

Educational Support Cell (ESC) TLDE *Tips & Strategies*

Cracking the code on Instructor Performance Data

Volume IV of *ESC Tips & Strategies* offered a primer on USAJFKSWCS 350-70-4: Assessment and Feedback Systems (in 695 words!). As promised, we will dig down more into the topic of Instructor Performance Data here.

Instructor Performance is just one of five data points that help us make informed decisions about our courses. (The other 4 points are *Student Feedback on Course*; *Student Feedback on Instructors*; *Instructor Feedback on Course*; and *Student Assessment*). Sometimes we tend to glance over Instructor Performance as it is the most time-consuming of the 5 data points to collect; however, this information can operate as a meaningful tool to inform professional development needs at the unit level as well as assist in developing individual instructor's craft. Instructor Performance can be evaluated in a variety of ways.

Formal Observations

Formal observations are standard in the field of education—an Instructional Leader (or designee) enters the learning environment where he/she observes the

Instructor throughout a lesson. Here at SWCS, we have formal observation tools* that assist in evaluating Instructor Performance against an established standard at either the basic or advanced levels of competence. By collecting performance data in this formal manner, the leader can institute post-observation conferences to counsel an Instructor on identified strengths, as well as any areas that need improvement. An Instructional Leader can identify

the number of formal observations he/she will complete during a particular course, and make a calendar to ensure the observation of each Instructor 2-3 times annually.

Additionally, a novice Instructor (e.g. a recent graduate of the Special Operations Instructor Course [SOIC]) should be held to a different standard than a seasoned Instructor. The Instructor observation instruments designed for formal observations at SWCS include Basic Instructor Standards (for validation of skills) and Advanced Instructor Skills (see boxes for delineation of skills).

Basic Instructor Skills

- Basic Presentation Skills
- Subject Matter Expertise
- Basic Facilitation Skills

Advanced Instructor Skills

- Class Management/Environment
- Presentation
- Facilitation
- Principles of ALM
- Assessment & Feedback

*Contact Mr. Jones (geojones@soc.mil) and the ESC for copies of these observation tools.

The ESC provides support for the uniform application of SWCS educational processes across the Institution to include:

-Support to Curriculum & Instruction [Courses and Instructors];

-Support to Leadership & Professional Development Initiatives;

-Support to the development and implementation of program evaluation and assessment systems; and

-Support to the design and implementation of SOF Career Pathways.

For more information, contact Mr. Geoff Jones at geojones@soc.mil, (910) 396-2518.

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TLDE

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Walk-Throughs

Another method of evaluating Instructor Performance involves the instructional walk-through. A walk-through includes a focused observation that should only take 5-10 minutes to complete. The Instructional Leader (or designee) enters the learning environment with a focus on specific elements of an effective learning environment/lesson. Of course, the most comprehensive approach to evaluating Instructor Performance is to focus on all elements simultaneously (with a formal observation tool), but in the absence of time the walk-through allows an Instructional Leader to collect data over shorter durations and to determine what, if any, trends exist among Instructors. The intentionally brief design of the walk-through works best for identifying trends to assess professional development needs. The brevity of the evaluation in a walk-through makes this method less effective for individual Instructor evaluations.

Walk-Through Focus Tools

1. **Class Management/ Environment**
2. **Presentation**
3. **Facilitation**
4. **Principles of ALM**
5. **Assessment and Feedback**
6. **Elements of a Flipped Classroom**

Currently, TLDE has 6 walk-through tools available. The first five tools (box above) align with the skills categories associated with the Advanced Instructor Observation Tool. The sixth tool was developed recently at the specific request of an Instructional leader who wanted to identify trends to inform professional development during the implementation of a flipped classroom model of instruction.

An Instructor's Look at Performance Data

As an Instructor, you have a vested interest in understanding the standards that SWCS desires in Instructors. Taking a look at the formal observation tool discussed on page 1 is a great way to determine what those standards involve. Additionally, using those standards as a rubric for self-assessment provides you with a solid head start in your journey to becoming a phenomenally, effective Instructor. Let's face it. Teaching is an incredibly critical vocation. You are accountable for more than ensuring that your charges can apply the knowledge and skills that they need to serve effectively as members of (maybe) your next team. You have the **awesome responsibility** of shaping these people into standard-bearers for your profession. By using the Instructor Observation Tools as self-assessments, you will get started on this journey in a more effective manner.

The Big "So What?"

Not a State secret, you should have already figured out the importance of collecting Instructor Performance data. We collect this information for **YOU!** Each Instructor receives formal observation data to inform his/her own teaching skill development, while the Post-Instructional Conference (PIC) process utilizes numeric data to determine overall Instructor strengths and weaknesses. Similarly, leaders use the numeric walk-through data to identify trends to inform overall Unit Professional Development needs. All in all, Instructor Performance data provides you, as the Instructional Leader or as the Instructor, with the knowledge that you need to make deliberate and tangible improvements in classroom instruction for the good of the Force.

For assistance with Instructor performance evaluations, contact Mr. Geoff Jones and the ESC.