



CLASSROOM OBSERVATION TOOL FOR ENGLISH LANGUAGE ACQUISITION



Standards-in-Action 2.0

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This tool provides a picture of ideal teaching and learning practices in a standards-based classroom. It includes what you can expect to see in a classroom that is effectively implementing the relevant standards in a daily lesson. It is designed as a professional development tool for instructors, those who support instructors, and others working to implement standards. It is not designed for use in evaluation of instructors.

Directions:

Under each Core Action, mark the indicators with either a “Y” (for “Yes, it is evident”) or an “N” (for “No, it is not evident”). However, if an indicator is not evident because it is not applicable in that particular observed lesson, then mark it as “N/A.” For example, the lesson may be implemented over a number of days and you are only observing a portion of the lesson for one day. Another example might be that you only observed the mid-to-final portion of the lesson and you did not observe some of the introductory activities. In both examples, some indicators might be marked “N/A.”

Use the section entitled “Evidence observed” for each Core Action to make notes about what is seen and heard to support findings. The process for observing effective teaching and learning practices is not linear. In many cases, determining whether certain Core Actions and indicators are evident will not become apparent until the lesson is over. Others will be evident early in the lesson. It is fine to take detailed notes on a separate paper and review the notes after the lesson to determine the presence of an indicator.

Core Action 1. Lesson content is rigorous and relevant for the level defined by the state-adopted standards.

Core Action 2. Lesson activities prepare students to access the content of the lesson.

Core Action 3. Lesson activities productively engage students in understanding the content.

Core Action 4. Lesson activities solidify or extend students' understanding of what they are reading, writing, and learning.

Core Action 5. Lesson activities build and expand students' academic vocabulary and syntax.

Core Action 6. Lesson activities offer strategic scaffolds to provide learners access to lesson content.



Core Action 1. Lesson content is rigorous and relevant for the level defined by the state-adopted standards.	Y, N, or N/A
A. Instructor establishes well-defined content and language development lesson goals based on the standards.	
B. Students are working with challenging content-rich texts that relate to their interests, experiences, culture, and level(s) of learning.	
C. Most class time is spent with some combination of reading, writing, speaking, or listening designed to build content and language.	

Evidence observed:

Core Action 2. Lesson activities prepare students to access the content of the lesson.	Y, N, or N/A
A. Instructor explicitly links lesson content to previous lessons or students' prior knowledge.	
B. Instructor offers a range of brief and engaging auxiliary resources to build students' knowledge and vocabulary about lesson content. This includes such resources as visual images, videos, and supplementary texts.	
C. Instructor draws on students' funds of knowledge about the topic and content of the lesson and provides opportunities for peer-sharing.	

Evidence observed:

Core Action 3. Lesson activities productively engage students in understanding the content.	Y, N, or N/A
A. Instructor sequences activities to support students delving deeper into content to build their understanding of key information.	
B. Students participate actively in collaborative learning activities where they build on each other's insights and develop their language skills.	
C. Students display persistence with tasks about demanding content.	

Evidence observed:

Core Action 4. Lesson activities solidify or extend students' understanding of what they are reading, writing, and learning.	Y, N, or N/A
A. Students have varied opportunities to demonstrate their understanding of the lesson's core content and its vocabulary through research, writing, or presentations.	
B. Students have varied opportunities to apply what they are learning in authentic adult-oriented contexts.	
C. Instructor ends the class by: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reviewing lesson objectives; • Providing students with opportunities to reflect on their learning; and • Previewing the next class session and explaining how it will build upon today's activities. 	

Evidence observed:

Core Action 5. Lesson activities build and expand students' academic vocabulary and syntax.	Y, N, or N/A
A. Instructor provides systematic work with academic and domain-specific words and phrases specific to the content of the lesson.	
B. Instructor highlights syntactically complex sentences from the lesson content for special examination and discussion.	
C. Instructor provides students with opportunities to use newly learned words and phrases in their writing and discussions.	

Evidence observed:



Core Action 6. Lesson activities offer strategic scaffolds to provide learners access to lesson content.	Y, N, or N/A
A. Instructor creates opportunities for students to learn through a series of social and academic interactions.	
B. Instructor provides such supports as sentence frames, visuals, graphic organizers, and student-friendly glossaries to promote understanding.	
C. Instructor allows students to use their home language in various ways to build understanding and facilitate access to learning activities.	

Evidence observed:



AGGREGATION AND SUMMARY OF OBSERVATION DATA

Step 1: Aggregating and summarizing observation data.

