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Putting the best possible teacher in the classroom : through reflection and self-evaluation

Renee Fisher
University of Northern Iowa

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Putting the best possible teacher in the classroom : through reflection and self-evaluation

Abstract

Over the span of five months, an elementary school teacher uses reflection and self-evaluation methods to review her teaching. The process encourages improvement in areas concurrent with the Iowa Teaching Standards. Including a current portfolio, the teacher uses the medium of videotape to self-evaluate her teaching style and the evaluation by building administrator. Current research in teacher evaluation lends support to the need for self-evaluation. The completed portfolio becomes a working document chronicling the teacher's work in the classroom and career field. The results show the improvement that has occurred, along with areas to advance in.

Running head: Reflection and Self-evaluation of the Teacher

Putting the Best Possible Teacher in the Classroom:
Through Reflection and Self-Evaluation

A Graduate Project

Submitted to the

Division of Education

Department of Curriculum and Instruction

In Partial Fulfillment

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Master of Arts in Education

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by

Renee Fisher

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Has been approved as meeting the research requirement for the Degree of Master of Arts in Education.

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Date Approved

Lynn E. Nielsen



Graduate Faculty Reader

12-9-03

Date Approved

Connie J. Erpelding

Graduate Faculty Reader

Dec 10, 2003

Date Approved

Rick Traw

Head, Dept. of Curriculum & Instruction

Abstract

Over the span of five months, an elementary school teacher uses reflection and self-evaluation methods to review her teaching. The process encourages improvement in areas concurrent with the Iowa Teaching Standards. Including a current portfolio, the teacher uses the medium of videotape to self-evaluate her teaching style and the evaluation by building administrator. Current research in teacher evaluation lends support to the need for self-evaluation. The completed portfolio becomes a working document chronicling the teacher's work in the classroom and career field. The results show the improvement that has occurred, along with areas to advance in.

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Introduction

Description

This project entails a semester's look at the evolution of a teacher, when working to align her teaching practices with the teaching standards for the state of Iowa. The teacher has evaluated herself and has had an evaluator review the videotapes of four lessons in four different subject areas. The results of this review have helped the teacher recognize strengths and weaknesses in her teaching, and identify areas for improvement. This project also entails a portfolio portion that gives further evidence to the methods the teacher is working on in relation to best-practice teaching in the classroom. It is an outgrowth of the learning she has done in her coursework for the master's degree in elementary education program.

Rationale

The rationale behind this project began by making it meaningful for the learner. Best practice teaching, encourages teachers to make lessons and activities ones that are meaningful for students, requires them to make inquiries, and then go about looking for resolution through a hands-on approach. This project is the result of my hands-on approach to a topic that is extremely meaningful to my students and me: my teaching.

Additionally, as the ways in which teachers are evaluated begins to evolve, looking at my teaching and comparing it to the Iowa teaching standards is also a step to becoming a better teacher. My portfolio will express the beliefs I have, the attitudes I possess, and the qualifications of being a well-qualified teacher. The knowledge I have gained through the series of master's degree classes I have taken is also demonstrated through the videotapes of my lessons, and the information found in my portfolio.

Although teachers are always working to become better at what they do, perfection is hard to attain, and very rarely obtained. Therefore, this project will live on past my time in the master's program, but on throughout my career, as I continue to evolve as a teacher.

The final rationale for choosing this project was due to my undergraduate and graduate education. The University of Northern Iowa is widely known for encouraging its students to be reflective, using self-reflection as a means for learning and advancing. Therefore, the reflections done in the context of this project represent my learning and advancement toward becoming a teacher who follows best practices.

Purpose of Product

The purpose of the product is to provide an opportunity to reflect on my teaching qualifications and make changes that will improve my teaching as well as celebrate those qualities that are valuable assets.

Importance of Product

This product will be a good starting point for me as I embark upon a long career in the education field. After five years of experience in education, this is a good place for me to look back at what I have done, and make positive changes for the next stage of my teaching career. My portfolio is evidence of the work I have done in meeting the satisfactory requirements of the Iowa Teaching Standards. My portfolio will be a valuable place to document my work as a teacher. It is a place where I can evolve and change the artifacts within it as I gain more experience in the teaching field and have a deeper breadth of experience to exhibit. The product of this project can serve as a model to other educators looking at ways to improve their teaching.

Terms of Importance

Iowa Teaching Standards. Throughout this report of my work, the Iowa Teaching Standards will be mentioned (Krueger & Wilkinson, 2002). Each standard has several criteria that must be met. However, the eight teaching standards are as follows:

- *Demonstrates ability to enhance academic performance and support for implementation of the school district's student achievement goals
- * Demonstrates competence in content knowledge appropriate to the teaching position
- * Demonstrates competence in planning and preparing for instruction
- * Uses strategies to deliver instruction that meet the multiple learning needs of students
- * Uses a variety of methods to monitor student learning
- * Demonstrates competence in classroom management
- * Engages in professional growth
- * Fulfills professional responsibilities established by the school district.

Demographics of Classroom. The students participating in the videotapes are students of a third grade classroom. There are seventeen students in the classroom. The elementary school is located in a small town, drawing its students from the small town of 1000, and the surrounding countryside. The school includes grades kindergarten through fifth grades with two sections of each grade. Our school district includes three elementary schools, a middle school and high school. Most students are middle class to low-middle class in socioeconomic status. The majority of the class would fall into the average to slightly below average academic categories. Two students receive special education support. The class is predominantly white, with the exception of one biracial student. The class includes nine girls and eight boys.

Methodology

Videotaping

To develop this project I began by identifying current strengths and weaknesses. I used the Iowa Teaching Standards and criteria for each standard through a self-survey. This survey was taken before the school year began in early August of 2003. The beginning survey was a starting point, and an opportunity for the identification of standards that needed to be looked at closely. Results varied from being on the high end of the spectrum to a few criteria needing improvement, but the majority of criteria fell into the middle two categories.

When the beginning weeks of school had passed, and students were comfortable with the teacher, one lesson was selected for the middle of each month, for the months of September, October, and November. Different subject lessons were taped to show the spectrum of behaviors and actions of the teacher. A baseline video was taped in early September so that it could be a starting point for the teacher and evaluator.

