

Teacher Leader Observation and Reflection Framework



ABOUT THIS RESOURCE

Learning and growing as a teacher is not a linear path, but a dynamic and iterative process that requires reflection on actions and outcomes. When teachers engage in reflective practice, they identify strengths and areas for growth so that they can develop their practice and adapt to changing contexts and student needs over time.

Pairing that reflection with classroom observation and coaching by a mentor, peer, or other teacher leader can be a powerful way to further drive professional growth. **For this practice to be most effective and have the greatest impact, the process of observation and reflection must be collaborative, formative, and personalized according to the needs of the teacher, the students, and the unique context of the lesson.**

WHY USE A FRAMEWORK FOR OBSERVATION AND REFLECTION?

This framework scaffolds the cycle of observation and reflection. It is designed to be used collaboratively and repeatedly over time in order to help teachers plan for improvement. Documenting the process this way ensures that the process is transparent, growth-oriented, and student-focused. Each step in the framework furthers the collaborative conversation, establishing a cycle of inquiry and action with plans for further reflection and follow-up.

This reflection and observation framework draws from Rolfe, Freshwater, & Jasper's (2001) 'What' model, an iterative process consisting of three simple questions:

- [What?](#)
Describe what happened (teacher actions and outcomes and student actions and outcomes).
- [So What?](#)
Reflect on instructional practices and students' needs (what new insight do you have?).
- [Now What?](#)
Describe a plan of action and how to apply new insights to new classroom experiences.

These three main questions are intentionally simple, making it easier to keep the inquiry and reflection process in mind as you observe teachers. The framework that follows expands on these questions, drilling down into specific actions, observations, and strategies as you reflect on what has happened, collaborate on comprehensive answers, and work together to make plans for moving forward.

HOW TO USE THIS RESOURCE

[PART 1: PRE-OBSERVATION](#)

Use the [pre-observation checklist](#) and guiding questions to prepare and plan for your observation. Provide the teacher you will be observing with their [teacher copy of the “What?” table](#) (explain that they should complete this table after you observe the lesson).

[PART 2: OBSERVATION](#)

Complete your [observer copy of the “What?” table](#) as you observe the lesson.

Invite the teacher to complete their [teacher copy of the “What?” table](#) after their observation, but before the post-observation conversation.

[PART 3: POST-OBSERVATION](#)

Conduct a post-observation conversation with the teacher you observed. Complete the [“So What?”](#) and [“Now What?”](#) tables together during the conversation, and use the suggested questions and prompts to keep the conversation moving forward as you collaborate on next steps.

PART 1: PRE-OBSERVATION CONFERENCE

PRE-OBSERVATION CHECKLIST

- Preview all the materials in this resource so that you are able to discuss and explain the process with the teacher when you meet.
- Schedule an appropriate time to observe.
 - Date and time:
- Schedule and conduct a pre-observation conversation.
 - Date and time:
 - During the pre-observation conversation, provide them with their teacher copy of the ["What?"](#) table and explain the observation process.
 - Obtain a copy of the lesson plan and review it. (Ask the teacher to share the lesson plan before/during the pre-observation conversation, or at least one day before the observation.)
 - Review the table below for suggested guiding questions for the pre-observation conversation. Customize the table as needed, then use it to document notes and ideas during your conversation.

	Guiding Questions	Discussion Notes
1	How can this process be most useful for you? What would you like to focus on, specifically?	
2	What do you hope students will be able to do by the end of this lesson? How will you know they can do it?	
3	How would you describe your students? What should I know about them?	
4	How does this lesson fit into the context of a larger unit? And the course? What have students done before and what will they do after this lesson?	
5	What materials can I review prior to the observation?	

6	How do you plan to differentiate for diverse learners?	
7	What specific student and/or teacher behaviors should I observe closely?	
8	How have you planned for active learning ?	
9	How have you planned for effective feedback and the feedback cycle ?	
10	How are students expected to prepare for this class?	
11	Any specific areas of interest, questions, or concerns you'd like me to focus on?	
12	How would you like to introduce me to the class?	
13	What have you learned from previous observations? What would you like to learn from this observation experience?	

NOTE: The purpose of the observation is to create a feedback cycle between teacher and observer. Your role as an observer is to offer different perspectives, support the teacher's inquiry and reflection, and provide feedback when appropriate, not evaluate performance. The intent is for both teacher and observer to reflect on the experience of the lesson and collaborate on next steps.

PART 2: LESSON AND OBSERVATION

<< TEACHER COPY >>

 MAKE A COPY OF THIS PAGE and share it with the teacher. Ask them to complete it after the lesson observation, but before the post-observation conversation.

What? Descriptive			
What were you doing?	What were students doing?	What instructional strategies did you plan for or include? What was your goal for this strategy?	How do you know students were actively engaged in their learning? Describe engagement levels and student learning outcomes.
	[Describe student actions and experiences]		

<< OBSERVER COPY >>

<h2 style="text-align: center;">What?</h2> <p style="text-align: center;">Descriptive</p>			
What was the teacher doing?	What were students doing?	What instructional strategies did the teacher plan or include? What were their goals for these strategies? <i>(Refer to your pre-observation conversation notes, if necessary.)</i>	How do you know students were actively engaged in their learning? Describe engagement levels and student learning outcomes.
[Describe teacher actions, words, and experiences]	[Describe student actions, words, and experiences]		

PART 3: POST-OBSERVATION REFLECTION

Conduct a post-observation conversation to review observations, reflect, discuss feedback, and make a plan for next steps. Keep in mind that this conversation is anecdotal in nature and intended to be part of a feedback cycle. Maintain focus on the student experience and the teacher's stated goals.

Step 1: Share your observations in the “What?” table with one another. Compare and discuss your responses.

Step 2: Complete the “So What?” table together, discussing the prompts and supporting the teacher as they write their responses.

Step 3: Complete the “Now What?” table together, discussing the prompts and supporting the teacher as they write their responses.

Optional: Use the following questions* to initiate further discussion or expand on what the teacher discovered during the reflection process. (*Adapted from Jim Knight's “Identify Questions.” For more questions like this, check out resources from the [Instructional Coaching Group](#).)

1. What went well or worked well? Why?
2. What surprised you? Why?
3. What didn't seem to go well or didn't work well? Why?
4. On a scale of 1-10, how close is this lesson to your ideal?
5. What would you like to see **your students** do differently? Describe what it would look like, and how you could facilitate that.
6. What teaching strategy would you like to try?
7. What would **you** like to do differently?
8. What would you like to try again, but in a new way? How?

Step 4: Plan a follow-up in the next month. Examples of follow up options include:

- Another observation
- A peer observation
- Professional development
- Investigating resources
- Collaborative planning
- Self-reflective practice exercises (eg. Reflective Practice Frameworks for [Active Learning](#) and [Feedback](#))

<< COMPLETE TOGETHER >>

So What? Knowledge and Meaning			
What do the students' level of engagement and the learning outcomes tell me about my planning or instruction?	What do the students' level of engagement and the learning outcomes tell me about my students?	Why did I do what I did? What was I trying to do? What did I base my actions off of?	What new insights or understanding do I have? What could I have done differently?

<< COMPLETE TOGETHER >>

Now What?

Plan of Action

What do I need to do to improve? How can I apply my insight and reflection to new classroom experiences?

Consider: Do I need to incorporate new or different instructional strategies? Do I need to modify strategies I've already tried? How will I plan for and implement this?

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