



Ne'epapa Ka Hana (NKH) 2.0 | Professional Development Program

# Authentic Social Learning

An Inclusive Teaching Model to Support Diverse Learners in Hawai'i

## Module 4: Planning and Goal-Setting for a Successful STEM Classroom with the ASLM

### Lecture 8:

#### The ASLM Guidelines for Teacher Self-Assessment and Goal-Setting

You have probably heard it said before, that teaching is a craft. Teachers spend years improving and perfecting their craft. Educators are unique in that teachers, at all career stages, constantly work to improve their teaching skills. The best educators in the industry are where they are simply by always looking for ways to become better. You, yourself, is striving to be better and improve your craft by taking this training and being willing to implement these strategies in your classroom.

In the previous training videos, we provided you with several strategies on *how* you can improve your teaching. The purpose of this training video is to provide you with strategies for discovering *what* teaching skills you can or should strive to improve. Like your students, it is difficult to improve your skills without feedback on what needs to be improved. Every teacher has a different skill set and different students, so improving your craft is mostly an individual journey. The most effective way to improve teaching and learning in your classroom is to practice self-evaluation and solicit feedback from other stakeholders. After receiving feedback, use that data to set goals for improving student learning.

## **ASLM Feedback Mechanisms for Teachers**

In most school districts, a major part of teacher evaluations is formal observations. During formal observations, the principal or other administrator observes the teacher during a lesson. These formal observations usually occur once or twice a year, depending on the teacher's years of service. Of course, the most valuable part of these observations is the following meeting where the administrator shares their observations about your strengths and weaknesses and strategies for improvement. These evaluations are like summative assessments; they are a small snapshot of one or two days of your teaching and often occur too late to make changes that would result in a meaningful change in student achievement. Just like summative assessments, these evaluations are valuable and important, but they should not be the only feedback a teacher receives. According to Akram and Zepeda (2015), evaluating teachers through just one source is problematic; true teacher evaluations should use multiple data sources. Kane et al. (2016) stated that there is no direct evidence that feedback from observations improves students' learning outcomes. Since the purpose of the ASLM is to improve student achievement, it includes other feedback mechanisms for teachers, designed to improve learning outcomes. The ASLM feedback mechanisms are a collection of data sources designed to be used to set goals for improving student learning.

The ASLM utilizes formative assessments to improve student learning. Therefore, it makes sense that you would use formative assessments to improve your teaching and learning. Therefore, the ASLM includes multiple feedback mechanisms for teachers that are designed to help you strengthen your teaching skills and improve your students' learning. The ASLM feedback mechanisms include multiple sources of data that you will collect to get a true picture of how you can improve your students' learning. If you are required to submit a year-end portfolio, these data points can be included in your portfolio of evidence of your teaching and continued improvement. The ASLM feedback mechanisms include self-observation and reflection, student feedback, formative assessment data, and parent and community feedback. The most important factor in the ASLM feedback mechanisms, though, is that you are open and willing to listen to and learn from the feedback. This can be difficult to do, but remember that you want your students to learn to view feedback as a positive tool for improvement, so it is important that teachers view feedback in the same way. It is important to note that the ASLM feedback mechanisms should be a compilation of different types of feedback that, combined with administrator observations, gives a complete picture of teacher effectiveness. It is recommended that you use a combination of these assessments to evaluate your teaching.

### ***ASLM Feedback Mechanism 1: Self-assessment and Reflection***

Teaching is an individualized profession and teachers are the best evaluators of their skills and their students' needs. Therefore, the ASLM feedback mechanisms are based on teacher

self-assessment and reflection. Self-assessment gives you control over your growth and recognizes that you are a professional who is capable of judging your performance and setting goals (Akram & Zepeda, 2015). Self-assessments are personal formative evaluations of your skills that you will use to set goals and improve your practice. After all, you are the best judge of your performance and you can use that knowledge to set your own goals.

### ***Self-observation Using Video***

This PD encourages you to use a self-recorded video of your lessons for self-observation. The only way to observe your teaching is to see it second hand on video. The recommendations are based on a study at Harvard by Kane et al. (2016) where teachers used self-recorded video lessons in place of in-personal observations by the administration. Your district may not be as open to submitting your videos, but you can certainly use them for self-assessment. Kane et al. (2016) found that 42% of teachers quite often noticed student behaviors that they had not seen before. Many of the teachers said they noticed things they said or did in class that they had not noticed before. Only 9% of the teachers thought the students behaved differently while on camera. The study found that teachers were more critical of their teaching skills after watching their videos and were more likely to report that their teaching had improved during the year than teachers who used standard evaluations.

