Actionable Feedback Strategies for the Classroom

- **Picture and Symbol Cues**

Young students who may not be readers can benefit from visual cues that help them know if they are on the right track and what they need to continue to work on.

- **Written Feedback**

This technique is an effective way to give students an opportunity to go back and correct errors or misconceptions in their work and to affirm specific successes.

- **Highlighting**

This works well when using a rubric or specific written criteria with students. It's a good idea to either take the score points off of a scoring guide or just give students the "meets and exceeds" criteria if you are giving feedback about success towards the standards. Highlight the areas of the rubric that the student has done well on with one color, and highlight the areas that need more focus with another color. This can be a quick way to give feedback.

- **Post-it Comments**

Using a Post-it note to give students feedback during independent work time can help provide them with short written reminders about the verbal feedback they have received. This technique can provide students with enough information that they can continue to take action on that feedback once the class period is over.

- **Clip Board Notes for Verbal Feedback**

When circulating between students and giving them verbal feedback, keep a clip board containing student names with you. Jot down areas that you have given corrective feedback about, or areas of student strength. Use your notes when you are conferencing with students. "I noticed I have given you some feedback about concluding sentences- have you been able to take action on any of those ideas?"

- **Three-Minute Conference**

Letting students know that they are "almost there" but that you would like to meet with them for a three minute conference helps them understand where they are in their learning. This is an opportunity to give students oral feedback. For some students hearing what they are doing well and what their next steps for improvement could be is beneficial.

Descriptive Feedback

"Can *this* student take action on *this comment?*"

-Jan Chappuis, 2009

Considerations when giving actionable feedback

Acknowledging Student Success	✓ Identify what is done correctly. ✓ Describe an aspect of quality present in the work. ✓ Point out effective use of strategy or process.
Guiding Future Thinking	✓ Identify a correction. ✓ Describe an aspect of quality needing work. ✓ Point out a problem with strategy or process. ✓ Offer a reminder. ✓ Make a specific suggestion. ✓ Ask a question.

Adapted from, Chappuis. <u>Seven Strategies of Assessment for Learning</u>, p. 59.

Examples of Descriptive Feedback from Middle School Math Classes
Grade 6
Student 1

"You have correctly answered both parts of the problem, showing me that you were able to interpret both the question and the graph. Your method of creating tables to show your combinations and prices worked to solve the problem.

Your next step is to find out the cost of buying the shirts if you could only buy packages to fill your order. What would the difference in cost be?"

Grade 7
Student 2

"I can see that you understood what Jill meant by doubling the height and width. Your diagram correctly shows what would happen if you doubled each side of the garden.

 Your next step will be to look for the word 'area' in your math journal. Find the areas for each garden in your diagram. Check to see if the area is doubled from Kevin's original garden. We have learned so many different terms in our geometry unit, it is easy to become confused. Another strategy to try is to actually make the "doubled garden" with paper and try folding it in half. Does one half have the same dimensions as the original 4 by 6 garden?"

Grade 8
Student 3

"Your table and equation show me that you clearly understand linear functions in written form. As difficult as it is to recreate a graph, it is important to match your data points to your table.

Your next step will be to create a new graph on a piece of graph paper. Where will you begin on your 'x' axis and where on your 'y' axis? What do you notice about the line of your new graph when you compare it to the line on your first graph? Does your graph represent a linear equation?"

Stars and Steps: Formative Feedback

Student name: _____

**Directions for "Stars and Steps" Feedback:**

1. Review the learning targets and student work sample.

2. Using the "Stars and Steps" feedback form, provide the student with some "star" feedback based on the quality of their work in meeting the learning target. Feedback should be descriptive and non-evaluative.

3. Next, identify which learning target has not been demonstrated in the student work. Provide feedback on the next "steps" the student should take to meet all the learning goals and improve his or her performance.

