

FOCUS SESSION 2 (Instrumental & Choral) - Planning, Evaluation and Grading
 Observation Outline

School: _____ Teacher: _____

Date: _____ Beginning/Ending time: _____

Questions to consider (Planning):

What information is given to the students at the outset of the lesson? Are any specific objectives stated? Are the materials to be covered (song titles, exercises) listed?

To what extent does the teacher explicitly plan the lesson before the students arrive? What form does this planning take?

Is any formal documentation of lesson planning required by the school or the district?

Is there a formal curriculum that this teacher is obliged to follow? If so, what is its source? The individual teacher? The music teachers of that district? The general school or district administration? The state? A national organization (MENC, for example)?

In what way is the teacher's advance planning evident or not evident during the course of the lesson? In what areas and in what ways does he or she remain flexible about the direction the class session takes?

When designing their lessons, how does the teacher balance the needs of the ensemble as a group with the needs of particular individuals within that group? In other words, how does the teacher try to plan for *everyone's* success while, at the same time, trying to provide *each individual* with a successful musical and personal experience?

What happens when the teacher is absent? What procedure is used to acquire a substitute? What sorts of information and materials does the teacher normally provide for that substitute? Is there a substitute at all?

If you were teaching this lesson, what would your lesson plan have looked like? Based on what you saw, prepare a lesson plan that states the specific musical objectives and strategies that you felt were the focus of this class session.

Questions to consider (Evaluation and Grading):

How are the students in this group evaluated? Do they receive grades? If so, are they traditional letter grades? Numerical grades? "Pass/Fail" or "Satisfactory/Unsatisfactory" grades?

Do students receive progress reports? How often? Do all students receive them or only students who are struggling or are in danger of failing? Are reports required by the school or have they been developed by the music teacher?

How are students' grades determined? What factors are figured into the final evaluation? Rehearsal attendance? Concert attendance? Performance tests or quizzes? Written tests or quizzes? Reports? Do the students have opportunities to gather "extra credit?"

Other than through intermittent feedback channels (report cards, progress reports), does this teacher use any formal system to keep the students apprised of their progress?

Is there any non-performance aspect of the ensemble program? Does the teacher ever make use of worksheets or other types of written or reading material? Are there any non-performance activities required by the school or district (such as reading or writing lessons)? If so, are these figured into students' final evaluations?

What does the teacher do when she/he notices that a student is struggling to keep up (possibly due to lack of practice, poor attendance, failure to regularly bring their book, music or instrument, general confusion, or any of a number of other problems)? Whom does the teacher contact? When? In what way? In what order?

For you to think about . . .

What changes do you notice from your first visit?

Has the size of the group changed? The instrumentation?

Is the classroom atmosphere different? How?

Are different musical things happening than on your last visit? What are they?