Portfolio

Throughout the course of the semester artifacts and information were collected to add to the teaching portfolio. Some artifacts and evidence are based on work that the teacher has utilized over the course of involvement in the master's program, and other artifacts came from the current school year.

Putting It All Together

A review of literature was consulted in regards to teacher evaluation and the use of portfolios. A final self-survey was completed in mid-November, following the last videotape. Weaknesses were recognized, and strengths were celebrated. Throughout the

project, self-reflection was apparent in evaluations of the videotapes and selections of the artifacts that were included in the portfolio.

Literature Review

Research on Teacher Evaluation

A study by Wright, Horn, and Sanders (1997) showed the most important factor that influenced student learning was the teacher. The effectiveness of the teacher in the classroom is one way we are looking at the use of standardized testing. However, test scores of students are the uncontrollable factor in being able to tell a qualified teacher from an unqualified teacher. Change in the government administration keeps teacher evaluation evolving. The search for an effective way to discriminate a qualified teacher from an unqualified teacher goes on.

The focus on teacher evaluation became prominent in the 1980's and 1990's, when it was identified as a valuable way to promote good teaching practices. Most teacher evaluation took place in the classroom by observations in which a teacher demonstrated his/her abilities. Most observations followed with a time for evaluators to make recommendations and note strong performances with the teachers. Combining the evaluation with the important ingredient of students, there are a few more questions we need to include in the evaluation process. Edward Iwanicki (2001) writes, "Before we analyze the teacher's performance, we must ask three questions: Were the objectives of the lesson worthwhile and challenging? Did the teacher treat the student with dignity and respect? To what extent did all students achieve the objectives of the lesson?" (Iwanicki, 2001, p. 57) With these questions, Iwanicki (2001) also points out that when we design worthwhile and challenging objects, meaningful learning will take place. These questions also review the characteristics of instruction like motivation to learn, discipline, and rapport, and mix those together to address student learning (Iwanicki, 2001). Are the students learning, and in what type of atmosphere is most conducive for learning? Is this teacher effective?" These questions within the context of the teacher's evaluations are the heart of the matter of teacher evaluation.

Types of Teachers

Before lumping effective vs. non-effective teachers into separate groups, it is of value to realize that each teacher has a different teaching style, and thus can be evaluated with a different type of style. Cruickshank and Haefele (2001) identify several types of good teachers, in their article "Good Teachers Plural." An ideal teacher is someone who has a solid emotional stability, ethical behavior, expressiveness, forcefulness, and personal magnetism (Beecher, 1963; Barr 1961). An analytic teacher is someone who examines their classroom practice using a variety of observation techniques (Simon & Boyer, 1968). In previous years, when analytic teachers used the Flanders System of Interactional Analysis (1960), they kept strict records of the amount of interaction between the teacher and the student, how much and what the teacher and the student talked about, and how much student silence or confusion on the part of the student was involved (Flanders, 1960). The effective teacher monitors learning activities, is supportive and equitable to students, and persists in challenging and engaging them (Rosenshine, 1971; Rosenshine & Furst, 1971). The effective teacher is able to teach in a manner that resulted in higher student achievement in standardized testing scores. Dutiful teachers are those who are evaluated by how well they understand and perform their duties, subject matter, classroom skills, and personal characteristics of a student that would encourage learning, and their service to the profession (Scriven 1990).

Another type of teacher Cruickshank and Haefele (2001) located is the competent teacher. The competent teacher shows strength in planning instruction, implementing instruction, assessing students, communicating students, and in performing administrative duties (Dodl et al, 1972). In the 1980's the expert teacher was pointed out. The expert teacher has extensive and accessible knowledge that is useful in teaching, they are efficient, can do a lot in little time, and they can find solutions to problems (Sternberg & Horvath, 1995). The expert teacher doesn't necessarily have to be someone

with a lot of experience. A novice teacher could have more expertise, but just be less experienced than a veteran teacher. The reflective teacher was first introduced in the 1970's.

The reflective teacher is also a student of his/her learning. They are interested in the art of learning and the science of teaching. They are interested in themselves as the teacher. Reflective teachers examine their practices, and look for ways to learn more about teaching through books and professional journals (Cruickshank, 1987, 1991). Satisfying teachers are those who work to please. It may be students, parents, other teachers, or administrators, but they seek positive feedback from others that see or are the result of their teaching (Janey, 1997).

Diversity-responsive teachers have become more prevalent in the last several years. These teachers are extremely sensitive to cultural, economic, social, intellectual, physical, and emotional differences among students. They work to make the lives of their students better both inside and outside of the classroom. Respected teachers are those who seem to have three traits that are consistent. These traits include competence in their subject matter. They care about the success and welfare of their students, and they have a distinctive character.

Each type of teacher mentioned is not exclusive of the other teaching types mentioned. However, when it comes to being evaluated, it is of importance to know the type of teacher that is being evaluated, as the high points of one type of teacher might not meet up with the qualities of another type of teacher. Having a set of criteria that can address the spectrum of teacher types is essential so that evaluations can be done in a fair, reliable, and objective manner. This demand for criteria has been addressed in Iowa with the Iowa teaching standards. The standards and their criteria leave open the realm of teaching styles, but address the issues that must be attended to in the classroom and that show the proficiency and qualifications of the teacher.

Kirkpatrick's Evaluation Model

Another way of looking at the evaluation process would be to look at Kirkpatrick's evaluation model (1996). Kirkpatrick has four levels that build upon each other. How the person being evaluated feels about their evaluation is an example of reaction, the first level. Most teachers look at evaluation very apprehensively, concerned about the results of the evaluation rather than the positive experience it could be. By creating an environment, where learning is valued, and each learning experience is an outgrowth, the reaction of those being evaluated changes, whether it be student or teacher.

Stepping up to learning, we can liken this to the pretest-post test cycle we have with our students. Teachers give our students a pretest to see where they are at, spend the chapter teaching them skills and concepts that will be valuable, and then review and take a posttest, after the chapter has finished. It is the learning in between that many of us hope to see. Even though a student doesn't receive a perfect score, we look to see if they have learned anything over the chapter's time. Teachers who are evaluated need to look at what they have learned between evaluations. The value lies in the improvements made, and not what changes have yet to be accomplished. Evaluators can look at this feedback and learning done between evaluations, and use it as a factor in helping them decide professional development opportunities.

