

Going into the Circle: A Process for Performance Review

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This performance review process grew out of a series of work groups and sessions by SHAPE staff and coordinators. The underlying tenets of the process are that review should be self-directed and self-fulfilling, and it should involve feedback from multiple sources. The SHAPE process for performance review has been implemented for instructors, counselors, paraprofessionals and coordinators; for site teams; and for the program as a whole. The process shared here is the process for individuals and for site teams.

To be an informative and productive review, the *Going into the Circle* review process identifies the individual or individual team as the center of a circle that receives feedback from multiple sources to guide the individual to a picture of his/her performance that can be shared with others (see Figure A).

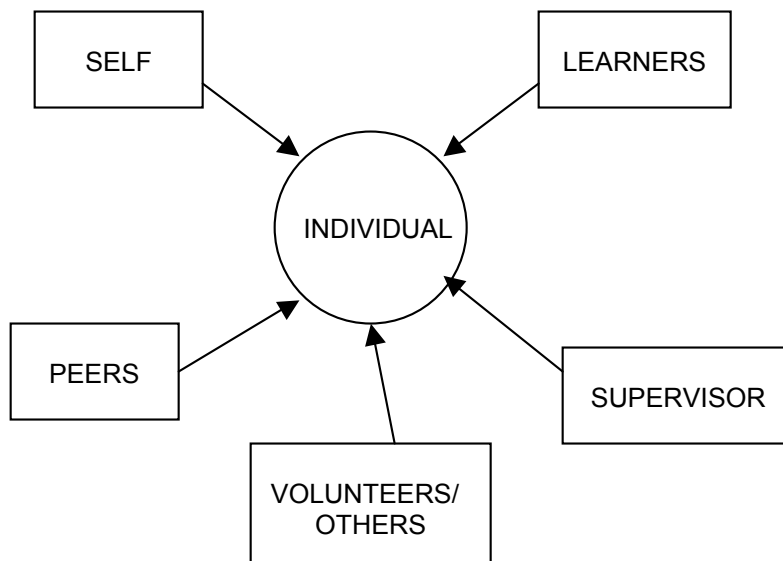


Figure A

The process itself is also circular (see Figure B). The very first time the process is begun, the individual or team enters by identifying the questions that the individual is trying to answer. These questions arise from staff development plans, job descriptions, prior reviews and observations, new program mandates and general interest. Once the questions are known, the data collection process is begun. Data is collected as the individual or team goes about its work. Anecdotes, samples, questionnaires, surveys and other material are gathered. Then after a pre-selected interval (which can vary among staff and teams), the individual or team review the material and draw conclusions about performance. The next

step is to share this with the supervisor (or another person or group), and then finalize conclusions, determine next steps and proceed to a new set of questions.