Use one column for each classroom observed. Mark the indicator with a **Y**—when you determined it was present—or an **N**—when you found it was not present. If an indicator is not present because it is not applicable in that particular observed lesson, then mark it as **N/A**. Once the data for each classroom observation is entered in the table below, the remaining three columns (i.e., the number of Y’s, the percent of Y’s, and when the percent is less than 50%) fill automatically. (Note the N/A’s do not figure into the percentages).

Core Action 1. Lesson content is rigorous and relevant for the level defined by the state-adopted standards.	CLASSROOMS OBSERVED										Total # of Ys	% of Ys	Less than 50%	
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10				
A. Instructor establishes well-defined standards-based lesson goals.														
B. Students are working with texts at or above the expected complexity for the level as defined by the standards.														
C. Students spend most class time engaged with some combination of reading, writing, or speaking directly about knowledge-building text(s).														



Core Action 2. Questions and tasks are text-specific and cognitively demanding.	CLASSROOMS OBSERVED										Total # of Ys	% of Ys	Less than 50%	
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10				
A. Instructor consistently sequences questions to support students delving deeper into text(s) to build their understanding of key information.														
B. Instructor consistently includes systematic work with high-value words, phrases, and syntactically complex sentences from the text(s).														
C. Instructor asks students to elaborate and justify their thoughts and responses with precision by drawing evidence from text(s).														



Core Action 3. Lesson content and activities productively engage students.	CLASSROOMS OBSERVED										Total # of Ys	% of Ys	Less than 50%	
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10				
A. Students participate actively in the lesson where they use evidence from their readings to build on each other's insights.														
B. Students have varied opportunities to apply what they are learning in authentic adult-oriented contexts.														
C. Most students display persistence with tasks about demanding text(s).														



Core Action 4. Lesson content is intentionally sequenced to develop students' skills and knowledge.	CLASSROOMS OBSERVED										Total # of Ys	% of Ys	Less than 50%	
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10				
A. Instructor explicitly links lesson content to previous lessons or students' prior knowledge.														
B. Instructor offers a range of brief and engaging resources to build students' knowledge about the topics of the central texts.														
C. Instructor ends the class by: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Reviewing lesson objectives;• Summarizing student learning with references to student work and discussion; and• Previewing the next class session and explaining how it will build upon today's activities.														



Core Action 5. Students' levels of understanding are checked throughout the lesson, and instruction is adjusted accordingly.	CLASSROOMS OBSERVED										Total # of Ys	% of Ys	Less than 50%	
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10				
A. Instructor consistently uses informal yet deliberate methods to provide students with prompt, specific feedback to correct misunderstandings and reinforce learning.														
B. Instructor consistently provides strategic supports and scaffolds to help learners focus on what is essential to make sense of what they are reading.														
C. Instructor provides opportunities for students to evaluate and reflect on their own learning.														



English Learner Additional Core Action. Lesson activities offer strategic scaffolds to provide English learners access to lesson content.	CLASSROOMS OBSERVED										Total # of Ys	% of Ys	Less than 50%	
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10				
A. Instructor offers a range of brief and engaging auxiliary resources to build students' knowledge and vocabulary about lesson content. This could include such resources as visual images, videos, and supplementary texts.														
B. Instructor provides such supports as sentence frames, visuals, graphic organizers, and student-friendly glossaries to promote understanding.														
C. Instructor suggests language supports, including using their home language to build understanding and facilitate access to learning activities.														



Step 2: Setting priorities for professional development.

Your program's priorities for instructional staff professional development may be based on multiple factors. These include overall program goals and objectives and multiple federal or state initiatives. Following are some brief guidance points:

1. Note which indicators were observed in less than half of the classes. Record this information by placing checkmarks in the following chart.

Core Actions	Indicators Observed in Less Than 50% of Classes		
	A	B	C
Core Action 1. Lesson content is rigorous and relevant for the level defined by the state-adopted standards.			
Core Action 2. Questions and tasks are text-specific and cognitively demanding.			
Core Action 3. Lesson content and activities productively engage students.			
Core Action 4. Lesson content is intentionally sequenced to develop students' skills and knowledge.			
Core Action 5. Students' levels of understanding are checked throughout the lesson, and instruction is adjusted accordingly.			
English Learner Additional Core Action. Lesson activities offer strategic scaffolds to provide English learners access to lesson content.			



2. Determine which one or two Core Action areas present the greatest challenge(s) for instructors.

3. Record the priorities for professional development related to strengthening classroom instruction in the Core Action areas generated by discussion with instructional staff.