Teachers are moving into Kirkpatrick's third level of behavior, when they take the evaluation experiences they have had, combine it with the learning that has taken place between evaluations, and use it as a way to shape their behavior in the classroom. Using the Iowa Teaching Standards to look at the learning that happens between evaluations, educators are also able to look at the behavior of the teacher, and use it as a guide in their qualifications.

The combination of reaction, learning and behavior will lead us to the final level of results. Results show when the teacher exhibits behavior that is valuable in the

classroom, through the success of the students. Results will also be factored in with the scores of students' standardized tests. As teachers have to become more accountable for their effectiveness and qualifications, this four level model starts with a good foundation and builds up. Even though this was originally created as a model in the business world, it is somewhat fitting in the educational world. As Naugle et al. state, "If schools as they exist now want to improve, they need to create an effective evaluation process" (Naugle et al., 2000, p. 144).

Portfolios

A portfolio of the teacher's progress in the teaching profession is an outgrowth of where the teacher started at, is at, and hopes to get to as his/her career grows. Through careful consideration, the portfolio gives a glimpse at the teacher's philosophy and daily practices of the teacher, along with reflections over the events and practices of the teacher. Using the Iowa Teaching Standards to construct a portfolio helps to give a complete, holistic look at the teacher. The difference between portfolios and scrapbooks of items is the impact that the reflection of the teacher adds to each artifact and item.

In regards to the project portfolio that has been compiled and constructed, the questions that Bryan Painter (2001) offers in his article "Using Teaching Portfolios" were valuable instruments (Painter, 2001). Painter suggests that teachers should consider these questions when selecting the artifacts for their portfolio. "Why is this artifact better than other artifacts that I could choose? Does this artifact provide evidence of my growth and success against one or more performance standards? Can I rationalize the importance of this artifact to those viewing it out of context? Is this artifact a result of my professional growth and accomplishments? Have I grown as a result of this artifact? How does this artifact represent who I am as a teacher?" Painter, 2001, p. 32). The experience of a portfolio compilation can encourage the teacher to take closer looks at the behaviors and activities he/she plans as the classroom teacher. It also fosters the notion to gain more

education on subjects they may not be well versed in, and persuades the teacher to share with others the subjects they do have knowledge about.

Collecting artifacts is the beginning of the process, as collecting items that demonstrate daily work, special projects, events that have been attended, and ways goals were achieved. Beginning to organize these artifacts is made easier if the teacher follows the teaching standards set by their individual state. Dividing artifacts that match up the standards and criteria of each state will make choosing the artifacts less difficult. When trying to decide upon which artifacts to include, the teacher must evaluate this artifact for the knowledge, skills, or objectives that are demonstrated in the particular piece. Those pieces that show strong pictures of the teacher help the viewer of the portfolio get a complete look at the educator. The completed portfolio can be a valuable way for immediate feedback when looking at the qualifications of the teacher, without stepping foot in the classroom.

Throughout the country, many teachers are now constructing portfolios that will be a part of their evaluation process. This piece not only allows an evaluator to see the teacher in the classroom, with many variable factors, it also allows the evaluator to see the teacher as a learner and reflector in his/her own right. However, it is important to note, that a portfolio should not be the only means of evaluation, as many educators continue to develop their evolving portfolio. An educator can begin to mold and shape their portfolio through various levels. As one moves to each level they don't leave it behind, but rather it becomes part of the process, as a true portfolio knows no end during the teacher's career. An educator's portfolio can show the creativity, organization, effectiveness, and management that takes place in the teacher's classroom on a daily basis (Perkins and Gelfer, 1993). It also represents the past, present, and potential future involvement in the classroom.

Trends in Teacher Evaluation

The article, "Trends in Teacher Evaluation," gave some ideas for administrators to consider when evaluating teachers in relation to current trends. The standards included being objective as possible, clearly communicating with the teacher before the evaluation, review the evaluation, likening the evaluation to the teacher's professional development, and identifying important teaching skills during the evaluation (Mayo, 1997).

There are many trends that evaluation is following besides portfolios, considering the ever-swinging pendulum of educational trends. Most popular and most experienced, is the classroom observation. A more valuable experience results when a pre-conference and a post-conference where the teacher and evaluator can discuss the experiences that will and did take place is allowed to occur. It is a chance for the evaluator to see what the teacher felt was most valuable, as well as their own impressions.

Peer partnerships, where teachers are helping other teachers succeed, is another way to measure effectiveness and cohesiveness of a group of teachers. Kathleen Halligan (1999) gave her teachers the option of continuing with the traditional evaluation process or moving to an integrated approach. This partnership approach focused on teacher teams that reviewed the important school improvement needs in reading, writing, and math, of their rural New England school. By selecting a teacher team approach, in two years, Halligan found that the teachers took a deeper ownership in student learning, the quality of their judgment improved, and students' scores on state tests went up (Halligan, 1999). Putting some of the power an evaluator can have into the hands of those being evaluated can be a positive thing.

Along the same lines as a peer partnership, is the relationship of a teacher mentor and teacher mentee. The mentee is usually a relatively new teacher to the district or

profession, who has the advantage of seeking support from a veteran teacher. This veteran can also help a newer teacher add new skills to their teaching. One of these new skills can be the process of evaluating oneself. The self-evaluation process is one in which teachers can gain a perspective of their work and identify areas of improvement, and areas of strength. In self-evaluation, “teachers collect the data on their teaching effectiveness, and analyze it for improvement in their teaching” (Taylor, 1994, p.109). This type of evaluation gives teachers an intimate role in the evaluation of their teaching effectiveness. The power of self-evaluation stems from the teacher’s desire to improve or change skills they hope to strengthen. For self-evaluation to work, the teacher must be willing to look at both their strengths and weaknesses and compare them to the emphasis they have in the classroom. Supportive in this evaluation process is the support and interaction with other teachers and the principal. Additionally, when used in conjunction with the ratings that students give the teacher, the process of self-evaluation can become more valuable. A teacher can gain a different perspective of their teaching through the reflections of their students, or the responses of parents who can describe the relationship they have with the teacher. When using evaluations of parents, it is important to take those evaluations from a descriptive standpoint, as opposed to a critical statement. Using descriptive statements as a means of evaluation lets the teacher see the emphasis they are having on the parents rather than focusing on the things that the teacher hasn’t accomplished.

