

EPISODE 290

# Keeping Your Options Open With Quality Documentation



INSTRUCTIONAL  
LEADERSHIP SHOW



# Essential Question



How can I document teacher practice so I have the evidence I need, if I don't know how some evaluations will turn out?

# Why Leaders Lose



School leaders get overruled in high-stakes teacher evaluations and HR situations when they don't have quality documentation.

# Keep Your Options Open



- Sufficient improvement may occur
- The teacher may depart
- The situation may worsen
- Other concerns may become your top priority
- You may want to protect the relationship
- Your reputation can only sustain so much damage



# Pick Your Battles

- Focus on the right issues
- Focus on the right people
- Limit simultaneous actions



# Win Every Battle You Fight

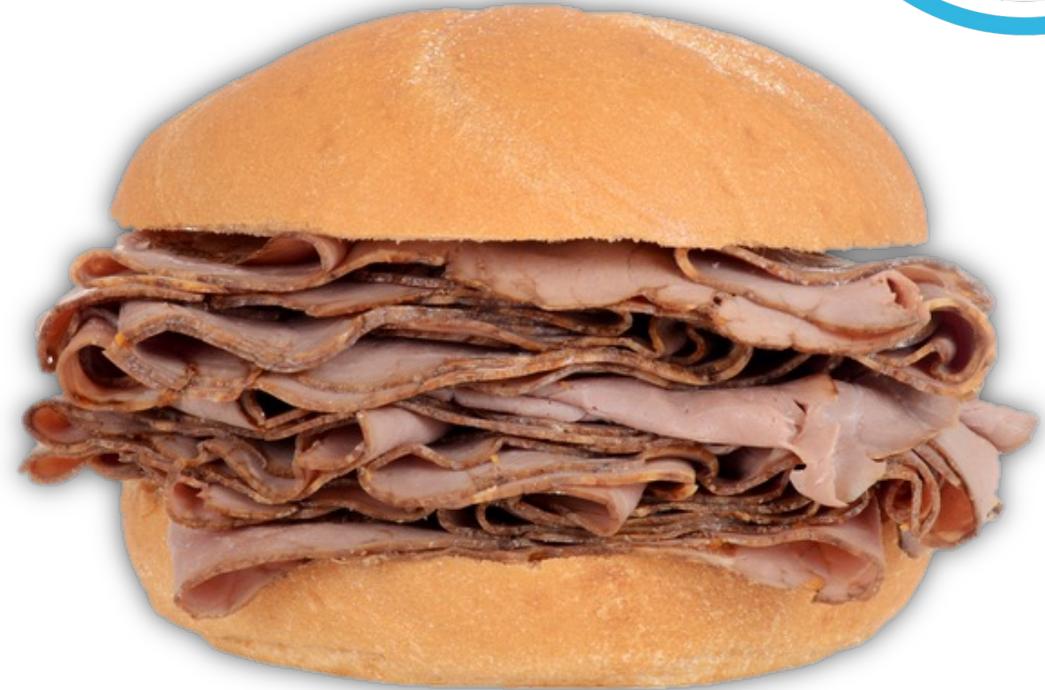
- Collect enough evidence
- Cross every  $t$  and dot every  $i$
- Dedicate the time it takes



# How The “Feedback Sandwich” Undermines Documentation



- Compliment
- Suggestion
- Compliment



# How The “Feedback Sandwich” Undermines Documentation



- Compliments are evidence in the teacher's favor *in the admin's own words*
- Suggestions imply an upper limit on concerns
- Implemented suggestions provide evidence of improved practice