4. As a formative assessment practice, "Stars and Steps" feedback is then returned to students so they can have an opportunity to recognize their accomplishments and apply the feedback to improve their work.
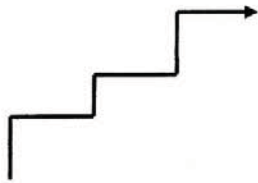
Stars and Steps: Completed

STARS and STEPS- Formative Feedback

Student Name: Maranda
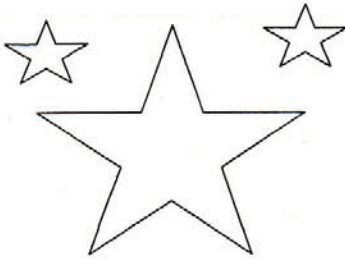
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> I liked how your resolution was entertaining and ended with George almost saving the world. You also used believable dialogue that would be used in real life.
>
> I don't think you had enough details to support your conflict. Explaining what Y2K was would help. You could also include more details to lead up to the conflict.

Short Story Learning Targets

- I can use supporting details to create a believable **conflict**.

- I can write a story with a conflict that is **resolved** in a way that entertains the reader and makes sense.

- I can write and story with believable **dialogue** that supports the reader's understanding.

Reflecting on Instructional Practice through Peer Observation and Formative Feedback

The Goals:

o De-privatize teaching
o Encourage and support continuous improvement of teaching
o Provide opportunities for collegial conversations based on evidence in a safe, meaningful, non-evaluative manner
o Encourage personal reflection on teaching practice and professional growth
o Promote collaborative peer relationships that are mutually supportive and respectful
o Improve student learning

Step One: Establish Norms and Responsibilities

- Peer observations and coaching should be voluntary and mutually directed.
- All aspects of peer coaching are kept confidential between the two teachers involved.
- All notes and materials from the observation are given to the teacher being observed.
- It is encouraged that the teacher being observed keep the materials in order to look at patterns over time

Step Two: Before the Observation

- The teacher being observed is in control of the observation.
- He/she will determine what is to be observed and what type of feedback he/she would like to receive.
- A pre-conference will determine the day, duration and focus of the observation
- Which specific observation protocol will be used and what data will be collected will also be decided at the pre-conference

Step Three: During the Observation

- Observer uses protocol and indicators to record observations as evidence and questions

Step Four: After the Observation

- An opportunity for formative feedback and reflection about instructional practice between the observer and the classroom teacher

Step 3: The Classroom Observation

Reminders for the observer:

- o Use the specifically agreed-upon observation protocol/ lens to record evidence and questions for the teacher
- • Record only the agreed upon data that the teacher requested
- • Additional student or teacher behaviors that are observed should not be commented on even if it is tempting to <u>unless</u> it is requested by the observed teacher
- • Use the protocol/lens to record what you see not what you think
- • Leave out personal biases and preferences

Characteristics of Effective Observers

The primary characteristics of effective peer observers are closely related to characteristics of good teachers. A good observer:

1. Has sensitivity; can empathize with the person being observed
2. Sees the observation process as an important objective in improving the effectiveness of teaching and learning
3. Is reflective about his/her own teaching
4. Is a good listener
5. Has the ability to give non-judgmental feedback
6. Accepts the validity of different teaching methods and styles, even when they differ from his/her own

The characteristics listed above consistently appear in the literature on peer observation, and successful programs emphasize the necessity of keeping them constantly in mind when observing.

By contrast, observers need to avoid the following:

- o Allowing one positive or negative factor to outweigh all other aspects of the observation
- o Being overly neutral to avoid uncomfortable conversations or controversy
- o Using your own teaching performance as criteria for judgment rather than agreed-upon criteria/protocol/indicators

Step 4: Post Observation – A Reflective Conversation Between Colleagues

Formative Feedback is…

- Positive
- Non-judgmental and non-evaluative
- Specific and evidence based
- Focused on the data not the person
- Prompts reflection
- Supportive and confidential

Reflective Language Stems:

Is the collected data consistent with how you feel about the lesson?

