

# Tips On Writing The Reflective Response

## Create a Positive and Professional Tone

- ❖ Be positive, brief, concise, accurate, professional, crisp, and clear. You are writing for a neutral third party, not the evaluator.
- ❖ Reinforce any positive comment from the observation. If need be, draw a positive implication from the evaluator's written or spoken remarks. Then incorporate it into your response.
- ❖ When a strength has been noted, embellish it. (*"I am pleased that you have recognized the effectiveness of my organizational skills. Thank you."*)
- ❖ Resist being negative or micro-focused on each detail:
  - Neutralize all items which appear negative.
  - Give reasons for performance
  - Give rationale for what has been criticized
  - Answer ANY item labeled as: *"ineffective", "failure to do", "lack of", "in need of", "should/could have", "suggest", "noticed" or "appeared"*
- ❖ Equalize the results. Stress preparation, motivation, curriculum, lesson flow. **Remember**, a visitor does not know what has happened before their visit or what happens after their visit.
- ❖ Focus on objectives, procedures, attainment. Be clear in directions assignments, and closing of lessons.
- ❖ Tighten up your response. Check your grammar, spelling, and punctuation scrupulously.
- ❖ **NEVER**, under any circumstance, send a response without having a trusted colleague or an Association official check it for you.
- ❖ Keep it short and simple. One page or less. This means that you cannot respond to each and every citation. Focus on the big picture.
- ❖ Long responses tend to portray you as argumentative, aid in making the administration's case against you, are too personal and less objective in appearance than what is required, and potentially raise new issues upon which the evaluator may attack you.

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## Use of Words and Terms

- ❖ Don't indulge in personal characterization of the evaluator, even if accurate. Instead, write your response skillfully enough so that a neutral third party reading the evaluation report and your response two years later will conclude that the evaluator did not have a true picture of you and your abilities.
- ❖ Your response should look more thoughtful and professional than the evaluation report. A neutral third party examining the rebuttal should conclude that you are knowledgeable, professional, calm, and competent.
- ❖ Use words like *"inaccurate"* , *"misjudged"* , *"misunderstood"* , *"error"* , *"misread"* , *"out of context"* , etc. when referring to the evaluation. As an example, indicate you are *"disappointed that the evaluator didn't have the opportunity to confer with you before and/or after the evaluation"*; or that, you are *"disappointed that he/she wasn't able to observe (something)"* , or that he/she *"didn't have an opportunity for (whatever)"*.

### **YOUR BEST DEFENSE IS A GOOD OFFENSE!**

That is demonstrating both actively seeking improvement and actual classroom performance improvement.