Before you begin filming yourself, there are a couple of things to keep in mind. First, the purpose of the video is to evaluate your teaching, not your student's behaviors. So, focus your video on yourself, not on the students. In the ASLM classroom, much of your time is spent guiding group collaboration and providing feedback, so you will need to be able to see the classroom as you move around. Second, let your administrator know that you plan to use video recording in your class. Be sure to state that the video is recording you and not the students and it will not be seen by anyone but you. Student safety and security need to be your top priority. The administration may ask you to get parent permission.

### ***The ASLM Self-assessment Questionnaire for Reflection***

In addition to self-observation, there are many other teacher self-assessment tools available. The ASLM Self-assessment Questionnaire was designed specifically for evaluating your classroom using social learning and the ASLM. The tool development was based on the Self-assessment Instrument for Teacher Evaluation -II by Akram and Zepeda (2015) and the Self-efficacy for Student-oriented Teaching (SE-SOT) questionnaire by Kilday, Lenser, and Miller (2016). The SE-SOT was used to capture instructional strategies that focus on student-centered lessons rather than on direct instruction. The ASLM Self-Assessment Questionnaire was created to evaluate the teaching skills needed to improve student achievement in a student-centered classroom environment and is based on the ASLM guidelines for inclusive mathematics and the ASLM

strategies. You can use the questionnaire found inside this lecture, for self-assessment and reflection.

### **ASLM Self-assessment Questionnaire**

*Response Scale: 1(Never) 2(Rarely) 3(Sometimes) 4(Often) 5(Always)*

#### **I. Creating Inclusive Learning Content**

I demonstrate accurate knowledge of my subject matter.

I plan daily objectives related to the required standards and 21st-century skills.

I use authentic place-based learning to create challenging and relevant learning content.

I incorporate technology / social technologies to enhance student learning.

I teach my students at the conceptual (not procedural) level using culturally-relevant strategies to communicate concepts.

I use assessment data to guide planning and relate content to student background knowledge.

#### **II. Creating Inclusive Learning Environments**

I plan student-centered lessons using social learning networks to ensure all students' participation in the learning process.

I focus on student autonomy and provide options for students to present their learning in a variety of ways.

I empower students to seek help from their peers and appropriate materials and technology resources.

I focus on building trusting relationships to create a friendly and supportive classroom environment.

I maintain high behavior expectations and create a classroom setting that minimizes disruptions.

#### **III. Creating Inclusive Learning Processes**

I create opportunities for students to make choices and find resources to support their learning

I monitor and guide students to use various strategies and resources to solve complex problems.

I minimize whole-group direct instruction and base the lessons on the needs and abilities of the students.

I teach and reteach individual students through small group intervention.

I incorporate social technologies (blogs, wikis, social media, shared documents) in my classroom activities.

I utilize the ASLM strategies to help diverse students collaborate, communicate, and contribute to the learning outcomes.

#### **IV: Creating Inclusive Learning Outcomes**

I embed a variety of inclusive formative assessments in my instruction daily.

I plan my method of providing feedback and how I will use feedback to improve student achievement.

I keep an official record of students' learning progress and use it for future planning.

I provide opportunities for students to monitor their performance and set their own learning goals.

I use formative assessment to guide and differentiate instruction and intervention.

## *ASLM Feedback Mechanism 2: Student Feedback*

Using student feedback is common practice in post-secondary education, but it is not widely used in K-12 education. According to Ogbonnaya (2019), 94% of four-year liberal arts colleges use student evaluations as a major source of teacher evaluation. It is thought that K-12 students may not have the maturity to accurately evaluate teacher effectiveness, but many studies have shown that students as young as primary grades can provide reliable evaluations of teaching practices (Ogbonnaya, 2019). While student feedback should not be used as the sole indicator of a teacher's effectiveness, it should be considered as an important and reliable source of data regarding a teacher's performance.

Your students are the direct benefactors of your teaching skills and practices. They are the only people who observe your teaching practices every day. So, they can provide you with valuable information if you are willing to listen to them. Kane et al. (2016) found that when teachers used student survey data, half of the teachers made a specific change in their instructional practice based on the feedback. Mart (2017) suggests you use student evaluations to improve your teaching practices, learning content, and classroom structure because student evaluations provide specific diagnostic feedback that can help you improve your practice.