In the process of self-evaluation many types of methods can be of use. Using a checklist, utilizing the process of video playback, or making a course log book, are all examples that leave evidence for the teacher to review when self-evaluating. Within the realm of making a course log book, several things could be recorded. These might include the good things about teaching a particular course or subject, any problems and how they could be resolved, any evaluation conducted, and the results of students’ work. The evaluations conducted could be in regards to the students or the teacher. Self-

evaluation also utilizes the skill of self-reflection, and looking back at what the teacher has done, and where they hope to go in the classroom. Using the concept of action research, the teacher becomes an independent learner. Teachers are studying themselves, through their research, and the way the teacher handles the problem or situation that is occurring in the classroom.

As the face of education changes, and requirements of teachers, students, and schools also change, the face of evaluating these entities will change. Students are being held accountable with the standardized testing they must take. Teachers are also held accountable through the scores of their students, and finally, schools are accountable for the scores of their entire student body. Teachers must work to show that their teaching is aiding in the progression of students and their learning, often shown on their test results.

The Project

In the context of my project, I tried several approaches that I had learned about through my research. I began by conducting a self-evaluative checklist, based on the Iowa Teaching Standards. This inventory was done before school began for the school year, 2003-2004. It provided a baseline of where I, the teacher, saw myself at the beginning of the year. I added the factor of videotaping myself, so that I could playback my lessons and review them myself, and for my principal to evaluate. Upon self-evaluating myself through the tapes, I used a method of a course log, that I had reviewed through the literature. This method was referred to in "Reflecting on Teaching: The Benefits of Self-Evaluation" by Lyndal Taylor, written in 1994.

In his article, Taylor uses an appendix to show how his course log can be broken into four sections: method, objectives, comment, and success. I added one additional piece to my course log. This section was the critique. The critique section included the areas where I noticed issues or ideas that needed to be worked on, where I could improve. I completed four videotapes. The first tape was completed in early September, and served as a baseline for the starting point of my teaching. The second, third, and fourth tapes were used to evaluate any progress I was making in using best practice teaching and in following the Iowa Teaching Standards and criteria (Appendix). In an effort to show authentic examples of my daily classroom procedure, I taped lessons with little notification to the students. Parents and students were aware the taping was going to be occurring during the first semester. However, the exact times were left vague to show daily classroom events. To aid in authenticity, the camera was focused on a central part of the room, and not usually moved. Audio relayed events that were happening off camera in a corner of the room. Three of the four lessons were based centrally around a large group lesson. The remaining lesson, taped in October, showed another type of lesson in which students were working on a presentation project. To help explain the

video being viewed, I narrated the events of that lesson. The remaining half of the lesson centered on a lesson with the large group.

Throughout the course of this project, I also collected, organized, evaluated, and selected artifacts I have chosen for my teaching portfolio. I have been collecting documents and artifacts for several years and months. However, I have selected pieces that outline where I am currently as a teacher, and any goals I hope to obtain as I continue the process of organizing, evaluating, and selecting pieces for my portfolio. To complete the project, I did a final checklist, once again, revisiting the Iowa Teaching Standards, to note where improvements have been made, and areas that continue to need to be strengthened. The benefit of utilizing this project long past the time of graduate course work, is that I can use the checklist as a annual tool to evaluate and reflect on the progress I have made as an educator, and the goals I set for the future.

Conclusions

I was able to identify many conclusions as a result of my work. It would be best to narrow the tremendous amount of growth I feel I made with a few broad statements. First and foremost, it is very hard to reach the point where everything works out exactly the way the teacher expects it. In the videotapes, many times there were side conversations going on while I was teaching. I did learn to address those, and by the last tape, I felt students were more engaged, and distracted less often. Additionally, there will always be students, no matter how hard you try, that will find themselves distracted, and do anything to get someone else distracted. It is valuable to ask for the respect that you as the teacher, and the other learners deserve in learning about a new concept or skill.

Getting students involved can be an asset in engaging them in meaningful learning. Giving students the power to realize mistakes and find ways to remedy them is a necessary life skill. When students are engaged they are able to build new skills onto previous knowledge, and apply it.

It is important to recognize not only your weaknesses, but your strengths as well. In research I had read, the point was made that most teachers can identify strengths, but don't see as many weaknesses. For me, I felt the opposite. I had a much easier time reviewing the tapes and locating things that could have been improved. It was much harder for me to say that something was going well. After reviewing a couple of tapes, some areas I felt that I lack in, started to get better. This could be attributed to the fact that I was working on this project, and through research, I have a much better knowledge of the Iowa Teaching Standards. To draw my project to a temporary close, I took a final

self-survey of the Iowa Teaching Standards. Some areas, I have improved upon, while other still need work. However, the opportunity this project presented, allowed me to see where I am at on the Iowa Teaching Standard framework.

Perhaps another important conclusion is that evaluation can be positive. Many teachers including myself dread evaluations. We are afraid the kids will act up, or something won't turn out right. However, having my principal evaluate my tapes according to the Iowa Teaching Standards gave me the opportunity to see where I was meeting the standards, and where I could continue to improve. I was able to see the evaluation was focused more on me, and less on what the kids did or didn't do.

Updating my portfolio was necessary. I have moved from trying to get a job, with my portfolio, fresh out of college, to being a career teacher. The accomplishments and goals I have now, are much different than they were when I was trying to land a job. Additionally, the compilation of artifacts, and the time spent pondering their importance was very valuable in terms of reflection. As my career continues to unfold, the addition and removal of evidence of my teaching will continue to occur and be a necessary task to continue.

Recommendations

Since this project was based around my teaching and work towards being a teacher who follows best practices, it is valuable to note some recommendations I could continue to improve upon. Keeping my portfolio current is necessary and should be done yearly. Besides this yearly cleansing, I need to continue to set goals for myself, based on the

standards that will help me improve my teaching and the learning of my students. This will be valuable, as teacher evaluation continues to evolve to a new level, in which student achievement becomes a part of the puzzle. Working toward goals, reflecting on them, and setting new goals is a continuous process, but will keep my teaching fresh, and beneficial for the learners that enter my classroom.

It also will be of value to continue to evaluate myself through the use of videotapes.