What collected data do you feel is helpful to you?

What patterns do you see?

After reviewing the data what might you do differently?

What strategies would you use or alter next time?

Tell me what you mean when you…

Would you tell me a little more about…

Collaborative Language Stems:

Would you like a suggestion on/about…

How do you decide to…

What are other ways that you might…

What do you think would happen if…

What feedback would be helpful to you?

Other information/data the observed teacher could consider bringing into the conversation:

- Samples of student work/products
- Student reflections, inventories, portfolios, learning logs, journals, exit tickets,
- Curriculum materials
- Assessment data
- Curriculum maps/ standards
- Photos, Video clips

Characteristics of Formative Feedback

- Promotes **reflection** as part of a dialog between the giver and receiver of feedback. Both parties are **mutually involved** in observing, thinking, reporting, and responding.
- Focuses on observed **behavior** rather than on the person. Refers to what an individual does rather than to what we think s/he is.
- **Descriptive** rather than judgmental. Avoiding judgmental language reduces the need for an individual to respond defensively.
- **Specific** rather than general.
- Promotes **reflection about strategies** and the students' or observer's responses to a specific strategy.
- Directed toward behavior which the receiver can **change**.
- Considers the **needs** of both the receiver and giver of feedback.
- **Solicited** rather than imposed. Feedback is most useful when the receiver actively seeks feedback and is able to discuss it in a supportive environment.
- **Well-timed**. In general, feedback is most useful at the earliest opportunity after the observation.
- Involves **sharing information** rather than giving advice, leaving the individual free to change in accordance with personal goals and needs.
- Considers the **amount of information** the receiver can use rather than the amount the observer would like to give. Overloading an individual with feedback reduces the likelihood that the information will be used effectively.
- Requires a **supportive, confidential** relationship built on trust, honesty, and genuine concern.

Classroom Observation Protocol: Utilizing Effective Strategies of Formative Assessment (Assessment for Learning)

Teacher: _____Grade Level/Subject: _____Observer: _____Date:_____

Elements and Indicators	Record of what was observed
1. Shared Learning Targets and Criteria for Success • Learning targets are clarified in student friendly language and shared with students • Students are involved in setting success criteria based on learning targets • Students and teachers establish individual learning goals based on learning targets and success criteria	
2. Effective Questioning and Dialogue • Effective questions, learning tasks and discussion techniques moves student learning forward and elicits evidence of student understanding • Rich classroom discussion include various levels of DOK • Adequate wait time is provided for students to respond • Discussions occur in various modes (whole group, partners, peer group) • Teacher utilizes various techniques to engage students in discussions	
3. Descriptive Feedback • Oral and written feedback given to students is descriptive, timely and is based on shared criteria • Feedback is used to develop a deeper understanding of students' instructional needs • Teacher uses student feedback to monitor and adjust instruction • Feedback helps student know what they should do next to reach a learning target • Students are given the opportunity to respond and act on the feedback	
4. Active Peer and Self Assessment • Students are activated as instructional resources for each other • During lessons students are encouraged to reflect on what they have learned and what they need to improve • Students assess each other's work and provide fair and helpful feedback • Students take a portion of the responsibility for monitoring their own progress	

Lens Six: Utilizing Effective Strategies of Formative (classroom) Assessment
(Focus on Learning)

Clarifying learning targets and sharing criteria for success	**Providing descriptive feedback** to students as they learn
Engineering effective questions and learning tasks that **elicit evidence of student learning**	Activating **students as instructional resources** for each other/monitoring of **progress toward learning targets**

Classroom Observation Protocol: Utilizing Effective Strategies of Formative Assessment (Assessment for Learning)

Teacher: <u>Mrs. Williams</u>	Grade Level/Subject: <u>Grade 6- Science</u>	Observer: D.Farrington

