

NAME:

DATE:

GRADE(S):

Four Cornerstones Classroom Observation Guide

*A classroom observation guide for
conducting “Four Cornerstones Learning Walks.”*



Silver Strong & Associates

Thoughtful Education Press

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Guidelines

The purpose of this guide is to help you conduct a focused, effective, and evidence-based classroom observation. Here are some basic guidelines to help ensure success:

1. Enter the classroom quietly. Find a place where you can observe the classroom as a whole, including student behavior. Be unobtrusive.
2. Use the “Observation Notes” pages to make notes on what you see and hear. Try to avoid judgments, 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. Review the Four Cornerstones observation pages. Check off any teacher practices (“How?”) and student behaviors that you clearly observed during the observation.
5. 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.)
6. Enhance the power of your observation of each cornerstone using the Four Ps of Effective Feedback to provide clear evidence and feedback that will promote reflection and growth.

Tips: For the Propose element of “The Four Ps of Effective Feedback,” refer to the “Thoughtful Classroom Tools Index.” In it you will find specific classroom-ready tools from the Tools for Today’s Educators texts: the tools are directly aligned to the particular indicators in Danielson’s *Framework for Teaching* (2013).

Also there is the “Potpourri of Posing Questions for the Four Cornerstones Aligned to Charlotte Danielson’s *Framework for Teaching* (2013)” that can help guide your feedback.

7. If you feel you have enough information to assess the teacher’s commitment to the cornerstone, use the “Assessment Rubric” at the bottom of each cornerstone page.

Observation Notes

Observation Notes



ORGANIZATION, RULES, AND PROCEDURES

Key: The codes that follow each indicator below represent the corresponding indicators from Charlotte Danielson's *Framework for Teaching* (2013).

WHAT?	How does the teacher organize the classroom to enhance learning and establish rules and procedures that clarify expectations?
HOW?	<input type="checkbox"/> Actively engaging students in developing and clarifying classroom procedures and learning behaviors. 1a, 2c <input type="checkbox"/> Establishing clear learning targets and expectations that drive learning; referencing targets and having students assess their progress toward achieving them. 1f <input type="checkbox"/> Providing clear directions for classroom tasks and checking to make sure that students understand their roles and responsibilities. 1a, 2c <input type="checkbox"/> Helping students develop insights into the products they'll be creating, performances they will be delivering, and tasks they will be completing to demonstrate what they've learned (i.e., providing models or high-quality work, rubrics, checklists, answer keys). 3a, 3d
EVIDENCE (STUDENT BEHAVIORS)	<input type="checkbox"/> Have access to necessary supplies and resources. 1d <input type="checkbox"/> Understand and follow classroom rules and procedures. 2c, 2d <input type="checkbox"/> Make good use of their time. 2d, 2c <input type="checkbox"/> Know what to do (self-directed). 1c, 2c <input type="checkbox"/> Understand/restate learning goals in their own words. 1c <input type="checkbox"/> Know what they have to produce and what's expected of them. 1c <input type="checkbox"/> Understand the plan for learning. 1c, 3a
MISSED OPPORTUNITIES	Were there any moves the teacher might have made that would likely have enhanced student learning?

FEEDBACK NOTES

Provide Evidence (Collect evidence that supports what you observed.)

Praise (Recognize positive teaching behaviors that enhance learning.)

Pose (Ask questions that foster reflection on the teacher's decisions and their impact.)

Propose (Decide—collaboratively, if possible—on how to improve practice.)

ASSESSMENT RUBRIC

When you feel you have enough information, use this rubric to assess the teacher's overall commitment to this dimension.

- (1) – Minimal or no commitment to this dimension
- (2) – Initial commitment to this dimension
- (3) – Clear commitment to this dimension
- (4) – Strong commitment to this dimension



POSITIVE RELATIONSHIPS

Key: The codes that follow each indicator below represent the corresponding indicators from Charlotte Danielson’s *Framework for Teaching* (2013).