Watching myself when I am not concerned about the learners and the lesson, but myself, will give me chances to reflect on the opportunities I am giving my students to learn and succeed. Lastly, it will also be helpful to continue to survey myself on where I match up to the Iowa Teaching Standards, similar to my pre-survey and post-surveys I took as part of the project. The results of these self-surveys can be the source of new goals for improvement. The final recommendation I can give is to realize that the process I have undertaken is essentially never ending. It just recycles itself in terms of meeting goals that lead to setting new ones.

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Tape 1 -September 2003--Proper and Common Nouns, Verbs, and Adjectives:
Grammar/Writer's Workshop Lesson

Method: Students listened and viewed on the chalkboard, the difference between proper and common nouns. After discussing the difference, teacher elicited different types of nouns from students, who volunteered answers. Students then discriminated between proper and common nouns, through the use of standing/sitting.

Teacher discussed the part of speech that is a verb, and asked for meaning for students. Students physically did the action, and then shared the action or verb they were doing. Students gave examples of verbs.

Teacher asked class for description of a student, to give class idea of adjectives. Students were able to describe student. Students then reviewed idea of adjectives through describing a dog. On a sheet of paper, students listed three nouns, three verbs, three adjectives, using a different crayon for each part of speech. Students then volunteered a word from each part to make a sentence. Other students had the opportunity to take words and make a sentence that used the same words, but was worded differently. Students completed lesson by transferring skills by independently answering questions on a sheet that talked about nouns, verb, and adjectives.

Objectives: Students will identify proper nouns and common nouns. Student will be able to identify the difference between proper and common nouns. Students will identify verbs and adjectives, and how they are used in speech.

Comment: There was a variety of action between standing and sitting for the different types of nouns; doing an action for verbs. There was interaction between student and teacher, with teacher eliciting different types of parts of speech from student. Student

had choices in answers they chose that fit the criteria being discussed. Teacher repeated instructions.

Success: Feedback was on time and immediate. Students were able to identify both proper nouns and common nouns. Students were able to move around the room while learning, for kinesthetic learners, utilizing the idea of multiple intelligences. Parts of speech were said auditorily, written on the board for visual learners, and students created three categories using a hands-on independent approach. The movement made by students to respond to questions was around the room, not focused in one area. Teacher repeated what students had said so everyone could hear. Students were engaged, and included in the lesson.

Critique: Students had down time when others were finishing something, a strategy or secondary activity needs to be in place, rather than just saying “Shh.” There was a lot of background noise, by students talking during downtime. Students need to be reminded to be respectful to the speaker, and not to talk when the speaker is talking.

Minor issue of describing the student’s skin color should have been addressed, not pushed aside. Some students were up moving around during the lesson. The teacher needs to further capture the attention of learners who have difficulty staying focused. There was some confusion when class discussed idea of a “sports lover.” This needed to be cleared up: a lover of something would be considered a noun.

Before finishing with the adjectives, the idea of describing the person and the dog needs to be reinforced. Wait till students have materials out before giving instructions for next phase of lesson, wait until the students have their materials out. To improve, instead of carrying out a conversation with a student across the room, move to their desk. When talking about adjectives, address student’s question, “Could it be anything?” By asking him, “What is it that you are describing, and how would you describe it?” It would have

cut down on interruptions by addressing the student that is interrupting immediately, instead of having them continue to say, "Mrs. Fisher, Mrs. Fisher, Teacher, Teacher."

Tape 2-September 2003: How Many Feet?

Mathematics Lesson

Method: Students used three forms of numerical writing to demonstrate how many feet were in each student's house at night. Students used tally marks, numbers, and manipulatives to represent their amount for three types of counting. Students wrote grouping by ones, tens, and the number for addition facts. This lesson was used as a beginning activity of a chapter in place value. Students also explored the idea of predicting and estimating numbers, and utilized idea of even numbers.

Objective: Students will practice addition skills. Students will see ease of counting by tens. Students will make reasonable predictions. Students will use tallies, numbers, and figures. Students will identify which type of counting is quickest.

Comment: Using the idea of thumbs up to manage class helped teacher identify those ready to move on with her. It was tough to explain to the students who had brothers or sisters that visited from college, as to whether they should be counted. Putting up and counting the counters was time-consuming, but necessary for students to see value of the numbers. For Dalton to make the connection with even numbers was a big thing. Reminding him of the good work he had done was a self-esteem builder for him. Using the idea of prediction for students to make a total guess was a good way to incorporate predicting and estimating with numbers.

Success: It was a good review for the idea of even numbers. Giving students a chance to see how they can remedy their mistakes, such as the student who wrote the wrong number down for number of feet instead of people in the house. Reviewing the mistakes with students, but allowing the class time to figure how to remedy the mistake was

valuable. Students stay engaged with counting the tallies. The amount of wait time for students to figure out their mistakes was ample.

Critique: Students are shouting out the answers. There was a lot of down time.

Something should have been prepared while they were waiting at their seats. There was a lot of side conversation. It was mostly about their families, but there was a lot of noise.

Disagreements about who was supposed to go next could have been solved with some notice of expected order. I lost track of what was happening away from the board. Students could be redirected when they were not at the board. This could be done with practicing recent concepts like fact family and facts review, or other problems to figure out at their seat while they are waiting. Comments from students, such as, "It doesn't look like the numbers are staying up with the counters," should have been addressed and reviewed.

In this particular lesson, the left side of the room was called on a bit more. The difference between the ones and tens should have been more distinguishable. I noticed this when students were figuring the tally marks and changing them into tens and ones. There could have been long and short lines to represent manipulatives of place value. There was a lot of sitting while I was counting. A more organized manner of counters would help the counting go faster.

Tape 3--October 2003: Science Magic Presentation and Skills
Language Arts-Reading

Objective: Students will practice communication skills. Students will give a classroom presentation in front of others. Students will prepare a basic outline. Students will be able to summarize a story. Students will work in a group to complete a product and then share that product. Students will be exposed to the idea of using context to look for keyword spelling.

Method: Students have read a story previous to taping that involves several basic science experiments. During the tape, students are working on preparing science experiments to present to the rest of the class. Each group of 3-4 students has a different experiment. Students are expected to prepare experiment and prepare a basic outline of the materials, process in conducting experiment, and the science behind the experiment.