Elements and Indicators	Record of what was observed
1. Shared Learning Targets and Criteria for Success • Learning targets are clarified in student friendly language and shared with students • Students are involved in setting success criteria based on learning targets • Students and teachers establish individual learning goals based on learning targets and success criteria	Deposition and Erosion vocabulary listed on board as review of previous learning targets Verbally shared goal for today "We'd like to share our findings from our hypotheses….." Learning targets presented as a question for students to discover by the end of the lesson. "By the end of the lesson you need to be able to tell me…."
2. Effective Questioning and Dialogue • Effective questions, learning tasks and discussion techniques moves student learning forward and elicits evidence of student understanding • Rich classroom discussion include various levels of DOK • Adequate wait time is provided for students to respond • Discussions occur in various modes (whole group, partners, peer group) • Teacher utilizes various techniques to engage students in discussions	Engaged students with real life scenario and effects or river erosion on their town Asked "Why is this important?" Higher level questioning Asked 4 "why" questions asked at one time. Used various discussion modes: individual and peer group Used "Turn and talk to your group" discussion strategy Prompted further learning: "What else could you add to that?"
3. Descriptive Feedback • Oral and written feedback given to students is descriptive, timely and is based on shared criteria • Feedback is used to develop a deeper understanding of students' instructional needs • Teacher uses student feedback to monitor and adjust instruction • Feedback helps student know what they should do next to reach a learning target • Students are given the opportunity to respond and act on the feedback	Feedback prompted students to respond to question #2 "Show me, I'm not sure what you are talking about" Draw it so we can see your thinking" "You guys are doing great!" "Ok, right" Criteria for what was expected in response to question #2 not discussed "You need to think beyond asking an adult for answers to be able to use resources to find answers"
4. Active Peer and Self Assessment • Students are activated as instructional resources for each other • During lessons students are encouraged to reflect on what they have learned and what they need to improve • Students assess each other's work and provide fair and helpful feedback • Students take a portion of the responsibility for monitoring their own progress	Students were prompted to reflect back to prior learning experience Students shared thinking with each other in groups. Teacher used group member's responses to promote further learning…"What could you add to that?" "Do you agree with that thinking?"

Lens Six FA: Utilizing Effective Strategies of Formative (classroom) Assessment
(Reflecting Conversation Notes)

Clarifying learning targets and sharing criteria for success	Providing descriptive feedback to students as they learn
Vocabulary used to reviewed learning targets from previous lesson Learning targets communicated orally and in written form to students Learning targets presented as a question for students to discover by the end of the lesson. "By the end of the lesson you need to be able to tell me…." *Do students have a clear understanding of how this activity fits into the big picture or unit plan?* *How will you know if students have met the learning target from this lesson? How will they prove they know it?* *Could this information be used to set criteria for success? (further clarifying learning intentions?)*	Timely feedback was given to students while teacher visited table groups. Feedback provided clarification of terms and concepts through re-wording of student responses Feedback prompted student on what to do next "Show me, I'm not sure what you are talking about" Draw it so we can see your thinking *How do your students know what their predictions should look like or include? (drawing? labels? sentences?- criteria needed)*
Engineering effective questions and learning tasks that elicit evidence of student learning	Activating students as instructional resources for each other/monitoring of progress toward learning targets
Questioning used to prompt reflection of previous learning and engage students to apply this learning to predict the effects of the scenario in their own town. Used higher level questioning- Why ?'s Discussions occurred as whole group and peer group. Individual students were called on to respond to questions and share their own opinions/thoughts Teacher rotated around to groups to listen, clarify thinking and prompt further thinking. *What might be some ways to engage more students in the discussion?* *How could students use questioning with each other?*	Students were prompted to reflect back to prior learning experience and apply findings to this new lesson. Students were given the opportunity to share thinking with each other through group discussions and drawings. *What are some ways students could gather and use peer feedback to enhance their work?* *How will students know if they have met the learning expectations for this lesson?*

