Proposed Masters in Literacy Instruction Final Exam

The Literacy Leadership course is designed to help you be a leader in the area of literacy. One task often required of literacy leaders is to observe the literacy teaching of a colleague, identify strengths and weaknesses, and make specific recommendations to the colleague about both what she/he is already doing that she/he should continue doing as well as what she/he should work to improve (recommendations that may involve you in ongoing modeling for and coaching of the colleague). Your exit exam for the Masters in Literacy Instruction program (an exit exam is required for all University masters programs) will involve you in doing just this. Details of this project are given in the paragraphs below.

First, you need to identify a colleague willing to serve as the focus of this assignment. The colleague needs to:

1. Agree to the data collection described below.
2. Have, based on what you know, at least some areas for improvement in his/her teaching.

You should not promise to provide the colleague with a copy of your entire assignment. The nature of the assignment is such that that may not make sense. You can promise to provide the colleague with some recommendations. You should use a pseudonym for the colleague in your write-up and inform the colleague you will do so.

Second, you need to collect information about the colleague’s teaching of literacy. At a minimum, this should include:

- Observing the colleague multiple times during different parts of the teaching day (e.g., two different sections of the course they teach in middle school or during both reading/language arts and during content area instruction in elementary school), taking two-column notes during the observations.
- Interviewing the colleague following observations, either taking notes during the interview or recording it for later note-taking or transcription.
- Taking two-column notes about the colleague’s classroom environment.
- Collecting written documents, such as lesson plans and assignment sheets, from the colleague.

Third, you need to analyze this information in light of what you have learned from EACH course you have taken in the Masters in Literacy Instruction Program. Specifically, you are looking for strengths and weaknesses – things she/he is already doing that she/he should continue doing as well as things she/he should work to improve.
Fourth, you need to write-up what you have learned into a document with five sections as follows:

1. Introduction to the colleague (basic information such as the teacher's grade level and teaching assignments) – this will provide important context for your readers.
2. Data collection procedures – the procedures you followed to learn about this teacher / the data you collected.
3. Colleague strengths in the teaching of literacy
4. Colleague weaknesses in the teaching of literacy
5. Recommendations for what she/he is already doing that she/he should continue doing as well as what she/he should work to improve

The paper will be evaluated by three people: (1) the professor of TE873 (currently Dr. Patricia Edwards); (2) the Masters in Literacy Instruction Advisor (currently Paul Kurf); and (3) one additional professor from the literacy faculty. Grading will be pass or no pass. Pass/no pass will be determined by considering the degree to which the following questions can be answered affirmatively:

1. Did the student provide the five requested sections of the paper?
2. Did the student collect a considerable amount and range of information about the teacher’s practice?
3. Did the student analyze the information thoroughly and thoughtfully?
4. Do the recommendations follow from the analysis?
5. Does the paper reflect content of EACH course within the student’s Masters in Literacy Instruction program? For example, was both the writing and reading pedagogy examined? Was the teacher’s teaching examined with respect to issues of diversity? Was the teacher’s work with struggling readers and writers examined? Was the teacher’s work with children's or adolescent literature examined? And so on. . .

If the paper is deemed a no pass, you will be given an opportunity to revise...