The large group lesson on summarizing has the students summarize books they have read. Students practice summarizing their science experiments to partners. Students then have a type of guided practice by summarizing on a worksheet page in which the class works through together, a guided practice. Students complete the independent practice portion the following day when completing their presentations to the class.

Successes: Students were working on a common goal in a group. Students were involved in the project, and then involved in the summarizing during the guided practice. Students were more focused on this activity than in previous tapes. "What do you think about...?" when asking the students about types of boxes they need to use, gave the students some feedback. However, it still let the students make the final decision in what they wanted to say.

When beginning the summarizing lesson, I took the opportunity for good classroom management, but asking students, “ Instead of shouting out page numbers, start at the first page of the story and flip to your experiment.” Having the group check the summarizing page we did gave students another opportunity for understanding the concept of summarizing. In this lesson, I had better wait time by letting the students get their supplies out before beginning the summarizing lesson.

At the end of the lesson, giving the students a plan of what will come next, aids those who need a routine. In this lesson, I improved on calling on a variety of students around the room. I also improved by slowing down the directions for the class so they could put everything away that they needed, and could prepare for what would come next.

Critique: Some students were very concerned about the camera being on. Students that weren't highly motivated were off task. When allowing students to go practice, there are some students off task in the coatroom. When seeking advice, a few students have to wait and get frustrated. During the lesson, I need to have a novel way to draw the class back into a large group discussion from small groups. It was hard to include a lot of students in the summarizing of the different books. I also need to choose a book that more kids have read instead of Farmer Boy.

Tape 4—November 2003-Observing the Wet Bean Lesson

Science

Objectives: Students will review how their notebooks will be evaluated. Students will contrast the characteristics of a dry bean to a wet bean. Students will explore the inside contents of a bean seed. Students will draw and label the inside of a wet bean seed.

Method: teacher led students through a review of the rubric that will be used to evaluate their science journals. The teacher instructed students in parts of a lima bean seed. Students had opportunity to explore hands-on the inside of the bean. Teacher gave support on identifying parts of a seed. Students had a second opportunity to explore the parts of the seed and then record data. Teacher led students through review of work comparing it to student's science rubric.

Comment: Student will review the science rubric that will be an aid in evaluating their science journals. Students have previously observed and recorded data of a dry bean. Students will look at a wet bean and record the characteristics. Student will learn the parts inside of the seed: seed coat, seed leaves, embryo, and cotyledon. Students viewed the inside of a bean that has expanded and gotten softer after being soaked in water overnight. The soaked bean made it easier to open for the students. The students were given a second chance to look at the parts of seed with a second soaked bean. Students drew and

labeled the inside of a seed on their data sheet. Students completed experiment by reviewing the rubric with work that was recently completed.

Success: Students are engaged in looking for the parts of the seed.

Students are respectful while waiting for drawing on the board. Student makes a connection between the plant and the seed connection with a seed scar. He compares that to the human connection between mother and child. Through the lesson, I have slowed down my talking rate so that students can better understand me. Students are exploring and recording information. One student asks another student, whose last name is White, how to spell white for his data sheet. Students are using background knowledge to build on what they know. Students recognize the seed scar independently the second time they look at the soaked beans.

Pointing out where students should try and open the bean, but letting them do it independently was also valuable in their independence and discovery. We reviewed the vocabulary words and the type of skills we have been doing. With time issues, sometimes this is difficult. The level of engagement was high, therefore, we had more time to review. Students picked up their materials after the experiment. This encouraged responsibility, and was valuable in management of the class. Students reviewed current data using the rubric we had gone over earlier in the time period. This activity was helpful in reinforcing reflection and checking over their work, early in the unit study. Repeating the vocabulary words for students was important, because repetition can help in comprehension and recognition of the words. Students were looking over their work

Critique: In the beginning, it took a long time for one student to get his materials out. This eats up time very quickly. Later on in the lesson, the same student is lying on his desk. Working to redirect this student needs to occur more often. The distribution of materials caused a lot of talking. Earlier on I need to address student responses to what might have happened to the bean. One student becomes very concerned with the camera on, and addressing this issue would have helped student to be less concerned, and more involved. Students is distracted wit his shoes. The student is largely away from the action, and I don't get back to him. This student also should have been redirected. In regards to the issue of redirecting students, I need to come up with a way to redirect students, other than to use the word "Stop." One student is up walking around, not talking about science. It would have been more helpful to throw in a few more beans to avoid having to go find some beans from the other class. Some beans that had been soaking came apart, and therefore, I had to borrow from the other class's box. This was a tremendous problem, but took up time. Instead of having a trail of students following me, I should have addressed student questions during exploration. When completing their science data sheets, one student gets distracted with her new crayons. It would have also been valuable to give an example of what specific means when evaluating their work with the rubric. It was just assumed students knew what specific meant. However, being detailed about its meaning would be worthwhile to the students.

SITE-BASED ACTIVITY #2
DATA COLLECTION

At your school site, consider data points and data sources you would consult when evaluating a teacher's performance level for each of the Iowa Teaching Standards.

For each of the Standards listed below, indicate at least two different data sources and data points

Iowa Teaching Standard	Data Sources	Data Points
<p>Iowa Teaching Standard 1: The teacher demonstrates ability to enhance academic performance and support for implementation of the school district student achievement goals.</p>	<p>Classroom Observation Parent Communications Phone Log Curriculum Guides Lesson Plans</p>	<p>Parent response Weekly Newsletters follows Curriculum</p>
<p>Iowa Teaching Standard 2: The teacher demonstrates competence in content knowledge appropriate to the teaching position.</p>	<p>Classroom Observation Lesson Plans</p>	<p>Independent Practice/ Assessments appropriate for 3rd grade students Uses learning activities for 3rd grade students</p>
<p>Iowa Teaching Standard 3: The teacher demonstrates competence in planning and preparing for instruction.</p>	<p>Classroom Observation Lesson Plans</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - lesson Plan are · Complete - Lesson - Pacing is appropriate - Directions are easy to follow - asks all students to Share