### *Informal Student Feedback*

Throughout this ASLM training, there has been a focus on using formative assessment feedback to move toward mastery and on empowering your students to have a voice in the classroom. If you allow your students to provide feedback on the learning content, learning environment, learning processes, and learning outcomes, they will know they are an important part of the planning process, and you will have the opportunity to improve your teaching practice. Students provide teachers with informal feedback all the time, but it is often in the form of complaints or misbehaviors, which can be difficult to interpret to pinpoint specific areas of improvement. Be deliberate about asking for honest, but critical feedback. In the beginning, it may be helpful to hold an official class meeting where you explain to the students how to provide useful feedback. Let them know you are open to feedback only if it is honest and critical. It is helpful if the students can provide a suggested alternative, but they may not always be able to. As a bonus, this will translate into their social learning skills. Be clear about the areas of the classroom that are within your control to change and those that you cannot change so they focus their feedback on areas within your control. After your students speak, write down their feedback and thank them for their input so they know you are listening. After you have had several formal meetings for feedback and your students know how to give feedback appropriately, you can move to more informal settings. You can ask for feedback on specific topics or lessons while you are monitoring their progress and giving formative assessments. As long as your students know you listen and value their opinions, they will be willing to provide feedback regularly.

## *Formal Student Surveys*

You can collect student evaluation data both formally and informally. Formal student evaluations can be given once or twice a year in the form of a questionnaire. Your district may use student evaluations as part of your evaluation, but these are given at the end of the year, limiting their ability to help you make adjustments in your classroom when they can positively affect student achievement. As you are implementing the ASLM, it is recommended you give a formal questionnaire after the first quarter and again after the second quarter to gather data on your progress and your students' progress. Before you collect data from the student evaluations, it is important to discuss the evaluations with your students. You want to empower your students and let them know that you value their opinion. As a bonus, this will also help ensure that the students take the evaluations seriously so you get more reliable data. It is a good idea to read the statements to the students ahead of time to make sure they understand them, but be careful not to sway them toward a specific answer. You can use the student survey, below, in the lesson to collect data. This survey is a modification of the teacher self-assessment questionnaire. As always, you can modify it to meet your needs.

### **ASLM Student Survey**

*Response Scale: 1(Never) 2(Rarely) 3(Sometimes) 4(Often) 5(Always)*

#### **I. Subject Matter**

My teacher is an expert on the subject he/she teaches.

I know what I am expected to learn and do every day.

My teacher shows me how our topics are used in the real world.

My teacher explains topics in words I can understand.

My teachers lets me use technology to help me learn.

My teacher checks to see if I understand what he/she is teaching.

#### **II. Classroom Environment**

My teacher lets us work with our classmates and makes sure everyone is working.

My teacher gives us options for our assignments.

My teacher encourages us to get help from our classmates, computer, or books so we understand the subject.

Our classroom is a friendly classroom and the teacher and students encourage each other.

My teacher expects us to control our behavior and not disrupt the class.

#### **III. Classroom Learning**

My teacher lets us make choices about our assignments and projects.

My teacher gives us difficult problems, but helps us or lets us research it to make sure we are successful.

My teacher will explain things to me again if I am confused after the lesson.

My teacher explains things to my group if we need help.

My teacher helps us use social technologies (blogs, wikis, social media, shared documents) in our lessons or assignments.

My teacher makes sure that everyone in the group is working and helping to solve our problems.

#### IV: Improving My Learning

My teacher checks to see if I understand the topic every day.

My teacher tells me how I am doing and how I can improve.

My teacher asks us to set goals for learning.

My teacher gives us options on how to show what we learned.

#### *ASLM Feedback Mechanism 3: Students Formative Assessment Data*

The ASLM focuses on using formative assessment data to guide instruction and improve student achievement. It is recommended that you embed formative assessments into your daily lessons, usually in the form of monitoring student learning and discussing their progress. Student formative assessments can provide valuable information on your teaching practices. As an example, you provide a whole group instruction on the Pythagorean theorem and then you give your students an authentic problem-solving task to complete. As you walk around monitoring and checking their progress through formative assessment, you find that the majority of the students are struggling. This would be an indicator that the students did not understand the lesson and you need to re-teach the lesson using a different approach. A goal of the ASLM is to streamline your teaching, so it is recommended that you use the data you are already collecting to assess your strengths and weaknesses as you assess your students.

#### *ASLM Feedback Mechanism 4: Parent and Community Feedback*

##### *Parent Surveys*

Your students are the direct benefactors of your educational expertise, but parents and community members are indirectly impacted. Akram and Zepeda (2015) found that contact with families was an important indicator of teacher quality. The most effective teachers view their classroom as a partnership between themselves, the students, their families, and the community. It is common knowledge that parent involvement is a key indicator of a student's academic success. The more you can open your classroom to families and the community, the more they will become involved in student education. Just like with your students, you want to empower them by letting them know you are open to their feedback. If parents know you value their opinion, they will be more likely to partner with you in their child's education. Of course, not all families will be involved, but just make it known that they are welcome. You can use the parent survey, below in the lesson, to collect data. This survey is a modification of the student survey. As always, you can modify it to meet your needs.