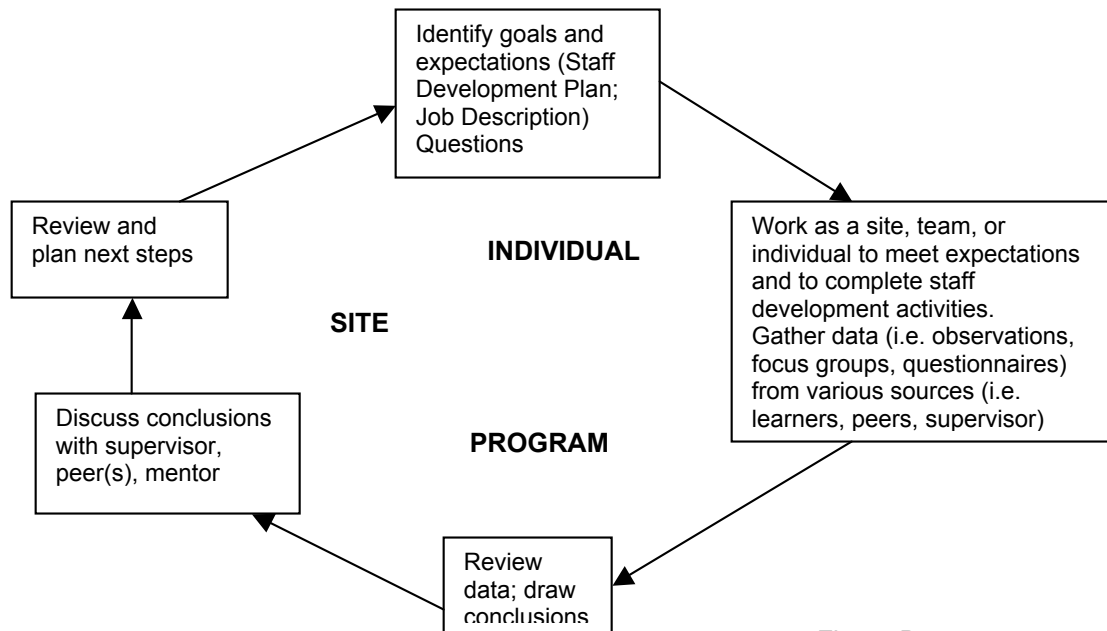


Figure B

The site review process follows the path in Figure B. Like individuals, a site also needs a “job description.” A sample, called a “Site Expectations Description,” follows this article.

The outcomes of a site review will...

- Encourage sites to celebrate and reinforce their accomplishments.
- Encourage innovations, insights and inspirations.
- Provide a framework for checking on new or revised processes, plans, or procedures.
- Promote teamwork that is beneficial and supportive for team members.
- Promote teamwork that facilitates learner success.
- Strengthen the site’s focus on our mission, our learner, and program goals.
- Involve learners as active members of their learning community.
- Provide information to the SHAPE program about changes and trends.
- Tie sites together to continue the vision of SHAPE as a unified whole.
- Encourage the continuing and improving quality of service to learners.

The individual review planning process follows the same steps as the site review process. The outcomes of the Individual Review will be...

- Recognition of the strengths and talents of the individual
- Identification of areas for growth
- Enhanced job performance
- Improved learning experiences for learners.

Each employee has a yearly evaluation/review with a supervisor. This evaluation could be scheduled irrespective of where an individual is in his/her review process model. Individuals are reviewed on their

progress with their staff development plan and the review process model, and on how well they meet the expectations of their job descriptions.

During the review the individual and supervisor...

- Discuss progress on the staff development plan.
- Discuss progress through the review process model.
- Share information collected from learners, peers, observations and materials.
- Discuss how well the individual met the expectations of each area of the job description.
- Draw conclusions about strengths and growth areas.
- Come up with ideas for working on growth areas.
- Discuss ideas for future staff development goals.

The supervisor and the individual jointly write a narrative description of the conclusions about strengths, growth areas and future goals. The final version is placed in the individual's permanent employment file.

Classroom observations may or may not be a part of the review discussion, but all instructors are observed on a regular pattern. Prior to the observation, the individual completes the Pre-Observation Form that asks for the following information:

- Objectives or main focus of the lesson.
- Any areas that the individual wants feedback on from the observer.
- Any background information that will assist the observer in understanding the learners and/or lesson

The observer completes a comment sheet that addresses the following areas:

Organization

- Punctuality and preparedness
- Effective use of class time
- General management of learning environment

Communication

- Degree of instructor talk vs. learner talk
- Opportunities for learners to meaningfully interact

Curriculum and Instruction

- Effective utilization of class materials
- Variety of learning opportunities (to accommodate different styles)
- Communicative instruction (promote development of reading, writing, listening, and speaking)

The process has worked smoothly. After each observation, the supervisor and instructor meet to discuss the observation only. Detailed notes are kept by the supervisor and used as reference at later observations or for the review. The review may be held at the same time as the observation follow-up conversation, but it often is not. Sometimes months separate the two events with it possible for the review to precede the observation. The written summary of the review conference is drafted by the supervisor and sent to the individual for comment. The document goes back and forth until both parties are comfortable with it and it is then sent to the employee's permanent human resources file.

Site reviews are not written up. The exercise in reviewing the site and preparing for the review has focused sites on making decisions about how to best serve learners according to a series of program-wide expectations.

The following sample information sheets and forms follow this article:

- Site Expectations Description
- Yearly Supervisor Review
- Supervisor Observation
- Pre-Observation Form
- Observation Comment Form

Site Expectations Description

1) **A site has processes to facilitate learner success.**

Expectations are met if the following elements are in place and are operating effectively:

- Retention Plan
- Site Orientation Process
- Assessment Process
- Learning Plan Development and Review Process
- Learner Mobility Plan
- Emergency Procedures
- Communications Plan

2) **A site follows SHAPE curriculum guidelines and expectations.**

Expectations are met if...

- Learners have access to SHAPE curriculum that is appropriate to the needs of learners at the site.
- Curriculum is modified or adapted as needed and modifications and adaptations follow curriculum adaptation guidelines.
- The schedule of classes allows learners to achieve their goals in a timely fashion.
- The resources that are available on the site are accessible to the learners.