Iowa Teaching Standard	Data Sources	Data Points
<p>Iowa Teaching Standard 4:</p> <p>The teacher uses strategies to deliver instruction that meets the multiple learning needs of students.</p>	<p>Classroom Observation</p> <p>Lesson Plans</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Oral/Written Directions - Uses Common Vocabulary (Age appropriate) - Physical movement in lessons - Models appropriate answers - follows 3rd grade Curriculum
<p>Iowa Teaching Standard 5:</p> <p>The teacher uses a variety of methods to monitor student learning.</p>	<p>Classroom Observation</p> <p>Lesson Plans</p> <p>P/Conferences</p> <p>assessment Log</p>	<p>Question/answer</p> <p>Physical activity to monitor learning</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Moves about room - asks students about learning - uses District/School assessment and reports to parents
<p>Iowa Teaching Standard 6:</p> <p>The teacher demonstrates competence in classroom management.</p>	<p>Classroom Observation</p> <p>Discipline Rewards</p> <p>Lesson Plans</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Classroom Climate - expects appropriate behavior (asks for it) - Materials for students available - Prepared for lessons - Gives oral "time left" during lessons - Students involved and on task
<p>Iowa Teaching Standard 7:</p> <p>The teacher engages in professional growth.</p>	<p>District Personal Portfolio</p> <p>Classes Taken</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Masters' Program - Implementation of new programs - Participates in professional development

Iowa Teaching Standard	Data Sources	Data Points
<p>Iowa Teaching Standard 8:</p> <p>The teacher fulfills professional responsibilities established by the school district.</p>	<p>Building/District Committees</p> <p>Administrator</p> <p>Observation</p>	<p>Science Curriculum Coordinator</p> <p>Timely Paperwork</p> <p>Participates in Professional discussions</p> <p>On Time to work</p> <p>Participates in after-School activities</p>

Evidence to support attainment of or failure to meet standard:

Renee has shown that she documents students learning with meaningful measures and uses data that is understandable. She administers and interprets different assessments for her 3rd grade students. By using ITBS, STAR, and running records she is able to identify areas of strengths and weaknesses of her students for parents and staff. Renee uses assessment results to individualize instruction and to self-evaluate her teaching practices.

Mrs. Fisher participates in parent-teacher conferences, and involves families in the classroom through various special classroom activities.

Renee is involved as a teacher-leader of the Mid-Prairie CSD science curriculum committee. She has been a catalyst in the development of the new curriculum and has facilitated meetings for the curriculum group members. She has made herself available as a resource for other science teachers within our district.

"Character Counts" is a part of Wellman Elementary's curriculum. Mrs Fisher continually uses the six pillars to reinforce and guide students through decision making. She uses this curriculum to create a classroom, which is based on responsibility, respect, fairness, honesty, kindness and trustworthiness.

Mrs. Fisher uses many avenues to communicate with parents. She send a weekly newsletter, emails, telephones and invites family members to school in order to have positive communication.

All criteria for Standard 1 have been addressed using multiple sources and multiple data points.

Circle one:

Meets Standard

Does Not Meet Standard

Additional documentation/artifacts applicable to this standard are attached as Appendix A-1.

Circle one:

Meets Standard

Does Not Meet
Standard

2. DEMONSTRATES COMPETENCE IN CONTENT KNOWLEDGE APPROPRIATE TO THE TEACHING POSITION.

The teacher:

- a. Understands and uses key concepts, underlying themes, relationships, and different perspectives related to the content area.
- b. Uses knowledge of student development to make learning experiences in the content area meaningful and accessible for every student.
- c. Relates ideas and information within and across content areas.
- d. Understands and uses instructional strategies that are appropriate to the content area.

Renee knows the content that supports our district standards and benchmarks and displays these in her unit planning. She has worked extensively in development of our curriculum. She is involved in the curriculum selection process and is chairperson of the Science Curriculum Committee for the Mid-Prairie Community School District. Through observation I have noted that Mrs. Fisher uses the curriculum in planning lessons and adheres to the 3rd grade standards and benchmarks. Renee reads professional materials and shares them with colleagues. She brings in additional materials to reinforce and enhance her lessons. Renee works closely with 2nd and 3rd grade teachers and shares information with them. Mrs. Fisher uses many instructional strategies and shares these with others in the building.

Additional documentation/artifacts applicable to this standard are attached as Appendix A-2

3. DEMONSTRATES COMPETENCE IN PLANNING AND PREPARING FOR INSTRUCTION.

The teacher:

- a. Uses student achievement data, local standards and the district curriculum in planning for instruction.
- b. Sets and communicates high expectations for social, behavioral, and academic success of all students.
- c. Uses student developmental needs, background, and interests in planning for instruction.
- d. Selects strategies to engage all students in learning.
- e. Uses available resources, including technologies, in the development and sequencing of instruction.

Evidence to support attainment of or failure to meet standard:

Mrs. Fisher uses her student achievement data to help plan for instruction. As mentioned before she uses the district curriculum in her planning. She participates in ITBS item analysis workshops and uses the data of strengths and weaknesses to plan for instruction. Students in Renee's room are expected to work to the best of their abilities. Through assessments she knows her student's strengths and she builds her lessons on those strengths. All students are engaged in learning in her classroom because she tailors lessons to individual students. Students in her third grade classroom are able to experience authentic assessment activities and individualized learning activities based on their individual strengths.

Mrs. Fisher has complete lesson plans listing the objectives for each lesson. Through classroom observations I have noted that her pacing of the lesson is appropriate, directions are easy to follow and she asks all students to share.

All criteria for Standard 3 have been addressed using multiple sources and multiple data points.

Circle one:

Meets
Standards

4. USES STRATEGIES TO DELIVER INSTRUCTION THAT MEETS THE MULTIPLE LEARNING NEEDS OF STUDENTS.

The teacher:

- a. Aligns classroom instruction with local standards and district curriculum.
- b. Uses research-based instructional strategies that address the full range of cognitive levels.
- c. Demonstrates flexibility and responsiveness in adjusting instruction to meet student needs.
- d. Engages students in varied experiences that meet diverse needs and promote social, emotional, and academic growth.
- e. Connects students' prior knowledge, life experiences, and interests in the instructional process.
- f. Uses available resources, including technologies, in the delivery of instruction.

