

## Educator evaluations should reflect daily routines

The stiffness in your teacher's voice, his statement of the objectives associated with the day's lesson and the way he conducts himself at his podium in the front of the classroom all indicate that something about this block is different. Your teacher's desk is arranged in a more organized manner than usual and he's more attentive and interested in students' questions and class discussion. A quick glance around the room reveals the reason for this atypical behavior. Your teacher is being observed.

We The Journal believe that teachers should not alter their teaching styles or normal classroom routines simply because they're being evaluated.

Throughout the course of the school year, teachers go through three evaluations: two announced and one unannounced. Teachers are given a score based on the criteria listed on a rubric that has been written to reflect all the qualities the State of Indiana believes teachers should demonstrate. The TAP rubric is what helps guide the evaluator throughout the block and has three main parts: planning, environment and instruction.

According to master teacher Melissa Schick, the score given to teachers is completely evidence based and not judgemental in any way. Even if the evaluator did notice that teachers weren't completing their normal classroom behaviors, Schick says it's not the evaluator's place to judge that.

"When we come in, we're looking at the evidence that we see just for that class period," Schick said.

Master teacher Tom Davis says that he is aware there are teachers who make a complete 180 degree

turn in order to please evaluators and receive a good score, however, he says it's not a widespread issue throughout the school. We agree with Davis, and, in fact, we believe that most teachers do not change their routines. However, there are still some that only follow the TAP rubric when they know they're being given a score on it. Not only is this frustrating for students, but it can also be stressful knowing that your teachers are almost pretending.

We do, however, understand that all teachers would strive to put their best foot forward while they're being evaluated. But completely changing the way their class functions on a daily basis and adding more substance to their agenda simply to get points on their evaluation is different than simply trying to mildly exaggerate the things they already do everyday.

Not only do teachers want to see a good score on the evaluation sheet they receive back from the observer, but they also might be interested in the bonus they are eligible to receive if the average yearly score meets up to specific standards. If, after the three evaluations, a teachers' average score is in between a 3.0 and 3.999, they receive a \$300 bonus at the end of the year. If their average score is between a 4.0 and 5.0, a \$600 bonus is given.

So, we know there is incentive for teachers to step up their game when being evaluated, however we believe all teachers should uphold the standards outlined in the TAP rubric everyday, not just when they're being evaluated. This is because, according to Davis, this rubric has been researched and proven to be effective in helping teachers to become better at what they do.