WHAT?	How does the teacher build meaningful relationships with the students and among students to promote learning?
HOW?	<input type="checkbox"/> Maintaining a positive and “with it” demeanor that shows students their teacher cares about them and is committed to the idea that “we are all in this together.” 2a, 2b <input type="checkbox"/> Ensuring that student interaction and collaboration are regular and positive so that they lead to better learning and stronger relationships. 2a <input type="checkbox"/> Creating an emotionally safe and comfortable place for students to share their thoughts, feelings, experiences, and attitudes towards learning. 2a <input type="checkbox"/> Learning what interests and motivates each student, and differentiating instruction and assessment striving to make each student’s learning personal and rewarding. 1b, 2a, 3c
EVIDENCE (STUDENT BEHAVIORS)	<input type="checkbox"/> Are respectful of each other and the teacher. 2a <input type="checkbox"/> Collaborate with each other. 2a <input type="checkbox"/> Participate in whole-class and small-group discussions. 3c <input type="checkbox"/> Feel that “we’re all in this together.” 2b <input type="checkbox"/> Display empathy. 2b <input type="checkbox"/> Share their feelings. 2b <input type="checkbox"/> Have a voice. 2b, 3c
MISSED OPPORTUNITIES	Were there any moves the teacher might have made that would likely have enhanced student learning?

FEEDBACK NOTES

<p><i>Provide Evidence</i> (Collect evidence that supports what you observed.)</p> <p><i>Praise</i> (Recognize positive teaching behaviors that enhance learning.)</p>	<p><i>Pose</i> (Ask questions that foster reflection on the teacher’s decisions and their impact.)</p> <p><i>Propose</i> (Decide—collaboratively, if possible—on how to improve practice.)</p>
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ENGAGEMENT AND ENJOYMENT

Key: The codes that follow each indicator below represent the corresponding indicators from Charlotte Danielson’s *Framework for Teaching* (2013).

WHAT?	How does the teacher motivate students to do their best work and inspire the love of learning?
HOW?	<input type="checkbox"/> Creating a classroom that is an inviting, stimulating, and fun place to learn. 1b, 3c <input type="checkbox"/> Providing regular opportunities for students to “stretch” their minds and engage in a variety of thinking challenges. 3b, 3c <input type="checkbox"/> Establishing with students that effort and striving to improve are critical to their success. 2b <input type="checkbox"/> Using key “motivational levers” like controversy, choice, competition, curiosity, challenge, cooperation, creativity and personal connections to increase students’ commitment to learning. 2b
EVIDENCE (STUDENT BEHAVIORS)	<input type="checkbox"/> Are energetic and enthusiastic. 3c <input type="checkbox"/> Display effort. 3c, 3b <input type="checkbox"/> Enjoy being in the classroom. 3c <input type="checkbox"/> Express their own interests, ideas, and insights. 1b, 3c <input type="checkbox"/> Are on-task and motivated. 3c, 3b <input type="checkbox"/> Stretch their minds with different forms of thinking. 3b, 3c <input type="checkbox"/> Committed to producing quality work. 3c
MISSED OPPORTUNITIES	Were there any moves the teacher might have made that would likely have enhanced student learning?

FEEDBACK NOTES

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A CULTURE OF THINKING AND LEARNING

Key: The codes that follow each indicator below represent the corresponding indicators from Charlotte Danielson's *Framework for Teaching* (2013).

WHAT?	How does the teacher develop a classroom culture that promotes serious learning and sophisticated forms of thinking?
HOW?	<input type="checkbox"/> Developing students' ability to use academic vocabulary and provide relevant information and evidence in complete thoughts when discussing ideas and responding to questions. 3a, 3b <input type="checkbox"/> Preparing students to respond to rigorous assessments that require deep understanding of content and meaningful transfer of learning. 3c <input type="checkbox"/> Creating an environment for students to comfortably discuss debate and argue through ideas objectively. 3b, 3d <input type="checkbox"/> Challenging students' minds with rigorous texts and content and equipping them with the skills they need to handle rigorous content. 2b, 3c
EVIDENCE (STUDENT BEHAVIORS)	<input type="checkbox"/> Use different forms of critical thinking. 3c <input type="checkbox"/> Use thinking and learning strategies (Notemaking, Summarizing, Comparison, etc). 3b, 3c <input type="checkbox"/> Support their thinking with evidence. 3c <input type="checkbox"/> Use academic vocabulary. 3a <input type="checkbox"/> Ask meaningful questions. 3b <input type="checkbox"/> Apply technology in meaningful ways. 1d <input type="checkbox"/> Exhibit habits of mind to work through problems. 3b
MISSED OPPORTUNITIES	Were there any moves the teacher might have made that would likely have enhanced student learning?

FEEDBACK NOTES

Provide Evidence (*Collect evidence that supports what you observed.*)

Praise (*Recognize positive teaching behaviors that enhance learning.*)

Pose (*Ask questions that foster reflection on the teacher's decisions and their impact.*)

Propose (*Decide—collaboratively, if possible—on how to improve practice.*)

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