Silver Strong & Associates

Thoughtful Education Press

# The Thoughtful Classroom
# Teacher Effectiveness Framework

## Online Instruction Edition

*A guide for conducting observations
of online and hybrid instruction*

# It's All About the Learning!

*It's all about the learning.* For over forty years, these words have been a constant reminder of our overarching mission at the Thoughtful Classroom.

This emphasis on keeping learning at the center of our work with our partner schools led us to develop the Thoughtful Classroom Teacher Effectiveness Framework (TCTEF). The TCTEF is being used by districts across the country because of its "learning-first" approach. More than an evaluation framework, the TCTEF provides school leaders with leadership tools and protocols for enhancing teacher feedback and promoting individual and schoolwide growth. The TCTEF also makes it easy for leaders and teachers to zero in on "the how" of improving instruction by incorporating ready-to-use instructional tools from our award-winning Tools for Today's Educators series.

This revised framework was designed to meet the high standards of the original TCTEF, while responding to the new demands of online and hybrid instruction. To achieve this goal, we have made the following adjustments:

- We have streamlined the framework. The Four Cornerstones continue to be the foundational elements of the framework, but the indicators have been reduced and modified to better address the demands of online and hybrid instruction.

- We have condensed The Five Episodes of Effective Instruction into three power standards: planning, instruction, and assessment. These three power standards represent the full instructional design-and-delivery cycle.

- We have increased the emphasis on parent and family engagement in recognition of the greater need to promote a strong home learning environment.

- We have incorporated the language of online instruction throughout.

# Guidelines

The purpose of this guide is to help you conduct focused, effective, and evidence-based observations and evaluations of online and hybrid instruction. Here are some basic guidelines to help ensure success:

1. Enter the classroom (online or brick and mortar) quietly.  If online, mute yourself. Look for opportunities to observe student behavior. Be unobtrusive.

2. Use the "Provisional Notes" spaces to make notes on what you see and hear. Try to avoid judgments. Instead, document key teacher and student behaviors that are apparent.

3. After the observation, review your notes. Add any relevant teacher or student behaviors that you observe but did not capture in real time.

4. Think about "Missed Opportunities." Were there any moves the teacher might have made that would likely have enhanced student learning? (Be judicious: One or two missed opportunities will allow the teacher to focus on specific improvements.)

5. Enhance the power of your observation by distilling your provisional notes and using the Four Ps of Effective Feedback to provide clear evidence and feedback that will promote reflection and growth.

6. If you feel you have enough information to assess the teacher's commitment, use the "Assessment Rubric "at the end of the guide.

# ORGANIZATION, RULES, AND PROCEDURES

| | |
|---|---|
| **WHAT?** | How does the teacher organize the learning environment to enhance learning and establish rules and procedures that clarify expectations? |
| **HOW?** **(TEACHING INDICATORS)** | ☐ Actively engaging students in developing and clarifying procedures and learning behaviors that will support online, hybrid, and in-class learning<br><br>☐ Establishing clear learning targets and expectations that drive learning; referencing targets and having students assess their progress toward achieving them<br><br>☐ Providing clear directions for learning tasks and checking to make sure that students understand their roles and responsibilities<br><br>☐ Helping students develop insights into the products they'll be creating, performances they'll be delivering, and tasks they'll be completing to demonstrate what they've learned (e.g., providing models of high-quality work, rubrics, checklists, answer keys).<br><br>☐ Establishing procedures for home learning and sharing targets and expectations with families |
| **EVIDENCE** **(STUDENT BEHAVIORS)** | ☐ Have access to necessary supplies and resources<br>☐ Understand and follow rules and procedures<br>☐ Make good use of their time<br>☐ Know what to do (self-directed)<br>☐ Understand/restate learning goals in their own words<br>☐ Know what they have to produce and what is expected of them<br>☐ Understand the plan for learning |
| **MISSED OPPORTUNITIES** | Were there any moves the teacher might have made that would likely have enhanced student learning? |
| **PROVISIONAL NOTES** | |
| | |

# POSITIVE RELATIONSHIPS

| WHAT? | How does the teacher build meaningful relationships with students and families to promote learning? |
|---|---|
| **HOW?**<br>**(TEACHING INDICATORS)** | ☐ Maintaining a positive demeanor that shows students and families their teacher cares about them and is committed to the idea that "we are all in this together"<br><br>☐ Ensuring that student interaction and collaboration are regular and positive so that they lead to better learning and stronger relationships<br><br>☐ Creating an emotionally safe and comfortable place for students to share their thoughts, feelings, experiences, attitudes, and concerns regarding learning<br><br>☐ Learning what interests and motivates each student, and differentiating instruction and assessment to make each student's learning personal and rewarding<br><br>☐ Actively communicating with families and providing support to help enhance online learning |
| **EVIDENCE**<br>**(STUDENT BEHAVIORS)** | ☐ Are respectful of each other and the teacher<br>☐ Collaborate with each other<br>☐ Participate in whole-class and small-group discussions<br>☐ Feel that "we're all in this together"<br>☐ Display empathy<br>☐ Share their feelings<br>☐ Have a voice |
| **MISSED OPPORTUNITIES** | Were there any moves the teacher might have made that would likely have enhanced student learning? |

