking. The lesson is over so the evaluator is not going to be able to fix or change it, but he/she will be able to impact the teacher's thinking and design of future lessons.

Post-conferences should not occur immediately after the lesson as this does not allow for sufficient time for the evaluator to synthesize evidence and feedback or for the educator to adequately reflect upon the lesson. However, these meetings should be held within a reasonable time after the observation so that the lesson is still fresh in the teacher and evaluator's mind. Ideally, this would be within 3-5 school days.

Evaluators should spend time preparing for the meeting by reviewing the evidence collected, identifying areas of teacher strength and areas for growth, developing thoughtful questions and planning the conversation. Click [here](#) for examples of question/sentence starters that encourage reflective thinking and meaningful dialogue.

Click [here](#) to see a full-size copy of the following sample template to use to guide the conversation during a post observation conference.

Post Observation Conversation Framework

Stage of the Meeting	Examples of Activities/Questions
Preparation before the meeting	Begin by reviewing evidence gathered and script taping done during the observation. Review any post-observation forms/reflection questions the teacher may have completed before the meeting.
Opening/Greeting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Greeting: <i>"Thanks for taking the time to meet with me. I'm really looking forward to our discussion on the lesson I was able to see in action."</i> Time: <i>"This discussion should take us about 45 minutes."</i>
Teacher's Reflection on Lesson	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>"How do you think the lesson went" (or if the teacher completed a self-reflection form) – "I saw from your reflection that. . ."</i> <i>"If you were to teach the lesson again, what might you do differently?"</i> <i>"Share evidence you have that indicate the learning objectives were met."</i>
Areas of Strength	Share areas of strength by highlighting evidence from the observation. <i>"I noticed that you had the students working in small groups to discuss the questions you posed."</i> <i>"You used exit slips to assess students' knowledge of what you taught"</i> <i>"I noticed that you working closely with group 1, what was there about this group that led you to do this?"</i>
Areas for Growth	Ask a self-reflection question to prompt the teacher to talk about what you want him/her to improve. <i>"What was your thinking behind developing the particular set of questions for discussion?"</i> Use language from a particular component of the instructional framework to help the teacher to focus on this area. <i>"You mentioned earlier that you wanted to focus on 2d-Classroom Management. I observed the group in the back looking at something on John's cell phone and not discussing the questions. Tell me more about how you develop classroom rules with your class and how you monitor/reinforce them."</i>
Closure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Summarize takeaways from the conversation and areas of future focus. Share Observation Form and Notes taken during meeting: <i>"I've categorized the evidence from the observation and also taken notes of our conversation so you can continue doing all the great things you are doing and also focus on the identified areas for growth."</i>



Evaluator Prequalification Update

The Illinois State Board of Education will be implementing new initial evaluator trainings after January 1, 2019. The last day to register for any Growth Through Learning Modules will be November 1, 2018. All modules must be completed by December 31, 2018. If all modules are not completed by this deadline, educators will be required to complete the new training in its entirety before being qualified to evaluate teachers or principals.

PEAC's Retraining Subcommittee is working on developing a face-to-face prequalification training. Once the training materials have been completed, the committee will offer a "train the trainers" session in early December. Only trainers who complete this session will be approved to deliver prequalification sessions to candidates who wish to be endorsed to evaluate teachers.

The prequalification sessions will be scheduled by providers and we plan to offer a master calendar of those sessions for the spring semester. We will report more as plans are finalized.



Tell Us What You Think

Take a Quick Survey to Help Us

Please take a few minutes to answer a short survey to give us feedback about the Virtual PERA Coach. We want to know if we have helped you with implementation of the Performance Evaluation Reform Act and how we might be able to assist you in the future. Click [here](#) to take the survey.

Additional Resources

[Illinois State Board of Education Webpage - Educator Evaluations - PEAC web page](#) This site contains links to guidance documents, resources, and past PERA Coach Newsletters to help teachers, administrators, PERA Joint Committees, and School Boards implement the Performance Evaluation Reform Act.

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