Evidence to support attainment of or failure to meet standard:

Through the observation of four video tapes of classroom instruction I noted that Renee spent time modeling appropriate answers. She follows the third grade curriculum and has spent time with the development of the curriculum. Mrs. Fisher works to meet all students at their individual levels. She differentiates her teaching for students with diverse needs in her classroom. She works well with the special education students which are placed in her room, adapting the curriculum to meet their learning needs. Renee is truly a "student centered" teacher using vocabulary and examples that fit her students. She uses high interest words, examples and activities to inspire students. During one of her lessons which I observed she discussed 4-wheelers during an English skill lesson. She uses the Accelerated Reader program to monitor student reading and comprehension skills

Circle one:

Meets Standard

Does Not Meet Standard

Additional documentation/artifacts applicable to this standard are attached as Appendix A-4.

All criteria for Standard 4 have been addressed using multiple sources and multiple data points.

5. USES A VARIETY OF METHODS TO MONITOR STUDENT LEARNING.

The teacher:

- a. Aligns classroom assessment with instruction.
- b. Communicates assessment criteria and standards to all students and parents.
- c. Understands and uses the results of multiple assessments to guide planning and instruction.
- d. Guides students in goal setting and assessing their own learning.
- e. Provides substantive, timely, and constructive feedback to students and parents.
- f. Works with other staff and building and district leadership in analysis of student progress.

Evidence to support attainment of or failure to meet standard:

Mrs. Fisher uses a variety of classroom assessments with her students. Besides Iowa Tests of Basic Skills she uses STAR Reading and Math Assessments, individual running records, authentic assessment techniques, portfolios, and Accelerated Reader. These assessment results are reported to parents by Mrs. Fisher during parent-teacher conferences and other meetings with parents and students. Mrs. Fisher has used this information to adjust her curriculum for students in the classroom.

Mrs. Fisher writes honest comments on report cards and reports to parents by notes, email, and telephone on their progress in school.

Renee has participated in Iowa Test of Basic Skills Item workshops for our building and has offered insight in response to test scores. She

Circle one:

Meets Standard

Does Not Meet Standard

Additional documentation/artifacts applicable to this standard are attached as Appendix A-5.

All criteria for Standard 5 have been addressed using multiple sources and multiple data points.

6. DEMONSTRATES COMPETENCE IN CLASSROOM MANAGEMENT.

The teacher:

- a. Creates a learning community that encourages positive social interaction, active engagement, and self-regulation for every student.
- b. Establishes, communicates, models and maintains standards of responsible student behavior.
- c. Develops and implements classroom procedures and routines that support high expectations for learning.
- d. Uses instructional time effectively to maximize student achievement.
- e. Creates a safe and purposeful learning environment.

Evidence to support attainment of or failure to meet standard:

Through classroom observation I have noted that students in Mrs. Fisher's class. I have noted that she has a respectful and appropriate manner. This is also an expectation of her classroom students. Renee has the classroom rules posted and she uses these to reinforce behaviors. She uses her classroom management skills to help continue the high expectations for learning. Mrs. Fisher continually communicates with parents to reinforce her expectations for students.

Because of the characteristics of Renee's classroom listed above, it has lead to using instructional time effectively and provides a safe and purposeful learning environment.

Circle one:

Meets Standard

Does Not Meet Standard

Additional documentation/artifacts applicable to this standard are attached as Appendix A-6.

All criteria for Standard 6 have been addressed using multiple sources and multiple data points.

7. ENGAGES IN PROFESSIONAL GROWTH.

The teacher:

- a. Demonstrates habits and skills of continuous inquiry and learning.
- b. Works collaboratively to improve professional practice and student learning.
- c. Applies research, knowledge, and skills from professional development opportunities to improve practice.
- d. Establishes and implements professional development plans based upon the teacher needs aligned to the Iowa Teaching Standards and district/building student achievement goals.

Evidence to support attainment of or failure to meet standard:

Renee has demonstrated and documented her formal learning she has engaged in. She maintains a personal portfolio which summarizes her professional learning and growth. Mrs. Fisher has devoted many hours of time to working with peers in the building and throughout the district. I am involved in the Mid-Prairie science curriculum committee and note how she is willing to work cooperatively with peers. She uses research to improve classroom instruction, working with peers and sharing information.

Renee has demonstrated her growth through pursuing continued education and uses this education to improve instruction.

Circle one:

Meets Standard

Does Not Meet Standard

Additional documentation/artifacts applicable to this standard are attached as Appendix A-7.

All criteria for Standard 7 have been addressed using multiple sources and multiple data points

8. FULFILLS PROFESSIONAL RESPONSIBILITIES ESTABLISHED BY THE SCHOOL DISTRICT. The teacher:

- a. Adheres to board policies, district procedures, and contractual obligations.
- b. Demonstrates professional and ethical conduct as defined by state law and individual district policy.
- c. Contributes to efforts to achieve district and building goals.
- d. Demonstrates an understanding of and respect for all learners and staff.
- e. Collaborates with students, families, colleagues, and communities to enhance student learning.

<p>Evidence to support attainment of or failure to meet standard:</p> <p>Renee Fisher has adhered with all board policies, district procedures and contractual obligations during her employment with the Mid-Prairie Community School District. She demonstrates professional commitment and respect obligations and has shown evidence of this through her attendance at concerts, open houses, conferences, and in-services. Through observations it has been documented that Renee adheres to all building duties. And volunteers for duties that are not required and are outside of the school day.</p> <p>Mrs. Fisher also maintains a professional manner in the classroom and through communications. Family newsletters, phone calls and email messages are part of her goal of family/school collaboration.</p>	<p>Circle one:</p> <p>Meets Standard</p> <p>Does Not Meet Standard</p>
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Additional documentation/artifacts applicable to this standard are attached as Appendix A-8.

- The teacher is a first year Beginning Teacher.
- The teacher meets or exceeds all eight Iowa Teaching Standards and is recommended for a standard license.
- The teacher fails to meet the Iowa Teaching Standards.
- The teacher is being recommended for a third year before a license decision is made.*

Evaluator's Signature: *Erin Parrott* Date: 12/8/03

Evaluation Period: _____, 20____ to _____, 20____

Teacher's Signature: *Renee L. R. Fisher* Date: 12/08/03

*The district must contact the Board of Educational Examiners to extend the provisional license for a third year. There will be a form provided by the Board of Educational Examiners for the evaluator to use to communicate the decision made on each 2nd year teacher. This form will be available in the spring of 2003.