Teacher _____ Date _____

Writing Workshop Observation Tool
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Check all that apply.

	Best Practices	Practices to Avoid	Comments/Notes
ENVIRONMENT/ INDEPENDENCE	☐Students independently gather quickly at designated spot with needed materials. ☐Students have ample time to work independently without interruption. (15-25 min) ☐Writing Center contains resources, tools, and writing materials that can be independently accessed by students. ☐Students do not wait for the teacher to help them. They know how to keep going. (start a new piece, reread an old piece)	☐An excessive amount of time (more than 2 min.) is used for students to gather and get materials. ☐Students do not work independently and need help to get started or keep going. ☐Center is lacking necessary supplies or students are not allowed to use materials without permission. ☐Students wait for help (with spelling, what to do next, or is-this-good check).	
MINI LESSON	☐Teacher teaches well paced **(5-10 min)** mini-lessons and includes all parts of the mini-lesson **(connect, teach, engage, link)**. ☐Teacher teaches something that is useful/applicable to all students. ☐Teacher encourages talk only during the active engagement part of the lesson. ☐Students stay on topic when they talk and are asked to process, think about, or try something (1-3 min).	☐Parts of mini-lesson are missing. ☐Teacher teaches something that is only useful for a handful of students. ☐Teacher asks too many questions and encourages individual students to talk and give their feedback or ask questions.	
WORKTIME/ CONFERRING	☐Teacher talks individually to students and teaches something based on what the student says or is currently writing. ☐Teacher uses the research, decide, teach, check in model as s/he confers. ☐Each conference is about 5 minutes. ☐The teacher confers (has a teaching chat) with 2-3 students per work time.	☐No conferring occurs. ☐Teacher confers only with the struggling writers. ☐Teacher tells the students what to do (add more here) so the conference becomes a matter of the teacher giving directions and the student following what the teacher says.	

	☐The teacher begins the conference by helping the student talk about his/her writing. (Usually this research is in the form of a question.) ☐Teacher teaches editing skills, but most conferences are not about editing. They are about getting an idea, organization, word choice, and elaboration. ☐The work time is between 15-25 min. All students are writing for this amount of time. ☐Teacher has variety of types of share sessions, and all students are engaged as either speakers or listeners.	☐The work time is too short (less than 15 min) or students are finished. Therefore, they are doing nothing, talking with a friend, reading, or working on other work from another subject.	
UNITS	☐Teacher has taught students many ways to generate topic ideas. ☐Students publish at least 5-10 times/year. ☐Teacher reads aloud during read aloud time (5x a week and not in workshop time) and shows students what she notices about how the text is written (3x a week). ☐Students use mentor texts as they write.	☐Teacher selects topics for students. ☐Teacher gives students prompts. Therefore, all students are writing on the same subject. ☐Students publish fewer than 5 times per year. ☐Teacher rarely uses mentor texts and does not attempt to connect read aloud to writing workshop. ☐Students do not use mentor texts.	
PLANNING	☐Teacher plans, reads, and decides on lessons in advance. ☐Teacher discusses how the unit is going with other teachers and talks about what students know how to do and do not yet know how to do.	☐Teacher does not have clear and specific goals for the unit. ☐Teacher reads the lesson for the first time as s/he is giving it. ☐Teacher can only discuss what is not going well or does not have a sense of what the students know.	
ASSESSMENT	☐Teacher uses a variety of methods of assessment throughout the unit (conference notes, writing samples, reflections) ☐Assessment reflects goals of unit and students are aware of goals/assessment throughout unit.	☐Teacher uses few methods of assessment. ☐Assessment is not linked to the goals of the unit.	