# Suggestions & Upper Limit



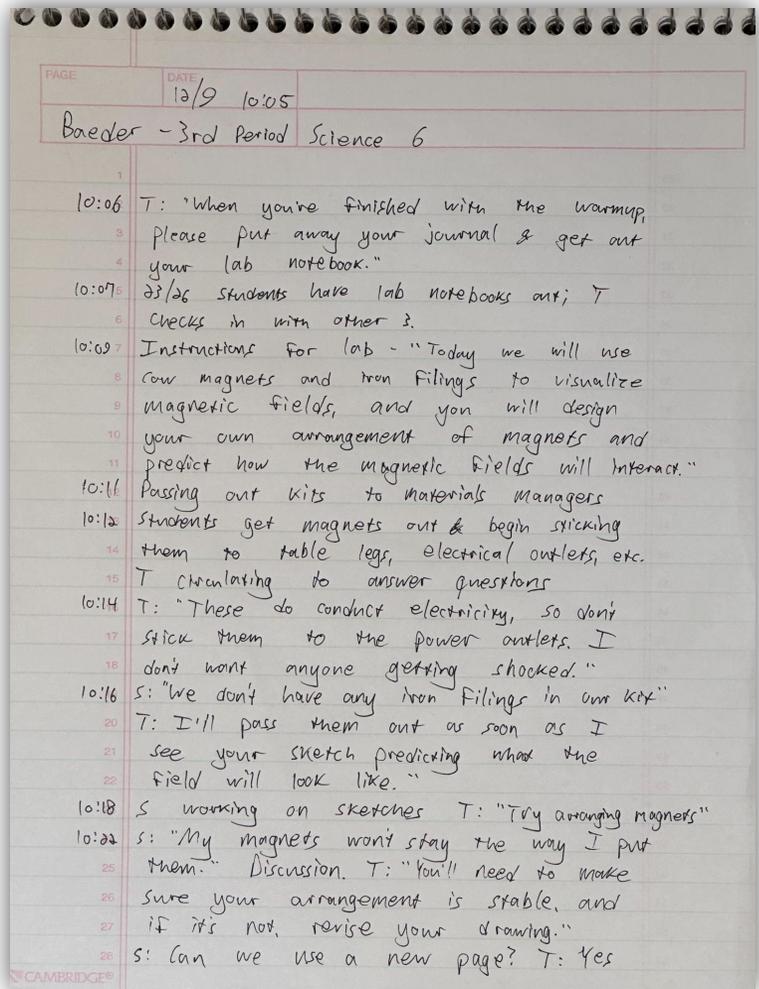
- The suggestions for improvement you make imply an upper limit on your concerns, because it's reasonable to assume you would raise the most serious issues in your feedback
- For example, if you make suggestions on how to conduct a warm-up activity, but have serious overall concerns about classroom management...
- Only the documented concerns will carry weight

# The Recap Email



- "As I mentioned..."
- "Per our conversation..."
- "It was great to talk about how you..."
- "Thank you for sharing with me how..."
- "Let me know how it goes as you..."
- "Keep me posted on how..."

# Then What Do I Put In Writing?



Low-inference notes



# Adequate Documentation



- Low-inference notes with timestamps
- Every walkthrough + formal observation
- Share with the teacher immediately
- Discuss with the teacher
- Avoid other written feedback



Here is the transcription of the text from the photo:



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PAGE DATE 10/9 10:05

Baeder - 3rd Period Science 6

10:06 T: "When you're finished with the warmup, please put away your journal & get out your (lab notebook)."

10:07 3/06 students have lab notebooks out; T checks in with other 3.

10:09 Instructions for lab - "Today we will use cow magnets and iron filings to visualize magnetic fields, and you will design your own arrangement of magnets and predict how the magnetic fields will interact."

10:10 Passing out kits to Materials Managers

10:13 Students get magnets out & begin sticking them to table edge, electrical outlets, etc.

10:14 T counseling to answer questions.

T: "These do conduct electricity, so don't stick them to the power outlets. I don't want anyone getting shocked."

10:16 S: "We don't have any iron filings in our kit."

T: I'll pass them out as soon as I see your sketch predicting what the field will look like."

10:18 S working on sketches T: "Try arranging magnets"

10:20 S: "My magnets won't stay the way I put them." Discussion. T: "You'll need to make sure your arrangement is stable, and if it's not, revise your drawing."

S: "Can we use a new page?" T: "Yes"

# PrincipalCenter.com/demo