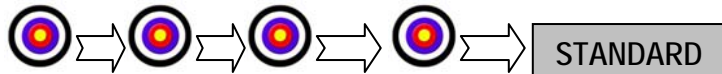# Classroom Observation Protocol: Connecting Learning Expectations to Instruction

Teacher: _____Grade Level/Subject: _____Observer: _____Date_____

Elements and Indicators	How Communicated	Record of Planning and Instruction *How is instruction linked to the focus standard or GLE's?* *What was discussed and/or observed?*
1. State/District Standards: -Record focus standard for instruction: _____		
2. Grade Level Expectations: [ ] • GLE's are used to plan classroom summative assessments • GLE's from the summative assessments serve as a basis for planning lessons, activities and instruction • Specific content and skills from GLE's are identified as learning targets and embedded in the lesson plan		
3. Learning Targets ** • Learning targets are clarified in student friendly language or "I Can Statements" • Learning targets are shared with students • Students can articulate the learning targets for the lesson or activity • Success criteria for learning targets is established • Learning targets are formatively assessed for understanding (before, during and/or at the end of the lesson)		

** *A Learning Target is a specific achievement expectation we have for students on the path towards meeting a standard or grade level expectation.*

STANDARD

Developed collaboratively with Measured Progress and Alaska Administrator Coaching Project-Revised 2010

Classroom Observation Protocol: Using Questioning and Discussion Techniques

Teacher: _____Grade Level/Subject: _____Observer: _____Date: _____

Elements and Indicators	Record of Questions	Mode of Instruction	DOK Level
1. Quality of Questions Occurring in teacher- directed (TD) or student-focused (SF) modes o Varying levels of questioning are used to guide learning -procedural, recall, factual, DOK 1 -compare, contrast, apply, consider, expand, evaluate, DOK 2-3			
	What was observed?		
2. Discussion Techniques Occurring in teacher- directed (TD) or student- focused (SF) modes o Teacher utilizes various techniques to engage students in discussions (response cards, whiteboards, think pair share) o Questions are used by teacher and students to guide discussions o Students assume considerable responsibility for the discussion o Students make unsolicited contributions to class discussions			

3. Wait Time
  o Adequate wait time is provided for students to respond
Record 5 minute sample intervals in a multiple series.
(e.g. for a 30 min. observation = 2x 5min.intervals.)

Interval 1: ____secs. , _____secs.,

Interval 2: ____secs. , ____secs,

Classroom Observation Protocol: <u>Utilizing Assessment to Monitor Student Achievement and Inform Instruction</u>

Teacher: _____Grade Level/Subject: _____Observer: _____Date:_____

Elements and Indicators	Record of what was observed or discussed
1. State and District Summative Assessment (Standards Based Assessment (SBA), state and district summative standardized achievement tests) • Data from state and district summative assessments are used as an essential component in the monitoring of student achievement • Standards Based Assessment (SBA) results are reviewed at the GLE strand-level to determine individual and class proficiency levels • School level and classroom level SBA data reports are used to disaggregate data • Broad curricular focus and programmatic needs are identified from state and district summative assessments results	
2. Progress Monitoring, Interim, Common Assessments • Results are used to measure and or track student progress toward meeting state or district content standards (broad domain or sub-domain coverage) • Can be used as an early warning of performance on large-scale summative assessments • Results raise programmatic questions that require further investigation (*formative for program – not current student) • Intended to be used to inform instructional decision-making	
3. Classroom Summative Assessment (Assessment of Learning) • A variety of classroom summative assessments are used to measure levels of student learning • Classroom summative assessments are aligned to GLE's (when possible) and based on established learning targets • The topics and skills emphasized in instruction are reflected on the classroom summative assessments • Results are used to determine the effectiveness of classroom instruction	