



Observation Support

OBSERVATION "TIPS" AND SUPPORT
December 2022

Observation "Look-fors"



What are "look-fors"?

- "Look-fors" are specific indicators of effective teaching and learning that can be observed during a classroom visit.
- They usually fall into three categories: teaching behaviors, student engagement, or learning environment.

Why are they important?

- Identifying "look-fors" helps you focus your observations and provides a common language for discussing instruction with teachers.
- In addition, having a shared understanding of what effective instruction looks like makes it easier to provide targeted feedback that leads to improved student outcomes.

How Many?

- Not a check list, but a guide to frame observation.
- Less is more. 2-3 areas will help with concrete feedback and targeted next steps.

What to Look for Observation Guides for English Language Arts, Mathematics, and Science, Technology/Engineering can be found in Teams folder

Observation "Look-fors"



Use of time

- Transition from one activity to another
- time spent with individual students or small groups
- time spent giving lesson or class started

Strategic questioning

- connect to lesson target or objective
- assess understanding
- stretch student thinking beyond a yes or no answer

Pacing

- is the pace too fast or too slow
- time spent on each lesson component

Clarity of presentation

- modeling
- clarifying
- providing clear directions

Observation "Look-fors"



Student movement

- Positive - quick transitioning and then back on task
- Negative getting out of seat frequently

Differentiation

- Scaffolding of lessons to meet diverse student needs

Checking for understanding

- Monitoring student progress during independent work pause at appropriate points in lesson to check for understanding

Student engagement

- Volunteering responses and on tasks
- Speaking out while off task

Participation strategies

- Use cold call to ensure variety of student voices
- Use of discussion protocols
- Opportunities for partners or small groups to collaborate



CEI

The **Claim**: A generalization about an aspect of an educator's practice

The **Evidence**: Specific illustrations and/or examples that support the generalization

The **Impact**: A description of the impact that aspect of practice has on student learning

Judgment: A conclusion about how well the educator's practice is meeting a standard of proficient practice

Claim



Claim is a statement that the teacher performs a certain teaching skill or carries out a certain pattern in his or her instruction. The claim should align with our Focus Indicators. The Focus Indicators are a subset of Indicators from the Model Classroom Teacher Rubric that represent high-leverage practices for supporting students' academic and social-emotional needs and promoting an ant-racist, culturally responsive school environment

Positive Claim Sample:

Mr/Mrs... makes a point of coming back to students who are confused.

Mr/Mrs...communicated standards for quality and quantity of work in several ways.

Mr/Mrs...used a wide variety of attention moves to keep students focused on the work

Mr/Mrs...establish clear routines for the beginning of class sends

Negative Claim Sample:

Mr/Mrs... send negative expectation messages when he does not allow appropriate wait time.

Mr/Mrs... allows 12 out of 28 students to do all the responding

Evidence

Impact



Evidence is a quote or literal description of something said or done during the lesson.

Impact is a statement of what the behavior accomplished or intended to accomplish. It is stating what was significant about the lesson and its effect on students.

Sample impact statements

- This saved time and kept students productively involved and carrying out the lesson objectives.
- The activator allowed the students to share prior knowledge and gave the teacher valuable information to adjust the lesson.
- Because the students could choose their activities, they were able to participate in the planning of their learning experiences and increase their own ownership and learning as a result.
- Students had an opportunity to make choices based on their individual interests.
- **As a result**, the two students stopped talking



Examples

Without Judgement or Recommendations

Mr. A consistently creates conditions that help all students take risks and sustain their efforts with academic work. (Claim)

(Evidence)

- An effort rubric was used during the lesson.
- Students completed self-assessment sheets, and the teacher followed up with individual conferencing.
- Mr. J used the appropriate wait time to allow students to think.
- The teacher responded to students' answers by sending positive messages such as "I like that thinking; it shows another view."
- Students used language like "I'm wondering...." and "I am not clear about..."

As a result, his students made greater than predicted academic gains throughout the lesson due to effort and collaboration. (Impact)

Mrs. W communicated and reinforced clear standards for the work of collaborative groups. (Claim)

(Evidence)

- The teacher posted criteria for cooperative groups poster in the front of the room, which was a solid visual to support expectations.
- It took under 2 minutes for students to gather materials, head to their lab tables, and get to work.
- Students frequently asked questions of each other rather than assuming they were on track. For example, one student asked, "What is this vehicle supposed to do?" Another student told her team, "We need to check this data."
- No student worked alone, and the groups reflected a cross-section of learners by gender, race, and level of proficiency.

As a result, all groups completed the lab and submitted their standard lab report and data poster according to the guidelines and objectives for the lesson. (Impact)

Mr. J did not take the basic steps to ensure a smooth and orderly lesson flow. (Claim)

(Evidence)

- Materials had yet to be prepared and set up at the beginning of class. For example, the calculators were in the closets, and the rulers were not out of the shipping box.
- There was no planned activity for the students who finished early. The teacher said, "OK, students, just be patient until your classmates are done. You can talk quietly with a neighbor."
- Additional materials was not planned for. It was stated, "I don't have any more sheets; go see if the office will let you make a copy."

As a result, most students spent at least 17 minutes of the 42 minutes doing things that were not productive or connected to the learning goal. (Impact)

Recommendation /Commendation



Recommendation/Commendation

A **recommendation** is advising for improvement, while **commendation** is the act of commending, praising, or favorable representation in words for guidance.

Just like CEI, your recommendations should be rooted in the Focus Indicators to ensure alignment.

Making Your Feedback Specific and Actionable

- Focus more on factual points than subjective opinions. Saying "I don't like it" is less helpful than stating the specific things you don't like.
- Break your feedback into key points instead of giving it as one big lump.
- Give 1-2 specific examples of each point. Only highlight some examples. The intention here is to (a) make the person aware of things they may be oblivious to and (b) illustrate what you mean.
- The more specific your feedback, the more actionable it is for the one receiving it.
- Any specific feedback that doesn't target the person is easier to understand and act upon.

Recommendation /Commendation



Recommendation/Commendation

Give Improvement Recommendations

- Give recommendations on what the person can do to improve, so they have a clear idea of what you have in mind and get a strong call to action.
- With your recommendations, (a) be specific with your suggestions, and (b) briefly explain the rationale behind the recommendation. Also, try to limit examples to one per point.
- Provide feedback within what you know as fact about the person and the content.
- A change in practice is less likely to happen if we make assumptions.

Recommendation /Commendation



Recommendation/Commendation

Salute Their Efforts

Don't underestimate the power of genuine praise. Tangible recognition is often cherished and kept on hand to get teachers through the rough days.

Celebrate Their Accomplishments

Teachers do a lot both in and out of the classroom. Also, with new learning, they take instructional risks. You might be surprised just how excited your teacher is to give praise for taking a risk.

Recommendation /Commendation



Recommendation/Commendation

Commendation Statements

"You made (insert what you observed) easy to understand."

A teacher's main goal is to teach. So, if they simplified something that was difficult for your kid to understand, let them know.

"You have created a safe and welcoming learning environment by (insert what you observed)."

Good teachers want to see their students succeed and invest hours preparing. So, tell them you can see their effort and that it doesn't go unappreciated.

"You're making an impact by (insert what you observed) "

Let your teacher know how much value they add to the students learning and why.



Here to help