| **PROVISIONAL NOTES** |
|---|
| |

# ENGAGEMENT AND ENJOYMENT

| WHAT | How does the teacher motivate students to do their best work and inspire the love of learning? |
|---|---|
| **HOW?**<br>**(TEACHING INDICATORS)** | ☐ Creating a classroom (online or brick and mortar) that is an inviting, stimulating, and fun place to learning<br><br>☐ Providing regular opportunities for students to "stretch" their minds and engage in a variety of thinking challenges<br><br>☐ Establishing with students that effort and striving to improve are critical to their success<br><br>☐ Using key "motivational levers" like controversy, choice, competition, challenge, and creativity to increase students' commitment to learning<br><br>☐ Encouraging families to support their children's efforts |
| **EVIDENCE**<br>**(STUDENT BEHAVIORS)** | ☐ Are energetic and enthusiastic<br>☐ Display effort<br>☐ Enjoy being with the class<br>☐ Express their own interests, ideas, and insights<br>☐ Are on-task and motivated<br>☐ Stretch their minds with different forms of thinking<br>☐ Are committed to producing quality work |
| **MISSED OPPORTUNITIES** | Were there any moves the teacher might have made that would likely have enhanced student learning? |

| PROVISIONAL NOTES |
|---|
|  |

# A CULTURE OF THINKING AND LEARNING

| | |
|---|---|
| **WHAT?** | How does the teacher develop a culture that promotes serious learning and sophisticated forms of thinking? |
| **HOW?** <br> **(TEACHING INDICATORS)** | ☐ Developing students' ability to use academic vocabulary and provide relevant information and evidence when discussing ideas and responding to questions <br> ☐ Preparing students to respond to rigorous assessments that require deep understanding of content and meaningful transfer of learning <br> ☐ Creating an environment for students to comfortably discuss, debate, and argue through ideas objectively <br> ☐ Challenging students' minds with rigorous texts and content and equipping them with the skills they need to handle rigorous content <br> ☐ Explaining to families the thinking skills being developed, why they are important, and how they can support them |
| **EVIDENCE** <br> **(STUDENT BEHAVIORS)** | ☐ Use different forms of critical thinking <br> ☐ Use thinking and learning strategies (Note making, Summarizing, Comparison, etc.) <br> ☐ Support their thinking with evidence <br> ☐ Use academic vocabulary <br> ☐ Ask meaningful questions <br> ☐ Apply technology in meaningful ways <br> ☐ Exhibit habits of mind to work through problems |
| **MISSED OPPORTUNITIES** | Were there any moves the teacher might have made that would likely have enhanced student learning? |

| **PROVISIONAL NOTES** |
|---|
| |

| PLANNING INDICATORS |
|---|
| ☐ Selecting relevant and appropriate standards and converting them into clear learning goals |
| ☐ Designing lessons and units around the way the content is organized and learning is configured (e.g., fully remote hybrid classroom, etc.) and breaking the content up into meaningful "chunks" |
| ☐ Identifying critical junctures in the learning sequence, establishing targets that students must achieve at each juncture, and using a variety of formative assessment activities to help students assess their progress toward the targets |
| ☐ Designing culminating assessments that are aligned with learning goals and that require the meaningful transfer of learning (e.g., project-based, complex tasks, research projects) |
| ☐ Differentiating instruction and assessment tasks so that all students can experience success and show what they know in different ways |
| **PROVISIONAL NOTES** |
| |

| INSTRUCTIONAL INDICATORS |
|---|
| ☐ Beginning lessons and units with engaging "hooks"—thought-provoking activities or questions that capture student interest and activate their prior knowledge |
| ☐ Using effective presentation techniques<br>   — Using a variety of presentation techniques (e.g., visuals, drama, stories, use of imagery, etc.) to make lessons vivid and memorable<br>   — Using modeling and think-alouds to help students understand the thinking skills, processes, and procedures |
| ☐ Providing students opportunities to process new knowledge and practice new skills through questions, discussion, critical thinking activities, and guided practice (alone, in chat rooms, with a peer, with the teacher) |
| ☐ Helping students master the information management process: assemble big ideas and details through note making, summarize/represent key information, and present/defend their ideas |
| ☐ Providing students with opportunities to look back on the content so they can make generalizations, develop new insights, and/or formulate questions |
| PROVISIONAL NOTES |
| |

| ASSESSMENT INDICATORS |
|---|
| ☐ Assessing students' background knowledge, skill levels, and interests relative to learning goals and targets |
| ☐ Using a variety of questions and response techniques (e.g., signaling, surveying, online response systems, Think-Pair-Share, provisional writing) to check for understanding in real time |
| ☐ Providing clear and descriptive feedback to help students refine their use of key skills and/or deepen their comprehension |
| ☐ Helping students reflect on their own learning process to identify what they did well and where they would like to improve |
| ☐ Helping students review learning goals and targets, assess their level of achievement, and "close the gap" when goals are unmet |
| **PROVISIONAL NOTES** |
| |

# FEEDBACK FORM

Teacher: _____    Observer:_____

Date: _____    Time: _____

Subject/Class:_____

| FEEDBACK NOTES (The Four Ps of Effective Feedback) | |
|---|---|
| **Provide Evidence** *(Collect evidence that supports what you observed.)* | **Pose** *(Ask questions that foster reflection on the teacher's decisions and their impact.)* |
| **Praise** *(Recognize positive teaching behaviors that enhance learning.)* | **Propose** *(Decide—collaboratively, if possible—on how to improve practice.)* |

| RUBRIC | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| **1 - NOVICE** | **2-DEVELOPING** | **3- PROFICIENT** | **4- EXPERT** |
| *Little or no commitment* | *Initial commitment* | *Clear commitment* | *Strong commitment* |