3) **A site has an atmosphere that is conducive to learning.**

Expectations are met if...

- A site is aware of the physical and emotional factors that contribute to successful learning.
- A site makes corrections to those factors that are within its control and communications with responsible parties those that are not.

(Note: Physical and emotional factors that can contribute to a conducive learning environment include comfort, security, physical space, lighting, ventilation, and others. Many of these factors are not within a site's ability to control or correct; however, a site can identify a factor that impedes learning and communicate that concern to parties that are responsible for responding to those concerns.)

4) **A site has a team structure and process.**

Expectations are met if...

- The team meets regularly.
- The team is inclusive of all staff members.
- The team respectively responds to the concerns and needs of its members.

5) **A site initiates and maintains relationships that are needed with outside agencies, schools and groups.**

Expectations are met if...

- Contacts with agencies, schools, and groups, as necessary for learner success, are current and respectful.

Yearly Supervisor Review

Each employee will have a yearly evaluation/review with a supervisor. This evaluation could be scheduled irrespective of where an individual is in his/her review process model.

Outcomes of the Supervisor Review:

- Recognition of the strengths and talents of the individual
- Identification of areas for growth
- Enhanced job performance
- Improved learning experiences for learners

What are you reviewed on?

- Your progress with your staff development plan and progress through the review process model.
- How you meet the expectations of your job description.

What do you do to prepare for your review?

- Gather information
 - Information collected could take the following forms:
 - Feedback from learners
 - Feedback from observations
 - Feedback from peers
 - Samples of lesson plans and learning activities that showcase growth or excellence
 - Samples of materials, notes, forms, etc. that show how the elements of the job description are being met

What will we do at the review?

- Discuss progress on staff development plan.
- Discuss progress through review process model.
- Share information collected from learners, peers, observations and materials.
- Discuss how well you met the expectations of each area of the job description.
- Draw conclusions about strengths and growth areas.
- Come up with ideas for working on growth areas.
- Discuss ideas for future staff development goals.

Final "Product":

- A narrative description of the conclusions about strengths, growth areas and future goals, jointly written by the supervisor and individual.

Supervisor's Observation

How often are instructors/counselors observed?

- Newly hired instructors will be observed twice within the first year.
 - First observation within first three months of employment.
 - Second observation within first twelve months of employment.
- All instructors will be observed once every two years.

When do observations take place?

- Observations will be scheduled at a time agreed upon by the instructor/counselor and the supervisor. There will be no surprise or drop in observations.

What is the observation process?

- Prior to the observation, the supervisor will ask the instructor/counselor to complete the Pre-Observation Form that asks for the following information:
 - Objective or main focus of the lesson
 - Any areas that the instructor/counselor wants feedback on from the observer
 - Any background information that will assist the observer understand the learners and/or lesson
- At the observation, the supervisor will take notes and complete a comment sheet that addresses the following areas:
 - Organization
 - Punctuality and preparedness
 - Effective use of class time
 - General management of learning environment
 - Communication
 - Degree of instructor talk vs. learner talk
 - Opportunities for learners to meaningfully interact
 - Curriculum and Instruction
 - Effective utilization of class materials
 - Variety of learning opportunities (to accommodate different styles)
 - Communicative instruction (promote development of reading, writing, listening and speaking)
- After the observation, the supervisor and instructor/counselor will meet to discuss the observation using the supervisor's notes from the comment sheet.

Note: The instructor has the choice as to whether or not to include the comments from the observation in his/her yearly review. If the instructor is not scheduled for an observation during the year, then an instructor may choose comments from a previous year's observation in the review.

Classroom Pre-Observation Information

(Please complete and return to your supervisor prior to observation.)

Instructor: _____

Class Name: _____

Observation Details:

Date: _____

Start and End Times: _____

Location: _____

Lesson Focus (ideas to be presented, objectives of lesson, main activity or activities, etc.)

Expectations of the Observation (what you would like to gain from the observation, what you would like me to specifically provide feedback on, etc.)

Background information (i.e. description of learners, explanation of what has been happening prior to this class)

Observation Notes and Comments:

Instructor: _____

Date of Observation: _____

Class Observed: _____

Observer: _____

Organization (punctuality and preparedness, effective use of class time, general management of learning environment)

Communication (degree of instructor talk vs. learner talk, opportunities for learners to meaningfully interact)

Curriculum and Instruction (effective utilization of class materials, variety of learning opportunities, communicative instruction)