#### **ASLM Parent Survey**

*Response Scale: 1(Never) 2(Rarely) 3(Sometimes) 4(Often) 5(Always)*

##### I. Subject Matter

My child knows what they are expected to learn or accomplish every day.

My child's teacher relates school work to the real world.

My child uses technology to help with learning.

My child understands the topics that are taught and can explain it to me.

## II. Classroom Environment

My child is engaged in learning the subject matter for the entire class period.

My child is given options on the assignments.

My child knows where to look for help to better understand the subject.

My child enjoys being in this class.

My child's teacher has high behavior expectations for the students.

## III. Classroom Learning

My child is working on challenging assignments but still feels successful.

My child understands what the teacher is teaching.

My child uses social technologies (blogs, wikis, social media, shared documents) for lessons or assignments.

My child likes working in groups with his or her classmates because they all help each other.

## IV: Learning Progress

My child's teacher communicates his or her progress with me.

My child's teacher knows if my child understands what is being taught.

My child is making progress in this subject.

My child's teacher makes me feel like a valuable part of my child's progress and learning.

### *Community/Volunteer Surveys*

In the ASLM, you are encouraged to reach out to experts and community members and invite them to be a part of the classroom. If you invite experts, parents, and community members to help with authentic learning projects, you can collect data from them as well. These volunteers will have a different perspective on teaching than you, your students, or other people in education. Therefore, community feedback can be extremely valuable as you prepare your students for work outside of the classroom. You will want to make sure the parents or community members have spent time in your classroom to get valid feedback. If you want to collect formal feedback from parent volunteers and community members, you can use the community survey attached to this lesson. This survey is a modification of the student and parent surveys. As always, you can modify it to meet your needs.

### **ASLM Community Survey**

*Response Scale: 1(Never) 2(Rarely) 3(Sometimes) 4(Often) 5(Always)*

#### I. Subject Matter

The students know what they are expected to learn or accomplish every day.

The teacher relates the students' schoolwork to the real world.



The students use technology to enhance their learning.

The students understand the topics that are taught and can explain them later.

## II. Classroom Environment

The students are engaged in learning the entire class period.

The students are given options on the assignments.

The students know where to look for help to better understand the subject.

The students seem to enjoy being in this class.

The teacher has high behavior expectations for the students.

## III. Classroom Learning

The students are working on challenging assignments but still feels successful.

The students understand what the teacher is teaching.

The students use social technologies (blogs, wikis, social media, shared documents) in their lessons or assignments.

The teacher makes sure that everyone in the group is working and helping to solve our problems.

## IV: Learning Progress

The teacher checks to see if the students understand the topic every day.

The teacher tells me the students how they are doing and how they can improve.

The students are making progress in this subject.

The teacher makes me feel like a valuable part of the class project and learning.

I would volunteer to be a part of this class/project again.

## **Next Steps: Using the ASLM Feedback Mechanisms to Improve Teaching and Learning**

After you have feedback data from your sources, your goal should be to use the data to modify your practices to meet the needs of your students. The following steps for using the ASLM feedback mechanisms are based on the concept of self-directed learning as described by Akram and Zepeda (2015).

### ***Step 1: Reflect and evaluate your knowledge and skills***

Use your feedback data to look for patterns in the student responses. If a majority of the respondents showed low scores in a specific area, reflect on your strategies and practices regarding that specific topic. Consider ways you can improve in that area to positively impact student achievement. The first recommended course of action would be to talk to your students and get their ideas or suggestions on how you could better meet their needs in that specific area.

### ***Step 2: Set goals and targets for improvement.***

After you have reflected on areas that need improvement, set one or two goals for yourself to make those improvements. These are your personal goals, so make them realistic and attainable. Choose areas where you want to improve. It can be overwhelming to try to focus on too many goals, so choose one or two.

### ***Step 3: Devise an action plan to achieve your goals***

You want to make sure you can achieve your goals, so figure out how you can improve in a specific area. If you need ideas, ask your colleagues about possible ways to improve that specific area. Other teachers will likely have valuable ideas and suggestions to help you attain your goals. Creating a collaborative environment between teachers has also been shown to improve school effectiveness. You could talk to your administrator and get his or her opinion on strategies for improvement. Through this PD you also have access to the course instructors for feedback and assistance at any time who are willing to help you develop an action plan.

### ***Step 4: Implement the action plan***

After you have received recommendations from various stakeholders, it is time to implement your plan. This may involve implementing the suggestions you received from your colleagues, administrator, or PD instructors. You may want to attend additional PD courses that focus on your goal area. Teachers are lifelong learners. As long as you remember that you are working to improve so your students will continue to improve, it will all be worth it!

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