

CONDUCTING MEANINGFUL CLASSROOM OBSERVATIONS

AEA 2018 — Speaking Truth to Power



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AGENDA

- **The Power of Classroom Observations**
- **Why Evaluators Can Help**
- **Strategies for Success**
- **Group Discussion & Questions**

Goal: To offer evaluators practical skills that will improve their ability to conduct classroom observations and provide truthful, actionable results to school districts

The Power of Classroom Observations

Vertical
Alignment of
Content

Instructional Style

Instructional
Strategies

Teacher Professional
Development Needs

School Climate

Resources

Teacher Professional
Development Effectiveness

Staffing
Needs

Pedagogical
Strategies

Classroom
Culture

Quality of Instruction

Teacher-Child Relationships





Why Evaluators Can Help



Strategies for Success

- 1 Know your context
- 2 Know your content
- 3 Use tools to match
- 4 Communicate effectively
- 5 Provide actionable results



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Meet with key district to answer the following questions:

What is the purpose of the observations?

How will observation results be used?

Who is being observed? How do they feel about it?

What are the district beliefs about what's happening in classrooms?

What does the district want to see happening in classrooms?

Review current best practices in the related education context

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With adequate content knowledge the observer can:

Assess accuracy of content being taught

Identify potential student or teacher misconceptions

Understand alternative solutions and models

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Choose or create observation tools that align to the context, content, and district goals

Some available protocols:

Horizon Research Classroom Observation Protocol

The Reformed Teaching Observation Protocol

NYS Pre-K Program Quality Assurance Protocol

Classroom Assessment Scoring System (CLASS)

Danielson Framework for Teaching (FFT)

Early Childhood Environment Rating Scale-Revised (ECERS-R)

Protocol for Language Arts Teaching Observation (PLATO)

Sample CSD MSP Teacher Observation Rubric-Math, 2018-2019

Teacher Information

Observation Date:	Time:
Teacher:	School:
Observer:	Grade Level(s):
Lesson Goal:	

Observation Ratings

Indicator	Not at All	Somewhat	Moderately	To a Great Extent	N/A
The lesson included a clear mathematical task.	0	1	2	3	N/A
Adequate scaffolding was provided to students as needed.	0	1	2	3	N/A
Students were provided with sufficient time (not too little, not too much) to explore.	0	1	2	3	N/A
Frequent conceptual connections were made by the teacher.	0	1	2	3	N/A
Teacher questioning is likely to help the teacher assess student understanding.	0	1	2	3	N/A
Teacher questioning is likely to help the teacher advance student understanding.	0	1	2	3	N/A
Teacher questioning moved beyond gathering information to probe thinking and require explanation and justification.	0	1	2	3	N/A
The design of the lesson encouraged a collaborative approach to learning among the students.	0	1	2	3	N/A
Students were intellectually engaged with important ideas relevant to the focus of the lesson.	0	1	2	3	N/A
Active participation of all was encouraged and valued.	0	1	2	3	N/A
Students were encouraged to share ideas, clarify understandings, and develop convincing arguments.	0	1	2	3	N/A
Students worked together to complete the mathematical task.	0	1	2	3	N/A
Students were provided with sufficient time (not too little, not too much) for reflection.	0	1	2	3	N/A

Rate the overall demand of the mathematical task observed.

Lower-Level Demands		Higher-Level Demands	
Memorization	Procedures Without Connections	Procedures with Connections	Doing Mathematics
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Memorizing or reproducing previously learned facts, rules, formulas, or definitions Cannot be solved using procedures because a procedure does not exist or timeframe is too short to complete a procedure Exact reproduction of previously seen material and what is to be reproduced is clearly and directly stated No connection to the concepts or meaning that underlie the facts, rules, formulas, or definitions being learned or reproduced 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Algorithmic. Use of the procedure is specifically called for or is evident from prior instruction, experience, or placement of the task Require limited cognitive demand for successful completion; little ambiguity exists about what needs to be done and how to do it Focused on producing correct answers instead of on developing mathematical understanding Require no explanations or explanations that focus solely on describing the procedure that was used 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Focus students' attention on the use of procedures for the purpose of developing deeper levels of understanding mathematical concepts and ideas Suggest explicitly or implicitly pathways to follow that are broad general procedures that have close connections to underlying conceptual ideas as opposed to narrow algorithms that are opaque with respect to underlying concepts Usually represented in multiple ways (models, manipulatives) Require some degree of cognitive effort; procedures may be followed, but cannot be followed mindlessly Students need to engage with some conceptual ideas to complete the task successfully 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Require complex and nonalgorithmic thinking—a predictable, well-rehearsed approach or pathway is not explicitly suggested Require students to explore and understand the nature of mathematical concepts, processes, or relationships Demand self-monitoring or self-regulation of one's own cognitive processes Require students to access relevant knowledge and experiences and make appropriate use of them in working through the task Require students to analyze the task and actively examine task constraints that may limit possible solution strategies and solutions Require considerable cognitive effort and may involve some level of anxiety for the student because of the unpredictable nature of the solution process required
1	2	3	4

Lesson Reflection

Date of Reflection: _____

Observer Comments	Teacher Comments

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Some tips:

Be transparent with administrators and teachers

Provide the tool in advance

Provide clear language to teachers stating that observation results will not be used to evaluate teacher performance

Provide information to the teaching union and ensure that the union is on board

Collaborate with district staff to schedule observations

Treat teachers with respect during observations

Remain friendly, but neutral. Offer to answer questions before and after the observation

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Provide a summary of findings:

Include aggregate results of rubric/Likert items

Include a narrative summary with highlights

Include information related to district needs/goals

Provide actionable recommendations, as appropriate

Discuss the results with district staff:

Prepare for a full and open discussion

Remind the district of the goals of the results

Frame results as an opportunity for growth

Discuss ideas for action

When the results of classroom observations are used as an information gathering tool instead of as a tool to measure teacher performance, the truth of what happens in classrooms can support teachers instead of impugn them!



Group Discussion & Questions



THANK YOU!

REACH ME HERE:



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